

Understanding Marriage - Reasons for a Wife's Submission

by David Guzik

A wife's submission to her husband is motivated by her obedience to Jesus Christ and is part of the order of creation, with the husband having administrative leadership and authority.

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Scripture: Ephesians 5:22

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Description

In this sermon, Pastor David Guzik discusses the concept of submission in marriage, focusing on the passage in Ephesians chapter 5. He emphasizes that submission is not about one person having power over another, but rather about following the pattern set by God. He explains that God often gives reasons for His commands because He loves us and wants us to understand the purpose behind them. Pastor Guzik also clarifies that the principle of submission applies not only to wives in their relationship with their husbands, but also to the church's relationship with Christ.

Transcript

This morning we're in the fifth part of a series that we're titling Understanding Marriage from Ephesians chapter 5 and in this series we're not endeavoring to say everything that the Bible has to say about marriage but we say a lot because Ephesians chapter 5 is one of the most important and most pivotal passages in the entire Bible dealing with the subject of marriage. The context of the whole passage is life in the spirit and as an element of life in the spirit Paul brought up the aspect of submission and in applying the principle of submission, Paul applies it in three major areas of life. He applies it in the relationship between a husband and wife in marriage.

He applies it to the relationship between parents and children in the home and then he applies the principle of submission in the relationship between employers and employees. Well this morning what we're focusing on is this outworking of the principle of submission as it applies to wives and that's why he brings up wives first when he deals with husbands and wives because the overarching idea in this passage is of submission as a part of living life in the spirit. That's why he says in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 22, wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. God is such a good God and he loves us so much that he does things for us that really aren't necessary but are done just out of the richness of his love for us. For example part of God's great love for us is shown in the way that he gives us reasons for the things he tells us to do.

He doesn't have to do this. The creator doesn't have to tell the creature why he wants him to do certain things. The potter doesn't have to explain himself to the clay.

He has power over it. It's enough just that the potter says to the clay I want you to be like this. But God loves us so much that he often gives us reasons for what he tells us to do.

But there's another reason beyond God's love why he gives us reasons for what he tells us to do. Oftentimes God knows that when we know the reason behind the command we can fulfill the command so much better. We know what not just the thinking of the command itself but why God came to that point and what the outworking of the principle is to be.

See what at one time may have seemed to be sort of an arbitrary way of God saying listen do this because I said to do it. Well suddenly it makes sense when we understand the reasons behind God's commands. Well last week in some depth we took a look at verse 22 where it says wives submit to your own husbands.

And I think we discussed that pretty well and pretty completely. I'd recommend to you the tape from last week if you missed it and knowing the reason behind this command I think can make the command all the more clear. It makes it all the more to the point and to the heart I believe too.

You see when we say wives submit to your own husbands and keep it very vague not really get specific as to what that means and what God intends by that. As long as you keep it very vague you can have a lot of agreement among people because everybody can sort of interpret it for themselves what that actually means. Once you understand the reasons behind God's command for wives to submit to their own husbands it's not so vague anymore and maybe some of the amens kind of stop because you get to the point here.

Well that's what we want to do this morning is get to the point and look at these three reasons why God says wives must submit to their own husbands. Now the first reason really we discussed last week. The first reason is right there in verse 22 where it says wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

You see the first reason for a wife submission to her husband is that it's part of her obedience to Jesus Christ. It's what she does as to the Lord. Now there's a couple of ways that people have misunderstood that phrase as to the Lord.

Sometimes it's typically men who look at it this way. They want to see that phrase as to the Lord as defining the extent of a wife submission. In other words they'd like to say wife as far as you would go in submitting to the Lord.

That's how far you should go in submitting to me. While there's some attractive aspects to that interpretation it's wrong. It's decidedly wrong.

It's just not biblical in no place does the Bible say that we are to give submission to another person in exactly the same way in exactly the same extent that we give submission to God. No when the

government is when we are told I should say about the scriptures to submit to our government we understand that. But if the government tells us to do something that's sinful or goes against the commands of scripture then we don't do it.

