

HIS WEDDING PICTURES EPHESIANS 5:25-30

A happy story comes out of Harlingen, Texas. A newlywed couple retrieved their lost wedding photos...

Kimberly Garcia was just back from her honeymoon.

She had her wedding photos on a memory card. She was headed to her mom's to load the pictures onto a computer, when she stopped to eat at the local IHOP.

There she left the card, *and her nightmare began...*

When it dawned on her what she'd done she went back to the IHOP. Kim looked everywhere from the booth they were sitting in, to the parking lot, to the shrubbery in front of the restaurant - but to no avail.

Kimberly cried all night. She never went to sleep.

At 2:30 AM she grabbed a flashlight, and talked her husband, Neythan, into returning to search again.

Meanwhile, a man named, Raul Charles, had also eaten at the IHOP that night. He left the restaurant about 20 minutes after Kimberly, and as he was leaving, he saw and picked up the lost memory card.

When Raul got home, he stuck the card into his computer and recognized Kimberly from the IHOP.

He returned the memory card the next AM, minutes after Kimberly and Neythan returned for one final look!

A disaster had been averted. Wedding pictures that were thought to have been lost were recovered... *And this is the purpose of our studies in Ephesians 5!*

Many married couples today have lost their wedding photos! The *memory card* has been misplaced. Not the photos per se, but *the meaning of their marriage - the reason for their wedding...* **For marriage is a picture!**

God created marriage as a divine snapshot of Christ's relationship with His Church. And the role God gives to husbands and wives completes the picture.

Husbands should lovingly lead, and wives should submit to their husbands and give him their respect.

Recall, symbols and pictures are important to God!

You don't have to look any farther than Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples. He spoke of the bread, **"This is My body."** The cup was also a symbol of His blood.

Then He commanded all generations of believers to regularly partake of these emblems! **Symbols matter to God!** He speaks to humanity through these pictures.

Last week we discussed the wife's role... To **"submit"** to her own husband as the Church respects Christ.

This week we'll talk about the husband's role...

And we'll begin reading in verse 25, **"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a**

glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.”

Let's also read verse 23, for it helps to define the husband's role, “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Men need to take charge - be the head of their home - rise up and take on leadership.

Not in a domineering, but in a saving and liberating way. A wife should flourish under her husband's headship. He covers her, and her mistakes. He gives her shelter, and protection, and an opportunity to grow.

Author Charlie Shedd wrote a letter offering some marital advice to his son, Philip, “Take charge! But not as a mighty potentate sitting on his throne, ruling his cowering subjects with an iron hand. No, take charge more like a conductor on his box directing a symphony. Delicate but definite. Subdued yet powerful!” I think that's an excellent picture - *like a musical conductor*.

His family is a symphony, and he's the director!

Understand the biblical concept of headship. As “head of the Church,” Jesus is the “Savior of the body.”

Headship is a position that not only comes with authority, *but responsibility*. Jesus took on our sins, and died in our place. **He took responsibility for what was not His fault!** And that's biblical headship in a nutshell.

This is the responsibility a man accepts when he becomes a husband. He takes responsibility for a wife and family. He *covers her debts, and mends her breaks, and repairs her problems, and heals her hurts.*

Fellows, are you *the head of your household*? Not **“head”** in the sense of bossy, but as a covering. Think of the word as a verb, not a noun. A husband should be the head of his wife, in the sense of providing her shelter - materially, and emotionally, and spiritually...

Did you hear of the man who was convicted of lying to the Internal Revenue Service? When he filled out his tax return he claimed to be **“Head of Household.”**

Too few men are truly the head of their house.

There is a gift shop that sells plaques for Father's Day. One of them reads, **“Wherever Dad Sits Is The Head Of The Table.”** I hope it sells like hot cakes!

Men, if your wife bears the burden of leadership, it's time for you to man up. Be *the head* of your house!

If you were a member of the church at Ephesus, and were hearing this letter from Paul for the very first time, you would be shocked by verses 22-30. They would be revolutionary. You'd ask for them to be read again...

The Greek culture expected wives to be submissive to their husbands, but no one ever expected a husband to love his wife - at least not in any sacrificial manner.

