

Paul's Letter to the *EPHESIANS*

CHAPTERS 4, 5, 6: *God's Plan for the Church* (the Body of Christ) (CONTINUED)

Principles for Relationships (5:21 – 6:9)

Foundational Relationship Principle (5:21)

5:21 Submit ¹ to one another out of reverence ² for Christ. [¹*hupodeiknumi*: be subject to, ²*phobia*: fear] This verse presents the foundational concept of submission: every spirit-filled Christian is to be humble and submissive in all relationships. Jesus "humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross" Matthew 11:29, Philippians 2:6-8. Christians are commanded to "humble [themselves] before the Lord" James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6-7 and "be completely humble ... with one another in love" Ephesians 4:2, 1 Peter 3:8-9. These teachings even extend to the conviction for Christians to consider "others better than themselves" Romans 12:10, Philippians 2:3-4. Christians submit to this perspective out of reverence for God ("fear of the Lord" Proverbs 9:10). The Lord also promises to give "grace to the humble" Proverbs 3:34, Matthew 18:2-4, Luke 18:9-14.

This verse begins the section ^{Ephesians 5:21-6:9} which discusses the application of the doctrinal principles of the first three chapters to relationships among Christians, within families and at work ^{Colossians 3:18-4:1}, by presenting the foundational concept for all aspects of submission.

All (husband/wife, president/janitor...) are equal at the foot of the Cross. ^{Job 34:18-19, Romans 2:11}

The following verses ^{5:22-6:9} name specific relationships in which God requires submission: wives submitting to husbands ^{5:22-33}, children to parents ^{6:1-4} and slaves to masters ^{6:5-9}.

Husbands & Wives (5:22-33)

5:22-24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior ³. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. [³*soter*: deliverer]

The first challenge is to each wife: God commands her to be in submission to her husband, even when he is an unbeliever ^{1 Peter 3:1-6}, as an act of obedience to the Lord ^{Colossians 3:18}, who is the primary object of submission. God desires for the wife to willingly and lovingly offer her submission to her husband as the family spiritual leader ^{1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12}.

It should never be the result of the husband demanding it. Furthermore, this command does not allow the husband to tell his wife to do anything contrary to Godly/Biblical principles, and if the husband does tell/ask his wife to engage in such a behavior, she is not required to obey.

The principle of ultimate submission to God applies in any authority/subordinate relationship.

Ephesians M: Chapter 5b

5:25-30 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (to make)⁴ her (holy)⁴, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word⁵, and to present her to himself as a radiant⁶ church, without stain⁷ or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless⁸. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. [⁴*hagiazō*: sanctify, ⁵*rhēma*: spoken word, ⁶*endoxos*: glorious, ⁷*spilōō*: moral blemish, ⁸*amōmos*: without blemish (lit)] Having established the husband's authority, the next challenge was God's command for each husband to love his wife in the same unrestricted, selfless and sacrificial way that Jesus loved (and loves) His church ^{John 3:16, Hebrews 12:2} (His bride ^{Matthew 25:1-13}). The incarnate Jesus gave everything he had, including His own life ^{Isaiah 53:4-5, Philippians 2:6-8}, for the sake of the church, thus setting the standard of sacrifice for a husband's love for his wife. When husbands love their wives as their own bodies, they will support their wives to become pure through sanctification ^{Titus 2:1-15}. The best approach is for the husband to teach his wife God's Word, because spiritual cleansing results from knowing and applying "the word" ^{John 15:3, 17:17}, and results in her being presented as a "holy and blameless" ^{Ephesians 1:4} member of Christ's bride.

5:31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." Paul quoted the divine plan for marriage given by Moses ^{Genesis 2:24}.

The fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother" ^{Exodus 20:12}, is not abolished by this command. This directive from God simply supersedes a man's priority of loyalty from 'Christ, parents, others' to 'Christ, wife, parents, others'. A man must "leave" and "cleave".

In an earlier writing, Paul stated the oneness in flesh is not the result of the act of marriage, but the result of intimate sexual relations, which God equates with marriage ^{1 Corinthians 6:16}.

5:32 This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. Marriage is a sacred reflection of the magnificent and beautiful supernatural union between Jesus and His church. This is one of many "mysteries" revealed in the NT age ^{Matthew 13:10-15, 1 Corinthians 2:6-10}.

5:33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect⁹ her husband. [⁹*phobēō*: fear] This verse is a summary statement of a God-ordained marriage. The intimacy and sacredness of the love relationship between Christian marriage partners is to be a visual (earthly) expression of the love between Christ and His church.

In summary: **Wife**, let your husband be in charge. - **Husband**, love your wife supremely.

Question: Was Adam the first example of fulfilling a husband's responsibility to his wife? Eve was deceived by Satan ^{Genesis 3:13, 2 Corinthians 11:3}, Adam was not ^{1 Timothy 2:14}. As a result of the three temptations, Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and then gave some to Adam. ^{Genesis 3:6}

Aware he was violating God's commandment ^{Genesis 2:16-17}, Adam still chose to eat the fruit. Knowing he would die ^{Genesis 2:17}, did Adam love Eve so much he chose to share her destiny?