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How To Love Your Wife



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this insightful talk, Steve Gregg delves into the importance of loving one's wife as Christ loves the church, acknowledging that the subject matter can be sensitive but emphasizing the duty that husbands have to love their respective partners in such a way. The speaker notes that a husband's role is to provide leadership and not domination, and that submission should not come from pressure or force. In detailing the responsibilities that husbands have when it comes to loving their wives, the speaker stresses the importance of sacrifice, particularly the importance of putting one's partner's needs first in a loving and safe environment, which includes meeting emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

Transcript

I'd like to speak on the specific topic of how to love your wife as Christ loves the church. So the few husbands that are here will have to feel like this is kind of pointed at you. It's not pointed at the women so much, but I just want to say that I used to love to teach about family and marriage things 20 years ago because I had a perfect family, I thought.

And then that family broke up, and it was not the first time. And as many of you know, I got married when I was 19 years old, and my first wife ran off with another man, left me with a baby that I raised alone, pretty much. I married again, my second wife was killed six months later.

I married again, was married for 20 years, had four kids, and that wife ran off and left the kids and me both. So I've had two wives that have run off. Now usually the common conventional wisdom is that if you have two wives leave you, you are the common denominator, you know.

These wives didn't know each other, so they weren't influenced by each other, they were both influenced apparently by me. And I was going to a church, especially at the time that my previous wife of 20 years left, the church believed that if a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church, the wife will not leave, which meant that since I've had two wives leave that I was not viewed as one who was doing something right, I was

doing something wrong to be sure. As I examine myself about that, I have to say I haven't learned anything new on the subject since then, partly because I was teaching and to my knowledge practicing the same things I'm going to teach you today.

In other words, I don't believe that loving your wife as Christ loves the church is something that guarantees that your wife will be happy. She has a free will too, she has her own walk with God and unfortunately you may love her very well and she may have issues that she's not responsive to that. But I'm not teaching here about how to make sure your wife is happy, of course that is a goal, having a happy wife is every man's goal, I would think, unless he's stupid.

But loving your wife as Christ loves the church is a duty without necessarily a promise attached, because Christ loves his church and the church has drifted from him. God loved Israel as his wife, he says, I've loved you with an everlasting love, he said to them in Jeremiah, but they ran off after other gods too. So there certainly is no teaching in scripture that if you love your wife as Christ loves the church, that'll be the total solution to all the problems in your marriage.

But I have stopped teaching on this, this is the first time in probably maybe close to 20 years, frankly, that I've taught on it. I'm only doing this now because I've been asked to. But I told my wife, you know, I don't know that I would be considered to have that much credibility to teach on this subject.

So I asked her if she'd get up and just speak for a minute or two and give me an endorsement so that you can know that my wife has a view about this that is, perhaps, will give me the credentials to speak on, I hope. Anyway, I don't know what she's going to say. Well, she didn't know what she was going to say.

Actually, he stole already a lot of my thunder, because, you know, I think he said to me many times how uncomfortable it is for him to talk about family and marriage relationships, because his past is so colorful. And I've got to say, when I first met him, I certainly thought, oh, no, no, this guy can't be this good if this past, you know, I mean, it's obvious all of us are going to think that if we're semi-intelligent about putting the pieces together. So I watched him a long time, and I met family and friends and, you know, double-checked and made sure and all that.

And we've been married almost seven years, and I can tell you he's just, he is what he presents. He's a little clueless sometimes about guy things, but he is so kind and bends over backwards, so much so that it reminds me that I should be being a little bit kinder and more attentive. He's very attentive and just really good to me, and I think it's all based on what he, he's thinking about what Christ would have him do in every situation.

And as you all know, with your kids or friends or a mean neighbor or whatever, you often stop yourself and say, okay, I can't respond to how I'm thinking. I'd like to ring their

necks or whatever, but how would the Lord have me handle this situation? What should I say to my kids here if they're doing, they're adult children, what do I say now? And it's not always easy to know what Christ would do, but you do the best you can, and you trust the Holy Spirit to really move you to respond in the right way. And he'll often say we've never had an argument, and it's true.

We've known each other for over eight years, and we've really never fought. I think I've been a little irritated with him once in a while, or we've disagreed on something, but there's been no difficulty. He is so kind and genuine.

I think that's kind of the thing. And you've got to be humble, whether you're the wife or the husband, about proving yourself right. He is wrong sometimes, but I don't always tell him.

And I think that above everything else that works in marriage, I think really being humble and knowing that the other person could be right or wrong, and it really doesn't matter, you know, where our difficulties. And at some point when he was talking about us not ever fighting, I said, no, we really haven't. And then he said something like, except I wonder if I ever, ever said you couldn't do something you wanted to do, what would happen then? Because he's so supportive, and I thought that was kind of funny at the time, like I wonder what would happen if I ever denied you? And he hasn't really.

So anyway, his principles haven't changed. I really believe that. Obviously as a young man, he's probably matured a little bit over the years, but it baffles me to this day how his life could have been so hard, except that God allowed it, and I know he continues to learn and be humbled by it, and that's what we all can benefit from with difficult times.

So anyway, I guess that's the best endorsement I can give. That's a pretty good one. Thank you.

You know, I've never actually, in the eight years we've known each other, the seven years we've been married, I've never had Dana come up here and speak before I did. So, and I just asked her this morning, you know, would you feel comfortable saying something because of the topic. It's the topic that I haven't taught on for almost 20 years because of the, I just feel like, you know, when my previous wife left me, I just thought, well there goes my credibility to speak about marriage and family and things like that, which was actually one of the things I talked about a lot before.

That, if you listen to my old lectures on toward a radically Christian counterculture and those kind of things, I gave those when I was with my ex-wife and our families together, and our children were doing great and my ex-wife was submissive and happy and, I don't know how happy, but she was, everyone saw our marriage as relatively perfect and I did too, but my ex-wife was not actually very happy apparently and she smiled in public, but she apparently was not as happy as I thought she was. And yet, you know, when a man

doesn't have a happy, then his first priority, if he's a Christian, is going to be how can I make her happier because that's what loving wants. Love doesn't always accomplish it, but love wants to accomplish that.

If you love somebody, then you want them to be happy. That's almost the definition of love. You want them to be pleased.

You would displease yourself in order to please them. You would, you'd sacrifice for them. That's basically what love is.

Jesus said, greater love has no man than this, that he laid down his life for his friend. Now, laying down your life is the ultimate sacrifice and it's not very often that you are in the position to actually die in the place of somebody to show that you love them, but you are to die to yourself day by day, hundreds of times in your lifetime, thousands of times perhaps, and it's those sacrifices that you make that are what love is. We often think love is an emotion, and probably you've heard enough preachers give disclaimers that no, love is not an emotion, it's something else, but what else is it? Well, it is something else.

It's a commitment. Love is a commitment to live and die for somebody else. Now, Jesus said we should all love one another, which means we should be committed to each other to live and to die for each other, and if that commitment isn't there, then no matter how much we like each other, no matter how much romance is felt in the relationship, then it isn't what, it's not loving as Christ loves.

Now, of course, the title, How to Love Your Wife as Christ Loves the Church is chosen because that's exactly what husbands are told to do, and I suppose on a subject like this, we ought to start with the passage that, from which the title of the topic is drawn, that's Ephesians chapter 5, and there's a, this is probably the most lengthy passage in Paul's writings that address the duties of husbands and wives. I will not read what he says to the wives at this point. Now, I'm not saying none of you wives need to hear what Paul has to say to wives, but that's not my topic, and that would definitely get us too far afield.

So, I'd like to look at Ephesians 5 and begin at verse 25. Paul said, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the word, that is the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own 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 the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this reason, the man shall leave his father and mother and be

joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Now, the last little shot there is addressed to the wives, but this is the section of this chapter that is mostly addressed to the husbands.

And it's from points within this passage. I want to draw my specific recommendations and exhortations to you. I believe that very, very many marriages are in trouble because men don't know to love their wives.

I'm going to assume that you who are here do not have everything to learn about this. That is, I imagine you're already kind of on the path. If you're a Christian and you came to a talk that announced how to love your wife, that means you came here because you wanted to learn how to love your wife more or more properly or something like that.

That loving your wife is already what you're committed to. And that's a good thing. That means that you probably have already learned a great deal about what works and what does not work in terms of loving your wife.

And some of you have been married perhaps longer than I have, though I've spent, I guess, a total of almost 30 years as a married person, if you add them all up. But I've spent a lot of time as a single person, as an adult too. But some of you have been married for, well, you might be married for a lot longer than I ever have been.