The Christian ethic brought to the ancient world the whole idea of **reciprocal responsibilities**.

Christian relationships are two-sided. Wives submit, but husbands need to love their wives... Kids should obey their parents, but parents shouldn't provoke their kids... Employees should work hard for their boss, but the boss should treat his employee's fairly...

In ancient Greece a wife was little more than a man's property. She wasn't allowed to participate in public life. She was kept secluded. Xenophon wrote, "It was the aim that every wife might see as little as possible, hear as little as possible, and ask as little as possible."

Even in Jewish culture a woman's plight wasn't much better. Every morning Jewish men prayed, "God, thank you that I wasn't born a gentile, a slave, or a woman."

But Christianity came to the rescue of women. Not only should a wife submit to her husband, but the husband should love His wife. And not only love, but as "*Christ loved the Church.*" That raises the bar higher.

The Christian ethic shifted the majority of the responsibility from the wife to the husband. Paul did more for women's liberation than all the bra burning feminists combined. Husbands are to be like Christ to their wives, and bestow the love that Jesus showed us.

Here's the husband's role in marriage - **love your wife!** Men, your wife desperately needs to know that you love her, and care for her. Reassure your wife daily that

you're committed to cherishing her, and protecting her, and providing for her all the days of her life.

A husband should be willing to lay down *his life* for *his wife*. In word and deed we need to love our wives.

But notice our text doesn't say husbands need to love their wives like Matthew McConaughey loves Jennifer Lopez - or like Tom Hanks loves Meg Ryan.

Men, you may not be an extreme romantic, or a silver-tongued poet, or handsome hunk - *and real life is never the movies*. But you know how to love your wife!

Love her like you love your **golf clubs**... Keep her safe. Protect her from nicks or scratches. Outfit her in fluffy, comfortable covers. Take her to nice places. Make sure she shines. Brag about her to your buddies.

Work on your swing - *how you treat her*. Get the right grip. Aim straight. Make good contact. Be consistent.

Make sure *love for your wife is par for the course*.

Husbands, you know how to love your wife. Love her like your golf clubs... *Just don't call her "Big Bertha"*.

Or love your wife like you love your **tools**.

They're your livelihood. You treasure them. They're always by your side. You keep your eye on them at the work site to make sure nobody walks off with them.

You keep them oiled, greased, sharpened, serviced.

You do what it takes to keep your tools in tip-top condition. Husband, treat your wife the same way...

Men need to love their wives, *but wives need to understand how men love*. Often, women marry men because they're attracted to masculine traits, rugged exteriors, and deep voices - but after the wedding they expect their husband to act and talk like a girlfriend.

They want him to yak incessantly - get all emotional.

Ladies, that's not the man you married. Some wives expect more from their husbands than he can deliver.

Dr. Laura Schlessinger, makes an observation, "Only when women enjoy those strengths they have that men don't, and enjoy the strengths men have that they as women don't, will they be happier creatures..."

Men display their emotions in action more than pretty phrases. If your husband doesn't say all the flowery things you think he should because you've watched too many chick flicks, you should look at what he does.

When he repairs a leaky faucet, or rotates the tires on your car - that's love-speak for a husband...

Action is largely how men communicate."

Wives, God has not called your husband to love you the way love is depicted in the latest chick flick.

Husbands love their wives like their *golf clubs...* or like their *tools...* or better yet, Paul says husbands should love their wives **like Jesus loves the Church.**

And Jesus loves the Church in at least **four ways...**

I'll list them... He loves us with a **sacrificial love**, a **sanctifying love**, a **sensitive love**, a **sharing love**...

First, Jesus loves us with a **sacrificial love.**

Notice again in verse 25, **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...”** Jesus gave Himself for the Church. He suffered, and bled, and died, so that we could live.

Jesus gave Himself for the Church in one big, bold monumental way. A husband is called to give Himself for his wife's sake in a lot of little ways from day to day.

It reminds me of the young man who said to his girlfriend, **“For you I'd swim the biggest ocean, climb the highest mountain, cross the fastest river, and I'll see you Friday night if its not raining.”** He was willing to make big sacrifices, but not the daily, routine sacrifices.

