

# They Two Shall Be One

By Gordon Gentry

Published by NTChurchSource.com

There is only one way Christ can bring us up into oneness with Himself as the only begotten Son, and that is as we submit to Him--truly submit out of understanding in our walk in His life. In God's plan, submission has a wonderful end result. Submitting to God's order of authority allows the fullness of the one we submit to to be ours, and we never have to be afraid of losing or receiving anything other than what God's plan and purpose calls for.

The Scriptures admonish us to submit ourselves one to another out of reverence for God. Being in a place of submission enables the body of Christ to partake of Christ's righteousness, because to submit means to see Christ, and then with the ability He gives, to allow all things to be done by Him and for His highest purpose, with no selfish end purpose in view. It is to give ourselves completely to His will, not because we have to but because we want to, asking nothing in return. It is choosing to put our wills into His purpose, by doing His will in the timing of the Holy Spirit with only one motive--love.

When we submit, we cause the one we submit to to work in the love relationship to bring us into oneness in that relationship. By submitting, we have become as the same body of that person, and as the scripture tells us, *"no man has yet hated his own flesh."* By submitting to Christ, we have become His body. Thus, Christ gave Himself for the church because it was a part of Him and He loved it. Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, and Christ and the church are one.

Paul likens this great mystery to the relationship of a man and his wife. He states in Ephesians 5:31,32, *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

*"Husbands, love your wives,"* he says in verses 25-30, *"even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."*

## The Meaning of the Mystery

A husband has the responsibility of ministering to his wife so that she has the ability to function in the life of God and fulfill her responsibility. But how is this to be done? The husband ministers by "nourishing and cherishing." When Paul said that the husband ought to nourish and cherish his wife as his own flesh, he gave an example. The example is Christ and the church.

To nourish literally means "to promote growth by furnishing or sustaining with nutriment." As the word is used, it would give us the understanding that this is to be a continuing ministry, a flowing, not something that just comes once in a while. The word cherish gives us the attitude in which nourishment is to be ministered. It means "to hold dear, to show affection for." It also means "to keep or cultivate with care and affection." The husband's ministry of love is a continued keeping, a constant cultivating with care and affection.

This expression of the life of God, nourishing and cherishing the wife, is to give her the ability she needs to fulfill her ministry in God's love affair. However, these expressions must be given out of

pureness of motive. There can be no selfish end in view. Each working must be born out of the pureness of love. Then the fruits of the husband's ministry to his wife will be the flowing out of the very nature of God in every expression of her ministry, that Christ might be all in all.

For the wife to clearly see the revelation of Christ, for her to be a glory to her husband, she must be sanctified, set aside...made holy and cleansed *"with the washing of water by the word."* To be made holy is to have the righteousness of Christ by faith. To be sanctified is to be set aside for God's purpose. The Scripture speaks of fullness: *"...not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing..."* This means that she is to be cleansed from all the defilement of the fall, and brought back to being a perfect reflection of the glory of God. This place of expression can only come as the husband gives of himself as Christ did for the church. As the Word (love) is ministered, it will give her the ability to move in God's purpose, in His life. The Word gives direction and purpose, washing away all the effects of rebellion and the stains left by sin, and by love lifts us back into God's purpose, to live in the life of God and for His glory.

Men are obligated to love their wives even as themselves. We can see that Christ is the only one who can bring the church up to its proper place, that of being a joint-heir in Him and with Him. Even so God has designed in His purpose that the man would bring the woman up to a oneness in their relationship. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. This can only have meaning to us as we submit to Him and allow His love to make us one in Him.

### **Submission - The Only Way to Fullness**

Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:24, *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."* In the relationship of Christ and the church, we never see the church bringing Christ up to its desires, but always Christ bringing the church to its completeness. The church is being transformed into His image. To be brought to this place, the church must be subject in all things. The church can never become the head. So if the same life of God moving in the husband is going to bring the woman to a fullness in God's oneness, she must be subject in all things to her husband. Always remember, we never submit because of what we can gain, but because of love. Love is blind to self-interests.

