

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Willful Submission of a Christian Wife

Scripture: Ephesians 5:22-24

Code: 80-382

Now I want you to open the Word of God this evening, to the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians and those of you who have been with us on Sunday nights know we've been looking at this chapter in light of our series on the Holy Spirit and with particular interest in looking at being filled with the Holy Spirit in verse 18.

Following verse 18 are all the effects of being filled with the Spirit or under the Spirit's control. And we started into that and went down essentially as far as verse 20 and we're going to pick it up and go all the way into the sixth chapter as we begin a series on the divine standard for marriage and the family. We're going to be talking about husbands, wives, parents, children, all the way down to verse 4 of chapter 6. And there's a subsequent passage about employers and employees under the biblical term of slave and master.

So, over the next few weeks, with a little bit of a break as we have the Shepherds Conference and don't have a Sunday evening service, this is going to be our theme. Now, I'd like to make a sort of initial suggestion that this discussion of marriage and the family has its most significant application to people who are married. Okay? Some of you don't qualify and you need to get married. So my opening word is, if you're not married, get married. This is the grace of life. This is God's best gift. If you haven't found someone willing to marry you, ramp up the intensity of your effort. Get married. And if you are married, have children. This is God's wonderful gift.

Now there are some people who have a gift for singleness that means a spiritual--unique spiritual capacity to remain single for the purpose of serving the Lord. Unless you have that gift and it's clearly defined for you, by no desire at all for marriage, then you need to be married. I don't need to remind in biblical times people were married by the time they were fifteen or sixteen, some of you are way overdue. Get married. Many of you are focused on pursuing a career, pursue a spouse. This is a very good place to find one because we have a huge number of single people who need to be married...they need to be married, for every reason that you can think of, but mostly for the reason that this is a gift of God called the grace of life.

I'm not sure why in this particular Christian culture in which we live that we are prone to follow the habits of the world and remain single for long periods of time, but that is a worldly kind of life, taking people who should be married and having them try to survive as single people when they are wired, hard wired and even given the opportunity by God to be married. Stop waiting for the Messiah, ladies.

He came and went. Settle for somebody less. And, men, stop looking for the Proverbs 31 woman. That is an ideal to which women aspire. And the truth of the matter is, find another Holy Spirit-led, loving Christian and get married.

Now on that basis, you can listen to what I'm going to say because if you're not married, you're going to be getting married. And if you're married and you haven't had children and the Lord enables you, you're going to be having children, so this is all very urgent for you.

I'm asking you to do something very foundational and you laugh because it sounds humorous. But there's so much truth in that that we have a society of people who way over exaggerate singleness, who way over extend singleness and make it very difficult on themselves and develop habits of singleness that make it harder to come together with another person because the groove keeps getting deeper and deeper out of which you have to get yourself and to walk together with someone in unity and love. Your singleness should be as short as possible. Marriage as quickly as possible. And once you've picked the right one, engagement as brief as possible.

And all of this, of course, is against the grain of our culture. I've been around long enough to know that people used to get married in their late teens and early twenties. That was the norm. And now the society perpetuates singleness out of its own selfish preoccupations and it's fraught with all kinds of things, not the least of which is immoral behavior. And we are living in time when way too many people are single and single because they are selfish and because either no one can live with them in their selfishness or they're not willing to give someone else the opportunity to intrude into their agenda.

We are watching the death of marriage. And you could say while we're watching the death of marriage because of divorce and you would be right. Or you could say we're watching the death of marriage because of homosexuality and you would be right. And we're watching the death of true marriage because we're watching the rise of homo-sexual marriage, and you would be right. You could say we're watching the death of the family because of sterilization, abortion. But we're also watching the death of the family because of an over-extended, preoccupation with selfish desires and personal agendas that push people into some perpetual singleness.