It's the same way in marriage. And last week we talked about four exceptions to a wife submission. Number one there's the exception of if the husband asks her to sin.

Well then she's under no obligation to do that. If the Bible says something is sin and the husband says I want you to do this. The wife has every reason in the world to say this is sin.

I'm sorry I can't do it. I love you honey. I don't want to offend you.

But the Bible says that I should obey God rather than man. And so I can't do this because I would be sinning against my God for me to do this. We saw a second category in which a wife need not submit to her husband is when the husband is mentally ill or in diminished capacities in some way.

I mean in that sense obviously the man isn't all there. And in that sense if he were to ask her to tell the wife to do something that's just crazy the wife can use her own discernment. A third area we saw where a wife is accepted from submitting to God is if the husband is physically abusive to the wife.

And nowhere does the Bible say that the wife has to hang around and be a punching bag for her husband. In no way at all. And so in that case clearly the wife isn't called to submit under the blows from the husband's fists or whatever it is he may do to her.

Obviously that's something that the wife doesn't need to submit to. And then finally we notice the fourth area where a wife's submission was accepted was in the area of adultery. If a husband is committing adultery he has no right to tell his wife well this is how it's got to be sweetheart and that's all there is to it.

I'm going to have you and I'm going to have this other woman and you can take it or leave it. That's all there is to it. You have to stay in this marriage.

No the scripture gives the wife very clear reason to say well I'm going to dissolve this marriage because you've broken the marriage vow you've broken the unity of our marriage and the guilt is all upon the husband in that case it's not upon the wife at all. So obviously that phrase as to the Lord doesn't describe how far a wife is to go in her submission but neither does it describe the limit of a wife's submission. Maybe that's an angle that some women have wanted to take.

They've looked at this and they say well look what this is telling me is I'm supposed to submit to my own husband as to the Lord so that when he's in the Lord I'll submit to him when he's not then I don't have to. Of course in this situation who is it that really decides if he's in the Lord or not? Well it's the wife. And so they're praying about something you know and and they're praying let's say about where to go on vacation one year and so the husband says well you know I think we should go to this place and the wife says well no I prayed about it and I think the Lord wants us to go to that place so I'm not going with you.

And I'm only supposed to submit to you as you're in the Lord and you're not in the Lord on this one and so that's all there is. Well obviously that's not the case either. So as to the Lord doesn't describe the extent of a wife's submission it doesn't describe a limit to the wife's submission instead what it really describes to us is the motive for a wife's submission.

A wife should submit to her husband because it's part of her obedience to Jesus Christ. It's part of being a good Christian and we might say that this is by far the greatest reason for a wife's submission. I mean if we know that doing a certain thing pleases God then that's really the end of the debate isn't it? I mean we may still find it difficult to do and we may have struggles doing it but the debate regarding what we should do is finished.

We should do what pleases the Lord and if the Lord Jesus Christ says to the wives I want you to submit to your husband and do it as a part of your obedience to me well then that's what wives should do. Again it isn't easy it's difficult it's something that needs to be worked out in real life but the goal is certainly clear. We should always do what pleases the Lord and if it pleases the Lord well then that's enough for us.

We talked about that in some depth last week but now we want to get on and talk about the second and the third reasons for a wife's submission because Paul details them in a very helpful way here in this text of Ephesians chapter 5. You see the second reason why a wife should submit to her husband is because it is appropriate to the order of creation. You say well where did you get that out of Ephesians chapter 5? Well take a look with me here Ephesians chapter 5. We'll start at verse 22. Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord for the husband is head of the wife.

And that's a very important phrase there that the husband is head of the wife. First of all I want you to see that Paul clearly says that this is a reason. That's what the word for means in verse 23.

Isn't that beautiful how God gives us reasons. He says wives I want you to submit to your own husbands as to the Lord now let me tell you why. He says for in other words because this is the reason because the husband is head of the wife.

Now what does it mean that the husband is head of the wife? One man told me once that his wife said well honey you're the head but don't forget I'm the neck and the head turns on the neck and that's a funny story there. Apparently not all that funny. What does it mean that the husband is head of the wife? Well obviously it means something in sort of an administrative sense right.

