

## Podcast 222 How to Love Our Wives in Practical Life, part 1

This podcast is a continuation and we've been talking about how we can love our wives, how we can build them up, how we can encourage them, the whole idea, but we're talking about strategies, we're talking about applications, but we're staying in this scripture and what we've just talked about is the new command which says that we are to love one another as Jesus has loved us.

It's found two places, John 13:34 and it's found in John 15:12 which I think is significant because it's right before Jesus is about to be crucified. This is like his last sermon, if you will and I listen differently. Not that you don't listen to everything Jesus says, but when he... this is the wrap up. These are the things that are important.

We've got this on our mind now, we want to love our wives as Christ loved the church as Christ loved us, which is Paul's spin, if you will, on the new commandment and now we're going to be very practical.

Let's pray. Father, we're grateful for your specific directions to husbands. It's not vague. We are to focus on Jesus and love our wives as Jesus has loved us.

Help us to do that. Help us to think beyond what we normally think of as husband techniques or strategies and adopt divine strategies that you've designed us to walk in. Help me, help us all. Give us ears to hear what the spirit is saying to us today in Jesus name. Amen.

Once this light bulb went off in my own thinking, because loving my wife as Christ loved the church, just reading Ephesians five to me was, I shouldn't say vague, but it was, it was vague. How do I lay my life down for my wife? How do I die for her?

But once I understood the new commandment, which was to, as the father has loved me, so have I loved you as I have loved you, love each other, that somehow it crystallized it for me. I started thinking of ways that Jesus has loved us, the church, how he's loved me as a child of God, as adopted child of God.

When I started meditating on this, I went through the scriptures and I started making lists of things that Jesus had done for us. The first one that came to my thinking was founded in Matthew 20:28 which says, "The son of man came not to be served, but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." I thought about that. The son of man came not to be served, but to serve.

This fits with the context of when the new commandment was first mentioned, which was in John 13:34 but if you remember in John 13 just a few verses earlier, I'm going to read this passage, when he had washed their feet and put on his outer garment and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you."

Now that's... I just took a chunk out of that, but the whole 13 chapters about when Jesus... he kneels down, he takes his robe and he readjusts it and he gets a towel and he kneels by his disciples and Peter had said, "No, no, don't do this. What are you doing your Lord? Why you washing my feet?"

He eventually washes all of the disciples feet and he makes this incredible impression on them that this is how you're supposed to do each other. You're supposed to serve each other. I think sometimes we lose the new commandment in the foot washing ceremony, which is so significant and so astounding to think of Jesus washing his disciples feet.

But we forget that he was giving us an example of how to serve one another or Galatians 5:13 says, through love serve one another. 1st Peter 4:10, as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.

I'm meditating on this and I came home one day and the kitchen... I've shared this story before and I apologize for those that have heard it, but I felt like the kitchen needed a little attention and I had been chewing on how I could serve Sandi.

I thought, "This is a very tangible way." I cleaned the kitchen, I washed the dishes, took out the trash, empty the dishwasher, dried the dishes that were in the dryer, you know what I mean? In your sink. In our house when you come home and you parked the car in the garage, you have to walk through the kitchen to get to the rest of the house.

Sandi came home. She walked through the kitchen and she didn't say anything. I felt like I'd put myself out. I had done this special thing I'm waiting for a small parade or hug or something to recognize what I had done and she didn't say anything.

There's a big part of me that wanted to go find her and say, "Did you notice anything when you walked through the kitchen?" A typical guy. Your poor wife has done that 10,000 times and probably doesn't get fagged hardly at all and I do a one time and I want all this acknowledgement.

But anyway, I stopped myself and I thought, I wonder how many times Jesus has done things for me. How many times he has served me and I haven't properly thanked him. He didn't stop, he didn't stop serving me. He just continued to do stuff for me.