I suppose if I had my way I would just line up all the single girls on one side and all the single guys on the other said and say, "Pick one and let's have a wedding." But I'm not a matchmaker. I can only give you a general perspective that it gets harder and harder for some people the longer they perpetuate their singleness, to give themselves to another person. Now there are exceptions to that. The Lord may keep a person for many of years...many years into their thirties and later because there is a person that God has designed for them. But for a general trend, when you reach the age for marriage, then you need to ask the Lord to make you the kind of person you should be so that you'll recognize the one that the Lord draws into your path.

We have a disastrous matter in our culture and that is the destruction of the family and people running around alone or divorced or in abusive relationships and the family is being lost to us. And all of these are presented as if they are alternate life styles that have as much merit as marriage and the family. But God has designed that through well-ordered families, righteousness would be passed from one generation to the next.

There's no way for the world to fix these problems, they aid and abet these problems. The world is fine with divorce. Divorce, no-fault divorce, any time for any reason, the world is fine with homosexuality, they advocate it. The world champion single isolated kind of self-centeredness and serial kinds of partners, all of this the world aids and abets and the church must rise up and stand for the wonder and the beauty and the joy and the fulfillment of marriage and the purity of marriage. It is such a noble union that it pictures the union between Christ and His church.

We're going to look at marriage here in Ephesians chapter 5 together over a few Sunday nights, as I said. But beginning this little series, we draw our attention to chapter 5 verse 18 because here is the foundation. "Be filled with the Spirit." Be being kept with the Holy Spirit. We've already talked about that. We know what that means, it means to be under the control of the Holy Spirit, to be moved along by the Holy Spirit. It's not a glass-filled, because that's a static kind of filling. It's a sail filled because that's in motion and that's this kind of filling. Be born along, moved along, carried along by the Holy Spirit. That is essential to Christian living.

And then we see what Spirit-filled people do. They speak to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. In other words, they worship. Spirit-filled people worship. Verse 20, they give thanks. Their lives are marked by thankfulness.

And then in verse 21, and this is what triggers the rest of the section, they submit...they submit. You could break these things down singing is a personal expression of joy for what's going on in one's own life by the working of the Holy Spirit, "saying thanks" is directed at God and "submitting" is directed at others. So, self is involved in the Spirit-filled life and out of one's own heart comes praise. And thanks is involved in a Spirit-filled life directed toward God and submission, verse 21. And I want you to notice that because it's a very important spiritual concept, "Be subject, or submissive, to one another in the fear of Christ."

In other words, if you reverence Christ, if you are in awe of Christ, if you desire to honor and please Him, then be a submissive person...a submissive person. As general characteristic, we are to be submissive. Spirit-filled people are submissive. That is to say, they are not dominating, they are not proud, they are not self-willed. They do not live by their own agenda which is, of course, the way people in our culture and our society today live. We have sown the seeds of a self-esteem psychology and we have reaped a harvest of pride, overwhelming pride, personal pride, self-

glorification, self-will, domination of the environment by one's own person and plans. But Spirit-filled people are submissive by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The word here for "subject," or "submit" is *hupotasso*, it's a Greek verb, *hupotasso*, it's compounded. It means... *tasso* means to arrange, to place in order, and *hupo* is under. It's a military term, it means to place yourself under, to rank yourself under. That's what it means in the military sense. It is to rank yourself under those in authority over you, under those who have responsibility for you, to be under someone. As a general principle as Christians, we are to live lives of submission. This is so clearly the general principle of Christian living that it is referred to many times in particular in the New Testament. But perhaps as clear a section as there is Philippians 2. In Philippians 2 we read in verse 1, we'll just pick it up at verse 1, "If there's any encouragement in Christ, any consolation of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any affection and compassion—talking about mutually among believers—make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, loving everybody the same, thinking the same things, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose."

How in the world can you do that? How can you get along so completely with others? "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others." That is the soul of submission. It is humility. It is being unselfish, having no conceit but with humility of mind, considering others as more important than yourselves. Not looking out for your own interests, but the interests of others. That is a spiritual grace that is produced by the Holy Spirit. If there is any fellowship of the Spirit, any real fellowship of the Spirit, this then will appear. And—by the way—the greatest illustration of this is Christ Himself. You are to have this attitude of humble submission in yourselves, verse 5, which was also in Christ Jesus who although He existed in the form of God didn't regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, held onto, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave and being made in the likeness of man, found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross."

