

Husband, Love Your Wife

Series: 5 Words --- Week 6

Ephesians 5:25-31

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- September 26, 2021

Video of Bill and Shelley Schreyer

Shelley: Hi, I'm Shelley.

Bill: And I'm Bill.

Shelley: And we're the Schreyers, and we've been married forty-five years this October. Our couple's story is that God uses broken people, and the mess is the message. Instead of our differences pulling us apart, more and more our differences combine and are used as a strength.

Bill: I think for me the biggest challenge in our marriage was me realizing just how selfish I am, how self-centered I was. I'm still learning to see Shelley and to see others first. But coming into marriage I had no idea how self-contained and truly selfish--the selfishness I brought into the marriage.

Shelley: And my struggle is to be willing when I feel hurt or wounded, to expose that to Bill and to be real with Bill and finish fights, have good fights—fights that aren't destructive but lead to healing and wholeness and greater oneness. So, instead of turning in and licking our wounds, we turn out and we see each other and truly can love each other.

Bill: For me, the work has been in the area of communication. My tendency is to communicate in short bullets and few words, and even as a poor listener, a passive listener, even anticipating responses. It's taken work to truly be a listener. And it is a skill that's been brought through pain and difficulty and a lot of failure. And my sweetheart is very patient and gracious, and together we have learned how to do that.

I think in the beginning, I think that we were very desperate on our commitment and our resolve to love one another. It was a purposeful focus and attention. And over time, because of the Lord's grace and His enablement, I think now that our love is much more spontaneous. So, I think it's gone from a place of effort and concern to a place of joy.

Shelley: When I was young I looked at love at something romantic. And then, romantic gestures. I was looking for flowers and cards and poems, because he did actually do that. And then it changed over time to security, like home and children and building things. But I found that that wasn't a stable enough foundation to build a relationship on. And God gave me a better one. I found I wanted God's dream for our marriage. I wanted to heal, I wanted to be bold in loving Bill, and so now I celebrate the changes that God has done in our lives. And I'm looking forward to what God will keep doing in our lives.

Bill: I've been chasing this girl since she was fifteen. And I thought when we were first married that I understood what love was. And I was sorely mistaken. We've been through some hard times. But the love and the joy that is there now that the Lord has wrought between us is truly priceless. Had I known, I think it would have fueled me, it would have propelled me forward more quickly. It would have encouraged me deeply. It has been a journey, a wonderful journey that continues. And frankly, I can't wait for tomorrow.

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Well, good morning, Grace. It's great to be here. I'm glad you guys could watch us on the TV set. I think I have just one quick announcement and then we'll get into our learning time. Let me see what it is ... oh, yeah! Melinda and I are grandparents! Boom! How about that, huh? And her sweet little name is Adelaide. And I just want to apply some science, the way we're defining science nowadays. Every time she has worn her Longhorn outfit and watched the game, the Longhorns score seventy points. That is science.

I've got another picture of her—take a look at this. Look at that, huh? Yeah. Wait, wait, one more picture. Okay. I know, right? One more picture, okay? Here we go. Yeah. I know! One more picture, okay? Just one more picture. There we go.



I mean, it's kind of a weird thing, but it turns out that I'm allergic to her. Every time I hold her my eyes start watering and my nose starts running. And then I can't let go of her. So, my arms lock up. It's been a blessing.

We're on our last two weeks of our series together *5 Words*. And I want to start by thanking the singles for hanging in there with us. Some young singles can learn some things—they might be married someday. I hope this has been helpful. And some of you that might not get married at all, you're still coming every week, maybe to help minister to other people and gain some wisdom on how to live the Christian life. So, thank you for doing that. I appreciate that.

Introduction

I'll start today with a number of quotes from an author that I enjoy reading. His name is G. K. Chesterton. He's known for his wit and his wisdom. He writes a lot on the family. Here's what he says about marriage:

“Love means loving the unlovable, or it is no virtue at all.”

“The whole pleasure of marriage is that it is a perpetual crisis.”

“Marriage is a duel to the death which no man of honor should decline.”

“The first two facts which a healthy boy or girl feels about sex are these: first that it is beautiful and then that it is dangerous.”

