

# Christ and His Bride

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     So I'd love to see how the church, it's actually been, I think, a year since I've been here, and you've grown so much. And there's all these up-and-coming leaders going through training, and Sean's doing a great job there.
- And so I'm just excited to see what God has for you. And you're starting to outgrow this facility, which has been a great facility for you. And so I'm praying for you guys regularly, and I'm just happy to be here again.
- And hopefully next time it won't be quite so long. Maybe I'll visit in the spring or something. Anyway, you've been in a series on Ephesians. And I hope what you've been, I trust, and I'm sure you have.
- I haven't listened to the sermons, though. But Paul in Ephesians is hammering home salvation by grace through faith in Christ, right? He's talking about the unity of the church and peace with God.
- And he's talking about gifts. Our gifts are for mutual edification. And he talks about our new life in Christ. And so he moves from gospel truths to gospel attitudes and actions.
- [ 1 : 0 9 ]     And so we are motivated by grace and love, by the gospel, not by a set of rules or law or legalism. Now, I am going to focus my comments primarily addressing verses 22 to the end, but I had 18 to 21 read, really, so that you get the context of what he's talking about here.
- And so here we continue in the motivation for gospel attitudes and actions and not a call to observe commandments. Let me pray, and we'll commit this time to the Lord.
- Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you that it is good. Thank you that it is true, that we can trust in it.
- And when we're face to face with it, Lord, help us to heed it and not inject our own culture or preconceived notions into it, Lord, but to hear from you, hear what your word truly says, that we would change our minds based on your word and not to change the word based on our minds, Lord.
- Help us to be shaped by it. And Holy Spirit, we ask that you would come and fill us now as I know you are present, Lord. We ask for your help in changing.
- [ 2 : 3 1 ]     Lord, when we hear the word, we want to be changed by your word. And it is your Holy Spirit that can do that. So we ask, Holy Spirit, come and change us this morning.
- We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. In 2013, a shoe company started promoting this new management structure.
- It was called Holacracy. Maybe you heard it. Maybe you haven't. This was an idea to get rid of hierarchy in the workplace. So get rid of all the managers, no bosses, no titles, nothing like that.
- Instead, workers would track their decision through this internal web app. Back then, the news reported on it and they hailed, oh, this is a great idea. Everyone reporting on it said, oh, they loved it and gave a defense for why it was great and why it would work.

And people really hailed it as the end of hierarchy in the workplace. And this was going to change the way society did business. Now, fast forward to last year, 2016.

[ 3 : 34 ] Employees are leaving this shoe company. Employees reported that there was chaos in the company. They didn't know how to get things done anymore. They actually reported that they wanted a boss so that they could run ideas by and decisions by.

And the reason for that is because hierarchy in business promotes order. The structure of manager and worker, that promotes order so that you can get things done, so that you can work together.

Now, this isn't to say that everything about this idea was bad. I'm not saying that. But I say this to show that it is important to have some kind of hierarchy in business and as well in all relationships.

Our God is a God of order. It's part of who God is. And he's the one that everything and everyone is subject to. It really could be no other way.

We are to submit to God because he is the one that created the universe. And so he gets to make the rules. And he is worthy of obeying. And actually, there's joy in obedience to him.

[ 4 : 50 ] So we are to be filled with the Spirit, as it says in verse 18. Part of that being filled with the Spirit is addressing one another in song. That's a whole other sermon. I don't know if you've preached on that.

It's a great sermon. Bob Coughlin also has a fantastic sermon sermon on singing to one another. That's part of what we do. Not only singing to God, but to singing to one another as we're reminding each other the truths of the gospel.

But that's a different sermon. Part of it is giving thanks to God always. That could be its own sermon too. And then we come to this. Part of it is submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

So if you've been filled with the Spirit, and really every Christian should endeavor to be filled with the Spirit, every Christian has received the Spirit, you can ask the Spirit to fill you as well and change you.

And if you've been filled with the Spirit, you will bring glory to Jesus. That's my main point this morning. Be filled with the Spirit, and you will show reverence for Christ.