I mean if you think of a flow of administration you have somebody who's a supervisor or a director or administrator or something. You might say that he's the head of this department that he's the head of this particular area in the organization. It speaks of having some kind of administrative leadership and authority and accountability.

I mean obviously when the president of the company wants to see what's going on in the marketing department he goes down and he looks at the head of marketing and the head of marketing is responsible for what goes on in that department right. He's the head and the people who work in the marketing department answer either directly or indirectly to the head of marketing don't they. So they have an obligation of submission to the head of their department but he also has the responsibility and the accountability over that department.

Friends that's what it means in that sense that the husband is head of the wife. It's a two-edged sword isn't it. Of course on the one hand it means that the wife owes submission to her husband.

On the other hand it means that when God looks down at the family unit and something's going wrong God wants to have a talk there with the head of the department. He's the one that he looks to first to see what's going on there. But there's also another idea in this whole phrase for the husband is head of the

wife bound up in many other passages scripture that the Apostle Paul and others wrote to us in the Bible having to do with connecting the idea of the husband's headship of the wife all the way back to the order of creation.

You see in biblical thinking this idea head more literally not only means a place of administrative authority it also has the idea of being the source and ever since the first man and woman that's our model Adam and Eve. Adam was the source of Eve and that established Adam's headship over Eve and it also established the pattern for the husband's headship over the wife. When you look at the biblical idea of headship and other passages like first Corinthians 11 and first Timothy chapter 3 the emphasis is put constantly on the fact that the man was created first not the woman.

So there's a natural priority for the man. The scriptures also emphasize the fact that the woman was made out of the man taken out of him and meant to be a help for him a help for man that was appropriate and compatible for him. Friends when you take a look at the biblical teaching on it the Bible is great emphasis on it.

Man was created first. That was no accident. It wasn't if God flipped a coin in heaven say Adam first Eve first Adam first I don't know and Adam won the coin flip.

God had a deliberate plan in creating Adam first as well. He had a deliberate plan in giving authority to Adam as Lord over creation virtually in a human level before Eve ever came on the scene. You know where this was very dramatically displayed was dramatically displayed when God told Adam to name the animals.

To you and I it almost sounds like an amusing story. You know you think of Adam and know that that looks like a giraffe and so I'll call it a giraffe or that looks like an elephant but there's much more to it in the biblical way of thinking. You know in the in the thinking of ancient Hebrews to name something meant that you had authority over it.

I mean after all you only name your own children right. You don't go around and name other people's children. You don't go around and name other things that you don't have authority over.

When you have authority over something you have the right to name it. When God told Adam I want you to name all the animals it was a way of expressing to Adam you have authority over all of these. I want you to notice something.

Adam did that before Eve came on the scene and then Eve was created out of Adam to come alongside him and share things with him. But friends Adam's authority was given independently of Eve. God made Adam the head of that family so to speak before Eve even came on came on the scene and then when Eve was created out of the place of Adam out of his side so to speak then it was Eve coming alongside Adam and completing him and then they could go and that she could be the compliment of man.

Might I say that that word compliment carries in itself the notice of submission because her main function is to make up the deficiency in man. And so the wife is to help him to aid him to support him and to do everything that she can to enable him to function as God's appointed head as God's appointed Lord over creation so to speak in the case of Adam and Eve and that's the position God has placed him in. She's brought into being to come and help function in that beautiful beautiful task.

Now if I could have you turn to a passage of scripture that speaks to this in a very strong way I'd like you to turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 11. You don't want to keep your finger a marker there in Ephesians chapter 5 but turn back in your Bible sort of to the left to 1st Corinthians chapter 11. We're going to begin there at verse 7. 1st Corinthians chapter 11 verse 7. In that passage we read Paul saying for a man indeed ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God but woman is the glory of man for man is not from woman but woman from man.

You see Paul's developing that idea that I was talking about here. Now you should know that Paul is not specifically talking about male headship in the home in Corinthians chapter 11. What he's speaking about that chapter is male leadership in the church but the same principle applies.