I like this one ... **“I have little doubt that when St. George had killed the dragon he was heartily afraid of the princess.”** He was doing what he was told.

Let me tell you about what happened this week with today’s lesson. It was Tuesday night and I was finishing up on the outline, which is two days ahead of schedule, and it was almost filled in. I thought I was going to have a pretty good week. I woke up Wednesday morning about 4:30 and remembered that class—that class. In 1984 I took a class in graduate school, in seminary, and it was called, *Marriage and Family in Ministry*. And I remember this one lecture that literally changed my life. And it twisted my spine. The other guys left the classroom and I was still just sitting in my chair, wondering what just happened. That class and that professor both won best professor, best class taught that year. I still have the notes, so I raced up here before the sun even came up and was going through my old files, and found those, typed them up, and this is that class. Brace yourself. Lecture seventeen: “Husband, Love Your Wife.”

We look at Ephesians chapter 5, and it teaches us how to love. This is certainly a general definition of what love looks like ---what Christian love looks like. But particularly on how husbands should love their wives and take the initiative and be the pacesetters. So, I’ll read that to you.

Ephesians 5:25-28, 31

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to Himself as a radiant church: without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ... ³¹ “For this reason a man will break from his father and mother and bond to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” And then watch. Here’s our blueprint that we’ve been looking at.

“For this reason a man will break with his father and mother and he will bond with his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

When you look at that paragraph and you look at that expectation of love, you can know immediately this is not cultural love. This is not good ol’ boy from West Texas, friendly, I can do this, I can make this happen. These few sentences state without saying it, you’ve got to know two things. One, you must be a Christian. These descriptions of what to do as a husband are not to reform you and make you better; they’re assuming you’re completely regenerated already, you’re born again—you’re born from above, you’re born from the Holy Spirit. That. And the second thing, not just that you’re a follower of Christ, but that you are completely yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit, because you can’t do it any other way. I’ll tell you more about that later on, but the Spirit of God needs to hear from your soul, *Thy will be done. Whatever You want me to do, I will do it.* Because that’s assumed in this passage.

Previous to this passage, previous to Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians chapter 1 through 3 are just these doctrinal declarations of all the things that God has done to change our souls and spirits from the inside out. And now He’s getting to the application section where he says, *Okay. After knowing all that to be true, here’s how you can love your wife.*

Marriage is right up there on the top of the twelve-step program. First of all, it’s one day at a time. And second of all, you’re going to need a higher power. You can’t do this. You can’t. And the higher power’s name? Jesus of Nazareth. And He was sent by the Father to forgive our sins. And then, since our sins were forgiven and our hearts are made perfect, He sent His Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is within us so that we can have supernatural expressions of love and courage towards one another. This is not a list of ten commandments that just pretty much shows us what we can’t do. That’s not the point of this.

So, if you’ve acknowledged your crimes before God and you realize that you are unable to pay those debts, and you received Christ’s forgiveness through His death and resurrection—boom. If you’ve yielded your life and said to the Spirit, *Anything—I’ll do anything. I’ll go anywhere ... whatever.* Then you can qualify to be able to do these things—to love your wife, guys.

Five Ways Christ Loves His Church

So, here it goes—the five ways that Christ loves His church.

1. Realistically

Number one: realistically. He loves the Church realistically. He understands who we really are and loves us in spite of that. There's nothing within us that would require someone to love us. We have no right to be loved. This love is not performance driven. As a matter of fact, if there's performance involved, let's quote the Bible: **“While we were enemies with God, Christ loved us.”** Christ died for us while we were yet His enemies.

So, in the context of “Husband, love your wife,” you don't love your wife because she deserves it. You don't make her earn your love. You don't love her so that you can change into the image of what you want her to be. That's manipulation, right? It is the facts, not the fantasy, of real married love.

Our culture projects that there's that perfect mate out there, that perfect person, and that you deserve that. If there's a perfect person I don't think she's going to be taking my calls. *There's Matt calling again. I thought the restraining order was already in effect.* I don't deserve a perfect person. But we have this idea that we'd have this perfect mate, this perfect person; and that's not how it works. What happens is that you have two sinners and now they're living together, and the honeymoon is over. And what does that even mean, that the honeymoon is over? It means real life is kicking in. Now I'm getting to see what's really going on. It goes from, *Oh, baby, you're perfect to Do you know what the problem with you is?* There's this evolution in marriage. It starts up here with appreciation, and then it goes to depreciation, and then finally, just acceptance. I get it. You know, a couple of sinners living together trying to figure this thing out.

