

Internet Outline

Love that Last

Ephesians 5:22-27

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A. It's Sacrificial (Vs. 25-26):

1. Husbands, love your wives – Husbands are commanded to continuously self-sacrificially, from the heart, based on the influence of the Holy Spirit, to be compassionate towards their wives.
 - a) The love referred to here is Christian love and not primarily romantic love; most marriages in the ancient world were arranged and not the result of erotic attraction. The reference to the husband's love follows surprisingly on AE's instruction to the wife to subordinate herself to her husband; in accordance with the contemporary patriarchal nature of society, the husband might have been expected to be told to instruct, advise and control his wife, and if he were told to love her it would be sexual love that would have been in view. Husbands are rarely enjoined in Jewish literature to love their wives (in *Ps-Phoc* 195–7 *στέργω* is used and not *ἀγαπάω*; see also *b Yeb* 62b). *ἀγάπη* is not used in Hellenistic literature in relation to households.¹
 - b) The obligations are not merely one-sided. The husband's responsibility is just as binding as that of the wife. This is not a reference to normal marital love, which would not need to be commanded, but to that volitional love which stems from God and resembles his own love. In contrast to normal sexual desire, which by its nature is self-seeking, this love is unselfish.²
 - c) The word "love" (*agapaō*) means seeking the highest good for another person (cf. 2:4). This is an unselfish love as seen in Christ's sacrificial death in which He gave Himself up for the church (cf. 5:2; John 10:11, 15, 17–18; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:25; Heb. 9:14). A wife's submission in no way hints that a husband may lord it over his spouse, as a despot commanding a slave. The "submit-love" relationship is a beautiful mixture of harmonious partnership in marriage.³

¹ Best, E. (1998). *A critical and exegetical commentary on Ephesians* (p. 540). Edinburgh: T&T Clark International.

² Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Eph 5:25). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 641). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2. Husbands, love your wives – As a husband leads with a deep commitment to execute God’s agenda, he must do so in a compassionate, self-sacrificial manner for this wife and family.
 - a) As also Christ loved the church. While human husbands can never attain the degree of love Christ manifested, yet they are exhorted to have the same kind of love, which is demonstrated in the clause that follows, and gave himself for it.⁴
 - b) The word for “love” here is *agapoō* (ἀγαπῶ), referring to the love that God is (I John 4:8), that God showed at Calvary (John 3:16), and the love that the Holy Spirit produces in the heart of the yielded believer (Gal. 5:22). This is a self-sacrificial love, a love that impels the one loving to give himself in self-sacrifice for the well-being of the one who is loved. The husband has three other kinds of love for his wife, a love of passion (*erōs* (ἐρως)), a love of complacency and satisfaction (*stergō* (στεργῶ)), and a fondness or affection (*phileō* (φιλεῶ)). All these are saturated with the *agapaō* (ἀγαπῶ) love of the Spirit-filled husband, purified and made heavenly in character.⁵

3. Just as Christ love the church - ‘Just as’ defines the structure by the wife, a husband should compassionately and affectionately care for his wife.
 - a) The kind of leadership the husband should exert is not defined by the prevailing cultural trends, but by the example of Christ himself. Above all the husband’s leadership is governed by a self-sacrificial love. This admonition to the men flew in the face of many heavy-handed and demeaning attitudes of men toward their wives in antiquity—both in Judaism and in Greco-Roman culture (see “Josephus and Philo on Marriage” and “Aemilius Paulus and Papiria”).⁶
 - b) Elsewhere in the letter, love has been seen as an essential quality in Christian living (cf. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15, 16). Significantly, the call to all to loving sacrifice for one another in 5:1, 2 takes a similar form to that directed to husbands here in 5:25, since in both places the analogy with Christ’s own self-sacrificing love provides the warrant for the appeal. The exhortation to sacrifice one’s own interests for the welfare of others, which is so necessary for the harmony of the community, now finds a more specific application in the husband’s role in contributing to marital harmony. Husbands are asked to exercise the self-giving love that has as its goal only their wives’ good and that will care for their wives without the expectation of reward. Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, p. 374). Word, Incorporated.⁷

⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Eph 5:25). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁵ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, p. 131). Eerdmans.

⁶ Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon*. (Vol. 3, p. 333). Zondervan.

⁷ Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, p. 374). Word, Incorporated.

