

Loving in 4-Wheel Low (Husbands)

Blueprint: God's Design for the Family

Ephesians 5:25-33

If you have your bibles, you can go to Ephesians chapter 5, that's where we ended last week. We talked about this divine dance of love and respect, and then we talked a lot to the ladies last week, how the wives are to respect and submit to their own husbands. Then this week, we're going to look at how husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. So Ephesians chapter 5, if you'll go there, I'll read the text in just a moment.

I don't know if you're like me, but YouTube has become one of my best friends because anytime I need to know how to do something that I don't know how to do, I go to YouTube and somebody, somewhere, is doing what I need to be done. So just the other day I was driving my Kawasaki Mule over to my parent's house and it just died in the middle of their driveway. I couldn't figure out what in the world is wrong with this thing. It sat in my parents driveway for about three days, finally, I towed it into my garage and I'm thinking I've got to figure out how to fix this. So I go to the manual and I'm turning page after page in this manual. And I don't do good with manuals because I don't want to take the time to read. I don't want to take time to read step by step what could be wrong with it, so I decided I'm going to close the manual and I went to my best friend YouTube and I typed in *problems with Kawasaki mules starting*. Before I knew it, I'm standing over the engine of my Kawasaki Mule with my cellphone in the seat watching another guy in his garage somewhere else showing me what to do to get my Kawasaki Mule to start. Maybe it's fuel pump, maybe it's the relay, maybe it's this, maybe it's that, and I'm taking various things off, testing various things and the entire time I'm watching someone else do. I'm looking at this example, looking at this video, for me to figure out how to do what I need to do because that's the way I love to

learn things. That's how I love to be shown how to do things. Don't tell me, don't give me a list, don't write it out for me in instructions, show me what I need to do. Let me see it and then I can try to mirror that and do what needs to be done. I think this is just probably something about us guys. Like we don't like reading instructions, we need a picture. Give me a picture and then I'll try to figure out on my own best based on that picture.

I think Paul knew this instinctively about husbands because as we go to Ephesians chapter 5, what Paul's not going to do is he is not going to say hey husbands, here's the forty-eight different ways you need to love your wife. He doesn't give us this list. He doesn't write a whole bunch of stuff on here's how to do it, and here's what it looks like, and here's this and here's that. Instead, what Paul does is he gives us a picture. He doesn't give us a list of rules, but instead he gives us a person to look at. He gives us this beautiful picture. He says hey, love your wife, and here's the picture. The picture, the image that he gives us is the image of a cross. Here's how you love your wife. You love her like this, and it's a picture of the cross of Christ. If Paul were to pull up a YouTube video and say hey guys, tune in to this YouTube video, here's how you love your wife, it's a picture of Jesus Christ walking up a hill with a cross on His back, and as He's walking up to Golgotha, when He gets there it is Him being stapled to a cross, and then where He hung and bled and died. That's the reel, that's the video, that's the image that we, as husbands; Paul says you want to know how you love your wife, here's not a whole bunch of rules of what to do and what not to do, here's a picture, here's a video, here's a person to look to and His name is Jesus Christ. It's the cross of Christ. It's the gospel. The way Jesus loved you is the way you are to now go and love your wife. So let's dig into, let's look at this image; let's look to this person that Paul is going to point us to in Ephesians chapter 5.

If you have your bibles, go ahead and stand, if not the Word is going to be on the screen, but look with me in verse 25. Last week we addressed the wives, and now we're talking to the husbands. Hear what Paul says.

Scripture

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 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. In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

(Prayer)

Father, we pray right now over us, particularly as husbands, that we would follow this Word, that we would truly love our wives like Christ loved the church. God, help us as a church to have marriages that are unique and distinct because they are gospel centered. They're through the gospel and for the gospel because we want Your name to be made famous everywhere we go. So help us to do this. Help us to apply this to our life. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen. You guys can be seated.

