

A HUSBAND'S LOVE FOR HIS WIFE.

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Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.
— Ephesians 5:25

What was Christ's love like?

1. Initiating Love

The love that came to us was initiated by God Himself. There is nothing inherently appealing or attractive in a sinful human that prompted God to love him. The love of Christ came solely from His sovereign initiative and from His free choice. God did not wait for humans to become lovely and respond to His love, but Christ Himself proved that His was a supreme, initiating love.

2. Sacrificial Love

Jesus Christ came into the world to give His life a ransom for many. He came to die. His was a life of obedience *so that* He might die a death of obedience to the Father and as a substitute for men. The love of Christ showed itself in that He gave Himself for others. He sacrificed Himself. He did not wait for convenience, and even when it was totally inconvenient, Christ still sacrificed for His bride, the church.

3. Unconditional Love

Christ loves with no conditional promises. He never says: "I will love you *if...*" His is always an unconditional love towards His elect and He loves perfectly, fully, entirely, everlastingly, and supremely with no qualifiers, with no stipulations, with no conditions. He loves His own unilaterally and even when the Bride sins and fails and stumbles, He remains loving toward her.

4. Delightful Love

The love of Christ delights His bride. No love can compare with the love from this Bridegroom! Just as Christ delights His bride and ravishes her with His glory, beauty and dazzling charms, so the husband should love his wife with a delightful love. His love delights the heart, it wins the affections, it woos the heart, it engages the person. The love of Christ satisfies His people!

5. Eternal Love

Jesus never loves temporarily. His love shall never grow cold. He never loves partially or merely for an occasion. The love of Christ cannot be manipulated or coerced. His love for His own lasts forever. It will endure as long as the everlasting ages will exist. His love is so strong and mighty that even the duration of this age cannot exhaust the glories of Christ's love. His goes on throughout all eternity as it never diminishes, lessens, weakens, grows cold, or fades. It exists eternally!

6. Providing Love

Jesus provides everything that His church needs. He came to live a life in her stead. He came to die a death in her stead. He came to rise from the dead for her justification. He ascended to heaven to intercede for her. Christ's love provides all that could ever be needed to procure the Bride's redemption. He provides for His church in all that she could ever need — both spiritually and physically. So the husband must love his wife with this kind of providing love.

7. Protecting Love

Christ Jesus promises to guard His people till heaven dawns. Nothing and no one could ever pluck a child of God out of the hand of Christ! His love protects. His love keeps. His love preserves. His love procures and secures. The love that Christ has for each of His blood-bought sheep is a jealous, protecting, preserving, and secure love. None can break in and loosen His grip on His people. His grip never loosens, it never grows weak, he never gives up on His people.

8. Complete Love

The love that Jesus displayed is one that endures 'to the max' or 'to the end.' The love of Christ is defined by completeness. It lacks nothing. It is full, whole, entire, and it lacks nothing good. Christ's love completely engulfs His Bride leaving no part of her unexposed to His perfect and full love. Christ's unbounded, unrestrained and unlimited love pours down upon His Bride fully!

9. Promising Love

Promises abound in the Scriptures from the lips of Christ to His Bride regarding her future glory. Christ verbally communicates with His Bride and He manifoldly vows to guard her, to keep her, to sanctify her, to feed her, to gladden her, to glorify her, to empower her, and to use her! One strains to even count the abundance of promises in Scripture that Christ makes to His Bride. The love of Christ is a promising, hopeful, guaranteeing, communicating and sure love!

10. Sanctifying Love

Christ builds His church. He strengthens the building as His people mature and grow in Christ. He cherishes His bride and washes her in the Word. He calls upon His people to feed upon Him; yes, to even eat Him! He provides daily sustenance for His people *in Himself*. Man does not live on bread alone but on every word from God's mouth. He surely builds and sanctifies His Bride!

11. Cherishing Love

Jesus Christ cherishes His Bride. He passionately loves Her. He tenderly loves her. He zealously loves her. He jealously loves her. Christ has such a profound and preeminent love for His Bride that He will protect her from any and all foes. He loves to manifest Himself *in* and *through* His Bride. He cherishes her and she knows it. Christ speaks of her frequently. He tells her how much He loves her repeatedly. And Christ lavishes her with ample promises of future hope!

12. Intimate Love

No relationship ever comes close to the intimacy that Jesus Christ has with His Bride, the Church. The union that believers enjoy with their Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, is unspeakably close, intimate, and loving. No other lovers ever come between the love that Christ has for His Bride. No rivals exist. There is no plan B. There is no option of leaving the Bride, the Church, and going after another. The love of Christ for His elect-people is an intimate love. They are so close that the relationship can be viewed as them being 'one.' Christ loves nothing more than His Church. There are no programs, no others, indeed nothing in all creation, that He loves more than the Church.

