

## Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5

**“17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.”**

# **"Importance of Husbands & Wives"**

The Apostle Paul has written to the Ephesians about the glories of the salvation that God has provided for us through His Son Jesus which he summarized in chapter two beginning at verse 4: **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

Much of chapters 3 & 4 focused on the glory and importance of the Church which we will return to next week. But now we are in the middle of learning about the works we were created in Christ Jesus to walk in, or as we studied here in chapter five, how to walk as children of light.

- For these good works we have instructions for men & women, husbands and wives, children and parents as well as workers and masters.

As we study all of these relationships, we are keeping in mind two important principles ... First, the Apostle's command that we are to always be **“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”**

We are not looking to establish pecking orders or power structures, but rather to see the glory of these relationships as they relate to Jesus, and yes, that is the only way we can be the light we are called to be in a dark world.

And second, we are to remember and understand where all of these relationships originate:

All made very good in the beginning and all tainted by the curse of sin brought on by our first father Adam.

There can be no real discussion of wives & husbands or any of these relationships if we do not know, understand and believe what God reveals to us about their origin, which of course is found in the Book of Beginnings: Genesis.

So, as we considered men & women last week we talked about the proper focus of each and I leaned heavily on a piece by Pastor Bill Smith who talked about the importance of our name.

**My given name is John! But life gave me other names as well: I am a man, I was a boy, I am a husband, I am a father, a grandfather and even a great grandfather, so now I also have to own being an old man as well.**

- **I could go through my various vocations, but that would take far too much time!**

**Each of us should come to see similar roles in our lives. Our little ones know only of their childhood while the older folks here have a long list like mine. We also stressed how we all go from childhood, to adulthood and then to old age, Lord willing seeking His wisdom and guidance through it all.**

**Now I pointed out last week that the Bible affirms that we are all men & women which does not sit well in our modern age... Because as they will tell you they follow the “science.”**

**But now we move on to the proper role of men and women in marriage which will get us into even more trouble! However, when we study the Book of Beginnings, [given to us by the One Who established all the Laws of Science!] we discover that marriage is God’s plan for men & women!**

**Where they not only become one flesh, in a relationship that reflects the glory of our Triune God, but also to be fruitful and multiply because the Lord wants to fill the earth with righteous people!**

**We also considered how the Fall of Adam has marred all aspects of this plan including marriage. As I said last week, IF we lived in a perfect world we would not need the Bible’s instructions.**

**So if God puts so much worth on marriage, why does the world hate it so much. And no, hate is not too strong. Pastor Albert Mohler reminded us of this in a piece he wrote this week: “we need to recognize that when the modern age sets itself against marriage, it sets itself against civilization. [Marriage provides] the very possibility of a healthy and productive, flourishing civilization. And [their opposition] is therefore an injury not only to the civilization writ-large, but to every single member of that civilization.”**

**I mentioned last week that the Bible and the Christian faith are often attacked as hating women, but we saw that not only does the Bible respect women, but it was the advance of Christian civilization that has given women the respect and honor they deserve. One of the common attacks relates to marriage when women are expected to use their husbands name after marriage and give it to the children.**

**Pastor Mohler went on to explain why that is important for society: “One of the chief responsibilities of any civilization is to create a context in which men have to take financial and other responsibility for their own offspring. One of the ways in society and in human history where that has been done is by making certain that fathers give their surname to their children in order to make clear he is responsible for them.”**

- **Having responsible men is a good thing for any nation, and I would also add in passing that no-fault divorce and abortion-on-demand are two other major ways that men escape their responsibilities today.”**

**With that in mind we should see why the normal pattern of life is for men & women to become husbands and wives and so Paul has instructions for each.**

**They relate to what we saw last week about how male and female are to be naturally seen in both the creational order and the covenantal order. This of course is even more important and necessary in our fallen world.**

**When discipling men we focus on strength, leadership, protection and being a good & loving provider.**

**When discipling women we focus on beauty, nurturing, mothering and being a maker of loving homes.**

I mentioned last week the thousands of books written about men & women, and now we can add thousands more when it come to husbands and wives along with marriage itself. So that helps us understand why the Apostle gives simple commands rather than going into all the possible details.

Learning those is part of how we grow and mature in the Christian life, never forgetting the first principles. So here Paul says that wives are to submit, and husbands are to love.

The easy way to see this, and sometimes the important way to see it, is in light of the Fall where after Adam's rebellion women desire to rule and men would rather party than take responsibility!

[does that sound like our modern age?]

However, Ephesians is written to Christians and so we must also see these commands in light of those good works we are to walk in! Remember, how we discussed the reversed order that the Apostle uses?

