

How to Love

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Good morning my dear friends. As many of you know, tomorrow is my dad's first death anniversary so this past year has mostly been grief for me and my times up here have been according to my feelings and needs. However, today I want to talk about love because big loses make us realize our big blessings, the people still around us. I gave this message in mother's day 2006, my first time in English. Some of you have asked me to give it again so it can be posted in our web page. The rest of you so sorry but you will like it anyway.

Ladies, the message is going to be a Valentines present for you, brothers, some of this might hurt but please pay attention and please remember that God wants you to be forgiving with your fellows (with me, in this particular case).

I've called the message "how to love the mother of your kids". Guys, I'm directing this to you because God made us responsible for it. For making it happen without faults or excuses.

Sisters please do not start pinching your poor husbands, not now and not latter while I'm talking; I have enough for them already.

The message is going to be focused on spouses but it applies to every love relationship and every love commitment. As a matter of fact, I will start with a completely different example:

A kid and his pet, I'll use a puppy as an example, but picture your own. Most of us can relate to this concept and to its implications, as kids or as parents or as both.

Picture yourself as a kid that has been nourishing the idea of having a puppy. You are now convinced and excited... there is only one problem: you have to convince your parents about it. What would their answer be, what concerns are likely? What commitments are you willing to do? Probably something like...

Conditions for having a pet

- Always enough clean, fresh water
- Feed twice a day
- Walk every day
- Clean "habitat" every day
- Bath on Saturdays
- etc. (fault-clauses perhaps)

Very often the kid, YOU in this case, accept all these responsibilities, commitments and even fault-clauses BEFORE even seeing, touching and feeling the pet! You decide to love the dog before knowing how it looks like, how it will act and how obedient will it be? Also, before knowing how many treasured and valuable toys, shoes, balls, gloves will be destroyed? Or how many favorite jeans and t-shirts will be ripped?

The kid decides to love, take care, and forgive the pet because he wants the pet. Love is not a feeling, love is a verb.

Love is not a feeling that appears inside us when we see some pretty eyes and a little tail full of enthusiasm. Love is something we decide to do, love is committed action, committed

forgiveness, committed interest in our pet's well being, in every way, every day... love is a willingness to be responsible, fulfill our promises, regardless, in spite of, etc. NOT if-behaves, if-obeyes, if-plays-my-way then I clean, feed, walk, etc.

No matter how carefully you choose a puppy, chances are: destruction, bites, disobedience and more will be part of the scene.

This is an early and simple example of committed love. Yet it is usually the first one we choose to make, important lessons of patience, tolerance and forgiveness.

Similarly, when we marry someone we know little... don't we? Perhaps the ultimate lessons of patience, tolerance and forgiveness are among marriage's fringe benefits

Before we start and before I tell you what verse we'll be analyzing, let me bring a few thoughts and verses: **Jesus words in**

John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (love is a commandment to all, with clear examples provided) **Jesus also said:**

Mark 10:9

"Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate" (God forbids us from stop loving)

And if we go to God's original plan in Genesis:

Genesis 1:28

"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (order to work as couple) **and shortly after He says:**

Genesis 2:24

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (orders with instructions) **in other words, orders to become a couple and instructions on how:**

1. We'll no longer be dependent in our parents, and start depending on our spouses for ALL our needs.
2. Man is responsible to maintain marriage by staying jointed with his wife in a way that makes them part of each other. This implies being totally dedicated to his only wife.
3. We are ordered to become physically united "become one flesh"

Ephesians 5:25

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her"(order, with example)

So we are commanded and ordered to love and become couple, clearly instructed and exemplified on how and forbidden to stop loving or being couple, how about that? and again love is not a feeling born in our heart, it is an action born in our will and in

compliance with God's will. However, we **do** have choice: do you realize that the only relative we have the opportunity of choosing is our spouse? So love is mandatory, to stop loving is forbidden but we can choose who to love for life, fair enough, sounds like a great plan to me, but wait a minute, why aren't we succeeding?