So I don't know what you're thinking at this point, but I can just imagine if I were a wife and I'm just hearing what Paul says to the husbands, I'm thinking really, that's what you're going to have the husband do? Isn't he kind of getting off a little easy? I mean, Paul, you've told me I'm supposed to submit and honor and respect my own husband, so I'm supposed to submit to my husband, I'm supposed to follow him, and he's just supposed to love me? Like, that's it? He's supposed to love me. That's the only thing you're going to give him; he's supposed to love me? Isn't that exactly why we got married? I mean shouldn't that be the most natural and most easy

thing for him to do? Of course he loves me. How could this be the command that the husband gets? I'm supposed to submit, but my husband's supposed to just love me? Well, that seems like we get off the hook very easy. But the reason is because often we have a wrong view of what love is, because we think of love as the Hallmark Channel. Because we have these Hallmark movies that come out, especially around the holidays, and the Hallmark movie are all the same. It's the same plot. You have a girl who's supposed to get married to this guy, and it turns out guy is not the one she's supposed to be with. But there's always this other guy who's in her vicinity, maybe it's a best friend, maybe it's someone she used to know, but eventually something happens and that guy realizes that he is wildly in love with this girl. He falls for her. He's got this uncontrollable desire for her, the movie plays out where now he is moving mountains to marry this girl because it's this uncontrollable feeling of romance he has no control over, and then it leads to marriage. That's sort of what we believe love is. It's this uncontrollable feeling that when it happens to you, you've sort of fallen. You're taken by surprise and then the most natural thing you can do is pursue that person. It's easy. It comes natural, and that's how we think about love. It's always this feeling, this fuzzy, this tingling; so of course, you're going to go after your wife, of course, you're going to do those things. Then we get into marriage, and then that's our view of love, it's just this fuzzy, tingly feeling where you uncontrollably pursue the other person. And then, what happens when that fades? Well, what we think is we've fallen out of love. All of a sudden, love's not there anymore, so we divorce, we separate, and we go find someone else that we have that uncontrollable feeling that we really don't have control over, but we just fall for them and then the same thing goes on and on. That's usually our view of love. It's this thing that just happens to us.

So for the ladies in here, you're thinking so God, You're telling my husband to just do that thing that comes natural to him anyways? But we see if Scripture that's not how God defines love. Love includes that, love is romantic in the sense of husband and wives, but love is not merely that. Love is not just this fuzzy feeling. It's not just this thing we fall into and then pursue because we can't really control it, but love is actually much deeper than that. Love is actually this covenant relationship where it says I

am going to love you. I'm going to promise to always love you because you are mine, a forever, never-ending, covenant kind of love. That's what Paul is talking about here. So wives, he's not telling your husband to just do whatever comes natural to him. Whenever you feel like loving her, go for it, when you don't, just breakup or move on. No, Paul is saying, remember the covenant that you've made with your wife, and you love her always with a never-ending, never stopping sort of love. Why? Because you've made a covenant with her. That's exactly how God loves us because the example Paul's going to give is love your wives as Christ has loved the church. So we've got to know what God's love is if we're going to understand how we're supposed to love our bride. So I think one of the most vivid pictures in the Old Testament is by the prophet, Hosea. So we go back to the prophet, Hosea, and we see God does something. See, I think Israel thought God loves us because we're really lovable. I mean, we're really good, we're really cute, and God just loves us because it's the most natural thing for God to love us. We're really good people, we shine before all the other people of the world. He chose us, so we must be better, we must have His affection differently. He's got fuzzy, warmy feelings towards us. We've always don't right; that's why God loves us. But what God does through the prophet, Hosea, is He's going to tell Israel, no, His love is much deeper than that. He doesn't just love them because they're lovable, or because they earned it or deserved it, He loves them because He loves them. He loves them through a deep covenant, through a deep promise.

