

## "THE FATHER'S ROLE"

2/7/16

Father's are special, aren't they? There's no one else like 'em... Here's what 3 kids had to say, bragging on their dads:

- First: My dad's so smart he can talk for one hour on any subject.**
- Second: My dad's so smart he can talk for two hours on any subject.**
- Third: My dad's so smart he can talk for 3 hours and doesn't even need a subject.**

My dad's better than your dad ... is the game we so often love to play. Why? Because fathers are special, aren't they? And, I want to show you, now, just how special they are in just two words: DUCT TAPE. Watch this (video on 'duct tape & dads')...

Paul must have thought that dads were pretty special, too ... as he took most of today's section of scripture to speak to fathers—a little bit to the kids, a little bit to the moms, but mostly to the dads. Listen to our scripture lesson for today:

**<sup>21</sup> Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ. ...**

**<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup> He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word, after making it clean**

**by washing it in water, <sup>27</sup> in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty—pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection. <sup>28</sup>**

**Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> (None of us ever hate our own bodies. Instead, we feed them, and take care of them, just as Christ does the church; <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.) <sup>31</sup> As the scripture says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one." <sup>32</sup>**

**There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband. –**

**Ephesians 5:21, 25-33 (TEV)**

I've said before, **there is no greater gift that a father can give his children ... than to love his wife as God has called him to!** As a reminder, the overriding theme of Paul here is ... *submission*. There is to be 'a mutual submission' present in the household, especially moms & dads—submitting to exactly what God has asked us to do! And, similar to what I said a few weeks ago, the submission that's a father's responsibility is 'a submission of love!' Fathers, too, are to submit to love those in the household the way God wants them to—the way God designed them to... Let's begin with *the meaning of this love*: What is it?

**THE MEANING OF LOVE.** In verse 21, Paul explains what the meaning of this love in the household is supposed to be all about: “Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.” **This love is about these things:**

- **Being Spirit-filled:** Ephesians 5:18 says, “Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit.” Just as wine can control us, when ‘under the influence,’ so too are we to be ‘under the influence’ of the Holy Spirit, allowing our lives to be controlled by God—being models of the love of Christ in our homes; we can’t do it without the help of God’s Spirit...
- **Submission:** V. 25 - “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it.” This love is incompatible with the misinterpretation of this scripture which calls for a domineering, commanding model of the husband/father...
- **Understanding ‘head-ship’:** 1 Corinthians 13 is a great model for what the ‘head’ of the family ought to be like. The husband who thinks that God ordered the family so that his wife could be at his beck and call has it backward. He’s to love & serve *her*; he’s to protect her (& family) & provide for their needs; his duty—in short—is to *love* ... so, what does that look like? Let’s now look at...

**THE MANNER OF LOVE.** Verse 23 (MSG) – “The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing.” So, how is that? In what way does Christ provide leadership to the Church (his bride), if that’s our model? Well...

- ***It is a sacrificial love*** ... and it involves...
  - *Consideration* - 1 Peter 3:7 tells us, “In the same way you husbands must live with your wives with the proper understanding that they are more delicate than you. Treat them with respect, because they also will receive, together with you, God’s gift of life. Do this so that nothing will interfere with your prayers.” It’s a love that is considerate, knowing that how we treat our wives will even affect our prayer life; *consider that!* It also involves...
  - *Chivalry* – If our wives are more delicate than we are (created that way), we need to be their protectors. Understand: If they are weaker, it is in the physical realm, because that’s the way God made us. A loving husband would never say: “After you’ve changed the flat tire, I’ll take you to the store.” We are created to serve our wives (& families) with our strength...
  - *Communion* – Spiritually, we are equals; treat your wife as a spiritual equal, as they too are joint heirs in his grace. The manner this love also includes this:
- ***It is a purifying love***... Verses 25-27 say, “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup> He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word, after making it clean by washing it in water, <sup>27</sup> in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty—pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection.” This scripture suggests that Christ’s love for

the Church is something that drives him to make her pure and keep her pure; he wants to 'clothe the Church in glory!' Gentleman, we shouldn't ever be caught leading our wives into any kind of sin; instead, we should be working to expose her life to the Word of God, serving a priestly role in our homes ... to help keep her and our families pure...

- ***It is a caring love...*** Verses 28-30 remind us, "Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> (None of us ever hate our own bodies. Instead, we feed them, and take care of them, just as Christ does the church; <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.)" Have you ever seen a man look into the mirror in the morning? And, look ... and look ... and look? And flex and... Well, you get the picture. A husband should love his wife like that!
- ***It is an enduring love...*** Verse 31 tells us, "As the scripture says, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.'" When a man & woman get married, scripture says 'they become one'—primarily speaking of a physical union that takes place. Now, think about this: "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!" To be a fulfilled husband, you need a fulfilled wife; to be a fulfilled father, you need fulfilled children! The King James Version of the Bible uses two words here: Leave & Cleave. *Leaving* ... means there's a vital severing of the parent-child relationship that must occur when a couple gets married—not a dishonoring or unloving thing, but a different *primary* relationship is now formed... *Cleaving* ... means 'to be glued to' ... another. When young couples try to 'cleave' but have forgotten to 'leave,' it always creates havoc in a marriage ... so *both have to take place in order for there to be ... an enduring love!*

Folks, let me just say again: The meaning of love is summed up in one word—*submission*. The manner of love is summed up in one word—*sacrifice*. But, there's one more question to be asked: ***What is the motive of the husband's love for his wife?*** What's behind a husband loving this way? Here it is...

Ephesians 5:32-33 informs us: "There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband." Why would husbands love their wives the way God has asked them to? **The motive is: its sacredness (in other words ... *it is of God!*)**

Marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church (his bride). It is 'a sacred mystery,' a 'deep secret truth.' *The sacredness of Christ's Church is linked here to the sacredness of marriage.* Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom and the Church is his bride! Marriage is supposed to reflect this union—a mirror image. Yet, how do we end up treating it sometimes? Like a sacred gift from God? Am I the only one who's ever taken their marriage for granted?

The truth is that the Christian husband shows what he thinks of Christ by the way he treats his wife! I wish I could go back and re-do certain parts of my marriage over the years! But, we can't do that, can we? What we can do, however, is to *listen to what we're hearing today ... and put it into play!* Our love for our wives should honor Christ!

The husband that understands this 'sacred mystery' or 'deep secret truth'—that marriage is to be a mirror image of God's relationship to his people, will just love to ... love, purify, protect, and care for his wife ... and let that be the foundation from which he can raise and encourage his children to know a maturity in Christ...