

# Husbands and Wives

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of submission to one another in the fear of God in marriage and family, with a focus on the roles of husbands and wives as servants to one another.*

**Duration:** 1:05:25

**Topics:** "Marriage And Family", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the biblical perspective on marriage and family, emphasizing that it is a God-ordained institution to be lived out in accordance with the Word of God. The focus is on the relationship between husbands and wives, highlighting the importance of mutual servanthood, sacrificial love, and respect. The passage in Ephesians 5 is explored, connecting the husband-wife relationship to the original family pattern in Genesis. The sermon underscores the mystery of marriage reflecting Christ and the church, with the necessary resource being the filling of the Holy Spirit for living out this divine design.

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## Transcript

Well, our study for this visit together is our fourth of six studies in the biblical series on Family, God's Way, looking through the major passages of Scripture to see what the Lord has to say about marriage and family. After all, marriage and family is not a culturally developed human institution, though many cultures put their twist on marriage. Marriage and family, it's a God-ordained, God-created institution, and of course it is to be followed and lived out and received in line with the revelation of the Word of God.

And we have another great passage to look at today, Ephesians chapter 5, the classic New Testament section on marriage and family. And our study for this visit is about husbands and wives, husbands and wives. And then our next series, study in this series, will be about parents and children.

Those are the four primary relational aspects of a biblical Christian household unit. Today, husbands and wives. Well, let's pray together as we open up the Word.

Lord, it is so good to hear from you. It's so good to be in your Word together. And Lord, we acknowledge the importance, the priority, the vital arena of marriage and family.

We thank you that your Word is just saturated with wonderful truth on the marriage relationship. And we pray now as we look today at the relationship of husbands and wives that you would give great insight, not

only for the preparation and ministry of our own lives, but also for discipling and teaching those that you bring across our path in the ministry callings you have given to us. And we thank you right now for your faithfulness to teach us by the Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Husbands and wives. In our previous studies, we saw the Lord establishing the family as a divinely appointed partnership. That's where it starts, husband and wife, a divinely appointed partnership.

It's not human, it's divine. And it's a partnership to serve the Lord here on earth. Then we also saw, moving from Genesis to Deuteronomy, we saw how family life was to function.

That it was to be a partnership of husband and wife that were loving the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and strength. And then embracing that truth at the core of their being. And then passing on to the children in word and deed and action and illustration what this life with the great I Am, the true and living God, was all about.

Then we saw in a study after that, right in Deuteronomy chapter 6, starting at verse 10, right after the family life section, we saw the dangers of idolatry, the false gods of the world. The enemy wants to destroy marriages and families. And his fundamental tactic is to get people off of loving worship to the true and living God and get them into devotion and attention and distraction by the gods of this world.

See, loving worship of the true and living God, that's the heart of marriage and family God's way. And if that's the heart of it, it is no surprise at all that the immediate warning given is about idolatry. I mean, idolatry is really what undermines Christian marriage and family life because you can only have Christian marriage and family life in worship with God.

So if you get people devoting their lives, worshipping, as it were, other things than the true and living God, you have made it impossible for that marriage and family to really progress righteously and fruitfully in the path of the Lord. Well, in this study, we'll look at husbands and wives, and we have a few headings that come right out of Ephesians 5. The first one is being subject to one another. The next, this truth is applied to wives.

Then this truth is applied to husbands. Then these truths are related to the original family pattern back in Genesis chapter 2. And then we'll spend a few minutes at the end in Ephesians 5 on the necessary resource for all of this to be taking place in our lives. First of all, being subject to one another.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 21. Ephesians 5, 21. Here we are described among those who are to be submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Submitting to one another in the fear of God. This truth is about being subject one to another. This term submitting to, it's a huge one.

And actually, it is the introductory truth that begins to open up the fundamental household relationships. Ephesians 5, 22, wives. Verse 25, husbands.

Chapter 6, verse 1, children. Chapter 6, verse 4, and you fathers. These household relationships of husband, wife, parent, child.