Husbands, love your wives realistically.

2. Sacrificially

The second way that Christ loves the Church is, quite obviously, sacrificially. He literally gives Himself up for us. He takes on the form of a man being a servant, taking on death, even death on a cross. It was all a choice. That's the important part. There was nothing emotional

about this. He's obeying the love of the Father. What He did was a choice. And sacrificial love always costs someone. If you forgive someone else's debt, that means that you're paying for their debt. You're absorbing that debt. Salvation absorbs the debt. Salvation is completely free to you and me. But it costs Jesus Christ everything. That's what it means to be sacrificial. It means that you're the person that's going to absorb that.

So, husband, love your wife. It's a choice, not an emotion. It is actions, not feelings. In the words of Aristotle, what you practice, you become. In Ephesians chapter 1 through 3 you have that in you. What you practice you become.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

The very definition of love—you might have even heard or recited it at your wedding. Remember 1 Corinthians 13? Look, this is love. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast. It's not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered.” Boy, I'm ready to stop reading. Anyway, “It keeps no record of wrong. It does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It always perseveres.”

Application

Here's a great application, guys. Husband, love your wife. Take any three of the attributes of love and for seven days practice those. What you practice, you become. And see what happens. I mean, it'd be a little bit like, if you rewind the tape and do three of the things you did when you were dating and you were trying to win her over. But now, even better, do it when you're married and win her all over again. Sacrifice in your love.

Another way to express sacrificial love for your mate is to initiate restoration, to be the first person to get involved in making forgiveness happen. We love because Christ first loved us. He started it. That's what that means.

Someone has to be first to make things right. Someone has to be inertia. The hardest part of momentum is getting it started. The husband—you do that. You start the conversation. You sacrifice your ego and go in there and say, “You know what? Let’s work our way toward the other direction.”

Here’s a sentence I’ve used before. It might be helpful to you. “Honey, baby, most of this is your fault, but I want to start this reconciliation process by saying you’re probably sorry, and I am too.” I only say that because you don’t ever want to say that. And some of you have—I can hear your nervous laughter. And I can tell you, if you do that one time, you’ll never do it again. So, initiate forgiveness by accepting responsibility for what you did.

Husbands, love your wives sacrificially.

3. Purposefully

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church—purposefully. Look at the intentionality, the direction, of the love that Jesus has for the Church.

Ephesians 5:26

... to make her holy, cleansing her ... and to present her to Himself as a radiant church: without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Look what it says in Ephesians 5. It says, “To make her holy” –that’s why—to cleanse her. “...to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” The purpose of this love is purity. It’s going somewhere. It’s making things right the way they were meant to be.

Beautiful quote: “Holiness is the very basis of the universe, because God exists.” And God is holy. Therefore, anything that’s not holy is not healthy. The goal is to get everything back to holiness.”

And so, we love our mate just the way they are, and then want to present them without spot or wrinkle. That’s the way God does it. He loves us just the way we are. There are no qualifications to become a follower of Jesus Christ—just repentance, I guess. Admit that you’re sinful and that you need a savior. And God takes us just the way we are and He says, *Okay, now*

let's go fix everything. He doesn't leave us where we are. And that's what we're supposed to do in marriage. Husbands, romance is awesome, and the fellowship and the kinship, the companionship, the fun, the partnering, and all that's fun. But there needs to be a purpose in our love, and the purpose is purity. The purpose is to make things holy. And the primary person involved in making our wives without spot or wrinkle, blameless and pure—in other passages, holy and complete, lacking in nothing—it's us, the husbands. That's what we do. That's where our *[recording unclear]*.

And this isn't a new thing. This isn't foreign. We've had to do this as parents. We love our child unconditionally, and then—Let's make them better. I love little Adelaide. (Do we have any more pictures of her? No, okay. Anyway, I'll get some for next week.) But you know, we're not going to leave her in that context. Let's teach her how to walk. And then when she walks across the room, let's teach her how to count. And then teach them algebra, where you yell and they cry. It's all a part of that process.