And you might be able to teach me things about loving your wife. But when I got married the first time, and every time, I'm sorry to say I've been married as many times as I have since I don't believe in divorce. It's rather ironic that I've had more marriages than one.

But in married life, I've always thought, okay, what is my duty toward my wife? Not my duty per se, like I have to do it. But what is it that God would like me to do? What is it that is good for her? What is it that God has in mind for a husband to do? And I've always thought, well, I should just take Jesus as the model because that's what you're supposed to do for virtually everything. And in terms of a husband loving his wife, there's specifically love your wife as Christ loves the church.

And that means that although I never have done it perfectly, it's always been the goal I had. It's always been the vision I've had before me. How does Christ treat me and his church? That's how I should treat my wife.

Now, I haven't always been spiritual enough to do things exactly as Christ did, but I've never set the goal lower than that. And when you aim at it, you get closer and closer, hopefully, over time. And I can't, I might say with reference to my first wife who I married when I was a teenager, and I was very naive about marriage because I came from a home where my parents had a wonderful marriage, a very enviable marriage.

I might even say almost a perfect marriage. So growing up, I just assumed marriage was that way. And I figured if I do what I'm supposed to do, then my wife, if she's a Christian, will do what she's supposed to do.

I have a wonderful, perfect marriage. I have to say my first marriage, my wife didn't quite get the picture, and I'm not blaming her. She wasn't raised a Christian as I was, so she didn't have these things in her vision.

And so she just didn't stay with the Lord or with me. And that kind of woke me up to the fact that, well, it's harder than I thought to make a marriage a happy marriage. My parents are happy.

They seem to be effortlessly happy with each other. As I've said, I've never had an argument with Dana that I can recall. I don't remember ever seeing my parents have an argument.

They're very peaceable people. And people sometimes ask me, you know, why do you, why are you patient with people on the radio and things like that? I don't know. I hope it's the Holy Spirit, but it could easily be temperament.

My dad's very temperamentally gentle also. So I hope, I'd like to give credit to the Holy Spirit for the whole thing. And yet, you know, that's where I grew up around.

And I have to say that loving my wife now is very easy. Not everyone has such an easy wife to love. My wife is, it'd be hard to think of anything to improve about her.

So I've got an easy job now to love my wife. And maybe some of the men here, it's not as easy. I don't know.

But a wife is generally going to be unhappy if her husband doesn't love her properly. There's no guarantee that she will be happy if he does love her properly. But at least you're giving your marriage a chance that she'll be happy and a probability.

I think in all likelihood, the majority of wives who are loved by their husbands, as Christ loves the church, are happy wives. As I mentioned, the church I was in the last time I went through a marriage failure held the view, in fact, even shortly before my wife left, one of the guys gave a sermon. He said, you know, and I'd heard this before, he said, you know, a wife is like a flower and a husband's like a gardener.

And if the gardener takes proper care of the flower, it'll be beautiful, it'll be healthy, it'll flourish. If you find that your wife is withering, it's like a flower withering. The gardener has neglected something.

It's the fault if the wife isn't flourishing spiritually in all respects. Now, I knew that wasn't true because, as I said earlier, I know that God treated Israel very well. She was his wife

and she revolted against him.

He even had to give her a bill of divorce at one point. It says in the book of Isaiah and Jeremiah, both say that. But I have to say my adult daughters who were in the room didn't like that message either because they were saying, so we women aren't responsible beings.

We don't make our own choices. We are destined to do well if we have husbands that treat us well and destined to do badly if we have husbands who don't. They said, we're not plants, we're human.

As humans, we make choices just like men do. And they were quite scripturally correct. There's a woman in the Bible named Abigail who had a horrible husband, Nabal, and yet she was a wise and gracious woman.

She flourished personally, though her husband was you know, a clod. And there are women who have had good husbands who've lost them. Hosea, the prophet, his wife ran off and committed adultery.

We have no evidence in scripture that he had done anything wrong. In other words, you can treat a wife well and she may do poorly. You may treat a wife poorly and she may do well.

But that analogy is still a generically true thing. It's generally true. When we talk about marriages, when we try to put rules or principles on how to treat people and how to make people happy and so forth, we have to kind of resort to generalities with the awareness that there are exceptions.

If I say, well, women or wives tend to want such and such from a man, there's going to be some wives who don't. I'm not going to be representing every wife. If I say, well, what men really are trying to do or what women really intend with their wives is such and such, well, I'm talking about most Christian men.

There might be exceptions. There might be men who aren't like what I'm describing. But a generality about men and women is sort of like saying men are taller than women, generally.

Of course, there's some very tall women and some very short men, but in general, that is a distinction between the sexes. And so I'm going to make some generalities in my talk that are, you have to understand, I recognize there are exceptions. But in general, this is what has been found by at least people who not only have studied but experienced married life and come up with ideas about it.

First of all, we're talking to husbands here. And you may not be aware, or you probably are, but you may not think about it, that the word husband, which we use as a noun, is

also a verb. To husband something means to steward it, to take care of it, to cultivate it.

That's why husbandry is a term that refers to raising plants successfully. Husbanding is something you do. It's a verb as well as a noun.

And it is therefore a stewardship. If you are husbanding a garden or you're husbanding a corporation, you're managing it, you're stewarding it. You have some responsibility for it.

And you're supposed to use your wisdom and your tact and your, whatever abilities you have to make whatever it is you're managing flourish. And of course, to be a husband of a wife requires that you do your best to cause your wife to flourish. And that's what actually Paul said Jesus does to the church.

I'm going to be looking at some of the things that Paul said about Jesus in the church here and just drawing some, I hope, practical things from it. Now you have notes in front of you. I really don't know that we'll cover everything in the notes, but I'm going to more or less follow the notes.

The first point that Paul makes in Ephesians 5.23 is that Christ is the head of the church. He says it again a couple other times in the discussion. Christ is the head of the church.

And that means that God has got to come first. Christ has got to come first. In 1 Corinthians 11.3, Paul said that the head of every man is Christ.

The head of Christ is God. He also says the head of the woman is the man, which should probably be translated the head of the wife is the husband. The head of the wife is the husband, but the husband has a head also, and that's Christ.

And even Christ has a head, his father. Paul says the head of Christ is God. The head of the woman is the man.

The head of the man is Christ. So a man, though he is in an authoritative role as a head in the home, has a head over him as well. He's responsible.

He's got some responsibility to steward his wife and his children, his household, in a way that pleases Christ because he's serving a head himself. Now, that God comes first in your life is something that some people have challenged because they say, well, really, if you're in the ministry, I've heard ministers say this to other ministers, your priorities are God, your wife, and then ministry, and that too many people put ministry above life. This is an error that ministers sometimes make.

They put the ministry ahead of their family life. I would just say all of those things fall under the number one priority, God, that you live your life for God. Any ministry you do is simply an outflow of your life with God.

Your priorities in ministry would be your family and then, of course, people outside your

family. Ministry is serving people, and there's nobody that you have more of a priority obligation to serve than the people under your household and your wife especially. The husband is the head of the wife, but the husband and wife together are in authority over the children of the household.

The wife has authority in the house too. Everyone has authority over them. The children have the parents, the wife has the husband, the husband has Christ, and Christ has his father.

That's what Paul teaches, and that's what we need to bear in mind. He is not commanded to be the head of the wife. The Bible doesn't say husbands be or become the head of your wife.

He just informs us you are. You are the head of your wife. You're in an office.

God has placed you in an office. It's called head of your wife, and therefore, you don't have to become the head. You have to know that you are the head and not neglect the implications of that.

You are to provide leadership. Now, the head is a metaphor that has to do with a member of the human body, and all the members of our bodies obey our heads, but our head has the interest of our body completely at the center of all decisions. The head is not going to make decisions that are going to impact the loss of a limb or the destruction of an organ of its own body.

The body and the head are one organism, and all the body members obey the head, but the head is concerned about every part of the body. If any part hurts, the head hurts. If any part is lost, it compromises or handicaps the head, and so a man who is the head of his wife is not simply someone who says, okay, I'm an authority here.

Therefore, my wife needs to do what I say. Therefore, I've got a servant to do my bidding, and if she doesn't do it, she's disobeying to God. Now, one of the biggest mistakes that I think men make who are married, who are Christians, is to tell their wives, I'm your head.

You're supposed to submit to me. Now, honestly, a wife ought to know that if she's a Christian, that her husband is her head, but a woman who is rejecting that role or neglecting it on purpose is not going to be changed by being told you're supposed to submit, at least not if she's told by her husband in most cases. It may be that another woman should say, woman, you should submit to your husband, but the husband telling the wife to do that is usually, a husband wouldn't say that unless his wife is already not submissive.

