

THURSDAY 6/11/20

SERIES: FAMILY DONE GOD'S WAY

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Title: Family Done God's Way: Husbands, Pt. 2

Well, today, we're talking marriage done God's way. And more specifically, we're talking to husbands. Yesterday we looked at two ways to be a godly husband. We discovered that **in order to be a godly husband, you need to love God before anyone or anything else. And from that love of God, you need to love your wife.** She is to be loved above any earthly relationship. And we looked at 6 ways to love your wife.

Today, we'll look at four more ways to be a godly husband. And the first way is to die to yourself. What Nat? You want me to die? Well, not literally. **You need to die to yourself to be a godly husband.** In other words, **you need to be selfless.** That is dying to yourself.

Listen to Ephesians 5: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and 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. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." (Eph. 5:25-28, ESV).

That has got to be one of the biggest surprises for men today. **Your role is to love.** Now this word *love* is important to understand in the original Greek. Three other words might have been used in Greek for the love of a husband for a wife. There was the word *eraō* that expressed the deep sexual passion of man for woman, and the words *phileō* and *storgeō* were used for affection within the family: brotherly love.

None of these is used here; instead, Paul chooses the typically Christian word *agapaō*, *love* that is totally unselfish, that seeks not its own satisfaction; it does not give affection to receive affection, but it strives for the highest good of the one loved. The kind of love that says, not my will, but your will.

This love has as its standard and model the love of Christ for His church. It means not only a practical concern for the wellbeing of your wife, but a continual posture to defer one's own desire for the benefit of the other. It implies patience and kindness, humility and consideration, trust and support.¹

¹ Foulkes, F. (1989). [*Ephesians: an introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 10, pp. 162–163). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Does this mean, men, that you're now a pushover? A doormat? No. Does this mean you lose your own desires, hobbies, and goals? No. What it means is you're going to be a godly husband; a man who desires to love his wife with agape love – that sacrificial love you think of when you make decisions. You are open to her thoughts, opinions, and cares. It means you don't always get your way. It means compromise. But above all, it means loving her like Christ loved the church. That kind of love was the ultimate sacrifice: death on a cross.

God isn't asking you to hang on a cross, so choosing to watch a romantic movie one night isn't that bad. Thankfully, my wife never asks.

So to be a godly husband, you love God, love your wife, and you die to yourself. Now, here's the next principle for honoring God in your marriage: **You need to provide for your wife.**

Now I recognize that some people are now out of work due to COVID-19. Others can't work because of a special need or illness. I get that. And as a general principle, husbands are called to be providers. Does that necessitate you have the bigger paycheck if you and your wife work? No. It means you are actively participating in providing for the family.

Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: ‘If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.’” Paul is not talking here of those who sincerely desire work and have been laid off, or are struggling to find a job. He is talking about those who are lazy. That's why Paul continues by saying, “For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now, such persons, we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.” (Vs. 11-12).

So there are people who are lazy. They don't want to have a job. Some people don't want certain kinds of jobs because they think they're above it, or they can be unrealistic. But Paul warns against this mindset.

That's why Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5 “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). Now Paul was specifically addressing the cares of orphans and widows, but the principle is clear. If you don't provide, and can provide for your family, you're worse than an unbeliever. That's a stern rebuke.

It's clear, husbands need to be providers. Again, I get it. I've had many jobs I didn't like. I knew they weren't a good use of my skills, but I took them for a time to provide for the needs of the wife, kids, and even my extended family. Why? Because I was called to. And I remembered that we work for God and not man. That's what Ephesians 5 says. We may not enjoy our boss, our work, or the result, but if God's called us to it, let's do it for the glory of God and for our families.

But this call to provide does not give us permission to be workaholics. It does not allow us to become slaves to our jobs, or find our value in our paycheck, our title, or our work. To be a godly husband, we are to provide for our wives.

Only two more to go, friends. And if you're feeling beat up, worn out, or like a failure, remember, according to God, you are His masterpiece. You were saved by grace. It wasn't based on your past performance, current, or future performance. That doesn't give us a free pass to coast as husbands, but it does remind us that His grace is sufficient when we drop the ball. Because God is a loving Father, he wants our best. And that's a reason to rejoice. So let's finish strong, brothers and sisters who are listening today.

