

Love Your Woman, Respect Your Man (Part 1)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello, friend. Welcome to today's program. I'm going to be talking about relationships. Sometimes, I feel that relationships are sort of the oil for the gears of life. When they're bad, things are bad. But when they're good, things can be really good. In particular, I'm going to be speaking about marriage. Though, even if you're not married, you're going to find some things that will be helpful in this. So grab a Bible, put on your crash helmet and your seatbelt. Let's get into the Word.

I am so glad that you have joined me today. We're going to be studying Ephesians chapter 5. Some of these great verses that have to deal with marriage. And let me just say you may be single and wanting to get married; there'll be some things in this message for you. You may be happily married, unhappily married. There'll be some things in this message for you. You may be widowed, divorced, single, and never want to get married. Whatever place you are in life, some of these principles will be applicable to you and your situation.

So I want to encourage you. Have an open heart and listen because God's Word it's our road map for life. It's our road map for relationships. And it's been said that a good marriage is the closest thing to heaven on earth. And a bad marriage is the closest thing to hell on earth. So we want to make bad marriages good, and we want to make good marriages great.

It opens up the apostle Paul writing to the Church at Ephesus in verse 25 of Ephesians 5. He says,

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

There is a lot there. Husbands, love your wives. It's the Greek word that's a self-sacrificial love. The same kind of love that Jesus poured out when He redeemed us; when He became our substitute. Who died for us and made us His Church; made us His bride.

I've thought often about this Church. Jesus gave—or about this verse. Jesus gave Himself for the Church.

Husbands, more than anything else, your wives want you. They don't just want stuff. Now, it's good to be able to take care of our spouse and our family. Very important. But more than anything else, your wife wants and she needs you, sir. She needs your time. She needs your attention. She needs your love. We're to love our wives just like Jesus loved the Church.

Now, it's interesting. In this scenario, the wife is likened unto the Church, and the husband is likened unto Jesus. And if you think about it, the Church often—as members of the Church, we respond imperfectly to the Lord. But the Lord, in His sovereignty and excellence and perfection, He always deals with us perfectly. And it's not that the husbands have to be perfect, and the wives have a lot of room to be imperfect. I think it just lends itself to the fact that when it comes

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to the success or the failure in a marriage relationship, most of the time, not always, but most of the time, what the husband does or what he doesn't do, I think, bears more weight.

I think about my relationship with Jesus. He gave Himself for me. He's still there for me. Anytime I want to talk to Him, He has time for me. He's never been too busy. He doesn't throw my past failures up in my face. And as I think about the way He loves me, I have to ask myself, "Am I loving my wife the same way that Jesus loves me? Am I showing her the same kind of grace and the same kind of forgiveness and the same kind of mercy and the same kind of passion that Jesus shows for me as a member of the Church?" So husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

It goes on in verse 26. It says,

²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The next thing that we find is that Jesus speaks words to His Church. He washes her. He washes her with the water of the word.

And I just want to encourage you, husbands, you've got to talk to your wives. You have to spend time communicating with them. The kind of words that we speak to our wives literally will determine their countenance. Here, Jesus washes the Church with the water of the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle and without blemish. The way we are is the result of the way that He loves us. And much of the time, our wives, the way they are, they are a reflection of the way their husbands love them.

I've often said if you want to know if a man is a good husband or not, just look at his wife's face. Her countenance will tell you everything.

I can still remember, as a kid going out to this sort of old restaurant that just had picnic benches in it. It was nothing fancy, but I went there with my parents. And we're sitting at this sort of picnic bench table and being served some food. And there were some people at a picnic bench table near us. It was a husband, his wife, and a third person. And the husband was speaking with such bitterness and such hostility in his words. And I remember, even as a little kid, looking over at their table and just watching his wife wilt like a flower in the heat of summer. I can still remember to this day, and it was 60 years ago, probably close to that, maybe 58, 59 years ago. I still remember that poor woman's face and the effect that her husband's angry words were having upon her.

