

Spirit-filled Headship
The True Nature of Husbandly Agape Love

EPHESIAN CONTEXT

The overarching theme of Paul's letter is this...

Ephesians 1:9,10

...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:22, 23

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Jesus' headship means 2 things:

1. Jesus acts as _____ of the church
2. Jesus is the supreme authoritative _____ of the church.

What does this unity look like? How do new life people function in the church?

The answer? They walk in wisdom according to the Scriptures, in the enabling power of the Spirit to perform what is commanded, and in submission to the body of Christ.

1. Scripture-informed
2. Spirit empowered
3. Submissive to the body

HUSBANDS

Ephesians 5:25-33

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her by the washing of the water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The Husbands' Command – Love

Not “**Husbands, rule your wives...**”

>>>*Husbands agape your wives...*

Agape love is exercised in submission to the body.

- It is a command by God. Commands are given because we do not naturally obey them.
- Agape is a love that has no conditions. It expects nothing in return.
- 100% to 0%
- Agape is covenant love of decision and will.
- Agape may have emotion, but it's not grounded in emotion. Agape does not “fall into” or “out of” love. Agape chooses to love with no expectation.
- Agape unseats the common patriarchal system of the home and replaces it with a Christological patriarchal system of the home.

Two Facets of Christ-modeled Agape Love

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

Q. How did Jesus love the church and give himself up for her?

Q. What are some implications?

Christ's Purpose for Loving the Church

Ephesians 5:26, 27

...that he might sanctify her by the washing of the water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Goal: Purity or Holiness of the Church. Sanctification.

Ezekiel 16:4-14

Q. What are some similarities between Ezekiel 16 and Ephesians 5?

Whereas Ezekiel was referencing God's active, sanctifying love for Israel – Paul is shifting that into the New Covenant age of the church, whereby God is uniting all things under Christ, both Jew and Gentile. We have been folded into that loving, sanctifying work of God – now revealed as the hand of Christ.

Paul uses parts of this imagery elsewhere, of Christ cleansing his people to present to himself a holy people.

1 Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

2 Corinthians 11:1-2

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

The same Greek word for washing used in Ephesians is also found in Titus.

Titus 3:5

*...he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the **washing** of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

It is consistent metaphorically to read this washing of the water with the word as the work of God, purifying and setting us apart as a betrothed people by means of the word, the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit.

Q. What does this have to do with husbands?

A. Paul is driving us to a radically different model for husbands.

>>> God created the husband role, and he modeled it *perfectly*. Only God can define the role of a husband.

Q... Does your understanding and perception of what a husband is come from God?

The Ezekiel 16 husband...

Makes his wife flourish.

Concerns himself with her sanctification and holiness before God (bathing, washing, anointing, covering, clothing).

Adorns her

Nourishes her well

Nurtures her growth into beauty

Prepares her to meet her king as an object of splendour.

Ephesians 1:3,4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Facet 1 of Christ-like Agape Love

A Husbands love must be a ***self-giving / sanctifying*** love.

Sanctifying love is GREATER than self-sacrificing/self-giving love. Christ demonstrates this. His sanctifying love for the church CAUSED him to show self-sacrificing love for her.

Q. Is your wife at the same level of spiritual maturity today as she was 2 years ago?

As you Love Your Own Body

Ephesians 5:28-30

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

*In the same way, (just as Christ has modeled), husbands **opheilousin agapan** their wives as their own bodies.*

Opheilousin – Gk. A moral obligation

Husbands have a moral obligation before God and man to agape (self-giving, sanctifying love) their wives as their own bodies.

Facet 2 of Christ-like Agape Love

A Husbands love must be a ***nourishing / cherishing*** love.

Nourish – Gk. ***Ektrepei***. Does not just mean provide nutrients. Ektrepei has in view a present, active process of seeing growth until it reaches a perfect maturity.

Cherish – Gk. ***Thalpei***. To show affection and tender love.

A Living Metaphor: Christ's Union with the Church

Ephesians 5:31,32

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

A THEMATIC RUN – the CHURCH SANCTIFIED, UNIFIED IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:20-23

*...that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave **him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fill all in all.***

Ephesians 2:6

*...and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us **in Christ Jesus.***

Ephesians 4:13

*...until we all attain to the **unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,** ...*

Ephesians 4:15, 16

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, make the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Ephesians 5:23

*For the husband is the head of the wife even as **Christ is head of the church, his body**, and is himself its Savior.*

Ephesians 5:25

*Husbands, love your wives, as **Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her.*

Ephesians 5:31,32

*“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to **Christ and the church.***

The Holy Spirit is exegeting Genesis 2:24. All the way back into Genesis – even before sin entered, and before the proto-evangelion, in the infinite mind of God, marriage was designed to picture a greater reality – a greater relationship. The relationship of Jesus Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:33

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Both have Christ as the CENTER of their roles.

Husbands have Christ as a model of agape love.

Wives have Christ as the object of submissive love.

The definition of marriage is not bound up within the male-female relationship.
The definition of marriage is grounded within the Christ-Church relationship.

Husbands – Love your wife as much as you love yourself. Do not neglect her as you would not neglect yourself. At the very least, live in such a way that your attention is as fixed on her as it is you. Don't be a roommate. Be a husband.

Christ-like, authoritative, agape headship carries two facets of love:

- Self-giving/Sanctifying Love
- Nourishing/Cherishing Love

Wives – respect your husband. Submit to him. Do not assert yourself over him. You are created to help him in God's calling for his life. You are not created to neglect or hinder. Your respect is a command. Your respect is not to be earned.

Christ-like submission carries two facets of love:

- Submission in everything to your husband' headship
- Respect

HOMEWORK FOR HUSBANDS

Your wife's most important need is spiritual growth in her relationship to Christ. To this end you are primarily called to self-sacrifice. You must self-sacrifice for her sanctification.

How can you practically love your wife with *self-giving/sanctifying love*?

- Disciple her spiritually. She is the most important disciple you will ever have.
- Be aware of her spiritual condition.
- Be aware of her struggles with sin.
- Be aware of when and how her relationship with God is compromised.

To disciple someone is to literally "come alongside of." You take upon yourself the yoke that she carries spiritually.

How can you involve yourself in your wife's spiritual relationship with Christ? Walk with her through the *means* that God has given us to facilitate our spiritual growth.

- Regular intake of Scripture.
- Regular prayer
- Regular participation in worship
- Regular hearing the faithful preaching of God's Word.
- Regular fellowship with God's people

To do this requires a sacrifice of time and effort. It does not come naturally or spontaneously. It must be measured and planned. You must actively run defense to guard this time and make it happen.

How can you implement this today?

- When will we spend time in prayer and Scripture reading together?
- What do I have to sacrifice for this to happen?

With regards to the church, is my church giving us the opportunity to grow under the faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word?

Remember, starting anything new where you have no accountability requires a lot of discipline at the beginning. Over time these things will become habitual and a natural routine of your life.

This is a starting point. We will look at practical help in a future session.