Why would he tell his wife that she has to submit unless he feels like she's not? Well, if she's not, then she's probably not inclined to, and if you tell a wife, you need to submit

to me, you probably only could cause a bigger rift in the marriage. Now, the Bible does say women should submit to their husbands, but that's between them and God. The most the husband can do, I think, is to give the woman a sense of safety in submitting to him.

There are many women who do not feel it's safe to trust a man, and some have a very good reason for believing that. There are many women who grew up in broken homes, especially in our generation and the generations to follow. Many women grew up without the father in the home.

Their mother had to work and raise the kids alone and had a hard time, and I've known women who told me that their mother told them never rely on a man, never depend on a man, and so they've been taught to be completely independent. If they do bring a man into life, he's kind of like an equal partner, she can take him or leave him, but if they can work together and have fun and enjoy each other, that's great, but she doesn't need him. If he leaves, she's all set up to carry on without him, because that's how a society of broken marriages has conditioned the offspring.

A girl whose father left, how is she going to trust that a man she marries is not going to leave? Well, she can, but he's got to earn it. It's a shame. It used to be that marriages just didn't break up very often, so a man marrying a woman didn't have to earn the trust that, well, will he leave me or not? I'll prove to you that I won't.

Well, more or less, they didn't expect them to, so a woman kind of went into a marriage and a man into a marriage, trusting each other. But now there's more cynicism. People are marrying later or not marrying at all, just living together.

When they do marry, often the ground rules for marriage are considered to be different than those that the Bible says. The woman's not necessarily seeing herself as coming into an arrangement where she submits, and he's not necessarily coming into the arrangement where he thinks he's going to submit his wife either. He doesn't care if she submits or not.

They just want something else out of the marriage. Then what? God wants. And what does God want? That it be a picture of Christ in the church.

That's what Paul says. He quotes Genesis 2.24, says, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and these two shall become one flesh. That's a quotation that also Jesus quoted in Matthew 19 when he was defining marriage.

Genesis 2.24 is the original definition of marriage, and Jesus quoted it saying that's how God wants it. Paul obviously quotes it saying that's how God wants it. Paul not only quotes it and says this is the a mystery.

This is a picture. This is something God ordained to be a picture of Christ and the church.

And so when God made Adam and Eve and made marriage, he had in mind Jesus and the church, and he gave them assignments that are corresponding in with relation to each other, to the relationship of Christ and the church.

And Paul says that's a mysterious thing, but I'm letting you know this is what it is. So when you look at your marriage, you have to look at this. Okay, if you're a man, I'm in the position of Christ toward this woman, and she's in the position of the church.

Now if a woman has been raised to distrust man, if she's had an earlier husband or a father or some other men in her life who've been disloyal or who've been unreliable, he might have a hard time winning her over. But the thing that he has to do most is make her know that she's safe. That's what Christ does.

He served his disciples. He washed their feet. He said, you know, I am your Lord.

He might as well have said, I am your head. I am your Lord. He says, you call me Lord and master, and you're right, I am.

But if I, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, well then you should do what I've done. You should follow my example and wash each other's feet. The idea here is that Jesus shows what a head does toward his body, what a husband does toward his wife.

He doesn't deny that he's the head, but it's not an ego trip for him. He doesn't feel like he's got to prove himself a man or prove himself to be in charge. He's there to serve his wife.

And again, this is the way the Christian authority structure is upside down from the world. In the world, being in authority means you're in the privileged position, and those that you're in authority over are supposed to serve your needs, serve your desires, obey your commands, and so forth. Now, obviously there is some of that in all relationships, but in the Christian realm, as Jesus demonstrated, the person who's really got the most authority is the one who's on his knees serving, washing the feet most.

That's the role. It's not imposition of authority on the wife. She very rarely will respond well to that.

If a man tries to make his wife do the scriptural thing and submit to him, he's probably going to crush her spirit. She's probably going to, she may stay in the marriage if she feels that she doesn't have any better options, but she won't be happy. She may respond grudgingly, but it's not going to be a very true picture of Christ in the church.

And so, how does a husband, well, how did Christ husband the church? Paul says in verse 25, Ephesians 5, 25, that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. This is what a loving husband does. He doesn't sacrifice his wife's well-being or her preferences or her happiness for his own.

He doesn't decide, now I've got someone to help propel me toward my goals and my agendas in life. He says, okay, here's a woman who's coming to my life. She's vulnerable to me because God has put her under my authority.

I need to make sure that she doesn't suffer anything by being in this position. I need to make sure that by coming under my authority, she is not worse off but better off. That her desires, if they're good desires, are sought by me to be brought to pass.

That I try to make her life as rich and fulfilled as possible. Now, you might say, well, then who's going to do that for the husband? Well, probably the wife will. She might not, but Jesus will.

You see, the head of the man is Christ. So, the man doesn't have to look to his wife to give back to him. In an ideal marriage, of course she will, but it's not always ideal.

The husband is to love his wife whether she is submissive or not. I remember in a previous marriage, my wife was behaving very erratically. I had reason to wonder if she was mentally normal or healthy.

She was doing things that were embarrassing and doing things that were hurtful to other family members and to the people in the church. People were calling the guy who was the leader of our church and saying, would you tell Steve to tell his wife to stop calling us because she just calls and rants. My wife was doing all kinds of things that were embarrassing, frankly.

I remember thinking, Lord, it says in 1 Peter chapter 3 that husbands are to honor their wives. How can I honor her when she's behaving so dishonorably? I actually believe that the Lord spoke to me at that time. He says, you honor your wife not because she is honorable.

You honor your wife because that's how you honor me, because I told you to do it. You honor me by honoring your wife, not because she's honorable, not because she deserves to be honored, but you honor her because I told you to and you honor me by honoring your wife. That made it very much easier.

I gave my life to Jesus to be his servant, his slave. Every day of my life, I'm to do what pleases the Lord. I'm happy to do so.

It makes it simple when he says, here's your assignment. Love your wife like I love you. It's nice to know.

I mean, some people are wondering, what's God's will for my life? I want to serve God, but I just can't get a word from the Lord. I don't have any particular vision for what I'm supposed to do. Well, are you married? You got an assignment there.

Love your wife. If you don't do anything else, that's assignment enough. If you do that and more, wonderful, but loving your wife is your assignment, and that means you give yourself for her.

That's what Jesus did. He gave himself for her, and that means he placed her needs, the church's needs, above his own. We needed someone to die for us.

He didn't need to come down and die. He wasn't sitting at him saying, boy, do I feel a lack in my life? No, he came down because we had a lack that we needed filled, and he came down and died for us, obviously. He put our needs ahead of himself.

A man often feels like he goes into a marriage having needs. He may be aware or not of what his wife's needs are, but he knows what his needs are, but he may not realize that he doesn't need anything as much as he needs a happy wife. That is if you're married.

If you have a wife, you don't need anything as much as you need a happy wife. There are other needs besides, but if you don't have a happy wife, you don't have a happy life. Everyone knows that.

Happy wife, happy life. If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. It's a miserable thing to have a home where the wife is not happy, and in probably the majority of cases where the wife's not happy, it's because the husband is not loving her as Christ loves the church.

Now, I will say Christ loves us as Christ loves the church, and we're not always happy, so I mean there's no guarantee that being loving is going to make the other party happy. They have some responsibility to be happy on their own too, and if they don't do it, they won't be happy no matter what you do, but it's really hard to be happy when you feel oppressed by someone else. It's really hard to be happy when you feel the most important person in your life and the one you're supposed to be on the same team with, compatible with, submissive to, you know, that that person just isn't on your team.

They expect you to be on, he expects you to be on his team, but he's not on your team. A woman can be happy if she insists upon it in that situation, and if she's in that situation, she should insist on being happy, but it's harder, and a husband should not do anything that makes it harder for his wife to be happy. Genuine love, as I said earlier, takes pleasure in making sacrifices for the person you love.

A lot of men think they love their wives because they're attracted to them. They find them beautiful, they find them sexy, they find them hopefully pleasant to be with. They have a lot of emotional feelings toward them, which is a certain kind of love.

It's just not the kind of love that we're talking about specifically. It's great to have those kinds of things, but that kind of love makes the marriage happy and pleasant, but it's not what makes it a marriage. What makes a marriage a marriage is that the husband is

laying down his life for his wife, and that he has sacrificed for her, and if he really loves her as Christ loves the church, he'll be delighted to do that.

