

Husbands and Wives – Part 4

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul outlines what it means to be mutually submissive as husbands and wives
2. aim – to cause us to pursue submissiveness in every area of our lives as followers of Christ
3. passage – Ephesians 5:22-33

b. outline

1. The Sacredness of Marriage
2. The Submission of Wives (Ephesians 5:22-24)
3. The Self-Sacrifice of Husbands (Ephesians 5:25-33)

c. opening

1. the **significance** of this passage in Ephesians
 - a. Paul is *expanding* his topic of what it means to walk in love as followers of Christ:
 1. not to be unwise, but to make the best use of the time (**vv. 15-16**)
 2. not to be foolish (and drunkards), but to be filled with the Spirit (**vv. 17-18**)
 - a. by addressing one another in song, making melody in your heart to the Lord, being thankful in every situation, and (**now**) submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ
 - b. Paul recognizes that this idea of **mutual submission** is difficult to understand
 - c. so, he brings forth some *examples* of how this *should* work in other kinds of relationships
2. the **location** of this passage in Ephesians
 - a. **chaps. 1-3** = the relationship of believers *to God* (**vertically**)
 - b. **chaps. 4-5a** = the relationship of believers *to one another* (**horizontally**)
 - c. **chaps. 5b-6 (updated)** = the relationship of believers *to others* (**connectedly**): the reach of our love for Christ as it permeates all other “classes” of human relationship; *the flow of our unity with one another in the church to everyone that we encounter in life*
3. the **mutual submission** at the core of this passage
 - a. **my definition**: the *symbiotic* relationship that exists between members in the church as they seek to lead one another into greater faith *and* submit to one another in the furthering of that quest
 - b. **question #1**: why are wives to be submissive to their husbands?
 1. “*as to the Lord*” (**v. 22b**) – because it testifies to what it means to be submissive to Jesus
 - a. **i.e.** how you treat your husband is a *direct reflection* of how you treat the Lord
 2. **principle: a godly wife, who gives honor and deference to her husband, testifies to what genuine saving faith is through that submission, to a world that does not understand it**
 - a. **IOW**: Paul is using marriage *as a picture of what mutual submission looks like*
 - c. **question #2**: what are husbands to reflect in their relationship to their wives?

III. The Self-Sacrifice of Husbands (Ephesians 5:25-33)

Content

a. the definition of husbandly love (v. 25)

1. (**note**) Paul devotes x3 more space to the husband’s duty than to the wife’s (9 vs. 3 verses)
 - a. because (**popular**): the duty of a husband is so much *greater* than the duty of a wife
 1. in reality, a successful marriage requires an effort of 100% *by both parties*
 2. submission by a wife is not inherently “easier” than the duty of a husband
 - b. because (**contextual**): the duty of a husband is a more *direct* reflection of the work of Christ in the order of creation and redemption
 1. so, Paul puts more attention into this half of the union, since it is more reflective of Christ
 2. (**again**) not to berate *either* party in the marriage, but to build off of each part of the relationship as an *example* of what it means to be filled with the Spirit in the unity of the church
2. “*love your wives*” (*agape*) = show a special kind of love; a unique form of love that centers around her inherent *worth* (**i.e.** this term used *primarily* as the love of God for his own people)
 - a. **1 Peter 3:7** – “*Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life ...*”

1. “*understanding*” = having a special knowledge of; having a deep perception of; **i.e.** knowing her in an intimate fashion across every spectrum of her individuality *and* your life together
 3. “*as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*”
 - a. **(note)** Paul uses another “*as*” conjunction (**i.e.** an adverbial comparison; a **reflection**)
 1. wives are to be submissive “*as to the Lord*” (**v. 22**) = a reflection of their *submission* to Christ
 2. husbands are love “*as Christ ...*” (**v. 25**) = a reflection of the **self-sacrifice** of Christ
 - b. **thesis: since the love (agape) of Christ for his people was characterized by self-sacrifice (giving), so the love of a husband for his wife must be utterly self-giving**
- b. the corruption of self-sacrificial love today**
1. **reality:** the radical feminism permeating W culture corrupts the thinking of men into believing that self-sacrificial love = “servant leadership” and (thus) is destroying biblical (normal) masculinity

“Relations between the sexes have rarely been in tatters the way they are now. Because we have kicked against the authority of God, as revealed in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, as revealed in the created order, and as revealed in our own consciences, we have toppled from a great height ... As we confront this disaster—and it is a disaster—the definition of masculinity that I believe we must return to is this: *masculinity is the glad assumption of the sacrificial responsibilities that God assigned to men* ... We need to be done with what we have come to call *servant leadership*. Servant leadership, as it has been defined in evangelical circles, has done to masculinity what the liberals want to do to AR-15s. What do I mean? I am here following the common sense wisdom of the bumper sticker that says *when guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns*. When a false definition of servant leadership is mandated for the church, the only people who will simply ignore that teaching will be the dullards and pigs. The sincere Christian men, who falsely believe they are being taught in accordance with the Word, will dutifully disarm. They will abdicate their essential role of *actual leadership* in the home, and they will call it servant leadership, leading from behind, or “just-what-I-was-going-to-suggest-leadership.” But there is a vast difference between real servant leadership, the kind Christ practiced and enjoined, and the kind that requires men to stand down whenever mama ain’t happy. By so emphasizing servant leadership, the church has not succeeded in establishing more of it, but they have succeeded [sic] in giving men a noble-sounding name as a fig leaf for their cowardice.” (Doug Wilson, *Masculinity Without Permission*, 03/07/2018, www.dougwilson.com, Moscow, ID, emphasis original)