This is what it means to be submissive, to be humble, to look not on your own things but the things of others. That broad command is also repeated in 1 Corinthians 16:16, "You also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors."

In other words, the Apostle Paul instructs the Corinthians as a matter of life to submit themselves to all who labor in the work of the Kingdom. Be submissive is a general way of life. In Hebrews 13:17 we are commanded to be submissive to those who are over us in the Lord, those who watch for our souls, those who must give an account for us to God. Obey your leaders, it says, and submit to them.

First Peter 2 and verse 13 says, "Submit to the authority of the government," whatever institution there is. First Peter 5:5, "Submit to the elders and pastors." So this attitude of submission just as pervasive in Christian living. And a Spirit-filled person will be humbly submissive.

I really think this is the grace that most women are looking for in a man. You say, "Wait a minute, aren't men supposed to be the authority in a relationship?" Yes, but it is a submissive kind of authority, and we're going to talk about that. I think most women are looking for a humble man, selfless man, a man who is not preoccupied with his own agenda and his own needs and his own expression and his own will, and his own plans. And I know most men are looking for the same in a woman, humbly submissive. And that submission can be seen in the grace of humility and in the way we respond to one another who serve the Lord as well as to those who are over us in the Lord.

It is this submissive attitude that makes a marriage work. I don't have any question about the fact that I'm supposed to be the head of Patricia, my wife. She doesn't have any restraints placed upon her by that, that in and of itself are abusive or harsh, because I understand that while I have authority over her given to me from God, I am also commanded to be submissive to her in every area of her needs. Sometimes when people say to me, "What's the key to a good marriage? What's the key to a marriage full of joy and blessing?" And I'll tell you what it is in a very simple sentence. And this is my objective in dealing with the wife that I adore; it is simply this, "Whatever will bring her joy and be to her benefit, I will submit to do, happily, because all I want is her joy and spiritual benefit." It's that simple. It's not complicated. It's not brain surgery. Do I always achieve that end? Ask her, she will tell you no. But do I always desire to achieve that end? Of course. I submit to her joy, to her fulfillment, to what blesses her and encourages her and exercise my leadership in that way.

The same would be true as a father. Do I have authority over my children? Yes. Am I responsible to God for the leadership of my children? Yes. But because I love my children, whatever would be to their joy and their fulfillment and their happiness, and their spiritual benefit, I can't do it fast enough. So this is a kind of submission that is really pervasive through all relationships whether you have the role of being the head or not.

This is foundational to everything. Everybody submits at some level. We all submit to each other. We all submit to the elders. We all submit to the government. As wives, you submit to your husbands. As husbands, there's a way in which you submit to your wives. Children submit to parents, but parents also submit to children. It's mutual. There is a kind of submission, a spiritual care that characterizes all of us in all our relationships. I think about it as a pastor, I've been given a responsibility over you in the Lord. What does that mean? Does that mean I conduct myself like Jim Jones and we all end up drinking the Kool Aid? No. What it means is, I'm accountable before God, I have to give an account, Hebrews 13:17. I have to give an account to God for my care for you and my authority over you must take respect for your particular and unique needs. It is a kind of authority that has at its heart care which means compassion and submission to the things that are needful in your life.

Now this doesn't mean we don't have leaders. We do. They are responsible to lead but with an attitude of submission. You understand? That's how it functions and how it operates. So we're going

to talk about each of these relationships from the perspective that it's all a kind of submission. It's all a kind of submission. Everybody's in the pecking order, even leaders, you know, you follow the leaders who are your pastors, but we follow Christ. Everybody's in the order of God's design. A wife follows the lead of her husband. But her husband is under the authority of the elders of the church and they're under the authority of Christ. And so it goes. All of us submit to one another. And this is a beautiful kind of thing, just in the experience of believers alone. And I am convinced that this is the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in a very remarkable way. The most, I guess the most important spiritual attribute that believers have in the assembly of God in the church is humility because apart from humility, we would have chaos, we would have absolute chaos. And when I look at our church and I see the loving unity among the leaders and the pastors and the elders and the congregation, I see that submission working in our congregation. It's a wonderful thing to see.

