

A GREATER LOVE

By Lloyd Biddle



“Now Jacob loved Rachel and he said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to you than I should give her to another man. Stay with me. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed but a few days to him because of the love he had for her.”

Genesis 29:18-20

I love the biblical love story about Jacob and Rachel. When I read that the seven years Jacob worked to receive Rachel’s hand in marriage seemed like only a few days to him, it inspires me. It inspires me to give my wife a greater love.

My wife is no ordinary woman, and neither is yours. Deborah was hand picked by God to be my perfect helpmate, life-long companion and only love. She is most

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certainly the heart of my home, the object of my undying affection and a central subject of my thoughts. God wants husbands to be deeply in love with their wives. After all, His word declares: *"Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."* (Ephesians 5:25) God intended for husbands to set themselves apart in Christ to love their wives in a manner consistent with the gospel so that they would be a living representation of God's love for the church. The apostle Paul calls this *"a great mystery"*. When I think all this through, I am left with the idea that my love for Deborah ought to be comparable to God's amazing love for me. His love for me cost Him his life. What a tremendously high and holy standard this is!

Husbands, God has given us a great calling, a challenge and an opportunity to love our wives like he loves each of us, like he loves His universal church. And although exploring the depths of this high calling is more than I can accomplish in this short article, I want to leave you with three things that can get you started on giving your wife a greater love.

The first thing is to remember how much you really want your wife. Going back to the story of Jacob and Rachel, we see that Jacob worked seven long years for Rachel in demonstration of how much he loved and wanted her. Even though I have been married to Deborah for 20 years, it's still crucial for me to remember how much I still want her. When I pause to think about how much I still desire her to be my wife, it helps prevent me from taking her for granted. Because I want her with me, I don't mind getting up early to go to work so she can focus on being a homemaker and a music minister. Because my desire is towards her, I don't mind preparing dates for us and bringing her gifts and flowers even for no special occasion at all. Husbands, I want you to think deeply about what attracts you to your wife like a magnet and let that attraction spur you on to greater acts of service and romance.

Secondly, husbands I want you to focus on holding your wife. In the physical sense, I am talking about holding her in your arms tenderly. Women long for their husbands to hold them close sometimes, not so much from a sexual perspective, but for intimacy. It surprised me greatly some time ago when my wife told me that one of her favorite things to do is to lay down with her head on my chest. She says that feeling my chest rise and fall while listening to my heartbeat is soothing and comforting for her. So I have learned to just hold Deborah some times. I want to meet her need for intimacy.

Thirdly, husbands need to hold their wives emotionally. This requires us to live with our wives with understanding. Our wives need us to be big champions of their dreams and aspirations. I recently ran across a good illustration of this type of emotional holding in *"Julie and Julia"*, a recent film about the famous chef, Julia Childs, her husband Paul and a young woman who decides to spend a year cooking 524 of Julia's French gourmet recipes. In the film, Julia receives a letter from a publisher rejecting her 700-page cookbook, saying it was too long and too hard for

American housewives to read and use. Paul, sensing his wife's great disappointment, responded by telling Julia that her cookbook is extraordinarily brilliant and would make French gourmet cuisine accessible to American families like never before. He encouraged her with his faith in her talent and abilities. Husbands, constantly encourage you wife by letting her know what she does so well. Make her keenly aware that you are her biggest supporter. Even when you come in contact with her weaknesses (and all of us have them), assist, nurture and edify her. Be gentle with her, even in correction, considering your own failings and weaknesses as the scriptures urge you.

The word of God teaches that *'he who loves his wife, loves himself'*. Husbands, strengthening your love for your wife is one of the most important things you can do for the Lord, for your wife and for yourself. Remember how much you can't do without her and suffocate her with your love and attentiveness.