They build it on the same foundation. So you saw that in verse 8. Nor was man created for man is not from the woman but woman from the man. Now look at verse 9. This is a very strong statement.

Paul says nor was man created for the woman but woman for the man. In other words Adam's in first place. Adam's the head there and Eve was created to come alongside Adam and to help him to be his helper to be his complement his complement so to speak.

So you get the point here. The passage makes a point very clearly and strongly. God created Adam first and he gave Adam responsibility over Eve.

Now let me make something very clear because I think there's been some bad teaching in the Christian community about this passage. I'm amazed as I look at commentaries and books on marriage relationships and all this. I'm surprised at how many of them are just bad books and how many of them take this passage in Ephesians chapter 5 where it says for the husband is head of the wife and they go through all sorts of biblical gymnastics to try to make it say anything except what it plainly says.

That the husband is head of the wife. And one of the ways they try to twist around this is they say well yes it's true that the husband is head of the wife but that's as a result of the fall. You see before the fall it wasn't like that.

Before the fall Adam and Eve were equal partners. Before the fall there was no headship. They just both answered to God and there they were equal partners.

There was no order of authority before the fall. And it's only as a result of the fall. And now that Jesus has come he's come to redeem us from the curse of the fall.

And so in a Christian marriage today you don't need to worry about the idea of headship. The husband and the wife are just equal partners. All that's a result of the fall.

Let's get back to how it was before the fall. And I say amen. Let's get back to it how it was before the fall.

Because God made Adam head over Eve head in that marital relationship before the fall. Everything we're talking about here happened before the fall. I am the first one to admit that the fall of Adam and the fall of Eve has made this whole issue of headship and authority in the marriage so much more complicated and so much more filled with sin and difficulty.

Friends, the essential unit, the organization that says that God appointed Adam to be the head of the family and that, well, look at it there in verse 9 of 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Nor was man created for the

woman, but woman for the man. That had nothing to do with the fall.

That was all pre-fall. So you get the idea here. This primacy simply put here, Adam was created for Eve, but Eve was created for Adam.

And this principle applies to every Adam and to every Eve throughout history. Genesis chapter 2 verse 18 declares God's intention in creating Eve. He says, I will make Adam a helper comparable to him.

Eve was created to be a helper for Adam, meaning that Adam was the head over Eve. She was called to come and to share in his vision, in his agenda, and to complete him in the fulfillment of that. Genesis chapter 2 verse 22 says that God brought Eve to Adam.

Adam wasn't brought to Eve. Eve was brought to Adam, to her head. Friends, it's an idea that's offensive to the spirit of our age, but the Bible in this passage clearly teaches that in the church and in the home, man was not made for the benefit of the woman, but the woman for the benefit of the man.

In this case, he's the head. And so it's up to him to have the responsibility and to set the agenda and to seek the Lord and to see what's best in this situation. Now, in speaking about this, there's a cloud that hangs over this in my mind.

And the cloud that hangs over this is that as we go through and very carefully consider what Ephesians chapter 5 has to tell us, that we're not taking the broad view of what the entire passage says. And so you notice this morning, at least probably half of us have noticed that I've said very little about the obligations of the man. And it would be easy for someone to think that from what we've gone through so far, well, I guess that all the obligations are just on the man's side.

Look at it. He's the head of the home. He was created first.

That's God's administrative order. Well, friends, if that's your understanding, then you don't understand this Ephesians 5 passage at all. God has placed tremendous and profound obligations upon the man.

And if I could sort of summarize and speak about it just briefly, you'll hear me talking about this over and over again in coming weeks. If there's any one great obligation that God puts upon the man, as we're going to see in the outworking of this Ephesians 5 passage, it's that husbands, you're no longer to see yourselves as one just to yourself, but you see yourself as a unit with your wife. Stop living selfishly.

Stop living just unto yourself. It's no longer you, but it's us. A husband has to start.

Stop thinking about me. And he starts to start thinking about us. And God has made you the head husband, not the head just over yourself.

