

## INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to turn in your Bibles this evening to **Ephesians 5:21**.
2. This one simple verse is our subject tonight.
3. It says, “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”
4. At a meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Bobby Richardson, former New York Yankee second baseman, offered a prayer that is a classic in brevity and poignancy:  
  
‘Dear God, Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen.’ (Biblical Recorder, Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations : A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers [Garland TX: Bible Communications, 1996, c1979]).
5. That simple prayer should be at the heart of every child of God.
6. Because it is His “will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else” that we desire.
7. Someone else once prayed along those same lines when they said, “Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free; Force me to render up my sword, And I shall conqueror be! I sink in life’s alarms, When by myself I stand; Imprison me within Thine Arms, And strong shall be my hand” (Ibid., Tan).

8. Someone once asked George Mueller what was the secret of his service. He said, ““There was a day when I died, utterly died;’ and, as he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor—‘died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will—died to the world, its approval or censure—died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends—and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God” (British Weekly)
9. All of these are examples of submission—submission to God and to one another.
10. For the last few weeks we have been looking at the one another’s found in the New Testament.
11. We have noted what Paul said in **Romans 12:5** that we “being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”
12. And as such we are to love one another and bear one another’s burdens.
13. Because we are linked to one another through Christ, we have a responsibility to one another.
14. As we consider the subject of submission tonight, I want us to consider 3 principles.
15. The first is simply, *submission has always been God’s will.*

## I. Submission Has Always Been God's Will

### A. This is Clearly Demonstrated in the Life of Jesus Christ

#### 1. He submitted to the Father

- a) **Romans 15:3** says, "For even Christ did not please Himself."
- b) **John 6:38** says, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

#### 2. His submission included every dimension of His earthly life

- a) Prior to coming into the world He submitted to God's plan of redemption - **John 1:1, 14**
- b) In **Luke 2:51** we see that even as a child He submitted to God by submitting to Joseph and Mary

"Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart."

- c) Even throughout His earthly ministry we see that He submitted to God

**Matthew 4:1-2** - says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry."

During His time of temptation and hunger, He submitted to God. Even though the devil tried by every means to stop Him. Because He was hungry he tempted Him with food in verse 3 but Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (v.4). Next he sought to tempt Him to jump off the pinnacle (highest point) of the temple saying that His angels would protect Him. But Jesus said, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (v.7). Having failed at those two attempts, he then told Him he would give Him “all the kingdoms of the world...if You will fall down and worship me” (vv.8-9). But Jesus said, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (v.10). Jesus subjected Himself to the Father.

- d) In **Philippians 2:5-8** He demonstrated submission to God by willingly going to the cross

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

Submission is demonstrated in the life of Jesus. It’s also...

- B. This is Demonstrated in the Teaching of the Word of God

1. We are told to submit approximately 15 times in the Bible
  - a) “submit” - 11 times
  - b) “submission” - 4 times
  - c) “subjection” - 8 times
  - d) “subjected” - 2 times
  
2. It is specifically stated as being God’s will at least two times
  - a) **Ephesians 6:5-6** - “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”
  
  - b) **1 Peter 2:15** - “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

## II. Submission is Required of All Relationships

William Booth said, “The greatness of a man’s power is the measure of his surrender” (Drapers).

In Ephesians chapter 5, beginning at verse 21, “Paul here made a transition and introduced his teaching about specific relationships of authority and submission among Christians (5:22-6:9) by declaring unequivocally that every spirit-filled Christian is to be a humble, submissive Christian.

This is foundational to all the relationships in this section. No believer is inherently superior to any other believer. In their standing before God, they are equal in every way (Gal 3:28)”

(John Jr MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. [Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997]. Eph 5:21).

A. Wives to Husbands

1. The husband is the head of the wife

**1 Cor.11:3** - “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

2. Since the husband is the head of the wife she is called to submit to him

- a) **Eph.5:22-23**

- b) **Col.3:18** - “Wife, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

- c) **Titus 2:5** says that the younger women are to be “discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.”

In 1998 when I was working closely with Southern Baptists, at their annual meeting they released a revised statement on marriage and the family which called for “wives to ‘submit graciously’ to their husbands.”

Not everyone was pleased with that adoption within the Convention. “The Baptist General Convention of Texas, the largest state convention of Southern Baptists,...rejected the national Southern Baptist Convention’s statement of beliefs.”

Pastor Clyde Glazener, then president of the 2.7 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas told the Ft. Worth *Star-Telegram* that conservatives who pushed for the 1998 marriage and family section are using *The Baptist Faith and Message* not as a guideline but as a creed to try to get all Baptists to conform to their view. “They are trying to hold people’s feet to the fire and walk lockstep with them.”