It's all about, verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. See that's what introduces the household relationship. Maybe you've asked along the way in your reading of the word of God or study of

Ephesians.

What is it that introduces household relationships? You know, in a sense, it just looks like it just interjects, you know. Going on in these wonderful first three chapters of Ephesians, the rich provisions of God in Christ for all of us who believe in the Lord. And then chapters 4 and 5, starting into the upright walk for those who are seated in heavenly places, how to walk upon earth here below and the application of daily righteousness to our lives.

And then just, it almost looks like it's just a sudden intrusion. Then all of a sudden, chapter 5, verse 22, wives. Wait a minute.

How did we get, how did we get to wives and then to husbands? How did this come in? What's the point here? See, if it were in Proverbs, we wouldn't even necessarily ask that question because Proverbs are sections that just stand alone, you know. Maybe a verse or two or six or eight verses and it's a subject. Then boom, it just changes.

Now we're going to consider another subject. The New Testament epistles aren't like that. They are the divinely reasoned mind of God unfolded premise upon premise for us to get insight and understanding into the heart and the thoughts of the Lord.

And the verse that bridges from this practical walk and light and love and wisdom in chapter 5, the verse that introduces the household relationships, submitting to one another in the fear of God. And then it goes right to, wives, submit to your own husbands. And then goes and tells husbands how to live a submissive servanthood life at home.

Being subject to one another, submitting to one another. It's a matter of one person subordinating their interests, needs and desires and well-being to those of another. It's about servanthood life.

See that's what a servant does. A servant subjects their interests and their own needs and their own desires and their own well-being to those of other people. And here we're called to be submitting to one another.

And as you go on reading, it's talking about in household relationships. Submitting to one another. One another.

It's one of the simple but absolutely profound phrases in the New Testament. One another. In fact, I commend to you a study of this phrase one another in the New Testament.

The ministries that are tied to one another are amazing. Pray for one another, love one another, encourage one another, bear one another's burdens. It is a phenomenal vision for practical one-on-one ministry for all of our lives.

And here its use is quite profound too. In Christian marriages, in Christian households and families, one another. We are to submit one to another.

Everyone in the household is to learn this way of thinking and living. It's mutual and reciprocal. There's a mutuality there.

One ministering to each of the others in the household. Each of the others in the household back to the one and to each other. It's reciprocal.

One to another. Each to the other. To put it another way, submission, biblically viewed in a Christian home, is not for one partner alone.

And why is that such an important issue? Well, you don't want anyone in the household to miss God's call and vision, but also we don't want to make the error that sometimes at least sounds like the church is making. What would that be? Well, submission is for wives. And then for anyone else in the household, we go to some other principle or concept.

That's not biblical. In fact, I look back on the early years of pastoring, late 1960s, early 1970s, when I would teach on marriage and family in those years, and of course it eventually ended up in Ephesians because this is a powerful passage in the New Testament on household relationships. I would just jump right in.

Okay, wives, now we're talking family. And not that God can't use that, but there's something gigantic missing. If we start there, what's missing? The very truth that introduces the household relationships and is to rule over every household relationship.

See, Christians in general are to be submitting to one another. That's how verse 21 appears. Being filled with the Spirit, and verse 19 and following, results of being filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns, verse 20, giving thanks always, and verse 21, submitting to one another.

See, this is a general call to every Christian who is walking according to the Spirit and filled with the Spirit. But God knows that the primary arena in human relationships that need to be developed are those in our own household. So if someone would say, okay, submitting to one another, how does that work practically right down where we live? Well, most of us spend most of our time at home and work, and Ephesians 5 and 6 talks about those relationships.

We've mentioned the household ones. Of course, it goes on to talk about bondservants and masters, employees and employers. And all of them are to be servanthood roles, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Submitting to one another. You say, well, wait a minute, how can a wife and a husband do that? Oh, it's very clear in the Scriptures. Well, look at it.

That's why God wrote on this. They don't do it exactly the same way, but they have the same exact heart goal, a servant in their household. But because husbands and wives have different roles, as do parents and children, each has their own primary way to function as a servant in that household.

