

Sermon Title: Spirit-Led Wives
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:22-24 (Ephesians #40)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-26-22

Come with me back to the Book of Ephesians, where today begins what you might call a "series within a series"; we continue through the Book of Ephesians verse-by-verse, and at the same time, we begin a series now of six consecutive paragraphs within the Book of Ephesians that all teach us how to live in relationships with other people.

There is a keynote for these six paragraphs. For everything from 5:22 through 6:9, the keynote is in Verse 21, where we left off last time: "and being subject to one another..." (LSB). The theme-word is "being subject"—or, "being submissive"—"to one another." They key word in Greek—a catchy little thing: *hupotassomenoi*. You who are studying Greek, this is one of those "paragons of participle-ism" that we will be teaching you about; it is a part of speech that lets us be *very, very* clear. It means "be subject"—or, as the participial form would make it, as it is in the Legacy Standard Bible: "being subject to one another."

And notice: this applies to "one another" *universally* in the Body of Christ. Verse 21 is the end of that sentence that starts at Verse 18 with the command: "Do not get drunk with wine...but be filled with the" Holy "Spirit"; and then, there's a series of five participles that describe what Spirit-filled people are like; and the last one is that they are *always* "being subject to one another."

This aspect of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit applies to *every* relationship you have with others, *especially* those in the Body of Christ. In our previous passage, we saw how this is the fifth of those five descriptions of what being filled with the Spirit is like when it comes to the collective gatherings and ministries of the Body of Christ.

"Being subject to one another" means *voluntarily* ordering your life under those around you, so as to be God's instrument to meet the needs of other people. Listen to the same thought, stated in slightly different terminology, from the pen of the same Apostle, written from the same jail cell during his [first] Roman imprisonment; we have this over in Philippians Chapter 2, Verses 3 and 4—you probably know this by heart: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another"—there's that phrase again—"as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (NASB-1977).

If you are under the control of the Holy Spirit, you will be acting like...well, the Holy Spirit, who is God (cf. Acts 5:3-4). The other Person of the Godhead, Jesus (Col. 2:9), famously described His own example in Matthew 20:28—"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted). And He said that *in distinction* to His previous words: "You know" how the "Gentiles" *love* to "lord it over" each other (vs. 25)—well, no; *you* should be each other's "servant" (vs. 26).

So in this section of Ephesians, it tells us how to order our lives according to the power and the design of the Holy Spirit, to maximize every relationship. Those paragraphs we are going to see deal with wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves, and masters—as representative relationships of all that we have in relationship to each other.

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These next six sections will, each one, deal with a select group of people. It might be tempting for you to now be whipping out your calendar and deciding which Sundays are for you, and which Sundays are to be skipped—*don't do that!* You may think that this one is not for you, unless you are a wife; you may think next Sunday is not for you, because you are not a husband. But, not so! There are specific *applications* for these select categories of people, but there are *universal* principles about being a Spirit-led member of the Body of Christ in *each* of these passages; and you need to apply it all for your edification.

You might be a single parent, but don't tune out on the husbands and wives part. Even if your life has been devastated by the destruction of a marriage, learn all you can; because, as a single parent, you have one of the most difficult and highest callings on Earth. You may have lost a spouse to death—*stick around!* We love you! We need you! And you are part of all of our relationships. You might be in the never-yet-married category. You might be at the stage of giving up on "yet," but there is no time like the present to figure out: this is God's design; this is the right kind of person to be, should He *ever* bring me into a marriage relationship. These things are *always* required of *all of us*, to live under the control of the Holy Spirit.

If you *are* married, I guarantee you will glean something from these messages that will make your marriage stronger—Lord willing, refresh your joy in that relationship. If you cannot learn *anything* fresh to apply, we need to check your spiritual vital signs, because this is God's Word—"living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword" and *penetrating* to our "soul" and our "spirit" (Heb. 4:12). Your spouse may be living with a fossil, but I believe in resurrection! Hang in there! Apply these things.

In the providence of God, while I was away last Sunday you heard an excellent exposition of Philippians 3:12-16, and the points that Scott Basolo extracted from that passage, it struck me, fit *perfectly* with these instructions for *all* of our relationships! As he put it: Here is what to "press on" toward, here is what to reach up for—toward greater holiness. This is what we need to be constantly striving forward for in demonstrating Christlikeness.

