**WHEN LOVE IS GONE**

***Husband, It’s On You***

The couple sat across from my desk at 45-degree angles so as not to even look at each other. The tension was thick enough to cut with a butcher’s knife. Silence reigned in my office. Finally, the husband spoke: “The flame has died out. There is not even a spark of love left. We are filing for divorce immediately.” Then again, silence.

This setting is seen every day all across the country. Marriage counselors and preachers hear it all too much. The family has eroded. Divorce is rampant. Sadly, the church has not been immune from this tragedy. Many in the kingdom of God are falling prey to the same sinful actions. Nearly everyone of you reading this have been affected either directly or indirectly by the scourge of divorce.

Okay, suppose you are the counselor or preacher on the other side of that desk from this couple. What do you say in reply to this man’s claim and declaration? What do you tell a couple who say love is gone and the marriage is over?

I’ll tell you what I do. I look the husband straight in the eye and say with boldness, “Sir, since you say love is gone from your home, then when do you plan to bring it back?” Then I remain silent and wait for his reply. As far as I’m concerned, the woman is not even a part of this conversation. I put the full burden upon the husband, knowing I have God’s full blessing of approval for this response. Here’s why.

John wrote, “***Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another … We love Him because He first loved us***.” (I John 4:11,19)

What do these two verses teach? They say that when we had no love for Jesus Christ, He loved us anyway. When we were in complete rebellion toward Him, He took the initiative to say graphically from the cross, “I Love You!”

Think about that when you read Ephesians 5:25. “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it*.” The love of a husband is modeled by Christ’s love for His bride the church. He loved her when she didn’t love Him. There was no 50 / 50 proposition in this sacred marriage. He committed Himself 100% to her, whether she responded to Him or not.

The church can feel total commitment and complete security in Christ’s love, knowing He will never stop loving us. That is exactly the love a husband is commanded to have for his wife. Even if she has stopped loving him, he can never stop loving her. If love has died in the marriage, it is the sworn duty of the husband to bring it back!

Husbands, whether we like this or not, the burden rests squarely on our shoulders to make sure that love is ever present in our marriage and home. We cannot shun this clear and present command. *AGAPE* is the Greek word here for love – and it carries with it the concept of unconditional commitment to someone. It is the word of John 3:16 that says, “For God so *loved* the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

When the marriage has spiraled downward to nothing more than constant bickering and fault-finding, when every conversation results in the use of the D-word (divorce), then let this be clearly understood, God will bring the husband to account for this failure. Yes, the wife is surely condemned in this too, but Paul’s admonition to the husband in Ephesians 5 puts the ultimate responsibility upon him to show leadership and restore love to the relationship. Anything less than this will bring damnation upon him, for he has violated his vows before God.

Husbands, I strongly encourage you to open your Bible and read out loud and with feeling I Peter 3:7. Go ahead, I’ll wait…

“*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*.”

When love is gone from your marriage, it is your God-given duty to not only show unconditional love to your wife, but to “*give honor*” to her as an heir with you in the grace of God. If you fail in this, your prayers will not be heard, and your salvation will be in jeopardy. Dwell with her with understanding by repeatedly demonstrating the love of Christ to her.

When love is gone, do something about it. Love her unconditionally. It could save her soul, and yours.

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