God is easily pleased, but hard to satisfy.

---George MacDonald

George MacDonald said it nicely. He says this about God: “God is easily pleased, but hard to satisfy.” He is easily pleased, but hard to satisfy. *Great job! Let's get better. Wonderfully done! Let's become more holy.* That's the way God's doing it. That's what we're supposed to be doing too.

And is it any wonder that marriages are especially and exceptionally brutal to people that are proud and stubborn? Because the nature of marriage is to change us. And a proud person says, *I don't need to change.* And a stubborn person says, *I don't want to change.* And you're fighting against the purpose of the institution of marriage.

So, husbands, do all that you can—within boundaries, whatever it costs—to help your wife become like Christ intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually. Clear the calendars, get out the checkbook, do what it takes.

And in the context of helping her become like Christ without spot or wrinkle or blemish, you're not a coach. You're not a drill sergeant, you're not the boss. You're gentle and you're caring, and you have reverence towards this relationship. You never defile what you love. There

has to be tenderness in the words. Like it says in Proverbs chapter 12, **“Reckless words pierce like a sword”**—especially from a husband—**“but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”** Husbands, be wise and bring healing with your tongue.

The purpose is to help purify your wife. Be part of the dynamics of her interaction with the world. It’s like that children’s hymn I think they sing in in our children’s ministry. I don’t know that, but it goes like this: “Be careful, little eyes, what you see. Be careful, little ears, what you hear. Be careful, little hands, what you do.” And after each one of those it says, “Because the Father up above is looking down in love, so be careful ...” basically to what you expose yourself to.

So, you could possibly come in and find your wife particularly twisted up or with high anxiety or distraught, and you could say, “What are your eyes seeing? Be careful. What are your ears hearing? Who’s in your head right now and how can we make that right? How can we bring truth and honesty and love into that world? And maybe I could be a person that could maybe block for you, so that those people or those influences don’t get in. Because I’m here to help you become pure and holy and righteous.”

If you’re married to the right person ---sometimes people don’t understand this—if you’re married to the right person—and sometimes, especially when people are opposites, because opposites attract—I can tell you, fifty percent of marriages are people who are a lot alike and attract, but these guys get a lot of the press. Opposites attract. And when that happens, people are confused or startled with all the kind of clashing that’s going on. And that’s what you saw in the video with the Schreyers. They were having their clashes. But it was in the context of clashing that they became like Christ in their lives. Marriage brings us out of the denial of how deeply our sin is rooted.

I love what Tim Keller talks about in his metaphor of marriage. He says that it’s like a gem tumbler, I think they call them. And so, what they are is that you get these gems and they’re pretty crude. They just look like common rocks.

Before

After



And then you throw them in this gem tumbler which is nothing more than like an industrial quality dryer. And you put all the gems in there with each other and you just turn it on. And for x amount of minutes they're just banging around into each other, and then they're knocking the hard edges off. And it gets more refined, and then you take them out and they're shiny and able to be sold. You can make a profit off those rocks. There's a before and an after here.

Because there's a purpose to the banging around. There's a purpose to the marriage and the arguments you might be getting involved in. The purpose is to make one holy. So, when a husband loves his wife the way Christ loved the Church, purposefully, that could be what's happening. Again, I just want to appeal to you men that you have to be careful with the words that you say, because they're amplified because of your position and your role. Women's body image—there are billions of dollars spent every year to make sure that they don't feel good about themselves. But if a husband comes in and says, "Oh, no. You're extremely attractive to me. You are stunning." Then your words "You are stunning to me" can contrast billions of dollars of influence.

But also, if all of her friends and her friends' friends say that she's stunning, but you say, "Yeah, but ...", she's hearing that too.

What I'm saying here is that with the nature of marriage, we have to respect the power of our position and use that the way God says so here: purposefully, to encourage and to make them holy. See?

4. Intimately

How does Christ love the Church? He loves the Church intimately.

Colossians 3:4

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Here's a short little sentence that talks about the interconnectedness that we have with Christ. Look what it says in Colossians: "And then when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him, but in His glory." Do you see what Paul's saying here? We are so connected and intimately intertwined with Christ that we share His name, we share His life, we

share His sufferings. And when He appears again, we're going to be with Him and we're going to share in His glory. He knows us, and He wants us to know Him.

