

From the Director

A Husband's Greatest Challenge

With God, you can love your wife as Christ loves the Church.

For the married man, one of the most challenging passages in the whole of Scripture is Ephesians 5:25:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Each time I read this passage, I am struck by the utter impossibility of doing what it says. How can I, a sinful human being, love my wife in the same way that Christ, the sinless Lord, loved the church? The call sounds ridiculous, but it can't be, since God doesn't ask us to do the ridiculous or the impossible. So how can a husband do it?

If we are going to live up to the standards of the gospel, we need to begin with a fundamental truth - that same truth that Jesus gave to the disciples after they showed amazement about the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God. Jesus said to them, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27).

The truth is the key to the passage in Ephesians as well. We want to say to the Lord, "Lord, how could I ever love my wife the way you love the church?" His response to us is the same: You

cannot do it on your own ("with man"), but "all things are possible with God."

The only way I can love my wife as Scripture commands is to admit that I cannot do it on my own - I need the grace and power of God. It is only by living in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus that I have the ability to rise above my own human limitations and sinfulness to be able to live the gospel call.

What we sinful human being could never hope to do on our own, Christ makes possible by his death and resurrection. We are given the ability to live a life pleasing to God. We are given the ability to live the high calling of the gospel in relationship to both God and man.

We husbands must acknowledge our bankrupt position and ask Christ to give us the wealth of his power. We should go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I want to love my wife as you loved the church, but it is impossible for me to do what you ask on my own. I want you to live in me in a fuller way and give me your grace and power to love my wife as you command me to and as I want to." This needs to be a husband's frequent prayer. Since we just automatically begin doing things out of our own strength and resources, we need to remind ourselves constantly of where the real strength comes from and learn how to rely more and more on Christ.

Loving your wife is not just a matter of good intentions or positive feels toward her. Love is practical and concrete. We love through our words and our actions. There are many

things we could do to love our wives as Christ loved the church, but I have found that a long list of things to do soon becomes no list at all. It is hard to remember a long live of resolutions and even harder to try and accomplish them all. I would encourage you to begin doing just one thing - God will bring other things to your mind down the road. My one recommendation is that you pray for your wife daily.

To pray for those in your care (both your wife and your children) is one of the most important things you can do for them. In prayer you lift up your wife to the Lord and invoke his blessing on her life. Pray that he will strengthen her spiritually, physically, and emotionally so that she can accomplish all that she has before her that day. Ask Christ to reveal his great love and total commitment to her. Ask the Holy Spirit to give her more of his power to live her life moment by moment in the freedom and peace of the gospel. Pray against the powers of darkness that wage war against her and try to rob her of her inheritance as a daughter of God. Pray for God to send healing and restoration upon her if she is sick or ailing. Also ask the Lord to reveal to you any ways in which you can show his love to your wife.

Prayer is not the only thing we should do to love our wives, but it is one of the best places to start. May God bless your marriage.

*By Randy Cirner.
Reprinted from New Covenant Magazine. February 1990.*



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*Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of
Thy faithful and
enkindle in them
the fire of Thy love.
Send forth Thy Spirit
and they shall be
created and Thou
shall renew the face
of the earth.
AMEN*

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Prayer Vigil
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