

# Husband and Wife in Christian Marriage

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, we confess that sometimes we are afraid of your word, and we don't maybe even want to acknowledge it, but we're afraid of it.

And sometimes, Father, we take great delight, glee, in your word because we think it gives us powers that it doesn't. Because we want power, we want to be the center.

So, Father, you know the true state of our hearts, and you know the true state of our lives. And we know that you love us, that Jesus is our Savior and Lord for all who put their faith and trust in him.

And so we ask that the Holy Spirit would fall with might and power and deep conviction as we open your word. Father, bring your word to the very center of who we are. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please be seated. Amen. So, one of the things, if you read any book on how to preach or anything like that, one of the things they talk about in preaching is that you have to begin your sermon pretty well right away with something that's going to grab people.

[ 1 : 0 6 ]     Like, within the first minute, you need to do something to grab people's attention and grant them a type of either tension or curiosity to enter into the sermon. And today, all I have to do is this.

And I know I meant it to be funny, but I mean, it's a very serious issue, right, in terms of Canada. All I have to do is say, today, you turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22, and the opening sentence is, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

And instantly, I've got curiosity. Instantly, I've got tension effortlessly right off the bat. So, here's the thing. I mean, we all laughed, and I meant to get a bit of a laugh, but it's very serious.

The fact of the matter is, is that you can just imagine what it would be like if on Monday, if those of you who work somewhere, if you got all your co-workers together and said you'd like to share this text with them, if I was to gather all the people in the coffee shop, and it wouldn't matter if it was a hipster coffee shop, Tim Hortons, sort of the opposite end of hipster, or Starbucks to hipsters, the opposite end of hipster as well, second cup, who goes to second cup, and if you're just to go and gather people up and read this text, there'd be all sorts of tension in the room.

In fact, for many people, for many women in particular, but often for men, there'd be actually a type of physical pain and shock that such a text would be read. Like, there'd be actual shock and maybe pain and fear that such a text would be read.

[ 2 : 4 7 ]     And if they didn't do just the normal Canadian thing, saying whatever and trying to be polite, but if they actually engaged with you, I mean, amongst other things, people would say to me, George, don't you think a text like this is unbelievably dangerous?

Like, don't you think this text will lead to abuse? In fact, some people would say, George, if people believe this text, women will die. In fact, we'll be lucky if all that happens is that they end up in the emergency room, because women will die if you have a text like this and try to get people to believe it.

That it's shocking that in an age when women can be fighters, pilots, and run nations, and run billion, multi-billion dollar corporations, that in an age like that, this, that a text like this would even be read without being read and then being mocked or saying that it should be discarded.

And that's basically how most Canadians and most North Americans would view the text. In fact, probably, especially if I was to do it in a coffee shop where I was familiar, one of the questions would ask me is this.

They'd probably say, George, do you believe this? And it would be like that, do you believe this? Like, surely you don't believe this. And if I said I did, there'd be, whoa, whoa.

[ 4 : 17 ] Right? That's the world we live in. That's the world we live in. So, what are we going to do with all of this? Well, what I'm going to do is I'm going to begin by telling you what many, many Christians in North America do about a text like this.

And they're well-meaning, and I might also, I might in fact be describing some of you here in this room. Well-meaning people, well-meaning Christians, very conscious of how this text is viewed in the world.

And so, how do they do? What they do is they do this. They go, in fact, many people who, many Canadian Christians would even right off the bat say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

Time out, George. You didn't begin the text in the right spot. Like, what on earth are you doing? Like, you should have begun not with verse 22, where it says, wives, submit to your husbands. You should have begun with verse 21, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

And what would happen in many Christian churches, many pulpits, including many evangelical and charismatic churches, is they would do something like this. They would say, well, George, verse 21 is before verse 22.

[ 5 : 24 ] And verse 21 gives the general principle about how Christians are to relate to each other. And the general way that Christians are to relate to each other is that they're to learn how to submit to one another. And so, therefore, that's what governs this text.

