

Wives, Respect your Husbands - Ephesians 5:22-24

Introduction

Submission is a good thing. Just ask Tim Silvia. Mr. Silvia is a mixed martial arts fighter and on the night of June 14th 2004 he decided he would not submit even though Frank Mir, another mixed martial artist, had him in what is known as an armbar. That's the move where your legs are over the other guy's chest and his arm is pulled up between your legs. All you have to do is arch your back and guess what happens. Yep, the arm breaks. Just like Mr. Silvia's did when he chose not to submit. All it would have taken is a gentle tap on the canvas to relieve the pressure on Mr. Silvia's arm. I'll bet he wishes he had done so. But submission is a dirty word in our John Wayne world. Submission implies that you don't always get what you want. Submission implies that you are not an autonomous being with no accountability. Submission implies that your name is not, John Wayne. But we, brothers and sisters, are not of this world. We belong to another kingdom.

In the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus tells us that the meek will inherit the earth. The merciful will receive mercy. The persecuted are blessed and yes, this Kingdom we belong to is so different, so alien and so upside down from our present world that the King would gladly submit His will to that of His Father and be brutally murdered for His enemies, in order that they might be made citizens in His Kingdom.

Submission is a dirty word in our present world but in the Kingdom of God submission is something to strive for and find joy in. In doing so you are much like your King. For the King was the most submissive of all. And hey, even if those in authority over us take our lives...it would only serve to usher us out of this world for good and into his presence forever.

With that in mind let's pray and then we'll look at submission in our text today and see what our great and mighty King has for us...

Context

Paul has just been dealing with walking in wisdom as opposed to foolishness in verses fifteen through twenty. That section ends with fellow believers speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. He wraps it up with this in verse twenty-one, "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ". Paul expects all Christians to submit to one another out of respect for Christ. No one sitting under Paul's teaching or any teaching from the Word of God is able to escape submission. He makes that clear as he gets ready to narrow the scope of submission down to a particular subset of people. So he ends with a nice segway into our text today with everyone submitting to

each other.

Look down at your Bible's with me at verse twenty-two of chapter five to see our command for today. This is what God's word says,

Command v.22

22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

The first thing we should notice from the verse is that Paul is addressing a specific group of people here. He is addressing the wives. This distinction is more important than you might think. As we go along in our text this morning we will see why this is so.

Next, God commands the wives to submit to their own husbands. See in our world today there are a lot of men who believe women should be submissive to them as a general rule. Look how much of the world treats women. Take a good look at how political leaders all over the world use the women around them. They are in and out of scandal after scandal. Human trafficking is a huge problem all over the world and here in the US. The world really does believe women should just do what the men tell them and be quiet. But the point is this ladies, you are under no requirement to submit to any man that is not your husband. None. And young ladies in dating relationships may I just say to you that you are under no such obligation to your boyfriend no matter what he may think or desire. You have entered no such covenant relationship with that young man, nor he with you, and you are free to do what you wish as long as you remain obedient to your Father in Heaven and perhaps, depending on your situation, your parents.

So you say, that's great Pastor Michael, but what is this submission to my own husband going to look like in my life? I am so glad you asked! It is going to look like the end of the verse. You are to submit to your husband "**as to the Lord**". Now that does not mean that you now have to treat your husband like he's Jesus. He's clearly not, but what that does mean is that there is a connection between how you are supposed to submit to God and how you submit to your husband.

What it's not.

Let's start with what your submission is not. Your submission to your husband does not mean that you have to do everything he says. Are you surprised? Notice something, we're going to cheat and look down in the text a ways, in chapter six verse one what Paul tells the children they should do. Paul tells them they should obey. They should do what their parents tell them to do, right. We're clear that children have a completely different role in the family than that of the wife. Right guys?! Your wife is not a child and the Bible does not address her as such. She is an heir with you in the grace of life. Wives, your submission is not blind obedience. There may be a time when you should not obey your own husband. What if he asks you to sin? Should you? No, absolutely not, you can submit to Him out of reverence for Christ, being willing to accept the

consequences of disobedience, and still be a God glorifying wife. Submission does not equal obedience.

