

- **WARM UP** I've never personally tried mountain climbing, but the closest I came to it about 20 years ago was an unforgettable experience. A few of us were messing around climbing up the side of a cliff, seeing how high we could go. I remember grabbing a piece of rock with my hand, but it was too loose, so I left it. A few minutes later, I got stuck, and couldn't move any higher. Going down seemed just as hard. Suddenly I realised, about 20-25 feet up, that both my feet were perched together on the very piece of loose rock I had tried with my hand earlier!!!

For some of us we are in a similar situation in our marriages. We're stuck, feeling like there is no way we can go forward, with a marriage that seems doomed to crash on the rocks. Thankfully, God can help us no matter how difficult the climb.



- **READ** Ephesians 5:23, 25

- **BACKGROUND**

The two main areas that are highlighted in these verses from Ephesians are two responsibilities that every married man has towards his wife. They are simply the responsibility to LEAD, and the responsibility to LOVE. Or let's put it a different way - they are the privilege to LEAD, and the privilege to LOVE. That's right, the responsibilities that are given to us from God should be seen as privileges, because it shows us He is willing to use us to represent His character and nature towards others.

- **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Discuss how changing attitudes and culture are making it more difficult to lead biblically in the home.
- 2 Looking at Ephesians 5:25, share as many practical ways in which Christ loves the Church that you can collectively think of, and see how that gives you practical application in your marriages in how you are to love your wives. Perhaps collate the list and email it to your group to stick somewhere you will see it often and be reminded!

- 3 If we really understand what Paul is saying in Ephesians 5:25, it means we husbands are to be the closest thing to Jesus our wives see this side of heaven – ouch! Of course we cannot be that in our own strength. Share with each other ways in which you find strength, encouragement, hope and help in staying committed as a loving husband. You may also want to share some failures, as this helps us all to know we are weak without Him, and helps others learn without having to make the same mistakes.

**What is God saying to me?**

- **LET'S PRAY**

- **REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER**



*In about 1986 God really touched me in the area of forgiving my father. I had a real anger towards my dad. I was really convicted, I wept buckets of tears. That evening I went to a meeting and Bill Subritzky was ministering. He said, "Close your eyes and ask God to show you any sin in your life." So I did that and across my forehead in neon lights was "freemasonry". I had a back condition of a dislocated neck and back problems all my life, from 18 to about 35. It was painful and it was hard to work. So when freemasonry came up, I confessed that as sin and the power of God hit me, and my spine just went click, click, click and I've been totally healed ever since. Greg*

*True stories from the Dove Ministries files*

- **CONSIDER THIS**

Perhaps you feel circumstances in your marriage have changed so dramatically, there is no way forward. Remember that God, being outside of time and space, knew all the mistakes you and your wife have made, before you even made them! That doesn't excuse us, or mean things are going to be easy – but it does reassure us that God is with us, and that in Him there is always a way forward. Focus on little victories, one day at a time, and He will help you!

