

# Paul's Exhortation to Husbands

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[ 0 : 00 ] Dear Heavenly Father, we just take this time to come to you. We give you thanks that we are able to boldly come before your throne, not because of any works or anything special in us, except that you have called us, you have redeemed us.

Like Isaiah in Isaiah 6, the angel which takes his coal and cleanses us and purifies us simply by touching our tongue.

Father, we thank you for this cleansing that you give us, that we can come before you, our Father, our God, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend.

And Father, we just pray for clarity as we come to this text with an understanding as to do so in your Spirit.

And these are not actions driven from the flesh, but actions driven by you. We ask these things in your most gracious and holy name. Amen.

[ 1 : 13 ] Please take out your Bibles. Turn with me to Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5. Our text for today is Ephesians 5, verses 25 to 31.

As you all know, or if you're new, joining us for the last several weeks, we've been packing, unpacking Paul's teaching for his instructions for wives.

And two of the key words that have come into under attack in our culture has been the idea of submission and headship. And one of the things that I really wanted to demonstrate to you is that given our culture, given abuses that we have seen in marriages, that these words are commonly misunderstood and disregarded.

I pray that I've been able to bring some clarity to you in our understanding. And I really believe the focal point of the instructions that we are given, or wives are given specifically, come from verse 24, where he simply says, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands.

The context, the focal point, the power, the model is Jesus. As Jesus Christ submits himself to the will of the Father.

[ 2 : 54 ] I don't think it can get any better. And it was interesting just reading different various blogs on some of these issues and people complaining and trying to do these linguistic gymnastics or grammatical gymnastics to say, this isn't what Paul meant.

Their argument is totally destroyed by this is what Jesus Christ did. He was the Son of God.

He was a part of the Trinity. He was not disregarded any less, but he made himself lowly.

He demonstrated meekness, humility, as we are all called to demonstrate to one another. This changes everything, doesn't it?

Our understanding of these passages. So wives, I pray that some of your concerns or questions were answered.

[ 4 : 04 ] And now we get to talk about husbands. Paul's instruction. So please look at verse 25 of your Bibles in Ephesians 5.

It simply says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with 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.

In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.

Because we are members of his body, 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'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

[ 5 : 34 ] With wives, the contentious words are submission and headship. For husbands, it's love. Not a lot of contention about love, but more about what is love.

It's a wonderful world, right? We all love movies that portray love, or books that portray love as being a wonderful power that drives us as human beings, right?

We move mountains for love, or rather, love moves mountains. Sadly, on the same hand, men, men, they justify all sorts of sins with love, or lack of love.

It's amazing that God ties marriage to the most incredibly perfect example of Jesus Christ, both for the wife and for the husband.

If we were to go back 2,000 years ago and hear these commands, these teachings that Paul has for us, it would have created a stir in our assembly.

[ 7 : 10 ] You see, the command to love one's wife was entirely counter-cultural to that culture at that time.

In fact, if you were to try to look outside of the New Testament Bible, the wisdom of the day, books of the day, you would be hard-pressed to find a command of the kind.

In the Old Testament, marriage is often seen as the representative about God's covenant relationship with his people.

If you're familiar with the prophet Hosea, the tragic story of a man who marries his wife, who continually betrays him.

And he continually takes her back, even to the point of buying her back from a slave market after she had willingly left him and willingly went to serve other men.

[ 8 : 23 ] And the picture that God uses, the prophets use in the Old Testament, is that the spiritual adultery is us when we run away from God, when we disobey God.

The picture is God's forever covenant love for us that he continually takes us back no matter how dirty, filthy, rebellious we have been.

Not only does he take us back, but he pursues us with the love which we cannot comprehend.

When we switch to the New Testament, we see Jesus Christ being this husband and we, the church, being this bride.

2,000 years ago, the average age of a bride was 12 to 17 years of age.

Historians believe that most grooms, or at least a third of the grooms, would have been anywhere from 11 to 30 years older than their brides.

[ 9 : 43 ] Most marriages at that time were arranged. They were family unions. They were contracts. They would often marry as strangers.

And usually they were expected within that first year to bear the husband a child, an heir. To the Jew, it was considered lowly to be born a woman.

Divorce could be initiated simply for burning your dinner. Any reason that created the husband some sort of unhappiness was enough to issue her a certificate of divorce.

To the Greek, wife was considered a piece of property. She was someone who had no rights.

She could not vote. She could not own land. She could offer no inheritance. Her purpose in life was to simply provide an heir for her husband and to tend for the children.