Bible says, for the joy that was set before him, Jesus endured the cross. It was a joy to him to do that for us because we needed it, and that's the ultimate sacrifice. If you love as Christ loves, you will take pleasure in it.

You know, if you get married and the marriage goes on for many decades and your wife becomes less attractive, let us say, which is going to happen if she gets old enough, not going to be as attractive as when she was in her prime, or maybe she becomes an invalid. A lot of men find themselves married to invalids. You know, he might say, well I can't do any of the things I used to do.

I don't find as much pleasure because she's not as enjoyable to look at, frankly. She might even be grumpier because she's, you know, in pain or whatever, and a man may feel like this is a lot harder to love her than it used to be. Well, count that a joy to say, well now if she was going to be in this condition anyway, she was going to need someone to love her.

Thank God he put me here so I could do it. Someone's going to have to take care of her. Why shouldn't it be me? And by the way, you know that your wife can take care of you if you become an invalid.

Even some of the worst wives, I think when their husbands become invalids, the wives step up and take care of them. Wives are very caregiving people, usually, most of them. Men, maybe not so much by nature, but that's the caregiving, giving of yourself, laying down your rights, giving up going out to play golf, or giving up going out with the guys, or going out to do something that you'd enjoy doing, because your wife needs you there at home.

It should be a pleasure. If it isn't, then you don't love your wife in the way that Christ loves the church. It should be a delight to make sacrifices that are a blessing to her or make her life better.

You need to meet her needs, it's true, but you also need to recognize what her needs are from her viewpoint. A lot of times men feel like they're doing something that's meeting their wife's needs, but what they're doing isn't something that a wife really cares much about at all. They don't see it as their need, and they wish you'd do something quite different, which you don't even recognize as one of her needs.

I'll tell you, I don't usually recommend books written by Christian psychologists and things like that, because I'm not into Christian psychology, but there's a really famous book, I'm sure many of you have read it, because it's been around for decades, about the five love languages. You've seen that book by Gary Chapman? I remember when I

read that, I thought, you know, there's nothing very revolutionary in here, except that it's very helpful to recognize that if your wife speaks a different love language, she may not understand when you're saying I love you. You might be saying I love you by acts of service, but that may not be the language she understands.

She may, you know, recognize love being spoken when you give her quality time, or words of affirmation, or gifts, or something else, or physical touch. There's these different ways in which people register emotional love. We're not talking about that totally self-giving kind of love that isn't necessarily emotional, but to make your wife feel loved emotionally, her needs in that area may be different than you know.

I myself was raised in a very huggy, touchy kind of family, so my, you know, one of the ways that I express love and register it when it's giving back to me has been with touch. I like to rub my wife's back, I like to rub her feet, I like to, you know, even friends, I like to hug them and stuff like that. It's just something that, just my upbringing, I register emotional love that way.

Some people don't. My ex-wife did not like it at all to be touched by anyone. She loved her dad, but she looked very uncomfortable when he'd give her a hug.

I mean, she was not, didn't have the same love language. I didn't realize that, so that may be one of the ways I failed her, because I think what she, I think probably her love language is she preferred, she felt loved when someone gives her gifts. Well, that's the one area where I didn't have a lot of ability, because I didn't have a lot of money to buy gifts, but I'm sure there were things I could have done.

I think writing notes, sending cards, things like that, when I gave her flowers and stuff, but the point is that some people, when you give them a gift, they just feel, wow, I feel loved. When people give me gifts, I feel kind of loved. I'm thankful when people give me gifts, but I'm not looking for that in my life.

I'm looking for other ways of expressing that. So, to know how your wife feels the need to be loved is not always intuitive. I mean, it's great if you and your wife just happen to be people who grew up experiencing emotional love through the same means, because you're going to naturally do that to show your love, and she's going to naturally recognize that as love, because that's the same language.

But as I think what Gary Chapman pointed out, is that if a man who speaks only English marries a woman who speaks only Russian, he can tell her all day long he loves her, but she doesn't understand the language. You know, if he doesn't know how to say it in her language, he can express love all the day long, and when she leaves him, he'll say, I don't know, I don't understand, I always was communicating my love to her, but it was a language that she didn't really recognize. And so, that's how it is with the different love languages.

Many of you, probably, maybe all of you have read that book. It's an incredibly popular book, and it's very uncommon for me to recommend a book that's actually a popular book, because often the books that are popular are popular for reasons that I don't necessarily resonate with. But that book and that concept brings out the fact that you need to recognize your wife's needs from her point of view.

She feels need for love, and you need to find out what it is about her language, how she understands feeling love, if you're going to really minister to her in that way and bless her in that way. The main thing, of course, about submission to somebody is it's going to be a miserable thing to submit to somebody if you don't feel that they're on your side. They won't feel safe.

Many times, a husband gives the impression from the choices he makes to his wife that he's got the agenda, he's the one who knows what he wants for himself, and he's expecting her to get on board and get with the program. And that's how a lot of husbands run their marriages. And a wife, then, who is very much aware of what she considers her needs to be, is not at all convinced that he's going to be looking out for those needs.

And there'll be a strong temptation, depending on how spiritual she is, she may resist it successfully or not, but there'll be a strong temptation to resist him because she's like, wait, I have needs here, too. Now, by the way, a very spiritual Christian is able to say, I have what I can see, consider to be needs, but I can lay those down, I can serve Christ, I can serve my husband because that's how I serve Christ. But let's face it, that's not the easiest thing to do even for spiritual people, and a lot of wives are not very spiritual at all.

And therefore, you're going to be crushing your wife if you're making her submit or expecting her to submit, and she doesn't feel like you've got her interests at heart at all, you've just got your own. And she's going to be thinking, well, who's got my interests at heart? Who's going to be looking out for what I need? And that's going to be the temptation that a wife has to not submit. Say, hey, I got to put the brakes on here because if we keep going with your way, the things I feel like I need are never going to be addressed.

Now, again, I'm saying this is the natural temptation. I'm not saying that people should submit to this temptation. I've been in a marriage where my needs were not, my wife's needs, my wife did not seem to consider what my needs were or care, at least not very much.

I just had to say, well, okay, I would have liked it if my wife was more interested in what I think I need, but she doesn't. But I can get that from Jesus. My relationship with Jesus is such that my real needs are always met that way.

Even David said, even if my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. You don't need to have your family meeting your needs if you've got a good relationship with God. But let's face it, people's relationships with God are not always what they should be.

And therefore, you're in a relationship with somebody who might need to be protected a lot more. If a wife feels that her husband is putting her interests first, in all likelihood, she won't feel like she has to do that. If she feels like what her husband's going about is promoting her, promoting her well-being, her safety, protecting her, seeking her happiness, well, there won't be much left for her to do in resistance to that.

Why should she resist that? She'll feel like getting on board with that, I would think. And so that's what the husband has to do, is recognize that he's there to serve his wife's needs in a way that she feels, oh, he's looking out for me, I don't have to look out for myself. I don't have to resist anything he's saying because what he's saying is the same thing I hope he would say.

The thing, the direction he's going is the direction I would hope he'd go. So making her feel safe is the main way of being like Christ. Because Christ, of course, gives all kinds of promises to comfort us and make us feel safe and let us know, you know, your father knows you have need of these things.

Don't worry about anything. He feeds the birds. He clothes the lilies.

He'll certainly clothe you. He's making it very clear. I've got this.

I'm going to take care of you. You don't have to worry about these things because I'm doing it for you. Now, what ways can a man make his wife feel unsafe or what ways can he make her feel safe? Because I want us to say, the safer she feels in your commitment to her needs, the easier it'll be for her to submit.

Now, some women are just never going to submit to anybody and some men will never do that. I mean, they're just people who are broken people and you may not be able to fix them. But if you've got a healthy Christian wife, she'll probably happily submit if she feels like you're pushing for her, that you're not dragging her behind you on your road.

You're looking at the road that would be best for her and hopefully she recognizes it too and you're both on that road together. First, she has to be the first priority. Sometimes men do not give their wives first priority over certain other things.

Their work, for example. The wife feels that his job is more important than she is. From the man's point of view, he probably feels, I'm working so hard at my job because it's good for my wife and family, for me to make money.

But a lot of times the wife and family aren't as interested in the money as they are in the

relationship. And the man who's out there trying to make his family rich may be pursuing something that she doesn't really feel a need to. Maybe she likes the comforts of home but she, you know, could do with a little less if there's a little more love in the relationship, if there's a little more attention.

A man has to put his wife ahead of his business and ahead of his own parents. Sometimes that's the problem. Sometimes the wife feels that she's in competition with the guy's mother or with the guy's parents.

