

A GODLY MARRIAGE #1: WIVES SUBMITTING TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS

Ephesians 5:22-24

Marriage is under attack in unprecedented ways. It is now urgent and crucial to have a Biblical (not just a traditional) view of marriage. A godly marriage will be a witness for Christ now more than ever.

1. WIVES SUBMIT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS – Ephesians 5:22

- Submission is considered by some today as an offensive relic of traditional patriarchy. Those who reject the authority of the Bible reject this teaching outright. It is also denied by some who claim to be “evangelical egalitarians”. But this passage is part of God’s Word and must be accepted as truth. In fact, submission of the wife is for God’s glory and our own good.
- Submission is for wives to their own husbands, not men in general. Submission is “arranging yourself under the authority of another”. It is subordinating our lives under someone else’s direction and leadership.
- Every Christian is to be submissive – verse 21. Everyone submits to someone in authority over them – Romans 13:1, 5. Jesus Himself was submissive to His earthly parents – Luke 2:51. But this is not teaching that there is full mutual submission in marriage, that husbands submit to their own wives. The Bible does not teach mutual submission, but mutual servanthood – Mark 9:35
- What are the limits of submission? *“It goes without saying that wives are not to be subordinate in matters that are sinful or contrary to God’s commands” – Peter O’Brien – Acts 5:29.*

2. WIVES SUBMIT BECAUSE THE HUSBAND IS THE GOD-ORDAINED HEAD – Ephesians 5:23

- Submission does not mean a woman is inferior to man – Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28. But there is still a God-ordained order. Jesus submits to His Father and He is not inferior to Him – 1 Corinthians 11:3. Each Person of the Trinity has a different role and function, but each Person is equal in glory and majesty. So it is with the husband and wife – different roles, equal in personhood. Jesus is the Ultimate Example of both Submission and Headship.
- Submission is not rooted in culture or tradition. Submission is rooted in Creationism not chauvinism – Genesis 2:8, 15; 18; 1 Corinthians 11:8,9; 1 Timothy 2:13. God has an ordained order for the family and church. One God-honoring motivation for the wife submitting to her husband is as a reversing of the effects of the curse on the marriage relationship – Genesis 3:16. Instead of desiring to control or manipulate, the submissive wife desires to follow her husband’s leadership.
- Headship does not simply mean “source”, but includes authority. Jesus is the example of Headship for the husband.

3. WIVES SUBMIT AS TO THE LORD – Ephesians 5:22, 24

- A wife’s submission to the husband is to be as to the Lord. Her submission is to be as the church submits to Christ – Ephesians 1:22; 4:15. As we submit to Christ in every area of life, so the wife is to desire to honor the husband’s leadership in every area of life. Wives submit to their husbands because they want to please the Lord Jesus. Wives submit not because he is worthy, but because Jesus is! The ultimate motive in submission is the glory of God. Another God-honoring motive in submission is “the powerful witness it gives to the gospel”.

- Do not underestimate the witness a Biblical marriage has today, including a submissive wife. *“You are not doing it only for the husband, you are doing it primarily for the Lord...You are doing it for Christ’s sake...because it is well-pleasing in His sight...it is part of your discipleship...These other people -living as they do, asserting their own rights, and displaying the arrogance which leads to all the chaos which characterizes life – when they look at you they will see something so different that they will say ‘what is this?’ ‘Why do you behave like this?’...and your answer will be...‘I am behaving like this because it is the will of my Lord.’ So you immediately get an opportunity for preaching and stating the gospel.” – D. Msrtyyn Lloyd-Jones.*
- How can a wife live this way? Only in the Power of the Holy Spirit and under His control – Ephesians 5:18.

Concluding applications:

- If you are without Christ, only God can give you the power to live in a way that honors Him through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Husbands – read on! Paul writes 40 words to wives and 115 words to husbands. We are not called to enforce submission of our wives. Let us value and treasure our wives for the contributions and help they are to our lives. Seek her input and counsel. *“Realize it is not easy submitting to you. So get serious about your spiritual walk. Start being the man God wants you to be, since your wife and children are relying on you and submitting to you in Christ.” – Richard Phillips.*
- Wives – your submission has power to impact your husband for godliness. Watch your speech about and to your husband.
- Marriage is not 50/50, it is 100/100 and Biblical marriages portray the beauty of Christ and His relationship to the Church.
- Singles – honor marriage – Hebrews 13:4. If God calls you to marriage, be careful who you marry! Marriage is not to be entered into *“unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, soberly and in the fear of God”*. Consider the character and spiritual life of your future spouse – 2 Corinthians 6:14.