My friends, you understand: You grew up and you saw Mom and Dad married; you saw people married; you realized most people get married; "Someday *I'll* be married"—and then you spotted one that was a standout, and eventually things developed, and you fell in love; and you think, "I'm going to get married, and we will live happily ever after." Do you understand: There *is* happiness in marriage; there is no other human relationship *like* it, and I am not against you being happy in your marriage—but, your marriage is not primarily for your happiness, it is primarily for your *holiness*; and God paired you up with somebody *specifically scripted* in His providential plan for *you* to grow to be more like your Savior. *Much more* for your holiness.

Alright, the first group: This is God's Word to "Spirit-Led Wives"; it is Chapter 5, Verses 22 through 24. It's pretty easy to outline: There is a Command at the beginning of Verse 22; The Motive, at the end of Verse 22; The Reason, in Verse 23; and The Pattern, in Verse 24.

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So, let's dive in: Ephesians 5:22—"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord." Or, more accurately, "*being* subject to your own husbands."

The "wives" are the ones specifically addressed here. It is probably significant to notice that mentioning "wives" first was probably unexpected in that culture, in light of their fondness for male domination; womanhood was *not* what we think of it in our society, by any stretch of the imagination. The reason for mentioning wives first is probably, on the one hand, that submission is the basic role for wives, and submission is what is the evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit, that we just saw in Verse 21. It may also be that Paul *intentionally* wanted to do things in a different order than the society, so that he would make God's design transcend societal expectations.

Now, it's printed here in the New American Standard as a command: "be subject"—and I have suggested that it is better translated, as the Legacy Standard Bible does: "*being* subject." But, you know what? That word is not in this verse—*not at all*, not in *any* form, not even a *little bit* of it. It is *implied* based on Verse 21 that came before it, and Verse 24 that we are going to see in a couple of minutes. The most literal translation of Verses 21 and 22 would be: "and being subject to one another in the fear of Christ; wives to your own husbands."

It is God's design that in every aspect of society, in every relationship between people, that there be two roles fulfilled—and they complement each other. Someone will be in authority, or leadership; and someone will submit to authority. Those overlap, there are gradations, it is different in every situation; but those principles are *always* present.

Government "authorities" are "established by God" (Rom. 13:1), they are to us as a gift (vs. 4), and citizens submit to government (vs. 5). Even if it is a *bad* government, it is better than total anarchy! Husbands are to provide leadership in their home; wives are to "be being subject to their own husbands." "Parents" are responsible to lead "children" and "children" submit to "parents" (Eph. 6:1). Employers are responsible for leadership and direction; employees submit to employers (6:5). "Elders" are responsible before God for the oversight and the direction and the shepherding of the congregation (Acts 20:28); the congregation submits to the elders (Heb. 13:17).

That is *God's design*! It is His design for order, for productivity, and for righteousness.

And so, the first group addressed here is the group that is in the role of "being subject" in the marriage relationship. One of my favorite Bible commentators, William Hendriksen—now with the Lord—he made a great observation entering this section of Ephesians; he said: "In His kindness toward womanhood, the Lord—fully realizing that within the family, much of the care of the children will rest on the wife—has been pleased not to overburden her. Hence, He placed ultimate responsibility with respect to the household upon the shoulders of the husband."

That's kind of anti-American! Hendriksen was Dutch, but he understood it anyway. A lot of people think, "Mom takes care of everything at home; I just go out and bring home a check!" Wrong! *Dead* wrong! *Totally* wrong! *Absolutely* missing God's priority!

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"Wives, be being subject to your own husbands." Now, would you notice how specific that is?—"your *own* husbands." It says specifically: "the husband that belongs to you"—your own unique husband. As a matter of fact, the word "own" is the word from which we get a couple of English words. The Greek word is *idios*; the words are "idiom" and—yeah, you guessed it: "idiot"; I'll come back to that. It means: "one that is totally his own unique identity."

An "idiom" is something that is unique to a particular language, and may not fit the literal definition of things. We had a chapel speaker in Seminary one time who had, just the day before, arrived in America from Korea; it was the first time he had ever been out of his home country. He had learned impeccable English in Korea, but he was explaining that the plane was a little late getting in, and his host said, "I wanted to take you to dinner; we don't really have time, but there's a great place we can stop off, and I'll treat you to your first hot dog." And the guy said, "I was afraid he would feed me a warm puppy!" Well, what does "hot dog" mean, if you take it literally? Well, that's an "idiom."

