

Eph Ch 5 Vs 25-33

(Submitting to one another) Part 2

We left off in our last gathering developing the exception to the rule that we read of concerning the biblical mandate of the wife's comprehensive subjection to her husband (notice vs 24). and The question that we were addressing is the one that so many wives have an ache just to ask, "is there any exceptions?" I told you of one very profound objection that God has instituted that applies across the board anywhere the "follower and leader" relationship is in effect. Be it employer/employee, parent/child, or husband/wife; anytime that an authority in our lives places us in a position whereby we are in jeopardy of compromise to the revealed will of God as found in His word, we must obey God rather than man.

Now if it goes against our preferences, that's irrelevant, but if it is contrary to the word of God then we cannot subject ourselves to that, but rather we must obey God's word over mans. and We see that lived out in scripture time and again when governments or kings would seek to institute a law or decree that would cause God's people to cease being obedient to Him or to compromise their relationship with Him. and They wouldn't do it, I've sighted Daniel for you a couple of times, Shadrach Meshach, and Abed-Nego refusing to succumb to idolatry at the kings command, many of the prophets who refused to compromise their message though kings demanded it.

Read through Jeremiah sometime, that guy was a hated man by many who were in a position of authority because he'd tell them that judgment was coming unless they repented. and They didn't like that so they would demand that he change his message (as if that would redirect God anyway) but he wouldn't do it, he wouldn't yield or stop; he obeyed God and not man. There's a great example of this in the 5th ch of the book of Acts. A couple of weeks ago I showed you one in the 4th ch but there's a great one in ch 5 as well. The disciples there exemplify very clearly how we're to respond to authority when authority contradicts the revealed will of God.

They had been out preaching, teaching and witnessing in the name of the Lord Jesus which of course upset the officials and so they brought them in and commanded them not to. But they continued in their faithfulness to the commission of Jesus to make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded them. and So the officers went out and brought them back before the council, the Sanhedrin, kind of the Supreme Court and congress and we read in Acts 5:27-32 *"And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

So they just start witnessing right to the leaders, “here’s what we think of your anti-witnessing ordinance, we ought to obey God and not men and then oh, by the way, here’s a witness for you; forgiveness of sins is found in the risen Christ.”

So the servant hood of God isn’t to be compromised in any setting, be it by the instruction of a church leader, a governing official or a husband to a wife. In Col (sort of our coinciding epistle to Eph) we read, “*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*” “In the Lord” being the qualifying phrase; if his leadership is godly-supported by scripture then you’re to submit, if it’s not then you’re bound to God over his direction.

Last week someone asked me about physical abuse, is that fitting in the Lord? Absolutely not, is it grounds for divorce; the bible doesn’t give that release so I can’t emphatically say yes. I would say that wisdom dictates and the love of God would have you remove yourself from harms way. But I can’t say, “go down and get the papers” because the bible doesn’t address that issue, but if you’re in a physically abusive situation, the bible by no means calls you to be any ones punching bag. I would encourage you to remove yourself from harms way and contact the necessary authorities. But back to the main issue of submission, wives are called to submit to their husbands as is fit in the Lord. If they lead in a way that may be contrary to your preference that’s irrelevant, but if it’s contrary to the word, you’re to obey God and not man.

The husband foolishly orders some sexually explicit videotape and seeks to entice the wife to set down and “enjoy” it with him. Well, is that tape impure, ungodly and dishonoring to Christ, it absolutely is, and the husband may try to qualify it or justify it by saying things like “well it’s ok to watch this because it’s with my wife.” Romans speaks of those “*who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*” What does that mean, it means that though you may never physically engage in a certain act you place your stamp of approval and endorsement on it by supporting those that do. You say how do I support and approve of what they do?

By putting it in your VCR or buying a ticket to place it in front of your eyes so that you might “enjoy” it right along with them. and Believe me that sort of thing happens, but wives you are by no means bound to submit to that junk. But with in the confines of scripture, remember wives that the headship of the husband is a fact to acknowledge, not a goal to achieve - and this fact is either recognized or ignored by husbands and wives.

Remember that the family can only function as it’s intended to when each individual member with in that family is willing and able to function in the capacity that God has called them to. So the wife’s call of service to the Lord is to submit to her husband, the husband’s call of service to the Lord is to submit to his wife through unselfish, self-sacrificial love.

Vs25-27

I don't believe that there is an honest Christian husband who can read or hear these words and not feel the punch that's behind them, the bare force of these words is absolutely staggering! "*Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.*" In the same fashion and demonstration of love that Christ exemplified in giving Himself for the church, husbands are to love their wives. and Apart from the Holy Spirit having His perfect work in each of your (as husbands and future husbands) lives, this command is impossible, think about, this is a call to perfect untainted uninhibited love. Which is why it couldn't be commanded of the husband until after the order was given to be filled with the Spirit (this is still within the context of vs 18) and until you're filled with the Spirit, you will not love your wife as Christ loved the Church. and Let's not forget that the filling of the Spirit is a day by day sometimes moment by moment decision that comes about by your willing submission to the Spirit's control in your life.