That's the big idea, rather than just picking on husbands and wives. And then they would say something like this. They'd say, but because you see what's going on, is there some type of local problem that's going on in Ephesus?

And then they'll begin to tell you the local problem that was going on in Ephesus. And then they'd say, so given that there's this local problem going on in Ephesus, and Paul is giving advice for a very particular problem, therefore what we need to do now here in Ottawa in 2019 is we need to understand that this is the text that everybody has to follow.

And the other text, 22 to 33, is just talking about a local thing which no longer applies. Now, here's the thing. It's very, very well-meaning.

But the problem is there is no local situation in Ephesus like what they're talking about. Like it doesn't exist. I don't want to offend some of you, and some of you might come up and give me some books.

[ 6 : 39 ] And in the books show me how archaeologists say this. But fundamentally, there is no particular situation like this that gets you around the problem of the text. The second thing is that at the level of the original language, and it's shown in most modern Bible translations, the reason that whole new section begins at verse 22 is because verses 15 to 21 is one sentence in Greek.

It's not as if it's a series. In English Bibles, because English doesn't usually work in that way, that you can have such long sentences. So what happens is there's a whole lot of sentences, and they'll make this look like the beginning of a new sentence, and then they'll want to put this.

But at the original language, 15 to 21 is one long sentence. And in fact, actually, I can tell you another thing. Sorry, time out. Geek moment for grammar nerds.

Okay. In that long sentence, the submitting to one another in Christ, it's a third of three participles, and there's a governing noun, and it's verse 18.

So there's the governing noun, and then three instances of what the governing verb, and blah, blah. In other words, 21 is really connected to that sentence, and it's not a brand new sentence that should begin a new paragraph.

[ 8 : 03 ] End of grammar geek moment. The other problem with the well-meaning way to try to get around the text, because you see, really what happens is they use verse 21 to deconstruct or make verses 20.

Another way to put it is they use 21 to deconstruct verses 22 to 33, or a better way to put it is they use verse 21 to make verses 22 to 33 disappear. But the problem is that Paul doesn't make reference to, let's say, something like head coverings, which you might wonder then if it's referring to something a bit more local.

The fact of the matter is that Paul grounds all of his argument in the fact that Jesus died for sinners, that Jesus is Savior and Lord, and the book of Genesis chapter 2, which is in creation.

In other words, things which aren't local but are, in fact, universal and fundamental to the Christian faith. So it's a well-meaning attempt to deal with it, but it's not right. And so for some of you, your answer to all that will be, ouch.

George, you just made the problem worse. You haven't helped the problem at all. You have made it worse. You're saying that this text is something universal that applies to husbands and wives in Ottawa in 2019.

[ 9 : 29 ] So here's my first brief point. And this is going to make you even more worried about me, but I thought I'd get it right out.

I think the Bible's teaching on marriage is wise. This is obviously not the only text on marriage in the Bible. I'm not going to try to pretend it is, but I think this teaching on marriage is very wise when it's properly understood.

And I know there's lots of fear and anxiety around the text, but I think we've got to walk towards it because the teaching is wise. And I hope by your prayers that I can show you that, in fact, it is very wise for Christians to understand and to walk towards.

So let's start walking towards it. Let's get back to our text. So Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 to 24. The way the text is structured is the first three verses talk to wives.

Then I think it's eight verses that talk to husbands. And then there's a concluding verse that talks to husbands and wives together. Maybe it's three and nine and one. I can't remember just off the top.

[ 10 : 39 ] But you can see there's almost three times more time he spends talking to husbands than there will be to wives. But let's look at what it says here. Verse 22, wives, submit to your own husbands.

Another translation is, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior.

Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in all things to their husbands. So you can see my first point that I mentioned a little bit earlier, that the fact the text is going to ground it not in something that we might say, that sounds like it's a bit of a unique issue, but something very, very fundamental.