Paige Patterson, who was the president of the Southern Baptist Convention responded by saying, “I am grateful that the Baptist General Convention of Texas’ leadership has made crystal clear for the sake of Texas Baptist church where they stand on family and church issues. Now it is up to the churches to decide with whom they agree – with a liberal, culturally acceptable view of family and church, or with a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing perspective. I have every confidence that the majority of Texas Baptist churches will go with Christ and with the clear instruction of the Bible”

(*ChristianityToday.Com*, December 6, 1999).

## B. Children to Parents

1. Paul says in **Ephesians 6:1-3** that it is right for children to “obey [their] parents in the Lord.”

He says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

“Children” Gr.tekna, “does not refer particularly to young children but to all offspring” (MacArthur).

“Sons and daughters still under their parents’ roof are to obey and honor them. Obey has to do with action, and honor has to do with attitude” (John MacArthur, *Ephesians*).

Eph.5:31 says that men and women are no longer under the authority of their parents once they themselves marry but “special respect and concern for their parents should continue as long as they live” (MacArthur).

“Obey” Gr.hupoakouo (pres.act.imp.), “to listen to, to obey” (Rienecker), “to be subject to” (UBS), lit. “to hear under,” that is, “to listen with attentiveness and to respond positively to what is heard” (MacArthur).

2. Paul tells Timothy that an elder is to “rule his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence” (**1 Tim.3:4**)

That same qualification is echoed toward the deacons who are men in v.12.

### C. Employees to Employers

1. Employees are to serve their employers “as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (**Eph.6:5-8**)
2. Paul mentions this same truth in **Colossians 3:22-25**

“Bondservants, obey in all things your masters

according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

Paul uses the word *hupoakouo* in both passages.

#### D. Citizens to Government

1. We are to submit to the “governing authorities”
  - a) **Rom.13:1**- “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.”
  - b) **Tit.3:1** - “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.”
2. This means that we are to “submit...to every ordinance” - **1 Pet.2:13-14**

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.”

#### E. Believer to Believer

1. We all are to submit to one another - **Eph.5:21**

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

2. We are to devote ourselves to the ministry of the saints - **1 Cor.16:15-16**

“I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.”

A.W. Tozer said, “The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they have not yet come to the end of themselves. We are still giving some of the orders, and we are still interfering with God’s working within us” (Drapers).

### **III. Submission is Required of the Church**

- A. We Are to Submit to God (**James 4:7**)

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

“Submit” Gr.hupotasso, “to place or rank under, to subject, to obey” (Strong), “to align one’s self under the authority of another” (Rienecker)

- B. We Are to Submit to Jesus Christ (**Eph.5:24**)

“Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ.”

“Subject” Gr.hupotasso

A.W. Tozer again says, “The man who surrenders to

Christ exchanges a cruel slave driver for a kind and gentle Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light” (Drapers).

“If you don’t surrender to Christ, you surrender to chaos” (E. Stanley Jones [1884-1973], Drapers).

C. We Are to Submit to the Elders of the Church

We are to know “those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (**1 Thess.5:12-13**).

John MacArthur says, “This does not mean simple face recognition, but that the people are to literally know their pastors well enough to have an intimate appreciation for them and to respect them because of their value. The work of pastors is summarized in a 3-fold description which includes: 1) laboring, working to the point of exhaustion; 2) overseeing, lit. standing before the flock to lead them in the way of righteousness; and 3) admonishing, instructing in the truths of God’s Word” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*).

“In addition to knowing pastors, congregations are to think rightly and lovingly of their pastors, not because of their charm or personality, but because of the fact that they work for the Chief Shepherd as His special servants (cf. 1 Pet.5:2-4). They are to submit to their leadership so that ‘peace’ prevails in the church” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*).

D. We Are to Submit in Order to Be Saved

“If you do not submit to Jesus for salvation you will not

be saved.”

**Romans 10:9-10** says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

**Luke 9:23-24** says, “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.’”

## CONCLUSION

1. Have you submitted to Jesus for salvation?
2. Are you submitting in all your relationships?
3. In order for us to live the one another’s we must submit to one another.
4. Warren Wiersbe said, “Submission has nothing to do with the order of authority, but rather governs the operation of authority, how it is given and how it is received.”
5. We are to esteem others “more important than ourselves” (Rom.12:10).
6. But the first order of business tonight is your submission to Christ.
7. Have you surrendered your life to Him?
8. Have you repented of your sin and come to Christ for

forgiveness?

9. You might ask, “Forgiveness for what?”
10. For violating His Law and His Name.
11. God gave His Law and pronounced judgment on those who did not keep it.
12. **Galatians 3:10** says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’”
13. James essentially said the same thing when he wrote in James 2:10-11, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.”
14. We have all broken God’s law and unless we have been redeemed by Christ are still under its curse—that curse being God’s wrath.
15. If you haven’t surrendered to Christ, I urge you to do so now.
16. Peter said in **Acts 4:12**, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
17. Let’s pray.