Your submission to your husband is not that you agree with him either. When you agree with your husband are you in submission? No, you're in agreement. Submission as we will define it today is "the act of yielding to the authority of another person". If you and your husband are in complete agreement on an issue then there is no need for you to yield. You are only in submission when he asks you to do something you do not wish to do and you yield your will to that of his. Does that make sense? You cannot look at your husband and say to him, "I'm submissive to you all the time, it's just in this one thing, I disagree with you". No, now, again, by definition you are being un-submissive. Submission does not equal agreement.

What it is

Submission is doing what you don't want to do because God has commanded you to do so. Who gave you this husband after all? Was it the great cosmic accident of your life that you got hitched up to this guy? No! God gave you this man and you can trust God that your husband is the perfect leader for you at this time. There is no better leader for you in the world. No other man would be better for you than the one you are married to now. Know how I know that, because you are married to him right now! This, being in submission to him, is God's will for your life. If he gets run over by the proverbial Mack truck this afternoon then we can talk, but for now you have what God has given you. Trust Him. He has given you the perfect husband to grow you to be more like Christ. That may be through many trials or that might be through much wedded bliss, but either way, God is using him to make you more like his Son. I promise you that. Submission is yielding your will to the one God has put in authority over you.

Remember just a moment ago I said your submission to your husband and your submission to God are connected. How so, well submitting "as to the Lord" is doing that joyfully without grumbling and complaining. That's how we are to submit to God is it not. Submission is not digging our heels in at every opportunity and fighting for your piece of the perceived pie. It is joyfully, trusting in God for the husband you have and the leadership he provides.

God is gracious to us in so many ways. He could have said to us, "this is the way it and that's all you get". That would have been perfect if he had done it that way, but he is gracious and he goes on to tell you why you should submit to your own husband.

Look down at verse twenty-three and see the cause for your submission, this is what God's word says,

Cause v.23

23 *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.*

Notice how he starts out the verse, “for”. Wives are to submit to their own husbands for, or because, the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church”. Why should you submit to your husband? Because God, all the way back in Genesis set forth what the marriage relationship ought to function like and he restates that very thing here in Ephesians. We are not free to define marriage anyway we like. We are not free to give and take roles in the marriage that we like or dislike. God has defined marriage to be one man and one woman, but he didn’t stop there he went on define the roles they are to carry out in the relationship. God has given that husbands are to fulfill the role of leader in the home and wives are to fulfill the role of helper in the home. Look what it says, there is no other way to see it than that. Wives you are to submit because your husband is your head like Christ is the head of the church. Do we get to grumble and complain, fight and argue, nag and manipulate our way into getting what we want from Christ, our leader. No! No more than you, my dear sister, should be using those means to get your husband to turn his will to yours. Look, you have gifts, abilities and talents that your marriage relationship needs. It’s not as if God is telling you to sit down and be quiet, but when there is disagreement and you have given your side of the answer it is time to submit to the leadership God has put over you. Don’t not say anything, we, husbands, need your wisdom and input, but when the conversation comes to an end...let it end.

And let me make one thing clear here before we move on. I am not saying women are less valuable than men. God’s word does not support that and any husband worth his salt could never support that either. Women are co heirs with Christ and God looks at them as having equal value in Christ. What we are talking about here are roles, not value.

notice the last part of verse twenty three with me for just a moment and we’ll move on. It says, “and is himself it Savior”. Is that saying your husband in your Savior. No. But it is hinting at what this relationship ought to look like to the outside world. Keep that in mind as we move on. We’ll come back to it at the end.