To be a godly husband, you need to love God, love your wife, die to yourself, provide, and **you need to know your wife.**

Now knowing your wife might sound like either a "duh" statement – something obvious - or it may sound like the greatest challenge ever. Wherever you fall on that spectrum, let's talk about this a bit more.

Do you remember what love letters are? Or love notes? I'm old enough to remember passing notes in school. And I remember writing and receiving love notes from my now wife. I loved to receive these notes. It wasn't always ooey and gooey love stuff. It was just ramblings of the day: where she was in class, who was around her, what she was thinking, what she was feeling, what she hoped to do, and of course, it had her smell.

Whenever I'd receive that note, I'd eat it up. I'd read it over and over again. It could be the most mundane thing ever. But I sincerely desired to know her and consume her, in whatever manner I could; and then marriage happens, and that knowing slows down.

It's that "Well, I accomplished that task. I got the wife. I got the sex. Now, onto college football on TV." Friends, you never coast to a great marriage. Men, husbands, listen up. You never coast to a great marriage. You coast to dysfunction. You coast towards distance. Just like lying on a tube in the ocean, if you stop swimming, you're a long way from Kansas.

So men, daily, you need to know your wife. Ephesians 5 says, "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.³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (5:29-33, ESV).

You are called to die to yourself. To be open to your spouse. You are called to nourish and cherish her. When you cherish someone, you know that person. And to know someone drives you to cherish them more.

Christian Psychologist and therapist, Dr. Jennifer Degler, suggests to know your wife, each day spend time knowing your wife. She wants you to know her. She's got data she needs to download. And you're the chosen device. So each day, find undistracted time to ask the question, "How are you? What happened today?" And be prepared to sit, listen, engage, and receive the download. Will it be painful? At first, it might. She will talk about girlfriends, family, kids, hairdressers, clothes, church, and more things you don't really care about. But because you care about her and want to know her, you'll give her your attention each day.

So to be a godly husband, you'll need to know your wife.

This leads us to the last way to be a godly husband. You need to take responsibility. Another way of saying is, you need to lead. Yep, I went there. I have to. **If you're going to be a godly husband, you need to lead and take responsibility for your home.**

Ephesians 5:23 says, "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands." Now I'll talk more about this passage in an upcoming message. But let me make a couple brief comments.

First, headship and leadership have nothing to do with being a tyrant, a jerk, a domineering person, or an abuser. People have used this passage to endorse this, and they're wrong. They're liars. And I'm sorry to any wife who's experienced this. They were wrong. So let me say to any wives out there who have been abused because of this passage, any who have been treated as a doormat because of this passage, I'm sorry – that is wrong! It is a gross misinterpretation.

Second, Headship is all about dying to oneself for the sake of his wife and family. Why? Because he takes responsibility for the welfare of his family in all areas of life: spiritually, financially, emotionally, physically, and so on.

Third, headship and leadership mean that the husband has the responsibility of taking the initiative to move things forward for his family.

You see, that's godly, Biblical leadership. You die to yourself daily. You think of what your family ultimately needs. They need spiritual guidance and leadership. They need physical provision, as well. It means caring for your family in all areas. Just like Christ gave himself up for the church, so too a real leader gives himself up for his wife and family, and, of course, answering to God for his family's success and failures. Men, what wife wouldn't want to trust and lean into a husband who loves God and loves His wife this much?

Friends, I've been married for 17 years. Marriage isn't easy. It's hard. I am in a constant battle with myself. I'm in a constant battle between my flesh and the Spirit of God. But I know that God is for me. He's for my marriage. Marriage done God's way spells success. It spells love and respect. And it all begins with you following God's design for marriage. Start today.

N: All right. Let's check in once more with Arnie Cole and Cara Whitney. Arnie, you're big on saying that when you're not moving forward in your relationship with God, you're actually moving backwards. Would you say the same holds true in marriage relationships?

A: Oh yeah. I think that's actually the easiest thing to see in your own relationship, if you're not moving forward, because it becomes stagnant, boring, routine, non-exciting. Whereas maybe in your spiritual life, it's more comfortable to be stagnant, but in your relationship, you start wondering why the fire has gone out, when you're the reason, you're the extinguisher. So yes, I think you always have to be moving forward in your relationship with Jesus Christ, as well as with your spouse.