All right, having established that overarching principle of submission, let's look at chapter 5 and start with the wives...we're going to start with the wives. And yes, we will get to the husbands, but I want to start where the text starts and here we read in verse 22, let me read you what the original says, "Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord." Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Did you notice the word "be subject" is in italics? That's because it isn't in the original. It isn't in the original. It doesn't say, first of all, obey your husbands. It's not that kind of a relationship. It has already established mutual submission and then it gives you the first illustration. "Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord." This is the first illustration of submission, the relationship that a wife has to her husband. But it doesn't say obey your husband because this relationship is more intimate, more inward and that is, I think, indicated here by the personal pronoun, "Wives to your own husbands." Not to every man, not to any man, but to your own husbands. This has nothing to do with the spiritual inferiority, nothing at all to do with spiritual inferiority, there is no inferiority among believers between men and women...none at all. Paul says in Galatians 3:28, "In Christ there is neither male nor female." Neither male nor female. We're not talking about spiritual things here, we're simply talking about divinely established categories of responsibility. And God is even fabricated us to fit those categories. For the sake of fulfilling God's design, the woman is commanded to be subject to her own husband as unto the Lord.

Nobody would argue that a woman needs to be submissive to the Lord. We confess Jesus as Lord when we come to Christ. Well it's a kind of relationship we have to our husband that is also like that. He is Lord in a very real sense, and we're going to see that in just a moment.

Now I told you that the word submitting is not in verse 22, but just to be fair about that, in Colossians 3:18 you have a parallel verse and the word "submission" is there, "Wives, be subject to your husbands." And the reason it's there is because there's not a parallel to verse 21, there's no comment about submission at all, so it has to be introduced in verse 18 which is why they put it in over here in the book of Ephesians. Be submissive or subject to your husbands and then Colossians 3:18, it says,

“As is fitting in the Lord.” In Ephesians it says “as to the Lord.” In Colossians it says, “As is fitting to the Lord.”

Aneko, a word that means seemly, appropriate, correct, the right thing. It could even mean legally binding, that’s a usage that we find in the Greek Old Testament. It is fitting. It is not a cultural issue. It is not a transient issue. It is not a temporary issue. A woman is to be submissive to her husband because it is fitting, it is appropriate, it is correct, it is legally binding, it suits the created order of God.

The headship of man is tied to man’s physicality. He is stronger. He is more aggressive. He is constitutionally designed by God to work for, to protect, to provide for, to secure his wife who is identified in Scripture as the weaker vessel, not weaker spiritually, not weaker intellectually, not weaker morally, but weaker in general constitution. God designed men to be the breadwinners, the workers, the protectors, the providers, the security for their wives. And that is obvious to anybody with an open mind. It is obligatory then and it is connected to divine design for a woman to be submissive to her husband.

To expand on that a little bit, and I said I was going to do this and I will. Turn to 1 Peter 3...1 Peter 3. This is such a rich portion of Scripture and I know many of you are familiar with it but we need to look at it because it says essentially the same thing. Verse 1 of 1 Peter 3, “In the same way, you wives be submissive to your husbands.” In the same way as what? In the same way as sheep are submissive to the leadership of the Great Shepherd. That’s how chapter 2 ends. In the same way that you submit to the Great Shepherd, so wives...and again that’s what Paul said in Ephesians, as to the Lord, it’s the parallel, “Be submissive to your own husbands.”