They want something of him and he's always kind of going their way. He's always making his decisions based on what his parents want him to do instead of what his wife suggests. You're supposed to leave your father and mother, including to your wife, when you're married.

You don't let your parents continue to be the head over you. And you put your wife ahead of your family, your parents, your job, your friends. If your friends say, how come you're not available to go out and do things with us anymore so much? You say, well, my wife wants me to do some things around the house here.

I mean, you put her first. If they think, well, boy, are you ever no fun anymore? Well, better that your friends think you're no fun anymore than that your wife thinks you're no fun anymore. Again, your need is to have a wife who's happy and happy to be on your team.

And so, putting her first is one of those things. If she can see that you are putting her ahead of other possibilities that arise that you might even be interested in, ahead of other people, ahead of other activities, then she's going to feel more safe. Okay, he's got my back.

He's watching out for me. I can submit him safely. The word safe is the functional word here.

She might submit and not feel safe doing it. But if she feels safe, she'll probably submit happily. A man needs to tame his temper.

That's an important way to make his wife feel safe. I don't know if any of you are given a temper. I'm speaking about something here that I don't really struggle with like some people do.

I have other struggles. I have my sins. But temper is generally not one of them.

I don't generally lose my temper. So my wife doesn't have to worry about me getting violent or angry or whatever. But some Christian men, they don't have the struggles I have, but they have a different struggle.

And they do have a short fuse. They get angry, they get frustrated, and they take it out on their wife. Sometimes when I'm watching a TV program or a movie about a husband, and the husband's shouting at his wife or getting angry at his wife, I think, how does he do that? I treated my wives with kid gloves and they still left.

I mean, maybe I was too milquetoast. I hope not. But the fact is, I don't know why a man thinks he can use his wife to ventilate his anger on and still have a marriage or at least a happy marriage.

I have to think that a man like that doesn't even have happiness in his marriage as one of his goals. I think he's an unhappy man and he's looking for happiness somewhere else than in his marriage. But in Proverbs chapter 19 and verse 11, it says, the discretion of a man makes him slow to anger and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

A man is honorable if he overlooks somebody's transgression against him, his wife's or anyone else's. In all likelihood, the person who's going to do the most good for you in your life is your spouse. But also the person who's going to give you occasion to be irritated most often is probably going to be your spouse too.

Even if they're easy to live with, you live with them 24-7 and therefore even small foibles are likely to become an irritation over the course of decades. I'm not saying there aren't people more irritable than your spouse in your life. There may be, but you don't live with them or you don't have to or you don't have to stay with them.

If you have friends who are irritating, you don't have to be their friend for 50 years. You know, someone who's very irritating, if they're not your spouse, you don't have to put up with them that much. Some, but not so much.

But your spouse, even if they're slightly irritating, that's something that wears on you over decades. And so you need to make sure you're slow to anger, that you overlook a transgression. That's an honor.

It's a glory to a man to be slow to anger. And don't do anything that endangers her. Now, this could be something financial or it could be something, anything that she feels you put her in danger.

Abraham made the mistake, of course, of when he went to Abimelech in Gerar saying that his wife was his sister. And he did the same thing when he went into Egypt. He deceived Pharaoh and said that Sarah was his sister.

Now, why did he do that? Well, he was aware that sometimes when a man has a beautiful wife that other men covet, they will take out the guy to get his wife. That is actually known to have taken place in Middle Eastern cultures. There are secular records of that even happening.

And Abraham knew that was a danger. He's got a beautiful wife, other men will want her. They won't believe in adultery, but they'll believe murder.

They'll kill him so they don't have to commit adultery and they can take his wife. And so he said, why don't you say you're my sister? Well, we know that that put her in apparent danger because she was taken twice into king's harems because Abraham had deceived him. And when those kings found out that she was his wife, they let her go and they wouldn't hurt her.

Abraham's fear was unwarranted. When Abimelech said, you know, why did you lie to me about this? He said, because I thought the fear of God was not in this place. Well, he miscalculated that.

Abimelech did fear God and wouldn't take another man's wife. But the point is that Abraham, because of his fears, endangered his wife, put her in trouble. Why? To save his life.

He actually said to her, so that I don't have to die for you, say that you're my sister. Now, if a man ever says, honey, we're going to do this so that I don't have to die for you, he's not loving his wife like Christ loves the church. And especially if the compromise he's asking her to make is one that puts her at risk.

And that risk could be financial. A man is not going to make his wife feel safe if he's a spendthrift, if he's living beyond their means, if he's going into deep debt to the point where it's not realistic to think that they can manage that debt. They're putting, he's putting the home in danger.

A woman's very much attached to her home, her nest, and a woman may reasonably feel the way he's spending money on all kinds of unnecessary things. Maybe he's a gambler. Maybe he just spends far more than they make.

And she's going to say, we're going to lose this house. We're going to lose everything because he doesn't know how to manage money. Managing money wisely, you have to realize it's not yours only.

You may be the head of the family, but it's the whole family's money. Even if you're the one that earned it, if your mother's, I mean, if your wife stayed at home with the kids as a mother at home, and you're out making the money, it's not your money. First of all, it's God's money.

But in terms of obligations, you need to use the money for the family, the whole family. It's the only money they have. It's your money.

And it's theirs as much as yours. Of course, you make final decisions about it because you're the head, but you have to realize that the way you spend money has got to make

your wife feel comfortable too. It's ridiculous to make big, expensive decisions without your wife being on board.

If you don't consult her about that, she's going to feel very unsafe financially. We're going to be out on the street. And by the way, the homeless population seems to be increasing.

And some of the people in the homeless population used to have houses, used to have jobs. I mean, anyone can put two and two together. If I don't play my cards right here, or if my husband doesn't, we may be sleeping out on Skid Row someday.

You never know. The wife has to feel safe, has to feel like, okay, the husband's working, he's earning, he's spending judiciously, he's not making major purchases, that she's not on board with. If he violates any of that, she's not going to feel safe with him.

She may have to go out and get a job herself, and that may even put her in a danger she wasn't in. A home is a safer place for a woman. I'm not saying women can't make it out in the world, they do.

My wife Dana worked in a secular job for 40 years. She's retired from 40 years of being a college professor at a secular college. That's not exactly what many people consider a spiritually safe environment.

My wife's a strong Christian woman, and it didn't compromise her. She was a good influence. Women can be good in the workplace, but also the workplaces where most women meet the men they have affairs with, statistically.

It used to be different, of course, because women were in the home more. If they had affairs, it was with the milkman, because he's the guy who came around to the house, you know, that's the main guy that she ever saw. Nowadays, the statistics are like two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women, and the majority of them are initiated by women who met somebody at work, who seemed to care more about her needs than her husband did.

She may be misperceiving that, but that's how she sees it. Sending your wife into the workplace may be a necessity at times. If a man's unable to work or unable to make enough money with his skills, she might have to help out.

But for a there are dangers out there that she doesn't face if she doesn't have to go out there. My ex-wife hardly ever said anything kind or showed any gratitude toward me, but she did repeatedly thank me at different times in our marriage that I didn't make her go out and work. I let her stay home and homeschool the kids.

She wanted to stay home and homeschool the kids. It never crossed my mind to send her out to work in the workplace. What would happen then to the home without a queen

in the house? There's got to be someone there.

Paul uses a word when he's describing the woman's role in the home. He calls it, the Greek word is two particles, house despot. Do you know what a despot is? It's like an absolute ruler.

Paul actually uses a Greek word describing the woman's role in the home as she's the house despot. Which means, although the husband's ahead over the wife, her realm is the home and she rules the children and the household protocol and so forth. She's the queen there.

She's the total queen in that situation. Doesn't mean that her husband might have to say, hey that's not working out right. Obviously she's supposed to submit to her husband, but he should be able to just say, I'm going to trust her with all of this.

Unless of course she proves untrustworthy and then he might have to step in. Another way that it may make his wife feel unsafe besides his financial practices is his driving. Now this might seem really almost humorous, but it's a very major part of our lives.

Is it not driving? How much time do you spend every week driving? Probably a lot. Now when you and your wife go driving, who's driving? You or her? Well sometimes wives do the driving and sometimes that might be the best way to make her feel safe because you might be a horrible driver. And sometimes a man doesn't want his wife to do the driving or doesn't want her to criticize his driving because his masculinity is tied up with his driving.

That's why guys get into race cars and they look for a street with no traffic so they can drive really fast. It makes them feel really masculine because they've got all that power under the hood and they're in control and so forth. It's a strange psychological phenomenon.

