

Sermon Outline

ONE FOR THE GUYS

EPHESIANS 5:25-32

I. One for the Guys

II. Good Works

- A. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that our purpose in life is to live out of the Lord Jesus and do good works in the world.
- B. God does not leave us clueless as to what these good works should be. We see an explanation of these good works in chapter 5.
- C. Paul begins chapter 5 with this exhortation: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”
- D. Now that we have been hugged by God in Christ, we are to imitate God the way children imitate their parents.
- E. How do we imitate God? By walking in love.
Eph 5:2: “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
- F. Eph 5:2 is massively important because it determines how we read and apply the rest of Ephesians 5—including the section on household roles and rules!
 - 1. Every good work that God calls us to do in Eph 5 is part of walking in love as God’s beloved children and Christ’s redeemed people.
 - 2. In fact, every good work that God calls us to do is itself created by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who works in us and through us.
- G. The apostle gives us a picture of the life that imitates God’s holy love.
 - 1. When we are walking in love, sexual immorality and all forms of impurity and greed will not be found among the children of God (5:3).
 - 2. Instead of dirty jokes and foolish talk, there will be thanksgiving (5:4).
 - 3. People who practice these things unashamedly demonstrate that they are not of the Kingdom of Christ to begin with. But when we are under the reign of Christ, the Spirit of Christ will work against these sins in our lives. So walking in love means that we should not partake of the behaviors of sinners (v 7), “for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord” (v 8).
 - 4. Since we are light, we are to “walk as children of light” (v 8).
 - a. Walking in love = walking in light.
 - b. God’s love is a holy love that is filled with the light of God.
 - c. God’s love is not to be confused with lust or the “tolerance” that the world equates with love.
 - d. Love does not partner with unbelievers in sin. Instead, verse 11 says that we should expose those sins for what they are.
 - 5. Walking in love means “making the best use of the time, because the days are evil” (v 16). It is live with a purpose, which is “the will of the Lord” (v 17).
 - 6. Since the Lord was the One who gave his own life as a sacrifice for our sins, the One who loved us so greatly, he can be trusted to know what love looks like.

His will is always a loving will. And precisely because it is a loving will, it fights adultery, greed, and all forms of impurity.

7. Instead of being “drunk with wine,” or filled with “debauchery” (or being career advancement, foolish entertainment, or the obsessive pursuit of more money), God’s beloved children are to “be filled with the Spirit” (v 18).
8. The Spirit-filled life looks a lot like this:
Eph 5:19-21: “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
- H. The fact that the household rules come after this lengthy section on imitating God, walking in his holy love, and submitting to one another, tells us one important thing:—THE WORK OF THE WIFE AND HUSBAND IN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD APART FROM THE COMMAND TO WALK IN GOD’S LOVE. (AND WALKING IN GOD’S LOVE IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN HUGGED BY GOD IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.)
- I. There are men who will use Eph 5:22-24 to pressure their wives into submission.
 1. These men read Eph 5:22-24 in isolation from everything else that has been written thus far.
 2. It’s as if they have forgotten that...
 - a. their wives are beloved children of God just as they are.
 - b. Eph 5:21 requires us to submit to one another out of love
 - c. their wives continue to be sisters in Christ even after marriage and are deserving of respect.
 3. But these men “don’t get it.” By beating their wives with Eph 5:22-24, they are already out of step with the Lord in this area of their lives, because everything in this chapter comes under the heading of 5:1: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”
- J. The heart of being a *husband*—indeed, the heart of being a *man*—is to imitate God in his holy love, the kind of love that the Lord Jesus showed to us by his self-offering for our sins.
- K. Implications:
 1. If your practice of headship at home does not feel like love to your wife and your children, then something is wrong.
 2. If your practice of leadership in the workplace does not look like love or feel like love to your subordinates, male and female, something is amiss.
 3. If your functional idea of masculinity (what it means to be a man) does not have holy love at its center, your priorities are out of place.
- L. True husbanding and true masculinity overflows with love, because God is love.

