

“Christ & His Church: The Model for Marriage”

“Ephesians” — Part 16

Ephesians 5:21-33

I. The Biblical Teaching on Submission or Subjection

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (NIV)

Why do we all balk at the concept of submission? Control and Selfishness

Definition - a military term – to rank under

Is this generally addressed to everyone? Yes and No

Generalities about submission

1. There are two relationships in which everyone is to submit.

First and foremost we are all to submit to God.
Second, we are all to submit to governing authorities.

2. There are four that are more limited in scope in which certain groups are to submit.

Christians to church leaders

Wife to husband

Child to parents

Slave to Master (no longer in effect but has some application to Employee to Employer)

3. None of these are absolute except our submission to God.

Acts 4:18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

4. It is a voluntary attitude.

Middle or passive voice - _____

5. It does not necessarily imply inequality or less worth.

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

6. It does not mean obey; it often works itself out in obedience.

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

7. It doesn't mean that the one submitting always has to agree with the leader.

Daniel 1:12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink."

8. It does not preclude exhortation or input.

1 Timothy 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of *sinning*.

9. It doesn't lock you into hard and fast roles.

Genesis 39:4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge.

10. Your obedience to the command is not conditional upon the other party. It is an individual responsibility.

1 Peter 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of *them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives...

1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

11. It's about order.

1 Corinthians 14:40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

II. A wife's submission in marriage is service and obedience to Christ.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord... ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

Who is she supposed to submit to? Her husband

Why is the wife to submit? Out of respect to Christ

III. A husband must love his wife in the same manner as Christ loves the church.

A. A Christ-like love that is sacrificial and edifying

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

What about headship?

1. It doesn't necessarily mean superiority – (Jesus is superior; husbands are not.).

2. There is leadership involved.

Luke 22:26 "But *it is* not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

B. A Christ-like love that acknowledges oneness and looks to her well-being

Ephesians 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body.

IV. The Big Picture

Ephesians 5:31 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. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see *to it* that she respects her husband.