



MARRIAGE IS FROM HEAVEN

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Marriage is from Heaven

SERMON REFERENCE: Ephesians 5:21-33

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2077

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a complete commitment for life. As we see in Ephesians 5:21-23, marriage is from Heaven; it is not simply a contract... it is a covenant. Husbands and wives are of equal worth before God; both bear His image, but in differing ways, because marriage is symbolic of the way God relates to His people.

Ephesians 5:23 says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body."

When the Bible speaks of the husband being the head of the home, it is not speaking of his rights; it is speaking of his responsibilities.

There are three major responsibilities of the husband, the first being his servant leadership.

Ephesians 5 does not call the husband a dictator. Rather, we are given the example of Jesus Christ, who is head of the Church, yet serves her and meets her needs. We are to meet the needs of our wives gently.

Husbands are also responsible for sacrificial love. This is a passionate commitment that comes from the deepest part of our being.

Sacrificial love is also a purifying love, as Ephesians 5:26 says: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word... not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Husbands are to express their sacrificial love through their protection and provision. They are to meet the family's physical, spiritual and emotional needs.

Finally, husbands are responsible for showing steadfast loyalty. Jesus promised to never leave nor forsake His church. (Read Hebrews 13:5.) Likewise, we are responsible for keeping the vows we made when we entered our marriage covenant.

If we think of marriage as a contract, we will look for loopholes, and miss the blessing that it truly is; if we view marriage as a covenant, we will cultivate something beautiful, like Heaven itself.

Adrian Rogers says, "A home ought to be a little bit of the Garden of Eden, the only part we have left till Jesus comes."

Life Application

Are you cultivating a marriage based on servant leadership, sacrificial love, and steadfast loyalty? Remember the priority, the permanence, and the purpose of marriage, and treat your spouse accordingly.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Churches must be more concerned with being true to the Word of God rather than being big.
- b) Liberal churches are dying on the vine, while Bible-believing churches are growing.
 - i) We're not primarily concerned about whether everybody likes our beliefs on marriage.
- c) Husband and wife are equal in the eyes of God.
 - i) Both bear God's image, but, in differing ways.
 - ii) The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people.
 - iii) A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church.
 - (1) Christ died for the church.
 - (2) God has given the responsibility to: provide, protect and lead the family to the husband.
 - iv) The wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of the husband as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.
- d) We need to understand the role of marriage from God's point of view.
 - i) This is not settle by human propaganda, but by the Word of God.
- e) We have so many failed marriages because we have thrown away God's plan for marriage.
- f) Stu Weber quote: "The great problem in America is failure in the highest office of the land, the husband and father."
- g) Marriage: contract or covenant?
 - i) Marriage isn't a contract, where you try to protect your rights.
 - ii) If you see marriage as a divine covenant, you'll accept your responsibilities.
 - iii) If you see marriage as a contract, you'll be looking for loopholes in the contract.
- h) This message speaks primarily to the husband and his responsibility to his wife in light of Scripture.
 - i) What we believe is based on the Word of God.
 - i) The Bible is God's Word
 - ii) It's not up for debate.
 - j) God's Word says a husband and father is responsible to his wife for three major things.

2) SERVANT LEADERSHIP (EPHESIANS 5:21)

- a) Submitting to one another in the fear of God.
 - i) The word "head" means "leader."
 - ii) The husband is not a dictator or a top sergeant giving orders.
 - (1) This doesn't speak of a chain of command, but a line of responsibility.