And you know, before it gained its very demeaning connotation, the word "idiot" was an accurate description of a person who is "totally unto himself" or "totally unto herself"—completely different and distinct and unique from all the others. Now, I will refrain from connecting the root of the English word "idiot" with anything to do with "your own husband"—that's up to you; if you want to go there and have that discussion this afternoon, go for it!

But it says "wives" are to submit, not to *every* man—just to "*their own* husbands." Think of it this way: "your idiomatic husband." The J. B. Phillips translation of this verse says: "You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the Lord"—it is a matter of adaptation and arranging and matching things up, as they need to be.

This is *not* saying: *all women* should submit to *all men* in *all things*. And it does not teach *anything* resembling male superiority. It's just that in the marriage relationship, the husband is the one ultimately responsible to God for decisions, for godliness, for direction; and the woman occupies a role of responding and adapting to that leadership, so that when the two come together, that *new thing* is more than the two individuals could have been by themselves. That is God's plan. It's like two pillars that hold up a structure. Both authority and submission have to be *properly* placed, or they both crumble and bring down the building with them.

Now, remember: the umbrella command here is: "Be filled with the Spirit." *One* of the *many* evidences of being led by the Holy Spirit is to be in submission to your "own husband," as we are *all* in submission to "one another."

And remember: this word means "voluntarily arranging yourself under the leadership of another." Submission is *voluntary* on the part of the one who submits. Submission is *voluntary* in marriage. There is a difference between "voluntary" and "optional"; it means it needs to be your choice, but it doesn't mean you have a choice to do it or not to do it. This is God's design.

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So-called "submission" which is *enforced* by the one in authority—that's called *slavery*; and in the context of marriage, it falls into the category that we now call "abuse."

"An excellent wife, who can find?"—Did you read what I wrote on our anniversary? "Me! *I did!*"—"Her worth is far above jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:10-12). That's submission as it is *meant* to be lived out.

The Command is: "being subject to your own husbands."

Now: The Motive, at the end of Verse 22—"as to the Lord." "As to the Lord" reveals the motive for *all* aspects of Christian submission (cf. Col. 3:17), *including* what we saw in Verse 21: we are *all* "being subject to one another" as unto the Lord.

The *misinterpretation* of this phrase is to turn it into saying you have to submit to your husband *exactly the same way* you submit to your Lord. Well, wives...in case you haven't noticed it yet: there's a *big* difference between your husband and Jesus Christ, and you have to live with that.

To "Christ," we are all "slaves" (Eph. 6:6). He *bought* us from our bondage to sin to set us free (Rev. 5:9), to now be "slaves" to "righteousness" (Rom. 6:18); and we *are* His "slaves"—and yet, we are His "friends" (Jn. 15:15). It is never said of the relationship of a wife to a husband that it's "master" and "slave"—quite different than that.

This phrase means you should regard your submission to your husband as obedience rendered to Christ. It is worshipping Christ to respond properly to your very own idiomatic husband. You adapt yourself to him because of your love for the Lord, who brought you into this relationship; and your trust in the Lord, that He will order your steps within your marriage. Same idea as Verse 21: Submit to one another as Christians out of reverence for Christ.

The Command is: "be being subject to your own husband."

The Motive: "as to the Lord."

The Reason: Well, this is God's design. Look at Verse 23—"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body."

The Reason for submitting is that this is the order of creation as God designed it, for our good! A body without a head? Doesn't get much done. A head without a body might have a lot of ideas, and none of them work. But a coordinated head and body where both function properly? That produces beauty, productivity, and grace. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:17-18)

The original plan of God for marriage is described in Genesis Chapter 2, Verses 18 through 25. The woman was created to be the perfect "helper" for the man.

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There's an old Hebrew parable that says that woman was not taken from the head of man, so that she would not be his superior; nor was she taken from the foot of man, so that she would not be his inferior; she was taken from the *side*, so that she might be his companion. Oh, and by the way: God put him to sleep, so he had no clue what was going on until he woke up, and found: "Wow! *This is the one for me!*"

Now, a few comments about that. First of all: Notice that the context of this statement about headship is limited to marriage. This is *not* speaking to single women. It is not addressing the role of "woman" in relationship to "man"—or "womankind" in relationship to "mankind"—in society, in general. The Bible requires male headship, or leadership, clearly in two contexts: in marriage and in the church. There are people who love to destroy and attack both of those, but that is God's design. To force the principle to other contexts is to go beyond what Scripture teaches us to do.