But this passage makes it very clear. Marriage and family God's way, a partnership of servants serving one another, we're told here in the fear of God, that is out of respect and reverence for our Lord. Number one, respecting the fact that God designed marriage and family this way.

If we fear God, if we respect and revere the Lord, we see here in this chapter that this is how Christian husbands and wives are to live, and children and parents. So out of fear of God, respect for the Lord, reverence for the Lord, wanting to do things His way, not our way, His way, not the way of the culture. We want to be servants in our home.

He designed it this way. But not only because He designed it this way, but because also our Lord exemplified this when He was here on earth living as a servant. Think about that.

Our relationships in our marriages and families are to be ruled by, influenced by, guided by, and exemplified by a third person, husband, wife, the Lord, and here the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's look at that in Matthew chapter 20, see how the Lord Jesus exemplified this submissive servanthood lifestyle when He was here upon this earth. Matthew chapter 20, verse 25.

But Jesus called them to Himself, His disciples, and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, the rulers lord over the Gentiles, the people, and those who are great exercise authority over them, over other people. Yet it shall not be so among you. But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. And then the ultimate example. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

So, the Lord Jesus here, teaching on these principles of servanthood. See, the people of the world measure greatness by how they can lord it over others. You know, if someone says, you know, I have a hundred people at our office, and when I say jump, they all cry out, how high? When I say go, they say what direction and do what, you know? And the greater that number, people go, wow, boy, is he or she powerful or important, you know? That's how the world measures greatness in many ways.

But Jesus said to His disciples, it should not be so among us. Rather, greatness in the heart of God and in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, greatness in our lives develops in relationship to servanthood. Not saying, wow, does that make me great? No, it means that I'm getting into a great kind of thinking and walking and talking and living.

Servanthood. Not lording it over others, but being a servant to others. And of course, Jesus demonstrated this.

Verse 28, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Years ago I was reading this passage and thinking, you know, when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, it would have been right if every person on earth grabbed a towel, lined up and took a turn washing the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. It would have been fitting.

He would have deserved it. It would have been right honor and glory and bowing down to Him. But isn't it fascinating that the way it actually worked out was the Lord Jesus Christ was the one who took the towel and the wash basin and knelt down and washed the feet of people like us.

And then He said, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, that's our example. He gave His life a ransom for many. The sacrificial giving of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, He was the suffering servant of Yahweh, of Jehovah.

And He is the one who wanted to serve us and meet the needs in our lives of His great salvation. This is what Ephesians 5.20 is talking about. This is servanthood.

And when the scriptures say to us, submitting to one another in the fear of God, that's what the Lord wants to lay on our hearts. Sacrificial Christ-like servanthood. Every Christian is called to it in their entire range of living.

But particularly now, we're entering into household relationships here, and every member of a Christian household, family, God's way, is servanthood. And then the Lord, kindly, graciously, wisely, sovereignly,

starts to describe how this submissive servanthood would work for a wife, for a husband, for a child, for a parent, and then again, you could go on to the boss at work and the workers. But we'll restrict our study to the household unit.

So first, this truth is applied to wives. Ephesians 5.22-24. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church.

And he is the savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. How does a wife primarily live out her servanthood in the home? Well, of course, by relating to her husband as a servant.

And we're told here, submit to your own husband as to the Lord. Relate to the husband, dear wife, relate to the husband as you should to your Lord. How's that? As a servant.

He's the master, we're his servants. And to be doing this in a way to show honor and respect toward the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the wife's primary opportunity.

And it has to do with yielding to the headship of the husband, verse 23. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church. Headship, it has to do with leadership.

Think of a physical body. What is the role of the head? Well, it's to lead and give direction and coordination in all the elements of the body. Basically, the wife's primary servanthood opportunity is humbly, wholeheartedly, out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ, follow the leadership of the husband.

Now, men, think of it. Your wife's primary opportunity of servanthood is yielding to the spiritual headship, leadership of the husband. How frustrating it must be for a wife when a husband is not taking spiritual leadership in the home.

