

- **\*Read Philippians 2:1-8\*** This, our main focus text for this year, is so rich and full of things for us to learn and applications for us to make from it. As we have focused on discussing how we can better serve our God, His Kingdom, and our fellow man...we would be remiss to not take a lesson and focus on how we can better serve our marriages and our spouses. This text can serve as a great springboard for how we can become better in our service to our spouses.
- When we read Scripture, we come to understand the value and importance that God puts on the marital relationship. It was the first institution that was established on this earth way back with Adam and Eve. It is the union that is to bring forth offspring that are to replenish and fill the earth. It is the union that Paul uses in order to explain the relationship that Jesus has with His church in Ephesians 5. Certainly, we must be impressed with how highly God holds this all important union between man and woman, husband and wife.
- Now...let's also recognize that not everyone here this morning is married. Some are not there yet because of age, some because of choice, and others because of circumstance. Others have been married at one time and will recognize the need for these ways of service. While not everyone will be able to take these things we discuss today and put them into practice...everyone will have the chance to consider first the example of Jesus in this text so that they might be moved to strive to be more like Him in all of the other areas of their lives where these things can be put into practice. With these thoughts in mind, let's consider 3 things that Jesus did that we can do as men and women to serve our spouses better.

## I. Lead By Example

### A. Jesus is the perfect example for us to follow. **(2:5)**

1. This is really the point that Paul is trying to get across in this text. He is encouraging the Philippians (and by extension us) to be like Jesus in their mindsets and attitudes towards one another.
2. Jesus's attitude towards us was and is one of perfect love and care. He was willing to give up so much, to come to earth, and show His humility towards us through his sacrifice on the cross. **(2:6-8)**
3. Then even before that death on the cross, Jesus lead by example by showing us how to overcome the temptations and lusts of this world. Because of His example we are able to look to Him as our high priest and be filled with the courage and confidence that we can overcome the temptations and trials that Satan will try to put before us. **(Heb. 4:15)**
4. Jesus strove to lead by example for us here on this earth and we can continually look to how He handled situations and be encouraged to imitate His victories over this world.

### B. As a husband, I can lead by example in my marriage and help my spouse to grow to be more like Jesus. The same can also be said for the wife, as well.

1. The goal of every disciple who is in a marital relationship ought to be to help their spouse get to heaven. I can help achieve this goal of helping my spouse get to heaven by the way that I live. If I live well and according to the way that Jesus expects me to live then I can help encourage my spouse to do the same thing.
2. Think about it from the other way side. Is there anything that can discourage a disciple more than for their spouse to be unfaithful in their service to God? The influence of the unfaithful spouse can have a dramatic effect on the faith of the one who is trying to do the right thing on a daily basis. The unfaithfulness of one spouse can certainly drag down the faith of the other.
3. However, let it also be noted that the opposite can also be true, and this is shown to us in Scripture. Consider the writing of Peter in **I Peter 3:1,2**. Peter says that a faithful female disciple can help to sway her unbelieving and disobedient husband to the Lord by her behavior. She can lead her husband to the Lord through her faithful example to the Lord.
4. Marriage is about two individuals trying to navigate through this life together in such a way that they can both be in heaven when this life is over. I can serve my spouse by leading her to heaven through my faithful example, and I learn how to lead by example by following the perfect example of Jesus.

## II. Fulfill My Role

### A. Jesus fulfilled the role that only He could fulfill in the redemption of mankind.

1. It was through Jesus giving His life on the cross that man could find salvation and forgiveness of their sins. The sacrifice of Jesus wasn't the first sacrifice that had ever been made for the purpose of atonement, but it was the perfect sacrifice that would only need to be made once for all men.

2. The sacrifice of bulls and goats served the purpose of temporary atonement, but those sacrifices had to be made year after year. **(Heb. 10:1-4)** Jesus fulfilled a role that the bulls and goats could not. He gave Himself as the perfect lamb of sacrifice that only needed to be given once. **(Heb. 9:11-14)**
  3. If Jesus had not been willing to fulfill the role that only He could fill then we would be a people most pitiful without any hope.
- B. In my marriage, I must fulfill the role that God has given me to fulfill.
1. God has designated that the man lead and love his wife in all that he does within his marital relationship. **(Eph. 5:23-29)** I must embrace my role as a husband and serve my wife well by fulfilling the role that God has given to me.
  2. Likewise, the wife must fulfill the role that God has given her to follow and respect her husband. **(Eph. 22,24,33)** When one or both spouses fail to fulfill the roles that God has given them then dysfunction will reign within the marriage.
  3. A husband who fails to lead will force his wife to take on a role that is not hers. A husband who fails to love his wife fails to serve her natural needs as a woman within their relationship. A wife who fails to follow or respect her husband will only cause her husband to resent her disrespect or he will shrink away from his leadership responsibility.
  4. A failure on either side of the marriage relationship will cause problems. Therefore, I must serve my spouse well by fulfilling my role in the marriage so that she is not pushed to have to pick up the slack and overstep her role within the marital relationship that God has designed.

### III. Sacrifice of Myself

- A. Again, Paul's main point of this text is to draw the readers mind to the humility of Jesus and this great attitude that we all ought to have for others.
1. "Do nothing from selfishness" is Paul's admonishment. **(2:3)** "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." Paul says. **(2:4)** His reasoning for admonishment is the fact that this was first the approach of Jesus towards all other people.
  2. Jesus didn't just give some of himself to others, but He gave fully of Himself for all other people. He was not looking out for His own desires and wants but wholly for our needs as sinners.
  3. Again, His example serves as our perfect example to follow. And His example of sacrifice is rooted in the greatest thing of all....love.
- B. Marriage is built upon the love of one individual for another, and that love ought to push us to love as Jesus loves and therefore sacrifice of ourselves for our spouses.
1. As a husband, if I want to serve my spouse in the way that God expects me to then I need to sacrifice and give of myself for the happiness and health of my spouse. For many this seems silly because then the relationship will be one-sided, but this just simply isn't the case if both spouses are giving of themselves for the other.
  2. If a husband is giving himself fully for his wife, and if his wife is giving of herself fully for him then every one is taken care of. But the thing about this is that it takes great effort on the part of each partner in order for the needs of the other to be taken care of. The lazy spouse never takes the time to consider the needs of his/her spouse and this leads to there being a spouse with needs unfulfilled. The selfish spouse doesn't care enough to give of his/herself in order to serve his/her spouse. These situations are nothing more than recipes for disaster within the marital relationship.
  3. Paul and Jesus, both expect for the husband and wife to give sacrifice of themselves so that the needs of their spouse might be fulfilled. Paul gave of himself for the disciples he loved so dearly, and certainly Jesus showed His love for us through His giving of Himself on the cross so that our need for salvation might be fulfilled.

Certainly, there is much to be learned from the writings of Paul and the example of Jesus. Both wrote and acted with the goal in mind of having all people to do as they ought to do no matter where they are in this life. If a person is a spouse then Paul and Jesus both expect for them to lead by example, fulfill their role, and sacrifice of themselves. Jesus first did these things and Paul expected for disciples to follow the lead of their Master. May God help us to serve our spouses well just as Jesus first served us well. May we do these things and therefore fulfill our goals of serving our spouses in such a way that we both will make heaven our home in the next life.