



# **Peninsula City Church**

## **Ephesians: Chapter Five: In Christ**

**Stay Humble**

Michael Podhaczky

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the AM Services**

## Contents

Ephesians: Chapter Five: In Christ: Humility in the Home .....	3
An Introduction.....	3
Paul's Teaching: Marriage in the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33.....	3
1. Wives Submit to Your Own Husbands: Humility.....	4
2. Husbands, love your wives: Humility.....	7
Some concluding thoughts .....	8

## Ephesians: Chapter Five: In Christ: Humility in the Home

### An Introduction

**Q.** Why did Paul have to deal with the home life and especially marriage in the letter, and what can we learn from it?

Paul, at the end of this chapter, encouraged the Ephesians to imitate their Heavenly Father and see heaven in their home.<sup>1</sup> As in the previous chapter, Paul here challenges the Ephesian church to pursue holiness and not morality. They were vastly different from the community in which they lived. Their lifestyle was not to reflect that of the city of Ephesus, but that of the Kingdom of Heaven. Paul taught the husbands and wives in the Ephesian church what it meant to live lives of humility. There was no room for pride in the marriage. That is, people who have been declared holy due to their contact with the Holy God. He went on to teach them about living holy lives within the home. It is these people who need to show the world around them what it means to live humbly with one another, especially within their own homes. The husbands and wives were not meant to use these verses as weapons to get their own way or put the other down.

We will briefly examine this material to gain an understanding of it. It is not an exhaustive teaching but just a review of some of the things Paul mentioned. Therefore, reviewing what Paul, a trusted teacher of truth, had to say can help us appreciate his perspective and gain a better understanding of it. We will review two principles from these verses to grasp what Paul taught, dealing with the following two points,

- Paul's Teaching: Marriage in the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33
  - Wives Submit to Your Own Husbands: Humility Ephesians 5:22-24
  - Husbands, love your wives: Humility Ephesians 5:25-33

### Paul's Teaching: Marriage in the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33

**Q.** What was Paul trying to communicate to the Ephesian church, especially in marriage?

Paul had been confronting the Ephesian church in various areas of their life. Here, he challenged them in their personal lives, their marriages. If they wanted to live properly together in their married life, then some things needed to be addressed in their homes. For him to raise this matter here, there must have been something wrong with some of their marriages. It is possible that, having come from homes of non-Christian followers, they faced challenges like the one raised here. Paul wanted them to have heaven in their homes, that is, to live humbly.<sup>2</sup> By conducting a study like this, we will address some of the issues Paul raised. So, the verses are as follows. That is, Eph 5:22-33. Marriage: Christ and the church,

<sup>22</sup> "Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. *Ephesians: Be Rich*. (Sydney, Australia, Christian Press, 1986), 129-155.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, *Ephesians*, 143.

because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, 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” (Eph 5:22-33 NASB).

The following is an expanded version of the verses mentioned above. That is,

<sup>22</sup> “The wives, *be putting yourselves in subjection* with implicit obedience to your own husbands as to the Lord, <sup>23</sup> because a husband is head of the wife as Christ is Head of the Church, He himself being the Saviour of the Body. <sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, as the Church subjects itself in obedience to Christ, in this manner also the wives should subject themselves in obedience to their husbands in all things. <sup>25</sup> The husbands, be loving your wives with a love self-sacrificial in its nature, in the manner in which Christ also loved the Church and gave himself on behalf of it, <sup>26</sup> so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the bath of water in the sphere of the Word, <sup>27</sup> so that He might himself present to himself the Church glorious, not having spot nor wrinkle nor any of such things, but so that it might be holy and unblameable. <sup>28</sup> In this manner ought also the husbands to love their wives as their own bodies. <sup>29</sup> The one who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Christ, the Church, <sup>30</sup> because members are we of His Body. <sup>31</sup> Because of this a man shall leave behind his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great. <sup>33</sup> However, I am speaking about Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, also as for you, let each one in this manner be loving his own wife as himself, and the wife, let her be continually treating her husband with deference and reverential obedience” (Eph 5:22-33 *Wuest*).<sup>3</sup>

We now come to a section of the letter that has been fiercely debated. It is a section of the letter that has caused some controversy throughout church history.