See, this is her great opportunity. This is the heart of her one another servanthood in the household. And as her heart is stirred by the Lord and the Spirit of God through the Word, she's wanting to see, what's the Lord laying on my husband's heart? What's the Lord laying on his heart for direction for our marriage or our household? How frustrating it must be for a wife who is at the place where she wants to submit to her husband as to the Lord and see that he's the head of the home and God is going to use him as a leader.

And she looks up to see where he's going, and he's not going anyplace. You know, just drifting or coasting or distracted, chasing the things of the world, trying to see how many people he can lord over. Who knows all the things that can happen in a man's mind and heart and miss this calling.

At the same time, this headship calling of the husband, it's not a dictatorship. Look at the terminology used to describe our example. Husband is head of the wife is also Christ is head of the church.

Our example, men, for headship is Christ and how he's the head of the church. And notice the beautiful phrase that follows. And he is the Savior of the body, of the body of Christ.

This word Savior, it typifies Christ's headship. As Savior, Jesus is therefore a gracious, loving rescuer. He's not a dictatorial tyrant.

His mind is not set on how he can use his wife for his own benefit. His mind is one of a Savior. Now, of course, Jesus is the only ultimate and true, full and comprehensive Savior.

But as head of the church, he's mentioned here as Savior. And he's our example as head of our home. In other words, he exemplifies for us gracious, loving rescue at heart.

It's not barking orders to our wives. It's, Lord, how can I be a rescuer in your hands toward her? A deliverer, you know, protecting and providing and helping her along. This is the pattern for the husband's role as head at home.

And then an amazing statement. If you have a wife, oh, give great consideration to this. If you're like most men without a wife, that is, you're heading toward a wife someday.

The only exception really would be a call to a celibate life. And not many have that call or gift. So you either have a wife or most men will have a wife.

Hear what the Lord says to your wife or your wife to be here. Verse 24. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

This is a heavy, heavy word for wives. And you know what? Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, this is a very heavy responsibility for us. I remember in one of our Family God's Way seminar settings, reading this one day.

And I had this sense that through the mind of many of the ladies there, there was this question silently screaming out. Are there any exceptions? Are there any exceptions? Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Are there any exceptions to this? Well, yes, there are actually.

But here's the thing. Anytime you find a pronouncement in the Word of God, the only exceptions possible are if God pronounces exceptions elsewhere. You know, a wife might say to me, I've had wives say to me, but Bob, you don't know my husband.

You know? Well, her husband is not an automatic exception to this. There are biblical exceptions. They all revolve around one theme we'll look at in a moment.

But, you know, you don't know my husband. He's a difficult man. Well, difficult men in and of themselves are not the exception here, though we should not be difficult men with our wives.

We should be a blessing. Our yoke with them should be light and easy like the Lord Jesus Christ with us. Well, what is the exception to such a comprehensive command? So let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything.

Well, it's the exception that has to do with any misuse of God-ordained authority. Acts chapter 5. Acts chapter 5 is a good place to go. You can find this throughout the Old Testament.

You can find it in various places in the New Testament. Acts chapter 5, verse 27. And when they, the temple officers, had brought them, the disciples, they set them before the council, the Sanhedrin.

And the high priest asked them, asked the disciples, saying, Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood, Jesus' blood, on us. But Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Now, submission is a huge issue, and it does include submission to government authorities.

You know, submission is not just a household issue, and it's certainly not just a wife-toward-a-husband issue. Every Christian has to learn about submission on all kinds of levels. Let's think of some together.

Every Christian must learn to submit to the Lord God Almighty, above all and in all things. Every Christian must learn to submit to the boss at work, to the governing authorities in his realm and region. Must also submit the younger to the elder, also wives to husbands.

Submission is a huge issue. Christians must learn to submit to pastors and spiritual leaders and their fellowships and all of that. Submission is not a narrow thing for one person, a wife to her husband.

