

How to Truly Love Your Wife

Do you love your wife?" "I don't think so," I wish I did, but I don't. I've even asked God to give me love for her. But I just don't have any feelings for her anymore." replied the young man. This husband was absolutely sincere but he was misguided in his understanding of love. He pictured love as warm, emotional, romantic feelings for his wife. In fact, these warm romantic feelings are the result of love, not the essence of love. He concluded that his marriage was over. Many in our society have come to the same conclusion.

"for we read in Bible in Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church" Husband, do you really love your wife? How does your love for her compare to Christ's love for the Church, which moved Him to give Himself for her on the cross? There is always a need to grow in Christlike love for your wife. Jesus commanded all of us to love one another just as He loved us (John 13:34) In Ephesians 5:2, all believers to walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us. So these comments apply to every Christian, single or married, male or female, in that general sense. We all must continually be growing in Christlike love for one another. But there is also a specific sense in which Bible applies the need for Christlike love to Christian husbands.

Christlike love should characterize each husband's relationship with his wife. Christian marriage is an earthly picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. The world should be able to look at a Christian marriage and see a distinctive difference in the way that husbands and wives relate to one another. When Christian marriages break up, it sends a false message to the world, that Christ does not love His bride with an enduring love for that individual. So it's here for a much greater purpose, to help us all glorify our Savior through marriages that reflect the relationship between Christ and His church.

Love is the priority for husbands: See Bible instructions to the wives(5:22-24), which state that the husband is the head of the wife, you would have expected him to say next, "Husbands, exercise your headship over your wives diligently, just as Christ is the head of the church" The husband primarily is responsible to set an atmosphere of love in the home. "Husbands, be continually loving your wives..." Many husbands think that their main responsibility is to provide an increasingly comfortable lifestyle for their wives and children. They would say that the long hours that they work are an expression of their love for their families. The truth is, many men find it easier to give their wives and children, material provision than to spend time with them and share their hearts with them in deep, loving relationships. It is true that if a man does not provide financially for his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8). But, your main responsibility toward your wife is, "Love her!" It's not easy, but it is your priority.

Love is possible for all husbands. God gives us the power to accomplish it by being filled with the Holy Spirit (5:18) The Scriptures say the Holy Spirit pours the love of God in our hearts (Romans 5:5) Without the Holy Spirit's replacing our self-centeredness with His fruit, which begins with love (Gal. 5:22-23), we could never make progress in loving our wives as Christ loved the church. While we will never do it perfectly in this life, but with the Spirit's power, we can make significant progress in it. The fact that God commands us to love our wives. What excuse do you have, If you say, "But I don't feel the same love for her that I used to feel," the Lord's reply is, "Get to work at obeying My commandment!" Falling in love is somewhat easy and effortless. But staying in love and growing in love require deliberate focus, effort and labor. If your marriage has degenerated into bitterness, blaming, and anger, you'll have to work much harder at obeying this command. But the fact that God commands it means that it is possible and required.

We must be clear about what means by "love". Love is portrayed as a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the loved one.

"Love is self-sacrificing," just as "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (5:25).

"Love is caring," just as a man nourishes and cherishes his own flesh, as Christ does the church (5:29).

"Love is a commitment," as implied by the command to love, by Christ's covenant love for us, and by the analogy of the body.

"Love shows itself," that is, it is not just words, but also deeds, as seen by Christ's going to the cross for us.

