

Rhema Bible Study

Ephesians Chapter 5 - verses 29 thru 33

May 12, 2021

Verse 29

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

The church is spiritually nourished and cherished by the Lord to the point that nothing can destroy it, not even the gates of hades (Matthew 16:18). When this kind of love is present, all other problems can be solved by both husband and wife. God is saying that people love themselves with the same intensity that Christ loves Christians. And that is the same kind of self-sacrificing, caring love that God wants a Christian man to have for his wife.

The most important thing that a husband can do for his wife is to build her up and cherish her as the most important person in his life next to God Himself. She is far more than a close friend. She is special and set apart from any other human being.

The husband is to love and care for his wife without measure. Just as it is not natural for a husband to hate himself, so it is not natural to hate his wife. Neglect or abuse of her violates the principle of oneness. Above all, a wife wants to be cherished by her husband. She wants to feel valued by him. She wants to know she is first in his life beside God.

A wife needs emotional security from her husband. This involves sex with love, being appreciated by her husband, and companionship.

Question...In reality, some Christians do hate themselves - what are some reasons for this?

Question...Can a husband love himself without being conceited - thinking he is all that?

Verse 30

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Before Paul approaches the one flesh concept concerning a husband and wife, as taught in Genesis 2:24, he establishes the Christian's relationship to Christ's body, the church. The "we" refers to Christians and represents members of His body, flesh, and bones. This is a very close relationship to Christ and other members of the body. It serves as a figure of unity, cooperation, concern, and love. This figure is discussed in full detail in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. When Eve was presented to Adam after being made from his side, he said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). This same kind of unity and oneness is used to show the closeness of those in Christ's church.

Men are to leave their mom and dad when they get married. In other words, parents of married children have no right to tell them what to do or how to run their life. Give suggestions, maybe, but that married couple is a brand new family unit; autonomous before God. The man must answer to God for how his new family functions not to his mother and father. There is an intimacy with husband and wife like no other institution in society.

Questions...How should a Christian respond to meddling parents?

Case Study - true example - parents loan money to children and now feel they have the right to make aggressive suggestions about the way they manage money...

Verse 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."

After discussing the oneness of members of Christ's body, Paul returns to the oneness of the husband and wife. At this point, he quotes Genesis 2:24, the first recorded law of marriage. There are three important demands mentioned in this verse for marriage: (1) The man will leave his father and mother, (2) he will be joined to his wife, and (3) together they will become one flesh. To *leave* his father

and mother means he is to begin his own home. The man and woman who leaves father and mother still loves them and respects their faithful teaching, but they must leave to establish their own home. Happiness in marriage cannot be found when one runs back home every time there is a ripple on the sea of marital bliss. Mistakes will be made, but, as a general rule, these should be worked out by the couple as they grow deeper in their love for one another. To be *joined* to his wife means that they stay together. The Greek word means to “glue upon, glue to, or to join one's self closely to.” When two pieces of wood are well glued together, the wood will break before the glue-joint does. Likewise, in the marriage bond, the husband or wife should die before the marriage bond breaks. Becoming *one flesh* is more than the sexual act. The *henosis*—the making of two *one*—is brought about by the total commitment of two personalities, each to the other, in the closest relationship of the flesh, i.e., sexual intercourse. Nevertheless, sexual intercourse alone does not make the *henosis*. In case of rape and seduction, there is no mutual commitment. In cases of harlotry, the sexual intercourse which was designed by God to be experienced in marriage, as a part of the “one flesh” experience, does not establish an actual *henosis*, but simply a “one body” relationship (cf. I Corinthians 6:16). What a great concept from God! This is one of the blessings of His creation that man and woman are made that they can become “one flesh.” But, how many married couples really believe this? For example, suppose we were to gather an audience of people and bring before them a healthy man. Then, we ask the audience, “Is it okay to cut this man's arm off?” Or, “How do you feel about cutting this man's body in half?” If they were to actually think we were serious, there would be a mob effort to prevent such a thing from happening. However, in the case of a married couple that has become “one flesh,” they can be divided in our society today without much concern at all. In God's sight, however, He sees a couple as ONE, just as surely as He sees the oneness of an individual body.

God formed Eve out of the body of Adam. The husband and wife are incomplete without each other. The marriage unit is **indivisible** in God's eyes. Partners who divorce their spouses destroy part of themselves. The bond between husband and wife should be the closest of all bonds between human beings. The husband and wife are no longer two, but one. God's design for marriage is that it is indivisible. Christ made us to be a part of His body. As Christ and the church are one, so the husband and wife are one. This oneness supersedes the close family tie.

Question...do couples have to do everything together?

Question...is it okay to spend time with the fellas or the girls?

Verse 32

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Unbeknown to the people of Moses' day (i.e., “it was a `mystery”), marriage was *designed by God* from the very beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose—it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday exist between Christ and His church. And now, in the New Testament Age, the apostle Paul reveals this mystery, and it is simply amazing! This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly discover that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much more fundamental than that. By inspiration, Paul understood that when God designed marriage, He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God's great purposes in marriage—to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever! If this is so, then the order Paul is writing of here (submission and love) is not accidental or temporary or culturally determined. It is, instead, part of the *essence of marriage*, part of God's original plan for a perfect, sinless, harmonious marriage. Therefore, here we have a very powerful argument for the fact that Christlike, loving headship and church-like, willing submission are rooted in creation and in God's eternal purposes, not just in the passing trends of culture.

All this talk about a man and his wife is designed to illustrate the relationship between Christ and his church. The wife was made for her husband just as the church was made for Christ. A husband is to care for his wife just as Christ cares for his church. If a husband wants to bless himself then he ought to be a blessing to his wife. If a wife wants to bless herself then she should be a blessing to her husband.

A good biblical marriage is not simply the union of body with body but of soul with soul. It is the meeting of mind and emotions between husband and wife. The loving relationship of Christ to the church is a paradigm for the husband to love his wife.

Marriage is not simply a male and female rooming together. Biblically, it is a blending of two souls together where they become one. What hurts one hurts the other.

Question...is it okay to treat women/wives as second-class citizens because of your culture?

Question...how do you change people's opinion about women not being equal to men?

Verse 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.

Notwithstanding the fact that the original marriage law was intended to show the relationship between Christ and His church, its application to human marriage remains unchanged. The husband **MUST** love his wife and the wife **MUST** be in subjection to her husband by respecting his God-given authority.

A Christian marriage should be mutually submissive, loving, and self-sacrificing. A husband should love his wife, and be ready to sacrifice in order to meet her needs. A wife should submit to her husband; meaning: she should be willing to sacrifice what she wants for the sake of her husband. When those things happen you have a happy family. There is no other way. No one needs any marriage counseling beyond that because if they are not will to do that nothing else will work anyway.

There are two different ultimate needs between husband and wife. If a wife tries to meet the needs of her husband by her own needs, then she will fail. If a husband tries to meet the needs of his wife by his own needs, then he will fail. There are two biblically dissimilar needs between male and female, between husband and wife. A

husband cannot meet his wife's need by what he wants out of marriage, and vice versa for the wife.

Women who negate their husbands privately and put them down publically do the very opposite of what this verse commands. Respect is the highest form of the wife's role in marriage. Husbands who do not cherish their wives but neglect them for their business or some other interest do the very opposite of what meets her fundamental need. Cherishing the wife is the highest form of the husband's role in marriage.

The relationship between husbands and wives is sacredly related to the relationship between Christ and the church.

Question...since it is not good for man to be alone, is it good for woman to be alone?

Question...why are there so many Christian women who want to be married still single?

End Chapter Five