You're the head over that wife. That means you need to bring her into consideration on every decision, every decision, every direction, every goal. You're not making those goals for you.

You're making them for us and the extended unit for your children. Also, that's what it means to be the head of the home. And a tremendous problem is so often husbands forget this.

They start living just unto me. They don't live the us kind of life anymore, the oneness kind of life. They just live unto themselves.

And so, yes, the husband takes that headship and he perverts it into something that's used just to further his own selfish ends. That's not the way the Lord wants it to be, and believe me, we'll get into that very much in depth when we consider the husband's role later on in the study in Ephesians chapter five. But I want you to see that just as true as it is that God wants the husband to see that it's no longer me, but it's us.

God wants the wife to see that that oneness, that that unity has a head and the head is the husband. I need to be very plain and very bold about this as I lay this out, because this is simply what the scriptures say. Yes, it's true that God has called husbands and wives into a unity, into being one before him, but they're not equal partners.

God has put the husband in the place of headship. It's not a 50-50 arrangement. God has said, no, husband, you have the headship.

You have the authority. Now, the beautiful part about this, and I wish husbands and wives would let this sink down deeply into their soul. When the husband has the authority, when the husband has the headship, he also has the accountability, doesn't he? God never gives headship apart from accountability.

God never has a situation where I'm required to submit to you, but you don't have any accountability about it. Of course you do. Anywhere submission is required because of God's order, there's a heavy accountability.

Wives, that should free you in a tremendous sense. So your husband's going to go out and make a wrong, stupid decision. First of all, tell him your heart.

Of course you should tell him your heart, not a combative, argumentative way. Say, honey, I prayed about it. This is what I see.

Lay it all out and say, you know what? Now I trust you to go make the right decision before the Lord. And then you stand back and you just grit your teeth because you know he's making the wrong decision. You know what? Let him make it and let God take out the whooping stick on your husband.

And God will do it. You need to get out of the way and let the Lord do it. That's what submission is.

Now, please don't don't think of submission in this silent submission kind of thing. That's not submission at all. Share your heart with your husband.

Don't say, I think this is wrong and I think you should do this and I think I think we should do this and I think this is what's best. But then say, honey, I trust you to make the decision that's best for us. Because that's how the husband needs to be thinking.

He needs to be thinking about what's best for us, not just what's best for him. And then if he does, then God will bless it. If he doesn't and God will protect you, wife and bless you, wife.

As I said, he may just get out that whooping stick upon your husband. You know, as as tough as a wife can make it for a husband who's doing bad and doing a jerk, so to speak, as tough as a wife can make it, it doesn't compare at all for how tough the Lord can make it and that God has a way of doing that. So, friends, what Paul is saying here is that the woman's different, that she's the complement of man.

He's saying to wives and saying, wives, the husband's the head, you're not. Don't try to be manly in the marriage. Don't try to behave like a man.

Don't try to usurp the place, the position and the power that God has given to the man to be the head of that home. That's wrong. God has called you in this place, recognize that the man's the head and that you should respond to that.

There's a very powerful and I believe beautiful way that we illustrate this sort of culturally. And I think that it's one of these things almost deeply ingrained in our cultural memory. It's how we handle names when people get married.

When people get married, a man and a woman get married, they take the same name, don't they? Isn't that a beautiful expression of oneness? We have the same name. We're one. And it isn't because we have the same name just because we were born from the same parents.

No, we're choosing to come together and to be one and to share the same name. So that expresses the unity between the husband and wife. Right.

But let's not forget whose name do they take? They take the husband's name. And that's how it should be. It should be that way to reflect the idea.

We're taking the husband's name because he's the head of this unity. We are one. And the husband is the head of this unity.

And I think that this way that we do it almost more at a habit now, people don't even think of it in these terms, but I think it's a wonderful and a beautiful habit when a couple gets married, that they take the same name and they take the husband's last name because it very powerfully expresses we're one and the husband is the head of this unity. All of that's reflected in the order of creation. And so are two reasons so far for a wife's submission to her husband.