Another comment: Headship *does not mean* superiority. Think about the other relationships we are about to see there: "Servants" are not inferior to "masters"! "Children" are not inferior to "parents"! Well, "wives" are not inferior to "husbands." But in relationships, there is a necessary order that requires both leadership *and* submission—or, "followership," if I can create that word. Each party in a relationship must occupy one role or the other.

Third thing. This is to husbands; we'll just give you a little snippet of what you might get next week: Being a "head" does *not* mean being a "ruler." It means here: being a "savior"—a "head" like "Christ," who sacrificed Himself to save people like us, who did not deserve it at all (1 Pet. 3:18a; cf. Is. 53:10; Jn. 10:18). The "head... as Christ also is the head of the church" is the one who gives himself up for someone else's benefit (vs. 25).

Last Sunday, doing that wedding that I have been waiting for, for so long, I looked my own son in the eye, and I said, "You lived with me for a long time. You know that I believe this stuff, and you understand: Being the head doesn't make you smarter, but it makes you more responsible. Take the responsibility."

Husbands, your wife needs your care, your guidance, your concern, your love, your example of godliness and service to the Lord. *That* is what she is called to submit to—not to your *dictatorship*! Listen to her. Seek her opinions. Understand her feelings. Yeah, I get it—that's impossible! But, spend the rest of your life trying to get as close as you can, right? We all know "I'm fine" *does not mean* "I'm fine"! That's an *idiom*, where the words mean something totally different! *Dig!* God gave *her* to *you* for *your* godliness! Take advantage of it. *Use* that relationship for His glory. She is the "helper" that God gave to *you*, knowing what you need better than you knew yourself, when you thought you chose her. You must do what is best for her, and what is best for your family.

The Command: Be submissive.

The Motive: "as to the Lord."

The Reason: Because it is the order of creation.

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Then, there's The Pattern: Verse 24—"But as the church is subject to Christ..." There's the word occurring again. As the church voluntarily arranges itself under the headship of Jesus, "so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything." We give ourselves to Christ voluntarily, wholeheartedly, sincerely, enthusiastically, unwaveringly—the same should be true for wives.

Now, there's that little phrase there: "in everything"—another use of "in everything," kind of like in Verse 20, that causes some people to leap to some wrong conclusions. Let me apply two sound principles of Bible interpretation that will help us understand this properly, according to its original context.

We will sort it out more as we look at the leadership of husbands, but one is the consistency of Scripture. We know that no passage of Scripture contradicts any other passage of Scripture because God cannot contradict Himself (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13), and this is all His Word (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:2). God will *never* put you in a position in which it is His will for you to *sin*! So obviously, "in everything" should be taken much more in connection with "as to the Lord" than *exactly* and *totally* everything.

You cannot submit to your husband if he tells you to lie. You would be a terrible "helper" sent from God, if you aided and abetted your husband in breaking God's laws, or if you did it for him (e.g., Gen. 12:11-13; 20:2, 5; Acts 5:1-10). If he asks you to swap mates for a night, if he wants you to put your "okay" on him spending a weekend with his secretary, or if he wants you to get drunk with him, or use illegal drugs—you decline, you humbly tell him the truth, you "speak truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), you confront his rebellion against God, and you pray that he will repent (cf. 2 Tim. 2:25).

You do not join your husband in sin, and you do not excuse helping him to sin by claiming you are being obedient to God in your submission. There comes the time that you may have to say what Peter and his friends told the High Priest and his Council in Acts 5:29: "We must obey God rather than men." You might have to say: "You know, I love you, I appreciate you, I'm devoted to you, I'm not going anywhere—but I am not disobeying my Lord for you. Please, change. Come back."

There is also the principle of context that tells you that understanding "in everything" has to be with regard to the marriage. Your husband is not your lord; but with the exception of any direct violation of God's moral will, you should be submitting yourself—arranging yourself under him, adapting yourself to him—in the most helpful, loving, Christ-honoring way that you can.

