

WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT SUBMISSION

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We are in a little mini-series that Paul is writing in the book of Ephesians. And all of his thoughts come after he spent four chapters outlining the gospel, two chapters outlining the church, and finished the previous passage with this verse: **5:21**

Last week we looked at the creation order God created. That's our first distinction. God and creation. Then God created man, then God created woman. First distinction, God and creation. Second distinction, male and female. Inside of our created distinctions is a web of submission. Everyone submits to someone.

What I love about Ephesians 5 and 6 is that it exhaustively covers all the roles you will be in your life. Male, female, husband, father, son, daughter, employee, employer. And what I want us to see specifically in these passages is that Paul always views our roles and responsibilities in one hand, and the gospel in the other. The gospel touches, and the gospel conforms every aspect of our lives. **Pray**

Now before we move on, I want to have us read **5:21** again. What we are going to see in the next three weeks are that masters are called to submit to God, slaves and workers are called to submit to their masters, children are called to submit to their parents, Husbands are to submit to Christ in leadership and service of their family, and wives are called to submit to their husbands.

I give this little disclaimer because I wrestled with this sermon all week, and I wrestled with it out of my weakness. That is because there is probably not a more contested aspect in our culture than that of gender roles and submission.

It's almost as if our generation runs around with a big banner that says on the front: "Be Tolerant" but on the back it says, "Or Else." There is venom, there is hatred, there is hostility towards the ideas of this passage and towards the people who hold the ideas of the passage.

And as I, scared of response, scared of criticism, weak in my flesh looked at how I was to preach these next few weeks God impressed two passages into my mind.

Ps 119:160. God's word is truth, and truth matters. We need truth, we need righteousness, we need God's word.

1 Co 1:18. The word of the gospel, the revelation from God almighty is folly to those who are in unbelief. But to us, to us Christians it is not a neat letter of inspiration, it is not a place of rules in order to subject a people to futility, it is not legalism, or ancient religious text, it is the power of God in salvation.

To argue with any passage of scripture is not to argue with Paul, or Moses, or John, it is to argue with God himself. And so I want to take this wool blanket, which at times can be scratchy at first, and I want to wrap myself in it so that I realize the very things which might cause me to itch and bristle at first are actually there to keep me warm. They are there for my wellbeing.

With that said let us yield our hearts, both men and women to hear the word of the Lord: **Eph 5:22-24**

Now some of you in here may read that passage and agree with everything that is in it. Some of you may read it and be totally turned off by it.

But what I want to do with the remainder of our time here, is look at four ways in which we can see this doctrine of submission in regards to wives as a sweet and God ordained gift. That's not manipulative, this isn't me spinning something, this is me hoping to present to you the word of God.

Point number one is an assumption that I do not want us to forget in the next few weeks: **Submission is Unique,**

yet Normative

Depending upon who you are, where you are, and what role you are in, your submission towards one another will look different, but everybody submits.

Christ himself submitted to the father. **John 6:38**

Paul willingly subjected himself to all people. **1 Cor 9:22.**

No one is a victim of submission. Submission is not an affliction, submission is a path of joy and service for a Christian. Submission is corporate in one sense, yet unique in others. Don't play the victim with submission because it 1.) Paints submission in a negative light, and 2.) refuses to acknowledge God's usage and desire for submission.

That is a normative and universal rule of submission. But the text which we are looking at today is not universal, it is specific.

Eph 5:22

Submission is of a Wife to her Husband

This passage is not about women, it is about wives. Contrary to what culture believes; the Bible is not promoting that all women submit to all men. That is not a Biblical ideal. All women are called to relate uniquely to men as godly women, but they are not called to be in subjection to all men.

Most of you women who are in here are not wives. So as a Christian woman, you are not called to submit to all men. You are not called to submit to your boyfriend, or to your fiancé. Until you are married, you have no right over your boyfriend, and your boyfriend has no right over you.

In this time, you are called to submit though. Because submission is normative, we submit, this is true both to the men in here and to the women. In this moment, Christians in this place are called to submit to God and his word, and to the church and its leaders. I am going to come back to this point a little later. But you women in here, are called to submit to God, submit to the church, and if it so happens that you become a wife one day, then you are to submit to your specific husband.

Wives submit to your husbands. I called my mom today because I love my mom. She is a hard working woman, she is a CPA, she is always volunteering for some board in town, doing a lot of pro-bono work for non-profits. She is strong, business minded, and affluent. And she is my mom.

I asked her to read through this passage and tell me how it made her feel as a woman and as a Christian. She started off by saying, before she saw the role of the husband, which is what we will look at next week she fought it.

Not knowing what the husband's role was in marriage was an issue which caused her to fight against it. And that is one reason why I think this is so fought against today. The husband makes the difference. We have an absolutely mindless and dangerous culture of dating in the states today. Often times we put more thought into what kind of hotpocket we are going to eat than we do into who and why we are dating.

