

Ephesians

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[0 : 00] I've got a sheet here that somebody got off of the Internet, and it's got some pretty good stuff in it, and it has to do with 25 pearls of wisdom. But I'm only going to give you five at a time because I think that's all you can handle.

Okay? Number one, if you're too open-minded, your brains will fall out. Two, age is a high price for maturity. Three, going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you a mechanic.

Four, artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity. And five, if you must choose between two evils, pick the one you have never tried before.

And let me add to that some dog day wisdom here. Now, just make believe that you are in the place of your canine pets.

So if you were a dog and your dog was your teacher, you would learn, number one, when loved ones come home, always run to greet them. Two, never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.

[1 : 12] Dogs love them. Three, allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy. And when it's in your best interest, practice obedience.

Okay. Dog's wisdom. We are on sheet 5D, and it is Ephesians chapter 5. And we left off with verse 19 at the top left-hand corner, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

And indeed, we have a lot to sing about. Somebody has made the observation that it is not coincidental that atheism has no song, because they just simply have nothing to sing about.

But we who are in Christ have everything to sing about, so we sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things.

That is an attitude of gratitude that is to be a reflection of every believer. When you understand the sovereignty of God and the principle of Romans 8, 28, how that God does indeed work all things together for our good, when you understand that and are committed to it, there is absolutely no alternative that you have other than to give thanks for all things.

[2 : 34] And that includes the nasty things that come into our lives, the things that we would never volunteer for, the things that we don't want and don't welcome, but they are the things that God uses to shape us and mold us, and it almost always comes through adversity.

Seldom does it come through prosperity. It comes through adversity. The statement has been made that saints grow best in the shadows, not in the sunshine.

And I don't know about you, but if I had my choice, I would opt for nothing but sunshine every day. But that's not life, and it's not reality, and it's not facing the fact that we live in a fallen world.

However, God has provided us with all of the coping skills that we need. And number one, we need to recognize sometimes it's difficult to buy into it, but it is true.

God really does know what he's doing, and he really is in charge, even though at times it may seem like your whole world is falling apart.

[3 : 47] He knows what he's doing, and he's in charge. And more than anything else, God wants to be trusted. He wants to be believed. He is worthy of being believed.

And the best way that we can honor him is to trust him. So, yes, Dana? I think it's Stanley, one of my wife's, the quote that she likes is, when we go through adversity, when we have trials, we come closer to God.

And who wants to come closer to God, and all the hands go up, and who wants adversity? Where do we go down? You talk about James? You talk about James? Be thankful. Yeah.

Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. Knowing that. Knowing that. Not suspecting or thinking or having a hunch. Knowing that.

The trying, the testing of your faith, produces patience. And that means produces endurance. And ability to hang in there.

[4 : 52] And that is a beautiful commodity. One that ought to characterize every believer. Submitting yourself one to another in the fear of God. That means, in the fear of God, means that because we give God the proper place in our life.

A major consequence that comes from that is the spirit of submissiveness one to another. This is what Paul's talking about in Ephesians.

I mean, Philippians 2, when he says, Look not every man on his own things only, but also on the things of others. And then he gets Christ as the example. It is natural for us to be self-centered. That's part of our fallenness in Adam. But, we who are in Christ have the ability to be Christ-centered. And, frankly, no excuse for not being that way because everything has been made to provide it for us.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. And then, we've already talked a little bit about this. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.

[6 : 02] And, I suspect that this is a verse that just about every Christian man has committed to memory. And, knows that that's supposed to be the wife's function. But, as we pointed out in our last sessions, that if, if the husband loves his wife in a sacrificial way as Christ loved the church, she will delight in rendering a submissive spirit to her husband.

And, she will not begrudge it. And, she will not feel that she is being taken advantage of. She will not feel that he is the boss and she's supposed to just carry out his orders.

She knows that his concern and care for her is primary in his mind. And, it ought to be. because, the nature of Christ was that he put others and their needs ahead of his own. And, that's what's supposed to characterize every Christian husband.

We are to look upon our headship not as simply somebody who is in charge, but as somebody who has responsibilities. And, maybe one of the best illustrations I can ever remember this was way back in the 1950s when I was in Alaska.

[7 : 22] We'd go out in the field for a couple of weeks of bivouac and sleep in those lousy pub tents on air mattresses and sleeping bags. And, man, you had to have your boots in your sleeping bag with you because you'd never be able to get them on in the morning if you didn't.

And, you wouldn't want to anyway. Because, it could be 20 below zero. And, I remember when we'd go out there and the guys would, everybody was pitching their tents, getting their tents up and we had to get the CO tent up and all the rest of it.

