

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: July 4, 2010

Title: Husbands and Wives – Working Toward the Common Good

Text: Ephesians 5:22-24, 33

Theme: A wife’s love for her husband shows itself in submission and respect.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

Headship and Submission must be placed within the imagery of a health body and an advancing army in order to fully understand what this means in its context. We began our study by noting how a husband’s headship is to be manifested by love. A love that is sacrificial, selfless and singular. When a husband expresses his headship inside of marriage he seeks to protect, purify, provide for and prize his wife.

This is what a husband’s submission to his wife looks like in the context of the marriage covenant. Now we would like to consider that of the wives. Like our initial study I believe we need to place our passage in the larger literary context of Paul’s Letter.

Before jumping into the study let us remind ourselves of what is already true. Remember the “canvass” on which this picture is painted (Eph. 1:1-3:21). What we are looking at is fruit. This is the work the Holy Spirit does in and through His people. This is what the Body of Christ looks like when it is “fleshed” out.

Our premise:

Initially when considering this paragraph there are four significant presuppositions.

- The order is Trinitarian
- The order is worship focused
- The order works **from** position and not **for** position
- The order is **absolute**, not **optional**
 - We run contrary to this to our peril in multiple areas.

The Problem:

1. We exist in a culture where these “fruits” are **not taught** and thus **respected** both **within** and **without** the church.
2. In the **absence** of ontological equality and functional hierarchy there is nothing but **exploitation** and **anarchy**.

We struggle in our marriages and as parents because we believe we are failing . . . and perhaps we are. We are afraid of admitting any difficulty or unhappiness. Often much is left unaddressed of marital infidelity and significant abuse and exploitation until it is perhaps too late. How do we correct this? A primary and initial response to the problems is **TEACH** and **LIVE** the **TRUTH**. If you attempt to become what you already are, you will work from the flesh. This does not negate my responsibility as a husband, father and grandfather to desire this fruit, but I must always work from what is already true and not work to become what I already am.

We must be dominated by who God is, what He does and who we are in Him or we will not

be able to enjoy all that is ours in Him. Unless and until this happens the picture laid before us in Ephesians 5:22 will be discouraging and frustrating.

I began by noting how my intent is to unpack the text. It is not to be unnecessarily abrasive or “pig-headed,” but it is to be honest and open with what sits in front of us and what the implications are for us as a community of faith in ministry expressions. Without further ado, let us begin.

Outline:

- I. For the Married (vv.22-33).
 - A. Instructions for the wife (vv. 22-24)

The fruit of the Spirit as played out in the marriage covenant has lived under negative press for quite some time. Yet the relationship between a wife and her husband is something of beauty. Neither respecting your husband nor loving your wife is negative. Both are seen as the most beautiful expressions one can render toward the other. Both acts by either individual are an invitation to love one another. There is something unique within the marriage covenant. The love a wife shows her husband is very different than the love she will show others. This is equally true of a husband’s love for his wife. There is something uniquely wonderful in all of this. Let us consider the four verses within our text as primary.

1. The exhortation to submit/respect (vv. 22, 33)

No wife is submitting to Christ who is not also submitting to their husband. And no wife is submitting to her husband who does not first submit to their Lord. There is a textual variant. Verse 22 does not have the word “submit,” but it is implied and to be assumed from verse 21. Although Colossians 3:18 does speak directly to this (“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord”.)

Although the word “submit” is not in verse 22, it is in verse 21 and the context of verses 23 and 24 clearly support the idea that a wife is to submit to her husband. Again, **it must be stated how this refers to functional hierarchy, not essence.** A wife’s submission is not an issue of superiority or inferiority, but of function. In the absence of hierarchy, there is only anarchy and chaos.

The word “submit” means “to arrange under, to subordinate; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice.” “The idea is to be under the authority of another. **It is an economical not an ontological idea.**” Notice how this word is used throughout the New Testament.

Jesus submitted to his parents (Luke 2:51). Demons submitted to the authority of the seventy (Luke 10:17, 20). Citizens are to submit to the higher powers (Rom. 13:1, 5; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13). Women in general are to be silent in the churches (1 Cor. 14:34). A day is coming when

everything will be in direct and immediate submission to God (1 Cor. 15:27, 28; Phil. 3:21 [already/not yet – Eph. 1:22]). Within the local church there is a general submission to the overall leadership (1 Cor. 16:16) and to one another (Eph. 5:21). The church is in submission to Christ (Eph. 5:24). Younger women are to be taught by the older women to submit to their husbands (Titus 2:5). The younger, in general, are to be submitting to the older (1 Pet. 5:5). James calls us to submit to God (James 4:7). Servants are to be submitting to their Masters (i.e. employee/employer relationship [Eph. 6:5-9; Titus 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:18]).

