

Practical Instruction for Successful Christian Living - Part 2

Text: Ephesians 5 & 6

Wives submit to your husbands

Ephesians 5:22-24

I. Understanding Submission

A. Submission in this context is understood as follows: subjecting myself to another for their well-being, for harmony & getting along, being satisfied with less than what is due me for the betterment of the other. Submission is the opposite of self-assertion; the opposite of an independent spirit. (Wuest)

1/ “submit” - Gk = literally, arrange under” The teaching of submission is important to N.T. theology & practice because it describes the self-giving love, humility, & willingness to die to self that are demanded of all Christians (Gal 5:13) and exemplified by Christ (Phil 2:8)

2/ Such submission is a strong & free act of the will based on real love for Christ and of the other person. In the end, submission is nothing more than a decision about the relative worth of another person, it is a manner of dying & rising again with Christ, a way to love and respect other people.

B. Studying the text:

1/ vs 22

Submission to the husband is placed within the context of the wife’s submission to Christ. Not from the standpoint of comparison but from the standpoint of inclusion: submitting to Christ includes a proper attitude toward ones husband (see again vs 21).

2/ vs 23

The husband is the “head” of the wife: that is, he is responsible for promoting her well-being, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. This does not mean he is responsible for her well-being but the promoting of it. This does not mean the woman has no responsibility to grow in these areas nor does it suggest that the husband is her source in these areas. Rather it places a demand upon the man’s conduct to promote and not hinder the wife’s well-being & growth in these areas.

This verse actually speaks to the man about how he conducts himself in relationship to his wife’s well-being. The word “head” in this context suggests the tender loving, self-sacrificing care & provision of Christ for the Church is to be mirrored in the husband’s relationship with his wife.

3/ vs 24

To this she is to submit in everything.

II. Husbands love your wives

A. Ephesians 5:25-33

1/ Estimates suggest that 1/3 of wives are beaten during the course of their marriage. And studies have shown that 18% of Christian wives report abuse of some sort & about 5% suffer physical abuse.

2/ It is imperative to see that Paul’s admonition to husbands is not to rule, control or dominate, but rather, to love. The Greek verb is agapao and is used exclusively in the N.T. to represent the love of Christ for the Church which caused him to

humble himself, become a servant, and become obedient even to death (Philippians 2:6-8).

3/ To love one's wife in this manner is to "submit" to her (vs 21). To this love Christian husbands are called, and to this love Christian wives are to submit.

B. NOTE: This text has some difficulties that must be recognized.

1/ It assumes a marriage where both partners are serious about Christian discipleship and are eager to model Christ in their lives one to another.

2/ It does not address problems within the marriage:

a/ when one of the partners is not fulfilling his/her part;

b/ when one of the partners is lazy, coercive, angry, controlling, abusive

3/ It does model how the Christian marriage should function in mutual submission.