

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Adam Loved His Body

Undoubtedly, many sermons have been preached about the mental state of Adam when he followed Eve in eating from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fact of the matter is that scripture does not give us all the facts of what really took place in that infamous day. We are left wondering, conjecturing, and inferring what happened based on other scripture or our own fertile imaginations. Over the years, I have heard pulpiteers preach about Adam as if he were the most stupid, pitied, or evil man that ever lived. As the thinking goes, how could he have disobeyed God's one command, leading to such disaster on his entire race? What was he thinking? Was he out to lunch, figuratively, when Eve offered a bite of the forbidden fruit? One well-known preacher declared with great bravado that when he meets Adam, he is going to kick him in the rear. Then, we come to God. What did He think of the whole mess? Was He wringing His hands in disappointment and perplexity? As if to say: "Look what Adam has done; now what am I going to do to fix this mess?" I will be so bold as to say that thinking along these lines is the foolishness of man, even if it might come from well-known preachers.

One day as I was studying scripture and considering whether God was responsible for what happened in the garden, I believe I received some revelation on the matter, especially regarding Adam and his action that day. Before sharing this revelation, I must offer a thought about God based on Peter's Pentecostal sermon.

This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." (Acts 2:23-24 NASB)

God's Son was not offered up as if to correct an unexpected problem or gross deviation from His plan for man. He was offered up because it was in the plan of God from before the very founding of the world, meaning God planned it all along: *The Lamb who has been offered in sacrifice [killed, slain] ever since [from] the creation [beginning] of the world [kosmos; ordered arrangement]* (Revelation 13:8). God intended to crush His Son on a cross (Isaiah 53:10) from the beginning, for it has always been His plan to reveal His divine love for not only man but for all the world and all creation, none and nothing excluded.

Now, this leads to the matter of Adam and why he followed his mate in disobeying God's one command. As an explanation is offered, keep in mind that the first Adam was a type of Him (last Adam) who was to come (Romans 5:14).

The answer to the big WHY is discovered in the word *love*. What transpired in the garden in that day was a love story being lived out, just as Christ, the last Adam, lived out a love story on the cross. Adam loved his body, just as Christ loves His body. Adam had no choice but to die with and for his mate, just as Christ had no choice but to die with and for His mate, the body of the Messiah. Simply, Adam had no choice but to transgress, for if he had chosen to obey God's command, he would have proven he did not love his own body, and, by the way, he would not have been a type of the greater Adam to come. The highest law or command of God is to love, for *God is love* (1 John 4:8, 16). Adam was tested in that day to see if he loved his body. He did not fail the test of love! However, there was a greater issue in play that day. By his action, it appears that Adam was trying to save his mate and was willing to die trying. However, he was deceived in thinking he could do so. Only God, in His love, could do so; only He alone can save His created, for He is the creator God and He is love. He laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16)! So, right from the beginning, love was presented in type with the antitype being revealed through God's Son.

Now, does scripture support such thinking? Yes! Paul makes the case for this great truth in his great circular epistle titled *Ephesians*. Take note that Paul makes it clear that he has the first and the last Adam in view as he unfolds the love of Christ for His ecclesia. He directs our attention back to the beginning of the love story.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 NASB)

FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. (Ephesians 5:31 NASB)

Most Christians know of the love of Christ for His ecclesia and that He is the head of His Body. Jesus and His ecclesia is a secret or mystery. However, Paul uses this mystery to reinforce the point that husband and wife are to exemplify this same type of love relationship. He relates the love relationship of Christ and His ecclesia to the love relationship of husband and wife.

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:23-27 ESV)

Husbands love your wives. Do we not think that this same command applied to Adam, a type of Christ? Was Adam not trying to be the savior of Eve in that day? If he loved his wife, he most assuredly was trying to save her. God knew this, even expected it. But God also predetermined that there is only one way to save both of them, and that is through His Son. But there is more to the story that involves the body or what could be called *body love*. According to Paul's pattern of Christ, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies.

Thus (in like manner) the husbands are also continuously indebted (thus: obligated) to constantly love their wives as their own bodies. The one constantly loving his own wife is continuously loving himself, for no one ever yet (at any time) hated (hates) his own flesh, but rather continually intensively nourishes (feeds and supports) and warms (cherishes; comforts) it, according as the Christ also the called-out assembly, because we are (we exist continuously being) members of His Body. Answering this (in the place facing this) a man will leave behind his father and mother, and he will be glued (welded) to his wife, and the two will be (exist being) into one flesh. This secret (mystery) is great, but I am speaking unto (into) Christ, even (and) unto (into) the called-out assembly (the ecclesia). Moreover, you men also, individually, each one thus (in this way) be continually loving his own wife as himself, and yet to the end that the wife may continually be fearing (standing in awe of) the husband. (Ephesians 5:28-33 JMNT)

The *Mitchell New Testament* offers great depth to the Greek meaning of these verses. The husband is to continuously and intensively nourish his own flesh, his body. Husbands must constantly love their wives as their own bodies. How much more does this apply to Adam who literally had a companion that came forth from his body? *The Lord took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place, and the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. She was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"* (Genesis 2:21-23). They were one flesh, and Adam loved his flesh because God had put love into his heart.

Dear brethren, ask the spirit of God to open your heart to this amazing love story that is a type of the greatest love story in all history that occurred nearly 2,000 years ago on a cross. Adam was a type of the one to come. The first Adam's love foreshadowed the love of the last Adam. Adam loved his body! Neither man had any other choice but to display God's love as saviors. However, the first Adam could not save himself or his wife; only God's Son saves. The mystery is great, but it is not to remain a mystery for those who love God and His Son.