There again is the personal pronoun. Not all men, not everybody’s husband, but yours. And by the way, the word “submissive” is the same word, *hupotasso*, to rank yourself under. And in this case, you do it even with an unbelieving husband because this is the divine plan, so that if even if any of them are disobedient to the Word, they may be won without a Word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your pure and respectful behavior. You want to evangelize your unconverted husband? Be submissive...be submissive. Your adornment, it’s not about external things, braiding, or plaiting the hair which was some kind of weaving it with gold in it, a very fancy thing, wearing gold jewelry, putting on dresses.

Look, that’s not wrong to do that. God has called us to make the most out of our fallenness. And there’s a beauty in adornment, we see that in the Song of Solomon. But your adornment must not be merely external. In fact, that’s not going to do it with your husband. You’re going to win your husband another way. Verse 4, “Let it be the hidden person of the heart. The imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God.”

You don't want to adorn yourself with perishable things. You want to adorn yourself with imperishable things. You don't want to adorn yourself only on the outside...yes on the outside, but not only on the outside but on the inside. You want your beauty not just to be seen by your husband but you want your beauty to be seen by God. This is the true beauty and it has great value. It is this kind of beauty that can win your husband.

It has always been the standard. Verse 5, "In this way in former times, the holy women also who hoped in God used to adorn themselves from the inside, being submissive to their own husbands." This is unmistakable. This is unmistakable. Any effort to overthrow this is an attack on God and on the divine order, which, of course, is what Feminism in all of its elements is, an outright attack on God. Holy women have always done this. Holy women, women who hoped in God, this means redeemed women, this is how they've always adorned themselves by being submissive to their husband. Illustration: Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

Now don't get carried away, men. Please. But you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. You shouldn't be afraid to submit to your husband. It takes all the terror out of the relationship because it brings peace to the relationship. And by this quiet, gentle spirit, you can win an unconverted husband. This is God's design.

Now I want to show you another portion of Scripture, this one may also be familiar to you. First Corinthians chapter 11, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and this is a very interesting portion of Scripture. I'm not going to dig down into it, I've covered it, you can read the notes in the Study Bible and it covers the details of it. You can read the commentary on 1 Corinthians and it's even more detailed there. But I just want you to get a sense of what this passage says, so let me read, starting in verse 3, "I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of a woman."

And I want to just stop there and say, head is a very important term, *kephale* in the Greek, *kephale*. There are people who say, Feminists who say that that doesn't mean authority, it does not mean authority. It means origin, they say, or source. That it's going back to creation and saying that since woman was taken out of the side of man, man is the source of woman.

Listen, Wayne Grudem did a study of the word *kephale* in the history of the Greek language. And every time it doesn't speak of a specific task, like the head waiter, every time it is used in terms of relationship, it always means authority...always. It never means anything else, certainly not origin.

So, Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of the woman and God is the head of Christ. God exercises His rule over Christ in His humiliation and incarnation. Christ exercises His authority and rule over us and men the same over women.

And then he goes in to illustrating this, “Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.” Apparently in that culture women wore covering on their head as a sign of their submission. That’s been true for centuries in ancient times and some places even today. In the Arab world women are still covered as a sign of their submission. So for a man to put on something that covered his head would be to disgrace his head because in that culture, women did that, men didn’t do that. They didn’t put a scarf on their head the way women have done. You know, the Jews got this a little bit confused and you have men today that wear a little cap on their heads because of a misinterpretation of Old Testament Scripture.

On the other hand, every woman who has her head uncovered, and there were two kinds of women in ancient times that did that, protesting women and prostituting women, Feminists and harlots, they had a Feminist Movement back in Corinth, when women uncover their heads, that is equally wrong and some in the church must have been doing it. They were uncovering their heads while praying or speaking and it disgraced them to do that. It would just be like someone with a shaved head. And we know from history that women who were Feminists shaved their heads as a protest.

“If a woman doesn’t cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off. But it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off, or her head shaved, let her cover her head.” In other words, the ultimate disgrace would be to shave your head, but it’s also a disgrace to take the covering off in that society, so leave the covering on. And he goes on to talk about that further.