[ 5 : 57 ] You'll bring him honor. You'll bring him glory. Be filled with the Spirit, and you will show reverence for Christ. Now, Paul introduces the next three sections with verse 21.

Some translations begin a new sentence here, saying, Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. And then 22, verse 22, begins a section on husbands and wives.

And chapter 6, verse 1, begins a section on children and parents. And then 6, 5, begins a section on bond servants and masters. The gospel has a profound effect on our relationships, not just the ones listed here specifically, those wives and husbands, children and parents, bond servants and masters, but really, generally, all towards all our brothers and sisters in Christ, as well, towards unbelievers, towards those outside of the church.

The Spirit changes the way that we interact with each other. And we have joy. We have humility towards one another.

Really, we want to put this on, being filled with the Spirit, so that we are not asserting our desires and opinions and preferences over others, but we are making others more important than ourselves.

[ 7 : 16 ] So here we are in this first section, wives and husbands. This isn't a particularly popular scripture in our culture. It's not even really popular in our churches many times.

I think one reason is maybe somewhat of a good reason. There have been many abuses of this doctrine or misinterpretation of this doctrine so that it produces like this self-centered chauvinism or misogyny towards women.

And that is not what we want to represent. We want to hold women in high regard and respect. And on the other side, we have a reaction against this doctrine that is radical feminism, one that seeks to even go so far as to make women as more capable than men, more valuable than men.

And that's not where we want to go either. We want to be biblically minded. And so this doctrine is often viewed that because there are different roles, there is inequality.

As one is the man is the head, the husband is the head. And so the one who submits, the wife, must be inferior. No, that's far from the truth. There are different roles.

[ 8 : 43 ] And you can see this really in many relationships. You have temporary roles. Like if you go to somebody's house for dinner, you actually submit to them, right?

You defer to them. They make the decisions on what to have for dinner. You may ask, hey, what can I bring for dinner? And typically you'll say, oh yeah, I can bring that.

Or if you don't, you ask politely, oh, I don't think I could do that. Could I bring this or that? So really you're deferring to them. That's a very temporary thing and a very natural thing that you would submit to somebody who's hosting dinner.

And as well in the workplace, right? You have a boss that you submit to. You have a good working relationship with them, I hope, that a manager helps you to do your work well.

And so we have the church relationships as well. You submit to your pastors and to maybe your small group leader or other ministry team leaders. This is a natural thing that you submit to.

[ 9 : 42 ] And as well, we want to promote this in the home. The husband is the head, the wife submits. And as a church, we must be faithful to scripture, not skipping over this part or ignoring it because we don't like it.

But I think if we delve into it, not just will we tolerate this doctrine, but we will come to love it and it will become encouraging to us.

Submission really is a beautiful thing to God and it should be a beautiful thing to us. Let's read in verse 22. Wives, Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. So my first point here is wives submitting to husbands is a reflection of the church submitting to Christ.

A wife submitting to her husband is a reflection of Christ submitting to the church. And some preachers and commentators have used other words to describe this, such as subjugation or subordination.

[ 10 : 57 ] And I don't think they're understanding of the verses necessarily any different than ours, just because they use a different word. But because I am personally uncomfortable with those words, just because in the modern English they carry some baggage with them.

And so the word that I prefer is submit. And that is the language that the ESV has chosen to represent that idea as well. But don't, what I'm saying is don't react against the words subjugation and subordination.

If you're reading a commentary or hearing a preacher, they may not necessarily be meaning anything different than we are here. but it's just a word choice often.

So I prefer the word submit. Really, it's the same word Paul uses in verse 21. Submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ. And this is speaking to all Christians.

And so this specific instance of wives submitting to husbands is grounded in submitting to one another, which really in turn is grounded in being filled with the Spirit.

[ 12 : 04 ] So indeed, we are bond servants to Christ. Once we were slaves to sin, now we are slaves to Christ. And so we submit to Christ willingly.

Submission should not be a foreign word or action to us. It shouldn't be repulsive or something that we need to shy away from. As I said, at the workplace, you submit to your manager.