Christ is the head of the church, that Christ is the savior, that the church, the real church, the invisible church, is his body. It's grounded in something which is not local, but in fact something which is universal.

And the fact of the matter is, is submit is the word in the original language. It's not that we can sort of do around it. It's important now as we started to try to gently look into this text, is that it doesn't say wives submit to men.

[ 11 : 56 ] It doesn't say wives submit to, yeah, it doesn't say wives submit to men. It says wives submit to your own husbands. In other words, this is a text that Louise would have to read, understanding that it's referring to how she relates to me, and not how she relates to other men.

It's just to her own husband. Just as, in a moment, it's a text that will be referring to me in terms of how I relate to my wife, Louise, not to all other women.

But it's still very, very stark and very, very shocking in Canada. In fact, some of you might say, many Canadians would say in the coffee shop that I've actually made it worse.

Once again, there's no out and dodge around the word submit. It says what it says, and it's very stark.

It's a strong exhortation repeated twice. Wives submit to your own husbands. So wives, in verse 24, should submit in all things to their husbands.

[ 12 : 58 ] The text actually makes it worse. Now, it looks as if I've made it worse. But actually, it's only when we actually start to really look at the text that we start to notice that the text, that Paul, that the Bible does something which is unbelievably odd.

And it's such an odd thing that happens. And let's be frank. There is a problem with patriarchy. There is a problem with patriarchy.

It's not an imagined problem. It might not be as extensive as some people would say, but it's a problem. And many times, Christians, especially those who are known as evangelicals, one of the great weaknesses of their thinking is that they talk as if patriarchy is not ever a problem, just as they'll talk as if social class isn't a problem or racism isn't a problem.

They refuse. We refuse to acknowledge that these are real things, real issues, real problems, prejudice, discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, patriarchy.

These are real problems in the world, and they have real impacts on how we read the Bible without realizing it. And sometimes when Christians are defending the Bible, what they don't realize is they're not actually defending the Bible.

[ 14 : 14 ] They're defending patriarchy, and they shouldn't. And they shouldn't. We shouldn't. The Bible is going to do something unbelievably odd.

It's so odd that what happens is we fill in something with a patriarchal perspective that's actually not in the Bible. Look what happens next. So here it is, verse 24.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husband. What happens next? Look at what it says. We'll read all of them, and then I'll point out what's so odd about it.

Husbands, love your wives. Verse 25. Husbands, love your wives. It's just the plural, right? It's not saying that husbands have more than one wife, right?

So, George, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water and the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

[ 15 : 19 ] And notice this big thing. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. It's a way of very powerfully saying that Jesus loves you and me to the point of dying on the cross.

He didn't die on the cross because of something he had done. He didn't do it because it was some type of extreme sport and he wanted to win the gold medal. No, he saw your need and mine, and so out of love for you and me, he comes and dies upon the cross for you and me.

So here's the thing which most of us don't notice. Okay? Normally, this is what we would expect. Louise, submit to George in all things.

George, these are the types of things you should say. These are the types of things you can't say. These are the types of limits you can do. This is the type of way that, you know, these are the benchmarks.

Is any of that there? None. You know what's missing in this text? The man is not given any power to command. Zero.

[ 16 : 28 ] That's what we would expect. Many Christian commentators say, well, it's assumed. And so they fill it in with patriarchy. No. It's not assumed.

How do I know it's not assumed? Well, one of the things is actually a proper use of verse 21. Because in verse 21, right?

It's talking about you're filled with the Holy Spirit and filled in the Holy Spirit. And if you're filled in the Holy Spirit, there's a certain way of talking with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Rejoicing in making melody in your heart in all times.

You know, there's a, I can't remember what the second one is, which is terrible. I should remember it, but I'm on a roll. And then there's a third one, submitting to one another. And does the text there say to other people, okay, George has to submit to everybody.

So everybody else, this is how you can boss George around. It's not there. It's the same word. Why would you assume it's there in verse 25 when you assume it's not there in verse 21?

