

Running Your Family By the Book (part 3)

(preached 10/26/14; Pine Grove BC Sunday PM)

Introduction

Some of you may remember an older show on TV called Kids Say the Darndest Things...

And then Bill Cosby did his own version in the 1990s...

And they would ask questions to kids about any number of subjects and listen to their responses...

Here is Manuel, age 8, said when asked to answer the question... "What is love?"

"I think you love is when you get shot with an arrow or something but the rest isn't supposed to be so painful."

9 year old Manny answered it this way...

"No one is sure why love happens but I heard it has something to do with smell... That's why perfumes and deodorants are so popular."

Here's what 7 year old John said,...

"Love is like an avalanche; you have to run for your life."

Or here is what Dave, age 8 said...

Love is something that just finds you, even if you try to hide from it. I've been trying to hide from it since I was 5, but the girls keep finding me."

Kenny responded this way....

"It gives a headache to think about love. I'm just a kid. I don't need that kind of trouble in fourth grade."

Finally, there is Greg, age 8...

Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good too.

And there you have 6 little boy's thoughts on love.

Hopefully, these thoughts changes as they became men, but unfortunately that is not always the case.

But tonight, you men, you husbands and fathers will be convicted about your own ideas of what love is...

Especially, the love you have or your wife.

And my prayer is that we all will leaved changed tonight by what we see in the Word of God.

If you haven't been with these past few Sunday nights, we are going through the Scriptures...

And looking at God's design for family.

This is not my opinion as a pastor.

This is not some Christian author's thoughts on how the family can live in harmony.

These are the thoughts of God.

Who designed marriage and family all the way back in the garden of Eden.

Most of our instruction has come from the book of Ephesians, chapter 5.

This is where Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus and he is going to address every member of the family by name...

Wives, husbands, children and parents..

But before he got to each group, he wrote a few verse that he addressed to every family member...

And really to every Christian on how to be a person who can get along with any other person in the world.

So, two weeks ago, we saw the basics of family life that are the foundation of every good family.

We listed these as 4 Principles of Being a Godly Family Member....

The first was to be a spirit-filled person.

This was not some special, out of body, activity where you get more of the Holy Spirit.

We saw that being filled with the Spirit was simply your daily walk of reading and obeying God's Word.

A spirit-filled person is simply a person living with a clean conscience before the Lord.

He or she is not walking in sinful habits, but instead is living in obedience to God every day.

And because they are Spirit filled, we saw that they are happy people.

They are filled with joy and sing to the Lord, making melody in their heart.

And we saw that people like this are easy to get along with, even if they live under the same roof with you.

We also saw the importance of being a family member who was constantly thankful for all things.

This is a person who is content in all situations.

They are grateful no matter what is happening around them.

This is not only the key to being a good family member, this is the key to having a trial proof life.

If you are a Spirit-filled, joyful, thankful person, even the trials that come your way are manageable.

Though you may be sick, though you may have lost someone close to you, though you may have lost a job or even have a horrible boss...

You are so obedient, happy and thankful that even these trials don't ruin your day.

And then we also saw the final principle for being a Godly family member...

And that was being a member of the family who is subject to the other members of the family.

You are not a me-first person.

You don't demand your rights.

You don't say or think things like, "That isn't fair."

You are the first to serve other family members.

You are always thinking of others needs above your own.

And we ended week 1 with those principles.

And what you will see is that all the instructions that follow are simply a greater expression of those 4 Principles.

Last week, we looked at God's instruction to wives.

We saw that a wife should be subject to her husband as the church is subject to the Lord.

The wife is under the leadership of the husband as the church is under the leadership of the husband.

The great example of submission for wives and really for every family member and every Christian is the submission of Christ.

Who gave up his life for others.

And who went to the cross not uttering a word.

And now, this week we turn to husbands.

Open your Bibles to Ephesians 5:25...

I just want to read the first 3 verses addressed to men here...

Men, we have a lot of ground to cover.

And we have a lot of work to do....

But lets get started with the first 3 verses...

Ephesians 5:25-28...

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives,*

Notice, that loving your wife is a command to the husband.

The wife has no such command given to her.

I think God created women as more loving creatures in many ways.

Husbands however need to be reminded to love their wives.

Much of this instruction was necessary in this day because women were looked down upon in many cultures.

And they still are in many ways.

The spread of the gospel has done much to elevate women to their proper place...

Which is their equality with men before the Lord.

Jesus did much to bring the image of women up in the world.

So, when Paul writes to men that they are to love their wives.

This is actually counter to the culture of his day, where women were used and discarded regularly.

In the Roman Empire, unfaithful wives were killed while unfaithful men were the norm.

But the Lord says, husbands love your wives.

Now last week, we went to 1 Peter to get some more instruction to wives...

And we need to go there to add some thoughts for husbands as well.

So, take your bibles and turn to 1 Peter 3:7...

Where Peter writes to husbands and simply says what Paul is saying here...

