

Podcast 218 The Husband's Calling in Marriage – Part 1 of 12

I was at the National Coalition of Ministries to Men conference this past week in Dallas, Texas with Promise Keepers as well. I discovered that that Promise Keepers being resurrected. In 2020, they're having an event in the AT&T stadium in Dallas, Texas. The organizers asked me to do a workshop on equipping men to be godly husbands.

I've been wanting to perhaps write a devotional for men on just insights from scripture on what it means to be a godly husband or strategies for building up our wives or how can we love our wife as Christ loved the church.

So I thought we'd start a series on this and this'll be our introductory session. Why don't we begin with prayer? Father, thank you for what you're doing in the world of men's ministry and thank you for this event that's being planned in these organizations that are collaborating, which I'm sure warms your heart to see your body working together in unity. I pray for our session today that you will draw near to us and give us your thoughts and your words and guide us as men think about ways that we can represent Jesus in our homes, love our wives as you loved us, and build up and encourage them. In Jesus name, give Scott and I both your thoughts and your help today and give us all ears to hear what your spirit is saying to us. Amen.

I often ask men attending my workshops what scriptures do they think I would be referencing when speaking about their responsibilities as a husband? Normally the first one they mention is to love your wife as Christ loved the church, which is found in Ephesians chapter five. Some mention living with your wife in an understanding way, which is taken from first Peter three. Others say 1 Corinthians 13. Each one of these is valid and applicable. There's another one that is in Colossians chapter three which says husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them. There's a couple more commands in Ephesians five. So there's the specific commands.

Then there are the exhortations that emanate or fall under the umbrella of how Jesus has loved us. If we're to love our wives as Christ loved us and who laid his life down for us, then how has Jesus loved us? That opens up a whole other arena of ways that we can think about and meditate on as well as first Corinthians 13, which it doesn't say husbands obey this chapter. It just says this is the love chapter, but it's the same idea. If we're going to love our wife as Christ has loved us, then what is love and how has Jesus loved us?

Love is defined there. So those two passages, those two thoughts, those exhortations that broaden our sphere from just the specific commands. I give you one more specific command and that's found in Genesis because this is where I'd like to start is seeing that there are these two parentheses you might say in the Bible. They both mentioned marriage. So in the very first chapter of Genesis, God took man, took a rib, fashioned a woman from the rib, brought them together, and he said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. So that was the one point I would like to make is, is that marriage is not a good idea. Marriage is a God idea. At first sovereign act, the first sacred institution that he designed and created and established and placed on the earth after he created the world in six days was marriage, which is family.

Same idea, but marriage. One man, one woman. Now those last four sentences just separated me from the world, the flesh, and the devil. One man, one woman. God brought together and made them one flesh and said, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Then in the second chapter of Genesis, that was by the way Genesis 128, and in the second chapter in the 24th verse, he says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast or cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh." So right in the very beginning, God establishes marriage. Is there any wonder that the world of flesh and the devil are raid against what God created? We live in a world. We're in a battle between good and evil, between God and the devil. We can sugarcoat it all we want and we can try to be tolerant and inclusive and everything else that we need to have hearts that are right, but we should not be surprised that we're involved in this gargantuan conflict that will end up well, but right now we're in the battle.

So it starts with marriage. This first command that I was going to mention is in the 24th verse, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife. So when I hear about a young couple moving in with a

man's parents, all I want to do is holler. Leave your father and your mother, cleave to your wife. Leave and cleave. That's the first command. So you don't need to be living with your in-laws. Ladies, you need to move out and get your own place. I think it was beneficial for Sandy and I to be living 700 miles from my parents and 1100 miles from my wife's parents and it gave us a chance to cleave to one another and hold fast to one another. So that's our first command.

That's a specific command and I think is very practical. Now I'd like to jump to the very end of the Bible, the other parenthesis, which is found in Revelation chapter 19 verses six through nine. "Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out. Hallelujah for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. And he said to me, these are the true words of God."

So marriage when we see it in Genesis is between a man and a woman. When we see it in Revelation it's between the bridegroom Jesus and the bride of Christ, which is us, the church. So in the greater scheme of things, ultimately the Lord's return, Armageddon, great and terrible day of the Lord. These things which we believe are ahead of us and which are cataclysmic, and they're immense and they're huge. Ultimately, the greatest thing that's still on the horizon is the marriage supper of the lamb and earthly marriage which starts in Genesis is teaching us. It's wetting our appetite. It's foreshadowing the great marriage, which is the marriage of Jesus and us. So we want to keep those two parentheses in all of our discussion because ultimately our greatest ambition is to be a part of that bride and to make ourselves ready and to look forward to marrying Jesus.

He is the bridegroom. So as a husband, I want to keep my eyes on Jesus. It's an interesting dynamic for men because in one sense we have this, you might say feminine part of us because we're a part of the bride and we want to submit to Jesus and we want to follow Jesus and we want to be near him and we want to have this very real dynamic and our relationship with him. At the same time, God calls us to represent him in our marriage. So as a husband if I'm looking for the perfect bridegroom, if I'm looking for the perfect example of what I should be as a husband to my wife, I need to look at Jesus and I want to keep that right up in the front. All right. So again, more scriptures that the world of flushing, the devil chafe and gnash your teeth at. Ephesians chapter five. "Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife.

