

Marriage: God's Holy Sacrament 5

Submit as unto the Lord

(preached 10/9/22)

Please turn to *Ephesians 5:22 & 1 Peter 3:1*.

SUBMISSION GONE WRONG. Before I get going, ladies, I'll wager many of you have several valid stories that if you'd submitted to your husband, things would have gone badly. Here are 3 common examples I've heard over the years: "If I had submitted to my husband..."

- **You wouldn't be here in church.** You're unbelieving husband hates that you come to church, tithe, and even gets upset if you read your Bible or play worship music at home. It's only because you've stood your ground that you're able to do these things.
- **There would be adultery.** Years ago your unbelieving husband suggested you have an open marriage and you said "no." If you hadn't....
- **Spendthrift.** Your husband is a spendthrift and if you hadn't stood up to him, the bills wouldn't get paid.

I promise I will address the times when you can and should stand your ground, say "no," and not obey him. Let me get there and do your best to let your guard down and allow the Holy Spirit to confirm the Scriptures within you. Let Him speak directly to your spirit and show you the heavenly revelation behind this doctrine vs just the earthly "God is telling me I have to obey" thoughts.

Ephesians 5:22-24 (ESV)

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

REPS NEW COVENANT. Please remember the divine revelation that ***human marriage is a direct symbol of the New Covenant***. Jesus is the Divine Husband Who died and came back with His resplendent wife who is us, the Church.

Jesus is the only Man ever born Who deserves submission and obedience. He's the only One Whose ever earned it, has never and will never abuse it, and won't use us like a doormat. He's just, fair, loving, patient, sees to our needs, provides, makes Himself available, and is always right about everything.

Everyone else on this planet that we are called upon to submit to does not deserve it.

God does not attach value or lack thereof with authority or lack thereof.

In God's view your boss, husband, pastor, professor, political leader, or police officer does NOT have more value than you do. They are not closer to God than you are.

FALLEN WORLD. *This is not the case here in the fallen world which assigns greater value and worth to authority figures and those with more money.* Even within religion, there are those who believe that pastors, bishops, priests, and what not are closer to whichever god they worship and are more righteous than lay people.

KIDS. If you have children and grandchildren, I assume you expect them to submit to your authority? Just as husbands don't deserve this and haven't earned it, doesn't the same apply to wives?

Now we must ask: **IF NO ONE BUT JESUS DESERVES BEING SUBMITTED TO, THEN WHY DO WE HAVE TO?** How does Jesus confer it if it's not earned?

TREE FARM STORY. I came back to Addison in 1997 and took over the tree farm from Dad, and it was a struggle in several ways. Although I'd worked the business since I was a kid, I was only on the labor end of things and never management. I was young, proud, full of ideas, and very naïve...and made plenty of poor decisions.

TRANSITION FOR EMPLOYEES. One of the hardest things was that I inherited all of Dad's employees. In just one year they went from an experienced and authoritative man in his 60's to an insecure inexperienced kid in his late 20's as their "boss" and some weren't taking it well at all. There was one fellow who'd worked for dad for years and he continually gave me pushback. He and I butted heads on several occasions and one day things came to a head.

JOHNNY BLOWS UP. I'd just made another bad decision and this fellow, we'll call him Johnny, had had enough. He blew up at me telling me I was running the farm into the ground and kept comparing me to Dad. *"If Terry had been here he wouldn't have done this, he would have done that!"* type thing. He went up one side of me and down the other, yelling the entire time.

HOW TO RESPOND? This might sound funny, but I was hoping his rant would go on a little longer because I had no idea how to respond. After getting over initial shock, I realized that when he was done I would need to respond. Should I yell back at him? Be humble and apologize? Defend myself or tell him he's right? I was conflicted and desperately trying to come up with something.

DAVE'S TEMPER. There was another employee standing there whose name was Dave and, at the time, I didn't know him very well. Whereas Johnny had worked there for years, Dave had been hired after I left Addison 6 years before. The whole time Johnny was berating me, Dave was calm and silent. Funny thing is I'd been warned by Dave that he had a short temper and prone to flying off the handle. I'd been told he liked solving problems with his fists.

DAVE'S WISDOM. Yet here he stood calm and peaceful during this very tense moment. Johnny was finally done with his rant and I still had no idea how to respond. Before I could speak, however, Dave did...he really saved the day and his words contained wisdom.

"TERRY PICKED HIM." "Johnny," he said "Scott's in charge because he's Terry's son and someday he's gonna own all this. Yeah Scott's doing some dumb things but Terry picked him and not us so this farm is his problem. Start showing some respect and let's get back to work." I was shocked and then relieved when Johnny stormed off and went back to work. I never said anything!

STILL RESPECTFUL. Johnny no longer works for me but, all these years later, Dave still does. He's still very respectful to me despite maintaining a reputation of a short temper and even to the point of throwing a fist now and then.