So the story of Hosea, God shows up to his province and says Hosea, I want you to go and marry a prostitute. That's vivid language. So he goes and he marries this girl named Gomer, and now he's entered into a covenant relationship with her. The problem with Gomer, she doesn't stop. She continues her waywardness. She continues to have other lovers while she's married to her new husband, Hosea. Here's what God says in Hosea 3:1, "And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods..." So Hosea marries this girl, not the kind of girl he wants to take home to mom, but he marries her and now she's running off with other men. She's going with different lovers. Then

now she's got herself in a situation where she's actually sold herself into slavery to another man who's taken advantage of her. And now she's on this block being sold as a slave, and God says Hosea, I want you to go and buy back your bride. So Hosea goes back, and with his own money, he buys back Gomer as his bride. He takes her back and he loves her as his wife. God said, Israel, that's my love for you. That's how I love you. You have continually went after other gods. You have continually made yourself unlovable. You have continually not earned nor deserved My love, but I have loved you all the way through. Why? Because My love is not a fuzzy feeling based on how good you are doing. My love is based on a covenant. I made a promise, and I have set you apart, and I am going to love you even despite you is what God tells His people, Israel.

So that's the kind of love we're talking about. We've got to get this deeper meaning of love. It's not just a cultural feeling; it is this deep covenant that we make, and through that covenant, we make a choice and that is to love. And of course, we see that in the gospels. We see that in Jesus' love for the church. Because we sometimes forget, well of course, Jesus loves me. I mean, just look at me. Of course He did. I mean, I'm pretty great. I've always been pretty great. He's kind of lucky to have me. But what we see in verses like Romans 5:8 is this, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." So, when did Jesus love us? While we were still sinners, while we were rebellious, while we were His enemies, while we were running away from Him and actually hating Him through loving ourselves and becoming our own Lord and God, what did Jesus do? While we were doing that, Jesus loved us and He died for us; not because we deserved it, not because we earned it, but because He chose to love us. And when He chose to love us, He made a promise that He would forever love us. That's the kind of love Paul is pulling from when he says husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, in that kind of a way; not when it feels good, not when you want to, not when she earns it, not when she deserves it, not when she's doing everything right, not when she's respecting you like she should. No husband, you chose your wife, now love your choice. Love her. That's what you are to do. "But she's..." Love her. Why? Because it's based on the love that Jesus Christ

has displayed for you. Because Jesus has loved you, now you go and love your wives.

See wives, Paul hasn't let us off easy here. Paul's actually given us something very hard and difficult to live out, and that is not just love you when we feel like it, but love you the way God loves us. We get to display that. Now, I want to ask those two questions that I asked of the wives, and that's why should we do this, and then how in the world are we going to do this as guys? So why? Why, husbands, should we love our wives like Christ loved the church? Why can't we just love them in a Hallmark way, where it's just when she's good I'll love her; when she's not, I'll be distant and cold and I'll pull away to show her I'm not pleased? Why do I have to always and forever love her the way God loves me? Well, 'the why' is ultimately because of the gospel, because you are representing something. You're not just doing something; you're showing something. You're showing your co-workers, your buddies, your kids, her, all the people around you, you're showing people by the way you love your bride this is how Jesus loves me. You get to show something. So 'the why' is because of the glory of God. So it starts with this desire to want to glorify God through your marriage, glorify God with your life. If you want to do that, then husbands love your wife as Christ loved the church, because you're the picture. People are looking at you and they're getting a sense of how Jesus loves His bride, the church, by the way you love your bride. You're not just doing something, but you're showing something. So 'the why' is ultimately is for the glory of God.

I want to ask the question, now, how? I mean, how in the world can we love like Hosea loved Gomer? How in the world can we love like God loved Israel? How can we love like Jesus loved the church? How in the world are we going to do this? How do we love our wives even when we might not feel like it, even when we think they might not deserve it? How do we continue to always pursue them with love like Jesus loves us? It's the same answer that we gave to the wives last week, and Paul answers it in the verses before this where he says don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. In other words, this is only something that you can do if you are filled with the Spirit of God and walking in the Spirit. You can't do

