

Ephesians Chapter 5  
Week 10, v. 22-27

Eph 5:21 said we are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. For the next few verses, Paul takes the general instruction of submission and relates it to the specific relationship between a husband and wife.

What is unique to the marriage relationship?

- It is the first relationship between people.

Gen 2:22-24 And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man. For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

- God designed it, so it is good.

Gen 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Pr 18:22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.

Heb 13:4a [Let] marriage [be held] in honor among all,

- Because God is the One who created marriage, He knows best how it works.

There are many studies and handbooks on how to have a good marriage. However, unless they are centered on God's original plan, the information is flawed.

- A marriage, in which two people are following the Lord, brings glory to God.

1Pe 4:11 Whoever speaks, [let him speak,] as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, [let him do so] as by the strength which God supplies; **so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

How is this section of Scripture useful to those who are not married?

- the general instruction of submission is addressed to all believers.
- it is important to know God's counsel in all areas so that we can promote it to others.

Do marriages fail? Why? Is it because God's design is faulty? Ten times out of ten, it is because we fail to follow His instruction.

Read Ephesians 5:18-20 again. What was the central theme of those verses?

What does a Spirit filled life look like in a marriage? According to Eph 5:19-20, my words and actions will flow from a heart that is overflowing with praise and thankfulness to God in all circumstances. (*even when*, your husband is 'impossible' to live with; *even when* he makes a poor decision; *even when* he fails to meet your expectations; *even when* ...[fill in the blank]...)

Eph 5:22-23 Wives, [be subject] to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 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 instruction is given to wives in verse 22? How is this instruction validated in verse 23? (Ask yourself why you are to be subject to your husband)

Just as Christ is the head of the church, man is the head of the woman. God, who has perfect knowledge and understanding, has placed the husband as the leader of his wife. A leader is someone who guides others. A leader is someone who is followed.

Col 3:18 Wives, *be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

Tit 2:5 {women are} [to be] *sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.*

1Pe 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,*

Submitting means to voluntarily place ourselves under the leadership of our husbands. We do this because God commands it and we are obeying Him when we follow His instructions. Obeying God brings Him glory.

A wife's submission to her husband is clear. The relationship of leadership/subjectation also holds true in general within the church.

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

1Cor 14:34 *Let the women keep silent (hold peace) in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak (preach), but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says.*

- let the women keep silent in the churches: "Women are commanded to be silent in public assemblies, and they are commanded to ask of their husbands at home. Geneva Bible Notes
- 1Tim 2:11-12 Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.
- In the Jewish synagogues the men were encouraged to ask questions, make comments and even object. This freedom was not allowed to the women.

How can we take this information and apply it? What does it mean for us today, in our church? What might a women's submissiveness look like in our church body?

As Christ exercises authority over the Church so as to save and protect it, so let the husband exercise authority over his wife by protecting, comforting, and providing her with every necessary and comfort of life, according to his power. Adam Clarke's Commentary

What does it mean to be the head of someone or something? It means to be the leader or person in charge. In this case it would be someone who guides; the guardian of another.

The man's leadership is not one of demands and control but rather that of protection and responsibility.

How do companies or organizations run effectively? Someone has to be in charge, ultimately responsible for decisions. Someone has to look at the whole picture and lead in accordance with what is best for everyone. What happens when people don't follow? When they choose to "buck" the system?

Eph 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives [ought to be] to their husbands in everything.

In what areas are we to be subject? In all things. This however does not usurp God's ultimate authority. We are to be subject in all things except that which would require us to sin against God.

What kinds of things do you have opinions about? What is the difference between opinion and truth?

Opinion is a *personal* view or belief, a belief or judgment *not founded on certainty or proof*; a belief stronger than impression and *less strong than positive knowledge*

Truth is reality based on facts and accuracy.

A personal note: When I have an opinion about something, it has served me well when I remember to stop and quietly ask myself if what I think I need to share is based on my own thoughts or opinion, or on the truth of Scripture. My opinion is not as important as I would sometimes like to believe and does not always need to be shared. (because my husband loves me and wants to serve me, I can influence his thinking with my opinions which can sometimes be to his detriment if I am not careful).

How will keeping this in mind help us to be subject *in all things*? Do I have to agree with the leadership in my life in order to follow? Do I have to agree with my husband in order to follow him?

The next few verses deal with how husbands ought to love their wives. While it is important for us to understand what the husbands role is, our concentration will be on how we as women can encourage the charge given to them.