Proverbs 19:14

"Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord" a poetic version could be:

"Houses and riches are earthly blessings; a prudent wife is heavenly blessing"

Perhaps we are not listening God, we are not waiting for his blessing through a prudent wife. But most likely we are not treating her as a heavenly blessing. And the same way inheritance from fathers is diminished by squandering or increased with dedication so is our inheritance from the Lord.

The base of society is family and the base of the family is husband-wife love, commitment, understanding, etc.

If there is a group of people that should have successful marriages it's us the Christians. We have the bible, the Holy Spirit and the new commandment that Jesus gave us while he was on earth. Howard Hendricks once said, "if your Christianity doesn't work at home, then it doesn't work" If we want to be good parents, we must concentrate in being good spouses, a good team. Children learn from example, their parent's relationship is their first model of what love should be. As I'm talking to men today, if you want to be a good father, be good husband, love their mother.

FAMILY can only be EARNED, FAMILY stands for Father And Mother I Love You

Now I'm going to tell you our passage... Let's see what Peter, a married man, has to say about this:

1 Peter 3:7

"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered".

There are 4 ingredients we need to provide in our relationship:

I. COMMITMENT. Husbands...

A. A husband is a married man, to one wife. Let's check out the size of this commitment:

- If one of you sells a car to another, what's needed? Both to agree, maybe a paper you both sign. Witness? Maybe a mechanic friend the buyer brought (we'll call him witness) 2+1 what's the chances of the agreement to be broken afterwards? Less than 5%
- How about a house? Both parts to agree, probably an appraiser, a bank representative, a notary public, 2 witnesses that signs (signer) and hopefully a

realtor. 6+2 before a Notary Public. What are the chances of the agreement to be broken afterwards? Less than 5%

- And a big company? In addition to a greater amount there are technology agreements, union obligations, patents, etc. which need to be addressed independently and together. Chances are that you'll have a couple dozens involved, including company, union and state representatives, lawyers, etc and signing before several law representatives. (Chamber of commerce, ministry of union-company affairs, etc.) what's the chances of the agreement to be broken afterwards? Less than 5%
- What kind of agreement or commitment requires between 50 and thousands of witnesses and needs to be made before a judge and before God? Marriage men, marriage. **THAT IS THE SIZE OF OUR COMMITMENT!** something like ...I promise to be committed to you in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, until death would part us... in other words, I will always love you. Very sadly, what are the chances of this agreement to be broken afterwards? 50%

Commitment is your personal guarantee that you will do what you promised, totally not partially, when we marry we promise to make one woman happy, for life. PERIOD

II. COMPANIONSHIP ...dwell with them... brothers, it says "with them", not "in spite of them", nor "beside them" nor "bothering them", nor "thanks to them"

- Many marriages suffer from not spending enough time together. Careers, other women, and other external interests have destroyed families. If you want to show your kids that you love their mother, you need to spend time with her. Again the first example of couple and parents is us.
- A typical scene. Dad arrives, eats, does his things, check the news, watches TV, goes out with friends... this sends a message: other things are more important than my wife and my kids. We all have little time, but a significant part of that time must be with her and them. WITH, doing things together, sharing common interests, living together in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer together, etc.

COMPANIONSHIP, Solid relations are built by spending time together.

III. UNDERSTANDING...with understanding...

- Marriage requires sensitivity. I found this funny description of the women's physical and chemical properties: for the same unknown reasons, it can boil or freeze spontaneously; it melts if treated carefully, but becomes bitter if treated inappropriately. So brothers treat them carefully.

Proverbs 21:9

"Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman"

- There is a joke that describes this, sorry sisters, please forgive me. I promise to restore you before the message finishes and your dear husbands hang me from Casa Buena's tallest tree: do you know what is the difference between a enchantress and a witch? 15 years of marriage! But brothers WE cause it to happen, not them.