"Love seeks the highest good of the one loved," just as Christ died for us so that He might sanctify and cleanse us, to present us to Himself in all our glory, as holy and blameless (5:26-27)

“Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” Jesus gave His life for the church - before we loved Him. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” His love does not depend on your love for Him; His love is unconditional. Under God’s leadership and help- love your wife as a service--as giving your life to God. Loving your wife is to be your primary ministry as a husband. Jesus is our standard.(2 Cor. 5:21)! “Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou my God shouldst die for me!” “Are you crucifying self on a daily basis on behalf of your wife?” Is your focus on using her to meet your needs or on setting aside your selfish desires in order to meet her needs? “... the real cause of failure, ultimately, in marriage is always self, and the various manifestations of self. Of course that is the cause of trouble everywhere and in every realm. Self and selfishness are the greatest disrupting forces in the world.” But, the apostle’s explicit command to husbands is that we love our wives sacrificially, as Christ loved the church. The main responsibility for setting a loving environment in the home is on the husband. But many husbands know nothing in daily practice about laying aside their rights, their comfort, their pleasures, their pursuits, or their time, for the sake of their wives. If you’re using your wife simply to meet your needs, if you don’t regard her needs above your own, if you are demanding your own way in the home, you aren’t loving her sacrificially.

Love is purposeful: The purpose of love is the perfecting of the loved one. The example of love is Christ’s sacrificial love for the church. Sacrifice mean giving up your patterns of self-protection. The expectation of love is the perfecting of the beloved. We want to be God’s instrument for building up our wives. The only way we will be able to do that is if we sacrifice ourselves in loving involvement in our wife’s life. There is a great deal of responsibility placed on the husband for the maturity of the woman God has brought into our lives. So love your wife sacrificially so that she blooms as God planned. Bible gives us Christ’s purpose in giving Himself for the church (5:26-27) “so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” Biblical love involves effort to reach a purpose. “That He might sanctify her...” To sanctify means to set apart unto God for His purposes. Christ does achieve His aims for His bride by a definite purpose and He works with us to achieve it.

There are three senses of sanctification in the Bible. There is positional sanctification, which happens at the moment of salvation. God sets us apart for Himself. (1 Cor. 1:2), so when Christ saves us, we are set apart from the world unto Him alone. In practical terms, this means that Husband must put a protective fence around your love for your wife. There is no place for flirting with other women. Jesus loves His bride. Even so, a Christian husband guards the exclusivity of his relationship with his wife. There is also progressive sanctification, which is the process by which God makes us holy in practice (1 Thess. 4:3). And, there is final sanctification, in which we will be completely holy at the moment of Christ’s return (Eph. 5:27) Married love has a purifying purpose. Christ “cleansed the church by the washing of water with the word.” This refers to the cleansing that takes place at the moment of salvation, when Jesus’ blood cleanses us from all our sins. While *sanctifying* refers to being set apart exclusively unto God, *cleansing* refers to the removal of our sins. In Ezekiel 16:8-14, where God describes how He entered into a marriage covenant with His bride Israel. He washed off her blood, anointed her with oil, and clothed her in beautiful garments and jewelry, so that she looked like a queen. Even so, Christ took us from our impurity and cleansed us from all our sins, making us the bride of the King. The application for husbands is that we must be committed to the total well-being of our wives, but especially to their spiritual growth in holiness. You should read the Word with your wife and pray with her and for her, so that she will grow in godliness. Talk together often about the things of God, including both the struggles and the joys of the Christian life.

Married love has an edifying purpose. The Lord is building His church, so that we will be holy, blameless and spotless. That has been His purpose from eternity, Ephesians 1:4 The Lord never does anything to tear down or put down His chosen bride! Even when He must discipline us, He does it in love that we may share His holiness (Heb. 12:6, 10) The application for Christian husbands is obvious. Any thoughts, words, or deeds that put down your wife, ridicule her, attack her, or tear her down, are not in line with your God-given purpose. At times, you may need gently to correct her in love. But your aim is to help her grow into a truly beautiful woman in the sense the words of 1 Peter 3:4, you want to encourage her to develop “the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” You should do it primarily to glorify the Lord, who loved you and gave Himself for you on the cross. Your love for her should be sacrificial, not selfish. It should be purposeful, not aimless.