this in your own power, you can't do this in your flesh; you will fail. If you try to just muster up enough strength, if today you're going to say you know what, I'm going to just grab my boots and I'm going to go and love my wife with everything I can, and I'm going to do this in my own power and my own flesh. You will fail, because in your flesh you'll always love yourself more than your wife. You'll always want to serve yourself more than you want to serve your wife. So what Paul's going to say is what you have to do is love her in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This January, we went on a mission trip to Nicaragua. As most of you know, you've seen videos, you've seen footage, we went to the coffee farms; we went to share the gospel with these people. It was incredible. But one of the neat things about the trip is we had to get from the airport to the mountains, and the only way to get there was by 4x4 pickup trucks. So we actually had to rent 4x4 trucks, and since we didn't have enough people to drive, I got to drive this Nissan 4x4 diesel manual transmission truck, and my dad got to drive this Toyota Helix, manual transmission diesel 4x4 truck. So here, me and dad are driving in Nicaragua, which is pretty crazy. They drive a lot different than we do, and it was a lot of fun. We're having this three-hour trek to Jinotega to these coffee farms, and when we get there, we do ministry. About halfway through the week, our plans change at the end of one evening, and we don't get to go where we're supposed to go, so what we get to do is have a little fun. So we're in Jinotega, and you're in this valley and you're looking up over these mountains. I mean, these mountains are everywhere around you, thousands of feet tall, these beautiful mountains. On the top of one was this cross. And Adam, the guy over the ministry, says there is a way you can actually take 4x4 trucks and go up to the top of this mountain. It's absolutely beautiful, but you can only get there if you have a 4x4 truck because it is literally straight up and down. So we're like, this is going to be awesome! So when we have an off day, we're like, let's go to the cross. So here we are, Garland is leading in his 4x4 truck, Dad's behind him, Oscar is driving his truck behind him, and I'm in the very back. So we start going on these windy dirt roads, Michael is in the passenger seat. So here we are; we're going around these dirt roads. I think Keith was in front in Garland's truck, and we're going and we start to get some elevation so we put the

trucks in 4-wheel drive. So here we are, we're going in 4-wheel drive in first gear, and we begin to climb. I'm talking straight up and down this mountain. I mean, it is a sheer cliff that we are climbing the side of. So I'm in the very back and I'm watching Oscar, who's watching Dad, who's watching Garland. We're all kind of going up this mountain together. All of a sudden, I noticed that we're getting halfway up this mountain and Oscar puts his brakes on, like halfway up this hill climb! I'm thinking what in the world are you doing! I'm at the bottom, Oscar has just put on his brakes, and I notice right above him, my dad in his truck has just put his brakes on. I'm thinking why in the world would you put your brakes on while you're on the side of a mountain! Here they are mountain climbed; to the right of them is a cliff, probably a thousand feet straight down. So I'm looking at Oscar and all of a sudden Oscar had his brakes on, and now he's got to go just a little bit more to get on the top of the crest. So Oscar begins to try to get it to go; he's in first gear, he's giving this little diesel all that it's got, but all it's doing is spinning out. It's jumping. It's lurching, and it's spinning out. I can see my dad's truck doing the exact same thing, and Dad's trying to back down this hill; now everyone's gotten out of the trucks. Everyone's trying to hold the trucks against the side of this mountain because if they don't make this, they're going to fall off the cliff. It's like this is not a good zone to be in. All of a sudden, my sister comes running down the hill, coming up to me and Michael, "Are you guys ok? Are you guys ok?" I'm like, "Yeah, I'm fine! Like, what's the problem? This is an easy climb. Like, me and Michael have been doing great!" We've been going up it, but here they are completely stuck on the side of this mountain. And so, we're finally getting out of the truck and we go up, and Oscar finally makes it to the crest. I just put it in first gear and easily make it up to where Oscar is. I mean, simple. Don't even spin out one time, and Oscar's kind of looking at me like how did you do that? And then, so we get there and here's Dad and Oscar, and I get out, and Dad says, "I don't know what was wrong! My truck just wouldn't go up the mountain. Something's wrong with my truck; it didn't have power! I had the gas all the way down, and it just wouldn't go, but Garland's truck in front of me; perfect. Never spun out, easily crawled up to the top of the mountain, so my truck must be wrong. Something is wrong with my tires, my engine, my