We can always entrust ourselves to love, knowing that we will only find ourselves in God's highest purpose. We must know that love has no selfish motives. Love always gives. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:22 that the wife submits herself to her own husband as unto the Lord. She must have faith that works by love, for this cannot be done if there is any selfishness in the heart. It is only by faith that we overcome this world. Faith must move in love, for faith without love is nothing.

This relationship has great importance in God's plan. Paul states in verse 23, *"The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church: and He is the savior of the body."* This order of oneness and submission can only bring an expression of His love. This relationship can only be fully enjoyed as we experience it. We must lose our individuality and allow His life to find expression in and through us.

For the husband to love his wife as himself, he must see his wife as his own flesh. She has become as his body. They are one flesh. Now the husband, in the life of God, must give himself, even as Christ gave Himself for the church and then allowed His life to have expression in a many-membered body. The wife must find fulfillment as the "body," with her husband as head. She must be cherished and nourished, because this is the expression of the life of God. Only the real life of God, love, can make the marriage relationship the expression of God's great plan.

*"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).*

Knowledge can only come as we walk in the life of God and know the outworking of His life within us. When God says, "Husbands, love your wives," we can see where He has put the responsibility for a lifting up to bring oneness in the relationship.

To sum it all up, the husband must shoulder the responsibility of his place of authority as the head of woman. The man must recognize the woman as the weaker member, but also that they together, in oneness, are heirs of the grace of life. Love manifested through the husband is what brings the wife up into oneness. Then, for love to be received by the wife, she must submit to that love which God has said must flow through the husband.

## **Demands of Love**

In the natural realm, to place one over another in a position of authority means that one rules the other, and in most cases "lords it over" them. At the root of this is covetousness, and the desire of one to get ahead of the other. But in God, love lifts up. To put one over another means that the one has been given a place of responsibility and ministry, for the purpose of bringing the other up to a oneness in the life of God--and this is so that the one who receives may partake of all that that position makes available to him. It is then by ministry that they are made partakers of all that Christ is, in life. This brings unity and oneness--thinking alike, having the same judgments, moving within the boundaries of the authority of each member as given by the working of grace, in God's plan and according to His calling.

As we move in His grace, any demand is a demand of love, and is to bring us into more understanding of God's end purpose, which is Christ becoming all in all. Understanding can only be born out of doing God's will. If we do not do, we cannot know (John 7:17). Love will set us free from all bondage and cause us to rejoice in doing what God has designed us for since the beginning--expressing His life. We are to express His life in the completeness of His nature, with all things put under His feet and Christ becoming all in all.

As the apostle Peter has said, the husband is to honor the wife, recognizing her in the role she has, both in their relationship and in God's purpose. True piety must have a practical outworking. Only those who know what God's design is for the home can move in that plan. God's authority must be evident in a practical way, with both husband and wife taking their proper role. There must be a giving of life (love) and a receiving of life (love). The life of God (love) is only meaningful as both parties find purpose in its outworking. When we speak of the outworking of love, we mean seeing and doing as the Spirit leads, in order that true godly affection may be seen, and bear fruit as it is experienced. The working out of the life of God permeates our whole lives. It affects our attitudes, our motives, and the actual living out of His life together as one.

The relationship that Christ has with the church is the same as the working between the husband and wife. This cannot be in any way two people living their separate lives, but two people moving in their appointed places in that one life, Christ's life. A husband and wife, submitting, nourishing, and cherishing in their appointed functions, give forth an expression of Christ's life which can only be revealed in oneness.

## **God's Order - Given to Lift Us Up**

The Scripture tells us that woman is the glory of the man even as man is the glory of God. What causes the woman to be the glory of the man? Is it not the ministry of the man bringing her up into oneness by love as she submits and adorns herself with a quiet and meek spirit?

