

**The Love of Christ for the Church Illustrated by the Husband's Love for His Wife; Wife Responds to Aggressive Love; Marriage Isolates & Discriminates**

- (14) The apostles were the human founders of the Church in the sense they were among this mystical body's original members to which they were to add others through evangelism. As Christ loved them they were to love each other and those who would join them through conversion.
- (15) The union of the believer with Christ as the only Savior for the Church is to be illustrated by the Christian marriage: One Savior for the believer; one man for one woman.
- (16) The love that the man has for his wife is to reflect through his relationship with his wife the kind of love that the Lord shows His Church.
- (17) First the Lord expressed His love for the Church on Calvary's cross when he became a substitutionary sacrifice for the entire human race.
- (18) His act of unlimited atonement allows anyone who responds to the Gospel to enter into the Church and become a member of the Body of Christ.
- (19) Those who do respond receive the Lord's forgiveness of all presalvation sins. Their sins were judged at the cross but not forgiven until salvation.
- (20) Postsalvation sins are forgiven at rebound as illustrated by the Lord's visual-aid demonstration in the Upper Room of washing His disciples' feet.
- (21) The forgiveness of presalvation sins at salvation is illustrated by one who bathes his entire body and is thus "clean." Such is the case for the soul, now saved.
- (22) Afterward, the believer needs only to confess his postsalvation sins in order to restore fellowship with God. This is what the Lord illustrated to His disciples when He washed their feet.
- (23) In doing so He displayed not only self-sacrifice by performing an act customarily carried out by slaves but more importantly it pointed toward His ultimate sacrifice that would occur the next day.
- (24) Thus the husband is to love his wife sacrificially. He is to serve her, care for her, provide for her, and protect her—exactly the kind of things that the Lord does for the Church.
- (25) All of a husband's dealings with his wife should reflect a grace mental attitude with readiness to forgive and forget any sins or failures on her part.
- (26) On the other hand the wife is commanded in Ephesians 5:33 to respect her husband. She responds to his efforts that illustrate the love of Christ for the Church and over time she acquires a love *for* her husband.
- (27) The wife is the responder and she learns by being the recipient of her husband's love to trust him, to depend on him, and to rely on him.
- (28) Her responding love which is reciprocal follows a course of orientation and adjustment away from her lust to usurp his authority and culminates with love *for* her right man:

1. Yield: to acknowledge from Scripture the position of authority held by her husband (Genesis 3:16).

2. Submit: to acquiesce to his authority and will (Ephesians 5:22).
3. Defer: to voluntarily submit to her right man out of respect and reverence (Ephesians 5:33).
4. Love: to experience esprit de corps with her husband in compliance with the divine mandates for the corporate marriage (SOS 3:1-4: "Him whom my soul loves").

- (29) The wife's advance from yielding to authority all the way to esprit-de-corps love is gradual and develops through continued response to her husband's aggressive love.
- (30) His aggressive love for her and her submission to him is celebrated by physical sex. The husband initiates, the wife receives and responds. The act is a ritual that certifies the unique relationship between right man and right woman.
- (31) I repeat: physical sex is the unique prerogative, the exclusive right and privilege, of only those who are united in marriage.
- (32) Physical love is the private affair of one man and one woman in marriage and thus isolates them from the rest of the human race. The beauty and pleasure of physical love is sustained by the esprit de corps each possesses with the Word and plan of God.
- (33) The Christian demonstrates this esprit de corps toward others whom he selects for friends. It is usually harmful to associate with those who do not share an esprit de corps with the Word and consequently do not have esprit de corps with God.
- (34) True friends are those you can enjoy without having to worry about being betrayed. You are free to exchange opinions, ideas, and beliefs without being judged or maligned. Unconditional love is the status that maintains the esprit de corps established by mutual orientation to the Word of God.
- (35) Therefore, we discover that in all three categories of love the attribute finds its virtue in thoughts, words, and concepts that are developed from divine viewpoint.