In the older Testament, there's a lot more happening than we give credit for. But when God and Moses are having this conversation about who He is, God says, *No, you're my people. You belong to me and I belong to you.*

Yeah, but what's your name?

I'm going to tell you my name. I'm known as Jehovah. I'm telling you, my name is Yahweh. You call me that.

It was an introduction to intimacy.

So, husband, love your wife intimately. You be the one to start to unzip your soul. Learn how to be vulnerable. Learn how to share who you are. Learn how to share your emotions. I'm only laughing because this has been a journey for me.

What's going on, Matt?

I don't know. I'm not hungry, and currently I'm not angry. So, I don't know.

And early in our marriage I literally had one of these—they're called faces of feelings.



FEELINGS FACES!



SUSPICIOUS



SURPRISED



HAPPY



ANGRY



SHOCKED



OVERWHELMED



LONELY



HOPEFUL



FRUSTRATED



DISGUSTED



MISCHIEVOUS



SAD



CONFIDENT



HYSTERICAL



FRIGHTENED



ENRAGED



DEPRESSED



EMBARRASSED



ANXIOUS



CAUTIOUS



SMUG



EXHAUSTED



ECSTATIC



JEALOUS



BORED



LOVESTRUCK



CONFUSED



GUILTY



SHY



ASHAMED

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They're used for little kids in counseling ... little kids and certain men. This is very helpful. And I'm not playing around. Yeah, I could point to one of these and say, *Right, that's what I feel right now.*

Do that. Honestly, it's a gag. Good. Why not? Whatever works. Learn how to share your emotions.

I'm not suggesting you become a woman. And women, I'm suggesting that men are completely different. So, it's not uncommon for Melinda to walk in and to say, "Wow, you look forlorn. What's happening? What are you thinking?"

And I would say something like, "Uh, I don't know. I mean, Larry across the street has a new backpack blower, right?"

"Oh, you must be feeling like his is way more powerful than yours and you want to get another one. You can."

And I say, "No, I'm not feeling like his is more powerful. His is more powerful, what? No! No, I was thinking that when Carey comes home, I think she doesn't weigh enough, so we could put one on the front of her and one on the back of her, and we could get her to fly. That's what I was thinking and feeling."

So, I'm just saying that we're a little bit different. So, we're not always feeling all the time. And even the things we're thinking are sometimes not very smart. But the rest of the guys are thinking, *I think that could work. You might need to tie a rope on her in case she goes too high ...*

5. Permanently

Anyway, lastly, Christ loves His bride permanently. The love of God is unrelenting.

Romans 8:38-39

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,
³⁹ neither height nor depth, or anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Boy, if you haven't memorized the verses in Romans chapter 8 about the love of God ... "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, principalities nor powers, like

the present or the future” --- all created things, right? “Height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God that’s found in Christ Jesus.” Nothing—it’s permanent.

2 Timothy 2:13

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.

Here’s a shorter sentence you can read. “When we are faithless, He remains faithful, because He cannot disown himself.” He cannot. He cannot stop loving us. It is permanent. As a husband, you cannot ever say these words: *I just don’t love you anymore*. I’ve heard men say that, and I want to say, that is not within the realm of your choices. It’s not even a software program that’s supposed to be running in your head. You can’t even say those words. You can’t do those things. That’s a square circle.

A marriage covenant is a declaration with God being the magistrate. And you’re saying on that day “Yes” to this woman and “No” to every single other woman in the world for the rest of your life—not just for that day, not just until that time, *until I find someone else*. No, for the rest of your life. You go on a trip to Paris and you meet someone—*This is my perfect* ... No, too bad. You are making a vow of permanent love forever. And so, that’s what it looks like to love your wife permanently. You don’t even think about it. *I cannot stop loving my wife*.

Summary

Here are the five ways that a husband is supposed to love his wife. Let’s say these out loud together. **One, realistically. Two, sacrificially. Three, purposefully. Four, intimately. Five, permanently.** And this love goes beyond the borders of who we are and what we have. It means this consistent, perpetual expression of giving and serving and loving and suffering and forgiving. And then repeat, all the time, constantly.

