

# Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Ephesians 5:22-33

## **Ephesians 5:22–33 (NKJV) (Part 1–On Women and Wives)**

*“22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

*25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

*33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”*

### **On Women and Wives**

In the last study we left off with Paul saying that believers should be *“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”* (vss. 19-20) and finally saying that all believers should be *“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”* (vs. 21)

We noticed that being submitted to one another does not deconstruct leadership or headship. God has set an order to the Church, to government, and to family relationships. However, it does show us all that we, as members of the Body of Christ, need each other. We should be listening to one another, learning from one another, exhorting one another, edifying one another. We should live “others-centered” rather than “self-centered” lives. We are not independent of one another but are called to serve the Lord, side by side, as individuals and as part of the body of Christ, giving glory to the Lord.

The same can be said about the marriage relationship: Husbands loving and serving their wives and wives loving and serving their husbands. As married persons we are called to listen to each other, learn from each other, exhort one another, and edify one another. A healthy marriage is modeled by “others-centeredness” not “self-centeredness.”

Husbands and wives are not to be independent of one another, but are called to live together, work together, and serve one another as a testimony to the glory of God. We live side by side as individual believers, but, as spouses, we are joined in unity for the glory and purposes of God.

Marriage is a model and testimony to the relationship believers have with the Lord. As husband and wife we are a model of Christ and His Church. We as believers are under the headship of Jesus. We are called to live our lives in submission to the Lord and His will for our lives. In the same way wives are to live in submission to their husbands reflecting the same model of obedience.

Paul told the Corinthians, *"...I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."* 1 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV) *"Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."* (vs. 24)

There is no reason to suggest that the Church and Christ are equal in authority or leadership. The Church and Christ are not co-equals. We are submitted to the overarching authority and leadership of the Lord.

## **Order in the Home**

God has set His order of leadership and submission in the home. Husbands and wives do not have the same roles. God has established headship in Scripture. For this reason Paul tells the Ephesians that *"the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body"* (vs. 23). He instructs every wife, *"submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."* (vs. 22)

*"Submit"* comes from the Greek word *"hypotasso."* *"Hypo"* designates a place in order below and *"tasso"* is to place in order. Therefore, *"submit"* signifies a place below or behind, in a certain order. It does not suggest lesser quality, poorer gifting, etc. In fact, many women have higher *"hyper"* intellect, education, insight, discernment, giftedness, etc. than many men. However, God has set an order for the home just as He has for the Church.

Submission does not mean less, worthless, etc. It does not suggest that a wife's mission, usefulness, or calling are less than that of the husband's – it simply signifies a difference of order in leadership.

In argument some will cite a passage from Galatians that reads, *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* Galatians 3:27–28 (NKJV) However, this passage relates to salvation not the order of the home. In Christ there is neither male nor female. In other words, salvation is offered and acquired by both men and women in the same way—by faith in Christ. It is no more a declaration of co-equality in leadership than it is to suggest that there is no distinction between men and women. (I am sure the LGBTQ community would love to have us believe there is no difference between men and women in their argument for same-sex marriage.)

## **The Battle for the Home**

One of the greatest battles waged in our day is for the home. Our adversary Satan is doing all he can to destroy the model God has set in place. For this reason divorce is at an all time high and fornication is thought to be culturally acceptable. The same-sex marriage agenda is likewise an attack on the home and model God has clearly communicated. The Bible condemns same-sex marriage, divorce, and heterosexual and homosexual fornication. These things are a direct assault on the foundational principles of marriage and the truths taught in the Bible. (In part 3, in the examination of this passage, we will look at marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the Bible.)

## **The Law of First Reference**

The model we are examining has its foundation in Genesis. God created man and woman to complement one another. Man is not independent of woman and neither is woman independent of man. Man *"...is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from*

*woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.”* 1 Corinthians 11:7–12 (NKJV) (See also Genesis 2:7-25)

God created marriage and modeled it as the union of one man and one woman.

### **Feminism in the Post-modern Age**

Inasmuch as divorce and fornication are condemned in Scripture so also is the post-modern view on marriage and leadership in the home. The popular model denies headship and promotes a feminism not found in Scripture. A wife is a precious compliment to man and the destructiveness of modern day feminism has harmed the Church, the home, and society.

### **Why Submission and Subordination?**

The Scripture makes clear that a woman’s role is to be a wife and mother. She is to be a *“homemaker.”* Paul taught Titus, *“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”* Titus 2:1–5 (NKJV)

The passage does not diminish women but provides them a place of honor and protection from the things of the world. Women are to be cherished and protected. They are to be provided for and loved. They are to be led into truth, supported, and cared for as Christ cares for His Church. Wives should not be placed in a position wherein they are a front line target of the Devil, men, or culture. Women who refuse to acknowledge their proper role and position resist the Lord and make themselves vulnerable to harm and attack.

Paul’s instruction to Titus does not suggest that a woman cannot work or serve outside the home. However, her first responsibility is to her husband, her children, and then to her church and community. Sadly, with so many men leaving their Biblically-prescribed roles, many women are tempted to or forced to walk outside the guidelines provided for them in Scripture. As a result, the Biblical model we are called to demonstrate is maligned, marriages fail, and children suffer. (We will discuss the role of men as we move forward in the text.)

