Christ's Love – A Model to Copy

Taken from Saturday Evening Post - "The Seven Stages of the Married Cold"

A Husband's Reaction to his wife's cold

First year -
"Sugar Dumpling, I'm really worried about my baby girl. You've got a bad sniffle and there's no telling about these things, with all that strep going around. I'm putting you in the hospital this afternoon for a general check-up and a good rest. I know the food's lousy, but I'll be bringing your meals in from Rosinni's. I've already got it all arranged with the floor superintendent."

Second year-
"Listen, Darling, I don't like the sound of that cough, and I've called Doc Miller to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please, just for papa."

Third year -
"Maybe you better lie down, Honey. Nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I'll bring you something. Have we got any canned soup?"

Fourth year -
"Now, look, dear, be sensible. After you've fed the kids and got your dishes done and the floor finished, you'd better lie down."

Fifth year -
"Why don't you take a couple of aspirin?"

Sixth year -
"If you'd just gargle or something instead of sitting around barking like a seal all evening!"

Seventh year -
"Stop sneezing! What are you trying to do - give me pneumonia??"

. . . A funny look at a not so funny reality.

(Funny picture of before marriage and after marriage)

Regarding the Last Days Jesus made this prediction: Mt 24:12 NASB - "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.) There is a direct connection between lawlessness (sin) and lovelessness. "without natural affection" is a mark of the last days.

God has equipped His people with a capacity the world does not have. He has put His Spirit in our hearts and His Word in our minds so that we can fulfill His expectation to love each other. Both Husbands and Wives are expected to love each other (despite the world's failure to do so).

Two primary words translated “love” in the N.T. (Agape & Philia; Verb forms – Agapao and Phileo)

The Wife’s love for her husband – Titus 2:4 (read and comment)
The older women are to teach the younger women to show an affectionate type of love (Phileo) (Titus 2:4 – Philandros – Husband Lovers). This is a more emotional, feeling type of love which also gives, but does so with feeling.
While agape emphasizes action, phileo emphasizes attitude (as it sets the mood of comfort and peace).

The Husband’s love for his wife – Eph. 5:25-33 (read and comment)
It is interesting that the love Husbands are to commanded to give to their wives is agape (a volitional choice or act of the will type of love which gives) (Ephesians 5:25-33).

How should I relate to my spouse? Answer: The same way Jesus does with His Spouse.
WWJD = What would Jesus do?

See: Ephesians 5 – Marriage (and the Love within marriage) is ultimately a picture (a small microcosm) of Christ’s marriage to His people. The Church is called “the bride of Christ”

It was Christ’s prayer that we have the same love God the Father has for His Son:
“and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

I. Christ Loves us <u>UNCONDITIONALLY</u>

Deut. 7:7-9
7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,
8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant…” (NASB)

Ezek. 16:3-f
'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem, "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.
4 "As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths.
5 "No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born.
6 "When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you *while you were* in your blood,

'Live!'
When God set His love upon us, it was not due to anything good or desirable in us. It was not based on what we did or would do (Titus 3:4 - f

But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared,
5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in
righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration
and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the*
hope of eternal life.

The kind of love God expects the husband to have is <u>not</u> dependent upon the <u>worthiness</u> of the wife. This love, as ultimately exemplified by God, is a love that gives even when the recipient of that love is an unworthy, evil wretch (Rom. 5:8).

There are "no strings attached" to agape love. So why should we love our spouse? Our motive is obedience to God.

Illustration: The Valentine's Banquet at Emmanuel.
The pastor asked the men: "Give one reason you love your wife"
Various responses followed: She cooks…looks…cleans…mothers…is so romantic etc.
My reply: "I love her because God told me to"

It's not, "I will love her <u>if</u> she . . . retains her youthful figure, cooks like Betty Crocker, cleans like the world's greatest custodian; hugs and kisses like she did on your honeymoon, etc. etc."

NOTE: Your motive for loving your wife is <u>obedience</u> and <u>love</u> for God! Not the attitude changes it may bring in your spouse, nor for any other immediate reward you may be hoping for. if your motive is what you can get, then you will tend to love as long as you are getting the desired results. Your love will be fickle, on & off, conditioned by selfish motives.

II. Christ Loves us <u>SACRIFICIALLY</u>

His Love gave us what we did not deserve…

He Graciously <u>Sacrificed Himself</u> for His bride

"and <u>gave Himself</u> for her" (Eph. 5:25)

Why did Christ <u>sacrifice</u> Himself for the Church?

a. Christ sacrificed Himself so that He could have a <u>special</u> relationship with His Bride

"Sanctify" = to set apart

"The Lord Jesus cherishes for the Church a peculiar affection, which is set upon her above the rest of mankind. . . The elect Church is the favorite of heaven, the treasure of Christ, the crown of His head, the bracelet of His arm, the breastplate of His heart, the very center and core of His love." (Spurgeon)

How special is your wife to you?
You have a very special relationship with your wife which you share with no other.

b. Christ sacrificed Himself so that He could have a <u>spiritual</u> relationship with His Bride

He gave Himself for the spiritual purity He desired in His Church.

If you love your wife, you will desire her to be pure. You will want her to be Godly, not worldly.

Love wants what is <u>best</u> for the one it loves.

Love never <u>defiles</u> the one it loves; rather, love desires <u>purity</u>.

If you love your wife, you will not put her in circumstances where her purity might be jeopardized. Nor will you ever commit adultery.

What will you give up for your wife's spiritual growth?

Will you sacrifice time and effort to see that your family serves the Lord? (Joshua 24:15)

III. Christ loves us **PERMANENTLY**

A continual love which will never end.

God said to Israel, Jer 31:3 "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."

John 13:1 NASB - Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Heb. 13:5 – "…for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

Eph. 5:31 (Quoting Gen. 2:24) – "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined (glued or cemented) to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (Mal. 2:16)

He has entered into a covenant with His people and it cannot be annulled.

Romans 8:35 - Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36 Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."
37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And we should do likewise!

DEPOSIT BEFORE WITHDRAWAL

Why do so many people have successful courting or dating relationships and unsuccessful marriages?

1) The realization of many of the faults of the other person are more apparent after some time has gone by; Infatuation fades.
2) Tendency is to take each other for granted after marriage
3) The assurance of "wedlock" has a tendency to lead some to not try to please the spouse as when the relationship was uncertain in the days of courtship
4) When courting a girl, you don't want to mess up; you try hard to please; you work out difficulties & conflicts; You are more conscientious about the "little things" that build relationships

*5) Basically, to summarize: You worked at the relationship then; You perhaps prayed more; worked more; wrote more; talked more; gave more; forgave more; spent more time with each other; spent more money on each other etc… YOU DEPOSITED MORE! And as a result you REAPED MORE of the benefits of your relationship.

Illustration: Going to the Bank and not being able to withdraw money because of a lack in your account.

* You Must Deposit into your marriage before you can Withdraw blessings from your marriage

Principle: Sowing & Reaping

Galatians 6:7

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

The neighbors' lawn (greener than mine because he works on his)

Let's deposit in our marriage:

Words of Kindness (please, thank you, etc)
Forgiveness (Will you forgive me; I forgive you)
Tokens of Affection (lots of kisses & hugs; flowers & notes)
Expressions of grace (gifts)
Time
Prayer