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**C0517 -- Apr. 27, 2005 – Ephesians 5:28-33 – Husbands, Love Your Wives**

Last week we covered the doctrine of Christ's love for the Church. Christ's love for the Church is used by Paul as an illustration of how husbands are to love their wives. When a husband realizes the depth of love Christ had for the Church he is able to apply that depth of love toward his wife. If Christ sacrificially loved those who actually hated him, how much easier is it for a husband to love their own wife who does not hate him? In western culture both the husband and the wife fall in love and choose to marry one another. This system should make it easy for a husband to love his wife. In other cultures marriages are arranged. The two do not necessarily fall in love and choose to marry one another. Either type of marriages is taken into account in this passage. For even a man who is arranged to marry a woman has the example of Christ sacrificial love for those who hated him. Even if his arranged woman did hate him he has the responsibility to love her as Christ loved the Church.

Verses 25-27 can be summarized as follows. Present middle imperative for **husbands to love your wives**, the manner of which is described next **just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her**. The verb **loved** is aorist tense pointing to the cross and the verb **gave** is also aorist tense pointing back to the cross. On the cross Jesus Christ **loved the church and gave Himself up for her**. This is the sole passage where Christ is said to love the church. Verse 26 we have the main verb *hagiazete* **sanctify** which means to set apart. This is an aorist subjunctive giving the first of three goals of Christ's love for the church. The *first* goal is to sanctify her or set her apart. In the Book of Ephesians the Church is being set apart to be "a dwelling of God the Spirit" (Eph 2:22). The Holy Spirit because He is Holy must have a holy and blameless dwelling place. So, the church must be sanctified. The broader scriptural purpose of Christ's sanctifying His body is that she might become His bride. The way in which Christ sanctifies the church is described as **having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**. Two elements here; **having cleansed** is a aorist participle which logically precedes the action of the main verb **sanctify** but occurs simultaneously. The cleansing therefore occurred at the cross and by being **washed**

in connection with the *rhema*, the preached **word** of God. This leads to the second goal of Christ's love in v 27, **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory**. This refers to the future presentation of the body of Christ to the head of the body, Christ, **in all her glory**. This will be a future presentation of all believers from Pentecost till the pre-Trib Rapture. Third, we have the final condition of the church's glory described negatively and positively in 27b. **having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing** is the negative **but that she would be holy and blameless** is the positive. The completed body of Christ will have no **bodily blemish or wrinkles** such as accompany old age for every member will be in a perfect resurrection body. Morally **she will be holy and blameless**.

Application of this doctrine of Christ's love for the Church is that the **husband ought to love his own wife** as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. This means unconditionally giving himself to her with the goal of enabling her to grow and develop spiritually and physically.

### **Christ**

loved Church  
 gave Himself for her  
3 goals  
 to sanctify her  
 having cleansed her  
 will present Church  
final condition  
 removal of sin  
 addition of righteousness

### **Husbands**

love wives  
 give your whole being to her  
3 goals  
 to set her apart as unique  
 to enable her to develop femininity  
 to make her inner beauty presentable  
final condition  
 removal of domineering masculinity  
 addition of servant femininity

Husbands, your goal is to beautify your wives. Most men marry a woman because she is beautiful on the outside but the goal of a husband is to help beautify his wife inside; to help make her presentable with an inner beauty of character that does not grow old or fade away but an inner adornment that lasts forever.

adv 3PPAI conj art NPM PAInf art  
 GPMrefpro APF adv art  
*Greek Text 5:28 outos ophelousin [kai] oi andres agapan tas eauton gunaikas os ta  
 GPN ref pro APN art PAPart NPM art GSM ASF ASM 3SPAI  
 eauton somata. ho agapon ten eautou gunaika eauton agapa*

**Translation 5:28 So ought also the husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.**

**So**, (*outos*) or **In this way** a husband ought to love his own wife. In what way? In the way we just described in 25b-27. Paul is making the application of the doctrine of Christ's love.