1 Peter 3:7....

⁷ You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with ^[c]someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

I think this passage helps us men know more about how to love our wives.

The first way to love here is to live in subjection to her as well.

Peter says “in the same way” goes all the way back to chapter 2 where Peter writes that Jesus is our example.

He submitted to death even though he didn’t deserve it.

And as husbands we set our rights aside for our wives at times.

We don’t seek only the things that make us happy; we seek to love our wife by putting her needs before ours.

Jesus was an innocent man but submitted to evil men.

So, that means you even set aside your rights in the face of an overbearing wife.

Any man can love a wife who loves him back, but try to love a wife who makes your life difficult.

That is the kind of love that is commanded here.

A submissive love that put her needs ahead of yours even when she is treating you unfairly in your eyes.

So, the first way to love your wife is to with a submissive love.

That is not saying that you love her so much that you give up your role of the head of the home.

No, God has made you the head of the wife.

But in that role, you show a submissive love without taking on a submissive role.

You give up your rights but you don't give up your role.

This is where so many people especially men mess up.

When we think leadership, we think domination and being vocal and macho.

Let me remind you that all leadership in the Bible is servant leadership.

This is a good lesson for us all.

Jesus wrapped himself in a cloth and washed the feet of his disciples.

And did he then get up and let the disciples lead him to the Mount of Olives?

No, he washed their feet; then, he got up and led them to the Mount of Olives.

And did they follow?

Yes, they did.

They followed so much that they eventually gave up their lives for Jesus.

That, my friends, is servant leadership.

That is servant love.

Setting your comfort aside for the good of others, carrying their burdens, meeting their needs...

Men that lead and love like that are easy to follow.

I'm sure there is not a wife in here tonight who would not gladly follow a man like that.

So, # 1, Love your wives Submissively. Put her needs before yours.

#2, Love your wives sensibly.

Look at 1 Peter again...

Live with her in an understanding way.

Here is what that means.

Love her in a way that she wants to be loved.

You need to know what makes your wife tick.

Which requires understanding her.

For some women, if you help with the household duties, she feels loved.

For other wives, she needs a regular date night with no kids.

For others, she just needs your undivided attention for 30 minutes.

For others, she wants surprises.

For others, she wants her honey do list done.

Every wife is different, but you husbands need to know your wives.

You need to understand them.

Figure out what makes her happy and do it, regardless of the inconvenience to you.

If she needs a few hours alone without screaming kids....

Load them up and head out.

If she needs her nails done, spend the money on that rather than something for you.

That is loving her Sensibly by knowing what she likes.

#3 Love your wife strongly.

1 Peter 3 again...

As with someone weaker since she is a woman....

God has designed you as the stronger partner of your marriage.

That doesn't mean you are more special to God.

It means that you are the one who protects her and your family.

She is physically weaker.

Carry the groceries.

Open the door.

Fix the car or pay to have someone fix the car.

Change the light bulb or call your Dennis to change the light bulb.

Cut the grass.

Paint the house.

I know some ladies like to do these things and that's ok, but men don't lay on the couch while she physically wears herself out.

And this also includes providing for your wife as well.

Be the bread winner of the family.

Loving her strongly just simply means what folks use to call “being a man.”

That is loving your wife strongly.

Finally #4, love your wife sacrificially...

Look back at 1 Peter...

Show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life...

The grace of life is marriage.

God gave man marriage as a great mercy...

It was intended to give both men and women close fellowship with one another...

God said “it is not good for man to be alone.”

And that is why he created woman.

But it is also equally true that it is not good for woman to be alone, so she was given to the man.

That makes her a fellow heir to the grace of life.

She is equally blessed to be a part of this marriage relationship.

Therefore, men don't think that marriage was just designed to bless you.

It was also designed to bless the woman equally.

Which is just the opposite of how most people view marriage..

People get married for how it benefits them.

Women marry to have financial stability.

Men marry for physical pleasure.

However, God is teaching husbands in 1 Peter that marriage is not just about them.

It is an opportunity to honor their wives who also have been blessed with marriage.

Husbands, loving your wife doesn't mean that she sacrifices for you, but rather you sacrifice for her.

Marriage should be a rush to self-sacrifice for both the husband and the wife.

And let me say this again very clearly...

These ways to love your wife are not dependent upon her actions at all....

Even if she is an overbearing or quarrelsome wife...

You love her in these ways.

And why do I say this?

Well, that's the love that Jesus displayed.

He loved those that wanted to kill him.

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Jesus is always our model of what true love looks like.

The love chapter in the Bible in 1 Cor 13.

This is read at most weddings, and nearly everyone who reads it thinks of the husband or wife's shortcomings when they read it.

I want to read a section of it now.

But I want your mind to focus on the person of Jesus when I read it.

Not yourself and certainly not your spouse's failures as you hear it.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not

act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷[b] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails

That is the love of Jesus that we see in the gospels.

Now, flip back to Ephesians 5:25...

