

Our theme in 2024 is “Live Like Jesus.” As we talked about Family last week we reworded our yearly theme verses to apply to our families. This week we are talking about Marriage, so how would those verses read concerning our marriages? Philippians 2:5 (NCV) might read, “*In your marriages you must think and act like Christ Jesus.*” And 1 John 2:6 might say something like, “*We claim to be a Christian couple, therefore our married life must be like Jesus’ life.*”

### **In Christ Like Marriages, Jesus Must Be Number One**

Right before I married Janet, I told her, “*Janet, I love you, but you are always going to be number two in my life, because Jesus is always going to be number one.*” Janet just looked back at me with confidence and said, “*That’s ok, Scott, you will always be number two in my life as well, because Jesus will always be number one.*”



Marriage is second in our GPS - God’s Positioning System for the family, because to have a good marriage, God must come first! **Ephesians 5:1-2 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

### **Christ Like Couples Submit to One Another**

**Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

*Submitting to one another:* This is not something that we can demand out of one another. Submission is built on love and trust.

*Submit, hupotasso.* The verb to submit translates to a Greek term with a military background.

- To submit is to accept the authority structure in which you are placed.
- Submission involves subordinating personal interest for the well-being of the larger unit.<sup>i</sup>

**Amos 3:3 Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?**

There is a four-letter word that hurts our marriages and hinders mutual submission and it’s spelled, S-E-L-F. We have the most trouble with S-E-L-F. Selfishness causes most marital conflicts. We can conquer “self” only by the power of covenant love and dying to our old selfish nature.

Are you unselfish? Are you selfless in your marriage? Do you think about yourself less? Have you taken that walk of death? Have you died to yourself?

Jesus is the ultimate expression of love. He is the ultimate expression of unselfishness. That’s why Jesus must be the center of our marriages. I must be surrendered to Christ Jesus first.

Submit to one another in *the fear and reverence of God*. Not in fear of each other.

Do it out of fear and respect for His divine order. **Ephesians 5:22-23 builds on this concept of mutual submission within the marriage.** (In other words, “How do we submit to each other?”)

### **How Christ Like Wives Do Their Part**

**Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.**

Not that he is the Lord but submit to him in the same way that you have learned to submit to the Lord.

**This is made easy when the husband loves the wife like Christ loves the church (vs. 25).**

- Is it hard to submit to a Jesus who loves you unconditionally, laid down His life for you, adopted you into His family, prepared a place for you in heaven, and allows you to experience abundant life here on this earth? Not at all!
- Now the husband will not be able to do everything that Jesus did, but he must demonstrate that same attitude of love and self-sacrifice towards his wife.

## God's Divine Order

**Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.**

- Two people can be equally qualified for a job, but one must lead.
- That doesn't mean that one is better or more loved than the other.
  - Oftentimes ladies may wish that they were the one chosen to lead.
  - Many times, men wish that they didn't have that formidable responsibility.
- But for God's order and peace to rule in a family, each must fulfill the roles to which they are called. (Mutual Submission)

*The Bible does not put males over females, but it does call for husbands to accept responsible leadership in the same spirit of self-giving and devotion Christ has shown for His church.*

*Women are never made second to men in general, but the wife is specifically called to accept her husband's leadership. **These verses put such demands upon the Christian husband** that it is impossible to see how a charge of male chauvinism could justly be made against the Bible, or how a license to exploit women or wives could ever be claimed from such texts.<sup>ii</sup>*

### How Christ Like Husbands Do Their Part

**Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives** (a direct command), **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.**

- What a standard for a husband! Love your wife the same way that Christ loves the church. You are to love her and, as the spiritual leader, you have a responsibility for her spiritual welfare.
- Just as Christ is washing and cleaning the church with the Word, the husband should be praying for his wife, sharing the Word of God with her, speaking the Word of God over her life, and imparting blessings into her life.

If verses 22-27 are too hard for husbands to understand, Paul gives husbands an explanation that every man can understand. Husbands love your wives as you love yourself, your own body!