It's for every household member to one another, but it's to every Christian on all kinds of levels. But whenever those with God-ordained authority ask anyone under their authority to do or say things or cooperate with things that are contrary to the revealed will of God, that person under that authority really has a spiritual responsibility to express one way or another, I must obey God and not man. Now see, if people in authority over us ask us to do things that we don't like or would prefer not to do, that's not an issue.

If they have that authority, we are to submit and yield. But if they ask us to do something contrary to what God has already spoken on, oh, that changes everything. They have misused their authority, they've abused it to the greatest degree possible.

And the response one way or another rightly would be, I must obey God and not man. Now, when a husband demands that a wife act contrary to the revealed will of God, she would want to be wise and careful how she stated her inability to comply with that. A meek and a quiet spirit, 1 Peter 3, is always precious in the sight of God.

And even when the husband is being a jerk and disobedient to God, it's not for a wife to say, oh, buster, I nailed you there, I've been waiting for this day. That doesn't fit her role either, which is to be a servant-hearted wife to her husband out of respect for the Lord. But nonetheless, this truth prevails.

And, you know, there's many a man that, how would some say, go ballistic at this point. There's many a man that is not ready to humble himself before the Lord and say, sweetheart, you're right, I'm transgressing against the law of God, forgive me, please, let's pray about what the Lord would have us do in this area. That's what a godly man should say if he foolishly stepped across this line.

But often men get very proud, very belligerent, sometimes physically abusive, certainly often verbally abusive. And that's a time when the body of Christ has to be available, perhaps leadership in the church or some godly couple who knows this family well. Often a wife needs spiritual support when she is standing true to the will of God against the contrary demands of her husband.

But it's about servanthood. It's about servanthood and the wife's great opportunity to fulfill her servanthood calling in the marriage and family is to yield to the spiritual headship, leadership of the husband. Now, at the same time, this truth is now applied to husbands.

See verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. Okay, God's going to apply this to wives. Wives, submit to your husbands, yield to the head of the home and cooperate with his leadership in the home.

Okay, that's servanthood in action. Now, verse 25 just goes straight to husbands. It doesn't introduce any other spiritual principle to be applied.

It is now the husband's opportunity to hear how he is to submit to the other. Here's how the wife is to submit to the husband. Now, how the wife is to submit, the husband is to submit to the wife.

You say, well, wait a second, they can't both submit to each other. Oh, yes, they can. Yes, they can.

Because all God is saying there, everyone in the home be of a servant heart to one another. Sure, there's going to be a descriptive shift in how God describes the husband's servanthood. But now, it's the husband's opportunity to hear God speak of servanthood, submitting for the husband.

Now, obviously, he doesn't say, well, okay, honey, you don't agree with me. You wear the pants in this family or whatever you say. That's not submitting to the wife God's way.

That's abdicating headship. That's not acceptable to God. And many a man has done that, you know, just at any cost.

That's not acceptable to God. Well, then, how does a husband carry out his headship responsibility and yet still be a servant? Oh, only God could come up with this. Only God.

Husbands, love your wives. Wait a minute. Husbands, love your wives? Surely you mean boss my wife.

I mean, after all, I'm the boss, right? I'm the head. I'm the leader. Wives, follow the headship, leadership of the husband.

It must be that it has to say, husbands, tell them the way to go. That's not what it says. Oh, there will be involved clarifying of direction.

But here's the responsibility of the servant husband. Husbands, love your wives. In what way? Just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her.

And Christ-like sacrificial love is the way the husband is to lead in the home. What a glorious plan this is. What a beautiful calling this is.

May God help us to see it and to embrace it. This, this is for the man in the home. The primary relational servanthood opportunity.

And of course, Jesus gave us the example. Our pattern is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is woven into the instructions to the wife.

The Lord Jesus Christ is woven into the instruction for the husband as well. He is the Lord of the home in word and in example. Love your wives.

That's our servanthood. What kind of love? Christ-like love. What kind of love was that? A self-sacrificing, self-giving love.

As Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. This is how God has called us men to learn to lead. In a costly, sacrificial, giving kind of love.

You know, again, husband might say, now wait a second. I'm the leader around here. I'm the head around here.