Well, mean that covers at least the first four words of Ephesians 5:25...

But those are some ways to love your wife according to the word of God....

But we need to finish this up...

So, let's look at the second half of verse 25...

just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church ^[a] in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

And just like the wives model for submission was Christ, husbands, your model of love is also Christ.

I want to add way number 5 to love your wife...

And that is...

#5 Love her Spiritually....

Jesus loved the church so much that he gave up his life for her...

And the point of laying down his life was so that he could clean up our lives...

He died so that we could be made right with God.

Verse 26 is Jesus cleaning up the church...

Verse 27 is Jesus presenting a pure church to God.

You want to know love husbands?

Love your wife by helping her grow in the Lord.

Read the Bible with her.

Pray with her.

Weep over her sin with her.

Lead her away from sin.

Make sure she is being exposed to the preaching and teaching of God's Word.

Sit with her in church.

Take notes.

Talk with her after you leave about what she learned.

Help her with her Sunday school lesson.

And this is a great imagine to keep in your mind....

See yourself taking your wife to the Lord and saying...

Lord, here she is...

Lord, I take credit for the godly woman she is..

But I tried to do all I can to make her like your Son.

That is how Jesus loves the church.

He chips away at our rough edges knowing that he will one day present us to His father.

Husbands, it should pain us to see our wives struggle with sin.

We should not rejoice in their failures.

We should be happy when they show impatience or bitterness or anger.

It should break our hearts.

You need to love your wife by helping her in her walk with the Lord.

Saying “that’s our problem” is not an example of love.

As we desire ourselves to become more like Christ, we should also desire our wives to become more like Christ.

And we do it with love.

We walk with her through her battles with sin and we hold her hand, rather than telling her what to do.

That is love because that is the love that Jesus has for us.

And then see what Paul says...

When you love your wife spiritually, look at verses 28 – 33...

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference

to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she ^[E] respects her husband.

Here is the cherry on top of the sundae.

Except Paul put the cherry on the bottom of the sundae by mentioning this last.

Husbands, when you love your wives this way....

It is of great benefit to you.

When you love your wife biblically, the love comes back to you.

And it comes back to you from two sources.

Your wife will love you and your heavenly Father will be pleased with this kind of love.

And man and woman are designed to be joined as one.

Marriage is not a tug of war.

It is a one-legged race.

Marriage is the coming together of two people.

Not the constant struggle to break away.

In a lot of ways, it is like the pregnant mom.

She loves her baby by eating well.

Even if that means that at times, she has to deny herself what she wants.

She eats well because she knows that her baby will benefit.

That way when the baby is born, the baby is healthy.

And the mom enjoys the blessings of a healthy baby.

Husbands, we need to show sacrificial love to our wives.

Even when that means denying our desires.

And when our marriage grows in this way, it produces a healthy God-fearing woman.

That saves you a lot of pain.

That is a joy to be with.

That loves you like you love her.

Husbands, love your wives.

Love them submissively by laying aside your rights.

Love them sensibly by knowing what makes them feel loved.

Love them strongly by protecting and providing for them.

Love them sacrificially by honoring her equal part in marriage.

And love them spiritually by helping her to become more like Christ.

Conclusion...

Let me end with this..

Wives, if your husband does none of this, that is not a reason to leave him...

And it's not even a reason that you shouldn't live in submission to him.

If you truly submit to him from a heart that wants to live in obedience to God's word....

You have honored the Lord.

And if you have to do that for the next 50 years, know that the Lord sees that and honors that.

And rest assured that he loves you completely.

Furthermore, don't nag your husband to be like this.

Nag the Lord with your prayers for your husband.

Only the Lord can change his heart.

Your words will only make it worse.

Your actions of submission will speak way louder than your words.

But make sure that your submission is from the heart.

Otherwise you become a Pharisee whose heart is not in it and the Lord is displeased with that.

Husbands, most of us fail miserably at all of this.

Acknowledge your failure, and beg the Lord for strength and commitment to the command to love your wife.

Don't try to eat the elephant with one bite.

Take it a day at the time.

As I look at the ways to love our wives, I think loving them strongly comes the easiest.

Most southern boys have been taught to treat ladies with respect or should have been that.

All the rest require must work on our part.

The next I would tackle is trying to understand your wife.

See what she likes and try to make those things happen.

But this requires something that we all struggle with.

This means talking to her.

And even worse it requires listening to her.

But do that over the next few weeks.

Find out what she likes and try your best to make that happen.

Then learn to lay aside your desires, and this may be what you need to do first.

But learn to sacrifice for your wife as often as possible.

And I don't want to say finally because this should be first also.

But be a pastor to your wife.

Help her walk with the Lord.

Ask her about sins that constantly tempt her.

And pray with her.

And read the Bible with her.

And explain the Bible to her.

And worship with her.

Today is not too late to get started.

Repent of the your sins as a husband now.

And trust the Lord to make you the husband you need to be.

Amen.