The first one is that it's part of her obedience to Jesus. The second one is that it's appropriate to the order of creation. The third reason now is because it's appropriate because of the model of the relationship between Jesus and the church.

Look at it here. It's in verses 23 and 24 of Ephesians chapter five. Paul writes and saying for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so that the wives be to their own husbands and everything. You get the point here, don't you? This is the first time in this text that Paul brings up this model. What he's saying is saying, you know what the relationship between Jesus and his people is like.

Well, that's an analogy to the relationship God wants to have between a husband and a wife. The husband stands in the place of Jesus, but the wife stands in the place of the church of Jesus' people. And if that's the model, well then very clearly it's appropriate in that model that the wife should submit to her husband.

It's just unquestioned. Could you imagine that the church would say to Jesus, well, no, I don't want to submit to you. I'm going to take a pass on this one, Jesus.

Sometimes the church does do that, but it never should. But we all recognize that in that relationship that the headship of Jesus Christ is unquestioned. So also the husband is the head of the team that is the one

flesh relationship of husband and wife.

If I could, let me just speak for a moment. This is so clear that there's no real debating about it, but let's say that you as a wife speaking quite honestly, maybe you'd never say this to another person, but you're just thinking in your heart right now, as I'm sharing these things, perhaps you as a wife, you don't want a head. You don't want a leader of the team between you and your husband.

I mean, honestly, you look at yourself and you say, listen, I'm no dummy. I'm a sharp, competent woman. I know how to make decisions.

I know how to set directions. I can accomplish things. And I don't see why I should be subjected underneath my husband and to recognize him as my head.

I mean, at the very least, I just say we should be equal partners. I don't have any more say than he does, and he doesn't have any more say than I do. And we'll just work out things along the way.

Why can't it be like that? Well, friends, if marriage was an institution invented by man, if it was man's institution, then maybe we could decide that's how we want to make it. I'm here to tell you that marriage is an institution that doesn't belong to us. It belongs to God and it's given to us as his gift.

And the that's your thinking, then you just simply don't understand a biblical marriage. And you're always going to be working against a biblical marriage in one way or another. It's the same dynamic as a Christian who says, well, I don't want Jesus to be my head.

Why can't we just be equal partners? You know, Jesus, sometimes you make the decisions and sometimes I'll make the decisions. I'll submit to you sometimes and you submit to me sometimes. We'll just work it out as we go along.

It doesn't work like that, does it? In the Christian life, the headship of Jesus is there. It's established. And so he works out this idea here in verse 23.

He says, for the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church, and he's the savior of the body. And so look how it works out. Verse 24.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands. Well, wives, you're to submit after that same pattern. We know that sometimes the church does get distant from Jesus and unsubmitive to Jesus, but we know it should never be like that.

And wives, that's the goal you need to paint for yourself here. This is the direction God wants me to go. Let me say this as well.

We're also comforted by the fact in verse 24 that he says, so let the wives be to their own husbands. He repeats that idea from verse 22 again, right? This reminds us that God does not teach a general subjugation of women unto men. No, he says that there should be the principle of male headship in the home and in the church.

After that, whoever can do the job better should be in charge. Politics, business, education, whatever sphere you want to talk about, it doesn't matter. That's why God says to your own husbands, not to men in general.

And we also notice there in verse 24 where it says, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Now we understand that this is a model, don't we? The relationship between Jesus and the church and the relationship between husbands and wives. Whenever you have a model, there's never an exact correspondence.

I mean, usually it's rough. There's many principles that you can draw, but one of the principles that isn't to be drawn from this is that again, just as the church owes Jesus unquestioned, absolute submission and obedience, we're not to say that that's what the wife owes to the husband. No, it doesn't work like that.

There are exceptions, and we talked about those four exceptions to a wife's submission to her husband. And so just because the model doesn't fulfill itself 100% doesn't mean that the model isn't useful. The model is there to make the main point.

But I do want you to see one thing here, and I think it's a beautiful thing, a powerful thing. In verse 23, he says for the husband as head of the wife, as also Christ as head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Now, husbands, that puts an obligation upon you.