You allow the Spirit to have total control of your life when it comes to your marriage; He's going to work in you the love of Christ for your wife; allow your flesh to dominate, there's going to be problems. Now this isn't to say that the best of marriages don't have struggles, I've always said that when you get two sinners together sooner or later there's bound to be problems. But this is the reality of the direction that Jesus wants to take your life when it comes to your marriage. and The Lord's pattern of love for His church is to be the husband's pattern of love for his bride,

How was that love exemplified? What type of love did Jesus demonstrate for *His* bride? I can think of at 5 ways (and I emphasize *at least*) that Jesus demonstrated His love. 1st of all His love was sacrificial, 2^{ndly} His love was sanctifying, 3^{rdly} it was a caring love, 4^{thly} it was faithful and finally (#5) it was unbreakable (which sort of correlates with faithful).

His love was sacrificial, self-denying as we mentioned last week He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life away, Jesus was a Servant King. and So you begin to see how the balance lays out, yeah the wife is to submit to the husband, but the husband isn't to be a self serving demanding dictator but rather he's to love his wife and to serve his wife, it's not too difficult to submit to love. What does a servant do? They take their own interests, time, efforts and energies and apply them to the benefit of another. The way that the husband is to lead his home is through love, and to serve the eternal best interest of his wife and family.

That's why Peter told husbands to dwell with their wives "*with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel.*" Not lesser vessel, but weaker vessel, the more delicate instrument. But you should be seeking to understand your wife's heart, and her needs and struggles. and You're to give honor to her, she's not your "old lady" she is the wife of your youth. She is the precious gem that God has brought into your life to make you whole. In the book of Genesis every thing that God created He said was good, do you know what the very 1st thing that God recognized that was not good.

You find it in Gen 2:18 where He said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*” Maybe you’ve heard it said that a man is really only ½ a man until he has a wife. Why, because she completes him, adds a dimension to his life that otherwise wouldn’t be there. Prov 18:22 says, “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.*” and So you’re to give honor to your wife, you’re not to degrade her and insult or criticize her in public, it’s never appropriate, but open slander is absolutely shameful. Col 3:19 says, “*Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*” Or angry with them growing irritated with them (now wives as I admonished the husbands many times last week I tell you this morning that I’m by no means seeking to load your cannons, this is God’s mail to the husband.)

But what do those types of attitudes stem from? Self-serving, you not thinking that your wife is serving you the way you want to be served. But the husband’s call isn’t to be self-serving; it’s to be self-sacrificing. Because that’s the way that Christ loved the church; sacrificially. and On top of that it was a gracious sacrifice, He gave Himself even though we’d done nothing to deserve it or merit it. A husband isn’t commanded to love his wife on the basis of what she isn’t or isn’t, what she does or doesn’t do, he’s commanded to love her because it’s God’s will for him to love her.

Time forbids us too many examples of this but Jesus didn’t love the disciples and serve His disciples by washing their feet because they somehow deserved it. He loved them and served them even though they’d been fickle, selfish, prideful, jealous, at times lacking discernment and self-indulgent. and Yet He still placed Himself in a *position* of vulnerability, how many husbands humble themselves, and open up to and make themselves vulnerable to their wives? Yet Christ presented Himself as the Lamb of sacrifice, in humility and vulnerability, you may be the leader of your home but if you’re going to love as Jesus did you need to be open in your love relationship with your wife.

There’s no such thing as “classified” information, or “need to know” basis, Jesus held back nothing that would be of benefit to you and likewise honesty and openness in your marriage relationship is absolutely vital. On both individual’s behalf, we’re just in the context of the husbands, now I’m not giving license to probe through the past and dig in the trash of your spouses past life, the bible speaks about forgetting that which is behind and pressing on. But what I am speaking of is simply the fact that we need to be open and honest with each other, husbands don’t think that the word “leader” means that your privy to information that your wife can’t be included in on. If it involves your marriage then it automatically is a 2 party thing, because there’s 2 to every marriage, Jesus held nothing back and neither should we.

The only reason I bring this up is because I know that men (being one) can have a tendency to be a bit withdrawn at times concerning various things. and I'm not sure if it's a control thing or a seeking to have some type of security in the role of the head of the home or what. But I'll tell ya guys, there is nothing positive that comes from distancing yourself from your wife on any given issue, and I'll tell you why. As much as you desire to be respected as the head of your home, your wife has a need to be secure in your love for her. But what happens is, when you begin to withdraw in a certain area and you're not open with her, she begins to feel insecure in the relationship because there's something he's not telling me and I don't know why. and So she begins to challenge you in this area, but now because you've been challenged you feel as though she has no respect for your authority and doesn't trust your leadership, which many times in turn causes the husband to respond by secluding himself even more because why would I be open to her, she doesn't trust me anyway. and The more you pull away the more insecure she feels, the more insecure she feels, the more probing questions and challenges she confronts you with, and it begins to snowball, and it can become a real bad deal.