[ 17 : 31 ] You can't. Well, then people say, well, George, that makes no sense. Exactly. From the world's point of view, which rates everything with power.

It makes no sense. But what does Jesus do? What is the Bible doing? The Bible is not saying this is how power works. So this is how you have to work. No. What does the Bible point us to?

The gospel. How are we to understand marriage? Understanding the gospel. How is a husband to understand how to relate to his wife? Think about the gospel.

How is the wife to understand how to think about her husband? Think about the gospel. Not think about power. Think about the gospel. And so here's the shocking thing.

What you would expect normally if this was written, what, Louise, submit in all things. George, now we're expecting, you're going to say something about command and said, what does Jesus say to me?

[ 18 : 33 ] What does the Bible say? George, love your wife to the point of being willing to die for her. And not just die so she can be left in poverty and sadness.

The point is that you are to understand that God's will for her is that she will be holy and she will be beautiful and she will be whole and she will be complete.

And you are willing to die to your own. You have to be willing. You are exhorted, George, to die to your own will in such a way that this work of God in her will work more and more and more and more and more and more.

And that, George, is your task. Your task, George, is not how to boss her around. Your task, if you choose to accept it, your task, mission impossible reference, sorry, your task is to be willing to die for your wife, die to your own agendas, die to all of these things and be willing to die for her.

Now, I'm going to say a little bit more about it, but I want to show the big point about all of this. So if I lose you for the rest of the sermon, this is the big point.

[ 19 : 51 ] The Bible gives wise exhortations in light of the true nature of love, the true problem of sin, and the enduring truth of the gospel.

That's the way to understand this text. Hopefully I have the time and I'll be able to show you that that's, in fact, what's going on. That the Bible gives wise exhortations, not, it doesn't, the Bible doesn't hit the women.

It's that the, it's giving wise exhortations in light of what all of us know is the true nature of love. It's giving wise exhortations in light of what we all know about the true problem of sin.

And what the world doesn't know, but we know if we're Christians, it's giving wise exhortations in light of the enduring truth of the gospel. And that's what Paul is doing here in chapter 5, verses 22 to 24.

So how do I say this? What is the nature of love? We think about it for a second. When we're in deep love with somebody, the first time when we fall really in love with another person, and that love that we have for another person, it seems like it's reciprocated.

[ 21 : 01 ] I will give an example from the, so I was in love with Louise, and, you know, we go on a date or two, and then finally I get over, invited over to her house for her apartment.

She was sharing an apartment with some other people. I get over, I get invited over for a meal and for tea, and I, we talk, and at the time she lived in an apartment right near James Street in Bronson.

I lived out at Bank and Hunt Club. Those of you in Ottawa, that's a long way away. And we stopped talking at 2.30 in the morning. It was January.

It was minus 25. Buses had stopped. Uber hadn't been invented. Taxis were for rich people. I had to walk home. 2.30 in the morning. Bronson and James to Bank and Hunt Club.

Now let me ask you this question. Did I walk there along those streets thinking, how dare she keep me talking so late? This is terrible.

[ 21 : 59 ] She had no concern for me and my needs that I had to walk for so long in such a... No! I thought I was the luckiest guy in the world.

I thought I was the luckiest guy in the world. Quite a few years ago in this congregation, there was a man who used to come here all the time. And he was a really, really nice guy.

Loved wine. Loved good food. And he was plump. And one day, I come into a meeting with him and he looked a bit flushed.

A bit pink. And I asked him what he'd done. He said, I just came from jogging. I said, you went jogging? That's bad people skills, by the way.

I shouldn't have said, you went jogging? I should have said, way to go! Or something like that. But I lost it. Because if you were to pick everybody in the church as to who's going to go for a jog, he would have been like right close to the bottom of the list.

[ 23 : 01 ] Okay? Well, how come you went jogging? There was a girl, a young woman. And he liked her. She went jogging.