Proverbs 15:1

“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger”

- It is mostly if not solely us husbands and the way we treat them what can makes them boil or freeze, melt or become bitter.
- A woman in love is unlikely to freeze or become bitter.

Proverbs 15:13

“A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken”

- We have to be sensitive to their feelings, their states of mind, their tastes, fears, etc. especially in difficult times, in sickness, for poorer and in those challenging days.
- One of the most difficult responsibilities of men is to perceive and distinguish their wife’s needs and respond wisely and nicely. However it is our obligation and we have promised to do it.
- There is a saying in Mexico, something like “love me more when I deserve it the least, because that’s when I need it the most”, so as funny as it sounds, maybe tender loving care is needed the most when we are dwelling in a corner of our housetop...
- An important part of understanding is the physical, the following verses are almost 2,000 years old, so I’ll need you to point out all the inequalities or submissions...

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control”.

- So if we can only deprive from one another for fasting and prayer, when do we eat or work? I’m joking...
- It’s pretty obvious that we must be willing to give affection and to please one another, always.
- What’s not so obvious is that it ALSO applies to holding hands, kissing, hugging “talk to me” “hold me”, etc. wherever I have authority over your body and whatever impedes Satan from tempting, lets do it!
- Furthermore, if you have a toothache, I will take you to the dentist, If you have a backache I will massage your back

Now that we understand each other, Ephesians 5:28 becomes obvious, mutual and is equally truth if inverted.

Ephesians 5:28

“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself”.

Three more to go:

IV. CONSIDERATION... giving honor to the wife... (...as to the weaker vessel, how's this?)

- Paul doesn't tell us exactly. However it is very clear that women are different than men and those differences are to be HONORED, not taken advantage of.
- You husband are to honor those differences and respect your wife as a woman.
- If we are different from each other, chances are some things we won't be able to understand from each other, we still have to honor them and respect them.
- It is our responsibility to love our wives stressing her qualities as a woman.
- Also remember that some of those differences attracted us to them, made us flirt with them, make crazy things to get their attention. Not to mention all we went through to get that first kiss. We should always continue to spoil them that way, make them feel loved, respected admired, desired, etc

A guy (maybe one of you tomorrow) took a bath, put perfume, dressed up and bought flowers for his wife. When he arrived home to surprise her, she opened the door and said: That's the last straw! I've had a bad day: the boy was in the hospital, got two stitches in the knee. Your mother called, she's coming for a week. The dishwasher broke and just what I needed, you coming home drunk!

- We must accept with shame that our wife is not used to us being romantic, trying to win her heart, flirting etc. Lets change that brothers.

Honor your wife

V. WE ARE A TEAM ...as being heirs together of the grace of life...

- We should respect her as a Christian woman. It is our duty to lead her, help her and support her spiritually. We share the same blessings and have the same eternal importance.
- Her prayers are as effective as ours, she can use her spiritual gifts as effectively, not to mention what our joint prayers and spiritual gifts can accomplish together.
- We should pray for her, teach the Word to her learn with her.
- And of course while she is fully equal in Christ, she is physically weaker and in need of protection, provision and strength from her husband. So be there.

Be WITH your wife. TEAM stands for Together Everybody Achieves More

OTHERWISE "...that your prayers may not be hindered".

Peter ends with a warning every husband must take pretty seriously and attend carefully.

Pay attention:

What Peter is saying here is that it is so important for God for you husband to keep healthy spiritual and conjugal relation with your wife that the quality of our relation with Him relies on it.

So guys: what is it that we can't fail on?

!!! In living a relationship that is full of commitment, companionship, comprehension, understanding, respect, wisdom, fellowship, fun, romanticism, and fulfillment in every way!!!

In much simpler words:

1. LOVE the mother of your kids...

- 2. How?**
- 3. A lot, always and nicely!**
- 4. Thanks to all my dear brothers and sisters. Have a wonderful week!**