If you have employees that you manage, they submit to you. And if you work alone, maybe you're your own boss, you're the only one there, you still submit to the government.

They have regulations and taxes you must pay, and so you must submit to them. And actually, in this country, there's really nobody in this country who does not submit to another person.

Even the president must submit to the Supreme Court decisions, thankfully. In our lives, we submit to Christ. The church submits to its pastor.

[ 13 : 02 ] We submit to each other. It's a working together for the gospel. And now, we don't really have a problem with the concept of submitting to Christ, right?

Wives, let me ask you this. Is it difficult to submit to your husband? And ask yourself, why is it difficult? Certainly, I know one reason.

I'm very aware of this. Your husband is not Christ. He's not perfect. I am not a perfect husband. Far from it. And I know that makes it harder to submit, right?

But you know what? Even if your husband was Christ, even if he was perfect, you would not be able to submit perfectly, right?

There's this, we are sinners. And we rebel against doing what is right often. And we're far from perfect. We will be made perfect when we get to heaven.

[ 14 : 02 ] And then we will submit perfectly. And, but let me, let's everyone look at it. I don't want this to, you to feel like, oh, I'm not married, so this passage isn't for me.

No, this is for everyone. And everyone can learn from this. Look at your relationship with God. We really do have a problem with submitting to Christ. Every time we give in to sin, we are throwing off the yoke and committing that same sin that Adam and Eve committed.

We want to be our own king and God. We don't want to be told what to do. But Jesus, Jesus said, what about this yoke? He said the yoke is easy to bear and the burden is light.

The culture sees yoke of submission as slavery, really. It's a tiresome and difficult burden to bear, one that no one should have to do.

But to the ox, the yoke is like it's work clothes. Now, I work right down the street at Akamai. Next door, we're building this brand new facility.

[ 15 : 13 ] And I see the workers out there every day. They have their work clothes all yellow. And they have these big giant boots on because there's so much mud that they're digging into because the water table is like this deep, you know.

And they put on their work clothes. It's what they work. I wore this because I thought it would be appropriate for today. I'm thankful that Sovereign Grace is not really about the suit and tie thing.

But you put on your work clothes. That's what the yoke is like. Now, some yokes are difficult and don't quite fit right. Others are made especially and specifically for the animal.

But God's yoke, God's yoke for us, is specifically fit for just what you need. That doesn't mean your marriage is going to be perfect. That doesn't mean every relationship you have is going to be perfect.

But what God has called you to is just meant for what you need. The difficulties that arise are for your good and to shape you.

[ 16 : 18 ] So God has called us to put on a yoke, some to lead and some to follow, but all to work together. And this is a situation where maybe the stronger one is trying to pull ahead, and that's going to be hard.

That's going to make problems for the team. Or if one is lagging behind, that's going to be a problem for the team. You both must work together in their own roles.

And yet one is always the lead. So the yoke that Christ has given is not just a burden, but it is a gift.

And we should view this relationship of submission and leadership as a gift. So we put it on, and there is work to be done together. Submitting to God together, joyfully working for God's glory through the gospel, bringing the gospel to bear in our lives and in the church and outside the church.

telling others about Jesus. This is how we do it. We work together. So let me get into a little bit of application here in this first point.

[ 17 : 28 ] This is not just for married people, so keep on listening. But first I will address the married. I'm not going to tell you exactly how your marriage should look because people are different, relationships are different, it's not a one-size-fits-all kind of thing.

But Paul is encouraging wives to lovingly submit to husbands, not begrudgingly, not with complaining, but with joy, like the church submits to Christ, or like the church is supposed to submit to Christ.

Verse 24 says, Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Now a question for you, wives.

Does your husband agree that you are walking this out? Not perfectly. No. But are you walking it?

Are you growing in this? Joyfully, not begrudgingly, not with complaining. Now, I have to bring up, what if your husband is not a Christian?

[ 18 : 34 ] Or what if your husband is a very difficult man? And that's a situation that a number of wives, I know in our church, are struggling with. And that is, I agree, is a difficult situation to work out.

And yet, Paul is still calling you to submit to your husband, even if he's not a Christian. In that way, may God bless that relationship. And maybe God will use that submission to bring the husband around.