## 1. Wives Submit to Your Own Husbands: Humility

**Q.** What was Paul aiming for the Ephesians to see here?

### Some Insights into the Teaching here: Eph 5:15-24

The following is a brief overview of the teaching in Ephesians 5:22-24. However, to understand what is happening in this section of the letter, we need to revisit Ephesians 5:15-21. Here, Paul emphasises that they need to live as wise followers of Christ. He also told them to live from the fullness of the Holy Spirit, listing five areas. One of these is to be subject to one another. That is, being wise,

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of your time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk (*stop getting drunk*) with wine, for that is dissipation (self-indulgence), but **be commanded to be filled with the Spirit**, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; <sup>21</sup> and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Eph 5:15-21 NASB).

So, in Ephesians 5:18, Paul commanded the Ephesians to be constantly controlled by the Holy Spirit. He pointed out five participles listed above: speaking to one another, they were to be singing; making melody; giving thanks; and finally, being subject to one another. The fifth of these participles also includes Ephesians 5:22, where Paul addresses their home life, particularly marriage. It may have been a cultural issue for the Ephesians that required addressing in

<sup>3</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 5:128.

alignment with the Kingdom of God's way of doing things. The topic discussed here is not a popular one for many people today. It can be a heated issue, especially if it is not handled well. Sadly, these amazing verses have been weaponised. The main section is the opening sentence, that is,

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22 NASB).

It has been suggested that this section could be seen as "Heaven in Your Home."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps some will be offended by this idea of "being subject or submitting to their own husband," mentioned in verse 22. It could be possible that the wives here held to the belief that, I am not my husband's slave. He is not my master. However, both wives and husbands need to trust in God in their marriage. They should not expect God to do their will; they need to do His will. God is God, and they were not, so His will should be supreme. Both the wives and husbands were required to know that they should not put their ideas and thoughts before glorifying Him. That would be pure idolatry and would not be tolerated by Him. He is God, and they needed to do His will, whether they could understand it or not. The "Believers are to practice humbly submitting to one another."<sup>5</sup> The husband, in humility, was to provide for, protect, and love his wife.

What is interesting about this verse is that the word subject or submit is not in the original language in Eph 5:22. The verse literally reads, "Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord." **Notice** that there is no use of the verbs subject or submit in the early text. So, what do we do here in this case? How do we determine the best course of action for this issue? We can go back to Eph 5:21, where we read the following,

<sup>21</sup> "And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, <sup>22</sup> the wives to their own husbands as to the Lord" (Eph 5:21-22).

It would have been a safeguard for the wives that they were not forced to submit to anyone else's husband, but their own.

It would have been the case until the New Testament was divided into chapters and verses. It was in 1551 in Geneva that Robert Stephanus (Estienne) published a copy of the New Testament with the verses. Then, in 1560, the first English translation of the verses was published by William Whittington.<sup>6</sup> So, Ephesians 5:21 and 22 were then divided. The verse Eph 5:21 can be seen as a transition from the preceding verses into the next section, beginning with Ephesians 5:22.

It has been suggested below that the word in Ephesians 5:21 could flow into Ephesians 5:22.<sup>7</sup>

"In this first article, I look at the Greek participles in Ephesians 5:18-21, especially the 'submit' participle in verse twenty-one. Here is an English translation of Ephesians 5:18-24 with the five participles in italics.

<sup>18</sup> "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled with/by the Spirit: <sup>19</sup> *speaking* to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, *singing* and *making music* with your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> *giving thanks* always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> *submitting* to one another in the fear of Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord, <sup>23</sup> because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, he himself is the Saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in everything."

<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. *Ephesians: Be Rich*. (Sydney, Australia, Christian Press, 1986), 143.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin, *Ephesians*, 177.

<sup>6</sup> Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Text to Translation: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker, 2000), 214-215.

<sup>7</sup> "1. The Grammar of Ephesians 5:21-22: Participles." <https://margmowczko.com/grammar-ephesians-521-22-participles/> (October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025).