- iii) To have headship is to have responsibility.
 - (1) If a wife is to submit to her husband, she is to submit to her husband for loving leadership.
- iv) Ephesians 5:23 is the model God has given for marriage.
 - (1) A husband is the leader in the home, in the same way Christ is the head of the church.
- v) Jesus Christ has never forced a believer to do anything.
 - (1) He leads and loves us to do many things.
 - (2) He is the model for the husband.
- b) To be “head” means responsible leadership.
 - i) 1 Corinthians 11:3
 - ii) We serve a triune God.
 - (1) God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - iii) The Father and the Son are co-equal in worth, power, majesty and glory.
 - (1) John 14:9
 - (2) John 10:30
 - iv) 1 Corinthians 11:3 does not mean that the Son is inferior to the Father.
 - v) Philippians 2:6
 - (1) The headship of one does not mean the inferiority of the other.
 - (2) The Father has eternal headship, not because the Son is inferior, but because of everlasting love.
 - vi) Every home needs a head.
 - (1) Anything with no head is dead and anything with two heads is abnormal.
 - (2) This does not mean that the wife is inferior.
 - (a) Both the male and female bear God’s image.
 - (i) Genesis 1:27
 - (b) Both the male and female are heirs of the grace of life.
 - (i) 1 Peter 3:7
 - (c) Both are equal in their standing before God if they are saved.
 - (i) Galatians 3:28
 - 1. God is no respecter of persons.
 - 2. We are all one in Christ; He does not divide based on race, gender or socioeconomic status.
- c) While male and female are equal, they are not alike; God has given them different roles.
 - i) The devil attempts to make men and women alike under the guise of making them equal.
 - (1) God made them male and female; the Bible is against he-women and she-men.
- d) The tendency today is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of maleness and femaleness.
 - i) Consequently, more divorce, homosexuality, sexual abuse, promiscuity, social awkwardness, emotional distress, and suicide.
 - ii) Mankind has thrown away God-given identity and the differences between the male and female.
 - iii) Oneness and equality are not sameness.



- (1) God is for oneness, not sameness.
- (2) God made us different that He might make us one.
- e) Recognizing the headship of one spouse does not mean the inferiority of the other.
 - i) We are to be submissive to our boss at work; but this does not make us inferior to him.
 - ii) We are to be submissive to a coach on a team; this does not mean we are inferior to him.
 - iii) We are to be submissive to a teacher in a class; this does not mean we are inferior to him.
 - iv) We are to be submissive to local authorities; this does not mean we are inferior to them.
 - v) It simply means that God has placed order in all society.
- f) Psychologist David McLawland said, "Marriage is not primarily a partnership as much as it is a team."
 - i) In football, every team has a quarterback calling the plays.
 - ii) Another team member might be better or stronger, but the coach has declared who will call the plays.
 - iii) Who says that the man is the head in the home? Our Coach says so.
- g) The wife may be superior to the husband in many ways.
 - i) The husband, as the head of the home, can delegate duties but not responsibility.
 - ii) When a wife does well in the duties delegated to her, she is to be praised.
 - iii) If the wife messes up in her duties, the husband is to get the blame.
 - (1) Because, ultimately, the responsibility falls on the husband.
- h) The problem in the world today is not primarily rebellious wives.
 - i) The problem is slacker husbands who shirk their responsibility to love and lead their wives as Christ loved and led the church.
 - ii) If the home is wrong, it's primarily because the man is wrong.
 - iii) God held Adam responsible for Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden.
 - (1) Genesis 3:17
 - iv) God held Adam responsible for not leading his home as he should have.
- i) What is Servant Leadership?
 - i) A leader serves.
 - (1) The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church.
 - (2) Luke 22:25-26
 - (a) For the husband to be the head of the wife means that he is to serve his wife.
 - (3) Jesus is the head of the church, yet He washed His disciples' feet.
 - (a) Luke 13:13
 - (i) Jesus never said that He was not Master or Lord.
 - (b) Servant leadership is the way you show your headship in the home.
 - (4) The wife is not there to serve the husband, he is there to serve her.
 - ii) A leader is gentle.
 - (1) 1 Thessalonians 2:7
 - (2) If you are a husband, you need to be a "gentle" man.
 - (3) Children love their fathers not just for their strength, but because they are gentle.
 - (a) Psalm 18:35
 - (4) If you want to have great kids and a great wife, be gentle with them.
 - iii) A leader guides by example



- (1) 1 Peter 5:1-3
 - (a) Husbands are to lead, not because they have to, but willingly.
 - (b) “Not for filthy lucre” means “not for money.”
- (2) Husbands have no right to ask anyone to do something they are not themselves willing to do.
 - (a) Or to believe a certain thing.
 - (b) Or to live a certain way.
- (3) As the husband, are you an example to your wife as Christ is to the Church?
- iv) A leader elicits the strengths of those that it leads.
 - (1) Husbands, your wife has gifts that you don't have.
 - (a) Acts 2:17-18
 - (b) Children and wives, as much as husbands and males, have a touch from God, wisdom from God, and He has poured out His Spirit upon them.