[ 11 : 07 ] If you were a single woman, there was actually no place in society for you. They made no accommodations for that.

Then to the Romans, they even thought less of women. In fact, there's this quote by this writer.

It simply says, If you are to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you are free to kill her without a trial. But if she catches you, she could not venture to touch you with her finger, for she has no rights.

This is the culture that Paul is bringing these commands to. In fact, everything changed with Jesus Christ, right?

He taught women. Women weren't to be taught. He dialogued with them. He opened up with them. He taught them. He counted them as friends.

[ 12 : 18 ] Entered their homes. We even see Paul continuing that. And Paul changes everything with this new life in Christ.

In Galatians, we clearly read that there is no Jew nor Gentile man or woman, slave or free man, but we are all one under Christ.

And then this command is given to these husbands to love your wives as Christ loved the church. This would have been mind-blowing. This is culture-shaking. Everything in their system taught the exact opposite.

And here comes Paul building this argument throughout this book of Ephesians about our salvation and how Christ died for us, not because we were really good people or we had potential, but it was only because of his great love for us.

[13:40] And he draws us in, both Jew and Gentile, to be one person. And then he drops this bomb. And Ephesians 5, husbands love your wives.

So this morning, there's really no debate on what love is. Perhaps, and we will get into that. But I believe the tension that I want to address exists not in our cultural understanding or sinful understanding, but as Christians who've been saved, been redeemed by Jesus Christ, the tension is a matter of the will.

It is the matter of the will. So I have entitled this sermon, Five Choices a Husband Makes to Love His Wife.

Five Choices a Husband Makes to Love His Wife. Before I go any further, I need to give you a reality check.

If you are listening to this sermon and you do not know Jesus Christ and you think I'm going to help give you some type of advice that's going to help you love your wife, understand your wife, perhaps increase your communication ability, that's not what I'm going to do.

[15:19] In fact, Paul's instructions to us, instructions that need to be done in the Spirit.

That's why in verse 18, we are to walk in the Spirit. We need to be empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be imitators of Jesus.

The fact of the matter is, it is difficult to pursue marriages as Christians in the Spirit, let alone to attempt to do it in the flesh.

We need to have this desire to not only know God, but to follow God, to submit to God, to honor God with our lives. And then we have this power to do, to make these choices, to love our wives.

If we do not, there is little hope. My encouragement to you, if you do not know the Lord Jesus, is to know Him.

[16:37] It is to call out for Him. It is ask Him to reveal Himself to you. It is to pray. It is to admit that you have a need for a Savior, for you need forgiveness from your sins.

We just sang these worship songs, which demonstrate that for those who are in Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation. We just read a passage that we cannot do in the flesh, which we are meant to do in the Spirit.

So this morning, as husbands, I implore you to pray for humility. Pray for ears to hear and a heart that understands.

If you have sins in your lives right now, confess them. Jesus Christ promises to forgive you.

Right now, I'll give you some time to do that. Just bow your head. Jesus Lord, forgive me.

[17:54] I have not made you a priority of my life. I have not obeyed you. I have done things that I knew were not honorable to you.

I took abuse. I took advantage of your grace rather than advantage of your love. Father, I do want to pursue you, to love you, to honor you.

And as I come to these words, these commands that you have given, I pray that you would make me right in your eyes, oh God.

Amen. Amen. So the first choice that a husband makes is that he chooses, that you say, a husband chooses to love his wife by taking responsibility for the family.

Right from the beginning of creation, God holds the husband responsible for the family. That the husband is the one God holds accountable to the family.

[19:11] As we learned last week in Ephesians 11, 3, Paul simply lays out, but I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ. The head of a wife is her husband.

The head of Christ is God. That idea of head is not a command structure where I deserve command, but I have responsibility to the one who I am under.

It is something that I willingly give. I desire to give and as we come under Jesus Christ, there is a functional aspect to this position.

When we go back to Genesis at the very beginning, there was sin. God held Adam responsible.

It was to him he spoke to. It was to him he addressed this issue. That doesn't mean the wife is lesser or any such thing, and I dealt with that last week, but there is a functional role here.

[ 20 : 23 ] I'm going to tell you something right here, men. There is no getting around this. You cannot pass this responsibility onto your wife, even if she wants it.

It doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is you can argue my wife knows more about you than I do. My wife comes from a better family.

She can help. My wife wants to. My wife is closer to kids. I just want to give her everything. The fact of the matter is we have this innate sin that happened right from the beginning and it's laziness.