But because of that men are sometimes careless drivers or even if they feel they're not being careless, their wife in the passenger seat is not so sure. And I know from myself when I've ridden with other people who are driving, I do my own driving most of the time. I usually drive when I'm with my wife and I do when I'm with most other people.

I usually drive, but I have sometimes, not infrequently, been in someone else's car when they're driving. I'm sitting in the passenger seat. I'm sure they're a good driver, but I'm always like, does he see that over there? Does he see that? You know, is he getting too close to the line there? I mean, I don't bug, I don't say anything because I'd be a total nuisance, you know, but in my mind I hope he sees that.

I hope he sees that. I got to figure that every wife is in that position if her husband's driving. I hope, you know, I hope, I'm not sure I'm safe and she's holding on to the, you know, the hand thing and making sure the seatbelt's tight because honestly driving is

dangerous.

I'm being just nuts and bolts practical here. If you're a careless driver and your wife has to ride with you, sometimes what might be, hey, would you rather drive? It's fine. I mean, but or if she says, hey, go slower or watch out for this stuff.

Instead of the man getting upset about it because she's challenging his masculinity, you know, hey, I can drive. I've been driving for 50 years. Why do you think I'm wrong? Realize that she doesn't know how safe you're driving.

It doesn't look to her like it is and remember that sometimes when you ride with other people, even if they're good drivers, you're not so sure they're paying attention as much as you are. So, I mean, in other when you drive, you can be giving your wife an ulcer. You make her feel safe by driving carefully.

It's a very practical thing, but it's part of what it means for a man to use his position to make his wife know that she's safe with him. I think a man should take responsibility for the discipline of the children. Most men don't anymore.

The wife usually is the one who disciplines the children by default. I have to admit that that happened in my home a lot. The truth is that my wife disciplined the children a lot when I was away and my kids were very well-behaved.

When I was there, I never really saw them need discipline. They were pretty well-behaved, but a wife, if she feels like the husband has left all the child-raising and the difficult parts, disciplining a child is the unpleasant part. You want your kids to like you.

You don't want to be the one to have to discipline them and say no to them or make them sorry they did something. Let the other person do that so you can be the good guy. You see that especially after a divorce when two parents are sharing custody of a kid.

One has got to be the good guy and one has got to be the bad guy. One has to do the discipline. The other party, usually the non-custodian one, just wants to be the pal, wants the kid to like him.

Then the parent who's got the custody often has all the unpleasant business of trying to make the kid do the right thing and the one who has visitation on the weekend, they just play with the kid. When you're raising a kid, you'd much rather put off the discipline of the child so you'll be the popular one. Well, that's how you lay down your life for your wife.

Don't make her be the unpopular one. You take that risk. By the way, disciplining your children will not necessarily make you unpopular with them, but we feel like it will because you're going to displease them momentarily.

That's what discipline does. No chastening for the present seems joyous but grievous. However, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it, the writer Fiebers tells us.

No one wants to be the heavy anymore with their kids and a man can really renege on his responsibility by making his wife take care of it and so she has to be the heavy. I mean, she'd like to enjoy the kids without being the heavy too and you make her feel more protective. You say, I'll handle this, you know, I'll discipline them.

Now, of course, if you're too heavy-handed in your discipline, some men are, then you need to learn to be a more gracious and effective disciplinarian, but to just pass it off to the wife just puts her in the position to do the unpleasant part when it's really your responsibility. Why would I say it's your responsibility? Because only a few verses after the passage in Ephesians 5 that we read about husbands love your wives and all that, just like two verses later or so, in Ephesians chapter 6 at the beginning, he says, children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right, honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

He didn't say you parents or you mothers, you fathers, bring up your children in the training and admonition of the Lord. Discipline is part of that training. That's the father's responsibility.

Doesn't mean the woman should never do it. Sometimes the father is gone for a few days or whatever, or he's dead, or he's out of the home. The wife has to pick up the slack there and discipline the kids.

But the husband should say, that's really my responsibility and I shouldn't be doing the easy thing and shuffling it off with my wife, so she has to do the heavy. I'm sure she'd much rather not. And along with that very same thing, don't allow the children to dishonor her.

If children sass their mother, if they disobey her, if they disregard her, if they ignore her instructions and ask you to give permission to do something she says they can't do, don't let them do that. She will feel that it's now you and the kids against her. She won't feel safe.

She won't feel like you're looking out for her. And of course, I'm assuming all along that you're honoring her, but you have to make sure that you require the children to honor her too. So not just because it's the right thing for them to do, but because that contributes to her sense that this is a safe situation for her.

The kids are not going to become her adversaries with your permission or with your

neglect. One way you can certainly make your wife feel safe is to make sure that there's something that will take care of her somehow after you're gone. That if you would die today, or at least before she does, statistically women live a few years longer than their husbands usually.

Obviously another thing that's where there's some exceptions, but that's generally the pattern. So if the wife knows she's likely to lose her husband eventually, and maybe soon, you never know when something's going to happen, is has he set her up? Has he set things up so that she's going to be okay? Now in my case I never really had insurance. I never had any money in the bank.

I just lived poor with my family. We had all we needed, but we didn't have anything for the future. But fortunately my wives were not the type of women who wanted that.

They were as much hippies as I was. Very non-materialistic, not interested in having a lot of money, but of course security. I think one reason that my ex-wife felt secure is that she knew that if I was dead, somebody else, her dad or her brother, would take care of her.

See that's an interesting thing too, because once a woman asked my ex-wife, you know you and Steve don't have any guaranteed income, you just live by faith, you don't have anything stored up for the future, how doesn't that make you go crazy? And she said, and I was so disappointed when I was reported back to her what she said, I thought she'd say, well God has taken care of us for 20 years here. Every need we've had. Why should we not trust God? Why wouldn't I believe God would take care of me with or without him here? I wish she would have said that, but she said, I know that if Steve died, my dad and my brother would never let me go without him.

I thought, you know, the truth is that if I died, my parents probably would be willing to step in and help, but I don't want my parents to step in and help. I want to trust God, but trusting God doesn't mean that you don't make sensible provision for a foreseeable future. The Proverbs says twice, the wise man foresees the evil and hides himself, but the foolish pass on and suffer for it.

That is, when you see, okay, I'm getting old, I won't be able to work. See, I never believe the time will come when I can't work, unless I lose my voice. If I get cancer of the larynx and can't speak anymore, and I get arthritis so I can't type or can't write books or anything like that.

I mean, if I get to a place where I really can't communicate, then I guess I can't work. But I still have always trusted God for my income, and one way that I know that I can is because actually when my ex-wife left, I stepped out of the ministry. For all I knew, maybe permanently.

I didn't want to do it permanently, but I just figured because my marriage was in bad shape, I felt like I can't, in integrity, pretend like everything's okay and continue my ministry. I stepped out of the ministry. I was out of the ministry for a whole year.

I remember thinking, where's my income going to come from? I don't know how to do anything. I can sweep floors, I guess. And I thought, if I have a little bit of money here, when I run out of that money, I'll go out and flip hamburgers at McDonald's or something, because that's about all I'm qualified to do.

I don't have any market skills. I just thought, well, that's what I'll do. I never ran out of money.

For that whole year, I was essentially invisible. I've never had a newsletter, I've never had a list of supporters, I was not on the radio during that time, I wasn't speaking publicly anywhere. I was invisible.

I was staying home with my kids, being a single dad, in a cabin in Idaho, where no one could see me, except God. I remember thinking, well, no one's going to be sending me money now, and so I'll just have to go out and get a job when I run out of this money. It wasn't much.

It never went out. It was like the cruise of oil in the bin of flour, that there's always something there. God multiplied it.

And I'd go to, you know, months after I'd gone off the air, and I was invisible to the public, I'd go to the mailbox, and someone had sent me 400 bucks, and I didn't even know. Probably some former listener, but I hadn't been on the air for a long time. How does that happen? Who does that? You know? And I began to realize that God was teaching me.

I always thought I was supported by the ministry. But here I am not ministering, I'm still supported. I'm not supported by the ministry, I'm supported by God.

I need to do what God wants me to do. If he wants me to stay home and take care of these kids, who just lost their mother, then that's what I'm going to do. And God, apparently, is willing to support me in that.

Then he put me back in ministry later on. But it was an important time for me to learn this lesson. A lot of people say, well, of course money comes in.

You're in the ministry, you're public, people appreciate what you do, they send money, and so forth. Well, that is true, that does happen. But, I wasn't in the ministry for that year.

There was nobody who knew my needs at all. Of course, no one knows my needs right

now either. But, I mean, no one had me coming to their attention or anything, but God still provided.