3) SACRIFICIAL LOVE (EPHESIANS 5:25-26)

- a) Husbands are responsible to their wives for sacrificial love.
 - i) A husband should be willing to die for his wife.
 - ii) Jesus modeled this sacrificial love when He gave Himself up for the church.
 - iii) Die to ego, pride, and ambition.
- b) Sacrificial love is a passionate love.
 - i) This is not referring to sexual passion.
 - ii) But a husband should be willing to give himself up for his wife.
 - iii) Marriages need two funerals and one wedding.
 - (1) Both husband and wife die to themselves and come alive to Jesus Christ.
 - iv) When a man loves his wife passionately, there is nothing too precious for him to give up for her, except his relationship to Almighty God.
 - v) Do not sacrifice your home on the altar of your job or your ministry.
 - (1) The church is the bride of Christ, not ours.
 - vi) Most women are willing to be in submission to a man who loves her enough to die for her
 - vii) Demonstrate that love by the way you live for her.
- c) Sacrificial love is a purifying love.
 - i) A husband's chief assignment from God is to make his wife a more radiant, beautiful Christian.
 - ii) He is to intercede for her, lead, teach, love, and protect her spiritually.
 - (1) He should not encourage her in any impurity: to drink something that is wrong, to watch something that is wrong, to do anything that is wrong.
- d) Sacrificial love is a protecting love.
 - i) A husband wants to protect his body when it's in danger.
 - (1) So he is to protect his wife.
 - ii) You are to protect her because she is “the weaker vessel.”
 - (1) 1 Peter 3:7
 - (a) “Weaker vessel” does not mean inferior vessel.
 - (2) Silk is weaker than denim; silk is not inferior to denim.



- (3) Porcelain is weaker than steel but not inferior to steel.
- (4) With porcelain you can make a beautiful cup. With steel you can make a sledgehammer to drive a spike.
- (5) The cup is weaker. Which is better?
 - (a) You can't drink tea out of a sledgehammer.
 - (b) You can't drive a wedge with a porcelain cup.
- iii) God made us different, that He might make us one.
 - (1) God gave men, generally, a stronger frame and physiology.
 - (2) God gave men to protect his wife as Jesus protects the church.
 - (3) Thank God we're under His protection.
- e) Sacrificial love is a providing love.
 - i) Ephesians 5:29
 - (1) "Cherish" means "to warm with body heat."
 - (2) "Nurture" means "to feed and mature."

4) STEADFAST LOYALTY (EPHESIANS 5:30-31)

- a) God's plan for marriage is summarized in Ephesians 5:31.
 - i) The priority of marriage.
 - (1) The highest relationship on this earth is not parent-child, it is husband-wife.
 - ii) The permanence of marriage.
 - (1) "Shall be joined to his wife" means "welded together."
 - (2) Mark 10:9
 - iii) The purpose of marriage.
 - (1) Today's society teaches "safe sex" but sex is not meant to be dangerous.
 - (a) We need to be teaching sanctified sex.
 - (2) "They two shall be one flesh" speaks of a blending not just of the body, but of the soul and the spirit until they become one.
 - (3) Today's kids talk about "going all the way;" this is the one thing they do not do.
 - (a) You "go all the way" when you give yourself; your body, soul and spirit forever to your husband or wife until death do you part.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) A home ought to be a little bit of the Garden of Eden, the only part we have left until Jesus comes.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take your Bibles and turn to Ephesians chapter 5. Now the reason we have so many failed marriages today is that we have thrown away the original plan that God has given. Somebody has said that, "The difference between courtship and marriage is the difference between what you see in the seed catalog and what comes up in the garden." Well, what causes that, I think, is failure to cultivate the garden.