True love, the kind of love that keeps a couple together for a lifetime, is not a feeling but an attitude. It says, With the help of God, I'm going to do everything I can to enhance the life of my wife. We should pray to God to change our attitude as Christ loved His disciples. Just image of Jesus on His knees, washing the feet of His disciples. In 1 John 4:19 says that we love because God loved us first. Love stimulates love.

"Love your wife in the same way that you love your body and your life."(Ephesians 5:28-33) You care for your body daily. You try to be as well fed and healthy as is possible. You quickly take care of any needs or desires that you may have. Take care for your wife's needs and well-being. Feel your wife's pain and illnesses as if it were your own life. A husband must see his wife's needs or desires, whether they are financial, physical, emotional or spiritual, must receive your full attention and make supreme efforts to meet those. In this way, you can love her and provide for her, just as much as you do for yourself.

"Be considerate as you live with your wife, with respect ..." (1 Peter 3:7) The Bible says that if we neglect this command, our prayers will be hindered! To be considerate means to quit any irritating habits! When she needs to be helped with carrying heavy items, do it! If she needs time to herself, take care of the children for her for a bit! Help your wife in any way you can. Show your love to her and always be considerate of her needs and wants. Pray and ask God to show you where you may be inconsiderate.

"Do not be harsh with your wife."(Colossians 3:19) Women are a lot more sensitive than men, so realize that harsh words, angry looks, irritated tones of voice and impatience will deeply affect your wife. Remember always that she is a precious gift that God has given you and always be thankful to God for her.

"The husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife."(1 Corinthians 7:3-5) Please love your wife physically. Don't deny her of what she needs. Discuss with her what her needs are both inside and outside of the bedroom. Finding other women attractive and looking at them will degrade your view of your own wife, because you will start to compare her with them. You will be less satisfied with her, and she will feel less special to you. Remember to be enchanted with your wife and no one else.

"Call your wife 'blessed' and praise her."(Proverbs 31:28-29) Tell her that she is special and that she is greater than any other woman on earth. Don't just mention her physical beauty, but compliment her on her care for you, her hard work, and her lady-like attributes. Watch the flower of your wife's heart blossom as you repeatedly fill her ears with your praises. She longs for those words and she wants to hear them from you! Your wife needs and longs to be treasured by you. The responsibility upon the man to grow to love, and express love, for every part of his wife is needed. Also, respectfully and sensually tell her so. Think of how good she will feel when both you and her truly believe that you are loving with every part of her! She will feel like the Queen of the world as you fall more and more in love with her.

"Honor your marriage; keep it pure by remaining true to your wife in every way."(Hebrews 13:4) Keep your marriage pure by training your heart and eyes to be true to your wife. Your marriage will reap huge benefits if you do and will hopefully last for a lifetime! Thank the Lord for inner beauty and appreciate it. Encourage your wife to be modest in public. "Women may be dressed in simple clothing, with a quiet and serious air; not with vanity about her hair and gold or jewels or expensive clothing;"(1 Timothy 2:9)

"Be thankful for your wife and realize the favor you have received from God."(Proverbs 18:22) Just think of how lonely you would be without a wife. Adam was alone and it wasn't good for him to be alone, so God gave him a wife. You have a lifetime companion, a friend, and a lover to enjoy every day. What a blessing! Thank God and pray for her daily. She is a tremendous "prize" from God.

"Be one flesh with your wife in every way."(Matthew 19:5) Enjoy life with her as if you want to be inseparable from her. Long to be with her, like you did when you first met, first love. Learn as a couple to agree on everything and be like-minded. Enjoy intimacy. Spend time just talking and sharing the day's events. Show a genuine interest and listen intently to your wife. Give her your full attention and eye contact anytime she is talking to you. Your wife is more important than anything or anyone alive but Jesus Christ.

God wants to use you in your marriage. Ask Him to give you a loving attitude toward your wife and to pour out His love through you. It is a prayer God will answer. Be unified and one with your wife and as being heirs together of the grace of life. Love is the choice to cooperate with God in serving your wife.