Well, the scriptures would answer, that's right. So get out in front of everyone in the home. Take the initiative, take the lead in demonstrating to the household what sacrificial, self-giving love like the Lord Jesus is all about.

What a powerful path for leading, you know. I'm the leader. Well, good.

Get out in front of the little flock at home and be the example of sacrificial, Christ-like love. Husbands submit by learning to lead through loving their wives. We're to love them.

We're to think of them. Consider them. Desire to be loving and gracious and kind and helpful in all of our ways with them.

And, at the same time, our ministry to them as Christ-like, sacrificial servants is to have a sanctifying and edifying effect in their lives. See that? Verse 26. We're to function in this loving, sacrificial way, verse 26, that's in line with Jesus' purposes in ministering to His bride, the Church, which says that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His loving, sacrificial ministry to His bride, the Church, He wants to sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of water by the Word. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His ministry to all of us in the Church as His bride, He wants to take His Word and, like a cleansing water, pour it over our lives. Use His Word to sanctify us and cleanse us.

To sanctify us. To set us apart more and more and more for the calling that He has in our lives. To cleanse us.

You know, if we belong to Christ, we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. Our souls are washed clean. We stand spotless before the Lord.

But in our walk down here on earth below, it's a muddy, dirty battlefield. And we need the washing of the water by the Word. We don't need to be cleansed anew in order, as it were, to get saved again.

Though when we err in sin, we confess our sins, and we enjoy again the fact that the blood of Christ is the ultimate cleansing agent. But we need to have the Word of God wash the mud off our feet in this walk through a dirty battlefield. See, that's what the Lord wants to do with us.

And the point is, Jesus is the example for us in our ministry to our wives. A sanctifying cleansing effect. And by the way, Jesus, our example, washing of water by the Word, it's kind of a good implied issue for husbands that we are primarily the ones responsible to get our family in and under the cleansing ministry of the Word of God.

You know, in many, many a Christian household, the wives are more motivated in this area than many a husband. You know, they want to get the Word into the lives of the kids, they want to get the kids to Sunday school and church and fellowship groups, and they want to help them in Christian endeavors, and they want the household, you know, filled with the songs of praise or Scripture plaques and all that. Praise the Lord for women like that, for wives like that.

My dear bride of now approaching 43 years, oh, she's had a heart for that. My goodness, and she does to this day. Though our kids are 38, 39, and 40, praying every day, contacting them all by phone every day or two, getting prayer requests, what's God done, what do you need to see, asking about how things are going at church.

I mean, she's just driven by the Spirit from above with this passion to keep ministering to the kids and grandkids. And I praise the Lord for all of that, but also I must acknowledge there's someone who even has a prior responsibility in that to her. Who's that? Me.

You know, me. It's to the head that is given this role of being sure that there's the washing of water by the Word. And may we not leave this to our wives.

Oh, if they are willing, we are above all men blessed. But let's not just leave it there. Let's take a lead there.

Then the kids are going to be double blessed. Double blessed. Our 12th grandchild is due any day.

I mean, it could be getting the call right now, you know. And that brings a whole new generation around, you know, that you can help their moms and dads. Get the Word into those little lives, washing over those little lives.

It's a dirty world for children to have to walk through. But there is a way for daily refreshing and washing. What a phenomenal way to sacrificially think and attend to those areas in the life of our wife.

To be sure that I know when my wife loves to read the Word and pray in the Word. And she knows when I do. And then we like to share together on and off through the day.

And we've kind of learned through the years. And I thank God for this. Just to guard that time for each other, you know.

I know there might be things that I would like her help in at a certain time of day. But I know that that's a time she just is the sharpest and most ready to read and learn and pray. And we can guard those things for one another as household servants one to another.

And also related to all of this, verse 27. Our ministries to our wives not only have a sanctifying cleansing impact in effect, but an edifying one. Verse 27, exemplified by Jesus.

That he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Oh, we want to see our wives growing and developing in the things of the Lord. Fulfilling their calling and maturing in the faith.