Now this is Father's Day, and I want to speak primarily, therefore, to the husband and his responsibility to his wife in the light of all of this. That's the reason why I've said, that women are from Venus, men are from Mars, according to a very popular book, but marriage is from Heaven. Marriage is from Heaven, and we're going to understand what God has to say about marriage.

Now, Stu Weber said something very interesting. He said, "The great problem in America is failure in the highest office of the land, the husband and father." That's the highest office, that's the highest office in the land, to be a husband and a father.

Well, let's look at what God has to say here in Ephesians chapter 5. We're going to be talking here about the marriage covenant. Not the marriage contract. If you look at marriage as a contract, you're going to be standing up for your rights. If you look at marriage as a covenant, you're going to be accepting your responsibilities. If you look at marriage as a contract, you're going to be looking for loopholes in the contract, but if you look at marriage as a divine covenant, you're not going to be doing that.

According to this Scripture that I'm going to read to you in a moment, man, the husband, the father, according to the Word of God, has three major responsibilities, and I hope by the time I'm finished, whatever else, if you're a husband and a father today, you will see your three major responsibilities. And by the way, if what I say today doesn't come out of the Word of God, you have every right to argue with me. But if what I say today does come out of the Word of God, don't waste time by arguing with me. Take it up with God, okay? Just say, "God, I don't like what You said," or "I don't believe Your Bible," or whatever. Don't argue with me about it because you'll be wasting your time. And I don't say that arrogantly, but I just want to say, folks, the Bible is God's Word. It's not up for debate, least not in my heart, and I trust not in yours.

Here are the three things that a husband is responsible to his wife for. Now first of all, he is responsible for **servant leadership**, servant leadership. Look in Ephesians 5 verse 21 through verse 23, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God, wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and He is the Savior of the body." Now, the word head here speaks of leader. The husband is the head of the wife, that is, he is the leader. Now he's not the dictator, the husband is not some sort of a top sergeant, to be beating his wife over the head with a Bible club. We hear a lot about the chain of command, you might hear about the chain of command in the army, but this doesn't speak primarily of a chain of command, this is a line of responsibility. That's a much better term. You see, to have headship is to have responsibility. That means if a wife is to submit to her husband, she is to submit to her husband for loving leadership. And God gives the model. What is the model? Verse 23 of Ephesians chapter 5, "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church."



Now, Jesus Christ has never forced me to do anything. I have never, ever in my marriage, and Joyce and I have been married for a long time, I have never forced Joyce to do one blessed thing! Never. Jesus has never forced me to do anything. He hasn't forced me to be at church today. He didn't force me to put anything in the offering plate. He didn't force me to pray this; He's never forced me to do anything, but He's led me and loved me to do many things. And you see, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. That is the model.

Now, to be head means responsible leadership. Now let me give you a verse of Scripture. This is a key verse. First Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3, "But I would have you know," here's the apostle Paul, the same one who wrote this passage, speaking, "But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God." Now let's take that last part of that phrase, "The head of Christ is God." Do you know anything about Christian theology, you know we don't worship three gods, we worship one God: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a triune God. And in the Godhead there's both Father and Son. And so the Father and the Son are coequal in worth, power, glory, majesty. In John 14:9, Jesus could say, "He who hath seen Me hath seen My Father." John 10 verse 30, "I and the Father are One." And yet this passage of Scripture here, in First Corinthians 11 verse 3 says that, "The Father is the head of the Son." Does that mean that the Son is inferior? Of course not.

If you know Bible theology, you know that the Lord Jesus Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God; Philippians 2:6. Therefore, the headship of one does not mean the inferiority of the other. Have you got the point? The headship of the one does not mean the inferiority of the other. Now, the Son is in Heaven at the right hand of the Father as an equal, and the Father has an equal headship, or an eternal headship, not because the Son is inferior, but because of everlasting love.