Hey, a good husband will be constantly dying for his wife... *dying to the habits that cause friction - dying to desires that breed distrust - dying to selfishness, and stubbornness - and dying to the kind of pride and self-righteousness that keeps you from saying you're sorry.*

When a husband comes home from work, he's tired, exhausted. He wants to be left alone. But a husband dies to his wants. He steps up to help out his family.

And notice verse 25 tells us Jesus “**gave Himself.**”

Men, this is what your wife desires most - she wants *YOU*. She didn't sign-up to co-exist with a stranger. A wife doesn't want you to just *do stuff for her*, but *spend time with her*. More than **money**, she wants her **honey**.

Rodney Dangerfield once said, “**I get no respect in my marriage. On my wedding night my wife told me we were seeing too much of each other.**” Trust me, your wife will never say that. She can't get enough of you!

Once, the house of a hard-working farmer and his wife from Oklahoma, was hit by a tornado. The funnel blew off the roof - sucked up the farmer and his wife still in bed - the same bed that landed 10 miles away.

When the hero units arrived the wife was crying...

But her tears were tears of joy. She said, “**I can't help it. I'm so happy. This is the first time we've been out together in 20 years.**” At times husbands, can get so busy *bringing home the bread*... they forget their *sugar*. Jesus gave Himself for the Church and husbands need to lay down their lives for their wives.

Second, Jesus loves us with a **sanctifying love**.

Read with me verses 26-27, “**that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**”

Jesus not only *sacrifices* for the Church, but He works tirelessly to **sanctify** and cleanse His Church.

The word "**sanctify**" means "to set apart." The idea is to separate from the ordinary - to treat as special - to elevate in status. And this is how Jesus loves us...

Jesus found me floundering in sin - but He cleansed me. He's made me His own. He's given me purpose, and hope, and beauty. He's restored my dignity.

I'm **His restoration project**. Through continual washings with His Word he's working miracles in me!

Jesus has renewed my mind. He's elevated my status. In Christ, I'm loved, and accepted, and valued. He involves me in His work. I'm somebody in Christ!

Now, He presents me to God, "**not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing...**" Where there should be age spots, there's no spot... Where I've weathered and worn, there're no more wrinkles... Though marred by sin, in Christ I'm without blemish, or spot, or wrinkle...

And this is how a husband should love His wife - with *a sanctifying love*. Your wife is *your restoration project*.

When you married, she had some scars. She'd been beaten down. Perhaps in the past she was molested, or abused, or mistreated. She felt like a Nobody.

Maybe she lived promiscuously, and lacked dignity.

Husband, a wife bears wounds, and the dysfunctions they've caused. These are not your fault, but they're now your responsibility. As the head of your home you should be God's healing agent in the life of your wife.

Husband, your job is to love your wife like Jesus loves us. Our sin was not His fault, but He took on its responsibility. He died in our place, and saved our soul.

Headship is being accountable for stuff that's not my fault. Real men don't bellyache, or cast blame - *they redeem, and forgive, and restore, and sanctify.* We work to show our wife, and her kids, a better life.

A husband's job is to sanctify His wife, and help her overcome her past. He treats His wife as pure and special. He respects her as a lady - he looks past what she used to be, and reminds her of who she is in Christ.

A godly husband helps to restore his wife's dignity.

Yet I know husbands who only make matters worse.

Their cutting comments remind their wife of what she once was - they stir up evil echoes of her past. Men, if this is what you're doing to your wife... **shame on you!**

Are you helping your wife grow in Christ - or are you holding her back? A husband loves his wife by speaking God's Word into her life - reminding her of how Jesus sees her - viewing her with the acceptance, and love, and forgiveness that Jesus has shown us.

Men, have you given your wife an opportunity to start over - or do you continually dredge up her past?

Let me ask the men a serious question, "Has your wife gotten prettier or plainer since she married you?"

Is she thriving or weathering under your influence?

Men, your wife is the by-product of your cultivation.

You're responsible for her health and beauty! Thus, if she's not healthier and more beautiful, than when you were first married - then you bear much of the blame.

