

**January 12, 2020 ~ Ephesians 5:25-33,
God-Ordained Relationships: Part Two**

As we previously learned from **verse 21**, mutual submission toward one another is what God wants and expects in all of our relationships, whether: husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave. The mutual submission we are to express is out of reverence for God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-24 tells us wives are to align themselves under their husband's leadership, for a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church; therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, wives are to be subject to their husbands in everything.

Read Ephesians 5:25-33...

A husband's love (**verse 25**) for his wife should exemplify Christ's love for His church. Christ gave Himself up for us. He saved us through a purifying love, according to His Word (**verses 26-27**). Husbands are to express that very same selfless, protective, nurturing, and sacrificial love for their wives, as Christ demonstrated toward His church.

Paul gives some strong illustrations and examples concerning the priority and depth of the husband-wife relationship. It becomes clear (**verses 28-30**) that husbands are to think of their wife as their own body. Would a person not feed and care for his own body? Christ feeds and cares for each member of the church, and each one of us, both husbands and wives, are members of Christ's own spiritual body. Likewise, a wife is one with her husband, as the husband is one with her.

In **verse 31**, Paul references back to the Genesis record to prove text his teaching by quoting Genesis 2:24. Let's take a look at **Genesis 2:22-24**, "The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

The word "joined" in **verse 24** has the meaning of being glued together [never to be separated; they have been welded together to become one] through Christ.

The husband wife-relationship is a model of Christ's relationship with His church. This first institution ordained by God was the marriage of a man to a woman, a most holy union, for this exemplifies Christ's relationship with us, His body. No wonder **Hebrews 13:4** says, "Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all" people.

Ephesians 5:32 declares that this is in fact a profound mystery. Paul is expressing the relationship between a man and his wife but it seems to be all mixed with the relationship between Christ and His church.

Christ is the head and the bridegroom of His church. Man is the head and the husband of his wife.

I think what makes this even more profound is the fact that while Christ is the head of His body, His church, and the husband is the head of his wife --both the husband and wife are members of Christ's body and are equal as parts of this universal and spiritual body called the church or the Bride of Christ.

So husbands, you are part the spiritual body known as the Bride of Christ, and therefore you also are to become the wife of Christ at the wedding feast described in **Revelation 19:6-9**.

As we have already studied (**Ephesians 5:22-24**), God has ordained that a wife is to voluntarily align herself in rank under her husband and show respect for his leadership. This respect is conditioned by and expressive of a reverence for Christ (**Ephesians 5:21**).

God has ordained that a husband is to be the loving and self-sacrificing servant leader to his family, as Christ is to the church. It is assumed that the husband will initiate this love for wife, just as Christ did for the church.

Paul doesn't tell the wife to love her husband but to submit to him and respect him. Why is that? The answer is expressed in the Christ-church relationship. Christ loves the church and expressed that love fully when He died for us. The church returns its love for Christ through willful obedience and submission to Him. **1John 4:19**, "We love because He first loved us."

Every individual who responds to the message of salvation, becomes a member of Christ's spiritual body the church. Had God not reached out and initiated His love for us, we would never have been able to submit in obedience to His Lordship.

We submit to Him because He loved us. The connection between a husband and wife's relationship and that relationship of Christ and His church is indeed a profound and a marvelous mystery, unveiled in Christ.

The Christ/church and husband/wife relationships are parallels, as marriage is a typology of being in Christ. One thing is very clear and very true: When God's love is given, accepted, and shared, husbands and wives will submit to one another expressing God's pleasure and will.

Husbands, when you are loving your wife in obedience to God's clear commands to care for, nurture, and protect her, she will find it much easier to willfully submit to your leadership.

Wives, when you are respecting and submitting to your husband's leadership-- he will find it much easier to lovingly care for, nurture, and sacrifice for you.

When God made Eve out of Adam's side and brought her to him, Adam named her and they became one flesh. That original relationship between husband and wife was pure; Adam's headship and Eve's submission were manifested by their mutual love for one another under God's care and provision.