III. Real Men Love

- A. So now that we know that:
 1. God created us in Christ for good works;
 2. These good works are an imitation of God;
 3. Submission is one of the good works that the Christian is called to do;
 4. Submission is to be the Christian’s default posture toward his or her fellow children of God, whether male or female,

- we have to ask: What does this look like in the life of the family? More to the point: What does this look like for Christian husbands and for men in general?
- B. The Lord Jesus says through his apostle:
Eph 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”
- C. Since v 25 comes after the call to love (5:1-2) and to submit to one another (5:21), I believe that the husband’s love for his wife is the way that he submits to her as a brother in Christ.
- D. Why is love a form of submission? Because love requires us to place our interests, pleasures, comforts, interests, even life goals, under the wellbeing of the one whom we love.
1. Klyne Snodgrass: “In the final analysis, submission and agape love are synonymous” (*Ephesians* (NIVAC), 296).
 2. Love is the way that the husband, as head of the home, submits to his wife as a sister in Christ, as a fellow-heir of the blessings in Christ Jesus.
- E. Also, men are to love their wives “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (v 25).
1. This simple statement reminds Christian men that they are not the ultimate lords of their homes.
 2. Because they are in Christ, they too, like their wives, are under the rule of Christ.
 3. The way they conduct their husbanding has to be an obedient, believing, repentant response to the Gospel that was explained in Eph 2:
Eph 2:4-5: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...”

IV. The Gospel (Again)!

- A. The Gospel makes a reappearance from vv 26-27.
- B. This reminds us that in any marriage, Christ is the central focus, not even the husband.
1. Each husband is merely a symbol of Christ.
 2. A husband is “good” to the extent that he connects the members of his family by word and deed to the life-giving Lord.
 3. Husbands are to love their wives like Christ loves his Church.
 4. Christ “gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”
- C. The Gospel is the Love story of all love stories.
1. The divine Husband comes to the rescue of his adulterous, cheating wife.
 2. But instead of dumping her (them), lo and behold, he dies for her sins.
 3. He takes her debts upon himself and sets her free from his own righteous anger.
 4. The divine Husband places himself *under* the interests of his own people.
 5. This amazing act of condescension and love goes against the way of the world, which is for kings to be served by others and to simply punish whoever gets in their way.

6. But this is the highest revelation of the heart of God. God is a God who is biased toward love, toward mercy. This is our King. This is our Savior. And he has saved us so that we might become loving and merciful as he is.

V. Gospeled Husbands

- A. With that blazing picture of the Gospel set before us, the Scripture comes back to the husbands. Verse 28: “*In the same way* husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.”
- B. The implicit assumption here is that the Church is the Body of Christ.
 1. Just as Christ loves his sinful, dysfunctional, still-somewhat-carnal Church as his own body, his own Self; men should love their wives as their own bodies, their own selves: “He who loves his wife loves himself” (v 28).
 2. How you treat your wife is a reflection on you. If you neglect her, treat her poorly, and are harsh toward her, it reflects on you.
- C. The Scripture gives us this beautiful declaration.
Eph 5:29-30: “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,³⁰ because we are members of his body”

VI. Markers

- A. All that we have seen thus far is very helpful in constructing a picture of what a “real man” (defined in Christ) looks like.
- B. A man who is being remade in the likeness of Christ is marked by love (Eph 5:2, 25).
 1. God-like, Christ-imitating love—that’s the heartbeat of a real man who is being formed in Christ.
 2. If your operating concept of manhood (gained from your own father, grandfather; or lauded by your mother, grandmother, or other women) is simply someone who dominates people, who seeks revenge on his opponents, or cannot cry or feel the brokenness of the world—that that is not a Biblical picture.
 3. Instead, men who are like God are men who love.
 - a. They love boldly, freely, generously, self-sacrificially, and without apology.
 - b. They are energized by love.
 - c. They don’t merely love people who are above them in rank or people who are “strong” or accomplished.
—They love those who are seemingly below them by earthly estimation. Depending on the society in which we live, these people may be their wives, their kids, their less-educated employees.
 4. Real men imitate the heavenly Father who has loved them so much. Love is a good work that God calls men to do.
- C. A man who is being remade in the likeness of Christ is marked by holiness (Eph 5:26).
 1. If your functional understanding of manhood places a higher value on earthly success, reputation, and physical strength over holiness, you don’t get it.
 2. Men who are being renewed in the image of God love holiness.
 3. They are concerned for holiness, because they have been made holy by God and separated from this world to live and serve forever in the house of the eternal Father.