The text says we **ought** to love them. The word **ought** means you have an "obligation". You are "obligated" to love your own wife. Notice, you are obligated to love your **own wife**, not any one else's wife. She is your unique possession. Treat her like she is. She is not a "thing" to be disposed of. You can get another car, you can get another job, you can get another hobby, but you can't get another wife like your wife. She is a unique possession and she should be uniquely loved. You should love her even above your children (crucial point). Christ's love for the Church extends particularly and uniquely only to the Church. Therefore, husbands, you are obligated to love your wives in a totally unique manner.

How much should we love our wives? Paul says **husbands** are obligated to **love their own wives as their own bodies**. The command is not to love yourself. The command is to love your wife **as** you love your own body. Love for your own body comes naturally. It is a natural function to protect and nurture our own bodies. We do not even consider whether we love our own bodies, we naturally do so. In the same way we ought to love our wives. Loving your wife ought to come naturally. We should not have to wonder whether we love our wives or not but we should simply love them wonderfully. Nor should we have to consider whether we love our wives or not but we should love them considerately. Lastly, we should not have to think to ourselves whether we love our wives or not but we should love them thoughtfully. Men, loving your wife should be something that is as natural as loving your own body.

By way of explanation Paul says, **He who loves his own wife loves himself**. This is to explain what it means to love one's wife as his own body. It describes the extent of the love. Of course, the husband is the head of the wife and, in this sense, the wife is his body. So, husbands ought to love their wives who are, as it were, their own bodies.

*Greek Text 5:29 Oudeis gar pote ten eautou sarka emisesen alla ektrepei kai thalpei auten, kathos kai o Christos ten ekklesian,*

**Translation 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,**

Verse 29 gives an illustration of how we love our own bodies. **flesh** (*sarx*) is used here as a synonym for the **body** (*soma*). It is a proverbial or general truth that **no one ever hated his own flesh**. Obviously this is a general truth that applies to all people and not just

husbands. Instead of hating one's own flesh a husband **nourishes and cherishes it**. Two important words here; first, **nourishes** comes from the Greek word *ektrepho* and means "to raise from childhood, to rear". Therefore, to **nourish** the body means to care for it so that it develops. This comes quite naturally. The second word **cherishes** is from the Greek word *thalpo* and should be translated "tenderly cares for it" rather than "cherishes it". The word literally means "to heat" but it can also mean "to care for" as a nurse or mother takes care of her own children. Both of these words are in the present tense meaning that husbands continually **nourish and tenderly care for** their bodies. This is the way husbands should love their wives. It should be natural for a husband to continually **nourish and tenderly care for** his wife as he cares for his **own flesh**.

The illustration of this comes next where Paul uses Christ and the Church once again to illustrate his point. **just as Christ does the church**. It is a natural thing for Christ to not hate His body, the church, but to nourish and tenderly care for it. Likewise, it is a natural thing for a husband not to hate his own flesh, but to nourish and tenderly care for it. Even though the Church is full of imperfections Christ nurtures and tenderly cares for His body. Christ did not found the church in order to leave her all alone and stranded, but instead He founded her to nurse her, gives her warmth of love and His power so that she can live victoriously in the world! So husbands should not marry their wives and then leave them stranded, all alone but should nourish them, tenderly care for them, warmly love them, and sustain them so they are enabled to develop and live as victorious Christian wives.

Why does Christ love the church?

*Greek Text 5:30 hoti mele esmen tou somatos autou], ek tes sarkos autou kai ek ton osteon autou].*

**Translation 5:30 because we are members of His body[, out of his flesh and out of his bones].**

Verse 30 should begin **because** rather than **for** because this is a causal *hoti* clause. Paul is giving the reason Christ loves the church. The reason Christ loves the church is **because we are members of His body**. Here Paul personalizes the truth by shifting from the universal church to the individual **members** that make up the universal church. The word **members** (*melos*) was used in 4:25. If you recall this word has reference to the parts of an organism, such as hands, legs, eyes, etc...These parts are never independent from one another but are interdependent on one another. These parts can't work independent of one another. Whenever Paul speaks of the **members** of the Church he never talks about them

as if they are a corporation but as if they are an organism, a living unit. The body of Christ is a close-knit group of members dependent upon one another and attached to Christ.

