

The Epistle Of
EPHESIANS
BIBLICAL MARRIAGE: WIVES
Ephesians 5:22-24

Introduction

Book Structure

Book Sections

- Section 1 Our Wealth In Christ *Ephesians 1-3*
- Section 2 Our Walk In Christ *Ephesians 4-5*
- Section 3 Our Warfare In Christ *Ephesians 6*

Section 2

Our Walk In Christ

- Walk In Unity
- Walk In Gifting
- Walk In Holiness
- Walk In Love
- Walk in Wisdom

Walk In Christian Homes

Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9

How a Christian should walk in:

- Marriage Wives & Husbands
- Parenthood Children & Parents
- Employment Servants & Masters

Foundations For Walking

Three foundations for this section:

1. The call to imitate Christ *Ephesians 5:1*
2. The call to be filled with the Holy Spirit *Ephesians 5:18*
3. The call to submit to one another *Ephesians 5:21*

The Call To Imitate Christ

Ephesians 5:1

Relationship Roles

In the text before us there are three relationships under discussion

- Marriage
- Parenthood
- Employment

Whichever relationship is under discussion

- There is an authoritative role
- And a submissive role

Whatever role you hold within that relationship

- There is an example in Christ to imitate

Godhead Roles

The godhead has three persons

- All in perfect harmony with one another
- All with distinct roles in relation to one another

Likewise, in marriage, parenthood or employment

- There are distinct roles to operate in
- Harmony can be found in these relationships through occupying these roles

The Father - In authority over the Son and the Holy Spirit
The Son - In authority over the Holy Spirit; In submission to the Father
The Holy Spirit - In submission to the Father and the Son

Jesus' Roles

Our example is the Son, Jesus Christ

- In one relationship He is in authority
- In another relationship He is in submission

Dependent on the relationship in question

- We have an example to imitate in Christ
- His example of operating in authority or submission

John 13:12-15

Jesus used His authority

- To show that we are to be servants of one another
- To build people up

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Matthew 26:39

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Jesus used His submission to

- To save people from sin and judgement
- To build people up

We look to Jesus for the example

- Of how to be in authority
- Of how to be in submission
- Both are used to build up

The Call To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

We have previously seen that the various aspects of the Christian walk (Paul discusses) are only achieved

- In the power of the Holy Spirit
- We cannot fulfil God's call in our own strength

The role of wife, husband, parent, employer or employee can be a calling

- We cannot fulfil God's call
- Unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit
- You do not get married and it is instant success and plain sailing
- You do not have children and parenting comes naturally
- It's hard

It was never designed to be tackled alone in our own strength

- Marriage is God-given institution
- Marriage requires a God-given enabling to succeed

That enabling comes through the Holy Spirit

- Those for whom this text speaks
- Should pray regularly to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be empowered for the role they have been given

The Holy Spirit

- Is the member of the godhead who is best equipped to teach us submission
- He submits to the father and the Son
- He is the very member of the god head who indwells and equips a believer

The Call To Submit To One Another

Ephesians 5:21

The body of Christ should be characterised by mutual submission

- i.e. the recognition of everyone's role and personal gifting
- Submitting to that person, in love, as they move forward in that role and gifting

This attitude of mutual submission needs to be in the home as well

Mutual submission does not mean

- Husbands submit to your wives the same way as wives submit to their husbands
- Just as parents don't submit to their children
- Just as masters don't submit to their servants

Mutual submission means

- Whatever your role is in marriage, parenthood and employment
- You need to submit to that role, i.e. acknowledge it, accept it
- You need to operate in that role

Example

Husbands you must submit yourself to the God-given role you have been appointed to

- Not shirk the role of decision-maker
- Honour the call to love your wives sacrificially

Because submission is the principle characteristic Paul focuses on

It is the person called principally to submit who has pre-eminence in the three scenarios

