

1.05.20 ~ **Ephesians 5:21-25**, God-Ordained Relationships: Part One
See **Ephesians 5:21**. Christians are to willfully submit to one another, out of reverence for the Lord who saved us.

This verse is a transition into the larger section (**Ephesians 5:22-6:9**), where we are instructed about relationships between husbands and wives, Christ and His Church, parents and children, and masters and slaves [i.e., employers and employees]. In short, we are to submit to one another, out of reverence for Christ.

All nations, churches, organizations, institutions, agencies, and families, function best with a clear chain of command or line of authority. Those who have the responsibility to lead, do not necessarily receive their authority because they are better than anyone else; but for the most part, it is because they have been hired, appointed, or elected into a position in order to provide oversight and manage for the functionality, and overall productivity, of the unit.

God commands all Christians: husbands as well as wives, parents as well as children, employers as well as employees, to have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus (**Philippians. 2:5-8**) "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

All believers are spiritual equals in every sense and we are to submit to one another out of reverence for and submission to the Lord, who loved us enough to die for us, that we might receive forgiveness for sins and adoption into God's eternal family. We are to express our love for one another as members of one body, brothers and sisters in Christ, encouraging one another to know, to exemplify, and to proclaim God's Word, as we humbly serve the Lord together.

Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Mutual submission is what God wants in all of our relationships, and we are to do this, out of reverence for Christ. As Christians, we are to show mutual respect and love toward one another, realizing that God has ordained distinct functions and roles for His people, but we all have the very same value and worth before God.

The church's understanding and application of God's Word is meant to provide protection, power, and purpose for Christ's church, as we obediently live out God's precepts and principles in a world that rejects the very existence of God.

Much of today's church has succumbed to the influence of the godless world around us, e.g., self-indulgence, self-importance, immorality, impurity, greed, and false teaching.

As we enter 2020, it would appear that God's standards are out-of-date to most of the world, perhaps irrelevant, and even offensive to a majority of people. Sadly, this has also become true among many of those who call themselves Christians.

God calls us to live differently than those who do not belong to him. God's design for marriage and family is in sharp contrast to that being practiced and validated in the world around us, especially in reference to how wives and husbands, and parents and children, are to function in their god-ordained roles. God makes clear distinctions in the matter of roles and functions for husbands and wives (see **Ephesians 5:22-25a**).

Wives are to respectfully submit to their husband's leadership; and husbands are to lead their wives by loving them sacrificially, as Christ loves the church.

God says wives are to be *subject* to [this is a military term, literally meaning, to *align or arrange in rank under*] their own husbands, i.e., wives are to willfully *submit* to their husband's leadership, because God has ordained it so.

This does not mean, nor is it taught anywhere in Scripture, that a wife is to *obey* her husband, as children are to obey their parents, and slaves are to obey their masters. A husband is not to treat his wife as a servant or a child; she is a co-heir of salvation and co-equal before God; but God has placed the responsibility on the husband to provide for, protect, and even suffer for his wife's sake, as did Christ for His church.

A husband is not superior to a wife, no more than a man is superior to a woman, simply because he is a man. In fact, many times a wife may be more qualified and skilled at decision making and leadership than her husband (but *this can, and often does, create struggles in a marriage*).

You see, God has ordained that a husband is to lead and a wife is to follow, much like a man and a woman dancing, if they both are trying to lead, they will most likely trip over one another's feet; it is clearly best for only one to lead.

God has designed every person for a unique role in the body of Christ, and these are to be carried out by way of mutual respect, submission, and love.

God's directives for leading and following are entirely functional and they are ordained by God (see **Genesis 3:8-19**). There was a consequence given for Adam and Eve's failure to obey God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (**Genesis 2:16-17**).

The word translated *desire* (**Genesis 3:16**) does not imply sexual, emotional or psychological desire. Eve already possessed those, for she was Adam's specially created "*helper suitable for him*" (cf. **Genesis 2:18**).

The *desire* expressed here is the same found in the next chapter (**Genesis 4:7**) where the same word is used [*meaning - to compel, urge or seek control over*]. God warned Cain that sin wanted to control him; God commanded Cain not to give in to or allow sin to control him.

