

LOVE LIKE JESUS!

Practical Lessons in Christian Living

1

WHERE ARE THE GOOD HUSBANDS / FATHERS?

- In today's society we have many absent, unengaged, or abusive husbands and fathers
 - There were some historical or traditional habits that had negative impacts on men and the roles of men
 - Some habits even blamed on "religion" or "Christianity" [misapplying or misunderstanding scripture]
- In the past, there were **more** "Christian men", or at least more that were governed by Judeo-Christian principles
- Many men perceive the church as weak, unmanly, or feminine (rather than strength or controlled power)
 - A "dependence" on God can be seen as an admission of weakness
 - New or missionary churches tend to draw more men (men feel more valued)
 - Established churches appear more "domesticated" and do not attract, or challenge, as many men

HOW TO BE GOOD HUSBANDS / FATHERS?

- **Poor definitions of Manliness**
 - Be tough, no crying
 - Good at Sports
 - Self Defense, physical protection
 - Military / Soldier
 - Provider (only)
 - Disciplinarian
 - Victorian or Islamic definitions of husband or father (abusive, dictator, authoritative, owner)
- **All partial answers**
 - Sports evolved from practice from war (war games)
 - Now only entertainment (i.e., not critical skill/activity)
 - Many who are spectators, not participants
- Wrong battle: It is the **spiritual** battle that we must engage!

A Later Sermon

SEARCH FOR GOOD EXAMPLES

- One bad example **only** tells you **one** way to do it wrong
 - There are just too many ways to get it wrong!
 - So being "**not Elliott**" is/was not enough!
- It is really easier to imitate a **good example**, if you can find them!
- Need (multiple) good example(s) for a well-rounded perspective:
 - Church leaders
 - Fellow Christians
 - Biblical examples
 - Scriptural principles
 - Seek advice
 - Ultimately Christ
- We can cover some basic principles...

A Later Sermon

GREATEST CHALLENGE!

- **Ephesians 5:25-30** Husbands, **love** your wives, as Christ loved the church
 - And **gave himself up** for her, that he might **sanctify** her,
 - having **cleansed** her by the washing of water with the **word**,
 - 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**.
 - In the same way husbands should 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 Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.
- **Greatest Challenge** is practicing **Agape** love!
- “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Eph. 5:1)

GREEK WORDS FOR “LOVE” - 1

- **Mania:** obsessive love, **jealous**, codependency
- **Ludus:** playful, **noncommittal** love; flirting, seduction, **casual sex**, “love” as a game
- **Pragma:** practical love, love based on duty, obligation, or logic (e.g., arranged marriages for political, financial, or citizenship issues)
- **Philautia:** **self-love**, self-importance, **prideful**, egomaniacal narcissists who think they are better than everyone else [lacking empathy, being exploitive, entitlement, arrogant, preoccupation with fantasies, do not accept responsibility for their actions]
- **Eros:** romantic love, named after the Greek god of love and fertility; physical, intimate attraction. [Not used in the Bible, but implied by **Heb 13:4**, *koite* = marriage bed, conception.]

GREEK WORDS FOR “LOVE” - 2

- **Storge**: family love, kinship and familiarity, often used for love that is one-way (as a mother loving her newborn baby). [Not used in the N.T. Except in the negative: Rom 1:31; 2 Tim 3:3 – **astorgos** – devoid of natural or instinctive affection, without affection to kindred, heartless.]
- **Philos**: loved, dear; devoted; a friend; courteous appellation, 29x. **Philia** affection, fondness, love, 1x (James 4:4). **Philadelphia**: friendly love, close friends/brothers, 6x (incl. Heb 13:1). **Philostorgos**, tenderly affectionate, 1x (Rom 12:10a).

GREEK WORDS FOR “LOVE” - 3

- **Agape:** love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness, **116x** (Rom 12:90).
 - **AgapaO:** to love, value, esteem, feel or manifest generous concern for, be faithful towards; to delight in, to set store upon, **143x**.
 - **AgapEtos:** beloved, dear; worthy of love, **61x**.
- Thomas Aquinas: “**To will the good of another.**”

GREATEST CHALLENGE IS PRACTICING **AGAPE** LOVE!

- **Gave himself up**
 - Have you made the choice to love selflessly?
 - Are you putting others' needs above your own?
 - Is your love unconditional, sacrificial?
 - Are you serving others with humility?
- **That he might sanctify her; that she might be holy**
 - Do you set her apart, make her special?
 - Do you regard her as holy, give her greater value?
- **Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**
 - Have you enabled yourself for that role by regularly being in God's word?
 - Do you pronounce her clean? Or are you an accuser?

from Ephesians 5:25-30

AGAPE LOVE! (CONT.)

- **He nourishes and cherishes**
 - How do you nourish your spouse? How do you promote her spiritual health?
 - How does she feel loved? What are her love languages?
 - Are you caring for her, as your own body? Is she part of you, and are you a part of her?
- **Present your wife in splendor, without spot or wrinkle, and without blemish**
 - Do you see the best in her, in your children? Or do you focus on the faults?
 - Do you praise her in front of others, or criticize behind her back?
 - Do you balance her faults? Do you **value** her differences?
- **As Christ does the church**
 - What do you do and how do you respond when she **rejects** your love or does not seem to appreciate it?
 - Have you decided to love like Jesus (even when those we are trying to love reject us and misunderstand our intent)?

from Ephesians 5:25-30

AGAPE IS THE KEY

- Agape-love is following Christ's example — to **Sacrifice, Suffer** and **Serve**
- Agape-love is the difference between — **boyhood** and **manhood**:
 - When you stop putting yourself, your pleasures, your hobbies, your needs **before** others — then you are **ready** for marriage
 - Being a man is taking responsibility, **servant leadership**
- Agape-love eliminates selfishness, e.g.:
 - “Mid-Life Crisis” — I am tired of putting others first, I am tired of always sacrificing, I want to be a kid again, I need to have fun!
 - “Delayed Marriage” — I am not done being a kid, I want to have fun, I can't be tied down, I don't want to take on that responsibility, yet!

SECOND BIGGEST LESSON — THE GOOD NEWS

- I suggest that the greatest challenge to marriage, or parenthood, is practicing **Agape** love
- It is the keystone to many other teachings and examples
- However, the Good News... **90% of the battle is just showing up — not perfection**
 - Consistency — hopefully every day
 - Endurance, Patient suffering
 - Sincerity (without wax), Honesty, Openness
- Each new day is a new opportunity to excel in good works!

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS!

- Admit, repent of past failures
- Seek forgiveness
- Voice your intent, your motivation, to improve
- Look forward for new opportunities
- Aim at your target, re-aim **daily**
- Ask for prayers

- If you are falling short, remember God's grace
 - If you have been knocked down, get back up!
 - If you have been thrown out of the ring, get back in the fight!
 - Need help, find a **battle buddy!**

THINK ON THESE THINGS

- **Eph 5:1-2** Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved children. And walk in **love**, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- **Rom. 12:9-21** Let love be genuine.

Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. **17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." **20** To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

To all Christians, but especially your spouse!