

Introduction

Jerry-

Over the past two weeks, we have looked carefully at what Ephesians 5:22-33 says to husbands.

To summarize what this passage says to husbands, Paul said...

- 1. The husband should lead his wife (verses 22-24)**
- 2. The husband should love his wife (verses 25-33)**

But what does Ephesians 5:22-33 say to wives?

Brandon-

Let us read again the passages that speak directly to the wives in Ephesians 5...

Ephesians 5:22-24

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.

Ephesians 5:31-33

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.

We can summarize the theme of this passage with two main commands for a wife...

- 1. The wife should submit to her husband (vs. 22-24)**
- 2. The wife should respect her husband (vs. 31-33)**

Body

Jerry-

Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

To many Christians, the word “submission” is an unpleasant word, and it is an idea that they resist.

The English word submit comes from the Greek word hupotasso (hoop-ot-as'-so); it means to act as a subordinate; to rank yourself under; and to obey.

To understand this command for wives to submit in the family, we must first understand the biblical foundation for submission to human authority.

The first man and the first woman were co-rulers. Their fall into sin changed that order. God chose to establish the man as an authority over the woman in the family. His purpose was clear for this new order of authority. Because of the fallen nature of man, the family needed this order of authority to have law and order.

After Cain killed Abel, there was no civil authority to enforce law and order. After establishing this order of authority in the family, God eventually established this order of authority in nations. So, submission to an authority is a part of a broader biblical concept that was designed by God to create

law and order for every human institution. People are difficult!

So, biblical submission is not just a command for wives. It is a command for every human being. It was God's plan for restraining evil, rather than just terminating the human race. So, Paul said, to resist the authority is to resist God.

Romans 13:1-2

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

NKJV

Brandon-

There is an inherent problem in God's plan. Rulers are people! There have been some horrific rulers in world history. The proverbs tell us what life is like when unrighteous authorities rule over us...

Proverbs 29:2

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.

NKJV

Jerry-

This explains why there is a lot of groaning going on in families. It also explains why there is such a reaction this truth in scripture that in the family a wife should submit to her husband.

How does a wife become the kind of person that submits and shows respect for her husband even when he is not righteous and loving?

Brandon-

It sounds difficult to me.

Jerry-

It sounds difficult because it is difficult.

1. You must be born again of God's Spirit.

- You cannot be a new creation in Christ to your husband unless you are a new creation in Christ.**
- You cannot show God's grace to your husband unless you know God's grace.**
- You cannot forgive your husband unless you know God's forgiveness.**

Brandon and Rachael-

2. You must know who you are in Christ.

Your husband cannot be an idol to you. When you rely on your husband to find your sense of significance or self-worth, you are turning your husband into an idol.

All your circumstances in your marriage can and will change. Your husband will let you down. Your kids will let you down. Jobs will change. Living situations will change. Seasons will change. Health will change. Things that once made you feel happy will be lost. Eventually, your marriage will end because of death. Jesus said that marriage doesn't last forever.

As a Christian wife, if your sense of significance and self-worth is wrapped up in the kind of husband you have or the kind of marriage you have, you are setting yourself up for disappointment.

Is your love for Jesus enough? Is His love for you enough?

Jerry-

3. You must have faith that God is accomplishing His purposes in your life when you suffer.

God promises in His Word to work through authority to accomplish His purposes, whether the authority is evil or whether they are good. Now, that takes faith to believe. But we have all these examples in scripture that support this promise.

- **God worked through Pharaoh to save Joseph and Israel. Joseph believed in God's promise, so he submitted himself to Pharaoh and respected him.**
- **God worked through Assyria and Babylon to discipline Israel. Daniel believed in God's promise, so he submitted himself to various evil rulers and respected them.**
- **God worked through Pontius Pilate to accomplish His purpose through Jesus. Jesus believed in God's promise, so he submitted himself to Pilate and respected him.**

- **The apostles of Jesus believed that God would use their suffering from unrighteous rulers to accomplish His purpose for them.**

Brandon-

So, these bible characters all had faith that God was working through their unrighteous authority to accomplish His purpose.

Jerry-

- **They had peace because they had faith in God.**
- **They had power to respect and submit to their authority.**

All Christians need to believe this is true when we suffer. This will determine how we respond to suffering. We will either become bitter or we will have hope.

Brandon-

But a Christian wife that lives with an unrighteous and unloving husband needs greater grace to believe this about God than most Christians because her husband is there every day.

Jerry-

That is hard!

Brandon-

It can get very hard if a husband wants his wife to disobey God's commands to obey him. She cannot do that!

Is there ever a time for a Christian wife to establish boundaries? By boundaries I mean, to remove herself from harm's way.

Jerry-

Yes. Paul said this in 1 Corinthians 7.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

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How does a Christian wife know when it is time to depart?

There are some decisions for every Christian that are a matter of personal conscience. When a woman is being abused by her husband, whether she stays or departs is one of those decisions.

1 Peter 2:18-19

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

NKJV

Conclusion

Brandon-

This is very difficult!

Jerry-

Yes, it is. I have often said that, in marriage, the wife gets the shorter end of the stick. It is a difficult task for men to lead their wives to love God and to love their wives as Christ loves the church. But, in my estimation, it is a far more difficult task for a wife to submit to her imperfect husband as her God-given authority and to show him respect.

Brandon-

It is only possible through the power of the gospel and what Jesus has done for us!

Invitation

- **Receive Jesus.**
- **Repent of any idol in your life.**
 - **Have you been seeking to find a sense of significance or self-worth from something other than your relationship with Jesus?**
- **Believe in God's promises for suffering.**
 - **God promises He will be with us in our suffering**
 - **God promises our suffering will not last forever**
 - **God promises to use our suffering to accomplish His purposes**
- **Surrender to God's purpose for suffering.**
 - **Take my life and make it Yours, Lord.**
 - **I am willing to suffer so that Your purposes can be accomplished in my life.**