

FAMILY 101 – The Hardest Word in Marriage

Ephesians 5:21-24

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

NKJV - "...submitting to one another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything."

There are many "Hard-to-hear" words: "Death, hell, depression, recession, layoff, foreclosure, divorce, cancer, infertile, loneliness, paralyzed, sin, war, breakup,..." However, relationally, the word "submit" is the most "hard to hear" word for many people in today's world.

Biblically, a wife's SUBMISSION should have 4 characteristics:

- I. Biblical Submission is **MUTUAL**. (v.21)
- II. Biblical Submission is **PROPORTIONAL**. (v.22)
- III. Biblical Submission is **RESPECTFUL**. (v.23)
- IV. Biblical Submission is **PURPOSEFUL**. (v.24)

I. Biblical Submission is **MUTUAL**.

"...submitting to one another in the fear of God."

- **Submission is here implied:** the word "**submit**" is not there in the Greek. In the original language it reads: "*Submitting to one another in the fear of God. Wives to your own husbands as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives.*"
- **Every person in the family relationship is called to be under submission**
Wives to husbands (v.22); **Husbands** to love wives (v.25); **Children** to parents (Eph 6:1); **Parents** to children (Eph 6:4)
- **Husbands are also to submit to wives:** "**Love** your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself** for her" (v. 25)
No greater act of submission than a willingness **to die** for another!! **The Cross:** the ultimate example of submission!!
- **Submission defined:** The original Greek word is "**ὑποτάσσω**" or "**hupotassó**" - a military term; to arrange in order file, rank. It means

to "**get in order** under someone else. It means you are willing to **relinquish your rights**; to **cooperate with and adapt to** the needs of those you love.

- Wives are **NOT** commanded to "obey" their husbands, as a child or servant should:

"Children, **obey** your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (Eph 6:1)
Slaves are commanded to **obey** masters (Eph 6:5). These are the Greek word "**ὕπακούω**" or **hupakouó** - "to obey". Wives are **NOT** to be treated like children or slaves. Husband and wife are **equal** partners in eternal life. (1 Cor 7:1-5 w/ the topic of marital sex!)

- Every person in life has a role of submission—even **Christ!**
 - "I want you to know that the Head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and **the Head of Christ is God**" (1 Cor 11:3).
 - "For I have come down from heaven, **not to do My own will**, but the will of Him who sent Me." (Jn 6:38)
 - "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, **not as I will, but as You will.**" (Matt 26:39)

- Order & Submission is necessary for **FUNCTIONALITY**:
Not inferiority or superiority, rather FUNCTIONALITY! Someone simply must be the head. There must be **a Leader!**
In the **Godhead**; the **Government**; the **Military**, and in the institution of **Marriage**

God has arranged different **roles/positions/functions** so that relationships can work in order and unity

II. Biblical Submission is **PROPORTIONAL**.

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

- **Context:** submitting to one another in the fear (reverence) of God
- v.22 - "As to the Lord"... v.24 - "As the church is subject to Christ"
- **Everything that is consistent with the character of Christ** and **not opposed to His Word!**

If opposed to the Word, appeal to higher authority - GOD!

- **God doesn't ask the wife to submit to violent, abusive behavior**
According to **a study in Christianity Today**, "Battered Christian Wives," **2/3** said it was their Christian responsibility to endure their husband's violence. **55%** reported their husbands told them if they were more submissive, the violence would stop. Of those, **1/3** believed their husband: thinking submission is the key to domestic violence when it was not!
- **There exists a Biblical "Chain of Command" for Christian families:**

God -> Jesus -> Husband -> Wife -> Children

If God's "**Chain of Command**" is broken, God's order is broken! If what the husband requires is NOT under submission to Jesus, the wife is to submit to the Lord!

Example: *"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29)*

- **Caution to wives: Watch your attitude!**
- *"The husband does not replace Christ as the woman's supreme authority. She must never follow her husband's leadership into sin. But even when a Christian wife may have to stand with Christ against the sinful will of her husband, she can still have a spirit of submission. She can show by her attitude and behavior that she does not like resisting his will and that she longs for him to forsake sin and lead in righteousness. Her attitude to honor him as head can again produce harmony."*
- **Maintain an Attitude of love...even when he's in disobedience:**
 - "I'd love to submit to you, but I can't. I'd love to see you in obedience to Jesus Christ."*
 - "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives" (1 Peter 3:1)*

III. Biblical Submission is **RESPECTFUL.**

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body."

- **Respect Enables the Leadership of the husband.**
 - Some women long for their husband to be leader of the home, but ***never let him lead:*** Could it be he is not a good leader, because you aren't a good follower and ***don't RESPECT*** him as the Leader?
 - **Relinquish control!** - Leadership implies the relinquishing of control and power to the leader God has called.
 - Wife's submission and **RESPECT** may enable husband to become a good leader
 - **RESPECT** is a vital need for every man, like LOVE is for a woman! (Scuba diver!)
 - **Illustration:** *Pete Flaherty, a county commissioner in Pittsburgh, and his wife, Nancy. They were standing on the sidewalk surveying a city construction project, when one of the laborers at the site called out to them. "Nancy, remember me?" he asked. "We used to date in high school." Later Pete teased her. "Aren't you glad you married me? Just think, if you had married him, you would be the wife of a construction worker."*

Nancy looked at him and said, "No, if I would have married him, he would have been a county commissioner!"

- Often, a man becomes great because a woman **RESPECTS** him and has thereby enabled him to do so.
- **You can BUILD respect in your marriage!**
Find the things your husband is **doing right**; encourage him, thank him, acknowledge him!
*"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - **meditate on these things.**" - Phil 4:8*
- **Women, it is not your job to change your husband; it's God's job:**
"My job is to love Billy; it's God's job to change him" – Ruth Graham
Pray for him regularly; **Encourage** him continually!

IV. Biblical Submission is **PURPOSEFUL**.

"Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

- *"If you want to know about the relationship between Jesus and His people, **just look at my marriage!**"*
- **Eph 5:32 NKJV** - *"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*
- Your marriage is either **a symbol** of or **a denial** of Christ and His church