If we will speak words of love, speak words of forgiveness, speak words of hope, wash our wives with the water of the word, well, then they'll be without spot, without blemish. Husbands, I'm just saying we have a great opportunity and a great responsibility. So I want to encourage you. Think about the kind of words that you speak to your wife. And wives, of course, for you, too, think about the kind of words you're speaking to your husband. Are you always cutting him down? Are you always correcting him?

I saw a funny little meme the other day. It was a guy, he's behind the wheel of his car. And the headline said, "Miracle. Man drives all the way across town successfully without the helpful safety driving tips from his wife." And it's funny because sometimes the wife is just totally correcting the husband, "Watch out. Slow down. Do this, do that." But it doesn't just happen in

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the car. It happens all the time. We need to really consider the kind of words that we speak. Are they cutting? Are they harsh? Do they tear down, or do they build up?

In the book of Proverbs, it says the foolish woman she tears her home down with her own hands. And it's just metaphorical by the word she speaks, by the actions that she portrays. Husbands and wives, hey, let's speak the right kind of words to one another.

It goes on here, and I'm primarily talking to husbands right now. It says,

²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

Now, "Love your wife like your own body." Just think about that just for a minute. If you injure your body, let's say you're playing a sport, and you throw your back out, or you twist your knee, or maybe you accidentally cut your hand or your finger really bad with a knife, you don't just neglect it. If your body is in pain, you give it attention. You tend to it. You nurture it. You do your best for it to heal. You treat it gingerly, as we say here.

And I was thinking about that, actually, last night. I was sitting at a fire in my backyard, reading over these verses, thinking about what I would be doing right now. And I got to thinking about this very point. If we really injure our body, if there's pain there, we don't ignore it. We pay attention to it. We do our best to get that body healed. And you know what? The Scripture says husbands should love their wives the same way. If your wife is hurting, give her some attention. Don't ignore her. If your wife is in pain, it may be emotional; it may be because she's been overwhelmed with the kids, and she's just feeling like she's treading water and kind of going down for the third time. Give her some time. Give her some attention. Do your best to get her healthy. Don't neglect her. Love her like you do your own flesh.

And some guy might say, "Well, how do I know if she's hurting?" Well, ask her. We should be able to tell if our wives are hurting, if they're in pain.

And it's not like, "What's wrong with you? Straighten up. Hey, can't you just get over it?" No, it doesn't always work that easy. You don't treat your body harshly. Here you've hurt your elbow. It's like, "Hey, come on. What's wrong with you?" No, you're just like, "Ah. Oh." And then you gingerly set it down. Treat your wife with the same care, with the same love, with the same patience that you treat your own body. My friend, it is a great investment, and as we say, it will come back to you in spades.

It goes on talking about Jesus' relationship to the Church. It says,

³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

That's important. You read the story in the book of Genesis, and those were words that Adam spoke. A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And that word "joined" in the original Hebrew literally means to stick like glue. Or it could be translated to never stop chasing. Never stop pursuing your wife. Never stop chasing her.

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Listen, Janet, and I have been married over 40 years, and I'm still chasing her around. Man, if she's in the kitchen, I'm still hugging her and kissing her neck and romancing her just like I did when we were first married.

You pursued her to catch her. Well, you don't stop pursuing her once you say "I do" at the altar. If you want a good, healthy marriage, a strong, growing marriage, you need to continue to pursue your wife. Keep the romance alive. Don't let your life become stale, predictable, and boring. Put a little energy into romancing your wife and pursue her.

And then verse 33. It says,

³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

So again, husband, love your wife. And, it's interesting, we read this, it says, in particular, let a man so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Now, the wives generally do not need too much encouragement or coaching when it comes to loving. Women are really good at loving, but they're not always good at respecting.

Here it says, "Husbands, love your wives, wives, see that you respect your husband." More than anything else, women, they want to be loved. They want that communicated to them. They want to feel loved, and they want to know that they are loved. And ladies, listen to me. More than anything else, men want to be respected, and they want to be honored.

Husbands, if you will love your wives, wives, if you will respect your husband, you can have a great marriage.

Loving comes naturally to most women, and respecting comes naturally to most men.