The Ephesians were taught here that it is submission all around. That is, the Ephesians were to submit to one another, including the husband to the wife. The submission must be voluntary, not forced. It is an attitude of the Kingdom of God, which should lead to action. However, the later translations have it, and it is an imperative middle. I take the participle in Ephesians 5:21 to be in the middle voice with a reflexive sense, as the husband and wife are to be subject to each other. So, I understand it as meaning 'submit for yourselves' or "submitting for yourselves." Others believe the participle is in the passive voice with the meaning of 'be submissive' or 'being submissive.'"<sup>8</sup>

It has also been pointed out that,

"Participles that follow the main verb ... elaborate the action of the main verb, often providing a more specific explanation of what is meant by the main action. In most cases, they practically spell out what the main action looks like. ... By using a participle rather than a finite verb, the writer places its action under the umbrella of the main verb, typically adding more detail."<sup>9</sup>

Notice that Paul used the phrase "one another" here. So, the submission is to be done throughout the church. It is the word used here by Paul, which can mean "to elevate others above us," that is, to act in humility." It is made up of two words. That is, '*hupo*,' meaning to subject or make subject."<sup>10</sup> The other word is, '*tasso*,' "in classical Greek it has a military meaning, 'to draw up in order of battle, to form an array, marshalled' both troops or ships."<sup>11</sup>

"In the Greco-Roman world, *ὑποταγή* could describe military hierarchy, civic duty, or household relations. The apostles appropriate the term but fill it with gospel content, emphasising willing, dignified response rather than coerced subservience. This radicalised humility shocked a culture that prized status and patronage."<sup>12</sup>

It is also used in Eph 5:24,

"But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24 NASB).

It has been said that,

"*Submission* has nothing to do with the *order* of authority but rather governs the *operation* of authority."<sup>13</sup>

Paul went on to use Christ, and the church is an example of the humility referred to in this passage. Jesus was humble and did the Father's will and not His own will, and when He went to the cross, Lk 22:42. Jesus said,

"Saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done' (Lk 22:42 NASB; see also Matt 26:39).

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45 NASB).

---

<sup>8</sup> "1. The Grammar of Ephesians 5:21-22: Participles." <https://margmowczko.com/grammar-ephesians-521-22-participles/> (October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> "1. The Grammar of Ephesians 5:21-22: Participles."

<sup>10</sup> Wuest, *The New Testament*, Eph 5:22-33, 128.

<sup>11</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest's Word Studies: From the Greek New Testament: The Exegesis of Ephesians*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 129.

<sup>12</sup> "5292. Hupotagē." <https://biblehub.com/greek/5292.htm> (31<sup>st</sup> October 2025).

<sup>13</sup> Wiersbe, *Ephesians*, 149.

Paul went on to point out that,

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything” (Eph 5:23-24 NASB).

Paul said that the husband is the head of the wife. What does that mean? As an illustration, he referenced the idea that Christ is also the head of the church. Christ gave Himself (died) for it, sanctified and cleansed it. The concept of the husband being the head is not to be carried out aggressively or violently, but he is to die to self. The word “subject” here refers to the same concept as mentioned in Ephesians 5:21. So, just as Christ is the head over the body, it is to be the husband who is to be head over the wife humbly.

## **2. Husbands, love your wives: Humility.**

**Q.** What was Paul aiming for the Ephesians to see here?

We have looked at what the passage says to the wives. We now come to a challenging section of the letter regarding how Ephesian husbands were to treat their wives. In fact, it is a section that advises husbands to remain humble towards their wives. That is,

<sup>25</sup> “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, 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” (Ephesians 5:25-33 NASB).

### **Some Insights into the Teaching here**

In this section, the husband was given an example of what was required. They were to obey the command to follow Christ and love their wife as He loved the church. That is,

- So, as Paul commanded husbands to love their wives, it was to be done just as Christ had already loved the church and gave Himself up for her: Eph 5:25.

Notice that the husband is commanded to love his wife. The importance of this cannot be overstated. The measure of the love of the husband for his wife is in the same way that Christ loved the church. The word used here for this command is *agape*, which means to seek the highest for one’s wife, even if she does not respond to that love. Christ has already loved the church so much that He came and died for it. It stands to reason, then, that husbands need to die to self for their wives. It is a sacrificial love for the church.

- So that Jesus might sanctify her, having cleansed her (once and for all) by the washing of water with the word: Eph 5:26.