And, somebody asked the captain who was in charge of the whole thing, we'll get your tent up first, sir. And, he says, don't worry about my tent. And, pretty soon somebody else would come along and say, we'll get your tent up right away, sir.

And, he'd say, not worried about my tent. And, long story short, this was the man who knew what it meant to be in charge. Before his own needs and his own tent and everything else was up, he wanted to make sure that all of his men were quartered in, bedded down.

Then, he took care of his needs. That's what leadership is. It's putting the needs of others ahead of your own. And, that is completely contrary to the way the world operates.

[8 : 35] Because, the way the world operates is out of that self-centeredness that wants to put self ahead of everything else. And, that's what creates the conflict, of course.

Dan? Something else that stuck with me a number of years. I went to Promise Keepers in Indianapolis several years back. And, they started it out with basically talking about what you're saying.

But, their way of saying it was, all your wives and girlfriends are glad you came this weekend. Not all of them are going to want to see you come home. Wow.

Yeah. Okay. Interesting way of putting it. Interesting way of putting it. Four. Verse 23. Make sure your wife wants to see you come home. For the husband is the head of the wife.

And, 20th century New Testament says, for a man is the head of his wife. Taylor renders it, the husband is in charge of his wife. And, this is something that a lot of people don't understand.

[9 : 37] Even a lot of Christians don't understand. And, particularly, many of the feminists. But, that is this. In every connection, in every relationship, somebody has to be in charge.

Somebody has to be in charge. Somebody has to make the ultimate decision when there is disagreement as to the decision to be made. Somebody has to make that decision.

And, the man is charged with the responsibility for doing that. And, it's a big responsibility. So, what advice I always give to those who come to me for premarital counseling, and I've lost track of how many there have been over the last 50 years.

But, when you are faced with a decision, and you don't know which way to go, and he is for A, and she is for B, what do you do? Well, to avoid a power struggle, which often is what happens, to avoid a power struggle, I suggest that the two people sit down, and they write down every reason they can think of for A.

And then, every reason they can think of for B. And then, every reason they can think of that is against A. And, every reason they can think of that is against B.

[11:00] B. And, it is amazing how you can come to agreement once you hear all the options and all the pros and cons aired out.

And, each one, husband and wife, is expected to make their best case. Present your argument.

And, by the way, that's a good word to use, and I prefer it.

It is a legitimate word, and it ought to go on in marriages, and that is arguing. And, by arguing, I don't mean name-calling and nastiness and all the rest. I mean arguing as the lawyers use the term, which means you put forth your best case.

You set forth your arguments in a calm, cool, rational way. You just try to make your case. And, each of you do that. And, many times, one may be able to honestly convince the other of their position.

And, it may be him convincing her or her convincing him. But, the point is, you reach agreement.

And, if the time comes when you simply cannot reach agreement, it's his call.

[12:12] And, he must make the call with the full knowledge that he is responsible for this decision.

And, she then has the responsibility as a submissive wife to support him in that call and do everything she can to make that call successful.

That means, she also has to avoid the temptation later on to say, I told you so. You know, when a guy realizes that he is entrusted with that kind of responsibility, it will give him pause as to the decision he is making.

And, it will cause him to go over his strong points again to make sure that he's on the right track here because it's an important thing and the solidarity of that union depends on keeping it together like that.

So, the husband is the head of the wife and he always, he is always, if he is a sacrificially loving husband, he is always eager and willing to take into consideration his wife's opinion and her needs and her desires.

And, I'll tell you what, fellas, there are a lot of wives, there are even a lot of Christian wives who sadly have to say, I don't think my husband even cares what I think about this or that or something else.

[13:42] he just seems like he's in charge of making all the decisions and he just kind of bowls the head with them and sometimes he lets me in on it and sometimes he doesn't.

Well, that's not much, that may be an arrangement but it's not much of a marriage because the thing that characterizes the marriage more than anything else is togetherness, oneness.

and the two shall become one flesh and that means there's no room there for secrets or for hidden agendas. Everything needs to be open and above board so that with clear conscience you can face each other and there's nothing held back.

Don? I'm giving social security experience now. In the days when I was there, a lot of women would come in after their husband died. They didn't even know how to write a check.

Yeah, I've heard that. That does go on and you know, there's something to be said for one member of the family being, as it were, the secretary or the bookkeeper or something like that and frankly that is not my forte.