4. Just as Christ love the church - Just as Christ defines how a husband leads his wife in the same manner, Christ defines how a husband decisively, on his own initiative, whether the wife loves him back, he must demonstrate Holy Spirit-inspired care and compassion, as defined in verses 28-29, towards his wife.
 - a) Husbands are to have a Christ-like passion to bring their wives into deeper purity and holiness before God. Christ's sacrificial love for the church is set forth as the pattern for the husband's love for his wife. Husbands ought to consider whether they are loving their wives according to this pattern. Paul quoted Genesis 2:24, the scriptural basis for marriage (5:31). There is a symbolic purpose in marriage (5:32). The union is designed to be a reflection of the relationship between Christ and his church.⁸
5. Gave, delivered - In the manner that Christ willingly surrendered to His Father's will, so must the husband relinquish all of his rights to accomplish God's will as a husband. This is a challenge for any man, and it is why Christ instructs the wife to be a helper and to surrender her will to Christ as her Lord.
 - a) Not only the expression of our Lord's love, but also an example of how the husband ought to devote himself to his wife's good. To give oneself up to death for the beloved is a more extreme expression of devotion that the wife is called on to make.
6. Sanctify – We must consecrate (set aside from reacting the way the world will – to be the opposite than the common) ourselves to Christ in our hearts as true believers due to our commitment to our faith in the face of the world - To venerate and adore Christ, thus dispelling all fear of man.
 - a) One thing is clear: the Lord Jesus died to bring forgiveness and affect a new life of holiness in the church, which is His "bride." A study of the concepts of washing, of water and of the Word should include reference to Jn. 3:5; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pe. 1:23.
7. Washing with water – When the husband is committed to speaking the truth in love (4:15), protect his family from false doctrine (4:14), preserve the family from using common sense (4:17), speak truth, not falsehood (4:25), and walk wisely based on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (5:15-18) the husband, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, preserves God's holiness in his home and, therefore, purifies his wife as he continues to mature like Christ (1 John 1:5-7). This process keeps the filth out of the marriage as described in chapter 5:3-14. Conversations are healthier and problem-solving are growing experiences of learning God's wisdom which blesses the children.

⁸ Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 596). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- a) Just as water washes the body, so the Word of God washes the heart (cf. Ezk 36:27).⁹
 - b) This “washing” probably alludes figuratively to the bride’s prenuptial washing (of course, washing was natural before any occasion on which one wished to impress another positively). After this washing the bride was perfumed, anointed and arrayed in wedding clothes. The betrothal ceremony in Judaism also came to be called “the sanctification of the bride,” setting her apart for her husband. The “word” naturally refers to the saving gospel of Christ (1:13).¹⁰
 - c) Indeed, the language of “the washing with water” is likely to have as a secondary connotation the notion of the bridal bath. This would reflect both Jewish marital customs with their prenuptial bath and the marital imagery of Ezek 16:8–14 which stands behind this passage. In Ezek 16:9 Yahweh, in entering his marriage covenant with Jerusalem, is said to have bathed her with water and washed off the blood from her. (Among those who support an allusion to the bridal bath here are Meyer, 295, 298; Abbott, 168–69; O. Casel, “Die Taufe als Brautbad der Kirche,” *Jahrbuch für Liturgie und Wissenschaft* 5 [1925] 144–47; Dunn, *Baptism*, 162–63; Bruce, *Epistles*, 387; Halter, *Taufe*, 282.)¹¹
8. He might present – When a husband comes before God, he needs to prove that what God called him to be as a husband was achieved; his wife ‘holy and faultless in God’s presence’ (Colossians 1:22). This is done in this manner:
- a) In all her glory – God would view wives whose husbands were faithful to their roles as splendid, in the fullest expression Christ intended for them.
 - b) Having no spot or wrinkle – These splendid wives have no stains and are flawless in Christ’s sight.
 - The presentation in view, which is given here as the *final* object of Christ’s surrendering of Himself to death, and (by use of the aorist) as a single definite act, cannot be anything done in the world that now is, but must be referred to the future consummation, the event of the Parousia (the Rapture). The words. “not having spot or wrinkle,” are an explanation on the negative side of what is meant in the word “glorious.” The bride is to be without moral blemish.¹²
 - c) She should be holy and blameless - The goal for every husband who chooses to become Christ in his home is no different than for Christ. He is to present his wife as consecrated to God, grown into all the church needs to be no longer controlled by evil desires, drunk with the Spirit (5:15-18), faultless in character before God.

⁹ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Eph 5:26). Moody Press.

¹⁰ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Eph 5:26). InterVarsity Press.

¹¹ Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, pp. 375–376). Word, Incorporated.

¹² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 132–133). Eerdmans.

- d) She should be holy and blameless - Most men view this verse as a steep climb. This would probably take place because they view who their wives are first rather what Christ is calling them to be. Because we all are provided a free will no husband can make his wife become the church. The goal is set for Christ as well. The results are first based on who we choose to become for Christ sake and our families not first how we can best present our wives.
9. What the husband is charged to do occurs when, with his commitment to be Christ, he serves his wife as Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit serves her spiritual growth. Here is what Christ, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit is doing to build both people up:
- a) Paul has told us that we are called to be holy and blameless (1:4).
 - b) We have been chosen in accordance with his plan, purpose and will (1:11).
 - c) We are no longer to live in disobedience (2:1-8) because we have been saved by grace (2:8), and we are Christ workmanship (2:10).
 - d) We are provided an inheritance as a result of Christ's death and resurrection, which is the Holy Spirit (1:13-14) who dwells in our inner being (3:16). As a result, we should be drunk with the Spirit (5:18), who helps us to submit to one another (5:21).
 - e) We are being built into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21-22).
 - f) Because we marry a Christian, we have unity in Christ because we are tied to one Spirit, one hope (2:18; 4:3-6), and one peace (2:15-17).
 - g) Through the pastor's teaching, our service to God and, our edifying of one another, we grow into the fullness of Christ (4:12-16).
 - h) We can experience the love that surpasses all knowledge because the Holy Spirit and Christ dwells in us (3:16-19).
 - i) We are to put off the old man and put on "the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (3:17-24). As a result, we need to watch how long we stay angry (4:26), our conversation (4:29-3; 5:3-7)
 - j) We must walk according to our calling (4:1-2) and imitate God (5:1-2).
 - k) A couple is not in the flesh living based on the old man (4:17-24) so that arguments with abusive language is taking place (5:3-5). They are now in the Spirit walking worthy (4:1-3; 5:1-2).
10. This is how unity is achieved for the home – one mind because it is one faith, one God, one Spirit, one Lord (4:1-7). *"So this because submission for the sake of spiritual growth and fulfilling God's agenda through the family to the world" (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25).*