You see, the home needs a head. Anything with no head is dead. And anything with two heads is abnormal. This doesn't mean that the wife is inferior. Let me tell you about the equality of the man and the woman. Both bear God's image. Put this in your margin, Genesis 1 verse 27, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." Both the male and the female, therefore, are in the image of God, and both the male and the female, therefore, are heirs of the grace of life. First Peter chapter 3 and verse 7, "Husbands and wives are to dwell together as heirs of the grace of life." So we are joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Both a man and a woman are equal in their standing before God if they've been saved.

Put this verse down, Galatians chapter 3 and verse 28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." So when our Lord looks at us, He's no respecter of persons. He doesn't say, "Well, you're of this race or you're that race. You're this socioeconomic status and you're that socioeconomic status, you're a male or you're a female, and I'm going to divide between you on that basis." He says, "Oh no, oh no, not in Christ." Friend, in Christ we're all one! Say, "Amen." Every race, every socioeconomic background, each gender, male or female, we are all one in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now look, the male and the female both bear the image of God. The male and the female are both heirs of the grace of life. The male and the female are both one in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now learn that and learn it well: they are equal before God.

But now listen and listen carefully. While male and female are equal, God has given them different roles. It's the devil's attempt to make men and women alike under the guise of making them equal. The



devil's slick, did you know that? Friend, I want to tell you something. God made them male and female and the Bible is against he-women and she-men.

The tendency today is to stress equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of maleness and femaleness. And you look around in society and you're going to see what has happened. The consequence is: more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more social awkwardness, more emotional distress, more suicide. Why? Because people have thrown away the God-given identity and the differences between the male and the female. Oneness and equality are not sameness. God is for oneness, God is not for sameness. God made us different that He might make us one. God, "Made them male and female."

And for one to recognize the headship of the other does not mean the inferiority of the other. If you work for a boss, you'd better be submissive to him or you'll be looking for another job. That doesn't mean you're inferior to him. If you're on a team, you'd better be submissive to the coach. That doesn't mean that you're inferior to the coach. If you're a student, you'd better be submissive to your professor or you're not going to learn and you're not going to get the grades. That doesn't mean you're inferior to your professor. If you are a citizen, you'd better be submissive to the policeman. That doesn't mean that you're inferior to the policeman, it just simply means that in all society God has put order. That's all it simply means.

David McLawland gave the best illustration of this. I've used it several times. He says that, "Marriage is not primarily a partnership so much as it is a team." And the husband is the quarterback on the team. Every team, if you're a football fan, we're using the idiom of football, every team has to have a quarterback who, in the huddle, calls the plays. Whether he gets the plays from the bench or whether he has them in his heart and mind makes no difference, he's the one that ultimately must call the play. Now, the quarterback may have a running back who is stronger and better than the quarterback. Maybe the quarterback, when he gets out of school will just take a regular job. The running back may go to the NFL, and be a multimillionaire. But in this situation, it is the quarterback who is calling the play. Now, he can get advice from the other players. If the bench calls the play, he'll call that play regardless of what the other players say. But he may not even call the best play, but at least the team will all be going in the same direction. Now the quarterback does not call the plays primarily because he's the best player; he calls the plays because somebody has to call the play, and who says that he's going to call the play? The coach says he's going to call the play. Who says that the man is the head of the home? Our coach. Our coach says so. I mean, that's all there is to it.

You see, the wife may be superior to the husband in many ways. I know that Joyce is superior to me in some ways and I'm superior to her in some ways. Now if you're the head of the home, you can delegate duty, sir, but you cannot delegate responsibility. In our home Joyce does the finances and I'm so grateful for that. She writes all the checks, and she balances the books, she makes all the deposits, she does all of that. God bless her for it. I'm so grateful that she does. Now if she is right when she does that, she is to be praised, but if she messes up, I'm the one to be blamed, because it is not her responsibility, it is my responsibility. I have delegated that to her.

Now I am convinced that the problem in America today and in the world today is not primarily rebellious wives but it is slacker, shirker, quitter husbands who do not take their responsibility to love their wives and lead their wives as Christ loved the church and led the church. You see, if the home is wrong, it is primarily because the man is wrong.