Another thing I say in wedding ceremonies that I conduct, derived from Proverbs 31; I say to a wife: "Your lips should be his most faithful counselor—always 'speaking truth in love,' as he does for you." So, *discuss* any issue that needs a decision. If it needs a joint decision, *work on it* with your husband. Give your input. Share your feelings—even if you don't like how he will *react* to your feelings. How is he ever going to deal with them if you don't "speak the truth in love"? Press him to pray with you about the decision. Do the best research you can. Maybe you know something he doesn't. Maybe you *both* have a blind spot, and you can help fill it in.

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Then, if you cannot come to complete agreement, well—accept his decision. He needs your support. He is *accountable to the Lord* for his leadership in your relationship! Remember: God is at work in *his* life, just as much as He is in yours. And also remember that your husband likes to hear "I told you so!" just as much as *you* like to hear it.

I can give you an example from another realm: Our elders and deacons meet together every month. We operate in a similar fashion. When we come to any subject that has been brought up to us, we have to work it through and seek the Lord's will. We have just finished a doctoral-level two-year program in "How do you shepherd a congregation in the realm of Covid—with *totally* contradictory, radical things being foisted upon you?" That wasn't very much fun!

But, you know, when we come to *any* situation, not everyone in the room has the same level of conviction about every subject. It might be *his* responsibility, but not *his*. One *cares* more than the other. One may *know* more about it than the other. So, we share our thoughts. We discuss. We pray. Sometimes we hit the "pause" button and go do more research and more praying, and come back; and we seek like-mindedness.

And we commit ourselves to operating by a principle of unity, unanimity. When we come to the point of making a decision, I don't think any of us pretend everyone has *exactly* the same *feelings* about it. Sometimes it's just: Frankly, I don't *care* which way we do that! It's fine, and it's within the moral will of God. Sometimes I *really do* care. We *do* commit to supporting the decision that the group comes to. We commit to doing whatever we can to make it work. And we commit to encouraging each other and supporting each other along the way. We *never* criticize that decision to other people. We support it. We don't *sabotage* it.

See, the principle works in different relationships; but that is how it needs to be with a husband and a wife. You may not always feel the same about a situation. And guys, there's a *clue* there: What's that saying? "Happy wife, happy life"? Sometimes, on a non-moral issue, that's a great chance to show your wife you think she's pretty terrific, and you want to do what she likes to do. Women, likewise—but arrange yourself around *that guy*.

Submission is not silence, it is not inferiority, it is *certainly* not slavery; it is voluntarily ordering your life so as to meet needs and fulfill God's design for your life—which is to be a "helper" to the man to whom He has called you.

It's not a hard passage to understand.

The Command: Submit yourself "to your own husband."

The Motive: Obedience "to Christ."

The Reason: Well, this is God's order of Creation.

The Pattern: Like "the church" is submissive "to Christ."

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Now, let me say a little bit more about this idea of submission—"being subject to each other."

Submission is the antidote to selfishness. Did you ever think about that? Selfishness is: "I want what I want because I want it because I like it, and you should do it for me!" Submission says: "I want what is best for *you*. I want what is best for *us*, together." Selfish people think first and foremost of themselves, but a Spirit-controlled person *doesn't care* if he or she gets credit, because the goal is to *serve God* and glorify Him, and He is always just; He is going to reward you for doing things right (Heb. 6:10).

Spirit-controlled people do not take personal offenses (1 Cor. 13:5). They are offended by what is an affront to the character of *God* (Ps. 139:19-22). Ever read the beginning of James Chapter 4? What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is it not your own *desires* which wage war in your soul? Submission is the antidote to that.

Submission is also the antidote to overdone individualism. Now, we are all *always* unique individuals; but there is a *difference* between being an individual as a member of a team, and being "individualistic." You don't want to be "individualistic," you want to be who you are, and use that for the glory of God. Every soldier in an army is a unique individual, but what do we do to them when we make them soldiers? We make them wear *uniforms* so that they are very clearly identified as being *unified* toward one collective goal, and they act in submission to the common goal. Not every soldier is smarter than every other soldier. The work toward one common goal (cf. Phil. 1;27).

Use your individual talents to contribute to the good of the whole Body of Christ; use your individual talents to contribute to the good and the health and the holiness of your own home—but don't do it to draw attention to your own individual talents. Do you get the point? Individual—not "individualistic."