It angers me to hear a husband, whose been married a decade, say he doesn't love his wife - *why not?*

After 10 years of marriage, a husband indicts himself to say he doesn't love his wife. *She's been in your care! What have you done to make her more lovable?*

A joyous, beautiful, godly wife is a testimony to her husband's love... Whereas, a depressed, brawling, nagging wife is proof of a husband's negligence...

I'll never forget the fellow who approached me after a Bible Study and said he'd decided to join the church.

He'd been coming several years, so I figured he already felt CC was his church home. I asked him why he'd reached his decision at this particular time.

He said, "*Pastor Sandy, I've been been watching your wife.*" *That's a little creepy!* Somebody is watching your wife, but then he added, "*She seems healthy and happy, and since she thrives under your leadership, I figure my family will do the same.*" Wow, I still didn't like him watching my wife, but he had some wisdom...

Husbands, do you smother and stifle your wife - or do you allow her to flower and flourish and grow?

Here's another thought, "Husband, is your wife growing in spite of you, or because of your influence?"

We're the "*Savior of the body.*" We should enhance our wives: *physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually.*

We love our wives with *a sacrificial love, a sanctifying love* - and third, with a **sensitive love.**

Verse 28, "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." Jesus treats the Church as His bod.

The Church as "**the Body of Christ**" is a multi-faceted analogy - it speaks of many truths - but certainly it illustrates the empathy of Jesus. He was once a man Himself. He occupied human flesh. He owned a body.

Thus, He knows what it's like to *be hungry, and feel pain, and be lonely, and have sorrow, and suffer need.* He knows what it's like to care for a physical body...

And so do I. We're all very in tune with the needs of our body. When my stomach growls, or I go without sleep, or get a toothache - or pound my thumb with a hammer - these kinds of needs don't get overlooked.

And this is the way a husband should relate to his wife. In a single word, his love shows **attentiveness.**

My wife might have needs that I can't meet. But I hope she never has a need I don't know about!

A husband is to nourish and cherish his wife as he would his own body... *I don't miss too many meals.* And I shouldn't miss picking up on Kathy's needs.

Once, a husband laid down on the couch, and picked up the TV remote control. His wife was in the other room, when he shouted, "Honey, anything you want to say to me before football season begins?"

That's not exactly being sensitive to your wife, the way Christ is sensitive to the Body... He hears our prayers 24/7. He lives to make intercession for us.

The least we can do is take some time from each day to be available to our wives, and hear the issues that concern her. *Men, do you listen to her heart?*

I've heard it put this way, "Every husband needs to know what makes his wife tick, what tickles her, and what ticks her off." That's great advice for husbands.

Paul is telling us that a husband needs to be as sensitive to his wife's needs as he is to his own body.

Years ago, I went on a school field trip to Jekyll Island with Zach's 6th grade science class. Jekyll Island is in the Atlantic - one of GA's barrier islands.

And I was bombarded all week with more info on Marine Biology than I ever wanted to know. Most of it sailed over my head, but I did learn a vital lesson about marriage. It's an illustration that I've never forgotten...

When the female china-back crab molts - or sheds her shell - it takes several days for her new shell to harden. For that interval of time the female crab is extremely vulnerable to predators and problems...

But it's during that period that the male crab comes to her rescue. The male china-back crab covers the female with his body. That's when the vulnerable female attaches herself to the male's underbelly. He carries her around, until her own shell is able to offer her the proper protection. **The husband covers his wife.**

And men, there will be times in her life when your wife will get *a little crabby*... That's when she needs you to cover her. It's during those times of vulnerability that you need to be sensitive, and to carry your wife.

It's a husband's job to provide his wife with protection, and reason, and stability. This is part of being the head over your wife. Every wife needs to see and feel that she is the object of her husband's love.

And finally, if we're to love our wives as Jesus loves the Church, we should love her with a **sharing love.**

Notice again verse 29, **"For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."** The urge to eat, or be warm, or sleep isn't something we have to think a lot about.

These are instinctive desires. And Paul is telling us that it should be instinctive for a husband to love his wife. It's an impulse that should come naturally for him.

Is it second nature for you to love your wife?

As Paul puts it, one day Jesus will present us as His “*glorious Church.*” He’ll share with us a glory that’s not our own. He’ll cloth us in His glory. It’s a shared glory!

