

“Husband, Cherish Your Wife!”

Ephesians 5:28-33

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October 21, 2007

*“²⁸husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies...²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** [feeds, NIV] and **cherishes** [cares, NIV] it, just as Christ also does the Church”*

I. Husbands are to nurture their wives:

A. By providing for her practical needs.

“**nourish**”—the Greek verb Paul uses is *ektrephei*; a) this word is used 19 times in the OT (LXX) and almost always in reference to “rearing,” “bringing up children,” or even “to nurse a child” with the emphasis on providing for all their needs (2 Kings 10:6; Isaiah 23:4, 49:21; Hosea 9:12); b) this word is used only twice in the NT, here and in Ephesians 6:4 where it refers to fathers who rear their children...a parent who nurtures a child—taking care of the basic needs to live a growing, healthy life

1. Suggested translations: “nurture, care for, provide, feed, nourish.”
2. The husband is to be the provider.
3. Give his wife the necessary resources (money, food, transportation, clothes, rest, **tools**...to do her job to the glory of God) .
4. Don’t deprive or neglect her (time...quality time).

“if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

B. As you nurture your own body.

“as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes... it” (Ephesians 5:28-29)

“the two shall become one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31)

1. Naturally.
2. Habitually.
3. Unconditionally.
4. Fastidiously.

C. As Christ does the Church (5:29, 32).

II. Husbands are to show tender affection to their wives:

A. By meeting her emotional/physical/romantic needs.

“**cherish**”—Paul uses the verb *thalpo*, which means “to heat; to warm” and so can be translated “to comfort, cherish, warm”; a) in the OT (LXX) it is used in Deuteronomy 22:6 of a mother bird sitting on her eggs; in 1 Kings 1:2 where king David’s servants are trying to keep him warm in his bed in his old age; in Job 39:14 of a mother stork who lays her eggs in warm sand; and in 1 Kings 1:4 of the young woman cared for (nursed) the elderly King David; b) in the NT this word is used only here and in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, where it describes Paul’s warm and tender affection he gave to the church:

*“we were gentle among you like a mother **caring** for her little children” NIV*

*“as a nursing mother **cherishes** her own children” NKJV*

So to “cherish” is to give tender affection, warmth, comfort, protection, and security.

B. Verbally.

*“husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way”
(1 Peter 3:7)*

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger” (Ephesians 4:31)

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh words stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1)

“An anxious hearts weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (Proverbs 12:25)

*“encourage one another and build each other up”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

“If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Galatians 5:15)

*“How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!...All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you”
(Song of Solomon 4:1, 7)*

C. Physically.

“enjoy life with your wife whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in

which you have labored under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

“rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving doe, a graceful deer...” (Proverbs 5:18 ff.)

“there is a time to embrace” (Ecclesiastes 3:5)

“And it came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah” (Genesis 26:8)

“May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine” (Song of Solomon 1:2)

“His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me” (Song of Solomon 2:6)

“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband” (1 Corinthians 7:3)

D. Protect your friendship from the destructive ‘little foxes.’

“Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom” (Song of Solomon 2:15)

“be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26)

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you” (Colossians 3:12-13)

III. Paul’s Summary:

A. Husband, love your wife!

“each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself” (Ephesians 5:33a)

B. Wife, revere your husband!

“the wife must fear her husband” (Ephesians 5:33b)

“fear”—the verb in 5:33 is from *phobeo*, from which we get our English word “phobia” which means “fear”; it is the same word used in Ephesians 5:21 where Paul said, “be

subject to one another in the fear of Christ”; frequently in the Bible there are positive examples of “fear”—Proverbs 1:7 says true believers are to “fear” the LORD; unfortunately the English language has almost no positive nuances of the word “fear”; the biblical usages of *phobeo* are best translated as “fear” or “reverence”—“respect” does not do it justice.

IV. Conclusion:

A. Husbands and wives are sinners.

B. Principles for godly marriage are not natural nor do they come from common sense.

C. A healthy marriage is dependent upon God’s model (as revealed exclusively through the Bible) and God’s mercy (that comes exclusively through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the resultant indwelling of the Holy Spirit).

D. God’s solution is not complicated, but it is specific.

E. The wife’s submission (actions) and fear (attitude) are not dependent or conditioned upon the husband’s response or behavior of Christ-like love.

F. The husband’s duty to love is not dependent or conditioned upon the wife’s submissive, respectful attitude.

G. Regardless of how your spouse acts or thinks, you should do the right thing—because it pleases God.

H. When the wife submits routinely and the husband loves routinely, that marriage will be blessed by God and will prove to be a fulfilling relationship.

I. Christian marriage is unique because it is a living, earthly, transitory metaphor of a greater heavenly, eternal reality—Christ’s marriage to His Church.