We are. It is laziness. We will defer responsibility anytime we want to or able to. We need to fight that.

We see this in plenty of times, but the matter is the role is yours because that is how God designed it.

[ 21 : 26 ] I have spoken with men who are CEOs, multi-millionaire men that struggle in this role because their wives know Jesus better.

And it's true. They do. But we're going to talk a little bit more about that later. But they have to take responsibility.

And it's, and your wife is to be your best asset. If she knows more, lean on her. You are serving together. Remember a couple weeks ago, we talked about the whole purpose of your family is to glorify God.

and you do that by working as a team. And the best way to deal with this is to take responsibility. If it means changing things in your life from your career to your hobbies, perhaps some of your things that you pursue in your life, then so be it.

[ 22 : 30 ] This is your calling as a husband is to lead your family. And the first choice that you need to make is that you have to choose this.

You need to choose this responsibility and make that choice that you are going to be the one who's going to take responsibility to the responsibility that Jesus Christ has called you to.

The second choice you make to love your wife is to place her needs above your own.

Let's take a look at verse 25. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

The type of love that Jesus Christ modeled to the church is called sacrificial love. This is the husband who puts on Christ who asks not what his wife can do for him but what can he do for his wife.

[ 23 : 40 ] In fact, it is not conditional. You might say, you do not know how my wife treats me. My wife disrespects me.

Fact is, this is not the issue. Jesus Christ himself loved sinners, rebellious, broken, horrible sinners. I'm one of them before I loved him. That's the model. Jesus Christ loved sinners even when they hated him.

him. I get it. The world preaches a message that states that once the romantic feelings have all gone away, you have some sort of right to be off the hook.

That you are to quit loving that person and find someone else that has those feelings for you. That's not it. Just as we talked about the example of Hosea, I'm sure Hosea did not have wonderful feelings for his wife when he went to the slave market to buy her back.

[ 24 : 56 ] Even when she showed him great ingratitude over and over and over again. the reality is God does not love us because we are attractive or somehow wonderful.

God loves us in spite of ourselves. You might ask the question, what happens when I'm mistreated? What happens when she doesn't look the same as when I first married her?

It doesn't matter. God does not expect worth in the object. sacrificial love is loving your wife when she forgets you and neglects you.

Sacrificial love means loving her when she overlooks you and insults you. Sacrificial love means loving your wife when she even speaks evil of your good.

When you are meaning something so good and she turns it around to make it look like it is something evil. You're called to love her.

[ 26 : 06 ] It means loving her when she ridicules your thoughts and opinions and perhaps your dreams and mistreats you. Sacrificial love means you do not get angry or defend yourself.

This is called dying to self. Sacrificial love means bearing with her when she is disruptive. she is irregular in her moods and her love for you is inconsistent.

It means loving her when she is foolish, perhaps wasteful, insensitive. But the love that Jesus Christ modeled for us is an enduring love and this is the type of love God calls husbands to love their wives.

Sacrificial love is not caring to refer yourself in conversation or to record or recite your own good works or pursue commendations from her.

Sacrificial love is when you can be unrecognized for something good. good. Sacrificial love is receiving correction and reproof from your wife and humbly submitting inwardly as well as outwardly.

[ 27 : 33 ] Feeling no rebellion and feeling no resentment. You see, this is what Jesus Christ calls us to as husbands.

this is what Jesus Christ calls us to as leaders. This is what Jesus Christ calls us to when he holds us responsible for the headship of the family.

It may mean swallowing our pride. It may mean swallowing our personal desires, your ambitions. It also might mean putting away dreams and aspirations.

It means to end the thoughts of if she were more like so-and-so's wife, then things would really be great. The love that Jesus Christ modeled for us is a sacrificial love.

That means death to self. the obvious question is how on earth do we do this? Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1.22 he says, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

[ 29 : 08 ] God, if you are born again, and if you are a child of the king, you have the capacity to do this.

It was interesting listening to some pastors talk this week, I mentioned at that conference that I watched, change takes time.

often, if you are a do it type of person, you sometimes believe the change that is supposed to take place in your heart should happen overnight.

It actually doesn't. The decision to follow God happens overnight. But you still need to allow God to change you.

what God cares is the direction of the path that you're on, not how fast you can get down that path.

[ 30 : 14 ] Often, one of the reasons why I read about Romans 8 is that we so often will switch over to the flesh and seek worldly ways to accomplish what God has called us to when we are to follow godly ways or ways of the spirit.