You thought you were free and clear until we got down to verse 25. No. God speaks to the husbands and to the wives, of course, right there in verse 23.

You see, how are we to understand that the husband is to be the savior of the body in the same way that Jesus is savior of the body? Obviously, you can't save your wife's soul. That's the work of Jesus alone. Jesus saves the soul by his work on the cross for us, by taking the guilt and the punishment that we deserve.

No, we can't save our wives in that way. But you see, that word savior, sometimes in the scripture is used in a broader context other than just our eternal salvation. Sometimes it's used just in the sense of offering help or rescue.

And you know how that works, don't you? I mean, you might say your car broke down and somebody's kind of going to give you a jumpstart and you say, well, they saved me. You don't mean that they saved you eternally, but they brought you necessary help in that time of need. And so what Jesus is saying to us here through the apostle Paul is that in the same way that Jesus protects and preserves and nourishes and cherishes the church, that's what the husband is to do towards his wife.

It's essentially the same idea as is in verses 28 and 29. Look at 28 and 29, where Paul says, so husbands ought to love, so husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church.

It's the same analogy. So just as much as the Lord takes care of his church and nourishes and cherishes and cares and protects and preserves the church, that's what the husband is to be doing towards the wife. You see, and friends, that's the whole principle here.

The husband is the head, but it's a nourishing, cherishing, preserving, protecting headship. The wife is to see her place there and the husband is to see his place. You see, friends, the husband and wife are not to live separate.

They're not to be like two different kingdoms that sometimes have better diplomatic relationships than others, right? That's how many marriages are, aren't they? You have two individuals and, you know, they're just negotiating peace treaties with each other all the time. And that's how things are resolved. They're always in a state of tension or always in a state of potential tension.

That's not how God intended it. He intended them to be one kingdom, one flesh. And the head of that is the husband.

And so you see how it very practically works out here. The wife isn't to act independently of the husband. She's not to stall or to refuse or to delay or whatever.

She's just to carry out what her husband would have her to do and to follow the direction of her husband, not in some silent submission that doesn't give her perspectives and her views. Oftentimes, if the husband is wise, that'll turn the whole issue, understanding his wife's wisdom. But the initiative and the leadership are ultimately the husband's.

But the action is always be coordinated. That's the meaning of the picture. Coordinated action, but leadership in the head.

No inferiority, just difference. That's not slavery. It's a beautiful way of working out a Christian marriage.

Now, let's conclude with sort of an understanding of this effect of all three of them together. We've had here three reasons for a wife's submission. Number one, it's part of her obedience to Jesus, right? That's what he means by as to the Lord.

Number two, it's appropriate because of the order of creation. That's all bound up in the statement. The husband is the head of the wife.

And then thirdly, it's appropriate because of the model of the relationship between Jesus and the church. Now, I think we're probably right in saying that the first reason is the strongest and the most compelling. Right.

What more reason do you have other than do it as a part of your obedience to the Lord? But there's something very important about the second and third reasons. They show that God has a definite order for the marriage relationship. They show that God has ordained the man to be the head in the relationship between the husband and the wife.

I mean, if all we had was the statement, why submit to your own husband's as to the Lord, it might be fair for a wife to ask, aren't men to live as to the Lord? Then shouldn't we say that a husband should submit to his wife in obedience to Jesus the same way? You know, if that was the case, then you wouldn't really have a head of the home. You wouldn't have any one of the two really in charge, really in the place of ultimate responsibility. And that's the goal that some marriages shoot for.

They shoot for this ethic where they say, well, look, nobody's really in charge. Nobody's really the head. We're equal partners.

I'll submit to you. Sometimes you submit to me. Sometimes we'll just let Jesus be our head and we'll work out each situation as it comes along and we'll see who will submit to whom.

Well, to say it simply, that's not a biblical marriage relationship. It's simply not. It ignores the essential order of creation.

Look, you can go back to the Genesis story a thousand times and keep reading it. You'll never find that Eve was created before Adam. You'll never find that Eve was assuming that Adam came out of Eve.