### **Disobedient Men**

The Scriptures do not ignore the fact that some husbands are unwilling to obey the Lord. In fact, their disobedience is recognized by the Lord. Men who are walking in rebellion are in the full view of the Lord. However, it is not the place of a woman/wife to rebuke or disrespect her husband. This was addressed by Peter. He said, *“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.”* 1 Peter 3:1–2 (NKJV) Paul said *“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man, but to be in silence.”* 1 Timothy 2:12 (NKJV) Therefore, women who are married to a man who is

disobedient to the Lord are to treat their husbands with respect—not answer back, not take the lead, nor usurp his authority. These women are to trust the Lord with the leadership of their husbands.

A woman is not responsible to God for the leadership of her husband. He is accountable—even if an unbeliever.

### **Unbelieving Husbands**

Paul recognized the fact that occasions do arise wherein a woman may be married to a man who is an unbeliever. He said, *“And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.”* 1 Corinthians 7:13 (NKJV) We can therefore safely conclude that a woman is to be submissive to her husband and demonstrate the grace and nature of a bride to her husband—even if an unbeliever or even if disobedient to the word—as a testimony to Christ.

### **As is Fitting in the Lord**

The obedience of a wife to her husband is limited to and in subject to the Lord. Should a husband ask or command his wife to disobey the Lord, it is only then that she can respectfully disobey. Paul told the women of Colossae, *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”* Colossians 3:18 (NKJV) Therefore, should a husband require his wife to disobey the Lord, her higher calling is to God Himself.

Women who simply don't like the leadership of their husbands are not to usurp or discredit his authority. *“...let the wife see that she respects her husband.”* (vs. 33) A wife is not to argue with or act in stubbornness toward her husband. She is to adorn herself with *“...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”* 1 Peter 3:4 (NKJV) Her example will be a blessing to the Lord, will leave room for the Lord to provide conviction to her husband without the distraction of human anger or reaction, and will provide the best possible testimony to her children.

With these things in mind it should be noted that women are called to be helpers to their husbands. Therefore, a woman may share with her husband and help him in decision making. Many women are gifted with insights that differ from those of men and can benefit them if and when they are willing to listen. Those men who genuinely love and respect their wives can benefit from the help they provide. Men are benefited when they care about those things that matter to their wives. A Godly man will seek for and allow his wife to weigh in on decision making, leadership and management.

Finally, we are all aware of our humanness and shortcomings. Teachings like this may be difficult to process and may inspire unbiblical self-condemnation which can lead to discouragement and depression. May we all be aware of this fact! God has not called us to a standard that He is unwilling or incapable of accomplishing in us. It is His work in us, not our work in Him. God is patient with our humanity and understands that we are frail. May we, as husbands or wives, be patient and caring for each other! May we learn from one another and grow in the grace of God. We are called to patiently care for one another, not criticize or act in impatience. As we self examine, we all see our own weaknesses. May this fact lead us to greater dependence upon the Lord—not to criticism of ourselves or our spouse.

Of interest is the fact that Paul speaks directly to the husbands and wives in this text—not to one about the other. He did not suggest that a man should say to his wife that she is to be submissive

any more than suggest that a woman criticize the leadership of her husband. We are all called to be patient with one another, love one another, and serve one another for the glory of God.

**Readings:** Ephesians 5:22-33 (Above)

Colossians 3:18 (NKJV) "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

1 Peter 3:1–6 (NKJV) "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

Titus 2:1–5 (NKJV) "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

1 Timothy 5:14 (NKJV) "Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

### **Biblical Fundamental Role of a Woman: Support / Help Mate**

1) Wife – Faithfulness, Submission, Respect, Affection

2) Home Maker, Mother, Rear the Children

## Questions

- 1) True or false: A man wrote this study, and therefore it is colored with anti-woman male chauvinism.
- 2) True or False: God is the one who has established the roles of men and women, husbands and wives.
- 3) True or False: Marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
- 4) True or False: God hates divorce.
- 5) True or False: I can get a divorce if my husband is a lousy leader.
- 6) True or False: Men are always right and that is why we should submit to them.
- 7) True or False: Submit means to be under authority.
- 8) True or False: Women are not as smart or as gifted as men.
- 9) True or False: Many women have a propensity to control their husbands.
- 10) True or False: A wife may respectfully disobey her husband if he is requiring her to disobey the Lord.
- 11) True or False: The role of homemaker is the high calling of every wife and mother.
- 12) True or False: Being submissive to the Lord and to my husband will take away from my personal identity.
- 13) True or False: If I recognize God's instructions concerning husband and wife relations, I will see that God desires what is best for me, wants me cherished and protected, wants to see me loved and provided for, and will bring me the greatest level of contentment as I await the day of His return.
- 14) True or False: The Bible does not recognize the way men and women's roles have changed to keep up with culture.
- 15) True or False: Satan wants to destroy the family and will do all he can to destroy my home.
- 16) True or False: Obedience to God is the greatest safeguard of my marriage.
- 17) True or False: My children will be greatly benefited by seeing a lasting and loving marriage.