



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

September 14, 2014

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
865-354-0855

Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

HUSBANDS

One of the most touching remarks about a woman's basic needs was spoken by Jacob's unloved wife Leah. Upon giving birth to her firstborn son, she said, "*surely now my husband will love me*" (**Genesis 29:32**). What Leah yearned for is actually the birthright of every wife, that is, to be loved by her husband. No believing wife with a believing husband should ever feel compelled to say about this subject, "*surely now...*"

According to the Bible, a husband's love is not measured out, based on his wife's performance. It is a constant anchor in a covenant relationship, expressed in word and deed.

It is an easy thing to love someone on your wedding day. In the first bloom of marriage, who cannot obey the wise man and "*rejoice in the wife of your youth*" (**Proverbs 5:18**)? But honeymoons give way to anniversaries, and children's birthdays soon supersede them both. Over time, expensive weddings cannot mask cheap marriages. And over time, husbands can forget what God says about loving their wives.

A husband must leave and cleave (**Genesis 2:24**), but it is much more than merely sticking with the marriage arrangement. In fact, God has so defined a husband's love that we husbands should squirm uncomfortably when we read it.

Elkanah claimed to treat Hannah better than ten sons would treat her (**I Samuel 1:8**). But neither Elkanah, nor Abraham, nor Peter are our models as husbands. Our model is how Jesus (the husband) loves the church (His bride).

Paul insists that we love our wives as our own bodies – as ourselves. It is a self-sacrificing love, independent of her response and attitude, that many men are just not willing to give (**Ephesians 5:25**).

Look closely at how you treat your wife. If the words "nourish and cherish" don't come to mind, perhaps you need to repent. Perhaps most of us should!

Jim King

SWEET WORDS

Sweet words come in many forms, but some seem particularly obvious.

Expressions of appreciation: "Thank you." "I appreciate that." "I appreciate you."

Both offers of and requests for help: "Can I help you?" "I need your help." "Can you help me, please?"

Expressions of love and connection: "I love you." "I value our friendship." "I'm glad I know you."

Words of repentance and restoration: "I was wrong." "I'm sorry." "Please forgive me."

It's amazing how easily these words come to some and how difficult they are for others. We know there are many reasons for this. We learn so much from our respective families of origin. Those of us who were blessed with excellent models as children have tremendous advantage. Those who were shown a bad pattern but chose God's better way merit special commendation. It's such a challenge to live better than we were reared.

Some are born with sweeter, more thoughtful dispositions than others. I used to think that every child was born with a "blank slate" and became what parents taught him to become. While never denigrating the power of godly parenting, I'm now certain that aspects of personality have strong genetic links. I'm just as sure that a measure of sweetness can be learned. If one of the "sons of thunder" could become the apostle of love, each of us can grow with God's help. Some pay too much attention to gender stereotypes and cultural expectations.

One of the devil's most effective lies is that real men don't say, "I love you." Another is – to quote the famous movie line, "Don't apologize. It's a sign of weakness." But we know that righting a wrong is really a spiritual strength. Saying "I love you" is powerful every time that it's true. At least to some degree, our words have performative power. We want to live up to our words. Saying the right things can move us one step closer to doing the right thing.

Some suffer having their sweet, heartfelt words rejected. None of us like to feel "bit." We remember the pain, and logic tells us to avoid the pain by stopping the behavior that caused it. How we need to be careful! Sweet, honest, heart-felt words don't cause rejection. The rejection comes from inside the rejecter. We cannot control how others respond to us or our words. Some have not practiced sweet words enough to feel comfortable with them. Practice tends to improve our comfort level, but getting started can be a major challenge. For some, the key is to practice before speaking. For others, a key might be putting sweet words into print – sweet cards, notes, letters, texts, and tweets – before verbalizing them. The real key is getting unstuck, finding the courage to move from good intentions to good actions. One suggestion for starting: If you have thought something sweet but have not yet said it, find a way. Break the ice. Take the risk. Use the energy from your success to win the next victory. Sweet words come from sweet hearts. Sweet words often sweeten our hearts. And God loves sweet, faithful, loving hearts (**Psalms 119:103**).

Bill Bagents