It's not the ministry, it's not even your job that provides for you. It's God that provides for you. If you're doing what God wants, God will provide.

And I knew that if I died, that my wife and kids, I believed that if I died in obedience to God, God would take care of my wife and kids. I assumed that it's partly because we're part of a fellowship that would pick up the slack for widows and orphans. But, of course, we don't have that kind of community in the church all the time.

I happen to be in a good church that did have that going on. But, to have some life insurance, to have at least a home, or something that your wife would be able to stay in, if she knows that there's something that will still be there for her if you die. Now, I don't believe this is an absolute obligation.

Obviously, I don't, because I never had insurance. Even now, I don't have life insurance or anything like that. I just believe in trusting God.

But not everyone is accustomed to doing that. And I think it's often the right thing to do. For your wife to know, hey, I've got this set up.

If I die, the house will be paid for. You're going to have this kind of money to live on. That will make her feel safe, because you're her provider.

Actually, God is. But sometimes wives don't feel it as much as they should. Sometimes you don't feel it as much as you should.

You feel like my job is providing for you. No, God is providing for you by giving you a job. If you lose your job, God will still be there to provide for you.

But a lot of people don't see that clearly. And I think for a man to be able to have something visible for his wife to know, you'll be safe if I'm gone, you know. I've made some provisions for that.

I think that's a way to love your wife. Certainly, one way to be loving your wife properly is to be sexually sensitive to her. By sexually sensitive, I mean to realize that in most cases women have different felt needs with reference to sex than men do.

I just read not long ago that women are like an iron and men are like a light bulb when it comes to sex. You plug in the iron and it gradually warms up. You just throw a switch and the light goes on.

Men are that way. Men, they don't take long to get ready. And a lot of times they're not very discriminating about how the relationships are going the same day.

Men just, their needs are somewhat different than their wives in that respect. And sometimes they expect their wives to be like them. And mostly women are not.

Mostly women, sometimes it takes days for them to get in the mood. So a man needs to be aware of that and not demand that she... And this is an area where I think men often are frustrated because a lot of times they got married because they were sexually frustrated and they wanted somebody that they thought would be available to them for that. Especially Christian men who will not commit fornication because Christians don't do that, supposedly.

I mean, Christians are not supposed to. So a Christian man will often get married saying, well, now I won't have to be celibate. I won't have to be sexually frustrated.

But some men get married and they still are sexually frustrated because their wife is not responsive or can't be responsive or whatever. I've been in that situation before. And you just realize, okay, I'm going to have to die to myself more than I thought because I thought that this was going to be a warm, you know, sexual relationship and my wife doesn't really have the same vision for that apparently.

Or if she does, she doesn't seem to be able to get on board and perform or whatever. And Paul talks about this very thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verses 3 through 5. He's talking about husbands and wives. And he says, let the husband render to his wife the affection due her.

The word affection here in almost all new translations is understood to refer to her sexual needs, whatever her sexual needs are that he should make sure that they are being met by him. And likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does.

You know, a lot of men who are macho, you know, heads of their household, they like that. My wife doesn't have authority over her body, I do. But look at the next line.

And likewise the husband doesn't have authority over his body, but his wife does. When it comes to sex, your wife should view you as having access to her body and you should consider her having access to yours. No more often than she feels comfortable with it, that is.

I mean, some wives get to the point where they're not interested in sex and all others want it just less frequently than their husbands do. And the husband has got to say, well listen, I'm supposed to be the man here. Which doesn't mean I make her do what I want, it means I should be the adult.

I should be the one who can lay down my preferences. I should be the one strong enough to, if she's not interested, to also not be. In one of my marriages, my wife was not interested in sex after the first six months.

She wasn't very interested in the first six months. But there was nothing after the first six months. She eventually left me for someone else because there was something going on between her and other men, just not with me.

But I lived with her for a year and a half without touching her. I mean, I wasn't able to. That was a long time.

That's when I was a teenager too. I was 19 and 20 and 21. That's a hard time to be celibate, especially when you have a woman that you're attracted to lying in bed next to you every night.

But that's where I kind of learned, you know, life isn't going to be all about sex. Marriage isn't going to be all about sex. You're just going to have to, your life is going to have to be all about Jesus.

And you're going to have to defer to your wife's preferences in the area of sex. Now, she should be deferring to you too. I mean, again, it's one of those things you can't say to your wife, you should defer to me because I have authority over your body.

No, your assignment is that she has authority over your body, you defer to her. Her assignment is to defer to you. If both people are doing what their assignment is, great, but you can't make the other person do what they're supposed to do.

You just do what you're supposed to do. And they answer to God for whether they do what they're supposed to or not. But then Paul says, Do not deprive one another in this area, except with consent for a time that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.

Then come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. It's very important to note that a healthy sexual relationship in the marriage or meeting each other's sexual needs is protecting each other. That's the point.

He said, if you deprive each other, then the devil's going to tempt you. You may stop for a while while you're fasting and praying over something, but make sure you come back together again because lest the devil tempt you. Anyone who's awake knows that there are temptations in the area of sex in this society all around, for men and women.

And the sexual assignment of the husband and wife is essentially protect your mate from those temptations. That's your assignment. Protect her.

Now, I honestly have heard of far more cases where the husbands feel that their wives are not meeting their needs than of cases where the wives want more sex than the husbands. I've actually heard of cases, a few, where the man is the one not interested in sex and the wife is, but the man is not. Now, this would be a total violation of what Paul's saying, that if he doesn't have sex with his wife and she wants it, then that's definitely depriving her of her needs.

Again, I think it's more common to run into men who'd like to have sex more often than their wives are really interested. In which case, the wife should pay attention to that. But the husband may find that either his wife wants more sex than he does, if he's not very responsive, especially if the guy gets older.

I think sometimes men get that way. But it may be that it's not so much that she wants more sex, but she wants a different kind of sex. She wants sex to be more caring, more sincere, less just a physical few minutes, but wants it to be an expression of something more and deeper in the romantic relationship.

I mean, a man's got to meet his wife's sexual needs because if he isn't going to, then probably there's someone out there who'd like to. I hate to say it. I mean, if you've got a good wife, she'll resist those temptations.

But they are temptations. If a woman is not being satisfied by her husband, either because he doesn't have sex with her, or because when he does, he seems brutish, he seems selfish, he's rough, he's not considerate. The old stereotype I used to hear when I was younger is the guy, after he has sex with his wife, he just rolls over and goes to sleep.

And she's finally gotten warmed up and he's just, you know, he's done. I mean, finding out what your wife needs, rather than being focused on what you need in that area, is your duty as a husband. Being sensitive.

Don't be sexually insensitive to her. Obviously, don't ever ridicule her. Well, you can damage her spirit almost permanently if you ridicule her.

And don't criticize her in public, in front of people at all. There can be criticism of a sort, obviously, in the relationship at home, but it better be kind and it should never be public. Again, she's not going to feel safe if she feels like every time she does something wrong, her husband is going to broadcast it to all their friends that she did something wrong.

That's not a safe situation that she'll feel good in. You should humbly listen to her criticisms. And keep short accounts.

Because her criticisms may be correct, you may be doing something wrong. And if there's any sense in which you are doing something wrong, and that's more likely true than not, be quick to say, I was wrong. That's a hard thing for some men to say, because they feel like if I admit I'm wrong, then she's not going to trust my wisdom.

She won't think I'm wise enough to really leave this home. Because I do things wrong. I need to defend what I did and show that I was not wrong, and that she's the one who wronged and criticized me.

You're not going to fool your wife. She knows you're wrong. If you did something wrong,

you're not going to fool her by trying to explain that you weren't.

She'll just figure you're not honest, and you're not safe. You're not a safe guy. You won't admit when you're wrong.

You need to be quick to say, I was wrong. When it's true. And then there's another thing too that a lot of men have found helpful, is don't prolong arguments.

Sometimes there are arguments that have to take place, because the husband and wife don't agree about something. It can be a cordial, loving kind of argument. Basically, they see things differently.

They're both trying to convince the other one that this is the way we should do things, or we should look at things. But if you can't come to agreement quickly, rather than saying, listen, we don't see it the same, I'm the head, we'll do it my way. What I'd recommend that a man do, and I did this a few times, and I was surprised how well it worked with a wife that was not the least bit interested in submission to me, that we'd have arguments, and I'd eventually say, okay, I'm not going to argue with him.

I'll tell you what, I'm going to consider this. Let me pray about this. I'm not seeing it your way right now, but I'll pray about it, and maybe you'll be right.