Now listen. Dear woman that is listening to me right now, if you want your husband to love you, all right, the way to get him to love you more is not to love him more. The way to get him to love you more is to respect him more. And husband, the way to get your wife to respect you more is to love her more. If you will give them what they want and they need, they will intuitively give you what you want and what you need.

So, wives, I want you to hear this because I want to really kind of zone in on you right now. Loving your husband is not the key to getting him to express love to you, but respecting him more is. And this is a command to be obeyed. Ephesians 5:33. Husbands love your wives unconditionally. That's a command to be obeyed. Wives, respect your husbands. That is unconditional. That is a command to be obeyed.

To the wife that says, "Look, there's nothing about him that I can respect." All right. The woman that says that is probably too angry or discouraged to think about what she actually can respect in her man.

Now realize these verses here in Ephesians, they're written to the Church in Ephesus. They're written to Christians. So right now, I'm talking to believers. If your husband is a believer, he's not evil. And most men, they don't set out to do bad and to be evil. Now there are some evil men in this world. There are some evil women in this world. There are some people that reject the gospel. They reject the light because they like darkness. They love darkness more than they love light. Well, I'm not talking to those people right now, but I'm talking about believers.

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Chances are, your husband wants to do right. He wants to be right even though he may have some issues and some areas in his life that needs some serious work. Most men are not full of evil intent. Now, wife, I want you to listen to me. The truth is, in all probability, your husband is just as frustrated with you as you are with him. Listen, he has been made in God's image. He has God-given attributes that are worthy of respect. Try and see in your husband what God sees in him. Look at his good heart and begin showing respect regardless of his response.

Most men, I want you to listen to me, what I'm going to share with you right now, if you haven't heard anything else I say; if you'll just get this, this could change your whole life, this could change your whole marriage. Most men are starving for respect. They're starving for honor. They're starving for admiration. And if you want him to show love to you, start demonstrating and vocalizing respect to him.

I read a little article one time. It was Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, and it was said there is a little experiment that you should try. Think of a few things that you respect about your husband. Really give it some thought. And some of you may have to think harder than others, some of you right away, it'll come to you. And it may be the fact that he works hard. It may be that he has a good sense of humor. It may be the fact that he didn't give up during a hard time and doesn't tend to give up. He's got a stick-to-it-ness, and he just stays in there. Maybe it's the way that he loves your kids. Maybe it's the way that he respected his parents, or maybe the way that he respects your parents. I don't know. But think about two or three things that you can come up with and then write them down. And really, genuinely think about them.

And then come up to your husband at a time when he's not busy or distracted and just tell him, "I was thinking about you today, and there are several things that I really, really respect about you, and I just wanted you to know that I respect you." And without going any further, turn around and quietly begin to walk out of the room and see what happens.

Most of the time, the husband is going to say, "Wait a minute. What are you talking about? What things? What do you mean?" It's because he's starving to hear those things. And then you've thought about them. It's genuine from your heart. You share those things with him that you respect about him. It's like, "Hey, I just respect the fact that you've been faithful all these years." Or, "I respect the fact that when we went through that hard time, that you were willing to stick it out, and I just appreciate that so much about you." Or, "I just really respect the fact that you take time with our sons." Or whatever it might be. "I respect the fact that you worked your way through school, and you got your degree." Or whatever it might be.

It might even be a little thing like, "I just respect the fact that you are clean. You clean up the kitchen. If you happen to cook, you clean up after yourself, or you keep your shop up. You keep your tools all in order. You keep your tools sharp." "I appreciate the fact that you're willing to lend your lawn mower to the neighbor," or whatever it might be.

But share those things with him and just see what happens when you do that.

There are three things I want to share about the way that God has created us, the way that God has created males. That if a woman will understand those things and respect and honor those things, oh my, my, my, my, my, what a relationship you can have. What a pivot point, a turning point, it may be in your relationship. And these three areas, they are areas that men crave to be respected in. And if you will begin to respect your husband in these three areas, I predict that he will unconsciously respond to you by loving you more.