You'll never find that God originally gave Eve the authority over the created order. No. Friends, we're all Adams and women are all Eve's in that sort of typical relationship.

But it also ignores the essential model of the relationship between Jesus and the church. Equal partnership between Jesus and his people. No, we're blessed that he's called us into partnership at all.

We're more than happy to say you're the head, Jesus. It's our place to submit to you. We'll pour out our hearts to you.

We'll tell you how we feel. We tell you how we see things. But at the end of the day, Lord God, you're the one in charge.

You're the head. And we submit to that. So we notice something in general about the principle of submission.

We notice that this principle of submission really has to do with an order of authority. I mean, Jesus submitted to his parents. Demons submitted to the disciples.

Citizens should submit to government authority. The universe will submit to Jesus. Unseen spiritual beings submit to Jesus.

Christians should submit to church leaders. Wives should submit to their husbands. The church should submit to Jesus.

Servants should submit to masters. And Christians should submit to God. All you got to do is look in your concordance under submit and you'll find all those passages.

But friends, none of these relationships are reversed. For example, masters are never told to submit to servants and Jesus is never told to submit to the church and so forth. The idea of submission has to do with an order of authority.

And God says to the husbands, you're the head. Husbands take your role as the head. Wives respond as being the head.

Because here's the news, husbands. God doesn't tell you to be the head of your home. He says you are the head of your home.

Now you're either a good head of your home or you're a rotten head of your home or maybe a mediocre head of your home. But I have to tell you this morning, now go out and be the head. You are.

That's a fact. And wives, God doesn't look to you this morning and say, let your husband be the head of the home. No, he is.

And you may be resisting it. You may be fighting against it. You may be making it difficult for your husband and for yourself and the children as well.

But listen, the fact of the matter is, is when God looks down from heaven, he sees the husband as the head of the home. That's it. It's our job to respond to it.

Now, I would not blame wives at all this morning if they sort of responded with a question. And if that question maybe wasn't born out of some pain, they didn't say, listen, does this mean all the obligations are on me? Why am I the only one told to submit? There's really only one answer for that. Wait till the next time we're into this and we talk about the obligations of the house.

I mean, we'll get into it and you'll see that God has more than enough obligations for the house. And really, the spiritual obligations upon the husband and the wife are really the same. It's just how they work out that are different.

For example, both husband and the wife are called are commanded to die to themselves. Right? Is the husband any less called to die to himself than the wife? No. But the specific arena that that death to self will work out in a wife's life is in submission.

And the husband, it'll be a little bit different. Both husband and wife are called to sacrifice. Wife, what, do you think you're called to make the only sacrifices? And the husband says, oh, he's going to have a grand time.

It's the wife that's called to die to something. It's the wife that's called to sacrifice. Well, some husbands unfortunately treat it like that.

But then that husband's in plain disobedience. No, they're both called to sacrifice. But submission is the way that the wife fulfills that command to sacrifice.

Both husband and wife are called to see their marriage as a model of Jesus's relationship with the church. And submission is the way that the wife honors that model. The husband honors the model just the same, but in a little bit different way that it works out.

Both husband and wife are called to honor the order of creation and see how God made Adam and how God made Eve. But submission is the way that the wife fulfills her role, her place in that order. And both husband and wife are called to be motivated by the love and the command of Jesus.

But submission is the way that the wife does it. You see, the spiritual obligations are the same. But because God has made an order of authority in the marriage, then the way that they work out differs slightly.

And we'll see how that works out. But can we both have the same heart in marriage? And a husband and wife have the same heart that say, I'm going to die to myself. I'm going to sacrifice.

I'm going to see our relationship as a model of Jesus's relationship with the church. I'm going to honor God's order of creation. And I'm going to be motivated by the love and the command of Jesus Christ.

You do that. I think the marriages will be strong. The wife will fulfill her role, which we've detailed very carefully over the last two weeks.

And then the husband will fulfill his role. And that's what we'll see the next time that we're in Ephesians chapter 5.

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