[14:55] I'm glad that both of my wives have kindly assumed that responsibility because both of them were a whole lot better at it than I was but there needs to be a oneness and a togetherness in that and the right hand needs to know what the left hand is doing and a marriage is a place where there is no room for hidden agendas or manipulation or secrets and yet that goes on and when it does, I can promise you it is always prompted by the flesh, always by self-centeredness, it is never the action of the spirit and it's something that should not characterize any believer for the husband is the head of the wife even as in the same way that Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Fellas, I am confident that if we love our wives as we are called upon to love them, a wife will feel deep security and appreciation and she will find real emotional stability and shelter under your headship and she will be so grateful that you are in charge of that relationship and she will not resent your being in charge because you carry out your responsibility not with a heavy hand but with primary consideration of what her needs are and what her thinking is and it's a beautiful thing I've often said that marriage when it is done the way God intended it's as close as you're going to get to heaven while you're still here on this earth and I firmly believe that's what God intended it to be but we all know there are a lot of marriages that fall far short of that and that's too bad because one of the reasons that Jesus Christ died on that cross maybe even the greatest reason that Christ died on that cross is so that relationships could be restored and be what they ought to be and in particular it was his relationship with humanity that was lost and injured and ruined and Christ came to reconcile us to God and restore that relationship and there's nothing in the world more important than relationships begins with our vertical one with God and then our horizontal one with our fellow man and especially the mate to whom we are committed for life it's a beautiful passage and I want to remind you again I suspect that if the women's live who call themselves feminists knew and understood how the apostle Paul really felt and really addressed the issue of headship they'd never be able to call him a woman hater like many of them do because when Paul came on the scene and delivered this information do you realize how contrary this concept was even in the Jewish community because in the Jewish community and in most communities at large virtually everything was masculine male dominated and it was in place that way from the beginning and when when the apostle Paul came on the scene with this sacrificial love kind of thing it hit like a bombshell this was not something that anybody was accustomed to doing and the name of the game was the husband just barked the orders and the wife carried them out and under Old Testament rubric that we find there from Genesis through Malachi the woman was considered a very second class kind of citizen and the typical Jewish prayer on rising in the morning was oh God I thank thee that thou hast not made me a slave a woman or a Gentile and in that they took great pride but that was part of the fall of Judaism was the pride factor so when you understand what the apostle Paul inspired direction is for husbands to their wives the whole cause of feminism is unnecessary and goes right out the window and you heard me say before that we men have ourselves to blame for the feminist movement more than anyone else because of the shabby shabby treatment that so many men have given so many women over so many years and the women's live actually became a revolt a rebellion against that second class status and that's when they started burning their bras you know guys didn't want to go to [20 : 03] Vietnam or the draft were burning their draft cards and the women's live were burning their bras back in the 60s and that was their retaliation to male domination so when they started making their corrections they shot three miles past the moon and overkill but nevertheless that's another story so therefore verse 24 as the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and the way he demonstrated his love for the church was he gave himself for it and another thing that I found it helpful and I think enlightening to tell young men and women when they come in for premarital counseling I look at this husband to be right in the eyes and I say son if you are not willing to lay down your life for this girl you have no right to marry her because that's what marriage involves it's a self sacrifice and a willingness to put the needs of the one you love ahead of your own that's the meaning of agape love agape love always seeks to say and to do the things that are in the best interest of the object of your love and that's the key to a marriage on the rock as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it that is that he might set it apart that word sanctified comes from the word separate it's also comes from the word holy it's hagiazoo and it means to make separate or distinct and that's exactly what this relationship is supposed to be that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word now you are as aware as I am that I'm sure there are some with good intent read water baptism into this but the washing here the cleansing that is to take place is the kind of cleansing that no amount of H2O can address this is an internal cleansing and it is a regeneration that comes about by being bathed if you will in the word of God which cleanses us on the inside where the water can't reach and

God does that through the miracle of regeneration that he might present it to himself verse 27 a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy there's that word again it's the same as sanctified in the original separated and without blemish and this sets forth the principle of positional truth which is very difficult for a lot of Christians to get their brain around because we just can't conceive of ourselves flawed though we know we are sin prone though we know we are it's very hard for us to consider ourselves as having an absolutely perfect flawless standing before the God of heaven but that's exactly what we have that is our position in Christ don't confuse that with your practice because in our practice we frequently blow it we sometimes let the flesh creep in and we say or do something that is contrary to the spirit and it is flesh through and through that does impact our practice and what Christianity what the Christian life is all about and what Christian maturity is all about is the growth that results in becoming more and more like Christ and less and less like the old Adam that's what spiritual growth is all about this is what Paul is talking about when he mentioned about growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and that God's goal for us is to be conformed to the image of his son and we do that through practice and we practice the Christian life this means we are becoming more and more like Christ it doesn't mean we are becoming more and more saved when you come to faith in Christ you are baptized no water you are baptized spiritually into the body of Christ and you are made one in union with him so that Christ's death becomes your death his resurrection becomes your resurrection his glorification becomes your glorification this is what it means to be in Christ and you are just as accepted in him as he is himself because because you are in union with him and inseparable from him and as God receives and loves his own son so he loves and receives you in the same way and I realize that's difficult to comprehend because we just can't fathom that kind of acceptance but this is what he was talking about back in