Verse 11, we can pick it up there...well; verse 10, The woman has a symbol of authority on her head and because of the angels? Yes, the angels want to see the woman in submission because that’s God’s design and they want God’s will done. In the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of a woman. In other words, there’s a mutual relationship that they share. There’s that mutual submission. But there is nonetheless the authority. The woman originates from the man, the man has his birth through the woman and all things originate from God. While there is mutuality and God is over all, and while we have authority over the woman, we come from a woman, which speaks of our mutuality. Nonetheless the man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the man and God is the head of Christ. That’s enough out of that passage, as I said, if you want a lot more detail, there’s more to be found in other sources.

Now I want you to look at Titus because I want to give you the complete picture. Titus chapter 2, this is an emphatic statement that will broaden a little bit our understanding of what it means to submit to the man, or the husband. A very relevant passage.

In Titus chapter 2, Titus is giving instruction on relationships in the church. He talks about older men, older women, younger men, younger women, and that’s the theme in this second chapter. Talks about slaves and how they submit to their masters. So it’s about those relationships, very much like Colossians and Ephesians. But notice in verse 3, “Older women are to be reverent in their behavior,

not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good.” Okay, now women are to teach. They’re to teach what is good. And just exactly what does that refer to? It refers to encouraging the young women, the next generation, to love their husbands...to love their children, to be sensible, pure...and then this, “Workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands.” And what’s at stake? “So that the Word of God will not be dishonored.”

A generation of so-called Christian women who take a Feminist approach and reject the calling of God to be subject to their own husbands and to love their children and be keepers at home, undermine the Word of God. They undermine the Scripture. They say to the world, “Not all of it matters. And if not all of it matters, then you can pick and choose what to reject, and the Word of God is undermined.”

Now let’s just pick out a couple of things here, out of all of this. Older women, mature women, godly women, reverent women are to encourage young women to love their husbands, *philandros*, husband lovers, encourage them to be husband lovers, to love their husbands and to be children lovers, *philoteknos* and *philondros*, husband lovers, children lovers, one word in the Greek...one word.

And then beyond that, to be subject to their own husbands. Here the word is an interesting word, to be really submissive in the sense that you line up under again. It’s not, some of the translations say obedient, but it’s not *hupakouo* which means to be obedient, it’s to rank yourself under. So whether you’re talking about Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Peter, Titus, you’re going to get the same verb. The term is translated in Ephesians as submit as we saw in verse 21 in a general sense.

So the pattern here is that young women are to be husband lovers and children lovers. And the instruction is that which is consistent with God’s design for women to the degree that in 1 Timothy 5 Paul says if there are young widows, tell them to get married and fulfill this God-ordained and God-blessed privilege.

Then also, you can’t leave this out, they are to be workers at home...workers at home. What does that mean? That means what it says, workers at home, home workers. God must have written that for our day when millions and millions and millions of women are working mothers outside the home. Millions of them have young children. In fact, the statistics of the number of women who work outside the home and have children under three is staggering, it’s something like a third of all mothers with children under three work outside the home.

You wonder why there are delinquents? This is a very fascinating term, workers at home, *oikourgōs* from *ergo*, to work; and *oikos*, home, work at home. Your task is at home. A woman’s task, a woman’s work, a woman’s employment, a woman’s calling is to be at home.

I mentioned 1 Timothy 5 and I think it's verse 14, "I want younger widows," of course implied here, but it touches then all women, "to get married, younger women, get married," that's where I got my introduction. Get married! Bear children! You hate this, Keep house! That's what it says. Get married, bear children, keep house and give the enemy no cause, no occasion for reproach. A married woman is in a safer place, a more spiritually beneficial place, a more protected place. She must care for her husband; it's a more selfless place. And she must care for her children and it's again more selfless.