Additionally, although the NASB leaves off the longer and more difficult reading, it should be accepted (as in the KJV). There is an additional description of the members of **His body** at the end of v. 30. The whole verse should read **because we are members of His body, out of his flesh and out of his bones**]. It is difficult to explain why it would have been omitted (unless by *homoeoteleuton* – a scribe skipping a line because of similar beginnings *autou...autou*). But its inclusion makes more sense out of the argument. Christ nourishes and cares for the church **because we are members of His body, out of his flesh and out of his bones**. A **body** is composed of **flesh and bones** and this fits really well in the context since the next verse is a quotation from Gen 2:24. Go ahead and turn to Gen 2:23-24. What has just happened in Gen 2:21ff? Creation of woman out of man. What does the man say in verse 23? **Now this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh**. So, this additional phrase in Ephesians 5:30 is an allusion to Gen 2:23 where man said, “This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”.

“The Jews have a tradition that Adam was created double-sexed, and that the two sexes were afterwards separated.”<sup>i</sup>

Woman was *physically* derived from man and the Church is *spiritually* derived from Christ. Therefore, in a spiritual sense, each member of Christ’s body is **out of his flesh and out of his bones**.

Hopkins said, “Man includes woman. Creation of *a* man without a woman would not have been the creation of man. Adam called her name Eve but God called their name Adam.”<sup>ii</sup>

In the same way “*the Christ* includes the Church. Creation of *a* Christ without a Church would not have been the creation of *the Christ*. Christ called her name the Church but God called their name *the Christ*. Now there are three entities scripturally; Christ, the Church, and the Christ. See below on “the two become one flesh.

Stevens said, “In the natural relations of the sexes there is a certain reciprocal dependence, since it is not only true that woman was made from man, but that man is born of woman (1 Cor 11:11, 12),”<sup>iii</sup>

In the spiritual relations of Christ and His church there is a certain reciprocal dependence, since it is not only true that the Church originated from Christ, but that Christ was born of a woman.

Christ nourishes us and tenderly cares for us because we are members of His body and spiritually we are depicted as being derived from his flesh and bones.

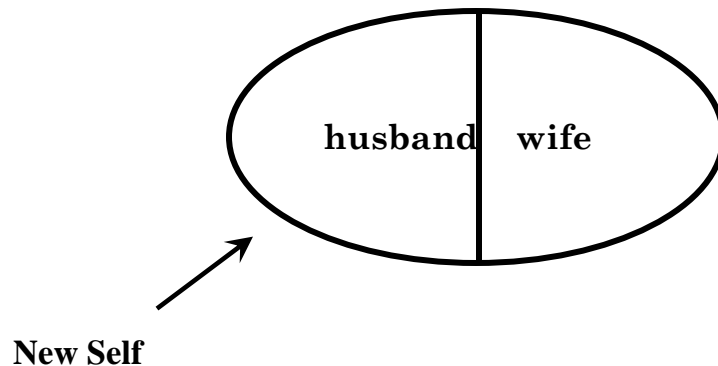
*Greek Text 5:31 anti toutou katalepsei anthropos [ton] patera kai [ten] metera kai proskollethesetai pros ten gunaika autou, kai esontai ou duo eis sarka mian.*

**Translation 5:31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**

Verse 31 is a quotation from Gen 2:24 without any introductory formula. It is most similar to the LXX translation with only two minor differences. First of all, this verse reviews the principle that a man must leave his father and mother if he is to ever be fully responsible under the Lord (leave and cleave). Men who remain at home and mooch off their parents never develop into leadership roles and never develop responsibility.