Treating our wives in a loving, caring way. There's kind of an interesting illustration of this. Verse 28.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.

It hit me one day in reading this, that if I just be as careful with my wife as I was sometimes with my own body. You know, I'm thinking particularly of shaving. It hit me one morning, shaving, you know.

I was being quite careful, you know. I didn't grab that razor and put a little lather on, hit some here, miss some there. Oh, what's the difference? I don't care.

You know, just yank that blade across there and tough up, buddy, you know. No, you know, I'm there very carefully, you know. And oh, oh, that was not good.

I wounded, I wounded this body, you know. If we would just be as careful with our wives as we are sometimes when we shave, we'd be tremendous servants to them. And that's kind of the thrust of those verses we just read.

You know, if we would give the nourishing, cherishing, caring help to our wives that we do just to keep making it on through this life day by day, we would have a great impact and be a great blessing to them. Servanthood, though, again, that's what it's about, servanthood. The Lord wants us to serve one another in the home.

There's a bit more here and these portions at the end of the chapter build on the husband's role. But also it's more than that. It kind of summarizes the matters for husbands and wives.

Because now these truths of servanthood are going to be related to the original family pattern in verses 31 through 33. Let's see if we recognize this from Genesis. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Verse 31.

Here the Lord directly relates the New Testament Christian home and these partnership patterns to the original family pattern established back at the beginning in Genesis chapter 2. The point being added here is that this fully unified partnership of two people living as one unit before God are now described here in Ephesians 5 to be servanthood partners. But we're talking about the same kind of relationship that God laid out at the beginning and he kind of graciously ties it in by this quote from Genesis chapter 2. This partnership. Two servants of God becoming servants to one another and the two becoming one flesh.

Oh, this is unique in the arrangements that God has put forth. This partnership of husband and wife serving one another. This partnership has a distinct and unique priority.

Next time we visit we're going to study the parent-child relationship. We'll notice that the parent-child relationship as precious as it is, as high priority as it is, doesn't match the husband and wife relationship. The husband-wife relationship.

It's the place where two become one. Where the lives of two become so blended that they're learning to share one life together. This is unique.

It isn't even mirrored in the parent-child relationship. Parent-child, a child and a parent, the two do not become one flesh. Oh, there's a precious bond, a God-given ordained bond of love and oneness in Christ with parents toward their children, children toward their parents.

But parent-child, we're not told in the scripture that the two become one flesh. This is unique. Absolutely unique.

Here's a big implication, I believe. Husbands and wives are not to get caught in the horizontal human trap of, quote, living for the kids. Oh, husband, wife, father, mother, they are to sacrificially be servants of God in the lives of their kids, but they're not to live for their kids.

I mean, how many marriages, the real binding element keeping it going are the children. And then the children grow up and somewhere around their late teens or 20s, they move out of the home and what happens to a marriage that was living for the kids, where the reason to be together was the children. The reason to be together disappears.

And we know the marriage rate among those with grown children is staggering. Well, it's because we're following a pattern in culture that doesn't match God's ordained household plan. I remember when our kids moved out from home, our three kids.

Our daughter, our one daughter was already married. And then not long after that, on one weekend, our two sons left. One of them went off to school, to college.

Well, he had lived at home two years, community college, went off for the last two years of his studies. And then that same weekend, his younger brother got married and they were gone. And it's kind of humorous.

I think of this and I love to tell this story. Friends in the church, a lot of them called us that following week. And the conversations went something like this, composite, putting them all together.

Phone rings, hello. Who is it? Pleasantries. And then they would say, Bob Deany, we're just calling to see if you're okay.

And if I had gotten the call, I got to where that week I kind of started kidding around with them. Though at first they didn't know it. I said, well, I think we're okay.

Why? I said, what's up? And they said, well, you're in the empty nest now. I said, oh, really? Hang on just a second. And I, you know, like I'm going away from the phone at 10 to something.

I said, well, I took a look around the nest and guess what? My wife's here and I'm here. It's not empty. So we're kind of shocked and a little insulted or mad until we laughed with them.