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Here are the three areas: in his work, his wisdom, and in his warmth. Work, wisdom, and warmth. Now, I realize that these broadcasts go out around the world in multiple languages, and in the English, that actually sounds really clever. Work, wisdom, and warmth they all start with the same letter. That letter that may not be so, where you're listening to this broadcast wherever you might be right now in the world. But it will still be applicable to you.

So first of all, let's talk about the man's work. It is man's God-given nature to provide and to protect. God has put that in every man. We go back to the book of Genesis, Genesis 2:15. It says,

¹⁵ Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

"To tend it and to keep it." Literally, God put him in the garden to work in it and to guard it and protect it. God created the man to provide and to protect. That is ingrained into every man.

Now, society, they'll dump a bunch of garbage on it and a bunch of human philosophy on that. And they will try and emasculate men and come up with different things. But, friend, this is the way God has created men. And it doesn't matter how much it has been skewed with the poisonous philosophies of man. It is still true. At the core of every man, God has ingrained it there to work, to provide, and then to protect.

Most women have no idea how important a man's work is to him and the importance that we, as men, put on our work. Our identity is tied up in what we do.

I know girls will get together; maybe they've just met. And one of the first things they do, they say, "Do you have kids?" The first thing they do is ask about relationships. In the Garden of Eden, the first thing God gave man was a task. The first thing God gave man was a job. You need to work in the garden, and you need to protect the garden. When God made woman, the first thing He did He brought her to the man, the first thing God gave her was a relationship. That tends to be the most important thing in the lives of women are their relationships. So the girls get together, and they talk about their kids. They talk about relationships in one way or another.

But listen, when we guys get together, a lot of times, we don't talk much at all. Talking is optional. But one of the first questions we will ask is, what do you do, meaning, what kind of work do you do? Because our identity is tied up in what we do. Have you told your husband, "Thank you, I appreciate you going out there every day and doing your best to support this family? I appreciate the fact that you work hard." Support his efforts, and don't ever put him down when it comes to his work and his desire to support his family.

Listen, it's something that we intuitively desire to hear that we are appreciated, that we are respected for the fact that we work and that we work hard.

I heard a story once about a woman and her husband were visiting some friends of theirs. And they're going into this new home that their friends had, and it was a spacious home. It was big. And without even really thinking about it, the wife says to her husband (the ones who are visiting), says, "Well, if you're ever going to get me a house like this, you're going to have to get a second job."

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And she didn't think much of it. She was probably just kidding when she said it, but the way most men are going to interpret that, they might laugh, but they interpret it as loser, failure. I don't respect and appreciate you. You haven't succeeded enough in your job. That may not be what was said. It may not be what was meant, but it's the way it was interpreted. It's the way that it was heard.

And so he withdraws, and she can't figure out what's wrong. Why has he suddenly gone stony silent? Well, it's because he feels disrespected when it comes to his work.

So listen, ladies, respect your man for his work. And again, you're going to have to join us next time.

I want to talk about this a little bit more. But we're also going to talk about wisdom and warmth. And you'll find out what that means and how incredibly important it is when you join us next time.

But I just want to tell you wherever you are right now; your marriage may be going down for the third time. Listen, God can resurrect a dead marriage, but He needs some channel to flow through into that marriage. Let it be you. Just say, God, here I am. Change me, use me, may I be a conduit of Your love and Your power and Your Spirit to flow through me into this relationship.

And I pray that God blesses you, that God increases you and that He gives you a spirit of wisdom and illumination when it comes to the truth of His Word.

Well, I'm so glad that you joined us, and I hope that you got something out of the message. And it's interesting if you look at different places in the New Testament where it talks about husband and wives' relationship, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, and husbands, love your wives," et cetera, et cetera, almost always before that, you'll find verses that will say, "Submit yourselves to God." First, submit yourselves to God, and then submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God. Have your relationship with God right first. It might say, talk about being filled with the Spirit, and then from there, it'll go right into marriage. And the idea is this our relationship vertically must be right with God before our relationships can be right horizontally. And if you've not given your life to Jesus, if this vertical relationship between you and God is not right, make it right today. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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