HOW HAS HE ENDURED? How has Dave been able to endure my continued mistakes, my own personality issues, and what not? Answer: it isn't just that he accepts my position as the owner—*he's always understood it was obtained by grace and not works.*

Psalm 75:4-7 (AMP)

⁴ I said to the arrogant *and* boastful, Deal not arrogantly [do not boast]; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn [of personal aggrandizement].

⁵ Lift not up your [aggressive] horn on high, speak not with a stiff neck *and* insolent arrogance.

⁶ For not from the east nor from the west nor from the south come promotion *and* lifting up.

⁷ But God is the Judge! He puts down one and lifts up another.

I WAS A SON. I'd done nothing to earn inheriting the tree farm but be Terry Towner's son. I didn't prove myself, I didn't show amazing leadership skills which impressed Dad, I didn't display some natural business acumen that raised his eyebrows, nor did I have this dedicated work ethic where I put aside all else for the sake of the family business.

What did I do to become dad's son? Nothing...I had nothing to do with it. What did I accomplish to earn this inheritance? Nothing.

JUST AS SALVATION IS BY GRACE, SO IS ANY AUTHORITY THAT GOD CONFERS.

WARNS AGAINST PRIDE. In verses 4-5 above, King David is trying to warn other authority figures not to be prideful and give themselves the credit for their positions. He implores them to be humble and reminds them it was God Who gave them what they have, and God Who can take it away.

God's divine appointment relieves us of the things the world burdens us with.

- In the world so-and-so beat us in sports because they were better or trained harder,
- What's her name got the promotion because she worked harder or had been there longer,
- What's his name was chosen because he knew the right people.

We're left with either a feeling of failure or lack of justice. Divine appointment by Grace takes all that away.

God is the one Who chose husbands to be the heads of their homes.

- The Lord didn't do it because we deserve it.
- He didn't select us because we're more important, worth more, or closer to Him.
- We didn't work harder, weren't naturally talented, or have some sort of "in" with Him.
- Your husband doesn't deserve submission and chances are good there are times when he deserves exactly the opposite.
- Being the one in authority doesn't always mean he'll make good decisions for the family.
- It doesn't mean he's looking to your needs as he ought to be or in any obedience to God.

Our Salvation by grace should bring us peace and not stress. Any supposed salvation that's earned must be maintained and therefore can be lost. A grace-based Salvation brings a sense of security that a works-based one never will. It also brings a sense of equality—so and so isn't Saved or "more Saved" than me because he lives a righteous life and does a lot of good in the community.

Truth is Christ gave me the same righteousness as He gave Billy

Graham. God doesn't value me any less. That being said, He chose Billy Graham to be the greatest American evangelist to have ever lived and did not choose me for that role...and I'm OK with that because I know Father loves me the same as He did Billy Graham.

“AS TO THE LORD.” Going back to our verse from Ephesians, the call for wives to submit to husbands is unique in all of the Bible in this sense: it’s compared to submitting to Jesus. Even the famous Romans 13, which tells us we were subject to governmental authority, doesn’t compare government to Jesus. Of all the places in Scripture where submission is called upon, this is the only one where the authority figure is compared to Jesus.

Again: your husband isn’t Jesus but he’s been assigned by our Savior to play his role in human marriage.

Colossians 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

SAKE OF THE LORD. Paul makes the same comparison to the Colossian church as he did to Ephesus: submission to husbands is for the sake of the Lord and not your husband. He’s the One Who assigned these roles.

UNBELIEVING & DISOBEDIENT HUSBANDS. What about husbands who are unbelievers and don’t follow the Lord or His Word? This was happening 2000 years ago in the 1ST century church just as it is now, and the Apostle Peter addressed it:

1 Peter 3:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,

² when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—

⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Verses 1-2 means an unbelieving husband is more likely to repent by the respectful treatment of his wife than he is if she tries to talk or argue him into believing.

Verse 3: a woman’s hair represents her husband, who is her covering. When you do your hair and make it look nice, do you know what that originally represented? In the days and culture of 1st century Israel? It represented that you loved and admired your husband...that you had a good one.

HAIR IS COVERING. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul identifies a wife's hair as representing her husband. A woman who shaves her head bald, he went on to explain, showed both the spiritual and physical world that she rejected the authority of her covering if she had one or didn't want one. That left her vulnerable to demonic spirits **if she wasn't Saved.** If a single or widowed woman knows the Lord as her Savior, Jesus is her covering.

JEWELRY. Gold Jewelry in Scripture represented a married woman with a prosperous husband who takes care of her and has bought her said jewelry to enhance her beauty. The shining and resplendent qualities of gold worn on a woman back then glorified her husband as much as her.

ADORNMENT INSIDE. When it came to Peter talking about hair and jewelry that a woman adorns herself with, this is what he was referring to. He goes on to explain that when a woman chooses to subject herself to her husband, it's like fixing up her hair and wearing expensive gold jewelry on the inside where God sees it.

Verse 5 showed that women back then hoped in the Lord to bring their husbands around and partnered with Him in this way.

CONDITIONS. ***Are there conditions where you don't have to and should not submit to your husband? Yes.***

- If ever tries to get you to commit sin, whether large or small.
- Something that bothers your personal conscience, even if its not listed as a sin in the Bible.