4. For that reason, they are concerned to provide a holy environment in their homes for their wives and their children.
 5. “Real men” lead their families into greater holiness by speaking God’s Word to them, over them. They point their families not to themselves, but to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the One who sanctifies us by his Word and Spirit.
- D. A man who is being remade in the likeness of Christ is marked by nourishing and cherishing (Eph 5:29).
1. The words “nourishing” and “cherishing” imply attentiveness, tenderness, love, and affection. The word for “cherish” means “to keep warm.”
 2. Men who are being refashioned into the likeness of Christ show affection, and are committed to nourishing, feeding, strengthening, empowering, and dignifying their spouses.
 3. When we men become more like Christ, we become...
 - less aloof and more concerned for others.
 - less apathetic and more able to sympathize with the pain of others (Rom 12:15).
 - less harsh and more affectionate and attentive to others.
 4. A man who is growing up in Christ recognizes that he cannot be harsh toward his wife, because Christ is not harsh with his Bride.
 5. This kind of man is captivated by the sheer goodness of Christ toward him—and he realizes that he cannot but love as Christ loved.
- E. Summary: Three cardinal elements of God’s kind of man include:
1. Love
 2. Holiness
 3. Nourishing and cherishing

VII. Gospels Masculinity

- A. We should not accept any vision/idea of masculinity that prizes conquest, control, aloofness, or lack of emotion.
- B. Such an ideal of masculinity does not agree with Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”
- C. Think long and hard, brothers! If we men define ourselves primarily or predominantly in terms of competition and conquest, what are we going to do in heaven where there are no more wars to fight and only people to love? Do we therefore lose our manhood, their masculinity?
- D. The headship of a husband (and other expressions of leadership) should be like the headship of our Lord Jesus.
- E. The headship of Jesus is a headship that...
 - *gives* (disproportionately) more than it takes
 - *empowers* rather than depletes
 - *forgives* rather than condemns
 - *heals* rather than hurts
 - *sanctifies*—and does not defile!
- F. Men who walk in this way of holy love may be called “weaklings” or “sissies” by the men and women of the world. But since the world is under the prince of the power of the air, and lording it over others is the typical form of leadership, perhaps we

should seriously re-consider whether we should let the world tell us what wholesome, mature masculinity ought to be.

- G. Men who need to conquer and be right all the time are greatly insecure.
 - 1. They need to be pointed to Jesus Christ as their true life.
 - 2. If they have Jesus, they have everything.
 - 3. There is no need to tear others down. Instead, they can give their lives away to build others up for the glory of God.

VIII. One for the Sisters

- A. Sisters, wives—all these words also apply to you.
- B. For wives:
 - 1. Since you are a helper to your husband, help him become this kind of man God wants him to be.
 - 2. Of course, your husband is responsible for his own actions. Just as he cannot “make” you respect him, you cannot “make” him the loving husband that we see in Ephesians 5. That is the Lord’s work.
 - 3. But you can do the next best thing: You can become the kind of wife that will encourage him in the direction of Christ.
- C. For sisters seeking marriage:
 - 1. Choose carefully the man you want as a husband.
 - 2. If your own heart is not attuned to God’s priorities, don’t be surprised if you get a man whose heart is not attuned to God’s priorities as well.
 - 3. If your taste in men is largely shaped by the priorities of the word; i.e., if you are primarily looking for a man who is ambitious, physically strong, and has great earning capacity—do not be surprised if you get hurt in your own marriage.
 - 4. Your heavenly Father is showing you in Eph 5 the kind of man you should be looking out for.
 - 5. Do not value a bigger bank account more than being truly loved.

IX. The One Real Man

There is only one Man who is “Real,” only one Man who fulfils his calling of son, brother, father, and husband in absolute conformity to God’s Law. This Man is the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Unlike the first Adam who blamed his wife for his failure, King Jesus the Second Adam pays for his wife’s sins—and gives her (us) his perfect life, his perfect record of holiness and obedience. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). When God sees us in Jesus, he sees holy men and lovely women made holy and lovely in his Son. Because of Jesus, we have a new desire to be the new men and women who bring God’s loveliness into the world. And because of Jesus, our failures are not fatal nor are they final, because we are already perfect in him. So brothers and sisters, let this be the last word to you: Your heavenly Father really does love you—a lot. He does not hold your sins against you. He loves you with an everlasting love in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the New Human Being. Put your hopes in him.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
3. What are some truths that we must accept before we can properly appropriate and apply the family rules in Eph 5:22-23?
4. Why would the instruction for husbands to love their wives be radical in those days?
5. Why is love a version of submission?
6. Based on v 25, how are men to love their wives? What role does Christ play in the husband's idea/ideal of headship?
7. What are three cardinal marks of a man who is growing up in Christ?
8. How do you inculcate in your son(s) a greater value for these markers of mature manhood in Christ?
9. How does Eph 5:25-32 apply to sisters? How can Christian women appropriate these words for themselves?
10. Think: In what ways (if any) are we (men and women) complicit in perpetuating selfish, cruel, hyper-competitive, unloving—and ultimately distorted—versions of masculinity?
11. Who is the One Man who did it all for us, making it possible for us to be Real Men and Women?