- He does not start with the head, but rather with the wife to remind us that we are always to be submitting one to another.

But we must also see that these commands are also reflected in the natural order of Creation. We saw the example of this briefly a few weeks ago when we considered how Jesus submitted to His Father in the Garden saying in the end, Your will be done and not mine.

- Submission is far more than just going along with everything you agree with and that applies to all these relationships!

So where does a girl or young women turn to for wisdom when it comes to being a good wife? As always, the Book of Proverbs is a great place to start. Proverbs does what I am arguing the Apostle Paul does when it comes to these relationships. Wisdom shows us the proper goals, but also warns us about the pitfall in a fallen world.

- Proverbs encourages women to be like a virtuous wife with a focus on beauty, nurturing, mothering and being a maker of loving homes.
- Proverbs also encourages men to be like Kings, with the focus on strength, leadership, protection and being a good & loving provider.

In contrast Proverbs warns men NOT to be fools, or worse than that proud! Women are warned to not be contentious or a destroyer of their own homes.

The reason we suggest regular study of Proverbs is because there is a lifetime of study required to be the men and women, wives and husbands that God wants us to be...

- Those walking in the good works we were created in Christ Jesus to walk in!

As a small example of this and to help us understand the commands that Paul gives to wives & husbands here, let me turn to the portion in chapter 31 that presents The Virtuous Wife:

It begins in verse 10 where the King asks, "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies."

Quite a contrast with the "loud & rebellious" woman found back in chapter seven whose "house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death." Seems like a pretty easy choice, but unless we are training our boys and young men in the fear and admonition of the Lord, they may well fall prey to the wanton women, who we are told take down strong men.

So turning back to chapter 31, we see how the proper marriage relationship works out...

11 "The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life."

Just as Jesus said that true leaders serve others rather than seeking to be served, the Godly women is always looking out for her husband & family.

And yes, at verse 15 we find that this requires a lot of work: “She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants.

16 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.

17 She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms.”

[Jael needed strong arms to use the hammer & tent peg!]

This could take up an entire sermon, but did you notice what some of her hard work required? She bought a field and used the profits for a vineyard.

- That certainly does not fit the image the world has of the Bible being anti-woman now does it?

And this wisdom was written over 900 years before Jesus was born!

Sadly, it also does not fit how women were treated in far too many Western cultures where they could not own property or plant vineyards...

- But as with each of our lives, cultures are also called to grow and mature over time.

The King continues to speak about the work of her hands and in verse 20 we see that her impact extends beyond her immediate family: “She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.”

- And then we have another “image” of the dowdy submissive wife destroyed in verse 22:

“She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.”

And yet another surprise in verse 23: “Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.”

- Just as Jesus is made known to the world when His Bride, the Church, is obedient to His commands, so the husband of a faithful wife will be a man of influence.

And finally we see that her true beauty does not come from the fine linen and purple at verse 25: “Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.”

Yes, she did have to be a good student of Proverbs to open her mouth with wisdom!

Then we come to this glorious conclusion at verse 27:

“She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: 29 “Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all.” 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.”

- So we can see that there is quite a lot involved in the wife submitting to their husbands in the Lord.
- The husbands get off easy because we are simply told to love our wives as Christ loved the Church, so we just have to be like Jesus!

We don't have a section called the virtuous husband, but we do have a Bible full of examples to follow and learn from. I always suggest Joseph and Nehemiah as good places for men and boys to begin, but there is a whole list of folks in the Hebrews hall of faith that we all can study and learn from.

- However, it is Jesus that is a great example and I want to turn briefly to how He demonstrated the loving leadership we husbands are called to have on the night He was betrayed!

John 13:2 “And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, [began to lecture His followers about what a great leader He had been... Wait, that is not right]

Rather we read that “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”

7 Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” 8 Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” 9 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”

10 Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” 11 For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.” 12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

I have only scratched the surface here and we will continue on next week with seeing how important marriage is in the Bible and to the world.

- For today, I trust this will help us understand just a bit more of what it means to be submitting one to another in the fear of God !

#### **Communion Meditation: Proverbs 9**

“Wisdom has built her house,  
She has hewn out her seven pillars;  
2 She has slaughtered her meat,  
She has mixed her wine,  
She has also furnished her table.  
3 She has sent out her maidens,  
She cries out from the highest places of the city,  
4 “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”  
As for him who lacks understanding,  
she says to him,  
5 “Come, eat of my bread  
And drink of the wine I have mixed.  
6 Forsake foolishness and live,  
And go in the way of understanding.”