He said, you want to go jogging? And he did. That ended up not working out, that relationship.

But the point is this. Obviously, with Louise and me, with many, many adventures, eventually it did work out. But this poor fellow, it did not work out. And they never got together.

But here's the point. What happens when you're really in love with another person and you know that they're in love with you? What happens? You're willing to sacrifice. The first thing about it, when you're in love, you feel the most yourself that you've ever felt in your life.

Right? When you're in love, you feel like yourself. You feel powerful. You have a great identity. You feel confident. And you also, what will you do? You put yourself second so that you can do their other person's interest.

[ 24 : 06 ] You're willing to sacrifice for them. Isn't that the true nature of love? What else happens? We're going to see this in a moment.

Like, you talk to somebody, you know, talk to a person and they've had a great marriage and their husband dies or they've had a great marriage and it's come, where one person really loves the other person that's come to an end through divorce or some other thing like that.

And for the person who really loves the other person, it feels like a type of death. It feels as if there's something in the very center of who you are that's been ripped out because it's the very nature of love, not only that you give of yourself and that you want to give to that person, but that you become one.

That in love, you want to enter into the other person's life and you want that person to enter into you and there's a type of oneness so that when there's a break, it actually feels like a type of death.

It actually feels like there's something inside of you that got ripped out. That's the nature of love. Look at what happens in the rest of the text. Look at verses 28 to 30.

[ 25 : 17 ] Look at how the text talks. Right? Verse 28. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

This is a talking, this isn't something that like in terms of overwhelming the other person. It's describing this deep type of oneness. It's reminding the husband of the deep type of oneness that happens in love.

Verse 29. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body.

And then Paul goes and he quotes from the book of Genesis. Genesis chapter 2, verse 24. He says, Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. He's using the Christ and the church in this mystery of love and the mystery of marital love in particular, that it's as if there's this one flesh.

[ 26 : 17 ] So if you go back to my point, the Bible gives true exhortations in light of the true nature of love.

The submitting, the sacrificing, the becoming one. The entire teaching is shaped on the true nature of love, isn't it?

But some of you might say, George, this doesn't work.

This doesn't work. George, marriages end in divorce. George, there's selfishness in marriage. George, husbands abuse their wives.

There can be, of course, wives abusing their husbands, but it's a bigger problem of husbands abusing their wives, especially of physical violence. And George, this all now, now all of a sudden, our critics will go, well, George, this is just all airy-fairy.

[ 27 : 26 ] But no. The Bible gives these wise exhortations in light of the true nature of love and the true problem of sin. You see, the problem is that the Bible is both more wildly optimistic than the world, but also more wildly realistic, all within the context of the truth of the gospel.

You see, the problem I have often when, that many of us have when we talk to Christians, and because we live in Canada, we have it as well, on one hand, on one hand, what will the average Canadian say about, if you explain the gospel or something like that to them, and about Jesus dying for sinners, and the average Canadian will say, but people are fundamentally good.

Don't they say that? People are fundamentally good. I'm a good person. But then the very, very next breath, they say, you can't have advice about this, about marriage. Why? Because people aren't fundamentally good, and they beat each other up.

Well, one moment, which one is it? I mean, it's a type of a discontinuity in how a lot of us think people are fundamentally good, but you can't give this type of advice to people because they'll abuse it.

Why? Well, because they're not fundamentally good. But the Bible's realistic. The Bible doesn't say people are fundamentally good. It says there's an integrity to people. There's a longing for the good.

[ 28 : 43 ] It says that there's common grace and they do good things, but it says that we are, in fact, bent by sin. And you see, this then is why the Bible is so wise. Right? If you think about it for a second, this is why the Bible is so wise.

This is why, if you go back and you look later on, remember I said it sets before the wife this task of submitting to her husband as to the Lord. and it doesn't give the husband any power to command.

