

REVIVE CHURCH- EPHESIANS #19

SUBMISSION

Recap- Last week we covered the atmosphere and culture of the Spirit filled church with an understanding that it takes Spirit filled and Spirit led people with a commitment to God, His word and His people to live out the following command of submission.

Ephesians 5:21-33 21submitting to one another in the fear of God.

22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

As the church operates in the spirit of the fear of the Lord, we realize we must reverence his order. This is a fundamental requirement of maturity in a believer's life. God's design makes each of us mutually dependent on one another. We do the majority of our learning and growing in the process of relationships. I am going to take a couple different angles at this text so that we don't miss all that it has for us. Today I'll be focusing on submission but I want to make sure we have a great understanding of what it means to be the bride of Christ next week.

21submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Paul moves directly into submission following the focus of spirit filled worship and spirit filled living. Submission to one another follows our submission to Jesus.

The verb submitting means that submission is under a person's voluntary choice to be under the influence of another. **Spirit filled people are not to demand others to submit to them. True submission protects, ensures, and secures it never demands.**

As a Christian, it begins when I submit to Jesus Christ. We submit to a king and His kingdom.

- Out of our love for Christ and our gratitude for His work of salvation Christians choose to submit their way, wills, affections, thoughts, desires and understanding to God. This begins when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

- **We entrust ourselves to Christ knowing that He submitted himself to The Father for our sake.** He laid down his life for us, so through the power of the Holy Spirit we can lay down our life for Christ for the sake of the Gospel. Repentance brings awareness of our need to submit.

As we behold Jesus and His perfect submission to the Father, we understand the pattern we are purposed to enter into.

- Christ lived in perfect submission to the Father. The Father did not coerce Him to “become flesh and dwell among us” ([John 1:14](#)). Jesus chose to enter the fallen, sinful world to “lay down his life” on the cross ([John 15:13](#)) so that God could “save the world through him” ([John 3:17](#)).
- Jesus Christ came from Heaven of his own choice to die on the cross. He chose to place himself under the authority of the Father while in the flesh. **Philippians 2:6-7 (NKJV)** 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men.
- **Hebrews 5:7 (AMP)** In the days of His earthly life, Jesus offered up both [specific] petitions and [urgent] supplications [for that which He needed] with fervent crying and tears to the One who was [always] able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission toward God [His sinlessness and His unfailing determination to do the Father’s will].

Charles Spurgeon wrote, “A lack of submission is no new or rare fault in mankind. Ever since the fall it has been the root of all sin...From the moment when our mother Eve stretched out her hand to pluck the forbidden fruit and her husband joined her in setting up the human will against the divine, the sons of men have universally been guilty of a lack of conformity to the will of God. They choose their own way and will not submit their wills. They think their own thoughts and will not submit their understanding. They love earthly things and will not submit their affections. Man wants to be his own law and his own master”

Christian submission is not an act of human will. It is divine work. We can submit to God’s authority and His will only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word submission was a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

There is an order to life and God alone is the one who defines that order. The order is not marked by legalistic boundaries or rigid demands. God desires individuals in the fellowship of believers to express his manner of life and his Kingdom. Submitting to God, prepares us to submit to one another.

22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

These verses have provoked many for a variety of reasons, mostly because of our lack of understanding. Paul provides specific instructions for the wife, the husband and most importantly the church. Paul is teaching us about mutual submission. Many have come to think of submission as oppressive. This specific passage in Ephesians, has been branded as sexist, some have misused the passage as justification for husbands' mistreating or abusing their wives. They insist that these words prove the Church expects women to stay married to them. This is NOT the Biblical understanding of submission.

Mutual submission was necessary because in Paul's day the subjection of women was a fact of everyday life. **Paul told married couples to submit to one another.**

- **This initiated a radical cultural shift in which wife and husband are on the same level in Jesus Christ. The wife can function in the body of Christ according to her gift and faith. She can pray and prophecy in the public fellowship (1. Cor. 11:2-13) as long as she does it in a culturally sensitive way not calling attention to herself. In Christ cultural domination by men does not exist.**
- **Paul also knew that order must be maintained under God's authority. So wives are to voluntarily submit themselves to their husbands as to the Lord. This is a spiritual issue not a matter of men getting what they want at the expense of a woman. Paul tells husbands to voluntarily submit as well. For men this is extremely demanding. In Christ there is no hierarchy, everyone is equally important.**
- **It's hard to communicate how revolutionary the aspects of the spirit filled life and marriage is. In ancient cultures domination on the part of the husband was assumed. In the spirit it is rejected. In Christ, the wife has equal standing, but she**

voluntarily submits not because the culture demands it, but because it is the will of God. *This does not mean that a wife is forced to do anything against the will of God because she is under the Lord first and she voluntarily submits herself to her husband only after the primary relationship of the lordship of Christ is lived out. Marry someone you can gladly submit to. (Amber)*

25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The demand put on husbands by the Lord is the demand of love in all of its unconditional facets, this is agape love.

- **If you were a man living in this time. And would have heard this command given by the Lord through Paul you would have been challenged to say the least.** This is the radical nature of spirit filled living.
- **That a husband would voluntarily submit to his wife through sacrificial love thinking only of her benefit was absolutely ridiculous in the ancient male dominated culture.** That the husband must totally give himself as Christ gave himself for the church was beyond the imagination of an Ephesians husband.
- **The husband must submit to the Lord Jesus Christ so that he becomes like Christ, releasing the love of Jesus to his wife. What woman would not gladly submit to the man of God who loves her, serves her and gives himself for her?**
- **A faithful husband willing lays down his life for his wife. *He is not a tyrant who forces her to submit to his sinful human desires but abandons his own will, affections, and needs for her sake.***

28So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

Paul provides another image to help husbands move into the image Christ has designed for his church. To be transformed from a controlling individual to become a compassionate unconditionally loving man. Since the husband and wife were one flesh which Paul refers to later the husband ought to think about how he treats his own body and compare that to how he treats his wife. The truth is that a man cares for himself. Since his wife is part of him,

he will care for her in the same way. The final phrase just as the Lord does the church, gives Paul an opportunity to change the focus from husband and wife relations to the church herself, the bride of Christ.

Jesus nourishes and cherishes the Bride to maturity just as husbands are nourish and cherish their bride .

30For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

We, the church as a whole are the bride of Christ. **Paul references Genesis 2:24 looking back at the original command of God concerning marriage. He is describing the relationship of Christ and the church as the pattern for marriage.** Christ ways of giving Himself to the church is the manner of marriage for Spirit filled people. Christ requires us in this marriage to leave all other lovers behind in order to walk in covenant with Him in the same way that marriage between a man and a woman carry these requirements.