The context of both **Genesis 3:16; 4:7** is after Adam sinned. In **Genesis 3:16** the curse on Eve implies that woman's desire would, from that time on, be to usurp her husband's leadership, to not align herself under his headship. Man, on the other hand, would fight against a woman's desire to take control, for it says he will rule over her.

Adam and Eve were told in **Genesis 1:26, 28**, to rule over the animals (before sin had entered), a different Hebrew word is used here for the concept of rule, it means to care for something that belongs to someone else, like a steward of what belongs to God.

Sin brought about a change in the concept of ruling, i.e., from genuine stewardship, oversight and management, it digressed to a form of authoritarian domination; however, this was not part of God's original plan for man's role as leader and woman's role as helpmate, but instead, this was the consequence of sin entering creation.

The act of honoring and fulfilling the roles that God intended for husbands and wives, was distorted at the point that sin entered creation, and the battle of the sexes began: radical feminism and male chauvinism entered creation as a consequence to sin's curse.

The original closeness and perfect unity between Adam and Eve is expressed in **Genesis 2:19-24**. By chapter 3 that unity and innocence is gone; Adam and Eve are at odds with God and with each other, for sin has entered the world.

Man was created first, and God placed man in the role of leader, first in the family, later on in society, and finally, in the church. **1Timothy 2:11-12** says, "A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."

Paul then reaches all the way back to original creation to show that women weren't intended to serve in headship roles over men; the reason being (**1Timothy 2:13-14**), "For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

This is talking about the fact that Eve, circumventing Adam's leadership, fell into the transgression of original sin by listening to and being deceived by the

serpent; and yet, it was through a woman [Mary] that the Savior was born. God designed women to fulfill roles in the home, church and culture that no man can fill, and therefore, she didn't have to carry the stigma of being the one who was deceived in the garden.

Woman was created after man, as his helpmate; and it was she who was deceived when acting independent of the man's leadership. Paul goes on to say (**1Timothy 2:15**), "But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

1Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

1Corinthians 11:7-9, "A man... ..is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."

It is interesting though, that we are told **1Peter 3:7**, "You husbands... ..live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

Peter is speaking of a Christian husband's responsibility to be understanding toward his wife's physical and emotional needs, and a husband is to be actively and genuinely sensitive toward her, "as with someone weaker, since she is a woman."

The truth is, males are generally stronger than females, both physically and emotionally, as multiple studies confirm, but of course there will always be exceptions.

However, when a male or a female faces an emergency and/or a high stress situation (pain or fear > flee or fight), during these events, in 100% of the test subjects (human and animal) the male brain always exhibits increased blood flow which heightens awareness, resolve and response; while the female brain always exhibits decreased blood flow, leading to muddled thinking, confusion, and indecisiveness.

By God's purpose and design, man was made to be the provider, protector, and servant-leader of his family; but western society and culture has pushed hard this past century, in an attempt to blur all male/female distinctions, roles and functions, e.g., unisex clothing, genderless bathrooms, feminine men, masculine women, gender confusion and dysphoria [e.g., Michael Jackson was famous for his sexually and ethnically ambiguous appearance and attributes; by his own words he sought to exemplify both gender and ethnic androgyny, and he became very popular because of it.

Western civilization for the most part has turned its back on God and considers God's Word to be obsolete. Let me assure you that all of mankind will one day acknowledge God's Living Word as absolutely sovereign and eternally authoritative (**Philippians 2:9-11**), "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Christians are to live by God's inerrant and eternal Word, no matter what the corrupt and godless world around us chooses to follow and promote.

The curse of **Genesis 3:16** laid the ground work for the battle of the sexes, and from that time until now women have been trying to usurp man's headship, and men have been trying to rule over women by dominating them. The consequences of such behavior is extremely detrimental to the families, churches, and communities of our society.

1Corinthians 11:11-12, "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God."

In other words we are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, and only then will a wife be able to willingly respect her husband's leadership in the home, and a husband be able to sacrificially love and care for his wife, leading by serving.

This is only possible through a personal relationship with God's Son, the indwelling of God's Spirit, and obedience to God's Word; apart from which, there will be no love, no harmony, no respect, and no mutual submission for one another out of reverence for Christ.

Pastor Mike
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