Instead, it says to the husband, husband, love your wife as Jesus loved his church. In other words, love for the sake of her, put her so high and the need for her to be, have integrity and all of that to the point of being willing to die to yourself and in fact, even die into your own life.

Be willing to die. And the wife is not given any power to command the husband. Both of them are voluntary. Why are they voluntary?

Because there's the true problem of sin. You see, there's a task which is enjoined, but it's not total submission nor total dying. Wives who are here, if your husband's a jerk, I don't know if I was allowed to say that in church, I just did.

[ 30 : 10 ] That's going to really profoundly shape what on earth submission's going to look like. If your husband's abusive, that's probably going to make it that the submitting is going to be almost impossible to see because he's abusive.

Because the nature of the person you're married to is in fact going to have a profound way of shaping the godly following of these exhortations. And in fact, it says more than this.

It's all, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's why not only is the command voluntary, so it's up to the person who does it, but it's also because they, because the Bible understands that sin is fundamentally a problem of selfishness and it's fundamentally a problem of putting yourself at the center of the universe and viewing everything from your own perspective.

Quick example of this to how sin makes us the center of the universe and, and see everything from our own perspective. If at the end of the service I was to announce that God answered our prayer in a remarkable way and has given us a building, the very first thing most of us would think is how does this affect me?

If I said the building is two kilometers away, for many of us the very first thing will be how does this affect me? Not, praise God! How does this affect me?

[ 31 : 40 ] Problem of selfishness. And so that's why the text, I have to watch my time, the text is so wise. It sets before us an exhortation that's voluntary that means that the husband and the wife do it with eyes wide open in light of the reality of the other person.

There's still an exhortation to deal with their own sin, their own selfishness, their own self-centeredness. And it's also very wise because everything is cast within the reality of the fact that Jesus died on the cross for sinners.

sinner. And that's what brings to the third thing. It's not just in light of the true nature of love, the true problem of sin, but the enduring truth of the gospel.

You see, one of the things which is so wonderful about the text is if you think about it, the husband and the wife together show the beauty of the gospel. It's not just that the husband shows the beauty of the gospel and the wife doesn't, or the wife shows the beauty of the gospel and the husband doesn't.

It shows that in a good marriage, a godly marriage, it takes a husband and wife together so the beauty and the power of the gospel is seen. How does that work? Well, think about what the gospel teaches.

[ 32 : 54 ] What does the gospel teach? The gospel teaches this, that God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three persons, one God from all eternity, they see human beings made in the image of God and they see that we have made ourselves the center, we have made ourselves selfish, we now turn from each other, we turn from God, we turn from the created order, there's this problem of being bent away from the good that's at the center of every single human being and human beings cannot save themselves and so God the Father says to God the Son in a sense, the only way to save them is to have you enter into that world and become as one of them and die in their place and so God the Son in submission to his Father sets aside his divine glory, his divine prerogatives, his appearance as God, his majesty, he sets all of these things aside, the honor and the glory and the worth that he is owed as God, the Son of God, he sets them all aside and being still remaining fully God, he humbles himself and submits to the demands of love, submits to the

Father, submits to the need of fallen human beings like you and me and enters the human story as a zygote in the womb of Mary. Submission.

No gospel without submission. And how does the gospel continue? The gospel isn't all about just the submission of the Son to the demands of love and to the Father because there's no gospel without the Son of God's dying upon the cross.

And so Jesus lives a sinless life, miracles, teachings, sinless life and dies upon the cross. So that you and I can be made right with God when we put our faith and trust in him.

And we see in Ephesians 5 not just that the Bible is giving advice around the true nature of love that when we think about it we understand that that's the true nature of love and it's giving exhortations in light of the true problem of sin which we all realize there is a true problem of sin and we as Christians but not necessarily the world we also understand that the entire advice is shaped within such a way that in a good marriage the husband and wife together make the gospel beautiful.

