

THE PRECIOUS BOND OF MARRIAGE

Ephesians 5:22-33

Introduction: Nobody can fully realize just how important this passage of scripture is for everybody has their own opinion of the role of the husband and of the wife. The Christian view of marriage, taken from this passage of scripture, is widely accepted today, at least in this country, but the view of marriage was vastly different in times past, especially in the times of Jesus and of Paul. How God wants Christians to live in marriage creates the most precious bond possible between a man and a woman.

1. The Jews had a low view/opinion of women.
 - For one not to be born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman was considered a blessing.
 - A woman was considered property, with no legal rights.
 - There was a saying that was more a saying than practice: "die before idolatry, murder or adultery.."
 - *Deuteronomy 24:1* indicates that divorce was allowed under certain conditions.
 - Two witnesses, a bill of divorcement written out by a Rabbi, a dowry for the woman and the divorce was final.
2. The Greeks view of women was much worse.
 - Prostitution was an essential part of life.
 - Wives were for having legitimate children, to be guardians over household affairs.
 - Wives were to stay away from all public affairs and events.
 - No divorce laws, just give the wife a dowry and she then left.
3. The Roman "marriages" were even worse than the Greeks.
 - They married only to divorce.
 - They numbered their years by their marriages.
 - Women had as many as 10 husbands, some had 8 husbands in 5 years.
 - Records show that a woman married her 23rd husband and she was his 21st wife.
4. This view of marriage was the background upon which Paul wrote this scripture about marriage.
 - Since then Christianity has "cleansed" the view of marriage and home life.

I. FOR MARRIAGE TO BE REAL, THERE MUST BE SACRIFICIAL LOVE

1. The husband is to be head of the wife.
 - He is not to control, not to be selfish, but to love and do things for her.
 - As Jesus Christ does for the Church, so the husband is to do for his wife.
 - The husband is to do whatever it takes for the good of his wife.
2. The wife is to "submit", to stand under her husband's guidance.
 - For family order and unity, it is best for the husband to be in leadership.

II. THERE MUST BE A PURIFYING LOVE FOR EACH OTHER

1. Every believer making up Jesus Christ's Church has been cleansed and set apart for Jesus' use without spot or wrinkle when all is said and done.
 - There are plenty of spots and wrinkles during one's earthly life, but in the end, all will be well.
2. Love caused Jesus Christ to accept us as we are/were and love causes Jesus to keep us as we are.
3. Love of the husband for his wife will be like that Jesus has for us, accepting and uplifting.

III. LOVE MUST BE A CARING KIND OF LOVE

1. A husband must love his wife as he loves himself, his own body. He must cherish her, tend to her needs and her well being.
2. Husbands are not to regard their wives as their housekeepers and babysitters.

IV. IT MUST BE AN UNBREAKABLE KIND OF LOVE

1. As the believer is ONE in the Lord, so is the husband and wife ONE.
2. As the believer leaves the world for the Lord Jesus Christ, so the husband and wife leave their families.
3. As the arms and legs are part of the body and will not be torn off, so are the husband and wife ONE and are not to be torn apart.

V. ALL CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES ARE IN THE LORD

1. Jesus is part of the Christian's marriage, therefore there are three (3) partners, husband, wife and Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. It is God's will that the husband lead his family in love.
2. It is God's will that the wife accept the husband's leadership.
3. Each have their own responsibilities as Jesus Christ and His Church each have their own responsibilities.
4. There is no country in the world where a woman from America can go and find more acceptance than she has here. Jesus Christ has made the difference.
5. Christian, follow God's plan for your marriage and it will be a precious bond.