

Love as Christ loved Giving as Christ Gave

On ***Exciting True Love: The Truth Will Set You Free*** we have learned of God's design for sex – a great sexual relationship, between a husband and his wife, that is getting better and better through the years. God designed this relationship to be so great that a husband would always be rejoicing in his wife, thinking “Yeah, what a wife I have! – she is so sweet! Oh, how I enjoy her body!”

In light of this, let's look at what God says to husbands.

Lesson:

Each husband must love his wife!

The Bible says it again and again and states it many different ways.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

In the New American Standard Bible, **First Peter chapter 3 verse 7** reads

You husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.

To honor someone is to value them as a special gift. Other translations of the Bible say a husband is to be thoughtful of his wife, to be a good husband, to be considerate as he lives with her. Understand her, her needs, what is important to her, and what are her daily burning desires.

George comes home, sees things out of order and looks around the room, taking in all that is happening – a son that is busy doing homework, two younger ones quarreling, his wife preparing dinner, but looking tired.

When George chooses to not criticize her, but greets his son, intervenes with the two quarreling ones in a firm way, and then goes to his wife and says, “Thanks for being my wife,” George is living with his wife in an understanding way. He's putting himself into her shoes.

How about this [situation]: after his pastor talked with him, Joshua looked at his wife and remembered who she was when she said she would marry him. [But now] the joy had gone out of her eyes.

So he thought about what she had been asking of him over the years. He realized that he didn't really know her. He thought his most important role was to work. He didn't know how she felt about things, what her concerns were, what makes her happy or sad.

Well, he determined at that moment to change. He determined to know her better and to live with her in an understanding way. To treat her with respect, value her, value what she says and needs, when he makes decisions.

There are many reasons why a husband should behave in these loving ways. **First Peter chapter 3 verse 7** has an excellent reason. Let me read that verse completely this time.

You husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

So that nothing will hinder his prayers. That's a very good reason to behave in loving ways.

Surely, men, you want to take notice of this, because whether you are religious or not, you want nothing to get in the way of your prayers being heard and answered by God.

We find another reason why a husband should behave in loving ways is found in the fact that when a man and woman come together sexually they are made one flesh. They are made one body. When a husband treats his wife well, considers and cares for her needs, he is treating himself well too. Listen to this scripture from the Bible, **Ephesians chapter 5, verses 28 and 29**

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.

Yes, when a husband is considerate of his wife, is understanding of her, cares for her well, he is treating himself well.

Is it possible that men would ridicule or make fun of a friend for being kind to his wife, for spending time with her, for meeting her needs, for devoting himself to her? Would they ridicule that same friend for taking care of his own needs? Think about it - for taking care of your wife is like taking care of yourself.

You may wonder why, on this program where I have spent so much time talking about the great sexual relationship that is possible for a husband and wife, one with freedom to enjoy each other to the fullest, that I would look at scriptures that speak to a husband about loving his wife. Well, to have the kind of sexual relationship that we have discovered is God's plan for us, a husband must be loving.

So this is a third reason to treat your wife in loving ways: to have a great sex life.

Gary Smalley and Ted Cunningham in their insightful book *The Language of Sex*, have said the radical statement, "...never try to improve your sex life in marriage. Instead develop honor and security in your relationship and you'll discover how great sex is a by-product of your loving relationship."

Isn't that interesting? Honor your spouse, treat them like they are a special gift, something of great value and they will feel secure with you. That security leads to closeness in your marriage. You develop that closeness more and more and that is the atmosphere for the best sex.

So honor and security develops closeness, which develops great sex.

Remember George whom we spoke of earlier who chose not to criticize his wife. He's creating security for his wife. She's not stressed of when he's coming home. She knows he's coming home to be an understanding husband and a good father. That is going to develop closeness with his wife. As they communicate with each other better and better, that closeness will grow. That will be the atmosphere for great sex.

Most women are sexually excited by how they are treated. See, your wife is turned on by how you behave towards her. When you are kind to her, she responds to that. When a husband is

considerate, thoughtful of his wife's needs and feelings, understanding her, what it is to be her and living her life, showing her honor and delighting in her, it is like foreplay to his wife.