B. It's Meaningful (vs. 28-30):

1. Ought – So, husbands are morally obligated on a continual basis to love their wives. This is a deposition they must find necessary for their marriages.
 - a) Plutarch says that “control ought to be exercised by the man over the woman, not as the owner has control of a piece of property, but, as the soul controls the body, by entering into her feelings and being knit to her through goodwill” (Moralia: Advice to Bride and Groom 142E LCL). Gurtner, D. M. (2004). Ephesians. In C. A. Evans & C. A. Bubeck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon (First Edition, pp. 562–563). David C Cook.
2. Husbands, love your wives – Husbands owe it to God (Deut. 23:21-23) to continuously self-sacrificially, from the heart (Ephesians 5:1-2), based on the influence of the Holy Spirit to be compassionate towards their wives.
 - a) In verses 28–32 Paul applied the truths given in verses 25–27. As the church is the extension of Christ, so is the wife an “extension” of her husband. (In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, p. 641). Victor Books).
3. Husbands, love your wives – As a husband leads with a deep commitment to execute God’s agenda, he must do so in a compassionate, self-sacrificial manner for his wife and family.
4. Husbands, love your wives – The nature of this love is defined by the manner by which Christ loves the church (vs. 25). He is the head of it (1:22-23), He shapes how it functions (2:20), He executes the Father’s will into the life of the church (loves through faith; 3:17-19), Christ serves the church so that every part of it builds up the other (4:16; the man manages his own so that it functions to glorify God; 1 Timothy 3:4-5) as his wife assist him (1 Timothy 5:9-10).
5. Loves his wife loves himself – When a husband is compassionate, affectionate, and willing to sacrificially care for his wife, the wife who is called to submit to her husband and be the church in the home (living in the fullness of God; 4:13 – serving the Lord’s agenda; 4:13, 16) will, because of her own spiritual growth, love him in the same manner (5:1-2) as Christ love the church.
6. No one ever hated his own flesh – No one normally, once and for all, would ever have a strong dislike or an indifference to his own body.
 - a) As their own bodies Love himself...his own body: The basis for such expressions and for the teaching of these verses is the quotation from Gen. 2:24 as in Eph. 5:31. The husband and wife become “one flesh,” and for the man to love his wife, is to love one who has become part of himself.

- b) Nourishes and cherishes it – Everyone continually seeks to keep themselves fed, their bodies warm, like birds caring for their young, in an effort to take very good care of it continuously.
- a) The language here reflects the loving care of a parent for a child (Eph. 6:4; 1 Thess. 2:7; *T. Naph.* 8.5; *Hermas, Vision* 3.9.1; Deut. 22:6), not in a demeaning way but illustrative of the nature of sincere love and tenderness. Both of these words are used in an ancient papyri marriage contract as the obligations of a husband (Best [1998], 550).¹³
- c) Just as Christ and the church - Just like a husband's continual care and compassion for his wife imitates how Christ loves the church (verse 25), and so must a husband nourish and cherish his wife.
- d) Just as Christ and the church - Christ our Savior sacrificed His body (verse 23) for the church so must a husband towards his wife (Philippians 2:1-5).
- e) We are members of His body – We continually possess the same characteristics as Christ (3:16-19; 4:13), and the church because we are all apart of His church as described in chapter 4:4-7.
- a) Although Greek and Roman moralists sometimes alluded to the unity of husband and wife, the image was especially prominent in Judaism, which shared Paul's and Jesus' dependence on Genesis 2:24, mentioned explicitly in Ephesians 5:31. The head-body analogy of 5:23 here becomes an image of unity rather than one of authority.¹⁴
- f) We are members of His body – Caring for one's wife is to care for a brother and sister in Christ. We are all one (4:4-7) and will remain together forever so we must continually care one for the other.

¹³ Gurtner, D. M. (2004). [Ephesians](#). In C. A. Evans & C. A. Bubeck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon* (First Edition, p. 563). David C Cook.

¹⁴ Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Eph 5:28–32). InterVarsity Press.