

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 17

A Marriage Made in Heaven

Ephesians 5:22-33

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“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.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 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. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

1. **Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, how is mutual submission worked out practically?**

Ephesians 5:22, 25	Marriage -> Submission/Service in Marriage
Ephesians 6:1	Family -> Obedience/Care Child-Parent
Ephesians 6:5	Work -> Obedience/Care Slave to Master

2. **Discussion question. What is the purpose of marriage from God’s point of view?**

The marriage paradigm is one of union. The husband-wife relationship was designed to reflect the oneness between Christ and His church.

3. a) Comprehension question. In a marriage, which party should focus on submission? Why?

Wife

- b) Comprehension question. In a marriage, which party should focus on service? Why?

Husband

4. Comprehension question. Headship is the basis for this submission. Explain what headship means.

- Headship - Refers to leadership...authority, preeminence, source...sustainer
- The husband has authority in a marriage but it does not mean the husband is superior to the wife
- Both the husband and the wife are equal, yet different
- Headship is not superiority, submission is not inferiority

Philippians 2:5-7

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.”

5. Comprehension question. Explain how submission is not inferiority based on Philippians 2:5-7.
6. a) Comprehension question. In Galatian 3:26, all believers are called the “sons of God”. Does that mean that Christian women are not children of God? Why was the term “sons” used?

All men and women who believe in the Lord Jesus are “sons of God” because the focus of sonship is inheritance. In Biblical times, women were often left out in terms of the inheritance passed down from the father. However, Paul was saying that regardless of gender, all Christians have a spiritual inheritance. Both male and female Christians are of the same standing through faith. There was no inferiority or superiority for either gender.

Ephesians 5:25-26

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”

b) Discussion question. What is the purpose of sacrificial service of the husband for the wife?

Sacrificial submission of personal desires to serve her spiritual good.

c) Discussion question. Based on what the Bible says, must a wife be a stay at home housewife after marriage? Refer to Proverbs 31:10-31.

7. a) Comprehension question. How did sin influence marriage? What are the inclinations of the husband and the inclinations of the wife?

- Husband desires to oppress.
- Wife desires to control.

b) Comprehension question. How did Christ influence marriage?

- Husband to sacrificially serve.
- Wife to submit.

8. a) Discussion question. Should a husband only love the wife if she is worthy of love? And should a wife only submit to her husband if he is worthy of her respect? Why?

Not based on merit. We did not deserve Christ's love and we were unlovely. He loved us to make us lovely.

b) Comprehension question. Is marriage a declaration of present love or a binding promise of future love?

c) Comprehension question. In a marriage, should love be conditional or unconditional?

d) Comprehension question. Why is vulnerability required in a marriage?

9. Discussion question. Based on Ephesians 5:25-26 above, one of the purposes of marriage is for sanctification - that is to be holy and without blemish. How does marriage sanctify a person?

10. Objective question. Which of the following are not acts of submission of a wife?

- Avoiding the effort to change or influence the spouse
- Acting in fear
- Obedience to everything
- Obedience to her husband in the Lord
- Getting all of her spiritual strength through her husband
- Not thinking

11. Discussion question. Why does a binding covenant (of marriage) enable us to be true (fully transparent) to our spouse?

Takeaway

- A. Marriage (The husband-wife relationship) was designed to reflect the oneness between Christ and His church
- B. Wives are to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord
- C. Husbands are to sacrificially serve their wives in love
- D. Headship is not superiority, submission is not inferiority
- E. Marriage is a covenant - a binding promise and declaration of unconditional future love

Case Study

Case 1 – Submission and Service

Roland and Mariel were married for 3 years and had a child of 1 year of age. Roland worked as a corporate manager for IBM and Mariel was a vice president of the CIMB bank in KL.

They were struggling with looking after the child as they had no in-laws who lived near them and they both hated the idea of sending the child to day care centres because the last one they sent her to she came back with food poisoning and had to be hospitalised for a week.

It was clear that one of them would have to give up their job to look after the child at least till the child got into school. The child obviously preferred her mother but Mariel loved her job and it paid more than Roland's job and was very reluctant to give it up. Roland was rapidly climbing the corporate ladder and quitting now would more or less derail his future prospects.

They argued over who should stay at home.

1. Looking at the passage today, can you suggest a biblical solution where there is sacrifice and submission?

Case 2 – Unequally Yoked

Jenny Lim married an unbeliever 10 years and felt guilty about the whole issue and did not step into church again since the marriage.

For the past 6 months she rededicated her life to Jesus at the FBC Alpha course and soon expressed her desire for their two children to attend Sunday school and church. There was vigorous opposition from her spouse Craig who forbade them from setting foot into the church and he told Jenny never to share the gospel to their children as well.

Jenny struggled with the whole issue as on one hand she had to be a submissive wife and on the other the children were very keen to go to Sunday school and always asked her questions about Jesus.

Her husband had instructed her to teach them that there was no God. She was also banned from going to FBC any more. Jenny also earned a very high salary from her job and Craig also warned her never to give a single cent to church.

1. What should Jenny do?

Case 3 – Divorce

Kirk and Karen had been married for the past 30 years and had 3 kids. The marriage had not been smooth. Karen was more aggressive than most women and she dominated most decisions around the house.

Kirk was constantly fighting her and pointed out in Ephesians that she should be submitting to him instead of bossing him around, although admittedly he was a bit of an untidy slob with infuriating habits. He resented being told off and she lacked any kind of tact.

They were both unhappy and found solace in friends they found in church. Then Karen had an affair with another gentleman from church and he sort of understood her needs and was a very rich man, very tidy and was the opposite of what her husband was. She felt she was in love again and no amount of warnings from her children could dissuade her from spending time with the man. Kirk too found solace in the arms of his secretary and was happy.

They considered divorce because she could not submit to him and he could not sacrifice for her.

1. Is there enough basis for divorce here?

2. What can they do?