

Being Married
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A mild-mannered man was reading a book on being self-assertive and decided to start at home. So he stormed into his house, pointed a finger in his wife's face, and said, "From now on I'm boss around here and my word is law! I want you to prepare me a gourmet meal and draw my bath. Then, when I've eaten and finished my bath, guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair." "The mortician," replied his wife.

Ephesians 5:21-33

- This is one of those passages that can be a HOT TOPIC for discussion
- How wives and husbands are to relate to each other according to God's design for marriage.
- Yesterday morning I posted on Twitter/Facebook: "Lord, help the teacher who has to begin tomorrow's lesson with the words: "Wives, submit to your husbands."
- So...I'm NOT beginning there. We'll get there very quickly, but it's important that we study the Bible IN CONTEXT.
- The last verse we looked at last week was Ephesians 5:21...let's do a little review to have some CONTEXT for the next few verses on BEING MARRIED.
- Verse 21 reads:

Ephesians 5:21

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- We said last week that Greek word for submit: hupotasso, means to put in rank UNDER. The verse tells us that Believers in Christ are to PUT OTHERS FIRST before ourselves.
- Several other verses speak to this:

Romans 12:10

10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Galatians 5:13

13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Philippians 2:3-4

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

1 Peter 5:5

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”[a]

Ray Stedman comments about that word “submit”:

The meaning has been grossly distorted. Perhaps the first thing that needs to be said about submission is that it does not cancel out equality. The outstanding manifestation of true submission, of course, is seen in our Lord's submitting of Himself to the Father. No one would ever conceive of the idea that Jesus found it a reproach to submit to the Father. He delighted in it. It was voluntary on his part. In no way did he regard it as a threat to the equality which he knew existed between himself and the Father. Therefore, to submit to someone does not mean you are not equal. Submission does not mean inequality. Literally, it means "put yourself under, arrange yourself under someone, for a good and proper purpose." It is a totally voluntary action." (See complete sermon "Living Christianly")

- Christ VOLUNTARILY SUBMITTED to the Heavenly Father’s will so you and I might have ETERNAL LIFE.

Philippians 2:6-8 (speaking of Christ...)

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

- So, BELIEVERS IN CHRIST are to SUBMIT voluntarily to others.
- Meaning put the best interests of others ahead of ourselves.
- It’s important that we have that CONTEXT about ALL BELIEVERS before we move on to the next verses 22-24.

Ephesians 5:22-24

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

- Let's start with this: Why does anyone have to submit?
- In our government we believe that all people are created: EQUAL.
- For our government to function we the people elect leaders.

- In our government, how many people can be President at one time? (Excluding the Clintons). One.
- Does the smartest or most gifted person always win the election?
- After an election what does the LOSING candidate usually ask the people to do? Unify and support the winner because we are all Americans and that person is OUR PRESIDENT.
- In ANY organization there is a structure for things to operate.
- In your company how many General Managers or CEOs are there (not counting “Co-CEO exceptions)?
- How about your favorite football team? How many head coaches?
- In the church, how many Senior Pastors?
- Does that mean all the other executives in your company or coaches on the team or pastors on staff are not as smart, gifted, or called as the top person? NO
- Why do we pick ONE LEADER at the top of any organization?

A train can only have one LOCOMOTIVE at a time and every car can't be the LOCOMOTIVE (unless it's in the new movie UNSTOPPABLE...another story)

Any organization has to have ONE LEADER. That doesn't mean that leader is to be a DICTATOR or a TYRANT. It also doesn't mean that the leader is smarter or more gifted than the rest of the group. But for any organization to function, someone has to be designated as the leader and others have to VOLUNTARILY SUBMIT to that leadership.

If it's the right kind of leader, that person will be a SERVANT LEADER who SACRIFICES for the group and SERVES them rather than BEING A DICTATOR.

- When we read wives SUBMIT to your husbands. Maybe as important as knowing what that word SUBMIT IS...it's as important to know what it IS NOT.

Wayne Barber writes:

hupotasso does not mean that the wife is commanded to obey her husband as a child would obey his parents or a slave would obey his master. Many men treat their wives like door mats and they "walk all over them" as if they have no sense or ability and as if they are inferior. That is not what the hupotasso means. As a matter of fact, there is another Greek word that is used in that kind of relationship. It is the word hupakouo (see related noun hupakoe) which is entirely different.

That word hupakouo (hoop-a-koo-o) is found in the next chapter in Ephesians 6:1: Ephesians 6:1 (King James Version)

1Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Wayne Barber continues:

Hupotasso describes two people who are absolutely equal in God's eyes. There is no inferiority of one to the other. The wife makes a choice to place herself as an equal underneath another equal, her husband, in order that there can be order and function in the family. The whole purpose of it is so that it meets the design that God has ordered... It

takes nothing from the dignity of a woman for her to submit, but rather it enhances it. It takes great integrity for a person to do what God says should be done.

- Notice that verse 22 says “to your own husbands” – women are not to submit to men in general...but to voluntarily submit the leadership of the home to their husband.
- Verse 22 also says: “as unto the Lord.”
- The motivation for a CHRISTIAN WIFE to voluntarily submit this leadership of the home is that it is IN SERVICE TO CHRIST.
- Verses 23 and 24 draw the parallel between the home and the church.
- It’s important not to MISINTERPRET that verse.
- Christ is PERFECT and SINLESS.
- Husbands are FLAWED and SINFUL.
- This verse speaks of the POSITION OF LEADERSHIP
- It’s does NOT MEAN that a wife is to submit to her husband the way she submits to THE LORD...her submission is a SERVICE RENDERED to the Lord.

Barbara Rainey writes...