Christ so loved the world that He came down to us, that through the power of an endless life we might be brought up to where He becomes all in all. He came not to be ministered to, but to minister. The husband's function, likewise, is not to be ministered unto, but to minister, imparting the ability to the weaker vessel to function in her place of ministry. All expressions of love and ministry must be out of true relationship with Christ, as unto the Lord and for His glory. Ministering to each other cannot be done in the life of God unless there is first a ministering to the Lord.

We must begin to know what a love relationship is. First, we must recognize the authority of Christ as it is working in individuals, not of our choosing, but as it has pleased God. It was God who created man, it was God who took part of man and made woman, and it was God who made man the head of woman. Woman was made for man, not man for the woman. God knows the part of the body that lacks, and has given it more abundant honor (1 Corinthians 12:24). God's oneness can only be brought about as each member fulfills his or her ministry in God's order. The woman cannot lift herself up, but by submitting to man, in God's order, she is lifted up to that place where she is one with her husband. God designed the man to rule and the woman to answer to him. From man, God made woman to be a helpmeet.

We cannot think for one moment that the woman has the hard place in submitting to her husband. We would not say the church has the hard place in submitting to Christ. It is just as difficult for the husband to take his place as head as it is for the woman to submit to her husband as her head. This is all God's working, and requires that God reveal it to each one. Neither can find fulfillment in God's will unless he or she is moving in God's order.

God's design for the husband-wife relationship is to bring both in His order to His highest expression, which is "*Christ in you*," Christ filling all in all. Each must want to do God's will because of the life that is flowing in him, or her. It takes grace to do God's will, wherever you have been made to fit into God's working.

## **Your Place Under God's Love-Authority**

Looking at the husband's position first: he must be willing to take his position in love, not to just rule or lord it over the woman. To lord it over has no place in God's plan. The husband cannot take his place unless the real love of God is working in his heart, because his role as a husband is going to take some effort. It is not going to be easy. So he must see what his role is as the head of the woman. He will have to suffer himself to be brought low, to take the place of one who serves, in order to lift the wife up to the oneness that he sees as the goal.

He can no longer look upon the wife as a slave or as one that has her duties, and try to make her do them for duty's sake, but must by his ministry allow the wife to move in love to do her duties--if we may call them that. The husband's ministry never comes to an end. He is the channel through which the authority of Christ affects the wife. This is not a small ministry, but a ministry of ruling so that the wife may be brought up to enjoying her role as his helpmeet in God's great working.

In olden days, submission was an adorning for the woman who trusted God. Peter said that the wives of today are daughters of Sara, who called Abraham lord, as long as they "*do well, and are not afraid with*

*any amazement"* (1 Peter 3:6). To "do well" means to fulfill God's purpose as a wife, and this is not out of fear, but out of reverence for God. To reverence God means to know Him in His life and nature and to submit to the working of His grace.

Abraham is spoken of in the same manner as being our father, for he was accounted to be the father of faith, we being his sons if we have faith. As regards faith, God looks at both the husband and the wife. He honors faith in both. They are *"heirs together of the grace of life."*

The husband has been given God's authority over the wife, but just to state that has no meaning. God's authority must be recognized by the wife as that which can work only for her good. If a wife does not recognize her husband's authority, there is no authority. This authority works in like manner in the church. Each member of the body of Christ must make Him Lord. Jesus does not force His lordship on any of us, but without Him as Lord we cannot be saved. It is not just saying we have made Him our Lord, but it is making Him Lord in our everyday walk, allowing Him to direct us and to be the sole reason that we do what we do--because His Word is abiding in us and we are abiding in Him.

The authority of Christ in the church is the same authority of Christ in the husband-wife relationship. If we do not submit to His authority it can only bring us unnecessary heartache, and could cause us to turn our eyes from Him to ourselves, bringing a full expression of sin--and the end of sin is death.