Let’s move on to verse twenty four where we see a comparison that should help you even more as to what your submission should look like. God’s word says this,

Comparison v.24

24 *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Wow! Ladies, do you see it? You have been given a command to submit to your own husbands in v.22. God has shown you the cause, or the why, of your submission in v.23 and now here in verse twenty four he is comparing your submission to the your own husbands to that of the Church to Christ. There is a much bigger picture here than just your life. As in all of the imperatives, or commands we have talked about over these last few months this is not just a horizontal command. This is not just about you and your

husband. This is about the Church. Do you ever pray that you will be a better witness for Christ in this life? Here is your chance! You are not just to submit sometimes. You are not to submit when you feel like it. You are to submit to the leadership God himself has put under in everything. This is what I was talking about earlier. We saw that Christ was the Savior of the body and now he compares your relationship to your own husband to that of the Church to Himself. Your walking as a submissive wife is showing the world the Gospel! When someone sees this, especially in our day and age, they will inevitably ask why you would do such a thing. Why would you yield your will to that of another and you can tell them because I am ever striving to be like my Savior who submitted His will in everything to his heavenly father for his glory and my God. How could I do anything else. I will gladly die to myself just as Jesus did in this relationship and it will shout to the world that you love Jesus more than you love yourself!

Only with a heart that is first in submission to Christ will you submit to your own husband and turn who you are, a servant of Christ, into how you live, in submission to your own husband.

Reflect and Respond

Now in closing I just want to speak to you as one of your Pastors in what I hope is a very practical application to the wonderful truth of a wife's submission. I've come up with three categories and while they might sound amusing at first, that is not my intention, it's just a way for you to see your situation more clearly. The reality is that many of you will fit into one or more of these categories. The categories are these; the good, the bad and the ugly.

The good: Some of you know right now that while submission to your husbands leadership may not always come easy, you are in a good situation. You have a godly husband who strives to lead in the way a servant purchased by God himself would. You know that while he is imperfect, he has your best interest and God's glory in mind when he differs with you and makes decisions that you are not on board with. To you I would say this, Thank God for him. Make it know in the heavens that you are thankful to God for the situation he has put you in and the man he has put over you. Give to him your time, talents, that he may not have. Then take the time that you have away from turmoil and hardship to teach other wives how to love Christ and submit to the leadership of their own husbands. Make much of Christ and show the gospel to those around you as they watch a relationship that looks like Christ and the church.

The bad: Some of you are married to believers that don't quite get it yet and it's not just you who sees it. Be submissive to whatever leadership is there. When you see any small glimpse of the godly leader you long for him to be, encourage it. Don't compare him to other men. I realize it's easy to live in this community and see others who are living out the Gospel in their marriage and think, "why can't you just be like so and so?" Resist that temptation and when you are tempted pray. Pray that you will be the kind of wife God would have you to be and pray that he will grow into the kind of godly husband God would have him to be. And above all, DO NOT lose hope. Do you hear me wives?

You do not follow God of hopelessness and as long as your husband is breathing there is a chance that God is on the verge of something big in his life. Even if he never changes, you can be a Godly wife that please God in her submission her husband. You can. By God's grace you can.

Some of you have an unbelieving husband that is nonetheless a good moral man. He protects, provides for and does he moral best to lead your family. He loves you as far as he knows how. To you I say, be thankful for him and be Christ to him. Be Christ to that man in your everyday love for him and for God. Show him in no uncertain terms what it would be like to be married to Christ. Perhaps in your patient kindness in love God will be pleased to save him.

The ugly: Some of you are in heartbreaking situations that can only be described as ugly. Some of you made it here to church this morning only by God's grace and determination. Your husband is no example of Christ to you and he is unaware of, if not against, God's will for his life and yours. I want you to know today that the Lord of the Universe loves you and so do I. So do your Pastor's here at the Chapel. You are of immeasurable value because Christ has made you so. The Bible speaks directly to you in these verses. You will be given that grace to submit by God himself. He always gives his daughters what they need to obey his commands. The Bible speaks to you other places as well. God tells us in Romans to love our enemies. I know that sounds harsh to think that your husband may be your enemy, but in many circumstances that is the case. Love him. Love him in anyway you can expecting nothing in return - knowing that your reward is not here on earth, but in Heaven. All that and one caution, if you are being physically abused or you feel that your life is in danger, please talk to someone - a Pastor, a counselor, or the authorities God has given us to go to. Submission and love does not equal abuse. God does not expect you to endure that sort of treatment.