To submit to your husband’s leadership is to support his leadership. It means being an encouraging, believing wife who allows her husband to be the leader in the family. It doesn’t mean being a doormat. You should share your opinions, your thoughts and feelings, and make decisions together. Ultimately, though, you support your husband’s decisions.

- Just to be clear, SUBMIT doesn’t mean wives blend into the background and never speak up.
- Susan is my MOST VALUED ADVISOR and usually has better ideas on any subject than I do.
- If we ignored her COMMON SENSE we’d be in a mess most of the time.
- But when it comes down to a final decision on something important, she defers to me. The good news: God has always made us UNITED on any major decision in our life together.
- Let’s deal with an obvious question: You might say, “I get that there needs to be ONE leader...but why the husband? Why not the wife?”
- Because God designed it that way. I don’t have any better answer.
- Now before you wives get too exercised about verse 22...Paul devotes TWICE AS MANY WORDS to telling HUSBANDS about what WE are to do in these next few verses.

Ephesians 5:25-30

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing[a] her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated

their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body.

- Love your wives as Christ loves the church.
- What ONE WORD would you use to describe how Christ loves the church? SACRIFICE.
- Those next words in verse 25 say it all: “...and gave himself up for her.”
- Husbands should SERVE and SACRIFICE for their wives and families.
- The other way that Christ loves the church is by providing SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP to it.
- Husbands, if your wife is a believer she wants you to be the SPIRITUAL LEADER in the home.
- You may feel inadequate to that task. That’s normal.
- It doesn’t mean you have to be gifted as a teacher...it means you have to RUN YOUR FAMILY by THE BOOK. Have them in church. Encourage them to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord.
- In verses 28 and 29: Paul knew he needed to make a strong point and he also knows how SELFISH we humans are by nature. How does he make the point about loving our wives? The way we love our own body.
- Dad’s with daughters; dads with sons; and both.
- What kind of Son in Law would you want for your daughter? Or what kind of husband would you want your son to be for his wife?
- Let’s use this image of CARING FOR YOUR OWN BODY to write that job description for the husband we’d want our daughters to have or our sons to be.
- If you care about your body what would you do for it?
 - We Cherish our bodies.
 - If you want to have a long life you CHERISH your body and take care of it. You only get ONE!
 - If you want to have a long, healthy marriage you do the same for your wife.
 - More on that in a minute
 - We Nourish our bodies.
 - Your body needs good food not JUNK FOOD.
 - Our wives need not only food, shelter, and physical needs met.
 - They need their heart and spirit nourished.
 - More on that in a minute too.
 - We Exercise our bodies for maximum health.
 - Encourage our wives to not only take care of herself physically, but also to EXERCISE and stretch her gifts and abilities to be all she can be.
 - Then APPLAUD her as she crosses the finish line of victory when she uses those gifts.
 - We Rest our bodies.
 - We need to give our wives a break from the heavy burden of wife and mother.

- That means get off the couch and do something around the house without being asked.
- We Protect our bodies and should NEVER abuse them.
 - Protection means SECURITY. Of course, physical security.
 - Christ literally gave his life for His bride...the church.
 - When we fall in love with our wives we think they are “to die for”, we need to make sure we MEAN THAT till death do us part.
 - We know from the study of psychology of men and women...SECURITY is a major need for a woman.
 - Not only PHYSICAL SECURITY but FINANCIAL SECURITY.
 - I have a low tolerance for a man who won't provide for the needs of his family.
 - I don't mean someone who is doing their best...I mean a guy who won't step up and do whatever they can to support their family.
 - Yes, your job is hard. Yes, sometimes it's not fulfilling. Yes, life is unfair. Quit whining and go out and kill something and drag it home to feed your family.

1 Timothy 5:8 (New International Version)

8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

- I want to circle back to NOURISH and CHERISH...and ladies I want you to help me out.
- Husbands pay attention and if you have a pen take some notes.
- Wives, what are some ways you want us husbands to NOURISH your heart and spirit.
- What are some ways your husband can make you feel CHERISHED?
- There has to be a leader in the home and God has laid out the plan.
- But a successful marriage takes a successful TEAM effort and that means UNITY.

Ephesians 5:31-33

31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”[a] 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- In case we husbands didn't get it before Paul says it again: LOVE YOUR WIFE AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF!
- Then he gives one more instruction to wives.
- If you ask the average wife what the husbands number one need is...we know what they would say. And I admit, I can understand why you would say that.
- But don't underestimate your husband's need for RESPECT.
- The male ego is a fragile thing...a little RESPECT goes a long way with your husband.

- Of course, that RESPECT needs to go in BOTH directions.

Jim Dobson tells a story about E.V. Hill the great preacher from Watts in Los Angeles: *As a struggling young preacher, Dobson said, Hill had trouble earning a living and decided to invest in the purchase of a service station. His wife knew he lacked the time and expertise to oversee his investment, and soon the station went broke and Hill lost everything.*

"It was a critical time in the life of this young man," Dobson writes. "He had failed at something important, and his wife would have been justified in saying, 'I told you so.' But Jane had an intuitive understanding of her husband's vulnerability. Thus, when E.V. called to tell her that he had lost the station, she said simply, 'All right.'

"E.V. came home that night expecting his wife to be pouting over his foolish investment," Dobson continues. "Instead, she sat down with him and said, 'I've been doing some figuring. I figure that you don't smoke and you don't drink. If you smoked and drank, you would have lost as much as you lost in the service station. So it's six in one hand and a half-dozen in the other. Let's forget it.'"

So, What's the Takeaway?

- God gave a model for marriage and Paul makes it clear.
- If a husband loves his wife the way Christ loves the church...submission won't even be an issue.
- Husbands and wives need to have UNITY...and that comes when BOTH are "filled" with the Holy Spirit and see a successful marriage as service to Christ.