



SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Monday, February 22, 2021

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25-30

In 1965, Nat King Cole produced and released the song *L-O-V-E*. Nat would sing, “Love is all that I can give to you.” “Love was made for me and you.” In those two lines, Nat King Cole identified what a woman wants and what a husband can provide.

Listen to Paul’s encouragement to husbands as He provides some coaching for the marriage relationship.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body. (Eph 5:25-30, NLT)

Paul says, “Husbands love your wives”. Paul uses the Greek word *agape* here. It’s that sacrificial love. This flows out of the notion, to mutually submit to each other. It has the idea of dying to yourself to meet the needs of the other.

Now notice, though, how Paul puts a condition on this. He says, “Husbands love your wife, if...she respects you, if...she maintains a perfect figure, if...she always agrees.”

Oh, wait. You were listening, weren’t you? Paul never says that. There are no conditions. He says just, “love your wife”, no matter what. Why? How?

Paul reminds us that Christ died for us in our dead, despicable state. We couldn’t look good enough. We couldn’t behave good enough for his love. No, Christ showed incredible sacrifice in loving an unloveable wretch like me.

God’s love for his children is unconditional. That is why we are to show that kind of love to our spouses. This is how we are able to as well. By God’s grace, we are conduits of His love, His mercy, and His grace.

Paul does give us some practical advice on how to demonstrate this love. He says Jesus died to sanctify or to make clean the Church.

Husbands are to provide and protect for their wives. I get so angry when I hear husbands leading their wives into compromise, whether it’s watching pornography, or some other garbage on

Netflix, or other services. I get so angry when I hear about a husband encouraging a wife to compromise her integrity at work, or in the neighborhood. We are to provide and protect in this love.

Today, you may not be married and never want to be. That's okay. This idea of loving well applies to us all. So, here's my challenge for you today:

-If you're married, identify one way you can love your wife with sacrificial love – with that love that provides and protects from the garbage of the world.

-If you're not married, identify one person you can show sacrificial love to. As Christians, we are ambassadors for Christ. Paul would call us "imitators" of Christ.

So today, show that agape love to someone you know, and then point back to God. He is the giver of the love we give, so let's give it freely.