The church was cleansed through the act of salvation; it is also to be continually sanctified. The reason is in the next verse, but He is coming back for a pure and holy bride.

- Why is the case, it is so 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: Eph 5:27.

Paul points out that Jesus is coming to present to Himself a glorious bride who is pure in every way. It is one of the reasons that He came and died.

- Paul went on to point out that husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies, cf. verses vv25-27. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body: Eph 5:28-30. It is here that Paul restates the message from vv25-27.

We all love our bodies and strive to take care of them. It is the same for the church that Jesus Christ loves His body. The husband needs to be doing the same, that is, be loving his wife.

- Paul went back to the beginning and stated the foundation of this love.

“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” Eph 5:31. It was before the rupture of the creation in the garden. That is,

<sup>21</sup> “So, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup> The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> 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.’ <sup>24</sup> For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen 2:21-25 NASB).

- Paul said that this was a mystery, and it is a great mystery that is for sure. He was speaking with reference to Christ and the church. So, the idea of marriage is, in a small measure, an image of Christ’s love for the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is commanded to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband: Eph 5:32-33.

Paul wanted to get the message across to them, so he restated it to both parties. For this to work, they are to be humble toward one another as they live in the home as Christ-followers. It would have been a countercultural lifestyle that the citizens of Ephesus had not seen before, especially if the church were constantly striving to live according to the truth that they were holy ones.

Therefore, as Paul has said here, the church at Ephesus needed to live humble lives, as wives and husbands. He was most likely dealing with an existing issue. Considering his language, it had something to do with humility and their roles as husbands and wives. That is, they were two lives that were different from those of the people within the city. Their life was to be a life of the Kingdom of God. They were to live in unity, a theme that has been repeated throughout the letter.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** Why did Paul have to deal with the home life and especially marriage in the letter, and what can we learn from it?

We have seen that Paul raised the issue of proper behaviour towards one another as Christ-following wives and husbands. There needed to be humility within the home. We need to remember that our spouses are not our possessions; they belong to our Heavenly Father. They are on loan to us, so we had better look after them. That is, our wives and husbands are our sisters and brothers in Christ. We are to treasure one another and look after each other. We have



no right to abuse them in any way whatsoever. We need to see them as so valuable that Jesus Christ died to show them how much He loves them. Husbands are not to force their wives to submit to them. In fact, remember that we are to submit to one another.

I know that there will be wives here today who have been wronged, abused, and had Eph 5:22 shoved down their throats. The verse has been used to suggest that Paul commanded wives to submit to their husbands. However, we have seen that it is not a command but instead flows from the work of the Holy Spirit, as mentioned in Ephesians 5:15-21. If anyone is commanded here, it is the husband to love his wife. It is to be "just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph 5:25 NASB). Husbands need to be the same and die to self. That is, Jesus Christ gave Himself for the church in that He died for her. In addition to this, "husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself" (Eph 5:28 NASB). What a great mystery is Christ and the church. We need to submit to one another out of reverence for God (Ephesians 5:21).

Just as Christ is the head over the body (the church), the husband is to be the head over the wife, but out of humility. These verses are not to be weaponised to get our own way. It is the God-given order of how to be humble towards one another. The way Christ gave Himself to the church is the only illustration given by Paul for the wife to submit to their husband humbly and how the husband is to love their wife. This can only happen if they are equal to begin with.

From today onwards, we need to let the Holy Spirit guide our reading and study of sections of the Bible, such as this one, to transform our lives. We need to 'Stop and reflect.' We have considered some of the views expressed on this matter. What has the Holy Spirit been saying to you today? That is, what is the one thing that stands out to you? Paul taught husbands and wives to live together in unity. He taught the church what it meant to live lives of humility. There is no room for pride in marriage. That is, people who have been declared holy due to their contact with the Holy God. We all need to apply what we have learned; otherwise, it is merely all academic. Then, we need to respond to what the Holy Spirit has been saying to us.

In response, we need to ask through this process:

- What personal application can be found in the passages?
- What is God teaching me today?
- That is, "What is God saying to me?"

How should I respond to what is being said, or what's the point?

- What are you going to do about it?
- What do you need to do to respond?
- Pray and respond