 - a. **IOW:** today, self-sacrificial love is equated with men subordinating themselves to women
 - b. **question:** so what does this self-sacrificial love (**i.e.** genuine masculinity) actually look like?
- c. the first image of self-sacrificial love (vv. 26-27)**
1. the image of Christ self-sacrificially setting apart the church as a **bride** for himself
 - a. true, Paul doesn’t use the term “bride” here, but the image of a bride is unmistakable
 - b. “*sanctify her*” = set her apart to himself – the picture of a man courting a specific woman
 1. in the wedding oath: and forsaking all others ...
 2. Christ setting apart his people (the elect, the church) as the only one which he will love
 - a. Jesus never took a bride; he “*cleaved*” only to the elect as his “wife”
 - c. “*cleansed her*” = to wash away her shame – the picture of a man “fulfilling” an unmarried woman
 1. in the First Century, to be unmarried was shameful; a virgin was considered a “child” under her father’s rule until married and made into an “honest” woman – a “completion” in marriage
 2. Christ washing his people (the elect) of their sinfulness
 - a. “*water*” – an allusion to baptism as a testimony of conversion into faith (**not saving**)
 - b. “*the word*” – an allusion to the teachings of Christ that lead to faith and repentance
 - d. “*present ... to himself*” = to present her as his bride – the picture of a bride coming to her groom
 1. in the wedding ceremony: the bride, dressed in white, coming down the aisle
 2. Christ presenting his people (the church) to himself as the perfect wife
 - a. “*without spot or wrinkle*” = no sinful imperfections marring their relationship (religiously)
 - b. “*holy and without blemish*” = in a state of perfection (justified)
 2. **(by extension)** the *continuing* work of a husband to do this with his bride (and family)
 - a. to continually make *and keep* his wife the *only* object of his love and affection
 - b. to use the Word as an *instrument* to help make his wife more and more into the image of Christ
 - c. to present them both to the church as fully devoted members, in union with the entire body
 - d. **IOW:** to be biblically **masculine** – to take leadership in a way so loving and so self-giving that a godly wife will *willingly* and *expectantly* give herself over to her husband in deference and honor
- d. the second image of self-sacrificial love (vv. 28-32)**
1. the image of Christ in a **one-flesh** relationship with the church
 - a. Paul returns to his “*body*” imagery, but now pictures the body as that between a husband and wife
 1. in **v. 31**, Paul quotes from **Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5** – the marriage ordinance (in the creation ordinance) that establishes a husband and wife as a one-flesh union
 - a. (**again**) the creation in marriage of a new creature, formed as the union of two disparate persons for the purpose of procreation and the foundation of family (human civilization)
 2. in **vv. 28-29**, Paul notes that the love of a wife by a husband is actually a form of *self-love*
 - a. the love of a husband for his wife is the care-and-feeding of this new one-flesh creature
 - b. to not love your wife self-sacrificially is to withhold care from the new creature itself
 3. in **v. 32**, Paul calls it a “*mystery*” = something formerly hidden, but now revealed
 2. the one-flesh union of marriage *now* symbolizes the same relationship between Christ and his church
 - a. Christ “*cherishes*” his church by caring for it and “*nourishing*” it (**v. 29**) – he sends his Spirit with the Word to mature the church as *an extension of himself* (**a form of self-love**)

- b. Christ also *leads* his church as his own body (v. 30) – he exercises a biblical form of **masculinity** with the church whereby he lovingly and self-sacrificially leads his people out of the world
- e. the importance of self-sacrificial love (v. 33)**
- 1. **question #1:** why are husbands to love their wives self-sacrificially?
 - a. **principle: a godly husband, who loves his wife self-sacrificially, testifies to the one-flesh union that exists between Christ and his church, the unique bond formed between the Lord and his bride (the church) and in their self-sacrificial love for one another**
 - b. true, this is difficult (especially with “willful” wives), but it is essential to the overarching picture of what *faith* is all about – to ignore this as “passé” is to say that we don’t really believe that Jesus properly modeled a self-sacrificial giving of himself that was *worthy* of faith
 - 2. **question #2:** why are Christians to be submissive to one another as to the Lord?
 - a. because it is a demonstration of what it means to be “filled with the Spirit” (v. 18)
 - 1. there is no room in the regenerate, Spirit-filled heart for *tyranny* or *timidity*
 - 2. all authority ultimately belongs to *Christ* – we are to submit ourselves *entirely* to him, and then mutually live in submission to one another *in the roles he has established for us in the world*