God knows this. He created us. He made women to get sexually excited that way. And He tells a husband to love his wife again and again. Isn't God good!

He even says to love her sacrificially – even though it might not be easy for the man, even if he might want to be doing something else. Listen to **Ephesians chapter 5 verse 25**.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy.

Think of Christ's relationship with us, the church.

- Christ is always available for us;
- He pursues us in love;
- [He] never forces himself on us.
- [He is] always ready for a close relationship. He wants to talk heart issues with us, as well as the little things.
- Jesus wants to be completely one with us.

And that is how God wants a husband to be. What a lover!

What a huge role a husband is called to! Don't despair, men: God never calls us to anything that he won't help to achieve. God is for you on this and may your wife be praying for you as well, and encouraging you, respecting you.

None of us have these relationships mastered. By God's help, we are husbands and wives learning to imitate God better and walk in love, to respect and love better. Through all this we are learning to delight more and more in our spouse and the sexual relationship we have with them.

So, husband: love your wife as Christ loves the church and love her as your own body.

Listen as I continue to read in **Ephesians chapter 5 verse 31**:

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

We heard these same words back in our first lesson. It was talking about Adam and Eve coming together as husband and wife, their wonderful sexual experience and their being made one flesh.

But listen to the next verse:

This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Wait a minute! The sexual relationship between a husband and his wife, the closest relationship two people can be, is a reflection of Christ and his relationship with believers, his church. That's big. Our sexual relationship when we are married is a reflection of Christ and his intimacy with us as individuals and corporately as the church.

Let me explain further. If we are teaching an idea, we look around our world for examples to use to help others understand the idea. God does better than that. He has created the examples so that we can understand. He created fathers so we can understand what it means when God says He is our Father.

God has created the sexual relationship between a husband and wife, the delighting in each other, the enjoyment, the pleasure so that we can understand the kind of close relationship he wants with us. Sex, and all that accompanies it, the touching, caressing and all, is a reflection of the close relationship that Christ wants to have with us!

It is not surprising that the devil hates marriage and sexual wholeness. If you notice, before you are married, it seems that you are always being tempted to have sex. However, when you are married, where has that longing for your spouse gone? Why doesn't Satan want us to be having great sex when we are married? [Because] kujamiiiana katika ndoa is a reflection of Christ and his relationship with the church!

It shouldn't surprise us that we are continually tempted not to value our marriages and the sexual relationship with our spouse. Let's give God glory and, with His power, change that around. Let's give sexual enjoyment to our spouse, let's plan it, let's have it on our minds and let us be ready to receive it when it is offered.

Let us value our marriages and the sexual relationship we have because we want nothing to stand in the way of that image of Christ and the church.

Good marriages, and the sexual relationship between that husband and wife, point us to God. They help us understand so much more about his character. Wow! When we women have that bad attitude of, "Oh, am I going to have to do it again tonight?", we are tarnishing that image of Christ and the church. Men, I'm sure you can think of some thoughts that would also damage that image. Let's get rid of them. Let's value our sexual relationship with our spouse, making the most of it.

Afterword:

Let's review the five reasons why a husband should love his wife:

- First, because God said to. Crazy as it may sound, that is probably the best reason. God is good, He's always wanting the best for us. His ways are right and they are for our benefit.
- Second is because if a husband does not love his wife, God might not hear his prayers. That's serious.
- Third is because when a husband takes care of his wife, it is like taking care of his own body.
- The fourth reason is the one that I'm sure all men were taking note of – to have great sex!! Remember that honoring your wife, considering her of value, creates security for her – a knowledge that you will not leave her, that you'll be kind to her. That security creates closeness and that close intimacy is the atmosphere for great sex!
- And the fifth reason to love your wife is because sex, and all that accompanies it, the touching, caressing and all, is a reflection of the close relationship that Christ wants to have with us!

This has been Nancy Crane on ***Exciting True Love: the Truth Will Set You Free***. Tune in next week to find out a wonderful gift that everyone can afford to give their spouse and why you cannot afford not to give it.