Did you know, did you know that God held Adam responsible for Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 3 verse 17, "And unto Adam He said, 'Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife and has eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, 'Thou shalt not eat of it,' cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.'" God held Adam responsible for not leading his home and keeping his home as he should.

We said that the husband is responsible for servant leadership. What is servant leadership? Sir, do you think you're "Little Lord Ha Ha?" Do you think you're the dictator in your home? Well, you've got a lot to learn if you do. **A leader serves!** Listen to what Jesus said. Now remember, remember that the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Well, what did Jesus say? Put this down, Luke 22 verses 25 through 26, "And He said unto them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he that is chief as him that doth serve.'"

You know what it means, sir, for you to be the head of the wife? It means you're going to serve your wife. It doesn't mean that she's there to bring you your slippers and the paper. It means that you are to serve her.

Jesus is the head of the church, and yet I find in John chapter 13, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. And He says in John 13 verse 13 and 14, "If ye call Me Master and Lord and ye say well for so I am." Jesus never said He was not Master, Jesus never said He was not Lord, but now listen, "And if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." I want to suggest, sir, that you find ways to wash your wife's feet. That's the way you show your headship in the home. It is servant leadership. Jesus said, "I am the Lord and Master, but a husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church." A leader serves. Your wife is not there to serve you, you're there to serve her.

Number two, **a leader is gentle.** If you're one of these tough guys, saying, "I'm the boss," and all of that, there's something wrong. You're sick. Listen, the apostle Paul was the great leader of the church, he was an apostle. But he said to the church in First Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 7, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." How many husbands today are gentle with their wives? Do you know what you need to be, sir, if you think you're the head of the home? You need to be a gentle man, a gentle man. That's leadership, to be gentle.

I've noticed children who love their daddies to death. Do you know why those children love those daddies? You watch, almost every time, the daddy will be a strong man that the little child looks up to, but he will be so gentle with that child. And when a man has that great strength and that great gentleness at the same time, that child will follow that father off a cliff! In Psalm 18 verse 35, the Bible says of the Lord, "His gentleness has made me great." You want to have great kids? Be gentle with them. You want to have a great wife? Be gentle.

A leader serves, a leader is gentle, **a leader guides by example.** Listen to this. First Peter, we think of him as the big fisherman. First Peter chapter 5 verses 1 through 3. He's talking now to the church leaders, and he says, "The eldest which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," that is, you can lead, "not by constraint," not because you have to, but willingly, "not for filthy lucre," that means, not because they pay you, "but of a ready mind," now listen, "neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."



Peter says, "Look, if you're going to be a pastor, don't think that you're the dictator of the church." And by the way sometimes people say, "You know, these pastors of these big churches like Bellevue, they're dictators." Well, I hear that; man I always laugh. I think, "Good night, if I was a dictator, they'd all tithe." They'd all be here for prayer meeting! I just serve at your pleasure. I'm not a dictator. I'm not a lord, but the Bible says, "You lead by example."

Now that's servant leadership! I have no right to ask you to do anything I'm not willing to do! Or to believe anything I don't believe! Or live like I don't live! I'd be a hypocrite. And servant leadership, friend, servant leadership is just that, it serves.

Servant leadership is gentle, servant leadership leads by example. Sir, are you an example to your wife? Christ certainly is to the church. Did you know what servant leadership does? It elicits the strengths of those that it leads. Do you know why Bellevue is such a great church? You say, "Well, because Adrian does everything." No. Did you know that we have literally thousands of people in this church who have ability in areas that I would not begin to have ability in and yet God has given me the privilege of being the leader?

And a husband, when he looks at his family, when he looks at his wife, he's going to see that she has gifts that he does not have. Put this Scripture down, Acts chapter 2 verses 17 and 18, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, 'that I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh,'" now listen to this, "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams," now watch this, "and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My spirit and they shall prophesy."

Now what does that mean? It means, friend, that children and wives, as well as husbands and males, have a touch from God, they have wisdom from God, and God has poured out His spirit upon them.

