

## Biblical Principles of Marriage (Part 7) – Eph 5:22-33

Eph 5:22-33; We're approaching the end of our Biblical Principles of Marriage series, and come to another pillar passage on it

A passage of rock-solid truths, for a marriage *Built to Last*

But before we get there, it's important that we cover 2 *other* principles; B/c they're *critical* for a proper understanding of the ones found in Eph 5; Here's the first . . .

### Principle #6 – Husbands and wives are equal in value (Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28)

That's principle #6; They're equal; Differences in role do not denote differences in worth; Or rank; Or privilege; Not in marriage

God created us in his image, male *and* female (Gen 1:27); That means both husbands *and* wives bear his marks; Equally so

*Both* reflect his goodness and greatness; *Both* represent his attributes and intent

And both, as followers of Christ, have the same *standing* before God

**Gal 3:28** says – *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

We have the same privilege as his *image* bearers, the same access to his *presence*, and the same *inheritance* of eternal life; Which makes us *equal* in value and worth\*\*\*\*\*

It's a principle you cannot afford to get wrong; Otherwise you'll get the rest wrong

Including principle #7; That . . .

### Principle #7 – Husbands and wives are mutually dependent (1 Cor 11:11-12)

*Mutually* needed; They're needed *differently*; And they're dependent in different *ways*;

But it's still mutual; Husbands need wives, and wives need husbands

Paul says in **1 Cor 11:11-12** . . .

*Nevertheless* [that is, despite the fact that husbands occupy a position of leadership and authority in marriage, that's the context], *in the Lord* [i.e. under *his* authority] *woman is not independent of man nor man of woman*

IOW they're de-pendent; They need each other; Mutually

*For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman*

IOW without man in the *first* place, women wouldn't be; Eve was taken from Adam

And without women, men wouldn't be; Which makes us mutually dependent\*\*\*\*\*

And that's just the start of it; We need each other

It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> principle, foundational for a proper *view* of marriage, a godly marriage

➤ Which brings us to Eph 5, and principle #8 (**Summary**)

[22] *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* [23] *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.* [24] *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Principle #8 is that . . .

### Principle #8 – Wives should submit to their husband (v22-24)

That's not to say that *husbands* don't have a massive responsibility; They do; And that's next week; But this week is wives; B/c that's where Paul starts

Saying in v22 – *Wives, submit to your own husbands*

A principle often maligned, and sometimes rejected; But Paul's clear – submit  
As in voluntarily yield to his discretion and decisions; His; Not somebody else's husband, but yours; Place yourself under his authority  
That's what it means to submit; At least in a *generic* sense

But *biblical* submission includes something else – joy and desire

IOW grudging submission, and grouchy submission, is not biblical submission; It's not *true* submission in God's eyes

### • **Biblical submission is a voluntary disposition and desire, to joyfully yield to the authority and discretion of another**

It's an attitude of your heart to *want* to follow your husband, and a desire of your will to say *yes* to his leadership

Just like you want to follow *Christ*, and say yes to *him* in your life

That's what it says; *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord* (22)

Have the same inclination to defer to *him*, as you do to God

Which totally flies in the face of our sin nature, *and* one of the curses of the fall; Going all the way back to Gen 3

Where God said to Eve after she and Adam ate of the forbidden fruit – “*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*” (Gen 3:16b)

And that's not a good a desire; It's a desire to put him down; And usurp his role

Just like his ruling over you isn't a good thing

But that doesn't change the standard to which God *calls* us in marriage; And empowers us to live out with his very *presence* in marriage

It's joyful, desirous, and godly

➤ What it's not, is spineless consent; The first of . . .

### • **4 Common Objections**

#### 1. “Submission is wimpy”

That's what some people say; It's degrading humiliation, demeaning servitude, and passive resignation; When nothing could be further from the truth

Biblical submission does not mean that you have to put your will to death, your mind asleep, or your mouth on hold

You're not only *equal* in value and worth, but your husband *needs* your input; It's part of being mutually dependent

And when you offer it with a joyful disposition to yield, it's about as courageous as you can get; The furthest *thing* from wimpy

Second, some people say that . . .

#### 2. “Submission is harmful”

It's harmful; And they try to dismiss it b/c they've been burned by it; Or hurt by someone who *abused* their authority or leadership

But listen, *abuse* of a principle doesn't negate its truth

For instance, just b/c someone *lies* to you, doesn't mean that honesty isn't the best policy  
It is; And just b/c they *abuse* the principle, doesn't make it false

And by the same token, just b/c some people abuse their *leadership*, doesn't mean you should stop submitting to your husband's

### 3. "Submission is cultural"

Many people try to explain biblical submission away, by saying it doesn't *apply* to us; "It's cultural; It was just for Paul's day"

The problem is – the reason Paul cites for why wives should submit to their husbands, is *beyond* culture; It *transcends* culture

Referring once again to the phrase – *as to the Lord*

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

Let me ask you something; Is our submission to the *Lord* cultural? Only applicable in Paul's day? Then neither is a wife's submission to her husband

The analogy does not allow us to do one, and not the other; Submission is *not* cultural

### 4. "Submission is mutual"

Wives not only have to submit to their husbands, but husbands to their wives; It's a mutual thing people say; And they base it on v21

Give thanks for everything, *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ*

"See, there it is; We're supposed to submit to each *other* in marriage"

But that's not a correct understanding of v21, for 2 reasons

First, the meaning of the *word* submit, doesn't allow it

In the 40 or so NT uses, it means that one person is under the authority of another;

Making *mutual* submission a contradiction of terms

You *can't mutually submit* at the same *time*, if one person is head of the other

Like a husband is head of his wife (v23)

2<sup>nd</sup>, if mutual submission were somehow in *view* here, it would imply that Christ submits to the church; Which is not only unbiblical, but once again, contrary to the analogy

V24 – *As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit . . . to their husbands*. There's nothing mutual about it; On either front

So the *meaning* of the word doesn't allow for mutual submission, and neither does the *analogy*

➤ Which begs the question – "What *does* v21 mean?"