**Ephesians 5:28-29 this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—(Nourish her. Cherish her. Care for her.) 30 for we are members of his body.**

***“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.” Proverbs 18:22***

**“My most brilliant achievement was my ability to be able to persuade my wife to marry me.”  
-Winston Churchill**

In Verses 30-32 Paul begins to relate the husband-and-wife relationship to the oneness of Christ and the Church, which he says is ‘a great mystery’ within itself (32).

### Christ Like Marriages, Will Leave and Be United for Oneness

**Ephesians 5:31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”** (Quoting Genesis 2:24)

The great mystery in marriage is that two people come together as one. For this oneness to occur there must be a leaving first! Many marriages are in trouble today because there has never been a real breaking away from both sets of parents.

- As we will see in Ephesians 6, children are to be subject to their parents.
  - Prior to marriage, both the man and woman are under the order and rule of their parents.
- Marriage is a transition away as you leave your parents, join with your mate, and begin to submit to one another.
  - You will always honor, love, and respect your parents, but you are now following God's divine order for your marriage and subsequent family.

Parents must release their children into God's divine plan for them.

- Trying to rule the lives of your married children will only hinder God's work within them.
- It is acceptable and encouraged to give Godly advice, share wisdom from experience, help when needed, pray for, and bless your married children. It is not acceptable to expect them to obey and answer to you as the spiritual authority in their lives.

### **Oneness Reflects the Image of God**

**Genesis 1: 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.** The characteristics of God are seen in both males and females. Together a married couple better reflects the image of God to the world.

*Author Larry Crabb says, "The goal of oneness can be almost frightening when we realize that God does not intend that my wife and I find our personal needs met in marriage. God wants our relationship to validate the claims of Christianity to a watching world. He wants marriage to act as an example of Christ's redeeming love, overcoming the divisive effects of sin."*

The world is dying to see true, authentic marriages. They want to see it in your marriage and mine.

If we are one flesh, one body, we should strive to nurture that body to good health!

- Hurting your mate only hurts you. Depriving your mate deprives yourself. Mistreating your mate is mistreating yourself. Winning over your mate is winning over yourself and losing.

### **The Power of Oneness in Marriage**

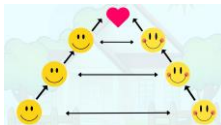
**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: 10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.**

### **The Love Triangle**

You will never have a Christ Like Family or anything that resembles one if Jesus isn't the center of your life and the center of your marriage.

- If my marriage is to reflect the image of God to the world, it only makes sense that my personal goal should be to be transformed into the image of God. I want to Live Like Jesus!

*"Success in marriage does not come merely through finding the right mate, but through being the right mate." Barnett Brickner (A God Chaser)*



**ILL:** Coming together as One. *Clackers.*

**NEXT LIFE STEP:** This week I will determine to keep Jesus as the center of my life and continue to be transformed into the image of Jesus. Jesus first!

### **Love and Respect Make for a Christ Like Marriage**

**Ephesians 5:33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

Husbands, love your wives, whether she deserves it or not. Demonstrate God's unconditional love.

***“A person needs to be loved the most when he or she deserves to be loved the least” Unknown***

Wives, just as the husband is commanded in scripture to love his wife, so is the wife commanded to respect her husband.

- Does this mean to respect your husband if he deserves it? Does it mean to only respect your husband if he loves you 100 percent like Christ loves the Church? Or should you give him proportional respect? Tit for tat? *“I’ll respect him only as much as he loves me?”*

Men need to feel that they are respected.

- They will go to great lengths to earn the respect of fellow co-workers, acquaintances, and friends. As the old saying goes, “Respect is not given it is something that you earn.” Right? **Not so in a Godly marriage.**
- Wives are called to respect their husbands unconditionally, just like husbands are called to love their wives unconditionally.
- A husband should never have to earn the respect of his wife. She should give it freely.

***“The key to an ideal marriage is not expecting perfection.” Unknown***

Couples, if you give love you will receive love. If you give respect you will receive respect in return. If you sacrifice and lay down your life for your mate the same will be done for you. Life breeds life!

**NEXT LIFE STEP: This week I will take the Christ Like Family Test and begin to work on areas that need improvement.**

---

<sup>i</sup> *Prisoner of Joy* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

<sup>ii</sup> *Spirit-Filled Life Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1795, notes on 5:22, 23, 24-33.