

A Spirit-filled Marriage

Ephesians 5: 22-33

Through our study in recent weeks, we have discovered much about our walk with the Lord and among the world. We have been challenged to walk in love, righteousness, light, and awareness. In our text, Paul continues to deal with the walk of believers, but his focus has shifted somewhat. He now deals with the marriage relationship and challenges believers to pursue a spirit-filled marriage.

A Spirit-filled marriage is a profound representation of Christ's love, requiring mutual submission that leads to deep connection and growth, transforming struggles into opportunities for grace and unity. Christians are admonished to cultivate Spirit-filled marriages that reflect Christ's love, fostering unity and understanding amidst struggles and weaknesses, while offering a model of sacrificial love that can heal and restore relationships.

As we discuss the [admonitions](#) within the text, I want to consider: [A Spirit-filled Marriage](#). Marriages developed on mutual submission to one another and the Lord reflect the relationship between Christ and His church.

I. The Humility of the Wife ([5:22-24](#)) – In these verses, Paul speaks of the role of the wife. Notice I referred to her role as the humility of the wife, not the humiliation of the wife. Her biblical role is often misunderstood and even misguided at times. We must clearly understand the Lord's intention regarding the wife. Consider:

A. The Instruction ([22](#)) – [Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord](#). The Lord desires the wife to submit herself unto her husband. This is difficult for some to embrace, even though it is clearly revealed in Scripture. I believe many have a difficult time with this because some men have distorted this truth, and even abused it. Submission on the part of the wife never implies she is inferior to her husband. The woman is not a second-rate citizen or of lesser value within the home. She has an important and valuable role to play. In fact, most homes are held together spiritually by godly wives.

- Submission in the text means “*to place in order; to place under in an orderly fashion.*” This doesn't speak of spiritual character, but of physical, positional, and functional order. A godly wife doesn't feel threatened by this because it is ordained of God. Her submission is never a problem when the husband knows his place and meets his expectations in the relationship.

B. The Motivation (22-23) – *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* [23]

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Paul speaks of the motivation involved in the wife's submission. She submits to her husband as unto the Lord. She knows God has ordained the husband to be the head of the home. She understands that marriage is the most beautiful picture of the relationship believers have with Christ. As she submits to her husband, she does so knowing she is following the instruction of the Lord and honoring Him with the life she lives. (There are cases where the husband doesn't behave in such a way to earn her submission, but she continues because it honors the Lord.)

C. The Representation (24) – *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.* Although it is difficult at times, a submissive wife knows the value of her position and the testimony she bears through submission to the God ordained order. As she submits to the leadership of her home, she bears witness to her submission to Christ the Lord. Her life stands as a public example of the church's submission to Christ.

- My spiritual life has been greatly impacted by godly women who chose to follow the direction of the Lord rather than embrace public sentiment and rebel against her husband. I would never advocate or support spousal abuse; and this passage doesn't either, but a woman who willingly submits to her husband bears witness to the saving grace of God and her relationship to Christ. It is revealed in a tangible way that cannot be ignored or denied by those around her.

II. The Responsibility of the Husband (5:23-29) – Here Paul reveals the responsibility of husbands. Men relish the thoughts of submission from the wife, but often fail to fulfill their God given responsibilities. He is more accountable for the home than the wife. We discover:

A. He is to Lead (5:23) – *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.* The Bible is clear that the man is to be the head of the wife and the home. The husband is expected to provide leadership within the home. Most men relish the thought of being head of the home. This is ordained of God, but many have a distorted view of what God has said. Being the head of the home is not being a dictator in the home. We are not called to lord over our wives, but to lead them.

- God's idea of the husband being the head isn't referring to ability, worth, or advantage; it is dealing with the order and function of the home. Someone has to take the lead and stand responsible for the home, and that is to be the husband. Now, men before you get too excited and proud of your God-given role, consider this – with that role comes responsibility. God has placed you in that role and He will hold you accountable for your family.

B. He is to Love (5:25-29) – Paul admonishes the husband to love his wife. Men, if we will love our wives as we should, showing the favor they deserve, their role will be much easier! The love of the husband is two-fold. It is:

1. Sacrificial Love (25) – *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.* We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. This is the Greek word *agapao*, referring to God's Agape love, love that isn't selfish or pleasure driven, but a sacrificial love. Have you tried to imagine the love of God for us? He loved us when we were unlovable, even when we had no desire to know Him. He loved us enough to send His only begotten Son to die for our sin.

- We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it! Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to take our sin and our shame upon Himself. He bore our reproach, becoming sin for us so that we might be saved. It was that love that took Him to the cross.
- Sacrificial love seeks the good of others above one's personal desires. It is a love that is steadfast and unwavering. It is not dictated by outward circumstances. This love is born of a desire to love, not looking for anything in return. Do you possess a sacrificial love for your wife? Sacrificial love will place the needs of the family as the priority.

2. Significant Love (5:28-29) – *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.* ^[29] *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.* Our love for our wives is to be as the love for ourselves. It is as much concerned with her welfare and desires as it is our own. We have become one flesh in the eyes of God and our love must show no partiality between the two.

- We are to nourish and cherish our wives as Christ did the church. We must be committed to *nourish* or "*feed our love and see to it that it continues to grow and mature.*" Our love should be stronger now than ever before. We must also *cherish* (*to warm*) that love, "*showing the warmth of our affection.*" If you love her, show her that love every day. Don't just say it; show it. She has heard it, but does she know it?

III. The Mystery of their Marriage (30-33) – Marriage beautifully reflects the mystery of Christ and the Church. There is no greater illustration for Christ's love for the church and His devotion to it than marriage between a man and a woman. Consider:

A. The Foundation (30-31) – *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* ³¹ *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* Paul offers a profound reminder – prior to marriage, and most importantly, believers are part of the body of Christ. Christ is the head and the church is the body. The believer is secured eternally within the body of Christ. In like manner, when a man and woman are united in marriage, they become one flesh in the sight of God. They are no longer two individuals, but one in the Lord. With Christ and the church as our supreme example, we see the admonition to submit to one another in love, with the husband respected as the head of the body and his love for his wife as his own flesh.

B. The Reflection (32) – *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* Paul reminds the church that the special relationship between a husband and wife serves as a reflection of Christ and the church. We are to love sacrificially, caring for our spouse regardless of circumstances. The marriage of believers serves as an illustration of the time yet to come when the Lord returns for His church and we are seated at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Bridegroom will come for His bride and we will spend eternity united with Him, enjoying His eternal presence in heaven. What a reflection of that grand meeting in heaven.

C. The Devotion (33) – *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* With the great mystery in mind, Paul offers a final admonition to husbands and wives. The husband is commanded to love his wife as himself and the wife is to reverence or respect her husband. These are simple enough to understand, but often more difficult to practice. However, I am convinced that if each spouse would do as Paul commands, the response from their spouse would be much easier in regard to the biblical principle. It is easier for a woman who is loved of her husband to respect him; and it is easier for a husband to love his wife when she shows respect to him. Our actions can and do influence the marriage relationship.

Conclusion: I don't know how you feel about the message today, but I have tried to be faithful to the text. America is in a mess, due in large part to the dysfunction of the home. If you desire the blessing of God, assume your role and pursue a Spirit-filled marriage. He will bless those who seek to live according to His Word.

Maybe your home is not as it should be. Maybe you need to seek help and guidance from the Lord. He is able to provide all you need. The greatest picture of the relationship of Christ with the church is seen in biblical marriage. Christ loved the church enough to die for her. He gave His life to redeem from sin. If you are unsaved, respond to the Lord by faith and be saved today.