And the answer is – "as appropriate, in light of the relationship;" Submit to one another as appropriate, in the context of each relationship and role

Which the following verses lay out; By saying that wives should submit to their husbands, the church should submit to Christ . . .

Children should obey their parents, and so on

Submitting to *one another* means "as appropriate, in light of the relationship" (**Summary**)

It doesn't mean mutual

4 objections, that don't hold water; And will cause you to diminish the glory of God's design, and miss out on his best in marriage, if you succumb to them

➤ That said, there are 4 aspects of this principle that *are* true

• **4 Main Aspects – Submit to your husband . . .**

**1. In everything (v24)**

Those are *Paul's* words; V24

*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands*. Everything

Not just the things you agree with, or the *good* decisions he makes; But in *everything*; Good, bad, *and* ugly

Now, does that mean you should do so silently? Just *withhold* your opinion when your husband's about to make drive over a cliff?

Sometimes; Sometimes; 1 Pet 3 says so

*Wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives*; 1 Pet 3:1

Sometimes you should remain silent, b/c there are bigger things at stake than just the decision at hand

But that doesn't mean *all* the time; B/c helper "fit for" that you are, he *needs* your thoughts; He *needs* your insight; He *needs* your wisdom

And it would be an abdication of your responsibility to withhold it

But *when* you express it, you need to do so appropriately; Including a genuine reminder that you're *with* him; That you'll support him no matter *what* the decision; In everything

➤ Now, that usually raises some "What if" questions; Like . . .

"What if my husband is a jerk, and doesn't *deserve* my submission?"

Let me put it this way; His lack of love toward you, does not excuse your lack of submission toward him; His failure doesn't alleviate your responsibility

It's a covenant

Here's another – "What if he asks me to do something wrong?"

In that case, you need to gently but firmly refuse; *Everything* doesn't mean sinful things

But even in resisting, you should show him your *dislike* of doing so

Or last, "What if he's hurting me, or putting our family at risk?"

For that, God has provided *several* measures of protection; And you need to take advantage of them

B/c the Bible does not teach *doormat* theology – where you let your husband walk all over you no matter what

That's completely contrary to Christ's love for the church

If he's neglecting you or abandoning you – get help; Start with a sister in Christ, then your Discipleship Group, then one of our pastors

And the same goes if he's abusing you verbally; Go to the church

But if he's abusing you *physically*, or putting your *family* at risk – get out of the house

Get out of the house, call the police, and *then* call the church

If he's hurting you, your responsibility to stay and submit just ended

I'm not saying you should divorce him – I'm saying you should get out, get safe, and get help

2 scenarios that warrant a *lack* of submission

But short of those, you should submit to your husband in everything

That's the first aspect  
The 2<sup>nd</sup>, is to submit to your husband . . .

## 2. As your leader (v23)

That's v23, where Paul gives a *reason* for the wife's submission

*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.*

Just as Jesus is the leader and authority over the *church*, so too the husband is the leader and authority of his *wife*; Which means you need to *follow* him

Go where he goes, do what he does, and love what he loves

Unfortunately, far too many husbands fail to *lead*; *Allowing* their wives to do so, or *forcing* them to; Either way, it's no good  
B/c you're not following, and chances are he'll *never* step up

Better to let things fall through the cracks; Better to let his failure show  
B/c sometimes, 2 steps backward *is* the way forward; Sometimes, you have to let it get *worse* before it can get better

3<sup>rd</sup>, submit to your husband . . .

## 3. As to Christ (v22,24)

*V22; Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord; And v24 says – As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

*As to the Lord*, and *as the church submits to Christ*

That's how wives are to submit to their husbands

Meaning what? Grudgingly and partially? Is *that* how you submit to Christ? I hope not  
He's looking for *wholehearted* submission; *Eager* submission; *Joyful* submission  
And expects the same with your husband

➤ The problem is, far too many wives fail to submit to *Christ*; They fail to yield to *him*; In which case the analogy is meaningless  
If you don't fully submit to Jesus, you'll *never* submit to your husband  
If you're going to have any hope of getting your relationship with *him* right, you have to get your relationship with *God* right

And then last, submit to your husband . . .

## 4. With respect (v33)

That comes from v33; Paul is at the *end* of his thoughts, and re-caps them by saying – *Let the wife see that she respects her husband*

IOW hold him in high regard; Instead of looking down on him or thinking badly of him  
– you should *esteem* your husband; Admire him; Appreciate him

Wives, did you know that your husband *yearns* for that? That he loves and longs for your respect and admiration? He does  
That's why he tends to withdraw or get angry when he doesn't receive it; When he feels disrespected; Or shamed; Or ignored  
Not that it's right on his part; But that's where it's coming from  
He *yearns* for your respect

And when you give it, when you show it, it floats his boat like nothing else

And fulfills your responsibility to submit (**Summary**)  
Pray – Lord, these things are hard sometimes; Help those in difficult marriages, and bless those who are trying; Give them strength, and peace, and even joy; As they strive to live for you in humble obedience