truck; something happened and I don't know what it is." And Oscar said the same thing, "Something is wrong with my truck." I say, "Well Dad, did you have it in 4-wheel low?" And he said, "What?" I said, "Did you have it in 4-wheel drive low?" He says, "Well, no. I had it in 4-wheel drive." I said, "Dad, there's a big difference between 4-wheel drive and 4-wheel low." He said, "Well, what do you mean?" I said, "Well, 4-wheel drive is like if you get in a little mud puddle, like in a field somewhere. 4-wheel low is for like climbing the side of a house." Because if you put it in 4-wheel low and you put it in first gear, that thing will climb up the side of a house, because what 4-wheel low does, it pulls all of the torque down to that very low setting, and it puts power to all four wheels at the same time. What happens is you begin to crawl up a hill. No more spinning out, no more trying to go fast; instead, in first gear, 4-wheel low, you can just set back and the thing works like it was designed to do. So here's Garland in front of Dad, perfectly going up this straight up mountain, not spinning one single time. Here I am in the back, going up this mountain, not spinning one single time. Here's my dad and Oscar, who can't move an inch. They're spinning out, they're stalling an engine; they're trying to keep their trucks from falling off the cliff. Why was that? Because they didn't know there was this little button that goes past 4-wheel drive, and if you turn it, it kicks into a whole other power range. It kicks it into 4-wheel low.

Here's what Paul wants to say to you guys. In your marriage, if you are trying to love your wife in your own power, it's not going to work. You can give it everything you have, you can hold the gas absolutely to the bottom of the floor; you can do everything right, but guess what. You're only going to spinout. That's all you're going to do, because it's in the flesh. Your flesh can't truly love her like she needs to be loved. The only way you're going to do this is if you realize oh, there's another button. There's another gear, and that is called 4-wheel low, and that is called life in the Holy Spirit. If you will submit yourself to the Holy Spirit, if you'll walk in Him, guess what? Yes, you will still have to push the gas, but it's a whole lot different. Now, you will not only have the ability, but you will have the power to love your wife like you're supposed to. And guess what? It will be yes, an uphill climb, but an uphill climb that you can make. Why? Because you're not doing it in your own power, you're doing it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So guys, if we're going to love our wives like Christ loved the church, it has to be in 4-wheel low. It has to be in the power of the Holy Spirit where we can have traction and truly love her like she needs to be loved.

So what does this actually look like? I mean, if we're a guy and we're going to turn it in 4-wheel low, and we're going to say ok, I'm going to walk in the Spirit, I'm going to love her in Christ and through Christ, what does that love look like? We're going to see four things, and I know you ladies are like hold on; you gave us like seven things. You ladies can handle more, right, we need probably three things, but I went ahead and thought you know what? We're going to try four. Here are four things from the text that we see.

1. Our love for our brides should be a sacrificial love.

So in 4-wheel low, what does your love look like? It is a sacrificial love. Here's what we see in the text. It says that Jesus gave Himself up for the church. He says love your wives like Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. So what does it look like to love your wife like Jesus loves the church? First of all, He gave Himself up for her. He sacrificed for her. He gave up His life for her. So if you're going to love your wife in 4-wheel low, if you're going to love her in the Spirit for the glory of Christ, it means that you give up your life for her. Just think about that. Think of that little statement. Imagine if you applied that into your marriage. Ok, here's what my love is going to look like. I'm going to give up myself for her. I'm going to give up my desires, I'm going to give up my wants, and my needs and what I'm going to do is I am going to give up myself for her. I'm going to sacrifice for her. I'm going to always look to her needs rather than my needs. My love for her is going to be marked with sacrifice. It's going to be that picture of Golgotha. It's going to be cross-shaped is going to be my love for her. I'm going to love her through the cross. I'm going to love her and display the cross for her. See, you're leading for her sake, not your own. See, Paul told your wives to follow you. Wives, follow your own husband. Why are they following you? Not for you, they're following you because you're leading for her. I mean, it's this beautiful picture of a gospel-centered marriage. The wife is following the husband and the husband is leading for the wife's sake. It's this beautiful circle; both are