[ 35 : 42 ] Make the gospel beautiful to a fallen world. Need to wrap it up. verse 33 however let each one of you love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

So I just want to try to bring it up to a final point I think I'm going to just skip through some things here you can look it up online some final things it's very interesting in this text there's two exhortations given to women the wives and two exhortations given to the husbands and they're not the same and so for those women who are married here in the room the exhortations that are given to you is to submit to your husband and to respect him and for some of you that's going to be very hard maybe for issues in your past some of you it's because your husband isn't maybe acting very well right now but the task that's given to you is to learn how to submit and to learn how to respect and one of my pieces of advice to you would be that next time you give your husband a card don't say on it

I love you but say on it I respect you I don't know why the Bible says that rather than something else but that's what the Bible says say I respect you and maybe rather than saying the different ways that you love him say these are the ways I respect you and for husbands who are here there's two different commands in this text you go back and you look there's two imperatives in the text given to men different than the ones that are given to the wives the two imperatives given to husbands is this agape love that's a self-giving putting the other first seeking the true good of the other agape love your wife to the point of being willing to set aside your power and your prerogatives and your agendas and so love your wife and that obviously also includes love as affection and it is very appropriate husbands that if you write a card for your wife don't say I respect you say I love you and to figure out in the light of your marriage how it is that you were to put such love into practice for your wife and the other thing and this is a mystery and I don't have time to go into it but it must be very important because it's in Genesis chapter 2

Jesus quotes it Paul quotes it it's in several parts of the Bible is that guys who are married you need to learn to set aside and leave your your mother and father your task is to leave your mother and father and live with your wife in such a way that you unite and relate to her to move towards one flesh that's your task guys that's my task to be willing to love my wife Louise to learn that I to be challenged to continually love my wife in such a way that I'm willing to die for her and understand the mystery of what it means to leave my mother and father behind to pursue being one flesh with her that's the task singles you get to listen in on an odd sermon all I can tell you is you've gotten some advice about how to pray for your married friends please stand one of the things which I didn't mention in this sermon

I'm going to mention it right now which is still technically part of the sermon is if you go back and you read verses chapter 5 verse 15 to 21 that long sentence and the sort of the governing verse is walk in love and then but the more specific thing that governs the next little bit and governs the rest of the text is that we are to learn to live in the spirit and the fact of the matter is both husbands and wives and for singles who have the task of living as a single life to the glory of God is the wonderful thing about marriage for us as Christians isn't that there's somehow on one level something different for Christian marriage than non-Christian marriage marriage was instituted by God before the fall it's woven into the created order it's part of how all marriages are to work it's why many non-Christian marriages are better than Christian marriages because marriage is integral to the way man and woman male and female were created and it's just there but the thing which is specifically helpful for us is not just that we look to the gospel to shape how we live our lives and to shape our imagination and to shape the healing of our memory and the healing of our wounds but to also understand that we don't do our marriage alone that for you and me who are in Jesus we dwell in the

[ 40 : 53 ] Holy Spirit and God in particular joins us to call upon the help of the Holy Spirit to figure out how to live and embody these exhortations in the real context of our own marriage how to repent and what to pursue let's pray Father if there are any here who have not yet given their lives to Jesus I ask that you would make the gospel more beautiful and more real to them and move in their hearts that they would give their lives to Jesus even today Father for those of us who are here who are not in marriage we bless you for them we ask that the Holy Spirit would move in a mighty and powerful way in the midst of their singleness that their life as a single person would be lived in such a way that the gospel is made beautiful that they come closer and closer to Jesus that they are filled more and more by the Holy Spirit and know the integrity that they have as a single made in your image and redeemed by Jesus and your child by adoption and grace and Father for those of us who are husbands and wives we ask that the Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction in our marriage that you would help us Father to remember these exhortations and that you would fan into flame within us a longing and yearning to be so gripped by the gospel that we seek to pursue that which you exhort us to seek and that we would be willing to repent of those things that we need to repent of that our marriages Father that our individual lives and our marriages might make the gospel beautiful

Father that is our prayer and we ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said Amen