Our difficulty is always in considering the negative, yet submission speaks of yielding to another's direction. It is always hoped that the direction to which one submits is the direction they wish to go.

- Consider 1 Timothy 2:9-15.
- Consider the language of Titus 2:5.

There is a significant dearth within the church of older women teaching younger women these principles. A reason might be because our older women do not model these qualities. Let us remember why Paul wrote these things. There was a problem and here is the solution. Mothers need to teach their daughters how to be godly women. When this is absent in the home and in the church the word of God will be dishonored.

One of our working principles at WBC is the relationship a husband and wife have between each other speaks louder to a child than anything a church might do. If this is true, does your child see you love your wife? If this is true, does your child see you respect your husband?

- Consider the language of 1 Peter 3:1-6.

The submission being expressed is without reservation. **Her submission is defined not by her expectations, but by his.** Just as Sara called her husband lord so also are today's wives to call their husbands lord. Does this require for them to say "lord" or is it through their attitude and actions that his position is celebrated? I would suggest it is communicated through their attitude and actions and not simply using the title "lord".

Let us remove from submission the darkness and negativity we assign to it and give it the life and beauty it deserves. All of us are to live lives of overall submission. Without general submission we would have chaos and anarchy. Submission and respect are stunning acts and we are to celebrate and honor them.

2. The explanation (v. 23)

Verse 23 begins with "for". Here it is explanatory. The submission rendered is marked by a continual action or state (Rogers and Rogers [v. 24]). Although the idea would appear counter-cultural submission looks like following another's lead and direction. If my submission to Christ is a beautiful thing, then why is submission to my husband an ugly thing? A wife can strongly disagree with her husband and still show respect.

- Submission presupposes Headship

Notice the inclusive nature. There are no qualifiers. There are no what ifs, or buts, a wife is to submit to her own husband as unto the Lord. Colossians 3:18 provides the one qualifier, “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord”. Thus, I would qualify the submission in the same manner the early church qualified its submission to the secular authority (Acts 4:19, 20). It is better to obey God rather than man. In saying this I believe we too easily dismiss the basic principle.

Wives are to submit to their husbands, not to every man in the community. “By saying ‘to own husband’ the sphere and limitation of the subjection is identified.” **Submission has nothing to do with equality but with function.** Notice, it says “as unto the Lord.” This makes it a spiritual act of worship. This is the manner of her subjection; just as a wife submits to her God so also to her husband.

3. The Example (v. 24)

With verse twenty-four we have a restatement of the command. Verse 24 begins with “but” (**alla**). The **alla** is emphatic not contrastive. ‘Just as the Church is to submit to Christ (**outos kai** [in this manner also]) are the wives to be in submission to their own husbands.

“The words, ‘in everything’ refer to everything in the marriage relation.” (Kenneth Wuest *Word Studies*, on Ephesians 5:24) If ‘in everything’ is defined by the context of the marriage covenant, then might we ask “what are those elements unique to the marriage covenant that do not exist elsewhere”? Let me suggest three.

- Physical intimacy (1 Cor. 7:1-7; Heb. 13:4)
- Domestic economy (Titus 2:4, 5)
- Spiritual formation (1 Cor. 14:35)

I do not believe strong women need to be made weak, but I do believe strong women do require stronger men. Men must lead and women must respect that leadership responsibility. **In the absence of leadership, people will create their own.** What if men do not lead what are the women to do? In the absence of male leadership women will create their own. They will do what they must to survive. But this does not make it desirable. Male leadership is to be encouraged, and when it is raised up women need to yield to that leadership.

Notice how the idea of submission is captured in verse 33. Paul begins with “Nevertheless”. “The word is used for breaking off discussion and emphasizing what is important.” (Rogers and Rogers on v. 33)

Paul uses the verb form of “respect” only here in Ephesians 5:33 and in Colossians 3:22 for “fearing” the Lord. He uses the noun form in Ephesians 5:21 and 6:5. Most commentators try to capture the idea with reverence. Just as the Church looks to Christ so also the wife in her

attitude and action of submission look to her husband. By submitting to her husband a wife is not losing value, she is gaining value. It is only as each looks to the well-being of the other through mutual service does each truly grow.

(Shepherding the Sheep: THE NEXT STEP)

1. Let us both as husbands and wives look to making headship and submission things of beauty.
2. My prayer is that we as married couples would personify the substance through the shadow.
3. Wives are you lovingly submitting to your husbands as to the Lord?
4. What if you are not married; then to whom do you render this respect? I do not believe single ladies are without any functional headship. First and foremost you submit to the Lord. Second, in the context of your home, even if living on your own, your submission is to your earthly father. In the context of the church you render respect to the oversight of Elders.