serving the other, both want the best interest of the other. See, a good leader, what does a good leader do? He serves, or she serves those who are under their authority. Leadership is supposed to bless those who are following, and that's the picture of godly leadership that is given to the husbands. He says lead her in a way that is going to sacrifice for her, that is going to bless her. So I just want to ask you husbands; when it comes to loving your wife, is your love marked by sacrifice, or selfishness? I mean, those two are completely different. Is your relationship with your wife marked with selfishness or sacrifice? If it's selfishness, you're spinning on the mountain. You don't have the power of God working in your life, and you need to lean into the Holy Spirit because what she needs is your sacrifice, not your selfishness. So sacrifice for her.

2. The second way we love it's a sanctifying love.

Paul says in the text that what Jesus is doing as He gives Himself up for His bride, the church, is that He is actually sanctifying her, that He might sanctify her and wash her with the Word, that He might present her to Himself in splendor and holiness, that Jesus is sanctifying His bride, the church, and our love should be sanctifying towards our wife, that it should be a sanctifying love. Now that word, sanctify, is to be made holy, it's to progress in holiness, and holiness is to set apart. I think what Paul is saying is husbands, here's what you need to do. You need to set your wife apart. You need to set her apart. You need to see her as special and unique and different in your life. Set her apart, that your love, the way you love her should set her apart from everyone else in your life. And in setting her apart, your love should encourage her own sanctification. Now how does that work, exactly? So there's a little trouble with this thinking through this. Ok, Jesus is sanctifying the church, but how am I going to sanctify my wife? See, Jesus actually has the power to sanctify my wife; I have zero power to sanctify anybody. That's God's job. God is the one who sanctifies through the Holy Spirit. It's not me as a husband, so husbands, we are to love our wives in a way that is sanctifying them, but we have no power in ourselves to sanctify her at all. So what exactly are we supposed to do with this text? I think it's important to remember that husbands, we represent Christ, but husbands, at the same time, we are also the church.

So we represent Jesus and His love for the church, but guess what. We also are the church along with our bride, who represents the church; that Jesus is our Savior. We are the church that Jesus is loving us as well, and He is sanctifying us as well. So both husband and wives need sanctification. This is not just saying husbands sanctify our wife because you don't need any. No, we both need sanctification. One of the beauties of marriage is this goal of sanctification, so how is a husband going to uniquely do this? Well, I think here's what it looks like. Your love is reminding your wife constantly of the gospel, that she has your love based on grace, not because she deserves it, but it is grace. It's unconditional love that is given to her as a gift because that's how Jesus loves her. But at the same time, when you're loving her like that, and when it's hard to love her like that, when you feel like I don't know if she deserves my love but you're giving it to her anyways, guess what. You're also reminding yourself of the gospel. You're reminding yourself, oh yeah, that's how Jesus loves me. He doesn't love me when I earn it. He doesn't love me when I deserve it. His love is unconditional. He is always giving me grace and mercy, so when I love my wife even in the hard days, I'm reminding myself of the gospel and that causes me to be so thankful for Jesus's love for me, and His love is sanctifying me as that same love display to her is sanctifying her. So the way we love our wives is not drawing attention to us; it's drawing attention to Jesus. It's reminding our wives this is what the gospel is. It's reminding ourselves this is what the gospel is, and it is a love that is helping sanctify both of us. We're showing each other what the love of Christ is like.