It helped me because my eyes were on Jesus. The goal wasn't to get a wonderful response from Sandi. The goal was to serve my wife as Christ served me. I thought, I'm going to let it go and I'm going to continue to clean the kitchen and I'm going to continue to do things for my wife. I'm going to continue to serve her, whether she acknowledges me, whether she gives me hugs, whether that's making a difference because this is how I can love my wife as Christ loved the church.

That's one thing. By the way, I have two pages, two whole pages with small text of ways that I have documented how Jesus has loved us. I just want to encourage the men that are listening that Jesus knows us. He created us, he designed us and he knows we have this thing called to start strong.

I think that in... I think of this when I read Mark chapter nine verses 33 to 35 they, the disciples came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest, and he sat down and called the 12 and he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

I liked the fact that Jesus didn't say, "Oh, that's dumb. You want to be the greatest." Instead, he just redirected their desire to be great because he knew that they were men and men want to win. Men want to be the greatest whatever, but men know what I'm talking about.

He said, "Look, in my kingdom, the rules are a little different. If you want to be first, you must be last. Who's ever the best servant wins." He redirected that desire. He didn't squash it. He didn't tell them that wasn't proper. He said, "I get you. I'm a man. You're a man. I understand you. But the best servant wins in my kingdom."

It's okay to serve your wife and you want to be the best husband, I hope that you have that in you, that you want to be... you want to win this. Well, the best servant wins. That's point number one for today.

Point number two, I probably learned this lesson most in 2012 when... and by the way, last night I had taken Johnny to an event for adults with special needs and I had some time. I took my laptop with me and I was looking for something from my journal. When I was in there I found it, but I ended up reading big chunks of my journal in 2012. I have never been a journaler.

I might have started and do it for two weeks when I was a teenager and then it stopped. 2012 though I became a journaler and I'm pretty faithful about it to this day. I go through fits and starts. But the thing that struck me was when humanity, when we go through difficult situations... Okay, so we just had Halloween and I saw somewhere on Facebook or YouTube or somewhere, I saw this man dressed up like... I don't know, something scary.

He would sit on the porch and they were filming this. He was sitting on his porch and he was pretending he was like a statue and then somebody would come near him and he would move or grab at them.

When something like that happens, your adrenaline kicks in and we have two options. Fight or flight. Most people run off the porch. But I remember watching this one guy, when the scarecrow grabbed his arm he didn't run, he punched the scarecrow in the head.

That's what the adrenaline does. But there's the third option because when I was going through that difficult experience in 2012 there's a part of me that just wants to fly and there's another part of me that to dig in and fight for my rights and defend my turf.

You know what? I discovered there's a third option and the third option is called dying. I did a lot of dying to Steve, a lot of dying to Steve's ideas, his ambitions, his plans. I don't know how else to say it. People have asked me, what do you mean you died? And I said, I don't know how to describe it, but there's a point when you just to let go and you just have to die.

I tell you that because it was through dying though, that I found my life. I'm in a really good place now with God and with my family. But after I came through that difficult experience, I thought of verses like Luke 17:33, whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life will keep it. 1st John 3:16, by this we know love, or as another translation says, we know what real love is that he laid his life down for us and we ought to lay our lives down for the brothers.

This is something that you're going to flesh out in your own homes. But I just learned to do dying. I've learned to embrace dying differently. I've learned, one of the things I do is I sing this song from frozen. Let's say that I see Sandi buy something that I maybe don't agree with the fact that we needed it, or maybe I knew of where we can save some money on it, or maybe she makes a decision to do something that I wouldn't have chosen, and in the past I probably would have given in, but I would have said something. I would've made a little comment, I would have whatever. Now I just take a deep breath and I sing to myself, let it go, let it go.