Another thing we might say is that submission is also the antidote to being opinionated. Now, look: you have your opinions, and they are *legitimately*...your opinions. And make a distinction: Having opinions and convictions—that's really important. They *have* to be anchored in Scripture, but there are a whole lot of things Scripture doesn't address, and you have your opinions about them. "Mine are right; yours need to be subordinated." Well, that's the wrong attitude, isn't it? (cf. Rom. 14:5) Being *opinionated*—that means being so proud and defensive of your opinions that you want to convert others to your opinions (cf. Prov. 18:2). Submission is the antidote to that.

Being submissive includes understanding the difference between when you have to take a necessary stand for truth, versus taking an *unnecessary* stand for your personal preference, or for your opinion. Never forget Matthew 20:28—"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Men, this is the week of temptation for you. There is a temptation felt acutely by people in positions of authority—like husbands, parents, employers, elected officials, elders. The temptation is to *demand* the proper response to your authority, or to *demand* respect for your position.

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But Spirit-filled people don't operate like that. They lead by instruction, by example, by persuasion based upon the truth from the Scriptures. Spirit-filled leadership points the way, and leads the way down the path.

A husband who expects his wife to bow to his every wish is relationally braindead. No, God gave you *her* for our greater holiness. Anyone who intimidates people into submission is not a spiritual leader; that's just a selfish person trying to fulfill the needs of his own ego, at others' expense.

So, men, resist the temptation. Any man caught using a recording of this sermon to browbeat his wife *will be* the object of a future sermon illustration—*probably* by name, unless I can control the flesh. There is *always* a time for *all of us* to submit.

There is a story told that before the era of GPS, the captain of a huge ship looked out into the night, and he saw lights faintly in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send the message: "Alter your course ten degrees south." Promptly, a return message came: "Alter *your* course ten degrees *north*." The captain was not pleased; he was angry that his command was being ignored, so he sent a second message: "Alter your course ten degrees *south*. *I am the Captain!*" A message came back: "Alter *your* course ten degrees north. I am Seaman Third Class Jones." So the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear that it would strike in Seaman Third Class Jones: "*Alter your course ten degrees south! I am a battleship!*" The reply came: "Alter *your* course ten degrees north. I am a lighthouse." You can stand on your authority, but you better understand the situation. There is a time to submit.

Being submissive is the result of being truthful about yourself. Apart from God's grace, you are hopeless (Eph. 2:12), you are undeserving (Rom. 3:10-19, 23). It is easier to submit when you realize that *all that you are* is by His grace and goodness (1 Cor. 15:10).

To submit means to seek and rejoice in the success of others; it's the *opposite* of calling attention to yourself (Jn. 3:30; 1 Cor. 13:5b).

To be submissive is to compare yourself with Christ, not with other people (Jn. 1:27; cf. Lk. 18:11; 2 Cor. 10:12). You can be big stuff compared to other people, but not compared to Jesus. He is the One to whom you will ultimately answer (2 Cor. 5:10).

To be submissive is to realize that you are part of a unit. We are *all* part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7, 12-13; cf. 1 Pet. 4:10). In the case of wives, the unit is marriage (Mk. 10:8). In Christ, we have mutual dependence; we have to all be working for the same thing, not for individual distinctions (Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2).

Having said that there is something in each passage for everyone, I also have to add an important thought about applying these things. This is for wives, and it is for *wives* to learn and to apply what God has for them (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-6). It is *not* a husband's responsibility to tell his wife how to do it! Ask, talk, listen, pray—just *watch* God bring you two closer and closer! (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7)

Sermon Title: Spirit-Led Wives
Scripture Text: Eph. 5:22-24 (Ephesians #40)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-26-22

Men, when we get to our part, there is going to be plenty for us to do. God took care of the women in three verses, and one of them was really about the men; He has a *whole flock of them* for us! I think we are a little bit slower to catch on.

Take personal responsibility for *your* role, and not your spouse's role (cf. Gal. 6:4-5); that's what you need to do.

And let's pray:

Our Father, how we thank You for bringing so many truly Spirit-led wives into the church family of Heritage Bible Church. Thank You for the great gifts that they bring. Thank You for Your work through them in so many, many ways. We husbands need to thank You every day afresh for that perfect "helper" that You have sent to us. And Father, though we live in such a sin-damaged world with so many fractured relationships, we can never give up the commitment to Your plan, to Your design, to Your ideal. Make us instruments of Your grace to help one another grow more and more like that, as the text says: "as unto Christ," in whose name we pray. Amen.