The joy of wives submitting to their husband is found in the worth of the husband. In our culture which elevates jovial, silly, immature behavior out of men, this passage is to be feared by women. Why would we submit to a man who is under submission to no one! A man who doesn't submit to Christ, who doesn't submit to the church, who doesn't lead, who doesn't serve, who doesn't think of the interests of others. That is a life to be feared. Men, be a husband worthy of submission, and women, date mindfully knowing that one day you will have to submit to this man if he is to be your husband.

When you get the husband, you get submission. When my mom saw the role of the husband she said this passage was one that made her feel safe, gave her a peace, and granted her a greater freedom. Freedom. Put that in your pipe and smoke it culture.

Wives, you are called to submit to your husband in service, in care, in love, in humility and in joy. In your time right now, are you seeking to develop those traits. Not everyone will be married, not everyone should be married, but I think most women would want those traits...are you preparing your heart for the potential submission in

marriage by submitting whole heartedly to Christ and to the church?

Submission is Based Off the Gospel

Eph 5:22-24

The saving work of Christ is central both to the work of the Husband and the work of the wife.

Christ came to do the father's will. He submitted himself, he humbled himself and he served the father out of a love which is untouchable in human standards. Here in this text we see Christ taking a position of submission to the father, this is the way in which he became the savior. He submitted to the Father, came to sinful people, died for their sins, and rose again because that was the will of the Father. But we also see Jesus modeling proper headship.

Women submit to their husbands, in the same way the bride of Christ, the church, submits to him. This is again putting a weight on a worthy husband.

Your husband will not be Christ, but your husband should seek to lead you like Christ leads the church. I am a pastor, I love the church, but I love the church because of the relationship it has with Christ. Christ bought the church as his bride, as his beloved.

As the church I do not submit to Christ out of fear and in uncertainty. My submission is never coerced. My submission to Christ is tied to the fact that my ultimate wellbeing and joy comes from submitting joyfully to the life, protection and salvation I get from Jesus.

Again, your husband will not save you. Jesus saves you, but your husband should live in such a way where he is constantly pointing and leading you to the one who did save you. Because Christ is the model of submission, we seek to submit, but because Christ is also the model husband, we see the joy and safety of submitting to someone who takes the responsibility of leadership in all seriousness.

Because the gospel is at the heart of submission, wives should look forward to it because it is the safest place to rest your heart, your head and your worries. A Christian husband who seeks to lead his family through Christ is the sweetest place to submit in marriage. Why? Because submission is modeled after the gospel.

Our culture is increasingly hostile towards submission and it's not because they hate the idea of it. Our culture is hostile toward submission because they are hostile towards the gospel. Are you preparing your heart in such a way where you seek to proclaim the beautiful submission of Christ, and the joyful submission of the church through your marriage? This is a platform for evangelism.

Submission is Worship.

What I love about God is that he is deeply utilitarian. God makes things which work, which have purpose and are effective. But God is also profoundly beautiful. Gender and gender roles are not outside of God's beauty and God's utilitarian design.

Look at **Eph 5:22**

What this is not saying, is submit to your husbands, wives, as you do to the Lord. There are limits to your submission to your husband, your husband is not a functioning savior, he is a pointer to a savior. You do not pray to your husband, you do not worship your husband, your husband doesn't take away sin, he doesn't absorb God's wrath. Your husband is a man.

What Paul is saying here, is that you submit to your own husband, as to the Lord. Your submission, your joy, your service towards your husband is done for the Lord. It is done for Christ, and before Christ.

Let me unpack this a little more. God didn't design wives to submit to their husbands simply because it was economic. God didn't do it simply because it was his idea. God designed women in marriage to act, respond, and live a certain way because he wanted them to worship him through their marriage.

Your submission to your husband is an act of worship towards God. This is true of all submission. Submission glorifies God.

Submission is worship. I've met all sorts of Christian women who do not believe that this passage is still applicable for women. But I've never meant a Christian woman who does not want to worship God.

What they are missing is that this passage is infinitely relevant, because it is directly tied to your worship of Christ. When our actions are bound to the gospel it cannot not be worship filled.

When we look at how the gospel saturates our lives, our lives become acts of worship. Look at **Rom 12:1**. Our lives, all of our lives, are components of worship and God designed us to have unique roles which project the beauty and glory of Christ in unique and wonderful ways.

I don't want to raise a generation of women who submit, I want to raise a generation of women who worship God and submit out a desire for their own good, and God's great glory.

Women, are you mindful of your future. Not all of you will be married, but all of you should strive to be ready to worship in any circumstance. Are you softening your heart to follow God and worship him in whatever station of life you are in? Pray for your heart, pray for the blanket of God's word to fall warmly on your shoulders. Submit to him and his church, and trust that his word is truth.

Men, are you looking for a woman who loves this. Are you looking for a woman who pushes you in your worship of Christ?

Christians: let the gospel shape the whole of your life, and let your life radiate the glory of Christ.