- Marriage Wives are spoken of ahead of husbands
- Parenthood Children are spoken of ahead of parents
- Employment Servants are spoken of ahead of masters

The Challenge Of Scriptural Authority

The entire Word of God is controversial

- Some passages hold a greater controversy about them than others
- It advocates a pattern of thought, life and conduct which is contrary to the world

The controversy arises when:

- The world or the individual find their thoughts / philosophy in conflict with those expressed by the Bible
- Nobody likes to be told they are wrong
- Nobody likes being confronted with the call to change

When we come to a text that gives rise to conflict, we are faced with a choice

- Do we follow the Bible?
- Do we follow our thinking?

The path you choose determines who is the ultimate authority in your life: God or you!

As Joshua said to Israel, "*choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve*" **Joshua 24:15**

Introduction to Marriage

Successful Marriage

Jesus & Marriage

The key to a successful marriage is **Jesus**

- The wife is in submission to Jesus
- The husband is in submission to Jesus

- The wife is filled with the Holy Spirit (who is sent by Jesus)
- The husband is filled with the Holy Spirit (who is sent by Jesus)

A marriage never fails when both people are on fire for Jesus

A marriage conflicts and failures occur when

- One party or both are not in submission to Jesus
- One party or both are not filled with the Holy Spirit (who is sent by Jesus)

Unequally Yoked

This is why a Christian should only marry a Christian

Paul is very clear on this matter

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

That's not to

- Condemn anyone who is married to an unbeliever
- Predict failure to a marriage between a believer and unbeliever

Marriage Triangle

Where both husband and wife

- Are in active relationship with the Lord
- Both are moving closer to the Lord
- They automatically will be moving closer to one another

Roles Within Marriage

Within the context of a successful, Biblical, spirit-filled, Christian marriage

- There are defined roles for the husband and wife

Submission to Christ means:

- You will operate in those roles as prescribed by Scripture
- In the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit

Stated Roles

- Wife To submit to their husband
- Husband To love their wife

The Role Of Wives

Ephesians 5:22-24

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

The Role Of Submission

The role a wife is to operate in is submission

Ephesians 5:22a

Wives submit to your own husbands...

Submit

A Greek military term

Used to arrange troop divisions in a military fashion under the command of a leader

It is not a term of inferiority

- It is a term of voluntary co-operation
- To ensure the unit operates effectively

You cannot have a military unit rebelling against their commanding officer

- The unit will cease to function effectively
- The unit will ultimately be divided and vulnerable to the enemy

The marriage unit has a chain of command

- It calls for voluntary submission (on behalf of the wife)
- To operate effectively
- To guard against enemy attack
- It calls for authority to be picked up (on behalf of the husband)

Region Of Operation

The sphere of submission is clearly defined

- *to your own husbands*
- Not a general submission to men in society

The Bible is clear, in the region of marriage and church

- Woman are not to have authority

Outside of these two regions

- Woman can exercise authority
- E.g. In business, education, politics, etc.

Marriage Mission & Sub-mission

Christian marriage has a mission

- To serve God
- To glorify God

The mission leader is the husband

The sub-mission falls to the wife

- If the sub-mission fails
- The marriage mission fails

God puts people together so they can effectively serve God

- God brought Ian and I together, so we can effectively serve God in CCM
- God brings a man and a woman together, so they can effectively serve God in marriage

Illustration

The great example of this is seen in Adam and Eve **Ephesians 5:31**

The mission was given to Adam (husband)

- Mission: To be fruitful and multiply

- Parameters: Don't eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

It would be impossible for Adam to fulfil the mission without the help of Eve

Genesis 2:18a

And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone."

Genesis 2:18b

"I will make him a helper comparable to him."