[25 : 58] Ephesians 1 when he says that he has made us accepted in the beloved and that word also bears the connotation of he he approves of us God approves of you because he approves of his son and you are in him and when Jesus Christ saved you he gave you as a gift he imputed to you by the way he didn't impart it to you he didn't lay it on you he put it in you he imputed it to you his righteousness that is incredible so you stand before him in a position of perfection uncondemned totally fully accepted in Christ that is your standing your state is something else your state you may be functioning and living in the flesh that does not impact your standing but it does retard your spiritual growth and development the more time you log walking in the spirit and walking in obedience to the

Lord the more you become conformed to the image of Christ that's what spiritual growth is all about it's getting our practice to come closer to our position and it's a beautiful thing and God has provided us with everything that is needed to do that and it is focused on his word and his word so it's a beautiful beautiful concept that it should be holy and without blemish so in the same manner ought men to love their wives as their own bodies he that loveth his wife loveth himself for no man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it even as the Lord the church how is that that when a guy loves his wife he loves himself well it's really simple guys when you stop and think about it because in that marriage union the two of you became one so any injury to her is an injury to you because you are both together in this thing you have not surrendered your individual identity or personality but you have been merged together in some glorious fashion that I don't think anybody really understands whereby

God makes us one in Christ and it is an absolutely incredible thing and when you think of that oneness just bear in mind that any treatment that you extend to your wife is treatment you are also extending to yourself positive or negative and comments questions anybody feel free Don well you know there there are cases yeah it is a different world now and there are a number of marriages where a gal maybe she's got you know maybe she's got maybe she's had more educational advantage and maybe she's got skills and training in areas that may command a large salary and boy meets girl and they fall in love and here's this guy he's maybe you know a \$35,000 a year guy and she's a \$235,000 a year gal and that can create difficulty particularly in this day and age but if they work it out and here let me let me inject this guys because

I'm so completely committed to this if I didn't believe it I'd never go back to the pulpit again that is every problem and every issue I care not what it is that comes into a person's life has a spiritual solution every one of and that's true even for unbelievers as well as believers the spiritual solution may be salvation but even where two people know and love the Lord and they have problems in

their marriage whatever it might be whether it's financial or sexual or you name it whatever the problem may be that surfaces there is a spiritual solution and I'm not talking about going to church although you know as a pastor I'm very much in favor of that and I certainly recommend it but it isn't the same thing because you know something there are a lot of miserable marriages that are in church every Sunday and that sounds like an oxymoron but we know it's true don't we we know it's true it doesn't have to be that way but that's no guarantee that the marriage is going to be has a very clear cut answer to every problem that can surface in a marriage difficulty is in the volition or the will of the individuals to implement that solution and that's where the flesh often gets in the way so it's a beautiful fellas

God has made every provision for us that could possibly be needed for our marriage to be everything he wants it to be and for it to fulfill the desires of both the husband and the wife he's already made all those provisions the difficulty is in our in our ignorance of the principles or our unwillingness to apply the principles that he has already given us and that's the whole basis for the series that we've done on marriage on the rock ten volumes available so far and that's that's 200 segments in those ten volumes yes with what Don said financially there's that one portion of a marriage and leadership in a marriage but there's a lot of other needs also there's emotional and quite frankly something another area where my wife is more gifted than I am is I don't know with ethics the right thing to do she gets me on the right path more than

[32 : 48] I get her on the right path oh hey I know all about that but there's a lot of needs that we all have in the families I appreciate that Brian I think part of that too is our worldview or the young person's if it's an education issue and so forth the training that they receive is they're going to agree to the principles and biblical position or they're going to go into the secular mindset of their education so the financial issue that you were talking about becomes more important than the biblical foundation which one is going to be the leader exactly especially especially in this day and age it's a very powerful component absolutely really they're going into the partnership not reliance on each other again that becomes very educational or it becomes the philosophical foundation of what they really feel absolutely and everything in the marriage will grow out of that and another important thing to keep in mind is that for good or for ill the husband tends to replicate in his marriage the kind of relationship that his father displayed in his growing up years and the wife does the same thing and both of those may be great in which case they've got a lot going for them but even if there was a negative role model for the husband or the wife that is still the one you tend to reproduce because that was the only one you saw in action so there needs to be the injection of a spiritual component to override that to compensate for that and that of course comes only from the word of

God and from our submission to it