13. Preeminent Love

The best love that one could ever experience is the perfect, supreme, preeminent love from Christ. His love is preeminent. Other human relationships pale in comparison to this relationship with Christ. Other lovers cannot begin to match the perfect love Christ has for His Bride. His love towers in height over all other loves. His love spans the breadth of all the universe and far surpasses any other love one could give. It goes deeper than any other love one has ever dreamed of. The love of Christ cannot be measured. It is preeminent, perfect, lavish, abundant, ever-flowing, rich, and divine. And this is the love Christ willingly and perfectly gives to His own.

14. Deliberate Love

To love is to sacrificially give oneself for another. Christ does not just 'happen' to love some people. His love is not an accidental, occasional, situational, or happenstance love. His love doesn't just happen. Christ deliberately loves His own and He intentionally loves them. No one ever crafted such an amazing picture of true love more than Christ did. He thought of how he could love His Bride. He went after her willingly, passionately, zealously. He sought her, He bought her, and He got her for Himself! He deliberately loved her even when He was tired, betrayed, lonely, feeling the approaching trials and troubles. Yet love won and His intentional and willful love gave Himself on behalf of His bride for her good, for her benefit, for her joy and her glory.

15. Singular Love

Fickle man pursues other lovers. The heart of men runs after other lovers that appear to satisfy and provide pleasure. But Christ's love is singular. He loves His Bride savingly, perfectly, supremely, and singularly. There are no other lovers in this relationship between Christ and His Bride. No one even comes close to winning His attention, His affection, His delights, His time, and His affection. His love for the Bride whom He sought and bought is a singular love. No rivals exist. No other lovers can be found. No one doubts this. His love for His Church is profoundly faithful and supremely singular. Husbands must see Christ's love and emulate this love for their wives.

16. Public Love

Christ publicly displayed His love for His people. He died for her publicly, outside the gate. He was even mocked in so doing. Many despised Him and ridiculed Him. Many reviled Him and spoke evil of Him in this perfect, divine act of supreme, self-giving love (at Calvary). Yet His love for His Bride was public, perfect, verifiable, undeniable, and lavish. Christ showed the perfect

kind of love — a self-giving of oneself to another regardless of how the recipient receives, recognizes, reciprocates, or expresses gratitude — toward His elect when He died for her at the hands of ruthless blasphemers. No one could deter Christ from His love. He loved His bride publicly so all could see the willful commitment He had for His Bride. He loves publicly and unashamedly.

17. Forgiving Love

God promises to never remember the sins of His people and never to call them to account. He never keeps a list of wrongs and never — ever! — says: “*Yes, but remember when you just did that last week...*” His love is a forgiving love. He takes all the offenses of those whom He redeemed and casts them into the depths of the sea because He paid the price for it. He holds no grudges. He is never bitter or resentful over her sin. He never keeps the record of wrongs and piles them up to use against us in a ‘blowup moment.’ He forgives. He chooses to not think on it anymore. He promises to never hold His Bride accountable for her offenses. Why? Because she is forgiven. He took her sins, her burden, her iniquities, her wrath, her punishment, her hell. His love forgives. Unquestionable forgiveness, unending forgiveness is what Christ gives. He never retaliates nor does He ever strive to get even. He forgives and actively chooses to not bring it up again to Himself, to her, or to others. This is a perfect, forgiving, supreme and divine love.

18. Relentless Love

Christ’s love chases after His sweet Bride. Like a marathon runner, the love of Christ swiftly and purposefully runs after the prize. And what is that prize? That Christ would have the full harvest of those whom He redeemed in glory one day who surround His throne and worship Him forevermore. His love is relentless. Like an ever-flowing fountain, Christ’s love is ever-flowing. Like a massive waterfall, so the love of Christ bursts down upon the heads of His elect. His love never runs dry, it never runs thin, it never stops pursuing, it never wanes dry, nor does it ever become cold. His love hotly and passionately pursues *one* lover: His Bride, the Church.

Concluding Exhortation:

The love of Christ is described by all of the above phrases. The way that He has loved *you, O Christian man*, is the same kind of love that God calls you to lavishly demonstrate to your wives. God does not call you receive this love from Him *only*. He calls and commands and commissions and *strengthens* you to receive the love that He has shown you *so that* you can love your wife in this same way. So husbands, examine the kind of love that you should have for your wives. What is your love for her currently like? What would *she* say if she were to describe your love toward her? Where can you grow? Where can you change? Where must you repent: first to God, then to your spouse? The delightfulness of looking at the husband’s duty of loving the wife is that it absolutely and powerfully drives you to the gospel *constantly*. When you thank God for the gospel of grace and how God lavished love and mercy upon you, you should consider how you should turn around and demonstrate this same kind of love toward your precious gift from God, your wife. Love her! Lavish affection on her! Singularly pursue her as your supreme lover! Passionately and deliberately love her. Sanctify her in Christ! Seek God’s help, then love your wife! Feed on Christ each day and preach the gospel to your soul. And then love your bride!