3. Number three is a nourishing love.

It's not just sacrificing; it's also a nourishing love. Here's what it says in verse 28, "In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church because we are members of His body." Now notice Paul makes a switch here. At first, he says husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church, now he's changing the imagery; he's changing the picture. He's saying now, husbands, love you wives as your own bodies. So he's giving us a

different picture. Now we're supposed to picture our bodies. We're supposed to love our wives as our bodies. Why? Because she is, in a spiritual way, our body. Do you know what I've noticed? That guys typically love their bodies. I mean, we just do. We love our bodies. You might be thinking I don't think I love my body. Well, let's take a little test. When your stomach begins to growl in a few minutes, maybe a few hours, what are you going to do? When it starts growling and you get that hunger pain, are you going to be like nah, stop; quit nagging me! No, what are you going to do? You're going to go and eat, right? When your body has a need, the head gets to work, right? When you start getting a little hungry, when you start getting that hunger pain, what do you do? You go and eat. We're very good at loving our bodies. When we get thirsty, what do we do? We go and we drink. Why? Because our body has a need, so our head gets to work. It says hey, there's a problem, I'm going to go fix this. So we tend to love our bodies. When they have a need, what do we do? We go and we meet that need. We nourish our bodies. I see this is me and my wife. We think different. Like when we go on a trip, my wife has this whole bag that's a separate bag, and it's called her bathroom bag. If you girls, you know, go on a trip, you probably have a bathroom bag. It is full of product. It is full of cosmetics. When I go on a trip, I have like, toothpaste, deodorant, and soap. That's my toiletries bag, like three items. For Katie, it's a whole deal. It's a whole bag. Why? Because she is noticing and thinking about what is my presentation and my face going to be. I could care less about that. But for me, in my bag is probably going to be some gym shorts, probably going to be some running shoes, because at some point during the trip, I'm going to go for a jog. See, for us guys, we don't have a lot of product maybe under our sink, but we have garages filled with old mountain bikes, old road bikes, a Bow flex, barbells, a watch that tells us our heartrate, the heartrate monitor that we strap on. See, us guys, we're constantly thinking about how am I going to keep this body in shape? Even if we're not, at least how am I going to feed it, because we tend to love and notice our bodies? And Paul is taking that imagery and he's saying hey, husband, in the same way, you should be loving your wife. In the same way, when your wife has a need, when your body has a need then the head needs to get to work. The head needs to notice that. The

head needs to see there is a need that needs taking care of. Notice what he does. He says all husbands love their bodies, and then he said no one ever hated his own flesh. So he changes from body to flesh. I think he does that intentionally because he tells us, hey, your wife is your body. But then in the next line, he goes and tells us that in marriage we become one flesh. So there's this play on body and flesh. She's your body; she's also your flesh. Hey, you love your body, but guess what. You also love your flesh, and that is because you have a wife who's been spiritually united with you. She is your body and flesh. You should love her. Look to the needs of your wife. Nourish her. What does this look like, practically? I think 1 Peter 3:9 gives us some instruction, or 3:7, when Peter would tell us to understand and honor. Those are two things husbands need to do with their wives. You need to understand your wife, understand her needs, understand the things to notice and look. Maybe you sense hey, my wife needs a date night because we haven't connected lately. That's your job. The body has a need; the head gets to work. I'm going to start planning a getaway with my wife because she needs this. Maybe she's come home from a long day and she's spent, and you say hey, I'm going to give you a break. I'm going to take the kids. Maybe you come home and she's had the kids all day, and you say, you know what, I'm not going to go for a jog, I'm going to just stay here and I'm going to let you enjoy some free time. Maybe she just needs time with a good book, time with a good friend, and you are sensing that, and you are giving that to her. You are nourishing that. You're hearing a stomach growl and you're saying it's time to eat, you need to be fed, and you're serving your wife, you are nourishing her, that your love is building her up. It is meeting her needs. You're understanding and honoring and watching, and constantly taking inventory; does my body have a need? If it does, this head is going to get to work because that's what the gospel does. You're constantly seeking to nourish your wife because you want her to be so full of your love that the world can see the glory of Christ through her. So it is a love that nourishes her.