SIN/MAI LAI MASSACRE. God never commits sin and has never commanded anyone else to either. Many years ago there was a terrible incident in Vietnam called the "Mai Lai Massacre" where American soldiers were commanded to fire into a crowd of unarmed civilians and they did. It's estimated that hundreds died. Immediately after there was great moral controversy over who was at fault.

WHOSE FAULT? Some said it was the fault of the commanding officer alone, because soldiers are trained to obey orders no matter what and respect the chain of command. Others said the soldiers were partially responsible because they knew it was wrong, and should have disobeyed.

If your husband tries to get you to sin, disobey him.

- If work is calling him in for a double shift and he says "answer it and tell them I'm not home" then say no, that you aren't going to lie for him.
- If he forbids you from coming to church, politely respond to him that you're going anyway and bringing the kids.
- If he suggests you have an "open marriage" where you can "see other people" tell him this isn't acceptable and you won't participate. (There is no such thing as an "open marriage" BTW. God created marriage and defined it as one man to one woman, committed to each other only. Being with anyone else is adultery, even by consent.)

- If he's physically abusing you or calling you horrible names, tell him it must stop immediately or you'll leave.

CONSCIENCE. There are times when things bother our personal conscience, even if it's not specifically listed under "thou shalt not" in the Bible. No one that I know has memorized every moral commandment there is, so *if your husband wants you to do something that's against your conscience, then don't.*

NAVIGATION. We have to navigate here a little more and wisdom is needed. Here are some examples:

- You believe the killing of animals for meat is unethical so you're a vegetarian. If your husband tries to get you to eat meat, say no. That being said, you likely won't get anyone else in your home to do the same.
- You don't believe in spanking your kids, it makes you feel terrible. If your husband tells you to spank them, say no and tell him he'll have to do it himself. That you'll employ other methods of discipline when you're the parent in charge.

IS THERE ROOM FOR A WIFE TO CORRECT HER HUSBAND, WHETHER FACTUALLY OR MORALLY?

Yes with one tag-a-long: it should be done respectfully.

JOHNNY WAS RIGHT. Back to my original story of Johnny my employee berating me. Although he didn't do it in a respectful manner at all, all the specific criticisms he had of me were right. It took me a few days to cool down and think about it, but the examples he brought up were spot on and I needed to hear them.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN RESPECTFUL TO ME. There have been several of you, both men and women, who have come to me with corrective concerns about a way I behaved or something I said from the pulpit. I'm not talking about doctrinal differences but times when I was either too harsh, condescended, or was acting in the flesh some other way.

NEEDED TO HEAR IT. While I didn't like being confronted, 1) I needed to be and 2) you have always done so in a respectful manner. I can't remember the last time anyone in this church didn't honor my God-given position as your pastor.

Treat your husband the same way (Scripture Says). He may get certain facts wrong and/or is acting in an immoral or inconsiderate way—he needs to hear from you.

MAY NOT TAKE WELL! I can't guarantee he'll take it well! I don't. I normally get defensive and justify myself and then maybe—maybe—later on in the week I will come back and admit I was wrong. Sometimes I don't.

Yet I'm far more convicted of my own wrongdoing when my wife is respectful than I am when she's not, just as Peter told us.

NOT NATURALLY SUBMISSIVE. What if you're not a naturally submissive person? Adam and Eve weren't born under sin like you and I, had no marital issues, and weren't upset with God. Yet the rebelled against him and at the FF. Is your friend Jenny, who seems to never argue with her husband and does whatever he tells her, more “naturally” submissive than Eve was?

FLESH VS SPIRIT. Paul explains in Romans 7 that the flesh is at war with the spirit and that its desires are diametrically opposed. It doesn't want to submit to anything except its own goals.

Submission isn't weak, fear is weak.

SHE'S AFRAID. Your friend Jenny who lets her husband run all over her is afraid of him. Whether he threatens to hit her, get a divorce, change the locks next time she leaves, or just loses his cool and verbally abuses her, she's afraid.

SUBMISSION IS MARRIED TO RESPECT AND DEFERENCE TO AUTHORITY, A FREE WILL CHOICE MADE IN COVENANT WITH CHRIST AND YOUR HUSBAND. IT'S CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

Fear of punishment and reprisal from your husband is not from the Lord and He does not want you living this way.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

SUBJECT TO JESUS. A wife submitting to her husband is a picture of our—the Church's—submission to Jesus.

NOT ALWAYS HAPPY WITH HIS LEADERSHIP! IDK about you, but I'm not always happy with His leadership or decisions He's made. I think the Rapture needs to happen NOW—I don't want Him to "tarry." I don't like most of His timing! Things for me need to happen a lot quicker than they do!

MY REACTIONS. He's denied me things in the past and I never like it, even to point of throwing the occasional tantrum and going into rebellion. I've had a few choice and blasphemous words for Him over the years, all of which I am ashamed of and can't take back.

Proverbs 31:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

¹² She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.