An important note: If our husband struggles in the area of leading, for whatever reason, our role as his wife *does not change*. *Why?* Because it is God ultimately whom we are serving.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

How did Christ show His love for the church?

Ga 1:4 who *gave Himself* for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Ga 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, *who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me*.

Eph 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and *gave Himself up for us*, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

How are husbands to love their wives?

They are to lay down their lives for them if necessary as Christ did for the church. Although a husband can't save his wife as Christ saved the church, he is to promote her salvation by encouraging her in spiritual growth and righteousness.

Scripture is filled with accounts of God's sacrificial love and enduring patience for His beloved children. There are also numerous accounts of His children

being disobedient and choosing to go their own way. Think of the Israelites stubbornness toward the leadership of Moses. Now think about your own attitude towards your husband and those in leadership in your life. **Are you 'stubborn' toward leadership? Are you difficult to lead? Do you think too highly of your own ability to lead?** This is not about being capable; this is about following the roles God has ordained for each of us.

**Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.**

Embitter <pikraino> to make bitter; to make someone aggrieved – to cause someone pain, trouble or distress; to become disillusioned – disappointed, disheartened. The antonym of being disillusioned is 'starry-eyed'.

**1Pe 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with [your wives] in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

Think of the things and people you are responsible for. This could be your children, ministries you are involved in, your workplace, etc. Now, think of those times when someone thwarts your efforts to do your work effectively. **What happens to your actions or feelings towards them? How difficult is it to be in charge of something or someone when others refuse to follow?**

Think of a child throwing a tantrum, wanting his own way. **What does this momentarily do to your relationship with them? Can it cause frustration?**

**How are you at submitting to authority?** The husband's role is to lead by love; a wife's role is to follow by obeying.

**Are you easy to lead? Are you easy to love? Are there areas in your life that constantly challenge those who are trying to lead you?**

**Eph 5:26-27 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.**

Christ came to redeem His church and make it holy. His truth is revealed through His word. The church is currently being made ready to be presented without spot or wrinkle - in purity, worthy of the love of Christ.

Paul continues to use the association of the church (the bride) and Christ (the Bridegroom) to that of a marriage relationship between husband and wife. The wife (the church) being submissive towards her husband and the husband (Christ) leading his wife in love towards holiness.

Your husband and those in leadership over you are responsible to take notice of your spiritual growth. To be responsible means to have the authority to make decisions.

Being a spiritual leader is a huge responsibility. *As you look at these verses, what do think of your husband's role in your marriage?*

If God has blessed you with a husband, recognizing the difficulty of his role in your relationship should cause you to be on your knees in prayer for him.

*How can you accommodate the leadership they are to exercise for your benefit?*

1Pe 3:1-6 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, as they observe your **chaste and respectful behavior**. And let not your adornment be [merely] external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but [let it be] the hidden person of **the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit**, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the **holy** women also, who **hoped in God**, used to adorn themselves, being **submissive to their own husbands**. Thus Sarah **obeyed** Abraham, **calling him lord**, and you have become her children if you do what is right **without being frightened by any fear**.

*According to this section of scripture, what is the character of a godly wife?*

- she is submissive to her husband
- she displays clean, pure, modest behavior *and conversation*.
- her behavior is derived from a heart that is humble and peaceful
- she is holy
- her hope and trust is in God
- she demonstrates obedience towards her husband
- she shows respect for her husband, recognizing his leadership
- she unafraid and undeterred by circumstances

*How does the character of this woman described above encourage her husband in his role to leadership and sacrificial love?*

**This week:** Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the "Apply It" bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. We will use these questions as a quick review next week. Review **memory** verses **Eph 5:1-2** in the NAS version and if you are trying the memory challenge, review Eph 5:15-20 and add Eph 5:21 to your memory verses.

Who designed the marriage relationship? What is the best handbook to read for a right perspective on the relationships in a marriage?

In what personal relationships do you have the opportunity to practice being subject to another? Think of those relationships specifically and then think about what submission might look like in each of them.

Read Eph 5:18-20. How does being Spirit-filled benefit your relationships? Your marriage?

Read Eph 5:24. If you are married, in what areas are you to be subject to your husband? How can you specifically encourage your husband's leadership?

Do you make it easy for him to lead you or are you constantly challenging his authority?

Read 1 Pet 3:1-6. List the character qualities that a godly wife demonstrates. How are you doing in each of these areas?

Take the time to thank God for the gift of marriage and for your husband specifically. Pray that you will be sensitive to opportunities to encourage his leadership in your marriage.