But I would encourage you, if that is your situation, talk with your small group leaders, talk with your pastors and other leaders in the church. Because every situation is different. And that's not one that I can particularly address from the pulpit.

But it is one that we want to work on and join together. And we want to follow Scripture on, even when it is difficult. And really, this is something, this is something that we need the Holy Spirit to fill us with.

Wives, you need the Spirit in order to submit to your husband. I know it's not always easy, especially, I know myself, your husband may not be the perfect man.

[ 19 : 50 ] And he may not lead in the best ways. But ask God to help you. And for the Spirit to strengthen you, to have joy, to submit joyfully, even when the one who leads you is not the perfect example to submit to.

Now, I will say, number two, this does not mean subjugation or oppression of women. Our culture has not always been like it is now.

And we're not desiring to return to any age where women couldn't vote or own land or were treated as property or slaves or when female workers were treated unfairly in the workplace.

And actually, some of that still exists. It's better than it was. And hopefully, in 10 years and in 20 years, things will get better. And I would agree, that is a great goal to have.

And there was often rampant sexism in the workplace. And some of that still exists, especially different segments of the business sector still have issues with that.

[ 20 : 53 ] And I pray that that would cease. I pray that that would go away because that is not coming from this doctrine. That would not be what we're wanting. That is a disrespect of women.

But the alternative here doesn't need to be militant feminism. It needs to be biblical femininity. One that reflects and is obedient to this passage even. One that is shaped by the word and not by our preconceived notions.

Not one that is shaped and founded in the culture, but one is founded in Scripture. And so, wives, it needs to look like that. Men, it needs to look like that.

Not with, maybe you grew up as a chauvinist. Well, now you have Christ. So you need to put that off and put respect for women on. Men, it doesn't mean that we tell our wives to do.

Men, I'm going to have you turn to Proverbs 31. I mean, you can all turn there, but I really want the men especially to go with me here. So Psalms is right in the middle of your Bible.

[ 22 : 00 ] Proverbs, and we're going to go to the end of Proverbs, Proverbs 31. Verse 10.

I want you to pay attention, men. This is what a woman looks like. An excellent wife who can find. She is far more precious than jewels.

The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not harm all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands.

She is like the ship of the merchant. She brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it.

With the fruit of her hands, she plants a vineyard. Now, of course, that's a great women's study, and often women do study this passage, and that's a good thing. I think men should study this passage as well.

[ 23 : 00 ] You see that last part right there? She considers a field and she buys it. She does this without consulting her husband, and it's shown to be a good thing.

Look at the level of trust that the husband has for this woman. Look how the writer respects this woman. Now, of course, this is the ideal woman, and wives don't feel like, oh, I need to be this in order to joyfully submit, in order to actually serve my husband.

I need to work this out perfectly. No, this is the ideal. We're aiming for this. But husbands, listen, it is your job to help your wife grow so that she becomes like this woman.

Now, this field was significant. It was a significant purchase, and she made this purchase all on her own. This is a task that this woman has, and we live in this age of communication where we're constantly communicating.

So I'm not saying that you should stop communicating and wives just go out and make big purchases all the time. No, I'm not saying that. The point here is that there is a trust and there is a responsibility, and really, women in many circles today have really lost some of that responsibility and that decision-making and, indeed, trust.

[ 24 : 27 ] I want to recapture that a bit. I don't know how that will look in your relationships and with your husband, but I do think that this is showing a very capable woman, right?

We want our wives to be capable and feel the freedom to make decisions and to carry out responsibilities because they are capable and they are responsible.

And I submit to you, husbands, that if you lack trust and respect and admiration for your wife as this husband does in Proverbs 31, I submit that you're not loving her as Christ loved the church.

Husbands, we need to receive godly wisdom and correction from our wives. We need to place trust in our wives to carry out these things and help our wives become the woman that they can be.

I receive correction and observations from Megan. It is so helpful. It's indispensable to me. I wouldn't be the husband that I am. I wouldn't be the father that I am.