And I'm not saying that the kids leaving the home was of no consequence. I mean, we both miss them greatly. And again, I must be candid and say my wife demonstrated that more often than I did.

You know, but I wasn't glad they were gone in any sense of the word. We love our kids. They were a great blessing around the house.

I may be adjusted to their absence better than my wife did. But here's the thing. We didn't go in the morning.

You know, the Lord was still there in our home. We were still there in our home. We still love the Lord.

We still loved each other. We still loved our kids. We were going to be praying for them every day.

Really, I think God's plan is bring a man and a woman together. Join them in marriage and the two become one flesh. They begin sharing one life together in the Lord.

Then the Lord adds children. And there's a season there, you know, 20 years or so, more or less, when the children are there and they are ministered to by the husband and wife. But the parents and children don't become one flesh.

It's still just the husband and wife are one flesh. Then when the kids grow up, and hopefully with exposure to godly truth for maturing spiritually, and they go out to establish their households, the husband and wife still have one another. And there's still one in the Lord.

I think that is the biblical pattern. And that's a good reminder here just when the subject is going to go to parent and child relationship soon. Now this, verse 32, this is a great mystery.

This is a great mystery. Two becoming one and each serving the other as a servant of God. This is a great mystery.

But I speak concerning Christ and the church. It's a great mystery. What is a New Testament mystery? It's a truth that you could not learn any other way than God revealing it.

You couldn't learn it just by being married 40 years. You couldn't learn it by just reading sociologically filtered books, you know, on how cultures have developed marriages and all that. This is a great mystery.

Great mystery. It's a grand mystery, marriages. But here's the great thing.

It doesn't have to remain mysterious. Because God has revealed in his word how it works. And if we learn in the word how it's to work, and then we turn all that to prayer, we'll be blessed in our homes.

And we will walk in the reality of that mystery. But it's concerning Christ and his church. You know, John 3, 29 and Revelation 22, 17, this imagery of us being the bride of Christ.

Every marriage, it is God's will that it be a demonstration of the great loving relationship between Christ and his church. That's what God wants to make of our marriages. Oh, that's a great mystery.

That's a grand mystery for God to reveal. But though it is a great mystery, verse 33, nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Yes, it's a great mystery.

But the reality of it can be demonstrated in love from the husband to the wife and respect from the wife to the husband. And it can have a great impact on people's lives. One with our wives.

Oh, let's respect that oneness. Not good for husband and wife to be disrespectful. Got to go home to the old lady.

Oh, does your great-grandmother live with you? No. No way to be speaking about the one that we are one with. And wives often do the same thing.

Got to go see the old man. Got to go see Caesar. Got to go see the boss.

Shouldn't be that way. Should be tender, loving, respectful, appreciative terms that come out of our heart, not just try to paste them on our lips. One last thing.

What's the necessary resource? How are people like you and me going to find the wherewithal to live and think and walk and talk like this? Well, it's right where the passage began, Ephesians 5.18. And do not be

drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. That's the necessary resource. That's how we're going to make progress in living up to this heavenly pattern.

Be filled with the Spirit. And you know something? That's the start of this whole passage. Submitting to one another is the end of a sentence that starts in verse 18.

Those who are filled with the Spirit, they become those speaking to one another in psalms and hymns. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father and submitting to one another in the fear of God. This is the outworking of the fullness of the Spirit in our lives.

This isn't just some goal we paste on the refrigerator, you know. Say nice things to your wife, you know. Well, it's great to say nice things to a wife, but those nice things should originate in our heart and they actually should flow out by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the necessary resource. The filling of the Spirit. And as you may know, this could be translated, be always being filled with the Spirit.

We'll end up at this verse again in our next study about parents and children, but let's pray about it now, shall we? Lord, we do ask you to fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit. What a high, holy, heavenly calling marriage and family God's way is. Lord, we want to be mutual servants in our home.

Teach us this through the example of the Lord Jesus Christ unfolded by the Holy Spirit and empowering us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And may we pass on these truths to others that we minister to. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. God bless you.

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