But the beauty is the reverse effect can take place as well, as your open and honest with your wife and she's assured of your love for her through your openness to her, your vulnerability to her and you consistently verbally reaffirming your love for her. (It's important guys that you tell your wife you love her), too many guys have the attitude, "well I told her I loved her when I got married and if anything changes I'll let her know." But listen, that's not acceptable. and So when she's secure in your love for her, she'll have no reason to question your decisions because she knows that whatever you decide, your love for her will've caused you to have been considerate of her, and her well being and so "hey whatever you decide is fine." and When you experience such bona fide, genuine trust, then your response is going to be, "wow, I really love this woman" and the more you display that type of affection to her, she's going to be consistently confirmed in your love for her which will just increase her willingness to surrender to your leadership because she's submitting to love, and that's just not hard to do.

It can begin to snowball the other way and it's a beautiful thing, you say so Jeff, me and my wife or me and my husband are pretty much at a stand off. What you're talking about sounds great and all but who should make the 1st move, I'm always questioning him, but he's cold and distant from me, Jesus said whoever humbles himself will be exalted but whoever exalts himself will be abased.

The bottom line is that even in trying to figure out who started the whole cycle one spouse is convinced it was the other, but the other feels it's vice versa. So in reality it's who can humble themselves confess their sin and ask for forgiveness, just remember that the bible says that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Man I don't know about you but I can use all the grace that I can get, so whoever wants the grace of God more I suppose will be the one to initiate that 1st act of humility.

Husbands I'd encourage you to remember that Christ's love was sacrificial, he laid down His life willingly, He didn't resist in pride because He'd done nothing wrong, but rather He humbled Himself for the benefit of others, Vs 25 "He gave Himself for her." The ultimate expression lies of course in the cross, the giving of His life, and the husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church gives everything he has for his wife including if necessary his very life. and You know what, it is necessary, we need to die daily to ourselves if we're going to appropriately love and lead our wives. His love was sacrificial, and it was also a sanctifying love notice vs 26.

Vs26

You might say that Divine love, or agape love doesn't simply condemn wrong in the one loved but seeks to cleanse them from it. MacArthur said this, "Love wants only the best for the one it loves, and it cannot bear for a loved one to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful. When a husband's love for his wife is like Christ's love for His church, he will continually seek to help purify her from any sort of defilement. He will seek to protect her from the world's contamination and protect her holiness, virtue, and purity in every way. He will never induce her to do that which is wrong or unwise or expose her to that which is less than good."

So you single gals when some guy wants you to compromise your sexual purity because he says he "loves" you, your discernment meter should be peaking hard in the red. Because that's worldly lust, not godly love, it's self-serving not self-sacrificing, and it doesn't sanctify you but rather separates you from God by engaging you in sin. Christ's love is sanctifying, and what is the sanctifying agent? The word of God, it's the washing of water by the word, it's the word of God that cleanses us from the filth of the world that seeks to attach itself to our new life in Christ by means of our flesh.

The Spirit of God uses the word of God to wash us and cleanse us, you remember what Jesus prayed in John 17:17 for His followers and those who would follow Him which includes you (if you know Him) He prayed, "*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*" The word of God has sanctifying power, and in the context you husbands and future husbands, as the head of your home you are primarily responsible for making sure that your family is in and under the word of God, and the teaching of it.

Why because even as Christ is the head is the head of the church and desires to sanctify *His* bride by the word of God, even so if you are to love your wife in like manner, you as the head of your home are to see that your household is in the word personally and under the word in public proclamation and teaching. As Joshua said and we went over Wednesday evening he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He understood his accountability before God, and to that end he purposed that he and his family would serve the Lord, and a Christ like husband will do the same. He will see to it that his family is being sanctified and cleansed by the word of God

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples He said, “*You are already clean (how) because of the word which I have spoken to you.*” and What’s the purpose of sanctification and purification?

Vs27

That you might be holy, even as the Lord your God is holy, that’s to be the goal of the husband on the behalf of his wife. To see her brought into the fullness of spiritual potential, not having spots, which are caused by defilement on the outside, or wrinkles, which are a result of decay from within. But this isn’t in regards to the physical those things are pretty much inescapable physically, but spiritually are our wives being fashioned unto holiness? The question that confronts me in this vs is, is my wife more like Christ *because* she’s married to me, or is she like Christ *in spite* of being married to me? and I’ll leave you to consider that between you and the Lord but your call is clear, your love for her is to be a sanctifying love. and 3^{rdly} Your love is to be a caring or nurturing love.