[ 25 : 36 ] I wouldn't be the pastor. I may not be a pastor at all if it weren't for Megan. I had desires before I met her, but she helped and changed me. She offered correction. She's praised for me regularly.

And through those prayers, I can point to you a number of times that God, she didn't even talk to me about what she was praying about, but she prayed and God changed my mind about something.

So, I love my wife. Her input and her joining me in this team is indispensable to me. Now, to everyone, it's beautiful when you see reverence for Christ, submitting to one another, whether that be the husband and wife relationship or other relationships.

It's a beautiful thing when we're submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. The world sees everyone trying to fight for their own, but when you see godly marriages, be reminded of your place in the bride of Christ.

We submit to each other out of love, and we submit to Christ Christ, out of love. And the husband and wife is just one example. Now, to the unmarried, rather than pining to be married, as I know, some, some, some, it's a difficult situation.

[ 26 : 58 ] Sometimes you want to be married, but you're not. Or maybe you're happy not being married. That's a good thing, too. Well, know that, know that, and find joy in the fact that you are married to Christ.

He loves you more than any husband or wife could ever love you. You are complete in Christ already. You don't need a spouse to be complete, to work for God, and to work in your life.

You need the church body. And he has called you, at least for the time being, to serve him unhindered. God says, and you don't have to turn with me, but God says in verse Corinthians 7, 32, I want you to be free from anxieties.

The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife. And the interests are divided.

The unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

[ 28 : 01 ] And then, of course, Paul goes on to say that yes, marriage is good and that that's good too. So both of these things are good, whether you're married or not married. Find joy where God has you right now.

Be filled with the Spirit and let there be joy in submitting in those roles that you are called to submit. So then, Paul transitions to addressing the men. And he doesn't tell them to rule well or be orderly.

What does he say? He tells husbands to love. Let's read in verse 25. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of 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. So I'm in my second point here.

[ 29 : 23 ] Husbands, sacrificially loving their wives is a picture of Jesus' love for the church. Husbands, sacrificially loving their wives, it's a picture of Jesus' love for the church.

This is to make the gospel more real to us. This is the institution that God created to reflect Christ and his bride.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, verse 25, and gave himself up for her. This is a call to the highest kind of love, men, a self-sacrificing love.

Husbands, you are called not to just romantically love your wife, not just care for your wife, but to love your wife in such a way that you sacrifice and serve her. This is maybe the scariest verse in the Bible for husbands.

Now, how? How are we to do that? Not just in, we're not just to love our wives in any way that she wants or any way that you want, but specifically, verse 26, that he might sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water with the words 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.

[ 30 : 38 ] Now, obviously, husbands, we do not have the power that Jesus did. We cannot die in order to take away the sin of another person because we ourselves are sinners.

Jesus was the only perfect one. He's the only one that can save. He's the only one that can truly forgive. And if you don't know him as your savior, know that he died in order to take away the sins of the world.

And he loves you and desires you to be saved, to be forgiven, to be in a relationship with him, to be joined with him. Your call is to repent from your sins and turn and believe in him.

Join a church. Be baptized. Those might be scary things for you if you are not a believer. But it is the most wonderful thing in the world to be forgiven by God and to start that relationship with God.

You'll be filled with the Spirit. You'll be joined with Christ in a union that is inseparable. One where he loves you unconditionally.

[ 31 : 54 ] So repent and believe. Respect the husbands. Husbands like Jesus, we are called to love and sacrifice so that we can help our wives be godly women.

Now how specifically? Washing of water with the word. That's what Jesus did and that is what husbands you are to do. When the disciples needed correcting, Jesus washed them with the word.



He gave them scripture. He taught them. When the churches needed guidance, the apostle Paul taught them with the word. One of the things our wives need most is to be thoroughly washed in the word.

This is the way that she can grow spiritually. This is really good advice for anyone, male or female, but this is specifically your responsibility, husbands. Wash your wife with the word.

Soak her in it. Make sure that she is receiving from the word. And guys, if you're not married, maybe you think, oh, I made it out of that responsibility.