Secondly, however, Paul is quoting Gen 2:24 to reinforce the idea that a husband is to love his wife because the two are **ONE FLESH** and no one ever hated his own flesh but **nourishes it** and **cares for it**. The command is for a **man** to **leave his father and mother and...be joined to his wife**. It is in the future tense because Adam had no earthly father and mother so he had none to leave. But in the future every person would have a **father and mother** and therefore he **shall leave** them and **be joined to his wife and become one flesh**. The word **JOINED** comes from *kollao* and means “to glue or cement together”. This is more permanent than nailing a couple of boards together. These two are put together in an inseparable union (like superglue). This leaving and cleaving includes the idea of sexual intercourse, a unique act that bonds the husband and wife in a way unlike any the man had with his parents (1 Cor 6:16). But this is more than a physical union. In fact, sexual intercourse is more than a physical union. It is also a spiritual union. This is why sexual intercourse causes such strong bonds between people either in or outside of marriage. The problem with sex outside of marriage is that the bond that is formed can never be sustained outside of the form of marriage. God created marriage so there would be the proper form in which sex could be enjoyed freely. When used outside of the form of marriage it causes jealousy, fear, anger, guilt, disruption of normal behavior, emotional turmoil, as well as the expectations and shape of a person which hinders future enjoyment of sex with the right mate.

Lastly, the **TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH**. Literally, “two into one flesh”. “The man and the woman are two independent entities before they marry. When they marry the husband is to leave his father and mother...and they shall be glued or cemented to each other. It can be compared to two objects that have been glued together, each maintaining its distinctive features. It is not the same as an alloy, an admixture of metals, because in that case the distinctiveness of each person would be lost.”<sup>iv</sup> Instead, “Each personality is enlarged by the inclusion of the other, ideally effecting the perfect blending of two separate lives into one. Continuity with the old personality is not broken, but the radical transformation resulting from the intimate personal encounter creates a new self.”<sup>v</sup> Because of this union a husband is obligated to nourish and tenderly care for his wife.



*Greek Text 5:32 to musterion touto mega estin, ego de lego eis Christon kai eis ten ekklesian.*

**Translation 5:32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.**

Verse 32 explains verse 31. Paul says, with reference to the husband and wife...**this mystery is great**. What does Paul mean it was a **mystery**? The word **mystery** (*musterion*) was first used in 1:9 where we concluded that a **mystery** was something “previously unknown but now revealed”. **mysterics** were unknowable because unrevealed. No amount of study or investigation into known facts could have brought to light a **mystery**. God had to bring a **mystery** to light by revelation before it to be known. Once revealed it is comprehensible by all believers (Eph 3:18). It is the opposite of the Greek word *apokalupsis* which means “to reveal” (Rev 1:1). The word **mystery** was also used in 3:3, 4, 9, here and it will be used one more time in 6:9. When we were in chapter 3:3-9 we covered the 12 mysteries of the NT. There are three mysteries in Ephesians

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Content</b>
1:9	“God Will Unite All Things and Restore the Whole Creation Under One Head”
3:3-9	“Believing Jews and Gentiles are Co-Equals in One New Body, the Church”
5:32	“Union of Christ and the Church”
6:19 <sup>vi</sup>	“Believing Jews and Gentiles are Co-Equals in One New Body, the Church”

The **mystery** here is the “spiritual union of Christ and the Church. Paul already used the physical metaphor of Adam and Eve from Gen 2:24 to describe this spiritual union. Now Paul explicitly states it. Now, Christ has become the model for how the husband is to love and the church has become a model for how the wife is to submit! Thus, the union between husband and wife as “one flesh” is a model for the union of Christ and the church.

Paul explicitly lays out the **mystery** in the last phrase of v. 32 where he says, **but I speak with reference to Christ and the church**. Paul has been using the physical analogy of husband and wife to describe the spiritual union of Christ and the church.