This isn't hard to figure out. This is a divine principle. Abandoning children to work outside the home is a violation of Scripture. You say, "Well my kids aren't home while I'm at work." That's not the point. That doesn't change the obligation because they went to school. It's the home that you prepare when they aren't there that makes the home a home. If you arrive when they arrive and leave when they leave, it's unlikely that the home will be the kind of home the children need. Working women contribute to lost children, delinquent children, children who have lack of proper understanding of God-ordained roles in the home, terrible decline, drugs. We don't even talk about the working woman phenomenon of adultery and divorce. And for a woman to be the bread winner...you say, "Well our house payment requires two jobs, we both have to work." Then get another house and have a family.

In fact, for men, 1 Timothy 5:8 says, "If anyone...meaning a man...doesn't provide for his own, especially for those of his household, he's denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." The point is the man is the provider and the protector and the security and the woman is there to care for the children and the home. Working outside removes her from under her husband and puts her under other men to whom she is forced to submit. And I'm just talking in very specific terms, as specific as Scripture, no more, no less. And I know in your mind you're wondering, "Well what about this? And what about that? And what about this?"

Is there any room for doing something part-time, serving in a ministry? Of course, of course. When you read Proverbs 31 you know that that lady had all kinds of things going but the home was the base, the center and the focus of all of it. She'd go a long way to get food cheaper. She worked hard with her hands to make garments and things for her family, and also to provide for other people who had need. She was so enterprising she bought a field; she was doing real estate on the side. But it was all about the home and from the home and for the home.

And this is the standard that God has ordained. We're a long way from it, aren't we? Speaking of the Proverbs 31 woman, we can't do this without at least looking at that passage for just a moment. "An excellent wife," verse 10, "who can find? For her worth is far above jewels." And what is the first thing that makes her valuable? You can trust her. You can trust her with your money, you can trust her with your children, you can trust her with your possessions...listen...you can trust her with your reputation. You can trust in her purity, you can trust in her character. The heart of her husband trusts in her. She'll have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight. She's like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar.

I don't think they had coupons in those days, but if they had, she would have had a little bag of those. And she'd go wherever she needed to to get the best price. She rises also while it is still night to prepare food for her household, portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it from her earnings plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength and her arms are strong. She senses that her gain is good and her lamp doesn't go out at night. She gets up before day break and she goes to bed after the sun has gone down, and it's all for the family. She stretches out her hand to the distaff," that's weaving thread. Her hands grasp the spindle, she has to make her own cloth. She extends her generous hand to the poor, stretches out her hands to the needy. She's not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her family are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself and her clothing is fine linen and purple. Yes, she adorns herself in a beautiful way and even with her children. Her husband is known in the gates and he's known as her husband when he sits among the elders of the land." She makes linen garments and sells them, supplies belts to the tradesmen. Strength and dignity are her clothing. She smiles at the future. Why? She's prepared for it. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and doesn't eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and bless her. Her husband also and he praises her saying, 'Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.'

That's what everyone would want in a marriage, right? Children who rise up and call you blessed, a husband who praises you. Charm is deceitful, beauty is vain. But a woman who fears the Lord, she should be praised. Give her the product of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates.

Enterprising, clever, energetic, compassionate, kind, works well with her hands, artistic, all those things are true of her. But the home is the focus of all of it. This is God's design for women who are intended to be married and who are married.

So that is the matter of submission. Now the manner of submission. That is the matter of submission. Now the manner of submission as...back to Ephesians 5:22...as to the Lord...as to the Lord. Your husband stands to you in the place of Christ.

Do you remember that the Scripture says very simply that when you receive another believer, you receive Jesus Christ, Matthew 18? When another believer comes to you, you receive Christ in that believer. That is particularly true of a husband. The husband is Christ to a wife in a sense, a kind of a delegated authority. That's why Sarah called Abraham Lord because God had delegated to Abraham authority. Your husband stands in the marriage and in the family in the place of Christ. That's the highest point of reference. That is the manner of submission. How would you submit to Christ, that's how you would submit to your husband because he is in that union, that Christian marriage, as Christ to you.