Do you know whose advice and counsel I value more than anybody's on the face of the Earth? The young lady I'm married to and in love with all of my heart. She's so wise. My life has been molded so very much by her counsel, and back in 1979 there were many people pressing me to run for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Very frankly I did not wish to do it. I had responsibilities here at the church. To be the president of the Southern Baptist Convention is like having one entire job just superimposed upon another job. The only difference is they don't pay you for the second job. It's just a great big mass of responsibility, and slings and arrows, and things that you have to learn.

Joyce and I were wrestling with that in prayer because many people were saying, "Adrian, you ought to do this." Before the Southern Baptist Convention, we would discuss it, pray about it, and she said, "On a scale of one and ten, where are you?" I'd say, "Maybe a three, maybe a two, maybe a zero." I don't think it ever got above a five. But on the morning when the nominations were to be made, past midnight, I was with two friends in a hotel room, down on my knees weeping and praying before God. My wife, it was so late she put on a housecoat, was there in the bed. I looked over at Joyce, and Joyce held up ten fingers. Friend, that did it. That did it for me. Why? Because I so respect her walk with God! I so respect her wisdom, that I know that God has poured out upon her His Holy Spirit and given her a wisdom that in many ways and in many times is beyond my own.

And a servant, listen, let me tell you, a responsible leadership serves, responsible leadership is gentle, responsible leadership sets an example, responsible leadership elicits the help of those that it leads or it is foolish leadership!



You know, the people of the world don't understand what I'm talking about. You might as well expect my dog to appreciate opera. They don't understand. They have not got a clue as to what it means for a husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church.

Now, I wish I had more time on that subject. Here's the number two thing. All right, now look. First of all, the husband is responsible for servant leadership. Secondly, the husband is responsible for **sacrificial love**. Did you get the second point? Sacrificial love. Now look again in Ephesians 5 verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." The Greek literally is, "And gave Himself up for it." The husband ought to be willing to die for his wife? That's how much you ought to love her. Sacrificial love! Servant leadership. Sacrificial love! Now he doesn't have to die physically to die to ego and pride and ambition and all of these other things.

How is he to love his wife? Well he's to love her **passionately**, and when I'm talking about passion here, I'm not talking about passion like sexual passion. And though that is certainly one of the gifts of marriage, but I'm talking about a passion that says, "I am willing to die for you." I'm saying, "I'd give myself up for you." Do you know what most marriages need? Most marriages in America need two funerals and one wedding, where both the husband and the wife die to themselves and come alive to Jesus Christ.

You see, when a man loves his wife passionately, there's nothing too precious for that man to give up for his wife except his relationship to Almighty God. I want to tell the members of this church something; I told the pulpit committee something when I came here and I'll tell you this again. My relationship to my wife is more important to me than my relationship to you. And I'm not going to sacrifice my home on the altar of this ministry. The church is Jesus' bride, not mine. Joyce is my bride. You can get you another pastor, but I've got one wife. Nothing, nothing is too precious for a man to give up for his wife except his relationship to God. And most women don't mind being in submission to a man who loves her enough to die for her and shows it by the way he lives for her.

Now not only is this sacrificial love passionate love, it is **purifying love**. Look in Ephesians 5 verses 26 and 27, "He gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." The husband, therefore, his chief assignment from God is to make his wife a more radiantly beautiful Christian. He is to intercede for her, he is to lead her, he is to teach her, he's to love her and protect her spiritually. He can never encourage her in any impurity whatsoever, to drink anything that's wrong, to watch anything that's wrong, to do anything that's wrong. No!

His love is passionate love, it is purifying love, it is **protecting love**. Look in Ephesians 5 verse 28, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." That is, you want to protect your body when your body's in danger; then you're to protect your wife. A man is sick who does not protect his own body, and a man is sick who will not protect his wife. He is committing marital suicide. Friend, be good to yourself and love your wife.