I love to watch old lovers. Old lovers when their bodies are starting to fall apart and that sort of thing. It happens. Listen, growing old is not for cowards. It is a courageous act every day. And what happens with old lovers is they serve each other in a way that’s visible, almost graphic sometimes. The stronger is always serving the weaker. How fast do they walk? They walk as slow as the slower person walks. And they bring healing to each other. The fears that get

exaggerated later as you get older are pacified by concern and truth. There's so much to learn in growing old together in love.

I don't know God's intention in running out our lives to such indignity, but I suspect it is to give us one final opportunity to be humbled, not so much by bodily failures as by the tenderness of kind care.

It may be said that the truest purpose of marriage is merely the opportunity to die for another.

Serving is not merely cleaning the floor or doing the laundry; it is suffering for, with and against the other without turning in towards yourself. Sacrifice compels us to enter the heartache, stories, dreams, desires and sin of the other in order to bless them.

---Dan Allender

I love what Dan Allender writes about this purposefulness. Here's what he says about the hardship and the purpose of old love. "I don't know God's intentions for running our lives out with such indignity, but I suspect it's to give us one final opportunity to be humbled, not so much in bodily failures—that happens. But in tenderness of kind care for one another.

"It may be said that the truest purpose of marriage is merely the opportunity to die for one another.

"Sacrifice compels us to enter into heartache and stories and dreams and desires and sins of the other just in order to bless them."

Marriage calls us to lose ourselves in the complex web of their soul. The mystery is great—in doing so, we find ourselves. We find our truest self and the God who is true to our self. The sacrifices of love open our eyes to the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection for us.

---Dan Allender

Watch this. "Marriage calls us to lose ourselves in the complex web of their soul. The mystery is great. And in doing so, we find ourselves. We find our truest self and the God who is true to our self. The sacrifice of love opened our eyes to the mystery of Jesus' death and the resurrection for us." That's *husband, love your wife*.

You feel the compounding weight of expectation and call that can be, frankly, just overwhelming? Here's how I responded to this lecture in class. There needs to be context.

I went to seminary when I had been following Christ for eighteen or nineteen months. I shouldn't have gone. I wasn't a very good practicing Christian. I was still learning. And I was really bad at being a seminary student. They were all polite and nice. And the first semester I was called to the dean's office twice. Now, that would scare some of you. But I went to the dean's office every educational experience I had. So, here I am again.

In this one, apparently there's this unwritten in the rule of the code of conduct and dress code that you can't wear jackets with beer labels on them. And so, I had this free jacket from Budweiser because I had sold so much beer at a club that I was in while in college, and that was the only jacket I had. So, I apparently couldn't wear that at seminary. And so, they made me take the labels off. But the labels, you could just tell—it was a Budweiser jacket with the label on it. But the point is, that was one of the reasons that I was in the dean's office.

And I didn't know how to be polite. I wasn't very tactful. I wasn't the evolved person that you see before you today. All right, so, anyway, you need to know that later on.

So, after we're done with this, he says, "Do you have any questions?" And everybody else is putting their notebooks away. Apparently, they've all heard this before.

I was engaged. This was the first time I'm hearing any of this. *Wait, what?* And so, yeah, I raised my hand and I say, "Are you kidding? I'm not going to do this. Because there's no way I can do this. Furthermore, I've never seen this done and I can't even imagine what it looks like. I mean, I don't even understand this. Not to mention, if you don't mind, that we've been talking about marriage in ministry, and I'm supposed to be at work where I'm loving people and caring for people and serving people, all the while leading a church, and then I pull into my driveway and I'm supposed to love my wife like Christ loves the Church? Where's the "me" time in any of this?"

And then I just said, "Is this because I have man private parts? Is that the deal? I get all of this because of that?"

Long pause. I didn't say "man private parts." I used other words. But the kids are here. Long pause. And this is where the professor and I really bonded, because he kind of grew up on the same side of the tracks that I did. He was the favorite because he was brash and he was honest and very efficient.

And so, after a while, he just looked at me. I mean, my eyes are filled with tears. And he just says, “Yeah. It kind of stinks to be a man of God, doesn’t it? Yes, it’s because you have those man private parts. That’s how it is.”