Paul (*eis* + accusatives)

↓  
Husband-Wife

↓  
Christ-Church

The husband-wife relationship has been used as a physical tool to illustrate this spiritual union that Christ has with the church. “Thus, Gen 2:24 is used in a two pronged way...the Church is, on the one hand, an independent person, the object of Christ’s love, and, on the other hand, so closely connected with Him, the Head, the Saviour, that together they constitute a unity.”<sup>vii</sup>

***Greek Text 5:33 plen kai humeis oi kath ena, ekastos ten eautou gunaika outos agapato os eauton, he de gune hina phobetai ton andra.***



**Translation 5:33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.**

Lastly, Paul summarizes our responsibilities in 5:33. His emphasis in this verse is on singular responsibility. Notice how in 5:22 that he addressed wives in the plural and in v. 25 he addresses husbands in the plural. Now he shifts and addresses each husband and wife individually. The word **nevertheless** is used to *conclude* a discussion and *emphasize* the essential point of the whole section. The essential point is that **each husband should love his own wife as himself and each wife must fear her husband**. No one is exempt! The husband is too intensely and continuously *agapao* his own wife **as** being **himself**! He loves her because he is united to her and has become “one flesh”. It would be stupid and totally unnatural to not love one’s own flesh. This passage is totally unique in that it required Christ’s sacrificial love on the cross to serve as an illustration. Before this husbands had the creation model (Matt 19) but now husbands have the Christ-church model (Eph 5). This is why this is the first and only commandment anywhere in the world for the husband to love (*agapao*) his wife.

Lastly, the wife’s responsibility is not reviewed but given more detail. Earlier she was commanded to submit to her husband as to the Lord (5:23). Now she is supposed to **fear her husband**. The word should not be translated **respect**, although the idea of **respect** is included it is more than that. The word is *phobeo* and was used in 5:21 of the **fear of Christ**. It has been popular in recent times to simply say that *phobeo* means “reverence or respect” but this lessens the real intent of the word. Kittel in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* say that the idea of “respect” is too mild a concept. It is no wonder that the true intention of this word in Paul’s day is not accepted in ours. People in our day have a problem with “respect”, but the idea of “fear” is outlandish. But this should not be a hard saying for those who think. There are different kinds of fear. There is the fear of one who has broken the law and there is the fear of the Lord. These are not the same kinds of fear. All believers are called to fear the Lord (5:21) but this is not fearing God as if He were some kind of bogeyman. Instead it means to be in awe of Him. Perhaps a word like “apprehension” or “trepidation” without the connotation of evil best fits the way a wife is to **fear** her husband. This command **to fear** fits under the more general heading of **submission** found in 5:22. One author says, “it is fitting for a wife to fear, but not as a slave”. It could not be so because the husband is commanded to sacrificially love her.

Lastly, a wife’s submission, obedience, and fear is not conditioned upon whether her husband is loving her or not. Likewise, a husband’s love for his wife is not conditioned upon whether his wife is submitting to him or not. Both parties are to fulfill their responsibilities

**as to the Lord.** It is a matter of obedience to Christ's commandments and to accomplish obedience you must choose to be filled by the Spirit (5:18). As a spouse you should focus on truly having concern for your mate and fulfilling your role as outlined in scripture. The primary goal of marriage is not to please yourself but to trust the Lord who created man, divided him into male and female and re-married them. God knows all about men and women and we need to go to no other source to get advice (sufficiency of Scripture). What we really need to know to be successful in marriage is the relationship and responsibilities of Christ and the church. It is this doctrine that is indispensable to successful marriages and opens the door for selfless unconditional love, submission, obedience, and fear. When these ideals are met everyone benefits; the individuals, the marriage, the family, and society at large. This is because the 2<sup>nd</sup> DI: Marriage is an absolute social structure. If you try to bend it or re-define it in any aspect there are disastrous consequences. The wisest course is to fulfill our roles. Do not be unwise but wise and do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph 5:15-17).

Matthew Henry said, "Not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled on by him; but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be beloved."<sup>viii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Strong, A.H., *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1970), 526.

<sup>ii</sup> Strong, A.H., *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1970), 525.

<sup>iii</sup> Strong, A.H., *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1970), 525.

<sup>iv</sup> Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 775.

<sup>v</sup> Richard Batey quoted by Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 775).

<sup>vi</sup> "mystery of the gospel". Not the *gospel* per se but the content of belief that united believing Jews and Gentiles in one new body, the Church.

<sup>vii</sup> Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 781.

<sup>viii</sup> Strong, A.H., *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1970), 525.

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