You see, what's challenging about this type of man who loves his wife, this type of husband, he is not exactly revered in our culture. He's made fun of, he's ridiculed.

God's God's God's It's often hard to recognize a humble, meek, patient, kind, compassionate, Christ-like man.

But that is what Jesus Christ calls us to. The man who takes up his cross daily, the man who is willing to deny himself, the man who's willing to be crucified daily, and who esteem others more than himself.

This is what God calls all men to. You see, these type of changes that we want to see in our lives don't just change families, but they change churches, and they change cultures.

[ 31 : 39 ] So that is the second choice we make to love our wives, is to place her needs above our own. The third choice we make to love our wives is by seeking her purity.

By seeking her purity. Take a look at verse 26. That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with 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 without blemish.

Okay, we can't clean our wives. We're not priests. We're not representatives that have the ability to save our wives. There's some actually whacked out theology that tries to place the man in the role of the Savior.

No, no, no, no, no. Jesus Christ is the only one that does that. But, you can take her away from her purity. You see, Christ loves the church and wants to cleanse and purify it.

This teaches us that when we love someone, we need to look at our wives and say that her purity has to be one of our goals. The fact of the matter is, nobody loves something and wants to defile it.

[ 33 : 05 ] Did you know that the first act of purifying your wife is actually marrying her? And by doing stuff is that you take her away from wrong relationships or sinful relationships.

Perhaps you're taking her out of a horrible un-Christ-like home life or some other indulgence that she may have been a part of.

Or perhaps it was a sin that she was involved in. I've shared with you the story of my friend who married a woman who came out of virtual life of prostitution.

And he just, a good man who's always followed the Lord who had never kissed a woman. And he did not want to love his wife originally but God broke something in her.

And now she serves alongside of him with no regrets, no shame.

[ 34 : 11 ] she's a new person in Jesus Christ and he played a part of that. You see, as husbands, we have the ability to pull our wives to Christ, to pour virtue into a life, to make it possible.

So how do we do that, right? That's the question. How do I do that? How do we do that? Well, the first way is to expose our wives to the word of God. expose her to biblical truths, how we act, how we talk, what is our example?

In many homes, this is absolutely reversed. It is the wife who is the prophet, who is the one who does the intense study.

But I'm telling you right here, right now, men, even your wife, who is the most gifted learner, teacher of scripture, teacher, she still wants you to be that guy.

She wants you to lead her heart in those things. It's interesting, I have a good friend at seminary, we were there together, and they felt the call to ministry when they arrived in California.

[ 35 : 28 ] He ended up giving up the life of ministry. He decided to stay in California because he wanted his wife to be continually under the ministry that was there because he saw the incredible change in growth.

They stayed there for at least a decade from I last heard. Just constantly the opportunities for her to learn and grow outweighed their ability to want to minister.

So a husband sometimes has to make that decision. So we want to expose our wives to the word of God, the word of truth. We want to live the lives that are consistent with this.

The second way is to never lead our wives into sin. We do not want to expose her to iniquity. We do not want to draw her to things that cause temptation.

Some of the biggest challenges that I have friends who've married women, even gone to seminary, good church women, they've come from homes where their fathers were incredibly wealthy.

[ 36 : 32 ] and some particularly had to die to material things. Specifically, they made specific choices to lead their wives away from that because their expectations were unless you had a million dollars in the bank account and a big beautiful home, that meant you were right with God.

He really felt he had to break her of material things. That meant no window shopping. It's easy to fall into those things.

The third way is we need to watch the form of entertainment that we take with her to expose her. We don't want to expose her to sinful feelings. This is something I never understood.

I'm just speaking a little bit personally, but I got to realize my wife is different from me. She has a different heart. She has a different background. There are certain things in life that trigger her that don't trigger me.

I've got this friend who I remember he had friends of our, it was actually common friends. They were in this band and they were playing and they were rising up.

[ 37 : 54 ] When he went there with his wife, it turned out his wife used to have a horrible drug past and just being in that setting, even though it was innocent, they weren't drinking, they weren't partaking, just being in that atmosphere, closed lights, listening to music.

He had to make a decision that he couldn't support the band, that he was financially helping or be a part of that because it was hard for his wife. And I've had to understand that there's certain things that don't bother me but bother my wife.