Even as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself, its savior. As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Okay first point, even though I'm reading Ephesians chapter five and even though I'm a husband and I'm reading other verses that have to do with my wife. I want to focus and if you looked at my notes right now, you would find out to all the verses that are just set apart for men are in bold. Probably it took me 30, I'm going to say a third of a century. How about that? Over 30 years before it finally hit me that I'm not supposed to read my wife's mail. This morning, I was up early. Her phone was in the kitchen and somebody's pinging her, somebody messaging her early and she had a tough night.

She was painting yesterday for my daughter in law. She's sore, so she was sleeping in a little bit and I did not go over and pick up her phone and see who was messaging her. I didn't look at her stuff. In the same way when the letters come in, they are either addressed to Sandy or they're addressed to Steve and I restrict myself to just the ones directed to Steve. It's the same way. When I'm reading Ephesians chapter five all I'm focusing on is the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. So what I'm trying to say nicely is it's not my responsibility to ensure or enforce or encourage my wife to be submissive. That letter is addressed to her.

That's a text to her from God. That is not my department. My department is to put my blinders on and focus on what he's given me to do. I used to think that it was my responsibility. I don't like to even say it, but I thought that I was supposed to say, well I sense that your attitude is not submissive or why didn't you tell me

about that because you're supposed to submit? I used to do stuff like that and I apologized to her. I'm apologizing to the world. That's not my department, that's her department. My job is not to fix my wife or to make her submit. My job is to love her as Christ loved the church. My job is to be her head, but as Christ was the head and Jesus never made me submit. He could have.

He's King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Instead, he chose to lay his life down for me. He won my heart and I choose to submit to him. So if I follow that model, it's not my job with the authority that God gave me and that's clearly in scripture. I have been authorized to be the head of the home, but I'm using that authority to build her up, not to lord it over her. I'm using that authority as Jesus did, to lay my life down and to die for her and to win her heart. If she decides she doesn't want to submit, that's her department and she has to talk to God about that. She doesn't have to get my permission because I am not her Lord, Jesus is her Lord. I am simply trying to emulate Christ in my relationship with my wife.

Now that was hard to say, but it works and it's changed our relationship. Once it got through to me that I'm supposed to love her Christ-likely, I just made up that word. It's not a good one. That changed our relationship. That's what I see when I read Ephesians chapter five now. So my job as a husband is to find those passages that pertain to my responsibilities and to work on them. Then she can find the passages that pertain to her responsibilities and she can work on those. The last verse in this whole passage says, let the wife see that she respects her husband. Well, it's the same thing. I think Dr. Emerson Eggerichs did a whole book on love and respect and it's legitimate and men do need their wives respect, but that exhortation is for her. That's not for me to go whining to her and say, "I need your respect."

It's up to her to search the scriptures and find out what works and we can communicate those things in a spirit of humility, but we can't enforce them or dictate them from the throne. Amen. Do you have any comments on that?

I have had some people kind of push back when I've said that and I said, "Well if you feel like it's your responsibility to make your wife submit to you, how about if we then, knowing this scripture is a two edged sword, how about then if we give your wife responsibility to make sure that you die?" That's what we're called to do. We're called to lay our lives down and give himself up just like Jesus gave himself up for the church. We're called to lay our life down for our wife. So if you want to make sure that your wife submits, then you need to give her full authority to make sure that you die.

So a couple thoughts then, and I don't want to belabor this, but let's just review what we've had so far. Marriage is a God idea. I used to listen to talk show hosts more. I don't know why I don't so much anymore, but when I was in the car I used to listen to Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and some of these guys and Rush used to talk about societal evolution. The reason that marriage is endured is because it's a good idea and we need it and on and on. It's not a good idea. It's a God idea. It was in God's heart from the beginning. Ultimately he has designed us and created us to marry his son. So we've got Genesis and we've got Revelation, and there's this huge beating heart of God that created marriage.

Ultimately it will be fulfilled when we marry his son. Now we go back to earth again, and then he gives what I think is like the Magna Carta, the blueprint for marriage which is found in Ephesians chapter five. The biggest thing I'd take away from that is keep my eyes on my own verses, recognize that I have been authorized to be the head of my wife. Now everything, even in the church nowadays. I shouldn't say everything, but you know what I mean? We're swimming against the current right now when we say these things. Whether the world of flesh or the devil or even big chunks of the church believe it or not, this is something that God ordained. We have to take our responsibility seriously and with the responsibility and the authority, we have to be careful. We're going to go into specifics about ways that we can love our wife as Christ loved the church, but we're just going to keep going a little bit.

The responsibility and the authority that we've been given, we want to use it well and we mentioned in Colossians husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them. I don't think Paul would need to say that. I don't think the spirit would have inspired Paul to say that and less, with that authority that God has given us we

can be harsh and we can be dictatorial and we can be the emperor and the king of our own castle and we have this power and authority, but we've got to use it well. We've got to take it seriously and we've got to submit to Christ ourselves. So that's a good place to get us started on this journey. So let's pray and then we'll go to part two.

Father, thank you for authorizing us as men to love our wives well. Thank that in the big picture, we're not only, you might say earthly representatives, but ultimately we're going to marry Jesus. Help us to keep our eyes on him. Help us to focus on the bridegroom and take our cues from him and look at the way he used his authority and look at the way that he loved us and have that same spirit imbued in us. Thank you for creating marriage. Thank you for designing us the way you've designed us.

Thank you for making us different. Thank you for making us men and women and in your wisdom and in your love, you created this sacred institution. Unwrap it for us. Give us more insights into this mystery. As we meditate on your word and contemplate on these principles, change us from the inside out to represent you well in our homes. In Jesus name, amen.