Vs28-29

We’ve spoken of this before no one has ever hated their own flesh, and the analogy here is that even as we are the bride of Christ, we’re the body of Christ as well, and even as Christ takes care and nourishes us and cherishes us. You being His poiema, His work of Art that He loves so unlimitedly, that’s how you are to treasure and cherish and care for your wife. I don’t hate my being, and no one does, I don’t rejoice when I get hurt.

Several months ago I was the last one here after Sunday services and I was running late so I took off running for my truck. Well it gets very slick back there when it rains and I rounded the corner behind the building and my left foot went out from under me behind my right leg and I flew up and land flat on my back with my ankle twisted behind me. and I just knew I broke my ankle because I was laying on it behind me. and I was scared that when I pulled my leg up to look at it, I was going to be staring at my Achilles tendon with my foot facing behind me and all I could do was picture myself dragging myself up to my truck and trying to drive myself to the hospital and hopefully not pass out. Now by God’s grace it was just a horrible strain, but my point is that I wasn’t lying there going, this is great! I hope that suckers broken because I really hate myself! But rather I was fretting because I desire to nurture myself and take care of myself.

As husbands God calls us to nurture and tend to the needs and struggles of our wives. Our love is to be a caring love and Again #4 and 5 basically together our love is to be a faithful and unbreakable love.

Vs30-31

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, we're actually joined to Christ; He's not just some distant leader. 1 Cor 6:17 says that, "*he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*" and The husband isn't to be a distanced from his wife captain of the ship, think how the Lord has given Himself to us, joined Himself to us and communicates to us, that's the picture of headship we're to follow.

Even as He is one with us, we are one with our wives, there is a bond there that's unbreakable, it's for better or worse richer or poorer, in sickness and in health Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you, that's faithfulness. Guys, the last thing your wife needs to be in fear of is your faithfulness to her, what's one of the names of Jesus? "Faithful and true" "*For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* In John ch 13 we read, "*Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*" His love is faithful, I have absolutely no doubts concerning Christ's faithfulness to me, and I'm absolutely secure in His love for me, and that's what we're called to give our wives, faithfulness, and a love that's secure. A love that's unbreakable, the husband and wife are to "leave and cleave" forsaking all others, being joined together as one.

The word "joined" means to cement or to glue 2 pieces of paper together. Once that bond is set you cannot tear those pieces of paper apart with out doing major irreparable damage to both parts, and the same is true of a marriage bond. Jesus' love for you is absolutely unbreakable and so your love is to be for your wife. A man who was afraid that he loved his wife too much was asked if he loved her as much as Christ loved the church. When he answered no, he was told, "then you must love her more." and In regards to Vs 31 it's not that you're to be no longer considerate of your parents but what it is saying is that there is to be no one closer to you on this earth than your spouse.

Peter said that if we don't dwell with our wives with understanding that our prayer lives will be hindered, an unhealthy marital relationship can cloud up the communication lines, all the more reason to love and honor and cherish your wife. Because if you don't then you're in disobedience to the word of God, which impedes your prayer life and none of us need that. and Husbands you may feel like you have all kinds of pressures and worries of your own but that's no excuse for not being sensitive and inconsiderate to your wife, because God calls you and commands you and me to love and care for our wives as Christ loved and cared for the church.

Vs32

The oneness of a marriage bond is a great mystery, now remember the concept of a NT mystery is that which can only be known by divine revelation and Paul is unveiling for us the mystery of marriage. It's an earthly model of the love relationship and intimate bond of oneness that Christ has with His church. In John 17:20-21 Jesus was praying and He said, *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”* and In vs 23 He said, *“I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”* When the world looks on at the married life of 2 believers, the divine ideal is that they would see a demonstration of the love relationship that Jesus has with His church.

Vs33

Guys, it's so important that you love your wife, that you allow the Spirit to do that work in your life and in your heart. and Have compassion on your wife; she is called to submit comprehensively to a guy like you. I mean lets be real that's a tough calling, be compassionate and patient with her, pray for her, she has to follow you. My wife has to follow me, and ladies have compassion on your husbands, be respectful to the position God has entrusted to him in your life, he's not just called to make sure the bills are paid, I mean sure that's part of it. But we're called to love you *exactly* like Christ loved the church, and He died for His bride, sparing nothing. and Do you know what our temptation is going to be all along the way, to spare our lives for the sake of self, it's not some privileged position over the role that God has given you.

It's not “Oh, how come you get to be the head that's not fair”, you mean how come we get to die like Christ died for you; I agree it's not fair (that's a joke). But they're both supernatural callings and it will not work with out God at work in each of your lives as the result of you being filled with His spirit and submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Vs 33)