It really helps me to just die. This is not that important. My words would just be for my own benefit. They're not going to encourage and help and build her up, they're just going to be little digs. I'm just trying to be very practical with this one. But two weeks ago, Sandi, I hope she's not listening to this, but anyway, Sandi volunteered for our Christmas present to go paint my son's living room. I recommended... I used to be a painter and I recommended what kind of spackling to get. I don't know if you've ever used that spackle that looks like vanilla icing. It doesn't shrink.

It's really good stuff. But you hardly use any of it. You need... for a whole room you might need two tablespoons or something. She bought a court and we'll probably never use that spackling.

I'm not old enough. I'm too old. You know what? I never said anything. I just smiled. I used it, but the cover back on, because I went over and helped her spackle and fill in some cracks and stuff. But I thought, I'm just going to let that go. I'm not going to make a comment. I'm not going to say, "You should have bought a different size."

Husbands this is one of the things we can do. You no idea how much that blesses our wives. If we will just let things go and don't bring it up and don't make our little comments and don't do the digging and we don't have to fight. We don't have to fly. We can just die.

That's going to mean different things to different people in different circumstances, but I'm just trying to flesh it out a little bit and be practical. I continued through my list that I put together. By the way, when I made that list, I discovered there's a whole bunch of them that were not practical.

I can't take my wife sins upon me. I can't break the power of the devil. I can't... There's a lot of stuff that Jesus alone did for us, but there's a lot of things that as I read through their list, I could take those principles and I could apply them to my relationship with Sandi.

Another one is found in Romans five, when we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good, but God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. I read that and I just think, you know what? Jesus loved us when we were naturally unlovable or not lovely.

He loved us when we were messy, while we were sinners. I think it's wonderful that my wife is beautiful and it's wonderful that she's just wonderful. But what if she wasn't? What if she was going through stuff? What if she all of a sudden was having these flashes? What if her temper was...

My job is to love her as Christ loved the church and even when... and she hardly ever does, but even when she maybe is not as naturally attractive as that other point, it's still my calling in following Jesus to love her regardless.

Sometimes people are easy to like. Sometimes they're difficult to like. Sometimes my kids are... when they were younger, they are obedient and compliant and cute and then sometimes they're stubborn and rebellious.

But if I'm going to love my wife and my kids as Christ has loved me, then I can't let my love be based on their behavior or their external attractiveness. I have to be following Jesus and love continuously.

There's another point, probably a simple one is sometimes when I think about, this was probably my first one, I pray for my wife. Jesus, it says in Romans 8:34 is the one who died more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25 says consequently he is able to save to the uttermost, those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them. Jesus prays for his bride continuously it looks like. I try to do it at least once a day, but throughout the day if other things arise, but we pray for each other and it blesses me when I go to speak at a conference or when I have some ministry obligation that my wife would tell me she's praying for me.

It's huge but I want to pray for her because this is what Jesus did for his bride and I want to continue to pray for my pride and that sometimes is the best thing we can do. These other things are external.

We serve and we love and... but praying, bringing her name before the throne, asking God to bless her and keep her, protect her, courage her, helper and I'm over the conviction that the more you

pray for people, the more your heart goes out to them. I think that's why Jesus says pray for your enemies because that transformation happens within us.

The more we pray for people, the more a heart squad to them. I hope that these couple, we're going to do some more in the next podcast, but I hope these first four or five applications will stimulate your thinking.

I don't think this is black and white. You have to do things exactly like Steve did, but I think God's word is eternal. I think it's practical. If we can just start looking up instead of looking at our wives and loving them like we would like to be loved or like we've been told they like to be loved or how we think they like to be loved, but if we look up at our savior and say, "How can I love my wife as you have loved me, us the bride," it's a different perspective and it's really helpful and it's... I just find it very, very encouraging.

Let's pray: Father, thank you for opening up my eyes to these principles and these ways that you've helped me to apply in our home. I pray that you'll help me and all of us to continually focus on how has Jesus loved us, how has the son of God loved his bride, and then help us to go into likewise and follow his example and love our brides as we have been loved ourselves. In Jesus name. Amen.