N: Is there a way that you can test if you are moving forward, and that you're not drifting, and how do you do that?

A: You ask! It's really quite simple, except you ask and make yourself not argue. You know, sometimes I'll ask what's wrong and then I'll be told. And then it's like, I want to argue, well, then, don't ask. You know, it's critical to always have feedback. And I'm always cognizant of the fact that I'm a pretty positive person and I tend to forget a lot of things. So I may be onward and upward, and heading out to the next great adventure, and bam, I look, and she's not so happy, and I have to stop. And, "Oh yeah, there's two in this." And so you're always checking in, because truly your happiness is based on the other person's happiness; if mama ain't happy, nobody's happy.

N: I think what you're saying there is so good, that we need to be willing to ask, how are we doing? How am I doing as your husband? Or just, how are you doing? And then be prepared to receive the information. It may not be about you, but it may be. And when that happens, be willing to receive it with humility and mercy and grace.

Cara, a lot of men get the provider part, but sometimes they focus on that to the detriment of other needs. Why do you think that happens? And what can wives do to help their husbands see those other needs?

C: A lot of guys having marriage problems, the first thing they'll say is, "I don't get it. I work hard so she can have nice things. She doesn't even need to work if she doesn't want to." Or you'll see guys and their friends will be having marriage problems. And then they'll be like, "I don't get her, man. He works hard. She's got all these nice things". But I'll tell you, buying me things does not do squat for me. My husband knows that; he's bought me things early in the relationship. They're sitting in a drawer. Loneliness is the biggest relationship killer. You need to continue to court your lady. You need to put the cell phone down and focus on her. I once heard this story where this husband and wife were getting a divorce, and she just wanted to put the screws to him. So her attorney says, "Why don't you just be really nice to him and treat him like gold? And then after two months, we'll serve him with the papers." And so she starts being real nice to him. And all of a sudden, this is all reciprocating. He's being real nice to her. And in that two month time period, the lawyer says, "Here's your papers." And she said, "Why would I want to do that? We're having a great time together." I think you just forget to court one another, and it's not about stuff. We're so submersed in stuff in this country, that we work and work and work and collect it, and we get lost in it.

N: Yeah, well, and I think what you've identified there is being attuned to our spouse's needs, and what Dr. Gary Chapman talks about, are our love languages. And so you recognized early on that, hey, gifts, that's not a thing for you, but rather that you know that one on one time, being focused on you intimately, and still courting you, that is a key reality that a lot of husbands aren't aware of. So we would encourage you, you know, take time to pay attention to what your spouse actually needs, and to begin to meet those love needs.

Arnie, what have you learned that your wife values most from you, and did that come as a surprise?

A: You know, I had to go up and talk to her about that too. I mean, this whole series has gotten me out of my chair. Probably one of the things is our friendship. We're truly best friends. You know, growing up, you just never thought that your wife could be your best friend. And then when you are best friends, and now with this COVID thing, I mean, you've really got to be best friends. You're hanging out and it's not a burden. It's actually; it's really pretty great. And it's

pretty exciting. And then she was saying, I would say stupid stuff, but that she really values, like emptying the dishwasher. After I eat breakfast, I always put my dish in the dishwasher. And stuff like that to me is stupid - it's just as easy to leave it in the sink - things like that, she really loves because it shows that I respect her.

C: Boy you're really showing Dan up right now, all that stuff.

N: Well, you know, some of that may or may not be love languages, but it's just simply being aware of our spouse's feelings and preferences. I mean, one of the things we often argue about at the house, and I say that somewhat jokingly, is why on earth would we put the toilet seat down when we've got four boys and only one girl in the house? And my wife simply can't see the logic in that, that why would we do that? So her gentle request is that we always put the toilet seat down when we're done. Even though again, there are four boys and only one girl. However we do it, because we know she prefers it.

C: She is the queen that needs her throne!

N: Bingo. Wow. I'm going to remind her that that is her throne. Excellent words of advice from Cara Whitney. I love it. I love it. Well, guys, this has been a fun discussion. We look forward to talking to you again next week.