What about the motive for submission? The manner as to the Lord. The motive is in the next verse, "For the husband is the head of the wife." For the husband is the head of the wife. That's simply the

illustration from the human anatomy. The head controls the body. The body submits to the head. Or you have uncontrollable behavior. When the body can't pick up the signals from the brain, you know what results, disability...malfunction. And the home where the body, meaning the wife, does not submit to the head is chaotic. But this is how it is in the Fall, according to Genesis 3:16, the woman fights against that authority, remember that? She wants to lord it over her husband. And he fights to suppress that and that's the conflict in a fallen relationship. That is overcome in Christ because now the woman sees her husband as the delegated authority in her life, delegated by Christ Himself. And she submits to him as head. Then there's harmony, then there's order. And there's beauty in the relationship. So that's the motive, because you are the body and he is the head.

What about the model? The model of this submission is given then in verse 23, as Christ is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. And as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. A wife is to be submissive to her husband, following the model of the church's submission to Christ.

I really don't think any Christian would argue that the church is to submit to Christ. Anybody want to argue that? You read through the Feminist literature that wants to overturn all of this, and you won't find anybody, any evangelical, saying, "Well, the church doesn't have to submit to Christ at all." Well then if the church is to submit to Christ, then the wife is to submit to her husband because that's what it uses as the analogy, the model. What kind of leadership does Christ give the church? Loving leadership, loving direction, protection, safety, security, strength, provision. And the church loves Him for all that He is and all that He provides.

He goes so far as to say he is the savior of the body, the church. The church submits itself to Him because He's the Savior. He's not the head in a dictatorial sense. He's not the head in a domineering sense. He's the head in a delivering sense, a rescuing sense, a protective sense. He's the Savior and that's the model that the husband and the wife must see. The wife submits to her husband not in the sense that he's a dictator, not in the sense that he's domineering, not in the sense that he's authoritarian, but in the sense that he is the protector, the provider, the preserver, the Savior. I'll save you from want...the husband says. I'll save you from need. I'll save you from danger. I'll save you from illness. I'll save you from disaster. I'm here to be your rescuer, your protector, your preserver, your savior.

So the Apostle Paul is saying that the wife must recognize that in the husband's capacity as head, he is closely united to her in one flesh and he is deeply concerned about her needs, her relationship to him is as a believer's relationship to Christ. She views him as her spiritual guardian, her spiritual protector, her source of safety and blessing and provision.

To extend it even more, Jesus is our Savior because He sacrificed Himself for us, right? And a woman should look at her husband and see one who would make any sacrifice for her well-being.

That is what women are looking for and that is what men must offer.

So, wives ought to be subject to their husbands in everything. It is inclusive, only their husbands and exclusive, all that their husbands do to care for them and to protect them.

What if I have an unsaved husband? First Peter 3, same thing, “And you can win him in the grace of God by your chaste and pure behavior.

Now all of this goes back to the principle of chapter 5 verse 18 where we started, right? You say, “How can a husband be all that?” Be being...what?...filled with the Spirit. How can a wife be all that? By being filled with the Spirit. This is what overthrows the curse.

Now, I know we've only talked about the wives and I think we're probably going to spend at least two weeks on the husbands cause we need it.

Father, we thank You for our time tonight, it's been just a wonderful day, all through. And we're grateful for the provision You make for us that we call the bread of life because You called it that. We thank You for Your Word, it feeds our souls, it lifts us to heaven, pulls us out of the world, refreshes us. I do pray for this congregation. I pray for the people who are already married, already have children, that they may walk in the power of the spirit, be Spirit-filled and live this way as You've designed marriage and the family so that they can enjoy it to the max. I pray for the single people to find a partner and get married, have children and experience this pure grace of life. Bring people together for that soon that they may experience this wonderful blessing. And help us all to be obedient, not worrying so much the other, but being sure that we are the one that we should be, walking obediently in the power of the Holy Spirit, as we submit to the Word of God. Make us true and pure in our worship. May our love for Christ dominate us and then we'll do what the Spirit would have us do. Thank You for healthy families in our church. Thank You for blessings on marriages. Thank You for what You're going to continue do in the future in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

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