And I need to protect her. It's not me wanting her to change. It's up to me to change. It's up to me to be aware. And the fourth way we don't lead, we choose to love our wives by seeking her purity is we don't want to lead her to sin in the way of don't do things that irritate her, that make her angry, that can cause her depression and bitter her.

we can bring up the past. We can bring up past sins that we know she might be ashamed of. That's not what we're called to do.

And it's easy to do that in the moment of heat where we're frustrated. The fact of the matter is if you seek her purity, you seek her holiness.

[ 39 : 24 ] Her purity is your responsibility. don't let it get stolen. The fourth choice that a husband makes to love his wife is to care for her.

It's to care for her. Verse 28, in the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. he who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes it and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body. The fact of the matter is all men take care of our bodies, right?

The body is sick, we rest. If we're hungry, we eat. If we thirst, we drink. We try to wear good clothes even though we may not have style.

We want to look good. If we're out of shape, we should be exercising and watching what we eat.

The fact is I believe that we are to be the provider, the protector, the preserver.

[ 40 : 34 ] And we need to meet the needs of our wives just as Christ meets our needs. And I'm not talking just about her physical needs, but her emotional needs.

I know that one of the things that is most hurtful to any woman is when she feels her husband does not know her or understand her. I know some people who have made some really strong decisions, people who have actually moved closer to the church so the wife could develop friends with people who had kids in their same age.

Just simple things that were sacrifices. It's to choose not to only look after your own needs.

And it's easy. Financially, we think our priorities come first. But it's to look after her, to make sure she is cherished, she is nourished, she is provided for, that she has the ability to pursue her hobbies as well as you have your ability to pursue your hobbies.

One of the most interesting words in the English language I think is the word cherish. To cherish. It literally means to warm with body heat, to melt, softened, to soften, to provide a nest, warmth, and security, to soften and support her.

[ 42 : 19 ] 1 Timothy 5, 8 says, but if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for members of his household, he is denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

it's interesting if you've taken any financial courses and you're familiar with Dave Ramsey, Dave Ramsey uses the analogy, the first thing he addresses husbands and he says, husbands, wives were, and he's kind of jokingly saying this, but he really means it that a woman has been created with an extra gland called the security gland.

And if we're reckless with money, reckless with the things that we own, we pay no attention, it can make wives seem very, very, make them feel uneasy.

Sadly, I have had to care for friends who've been divorced by their wives because they choose to think that by having the bigger home, by working the 80-hour weeks is what she really wanted, and it's not what she wanted.

She wanted a place to feel safe with her husband and her kids, to not be under constant financial pressures. She wanted her wife to be with, she wanted her husband to be with her, not with his co-workers.

[ 43 : 44 ] So the man makes that choice to love his wife by seeking her purity and by caring for her needs. And the fifth choice, that a husband makes to love his wife is to be faithful to her.

It's to be faithful to her. Verse 21, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

That means she is your greatest priority. these were the thoughts echoed back in Genesis and repeated in Matthew 19. You see, this is what marriage is.

It's not a partnership, it's not a contract. There's no two individual separate identities, but it's coming together in one flesh.

And that doesn't happen automatically. It's still easy for me to think as an individual sometimes and not my wife, with my wife in there. It's just, I'm used to operating a certain way and I have to constantly, not constantly remind myself, but there's moments in my life where I got to start, stop thinking of myself and thinking about my family first.

[ 45 : 02 ] We are to be of one mind, one purpose, one heart, one emotion, and one flesh. When we think about being faithful, some people argue that we're just, it's about physical faithfulness.

But it's not. It's about emotional faithfulness. What I give my wife, no one else gets. What you give your wife, no one else gets.

She's supposed to have your intimacy. She's supposed to have your intimate stories, the pressings of your heart, the things that make your heart get excited about life.

They're not meant for your co-workers. They're not meant for your old friends. They're meant for your wife. The desires you have are to share with your wife.

All too often I have seen emotional bonds begin in the workplace. And sometimes you have to fight against it. I work downtown Toronto right off Bay Street, which if you don't know is the financial center of our country.

[ 46 : 19 ] And the secretaries that many of these CEOs hired are supermodels. They come to work looking professional, looking great. You come home, your wife's still in sweat, she's still got puke on her shoulder from carrying the baby.

It's not so glamorous when you get home. But you have to wrestle for the truth. You have to wrestle for what is right.

You have to struggle for what is godly. That means you have to shut the eyes. You have to cut off the envy of what other people have.

And you have to make your wife the one you are going to be faithful to. See, you've made a covenant. The covenant is to speak lovingly and positively about your wife.