[ 33 : 07 ] I'm okay for now. Maybe you will get married at some point. Or maybe you won't. But it's always good to be familiar with the word yourselves. Read it.

Know it. Pay attention when the word is preached to you. And really, women too.

The word is what shapes us. If you want to be able to lovingly submit to your husband, you want to work alongside him, know the word. Husbands, you want to lead effectively and humbly and as a servant, know the word.

And of course, you need the spirit. When you approach the word, don't approach it intellectually only. Yes, you need to know the knowledge of the word and study it.

Theology is important. But our theology should move us to action. It should move us to love. So when we learn from the word, may it well up in our hearts that we be thankful to God and love him more as we have studied the word.

[ 34 : 21 ] Now, to get into application here a little bit, husbands, you need to serve in a way that is sacrificial. Sacrificial leadership. And this includes a number of things.

I'll highlight a few things here. This is things that I think about maybe you would serve in different ways. But for me, here's just a couple. And I'd say this as an example.

You don't need to do all the things that I do. I'm sure Sean's marriage looks different. Paul Buckley's marriage looks different. Taryn's marriage looks different. But schedule. I take care of the schedule.

There's a lot of things I'd like to do. But my priority time is with Megan. Time with my kids. So for us, we say no when there would be too much time away. And I have a rule for myself.

Again, you don't have to have the same rule. But for me, I don't really like having two nights away from my family. I'll do it sometimes. But I don't like it. So there's a thing.

[ 35 : 25 ] What's the opportunity? Okay, I'll weigh that against being away from my family. If it's three nights in a row that I have different things that I'm doing, that's almost an automatic no. Unless it's like a conference or something for work or whatever.

I don't like to be away three nights in a way from my family. Now, again, that's just me. But it's a way that I manage so that I can spend time with my family.

Sometimes it means a sacrifice. So things that I'd like to do. Things that maybe maybe I feel like God is calling me to do that, but I can't do all of those things. And so we have to manage the schedule.

And as well, I manage, make sure that there's time for date nights and time with kids after, time, sorry, time with Megan after the kids go to bed. And so that's one way.

Maybe for you it would be similar, maybe it would be different. So really, it's my role to protect our calendar. And if maybe your wife is good with the calendar and she does that, that's totally fine too.

[ 36 : 28 ] Like I said, every marriage is different. Now, I take care of the budget, finances, taxes, all that kind of stuff. I really don't like dealing with money. That's not my favorite thing to do, but it's a way to serve our marriage.

Now, your marriage might look different. Maybe your wife, you love working, doing taxes, all that kind of stuff. Actually, my mom likes doing taxes, so I don't quite understand it.

So she actually does the stuff in my parents' relationship, but it's a way that I serve her. But guys, I want you to study your wife. Know what her likes are and what her dislikes are.

She'd probably be embarrassed, but maybe she's downstairs. Okay, it's okay. I'm just telling her. She doesn't really like being in a crowded place where there's food, you know, like a buffet or whatever.

It's just not her thing. And so I'll just go and say, hey, what would you like? And I'll go get her food. It's a very small thing to do, but it's a way that I can serve her.

[ 37 : 31 ] Because I know, I'm familiar. This is not really something that she's going to get over anytime soon, and so I serve her in that way. It's a very easy way to do that. But know what your wife's likes and dislikes are, and if you can help her in some of those ways, you know, take out the trash and all those jobs that may be not the most glorious at home.

Do those things to serve. Another one, prayer. It takes effort to prayer. And one of my prayers for Megan is actually a prayer for me.

Help me to be aware of how to point Megan to Christ and apply the grace of God for today. There's many things I pray for her, that she would receive the word, that she would have time to study, because I know with the kids and all that's going on, sometimes she doesn't get that solid time away.

But I pray that she would be aware of God's grace for the day. And I want you to pray for your wife. Not just a little prayer. Pray longing for God to work in her.

And pray every day for her. I don't pray every day for her. I miss. I'm not perfect with that. But have that as a goal. Pray as much for your wife as you can.

[ 38 : 44 ] It will benefit you. And then lastly, I talked about schedule, but I want to talk a little bit about time.