This is why God's Word does not give us two ways of receiving His authority. Paul tells us that the woman must submit in all things, as unto the Lord. There is no second-best; there is only God's order. The authority we are talking about is a love-authority. This may sound good to those who think love is permissiveness, but love-authority doesn't just let you have your own way. It is the means of bringing us all to God's predestinated end--to God's perfect design, which cannot fail because it is finished in Christ. We are the only ones who can fall short of the fulfillment of God's will. We choose to submit to Christ. So too does the wife choose to submit to the headship of the man, in Christ.

If the wife fails to submit to God's authority, she cannot be the glory of her husband--and this is what she was created for. And if the husband tries to use God's authority for his own ends, it ceases to be God's authority. It becomes man exerting his own authority, which can never bring an expression of the oneness in Christ.

## **They Two Shall Be One**

As long as we are on this earth, there must be this order of submission. Woman was not made with the same emotional stability as man. She tends to be motivated by how she "feels" and is easily swayed by the emotions of the moment. She was taken from man to be a helpmeet. Her strength and stability come from her husband as her head, even as the church receives direction and stability from Christ as its head. The secret of strength in both relationships lies in the submission of each to her proper head.

Only as the wife submits to the husband can there be a true revealing of the nature of God, the ability to love and be loved. The husband's role in the marriage relationship is to rule; the wife's role is to come under or answer to. When brought together in Christ, this relationship reveals the nature of God--which is love. The two in the relationship of husband and wife express a oneness or completeness which is not expressed individually. Adam said, *"This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh."*

As God has made man and woman, there is an emotional completeness that can only be expressed and experienced as the wife submits to the husband. Man was given the ability to love and to rule with stability. But this is not necessarily so today, in either of the sexes. Sin has taken its toll. Today we have women that are more masculine and men that are more feminine. Yet you cannot say that this has

changed God's order of authority or the flow of His life.

*"...There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28). The reason for this statement of equality between men and women is that God's order of submission brings them into the oneness that is in Christ. They receive the grace of God together because of the oneness that both are partakers of in Christ, within the order God has instituted. It is God's order, and His design. God did not create male and female equal in their individuality. Equality is not in man as he stands alone, but in oneness, the oneness that finds its completeness in Christ and in God's design. Colossians 2:10 says, *"And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principalities and powers."* This is the only way that we can know we are in Him--we are complete only in Him. Also in 1 John 2:5, *"But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him."* There must be evidence that we are in Him. 1 John 2:6, *"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."*

### **The Way to God's Highest Purpose**

We know that the order of God's creation has meaning only in this life. But doing God's will causes us to abide forever. 1 John 2:17 says, *"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."*

There will always be an order for the expression of God's glory. Only submission to God's order now can bring us to God's order then. For male and female to be one, the wife must submit to the husband as her head. If any of us submits to any other person, our glory is the glory of that person, whether it is what God has designed or not. When the wife submits to her husband as unto the Lord, the same glory of the man, which is Christ, becomes hers. Thus we see man being brought from the place he has fallen, which is *"short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23), to a place of glory in Christ.

Trying to submit in our own power cannot give expression to His oneness. There must first be a complete denial of self. The cross must have done its work. If either husband or wife has not allowed the cross to do its work of death to self, the submitting of one to the other has no meaning. Only after the work of the cross can there be a giving and receiving of love, as expressed by God to us when He sent His Son.

Man was made to be loved of God, and to love God. Thus, when God created male and female in His own image, He made them with the ability to receive His love as well as to give love. For anyone to love without that love being received by another cannot bring glory to the one who loves. The Scripture reveals that we didn't love God first; He first loved us and gave Himself for us. Man could not know God in his sinful state; sin had made man incapable of receiving God's love or of loving God. To be able to receive expressions of love from God and to love others as God loves us, man had to be born again and receive God's life.

God has designed the husband and wife to express a part of His great drama, in the life of God. The husband, in submitting to Christ, has the power now to give. Likewise woman, in submitting to her head, is able to receive. In its simplest form, this was the intention of God's creation. He has also made the same principle applicable in the church. The principle is one of receiving and giving, and *"You shall know them by their fruits."* God's love-authority is the same wherever it is working, bringing us up into His highest purpose.