The Church is in Christ to the extent of sharing in His accomplishments. We’ll rule and reign with Jesus, not because of our successes, but due to His victory!

Jesus longs for the day when He’ll present the Church before the Father in shared glory. He’ll show off His bride. He’ll sport her on his arm, and brag of her beauty. One day, we the Church, will be a trophy wife.

This is what Paul means in Romans 8:17, “*If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*” In the big scheme of things, Jesus makes sure we not only carry His burdens, but we share in His glory. *And this is also the goal of a loving husband.*

Over the years my wife has been my best friend.

There’ve been times when she was the only person I could lean on. She’s helped me carry the load.

That’s why now, when a small reward comes my way I’m quick to share it with Kathy. She’s shared in the struggles, she should also share in the successes.

Hear ye, hear ye, all husbands!... If you want your wife to “*submit*” or *arrange her life around yours* - then when a little success comes your way make sure you share it with her. Let her in on the spoils of the battle.

She’s helped you fight the wars, and been in on her share of combat. Now share with her your successes!

It reminds me of the account in 1 Samuel 30 of David's victory over the Philistines. The men who guarded the stuff back at camp, received the same share of the spoils as those who had drawn the sword.

David said, "But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." And David made the order an official decree. It was a policy from then on in Israel.

And this should also be every husband's policy.

A faithful wife who guards the stuff deserves the same spoils as the husband who wins the victories.

Husband, why not give a portion of that next bonus check to your wife so she can buy a new dress?...

Or take her with you on the next fun business trip...

She's held down the fort, now that your busy season is over, why not treat her to a night off?

Every husband knows what it means to him when his boss appreciates and rewards his hard work. Well, it means the same to a wife, when her husband acknowledges her dedication and faithfulness.

Husband, do you praise your wife? Do you carry her picture around in your wallet, or on your cell phone?

Are you proud of her in public?

A smart husband compliments his wife regularly!

I'm sure every husband here appreciates his wife and all she does, *but when was the last time you told her?* Part of loving our wives, is to have [a sharing love!](#)

It reminds me of an British fellow who came to America. He attended church one Sunday, and heard a sermon on this topic. He took it to heart, and returned home determined to communicate his appreciation.

While in the United States, he noticed how Americans complimented one another with the phrase, [“You look like a million dollars.”](#) He decided to use that on his wife, but the translation changed the meaning...

He said, [“Honey, you look like a million pounds!”](#) And you can be sure her reaction wasn't what he intended.

There was though one smart British gentleman who was quite skilled in complimenting his wife. England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill was once attending a banquet with his beloved wife, Clementine or Clemmie.

They were sitting at a table with other dignitaries, when each person was asked a question, [“If you could not be who you are, who then would you like to be?”](#)

When it was Churchill's turn, he took Clemmie by the hand, and said, [“If I could not be who I am, I would most like to be Lady Churchill's *second husband.*”](#)

Wow, the ole boy sure knew how to make points with his wife! And husband, you'll win a few points yourself when your love for your wife is [a sharing love.](#)

Husbands, love your wife as Jesus loves the Church!

Love her with a *sacrificing love...* with a *sanctifying love...* with a *sensitive love...* and with a *sharing love.*

Once a husband asked his pastor if it were possible to love his wife too much... The pastor answered, *“Do you love her as much as Christ loves the Church?”*

The man shrugged and replied, *“Of course not!”*

The pastor responded, *“Then love her some more!”*

And I'm sure every husband here today can love his wife a little more! You can *make a sacrifice... or help to sanctify... or be more sensitive... or more sharing...*

Men, you and your wife are posing for a picture that God is trying to paint! Her role is to submit. Your role is to love. *And guess who has the heavier responsibility?*

The buck stops with the buck! You want to be treated as the head of your home, then act like the head and not the tail... Take responsibility. Love like Jesus loves.

Stop complaining and start loving.

Cover your wife and kids with your love.

It's time to retrieve and restore the wedding pictures.

And husband, it falls on you to get the ball rolling. **You** can start! **You** can set a new tone in your family.

The first step is to man up, and take back the leadership, *by assuring your wife of your love for her!*