That’s why I was still sitting there when everyone else had left. That’s when I found out in real time that the Christian life is way past hard. The Christian life is impossible. And now I understood.

The love that’s within me, the strongest, deepest, purest love that I have to give to my wife, contaminates the love of God that she could receive if I would open myself up to that. The power and the purity of God’s love—if I would just get out of the way---has the ability to do what Ephesians 5 says that husbands are to do. We love because Christ loved us. It is that love that we are conduits of. It only happens—it can only happen—if we’re Holy Spirit-powered, and this is based on a covenant salvation, gospel-based salvation love. That’s the only way.

Fundamentally, it comes to this: how to live the spirit-filled life. It’s not complicated. It’s just hard. In a few weeks, we’re going to have a sermon on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. That’s later. This is just how to do it. And we don’t have much time, but I don’t need much time. Here’s what it is. Spirit-filled living is to know the Bible and then to submit to it.

See how there’s two parts? Know the Bible—not what you think is in the Bible, not what you want to be in the Bible, not what you want to say and you read it and that’s—no, it’s what the Bible says to do.

Application

So, application: join a Bible study. You have like 320 options just in this church alone. Learn and find out what the Bible says. That’s part one.

Part two: and then submit to what the Bible says through the power of the Holy Spirit. And this church and other churches are famous for how much Bible they know. But they’re not submitting to what it says. And so, one of the strengths of this church is multigenerational mentoring going on. You join one of our Bible studies and you get in with a bunch of people of your age going through the same thing, and it has mentors in there so that basically, we’re fighting the stupid inside of us together. And we work through it together. We’re working through how we get the Holy Spirit to help us submit to what is clearly written in the Bible.

There's a key phrase that lets Him in and turns Him loose. Do you want to hear it? *Thy will be done.*

It's that simple, but it's not easy. It's you saying that it's an act of the will. *You take my life. I want to do whatever You want me to do. I want You to take my dreams, I want You to take my ego, I want you take my rights, I want You to take my needs. I want You to take me out of the whole thing. I'm tired of talking about me. I want to do what You want me to do as a husband.*

Did you know there's an honest-to-goodness verse in the Bible that says this: "Cursed man that I am, who can save me from me?" And the answer is, the grace of the Father because of the sacrifice of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. When we realize that we're the problem—"Cursed man that I am, who can save me from me?"—the answer's there. It's just a matter of learning how to do it. Join a Bible study. Get in a group of men or women that are going through life trying to do this together.

Today here's the application. I love little wins. If we can just win 1% over a series of weeks, you'd change your whole life. So, here's the application for the married people right now. This week—actually, for this month—we'll start this week—I want you to pray five out of the seven days for five minutes. Pray with your wife five minutes. Pray together holding hands, and why don't you just pray about I want to learn how to become a better husband? I want to learn how to unzip my soul. I want to learn how to live and to give sacrificially. All that.

Next week we'll have some things for the women to pray. But I want you to just pray that for one month for five minutes. Some of you guys are varsity players—good for you. Go to twenty minutes. I would recommend this, too—men, lead the prayer. You start off. You start off, because you initiate prayer. You initiate talking to God. You also want to do this, because when a woman prays, she's going to do everything. She's going to pray about everything. If you let her go first, you're going to be like, What, you're praying that the roses in the front bed would come in? I've got nothing left.

So, you go first because you're initiating, and also, there's nothing left when she's finished. Can you guys do that this week? All right, we're off to a great start. Let's pray right now.

Dear God Almighty, Yahweh, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now we see what and how we are to live our lives as men that are married. And so, now I appeal to a prayer of lordship, that

You would do in my soul whatever needs to be done; that I would go wherever You send me, and I would spend time with whomever you direct me to.

Lord, I'd ask that You would give me the courage to face why I can't unzip my soul. And then, give me the courage to transcend that fear and lay myself open to the woman that You gave me.

Lord, I'd ask that You would give me tender ears to listen more effectively and the courage to help me love my wife the way Christ loved the Church—these five ways that are transcendent.

Lord, I'd ask that our marriage, my marriage, this church's marriage, could be a lighthouse to what you intended in the garden those thousands of years ago, that's still available to those who are radically surrendered to Your will and Your Spirit's power. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.