

What Paul Really Meant When He Said to Love Your Wife

Let's look at the Word of God to learn about loving our spouses. Take a look at Ephesians 5:25-27.

Paul, the author of Ephesians, gives us a clear path to follow in regards to loving our spouses. He starts with the big idea of: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and that He might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Paul then moves on to explain the "how-to" section of this principle. He starts with a great phrase, "In this same way." In other words, *just like this*.

Paul continues in verses 28-31, "In this way men ought to 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 the Lord cares for the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh,'" the final creation of God, His masterpiece, a marriage.

I want us to really understand what is being said here. Paul suggests that taking care of a wife (or a spouse for that matter) is like feeding and caring for your body.

Let's go through the feeding and caring for your physical body. Let's talk about food. First, you work for food, then shop for it, then cook it, then eat it and then clean up afterward. I think on average it would be very safe to say each of us spends a minimum of two hours a day just feeding

our body.

Another step in caring for your body is sleep. For most of us, sleep is a six- to eight-hour investment of caring for our bodies. You can see that caring for yourself on a daily basis is time-consuming, even on the short ride of two hours to eat, 30 minutes to shower and six hours to sleep. This low maintenance is factually committing a minimum of eight hours and 30 minutes a day to self-care. That is one-third of your day committed to the caring and feeding of your body. That doesn't include exercise or doctor, dentist and eye doctor appointments. That's if you are healthy.

At a very core level, you fully accept with gratitude the daily maintenance of your body. In this same way, when you fully accept the daily maintenance of your wife or husband, you will be happy to maintain them on a daily basis.

Christ doesn't show up and feed His church irregularly, but daily. If you, as an individual, accept fully that marriage is a daily discipline, marriage can be so much easier. Until you fully accept the daily maintenance of your spouse, you may be angry about it, bargain about it, be sad about it or even just deny their need for daily maintenance by you, and you alone.

This principle can really set you free, depending upon your response to the very real reality that your spouse requires daily maintenance. If you accept this maintenance principle, you will have a grateful attitude. The same way you thank God for the food, shower or sleep, you will thank God for your spouse and your calling to maintain them.

If, however, you have hardened your heart, the daily maintenance of this child of God will be a burden. You will be burdened by praying with them, sharing your heart, dating and the financial cost of a spouse. Maintenance exposes our hearts. If we do this cheerfully, then I think we understand what Jesus feels when He serves His church every day.

I love the conclusion of Paul's thoughts here, especially in the light of marriage being God's creation. He states, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife."

If we accept our full responsibility to maintain our spouse, this process leads us into the glorious creation of a godly marriage on earth.

This really is glorious and excites me so much that I am going to get up right now and get some dishes done before my wife comes home. If you get the ideas in this article, you might also have some creative ideas on how to maintain your spouse.

I think it's incumbent upon us to ask ourselves, "What kind of maintenance person am I toward my spouse?" If Jesus was giving me a grade today on how well I have been maintaining my spouse, what grade would He give me?

Regardless of your answers to these questions, you have today and the rest of your life to be the most awesome maintenance person of your spouse. I say go for the gold when it comes to maintaining your spouse. {eoa}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books, including *Miracle of Marriage*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, [www.heart2heart.org](#), on his Facebook, [www.facebook.com/heart2heart](#), by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@heart2heart.org.