

Hope for the Dense Husband: Your Selfishness Can Work for You

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Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her . . . (Ephesians 5:25)



Okay men, we are to love our wives. Most of us do. At least we *say* we do.

But, the bar for that love to our wives is set so high—so aggravatingly high. Wives, have sympathy for us. God requires us to love you as Christ loved the church! Who can do that?

Notice that the apostle Paul, the author of these words above, tells us to "love" (present tense) as Christ "loved" (past tense). He points first, not to Christ's ongoing love for the true church, but back to His supreme sacrificial act of dying for her. We are to love like that. Impossible!

Certainly, there has never been an act of love to this degree in the history of mankind. The cross was that act of love which presents the Bride, His church, blameless before God, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." It washed and pardoned His church once-for-all, so that all believers will be received into God's eternal world.

We can't accomplish what Christ did when He died. But we are to love our wives *in the same way* that Christ did—by sacrificing for them. That's the point.

Need Motivation?

So, are we men to live in disappointing failure all our lives, constantly falling short of true biblical love for our wives? Who can consistently love like Jesus did when He died? I've often been so disappointed at the inadequate love I exhibit that I can hardly hold my head up. If you are like me, you need motivation.

Merely acknowledging that Christ's sacrificial act of love is our standard will not provide sufficient motivation to love our wives as we should. It may help us for a day or two, but God knows we need more. Thankfully, He has something to say that will make sacrificial love almost unavoidable. How would you like to fulfill

your responsibility as a husband to love sacrificially because you *want* to, not because you *have* to?

Read his logic:

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of Christ. (vs. 28-30)

Here is the way it works: He states that Christ's *ongoing* love for the church is due to the fact that the church has been made His own body. As Christians, we are "members" of Christ—that is, we are His hands, feet, ears, nose, and big toe. For Christ to love us is for Christ to love His own body. His love for Himself is the reason for His unselfish love for you.

Like Christ who lovingly cares for his spiritual Body, the church, we naturally care for our physical body! When we tenderly treat that painful hangnail, we are a living illustration of this astounding truth.

So what does all this have to do with loving our wives?

Simple: Our wife is also our own body, according to the Genesis passage Paul cites in his appeal. He concludes, "He who loves His own wife loves himself."

In fact, the more you love yourself, the more you love her! This principle turns selfishness into love! Because we're experts at loving ourselves, I'm confident that even the worst of us can do this!

Men, God has put the cookies down on the table where we can reach them now. Any old slug who can love himself, can love his wife sacrificially. When you are tempted to demean your wife, or dismiss her needs, say, "I'm doing this to myself!" If our perspective is right, our love will be right! But, the minute you forget that, you will be the same old creep you've always been.

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