You're to protect her because, according to First Peter 3:7, she's the weaker vessel. That does not mean that she is the inferior vessel; she is the weaker vessel. What is weaker, silk or blue denim? Is silk inferior to blue denim? What is weaker, stainless steel or gold? Well is gold inferior to stainless steel? What is weaker, porcelain or steel? Now, with porcelain you can make a beautiful cup; with steel you can make a sledgehammer to drive a spike. Which is weaker? The cup. Which is better? You can't drink tea out of a



sledgehammer, and you can't drive a wedge with a porcelain cup. "God made us different, that He might make us one," and God gave men to protect, and as Jesus protects the church and thank God we're under His protection, the husband, with his servant leadership, is to protect his wife with sacrificial love.

But it's also **providing love**. Look if you will in Ephesians 5 verse 29, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord, the church." To cherish means to warm with body heat; to nurture means to feed and mature. So listen, folks, you owe to your wife protective love.

I had a lot of things I was going to say about that, but here's the last thing. I just want to get this last point in. First one, who can remember it? Servant leadership. What's the second one? Sacrificial love. Now here's the third one; all right, servant leadership, sacrificial love, and here's the last one, **steadfast loyalty!** Look if you will in Ephesians 5 verses 30 to 33, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Now folks, let me just tell you something here very plainly. Here's God's plan for marriage. All of marriage is just wrapped up in Ephesians 5 verse 31, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife." Do you know what the highest relationship on this Earth is? It is not parent-child. And it is not child-parent. It is husband and wife, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife." And so, it's so important here that we see that the priority of marriage is the relationship between a man and his wife.

And the permanence of marriage is, "Shall be joined unto his wife." That word in the Greek and in the Hebrew in the Old Testament has the idea of being welded, I mean put together! And the Bible teaches in Mark 10:9, "What God hath therefore joined together, let not man put asunder." That's the permanency of marriage.

And the purpose of marriage is, "And they two shall be one flesh." Now I'm going to tell you something else, folks, my heart breaks for our teenagers today. Teenagers who are being taught, quote: safe sex. Folks, it's not meant to be dangerous, it is not meant to be dangerous. What we need to teach them is: sanctified sex. "They two shall be one flesh." This speaks of a blending, not just of the body, but the soul and the spirit, till they become one.

Do you know what's such a heartbreak? These kids talk about going all the way. Folks, that's the one thing they don't do. That's what they don't do. You don't go all the way until you give yourself, body, soul, and spirit, forever, to one woman, to death do you part. That's God's plan. That's God's ideal. The devil is selling a generation today a bill of goods. Folks, I'm telling you, the husband owes to his wife a steadfast loyalty. And I remind you what I told Joyce. I said, "Sweetheart, if you ever leave me, I'm going with you." I belong to Joyce; she belongs to me, we're in it together, and we're in it all the way.

To me, if you know your Bible, what we said is just like saying water's wet. I mean, that's God's plan. And I feel sorry for people who don't get in on it. A home ought to be a little bit of the Garden of Eden, the only part we have left till Jesus comes.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, would you just begin to pray for those 'round about you? If anybody here who doesn't know Jesus,



today would be a wonderful day for you, as we said earlier, to give your heart to Jesus Christ. Jesus loves you, He died for you, and He will, today, forgive your sin, come into your life, give you a new nature, begin to work inside of you to make you a person He wants you to be, and give you a hope for Heaven. You say, "You know, Pastor, I wish I'd have heard the message on the home a long time ago. Is it too late for me? I've kind of done some things in some ways I wish I'd not done." Well, friend, just give it all to Jesus. You see, that's why we need a Savior, and if you've failed, just give Him all the broken pieces. He'll put them back together His own way; with the gold of His grace He'll put them all back together in His own way.

If you don't know Jesus, why don't you pray this prayer right now? "Lord Jesus, I need You and I want You. Thank You for paying for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I turn from my sin and I turn by faith to You. You told me if I would trust You that You would save me. I do trust you, Jesus, right now this moment with all of my heart, right now. Come into my heart." Ask Him that, "Come into my heart, forgive my sin, save me Jesus." Would you pray that? "Save me, Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then by faith, just by faith, don't wait for a feeling, say, "Thank You for doing it. I receive it by faith. You're now my Lord and my Savior and my God and my Friend forever. And now, Lord Jesus, give me the courage to make it public, in Your name I pray, Amen."



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