And this is a little bit different. Time is maybe one of those things that husbands struggle to give up. And maybe this is the call that is the most sacrificial for guys. It depends on the guy.

But what I mean is time from work. Now, some guys, you get a long hours of the day and you have to take home. You have to be on call 24-7.

And that's just the way things are. But I know there's plenty of guys who come home. They're still on email. They don't need to be on email.

They're still checking their email. Or maybe they work extra hours and they don't need to work extra hours. Now, it's a good thing to work and work hard. And I'm not telling you how many hours to work.

[ 39 : 45 ] But it can be an escape. The easy thing to choose is to go and continue to work for your job. When maybe what God has for you is to put that down at night and spend time with your wife and with your kids.

Now, other guys, maybe it's not work, but it's video games or you go out golfing all the time or whatever hobby occupies you and you're very interested in.

And you do that to the exclusion of spending time with your wife and with your family. Guys, we are called to sacrificially love our wives.

And so sometimes that's going to mean putting those things aside and spending time with your wife. because if you love, say you love your wife but you never spend time with her.

Say you love your kids and you never spend time with them. That's not loving to your wife and to your kids. And I recognize there's some difficult situations out there where a guy is required to work maybe two jobs or three jobs just to afford to all that.

[ 40 : 57 ] And maybe there's not a lot you can do about that, but have a heart towards caring for your wife as much as possible. Get out of that situation as fast as you can.

Bring your leaders into that. Pray about getting out of that situation so that you can spend time with your family. And then washing with the word. Those, previously all those things are about really loving but what about washing with the word?

And I know I need to grow in this. I need to get better. When Megan comes to me and is upset or there's a problem, my tendency can be laziness or impatience with her even.

But God calls me to bring scripture to bear on the issue. And don't get that wrong. Like she comes to you and she's upset. Well, let's turn to Philippians and should I have joy?

No. That's not going to help probably. You'll find that out pretty quickly I think. But to help her, come alongside her in whatever it is.

[ 41 : 59 ] Help her be redirected towards joy in the Lord. Even amidst difficulties. And that is something that takes patience and takes effort to walk alongside and not just blast them with scripture or ignore them or get impatient as I do sometimes.

And as well, be proactive. You should know that your wife is doing well or not doing well. And help her to do well.

Help her if she needs to spend more time in scripture. Make time for her. If the mornings don't work because of the kids and all that's going on, maybe give her some time at night to spend in the word.

Or find some other time that she can benefit and pray and spend time. And then also discuss with her. Talk about God. What he's doing. Now, as if the example of Christ isn't enough, the reality is that the husband and wife are one flesh.

Let's read in verse 28. 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.

[ 43 : 22 ] So if your wife is not doing well, then you are probably not going to do well either. And I want you to have joy in life and in Christ. And if only for selfish reasons, you will heed this.

If you want to do well, then you've got to cherish your wife. Really, how can you not love and respect her? She is your own body.

And when you don't love her, it's like trying to separate your body from itself. You say, I'm angry with my arms right now. I'm not going to use them anymore. I'm just going to let them flail around.

That tends to be ridiculous. Or if you've got a sprained ankle and you say, I'm just going to ignore that. I'm going to walk like I normally do. Well, you know what? Soon, your ankle's going to puff up and it's going to be unusable.

If you ignore your wife when she is hurting, she's going to be like that sprained ankle trampled upon and going to do much worse.

[ 44 : 24 ] So when she's hurting, when she needs care, take the time to care and come alongside. Like a sprained ankle, maybe you need to keep off it for a little while.

I don't know what that looks like. Maybe taking some of her responsibilities for a time so that she can get better. Whether she's sick, whether it's a spiritual oppression, whatever.

Take time to care for your wife. Now, husbands, you can't do this without the spirit independence. I know you may be feeling condemned right now. How could I live up to this kind of standard?

Well, we can't. This is the standard of Christ. Christ loved the church perfectly, gave himself up for it perfectly. But I do want you to be convicted.

I want you to be envisioned to grow in your marriage. Or if you're not married yet, guys, grow in knowing the word so that if you do come a time where you do get married, you are prepared, well prepared to lead well and lead by the word and lead by Christ and his example.