It's to praise her, build her up, not just in front of her, but even with others. just to let any other person that your affections are for your wife and no one else.

[ 47 : 38 ] You are faithful to your wife by always forgiving her as Christ forgives us. Never let your wife live in the fear that you don't forgive her.

anger. It's why biblical wisdom is do not let the sun go down on your anger. There are going to be times where we legitimately feel anger.

But it's sin to allow that to get to a point of bitterness and to want to hurt, to strike back. These are the things we need to guard against.

You see, this marriage that Paul is describing is to be a picture of Christ's love for the church.

It's to draw others to a community. The question is, does your marriage bring others to Christ?

[ 48 : 51 ] I'm not saying your marriage is perfect because guess what? You're not perfect. So your marriage is never going to be perfect. So don't even live with the assumption you're going to get there. But you can be made more holy through your marriage.

marriage. You know, one of the questions that obviously gets asked is sometimes some marriages are difficult.

The question sometimes is what happens if a wife doesn't submit or does not honor, does not love her husband? Sometimes when there's sin there, there's also an accountability to the church.

church. You're not on your own with this. You have other people with you. You have elders, pastors. And my encouragement, if this is a problem in your home, that you bring it forward.

Yes, I have actually seen church discipline done for wives who've been cruel or unwilling to submit or live what God has called them to.

[ 50 : 03 ] As I stated before, it's not easy. Plenty of the books that are more recent are entitled like When Sinners Say I Do.

We will always struggle against the flesh. But this battle is made far more easier when we submit to the Spirit. Reality is I've only been at this for six years.

And there's so much more room for me to grow in my love for my wife. I am still learning her. I am still understanding her. Sometimes I find myself laughing to myself because things that may have frustrated me six years ago I kind of understand now.

And I laugh. And it's because my wife is a uniquely woman. And part of my role is adjusting myself rather than expecting her to adjust to me.

I want her to feel loved, to be cared for, to feel cherished. That I want to create a safe, secure environment for her to flourish in.

[ 51 : 23 ] Men, if for some reason you have abdicated your role of leadership, it is never too late to reclaim it. It is never too late.

The first step is the first step which is making the choice that you're going to take responsibility.

And then the second choice is you begin to love your wife as Christ loved the church. You do not demand respect. You do not demand submission.

you do not even have the right to demand that she loves you back. But you can love her, you can warm her, you can draw her in exactly what Jesus Christ did for us.

It all begins with God. My prayer, you as husbands who are here at Squamish Baptist Church, that you are willing to make this choice to love your wives.

[ 52 : 35 ] And let God take it from there. Please pray with me. Father, we need the cross. We need to be let out of our prisons.

We need to be forgiven. We need to be redeemed. We need to be redeemed. Father Satan is such a skilled accuser.

He makes us feel less than, makes us feel insecure, makes us feel like we will not have the ability to. He wants us to make us feel dejected, depressed, not strong enough, not worthy enough.

Father, as men, I ask that you'd forgive us for not pursuing our wives as we were meant to pursue them. For those that have, I rejoice.

I pray that you bless their testimonies. I pray that you just bless them as they make right decisions, sober decisions.

[ 53 : 57 ] Father, I just ask that you would strip us of our selfishness, strip us of ourselves. The cross is where we can be who we really are, stripped of all false pretenses.

There's no excuse that works at the foot of the cross. Father, I pray that you would lead us to be humble, to be servant oriented, to see our wives as truly better than ourselves, to understand that you have given your child to us to be one flesh, that we would steward our marriages in ways that would bring glory to you, ways that would bless our wives, strengthen and embolden our children.

Father, forgive us when we did not, when we let our wives to sin, whether it be attitudes or eyes or actions, when we press the button of you remind me of your mother button.

Forgive us. Father, some of us have been hurt, we've been damaged, we have felt unloved. pray that we have tender, forgiving hearts.

May you give us strength, wisdom. May we choose to walk in light, choose to walk in wisdom, choose to walk in the spirit.

[ 55 : 50 ] Father, we live in a world that attacks marriages left and right. Satan seeks to destroy families. give us boldness, give us strength, give us courage to love our wives, not because they're not worthy of love, because that we just so willingly want to abdicate that role.

Heal our wounds. forgive us for our words, strengthen our resolve. Give us a greater love for you, Lord, and a greater love for our wives.

We ask these things gracious, powerful, everlasting, soul-changing ways. thank you, Jesus, for the model that you provide for us.

In your name, amen. Thank you,