Genesis 1:26-28 makes it clear that they (man and woman/husband and wife) were to rule over creation; to be blessed and multiply. Even though Adam was to

be in leadership and Eve was to be his companion helper, their relationship was so closely knitted together that God's command was given to them jointly.

Marriage was instituted by God for several reasons:

1. (**Genesis 1:28**) To procreate mankind by raising up children, filling the earth.
2. (**Genesis 2:18**) For companionship so that they would not be alone.

The Fall brought a curse on man, woman and marriage (**Genesis 3:16-19**): Woman was cursed with painful childbirth and a desire to usurp her husband's leadership. Man was cursed with difficult toil just to make a living and a desire to dominate his wife.

Marriage was corrupted from the very beginning, before the first child was born; harmonious marriage relationships can never exist apart from mutual reverence for Christ and mutual submission toward one another.

The curse of Genesis brought conflict between husbands and wives. The Cross of Christ brought the cure for resolving that conflict: as man submits to the Lordship of Christ he will be able to serve as the head of his own family not by demanding obedience or ruling harshly over his wife, but by expressing Christlike love toward her: sacrificial, unconditional, unbreakable love.

Jesus didn't sacrifice Himself for the lovely or worthy but for the unlovely and unworthy. A husband's love for His wife is not because she deserves it or is worthy of it.

The love of the world is a conditional love based upon attraction, fulfilled needs, and pleasure. In other words, it is based upon a certain type of appeal that one has for another. As soon as the 'feeling that was appealing' is gone, so is the relationship, in many instances.

God's love for us, Christ's love for the church, is not based upon any type of merit or appeal between the one who loves and the one to whom that love is directed. Thank God that we don't have to stay appealing or attractive to God to receive His sacrificial love for us.

A husband is not commanded to love his wife because of anything that she is or is not. The husband is to love because this is God's will for him. It is a definite plus to be able to love a woman who is kind, beautiful, gentle, fun, and winsome. But even if all those qualities were taken away, the husband would still be just as responsible before the God of Creation to love his wife.

The husband is under a greater obligation to love his wife when she isn't appealing, attractive, or deserving. In fact, the more unlovable and unworthy she becomes the more need she has for the healing and restorative nature of her husband's love. This is exactly the kind of love Christ has for us, even though we are in a condition of abject sinfulness, deserving only the Wrath of God.

A Christian husband is to be generous and gracious as he loves his wife; no matter how nagging, irritating, and contentious she might become.

When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He did it because of His love for them, not because it was pleasant or they deserved it. Jesus expressed His love for them by serving them in this menial way, even though He was Master and Teacher.

Love does whatever needs to be done, whether there is worthiness or not. If a husband loves his wife only when she is pleasing or attractive to him, that husband is not loving as Christ loved the church.

A husband is to give up everything for his wife, including his own life if necessary. He is to put aside his own wants, needs, and opinions if that is what is required to meet her needs. A husband who loves his wife "as Christ loved the church" is more than willing to give up everything for her.

Think about it! If a husband is willing to sacrifice his own life for his wife; he must be willing to make lesser sacrifices for her. If a husband is obeying God concerning this priority command to love his wife, that husband will take time to talk with, listen to, and even share his own thoughts and fears, hopes and desires, with her.

There isn't any place that a man's relationship to God is better tested than in his relationship with his own family, especially his relationship with his wife.

How are we doing husbands? Listen, you are to supply your wife's needs just as Christ does for His church. Husbands are to use tender love and physical affection to provide warmth, comfort, and security to their wives; these responsibilities fall to the husband for his wife, just as they fall on Christ for the church.

A husband and wife is seen by God as one flesh, not two. Marriage is a unit of two people who have been unified and welded together by Christ in such a way that they are no longer two but one.

This sacred relationship between husbands and wives is a typology of the relationship between Christ and His church. Husbands are to sacrificially love their wives and wives are to respect their husband's leadership.

When husbands and wives walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to God's Word, being subject to one to another out of reverence for Christ, they will experience God's pleasure, presence, and power, in a supernatural way, because this brings honor, glory and praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen? Amen!

Pastor Mike
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