God has created woman to be a helper the man

- Man has the mission
- Woman has the sub-mission
- The mission succeeded
- The parameters were exceeded

Reasons For The Role

Three reasons are given for this command:

1. The Lordship of Christ
2. The Headship of the Man (in Christ)
3. The Relationship To Christ And The Church

The Lordship Of Christ

Ephesians 5:22b

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

"...as to the Lord" is a key phrase

- It is important to understand what is meant by the term
- Wrong understanding will lead to wrong operation of submission

Emphasis On The Lord

"...as to the Lord" means

- Wives submit to their husbands as a part of their duty to the Lord
- i.e. submission to your husband is an expression (outworking) of your submission to the Lord

A wife shows the Lordship of Christ in her life

- By submitting to her husband

Emphasis On The Husband

Some have the idea that, "...as to the Lord" means

- The wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself
- As you submit yourself to God in everything without question
- So you submit to your husband in everything without question

This is a wrong interpretation

- Unqualified submission is to commit the sin of idolatry

The husband deserves respect

- The husband does not deserve blind obedience

There are limits to a wife's submission to her husband

- Just as there are limits to a child's submission to their parents
- Just as there are limits to a servant's submission to a master

Example

A husband cannot demand his wife break the law

Emphasis On The Wife

Some have the idea that, "...as to the Lord" means

- The wife will submit to her husband so long as he does what the Lord wants
- This often results in the wife determining what the Lord wants

Example

I'll submit to my husband when I agree with him

- When it's the right decisions it's of the Lord – so I'll submit
- When it's the wrong decisions it's not of the Lord – so I won't submit

This is a wrong interpretation

- Qualified submission, based on a standard not set by God, but by the woman
- This is for the woman to set her authority above God's
- Which again, is to commit the sin of idolatry

There should be discussion in marriage

- When there is disagreement, the final decision falls to the husband
- Disagreement, is when submission is truly tested

The Headship Of The Man

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.

The Head

- God has ordained that the husband is to be the head in marriage
- In the same way that God has ordained that Christ is to be head in the church

Mark 12:10

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. [head of the corner]

The husband is to be the Chief

When Paul (and his companions) preached to the Jews in Corinth, and they opposed him, Paul said:

Acts 18:6

Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

The responsibility lies with you

- The buck stops with you
- For where you stand before God

The husband

- Is the one with the responsibility in the marriage
- Is the one with the authority in the marriage
- The buck stops with him – he is answerable to God (about the decisions and directions taken)

The Authority

The head is governing part of the body

- It is where the instructions come to direct the other members of the body
- It is the source of authority
- You cut off the head - the body dies

In the same way the husband is to be the authority in marriage

- The marriage is to be directed by the husband
- The husband in turn is to be directed by Christ

That's not to say the wife cannot provide counsel and opinion

- She is as much a vessel of God as her husband
- Often she will hear from the Lord more clearly than her husband
- But the ultimate decision and authority falls to the husband

The Relationship To Christ And The Church

Ephesians 5:24

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

The Christian marriage should serve as a model

- Of Christ's relationship with Church
- Christ as the Bridegroom, the Church as the Bride

As the church (the Bride of Christ) is to operate in submission to Christ (the Bridegroom)

- So the wife (a picture of the church)
- Is to submit her husband (a picture of Christ)

If you are looking for a model of marriage

- Do not look at your parents or friends
- Look at the way the Church operates (or should operate) toward Jesus Christ

Illustration

Christ is the Good Shepherd

- Feeding the sheep
- Protecting the sheep
- Leading the sheep
- Loving the sheep

The sheep in turn

- Trust the shepherd
- Obey the shepherd
- Follow the shepherd
- Submit to the shepherd

Exceptions To The Rule

...in everything.

The wife is to not look for loopholes to escape submission

However, there are areas where submission is not to be expected:

1. When the husband asks or expects the wife to sin
 - She does not have to submit to immorality
2. When the husband is medically incapacitated or insane
 - She does not have to submit to madness
3. When the husband is physically abusive and endangers the safety of the wife or children
 - She does not have to submit to violence
4. When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery
 - She does not have to submit to infidelity