4. Last, it is a love that cherishes her.

It's a cherishing love. See, Paul says that Jesus, He nourishes and cherishes the church, and that's exactly what we should do. We need to

nourish and cherish our wives. I think this little word, cherish, could change your marriage. Guys, we're naturally cherishers. We naturally cherish things. As little boys, we grow up collecting baseball cards. We put them in albums, we look at them, and we get them out. Then we grow up into guys who collect things and love things, whether it's a truck, or a hobby, or we just love getting things and cherishing things. We get little hobbies and our wives, it kind of drives them crazy, but we are naturally cherishers. That's what we do. I think there's a reason there. It's because we were meant to cherish, but ultimately, we're meant to cherish our wife, to praise her like a rare diamond, to have affection, to set her, not just apart, that's to sanctify her, but to set her above, above everything else that we see her as the value that she is, and we cherish her. See, if I were to ask your wife, does your husband love you? I mean, right now, if I went up to your wife and we just gave her the microphone and I said, "Does your husband love you?" What's she going to say? I'm guessing she would probably say yes. Probably all of us would probably say yes. But what if I handed her the mic, said, "Does your husband cherish you?", and gave her the mic. What would she say? What would be her first reaction? Does he cherish me? Does he value me? Does he set me above all others on this earth? Does he see and prize my great value in his life? Does he cherish me like he cherishes a hobby, or a collection, or a thing, or a hunting trip? Does he cherish me? What would your wife say? Do you cherish her? I think just practically with your eyes, how you cherish her is you say, my eyes are only for you and no one else. You are my standard of beauty. I'm going to make sure that I look at you and you only, whether that's a physical other girl, whether that's my smartphone, no I've got my eyes only for you because you're my standard of beauty. I think with our mouth, it's constantly giving her praise and compliments. You are constantly telling her how beautiful she is. Why? Because she's your standard of beauty. She's the most beautiful girl in your planet. She really is, so tell her constantly. Give her compliments. Constantly praise your wife. Why? Because you cherish her and you want to tell her how grand you think she is. So with your mouth, praise her. With your ears, listen to her. See, as guys, we love listening. Maybe it's a leadership podcast, maybe it is ESPN radio; we love listening, but we often don't listen to our own wives. We

cherish them by giving them our ears, by listening to them, sitting down and saying honey, I want to hear from you. Tell me how your day was. We listen. Then with our hands, we serve them. We look for ways to serve our wives. That's one of the ways we cherish them is to serve them with our hands. Then with our feet, we make sure that we spend time with them. We are there with our wives, in their presence, spending time, sitting down beside them, and saying honey you matter to me. I'm not just going to go outside and do something because I cherish all the stuff I've got outside, no, I cherish you and I'm going to spend some minutes with you, just looking at you because you know what, above all this I cherish you. Cherish your wife.

What Paul is telling us is our love should be sacrificial, sanctifying, nourishing, and cherishing. I know some of you guys are thinking, man, there is just no way. This might be easy for you and your wife; you don't know my situation. I can't do it like that because I'm just...yeah, because you're in 4-wheel drive, and what you need to do is put it in 4-wheel low. You need to stop trying in your own power to love your wife like Christ loved the church. Instead, you need to run to the cross first. You need to deny yourself and take up your cross. You need to know that in your uniting with Jesus, you can gospel love her because the gospel has been given to you. You have been shown this love despite you, so now through you; you can go and show that same gospel love to her, not in your own power, not in 4-wheel drive, but in 4-wheel low. Yes, it's going to be a crawl up the mountain at times, but if you'll remain in His power and not your own, He will give you the ability to love your wife like He has loved you. Not for your own self, not even for just the sake of your marriage, though it will go better, it will be holy, it will be a place of blessing if you as a couple will love and respect like Christ has told us to, and do this dance of the gospel. It will go better, but even bigger than that, it will display something, and that is the relationship of Jesus Christ with His bride, the church, that you two will glorify God. And in that is joy that's incomprehensible. That's the kind of love we need, not just 4-wheel drive trying hard kind of love, but 4-wheel low for husbands and wives, walking in the Spirit, filling out this dance of love and respect so that the world sees the love they ultimately need. And that is the love of the gospel.