[ 45 : 38 ] We're called to be servant leaders, not authoritarians. We're called to be humble guys, accountable to God and to other men. Your wife should feel the freedom if you are in sin to go to some other guy within the church and he will help bring correction to you and receive that.

And so we want a leadership that is marked by love and not authoritarianism. Now imagine what it would be like if every Christian loved the church as much as Christ does.

That would be a wonderful thing. And so let us love others, whoever it might be, as Christ loved the church.

Let us put on the self-sacrificial love. This is a call to all, not just husbands. And when others struggle, bring the word to bear for them. You can help others be washed in the word if you are sharing the word with them and encouraging them in what God is already doing in them.

This is good for all, but this specifically is the responsibility of the husband for the wife. So this is a good thing for all. Let's all do this. But husbands, this is your role for your wife.

[ 46 : 52 ] And we need the Spirit. We need to be filled with the Spirit so that we can do this. Now, marriages are supposed to show us a picture of Christ and the church. Let's read verse 31.

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. My third and final point here is the one flesh union of marriage points to Christ and his bride.

This one flesh union, this marriage, points to Christ and his bride. Jesus left his father in order to come down and humble himself as a baby. He was born humbly in a feeding trough, really.

This is what Christmas is all about, celebrating the beginning of the joining of Christ and his bride, the church. Christ was humble, is humble.

[ 47 : 56 ] He is self-sacrificing. And because of his abundant love for us, we get to benefit. Our marriages point to the greatest marriage of all, one that will happen at the end of the age, when Christ comes for us, his bride.

Christ promises. Jesus promises to love us. He promises to keep us and cherish us. Our response is to submit to him in love, with joy.

The love of Jesus is a never-ending love and it's a never-stopping love and nothing can take us out of his hand. There is beauty in this relationship.

When we submit, when the church submits to Christ, that's the way things should be. There is beauty in this covenant, the one that Christ bought with his blood.

This is a never-ending love. This is one of the reasons that God hates divorce, because it does not reflect Christ and the church.

[ 49 : 05 ] Christ and the church are not going to get divorced, because Jesus didn't even give up on us when we are unfaithful. When we fail at being a husband who loves or a wife who submits, when we fail at loving others, at obeying God's word, when we're lazy or impatient or angry, when we're materialistic or selfish or self-centered, God forgives us because of his never-ending love that Jesus bought on the cross.

Why did he do this? It was to save a marriage hadn't completed yet, a marriage to his people, to his church, that he would hold them for eternity.

That's God's promise. If you've been joined to him, he will not divorce you. So our marriages are supposed to be a reflection of Christ and the church.

And so we need to be filled with the Spirit so that we show reverence for Christ, so that we bring him honor and glory in our own lives. And so to us, let's celebrate and encourage marriages in the church.

Help those marriages if we're aware of difficult ones. Come alongside them. And let's submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, joyfully, willingly.

[ 50 : 32 ] Let's love each other. Let's endeavor to wash each other with the word. Husbands especially, because that is your role for your wife. Let us be filled with the Spirit.

Have joy in whatever roles God have given us. In the workplace, at church, in the home, with friends. If you're called to submit in whatever relationship it is, do it with joy and without complaining.

If you're called to lead in whatever relationship it is, love and serve those who are submitted to you. Let's pray and ask God to do that work in us.

Father, we thank you that you have given us your word. Lord, sometimes it's not the easiest to obey and to follow.

But Lord, we want to be shaped by your word. And so help us to apply this in our marriages and in our relationships at work and at church and wherever we are, would we be joyful in submitting.

[ 51 : 46 ] And in any leadership relationship, Lord, let us serve and sacrifice and love those who are under us, who are submitted to us, Lord, but not wielding our authority with authoritarianism, but leading it with humility, Lord.

And so I ask, Lord, would you do a work in each and every one of us, whether that is to shape us as a husband, shape as a wife, shape as a single, a child, Lord.

Help us all to love you, love the church, love our relationships that we have as you have loved us. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.