And I'll get back to you on it tomorrow. Not going to go to bed angry, not going to go to bed with a sense of anger over this argument. Let's just say, we haven't reached a conclusion where we agree yet.

I'm going to consider what you said. Let me make sure I understand what you said. This is what I understand your position to be.

That usually makes a wife feel more comfortable, if he can accurately repeat back to her what she is actually trying to say. Because many wives feel like, he's not hearing me. He's not understanding me.

But if you say, okay, here's what I think you're saying. I'm not quite there, but let me consider. I'll pray about it, and I'll get back to you on this.

It diffuses the argument completely. And you can come back the next day and say, you know, I see it your way now, or not. You can say, you know, I still have not seen it.

But it's not a hot argument anymore. And, you know, what I actually found was so surprising for me, the times I did this, almost every time I did this, my wife came back to me the next day and said, and it wasn't this wife, but it was, because I never had an argument with this wife, but a wife I argued with a lot. This is how I learned to settle it.

Okay, let me think about this. I'll pray about it. I'll get back to you.

Usually she'd get back to me first and say, you know, I think you're right. You were right. I just thought about this more.

And so, but I was prepared to say she was right. You've got to be in there. It says in Ephesians 4, 26, we should not let the sun go down on our wrath.

And in Proverbs 20, in verse 3, it says, you know, it's an honor to stop arguing. Any fool, it says, can start a quarrel. It takes a lot more wisdom and maturity to stop quarreling.

And sometimes when you realize, uh-oh, we're arguing here. This is not pleasant. We're going to have some friction here to say, okay, this is an argument we don't need to be having.

It may be that we have to talk about it again sometime, but this spirit of this argument is not what it needs to be. Let's stop it right now. I'm going to consider, we're unsettled on this.

Your view may be correct. Mine may be correct, but we're going to have to give it more time to think about it, pray about it. Let's get back on this.

That's a, I think the wife then at least feels that you've hurt her and that you're not going to bulldoze her. A wife who feels like her husband's going to bulldoze her, say, okay, I can't win you over, so I'm just going to go forward anyway. You just get in line.

I think a man can do that, but I think he's a fool if he does that. I think his wife is not going to feel safe. I think he'd be unwise to do that.

So in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 26, it says that Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the church by his word. So the husband should be the spiritual leader, able to minister the word to his wife. In many cases in marriages, even when both are Christians, it's the wife who's kind of got more spiritual, more spiritual zeal and stuff than the husband.

A man needs to realize that although it's good to support his family, more important that he can support his wife spiritually and that he becomes as much as possible a master of the word of God, not just that he can quote scripture. That's not always going to be helpful. Sometimes quoting scripture to a wife is, she's going to be feeling like she's beaten down by it.

But basically that you know what the scripture teaches and you know how to apply that and you run your family on the terms that the scripture gives and your wife is learning and being nurtured and sanctified by it. And of course a man has to be an example. You can't just tell his wife this is the way Christians are supposed to be and then he's not doing it himself.

He's got to be the example. Paul said in Ephesians 5.29 that Christ nourishes and

cherishes the church and this is in the context of a man loving his wife as Christ loves the church. And that means that he takes responsibility for her needs.

We've talked about that. It means that he romances her to the best of his ability. I have to admit, notice I didn't put on the notes after romance, I didn't put any specifics.

Partly because I'm not really sure that all women respond to the same kind of romantic things. I'm not really, I'm one of those guys, I'm still trying to figure out what women want in some respects and especially in the area of romance. I think giving flowers is an important thing if it seems spontaneous and not manipulative or something.

I believe writing a note or a card to your wife. My wife's better at that than I am. Whenever I travel alone and I get to where I'm going, I open my pack and she's written me a love note and put it in my luggage.

I always think, I should have done that. I didn't do that when I left. You know, but those are little romantic gestures.

I honestly don't know what big romantic gestures are because I'm not naturally schooled in being romantic. And so I mean, I really think a man, if he doesn't know how to make his wife feel like she's being romantic, he probably should ask her what he should do more. But you need to cherish her.

She's valuable. Sometimes you take her for granted. Okay, she's mine now.

I had to try really hard to win her when I was courting her. But now I got her. Now I can put my energies somewhere else.

No, really, she's as valuable as your wife as she was as a woman you were trying to get to be your wife. You obviously courted her because you valued her. You wanted to spend your whole life with her.

Now you are. You need to value her the same as you did then. Maybe more.

Actually, you should learn to appreciate her more. Gratitude. You know, I have found that the way to feel emotional love towards someone is to have gratitude toward them.

And the only way you... It's a very easy thing to have gratitude. You just have to remind yourself of all the ways you're indebted to her. You take for granted the fact that she cooks, that she's there when you come home, that she keeps the house clean, that she cares for the kids, that she, you know, puts up with you, that she's a team player with you or whatever.

You take it for granted. That's what a wife is supposed to do. So, she does it, great, excellent.

I'd have something to say about it if she didn't, you know. And you kind of take it for granted all the things she does and you think, well, but she's doing all this for you. She could be doing something else for herself.

She could be doing something else with her life. She could be with a better man than you, maybe. Now you might not think that about your wife.

Maybe you think, I'm better than what she deserves. I've never felt that about my wife, especially now. I feel like my wife could do a lot better.

But it makes me really appreciate it. She forsook all others to cleave only to me and your wife did the same thing. That's something you should value and never cease to see.

That is really cherishing. You know, I said, well, I've done the same thing to her, so it's no big thing. Well, the fact that she did it for you is something to value and that she's still doing it.

She's faithful to you and trying to please you in any sense. That's something that some wives don't do and she might otherwise not do it, but she's choosing to do that. And of course, being courteous, being respectful, those are all parts of nourishing and cherishing her.

I'm going to have to stop here because I've gone long and because, you know, no need to go into all these details more. The main thing is to see that what Paul talks about in Ephesians 5, about how Christ treats the church, these are the key points of how a husband must love his wife. And you have the notes now, so I mean, if anything there is something that was helpful to you, you can remind yourself of it looking at the notes later.

But loving your wife is the best way to make yourself happy too. I'm not saying you should do it to make yourself happy. It's just a byproduct.

There's a book that was real popular back in the 70s, a Christian book called Do Yourself a Favor, Love Your Wife. Do you remember that, Tyler? That was a great book. Paul said, you know, he that loves his wife loves himself, in a sense, because you love your wife, generally speaking, she's going to love you back.

If she's not the type that will love you back, she'll at least hate you back less. She may be a woman who would hate you back when you love her, but just think how she'd hate you if you didn't love her. You know, you gotta love them.

God made us to love our wives, and he made it so that we wouldn't just do it because it's a happy situation for both of us, but it's because it's a picture of Christ in the church. And you know, when people see Christian marriages that are not loving, then it really doesn't give them a visual aid of how Christ is. I mean, this is a really special assignment of

husbands, to look like Jesus to the world.

And show what Jesus is like by treating your wife the way Christ treats his church. That's really a privileged assignment. And every husband should take it very seriously, and should repent if they feel like they've not done so.

And my wife thought I should do a song, not just because it's kind of cool to do a song, but there's a particular song a friend of mine wrote that is very much about this. He's died now, and actually, some of the songs I did the other night, he wrote also. He's wrote a lot of songs.

He actually wrote this song called Husbands and Wives. His name was David Siegel. And the sad thing is that he had more failed marriages than I had.

A lot of them were his fault, though. He wasn't always walking with the Lord. But when he was, he was very sincere.

And I remember, I used to play in a band with him. And he was, when he did this song, it really choked him up. Because he wrote it after a few failed marriages, and realizing some of the erroses he'd made.

Anyway, this is Husbands and Wives by David Siegel, the late David Siegel. My turn, it's your turn. I did it yesterday.

Forget it, we can't talk anymore. Anyway. If you can't take it, maybe you'd better leave.

When the Lord hears these things, oh, how he must grieve. Husbands and wives, with tongues as sharp as knives, lay down your pride, let the Lord work inside. Give love a try, let your spirits fly.

The Lord has new lives planned for husbands and wives. Remember back when you kissed goodnight at the door, a kiss don't seem to mean much anymore. But there was the night when the baby was born.

Now there's just cold stares from two hearts that are torn. Husbands and wives, with tongues as sharp as knives, lay down your pride, let the Lord work inside. Give love a try, let your spirits fly.

The Lord has new lives planned for husbands and wives. Husbands and wives, with tongues as sharp as knives, lay down your pride, let the Lord work inside. Give love a try, let your spirits fly.

The Lord has new lives planned for husbands and wives. The Lord has new lives for husbands and wives.