

BIBLICAL FAMILY IN A MODERN WORLD: His & Her's Part 2' Ephesians 5:21-24; 32-33

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! I am grateful you have joined us today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in the middle of a teaching series we've called, "A Biblical Family in a Modern World." We are looking at the topics of marriage and family according to God's plan. So far, we've looked at God's design for marriage, what it means to build a godly home, and last week we studied part 1 of his role in a marriage relationship. Today we are looking at the wife's role.

Let me also say that if you have missed any part of this teaching series, I encourage you to go back and listen to the messages as they build on one another. You can listen on our church website at trinitytx.org/sermons or on our podcast called "Hope for the Broken," which can be found on any platform you listen to podcasts. Today's message is best understood in the context of last week's message on the husband's role.

And again, I want to remind you that I am not a marriage and family expert. Far from it. But as I study each week, I am leaning on a lot of resources by Christian marriage and family experts. And it would be cumbersome for me to cite every time I lean on a resource. But I do cite references in my notes which are posted on our church's website every week. So, if you would like additional study, you can download my notes and look at those resources.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Buffets

You know, one of the things that has seemed to go by the wayside, for the most part, post-COVID, is buffets. You still see them, but I don't think I have been to a full out buffet since the pandemic. The thought of going to Golden Corral with food laying out that other people have breathed on is just not as appealing anymore. Know what I mean?

But buffets were great. All you can eat, and you could pick and choose yourself what was on your plate. It was awesome!

I mention buffets to begin our study today because in many ways we tend to approach Bible Study that way. We really love it when the pastor preaches on

grace, mercy, and forgiveness. We want more of that. But other teachings in the Bible are less desirable. For example, we don't care for giving sermons or even today's topic, the wife's role of submission. And I understand the perspective of a man teaching this subject from the pulpit. But I hope you've to come realize that my desire is to teach the Bible and to handle it correctly.

And here's the truth, when it comes to the Bible, we believe it is God's Word and His revelation to us. Therefore, we align our lives to every aspect of its teaching. So, when it comes to subjects like today, we don't just pick and choose. We embrace the teaching of the Bible as the whole counsel of God. And we should never be afraid of what Scripture teaches as it is ultimately instruction for our good and our flourishing.

Now, I do believe that if we wrap our minds around the correct teaching of the wife's role in marriage, we find freedom and contentment. So, that is my aim for today. So, with that said, I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5, as we look at verses 21-24 and then verse 33. Let's read the passage together and then jump into how it applies to our lives.

By the way, if you do not have a Bible, there should be one located in the seat rack in front of you or very nearby. And if you need a Bible, I want to encourage you to take that Bible with you as our gift to you today. Those were donated to us, and we'd like to pass them along to you should you need one.

Follow along in your copy of God's word, beginning in verse 21 of Ephesians 5. *²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Skip down to verse 32. ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

In the Christian marriage, the husband's role is headship and love, and the wife's role is submission to her husband's lead. And this is out of a mutual submission, verse 21, to The Lord.

Like I mentioned last week, this passage is perhaps the most misunderstood and misquoted passage in the entire Bible. So, I want to approach today in two

sections. I want us to first examine what submission is not, and then look at what submission is. Very simple outline this morning.

MESSAGE:

So, let's begin by looking at...

1) What Submission is NOT

I want to address some misconceptions of what biblical submission means. Four things that submission is often taken to mean but are things that submission absolutely DOES NOT mean. First, submission is NOT...

A) Inferiority.

It is very clear in the Scriptures that all humans have an intrinsic value. And Genesis 2 screams equality between Adam and Eve.ⁱⁱ Humanity is the only creation that bears the image of God, and both males and females bear that image. Therefore, all humanity has a very high and equal value. So, when it comes to the teaching on submission, in accordance with Scripture, it cannot be equated to value. In the Christian marriage, men and women have differing roles but those roles do not make one more or less valuable than the other.

ILLUSTRATION: Quarterback

Let me see if I can explain it this way. This weekend kicks off the 2023 NFL football season. College football is way better, for many reasons, but the Cowboys take on the Giants tonight. Now, in football, each player has a different role to play for the team to be successful. The Quarterback, the leader on the field, is very dependent on the offensive line. And the Wide Receivers are very dependent on the Quarterback. While the Quarterback calls the plays and leads the team, each position is equally important.

The same is true in marriage. For marriage to work properly, each person must play their role. And these roles do not communicate value, you see.

So, the first thing we come to know is that submission is NOT inferiority. Secondly, submission IS NOT...

B) Oppression.

Our culture bristles at the Biblical teaching of a wife submitting to her husband. That's because culture has defined submission as oppression. But in no way, shape, or form is biblical submission oppression. The Biblical charge to submit

does NOT mean wives are subservient or that they are to be controlled. That's NOT what Paul is teaching.

A couple of us from staff got together to work on a definition of oppression to help with clarity here. We defined oppression as **an outward decision, made by someone else, identifying themselves as superior over you.**ⁱⁱⁱ Let me give you an example of what oppression is from the Bible.

When famine struck in Genesis, many Jews went to Egypt where Joseph had risen to second in command and made provisions for the famine. As a result, Jews stayed in Egypt. After Joseph died, a king came to power in Egypt that made the Jews slaves. Exodus chapter 1, beginning in verse 11, paints a picture of oppression. ***¹¹Therefore they [Egyptian Leaders] set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens*** [That's an outward decision made by the Egyptian leaders]. ***They [The Jews] built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom [PIE-THOMB] and Raamses [RAY-AM-SEES].*** ***¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.*** ***¹³So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves*** ¹⁴***and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.*** This was not submission, it was oppression. Submission is NOT oppression. There is a big difference. We'll come back to this thought in a moment.

But we see that submission is NOT inferiority and NOT oppression. Thirdly, submission is NOT...

C) Universal.

I think many have a picture that the Bible teaches that women are supposed to be subservient in general. But look back at our text. Ephesians 5:22. ***²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*** The wife's role of submission is to her husband only. In other words, **Paul is not teaching that all women should be subject to all men.** Remember the context, Christian marriage.

Let me give you a biblical example. The model Biblical woman is presented in Proverbs 31. When you read that, we learn several things about the role of women in society. The woman depicted in Proverbs 31 was an entrepreneur, wheeling and dealing in the marketplace, provided food for her family, creative, into fashion, dressed her husband and children well, compassionate toward the

poor, wise and respected in the community, and received praise from her husband and children.^{iv} This woman was very successful and in today's terms, a CEO of a fortune 500 company!

Ladies, you might find this example to be inspiring or you may feel it is impossible to measure up to. Either way, the point is, you should feel freedom to be all that God is calling you to be.^v Submission is not universal in that you are to submit to all men. But in marriage, you are to submit to your husband.

Submission is NOT inferiority, oppression, nor universal. Fourthly, submission is NOT...

D) Demanded.

Submission is commanded, but it is not something that is demanded. Look again at verse 22 of Ephesians 5. ***22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*** This is not saying that your husband is your Lord. It does mean, though, that when you submit to your husband, you glorify God, The Lord.

Remember, Paul is using the word "submit," not the word "obey." He will use that word later when he talks about children obeying their parents. But he does not use "obey" in relationship to wives and husbands. The reason for that is because submission is not something that is demanded like obedience is.

And fellas, we should not weld this verse as some sort of sword. "You better submit to me, woman! The Bible says so." That usually never ends well and is received as being oppressive and domineering. The Bible does not give any license to husbands to demand submission.^{vi}

And let me just say something to husbands at this point, if this teaching on wives submitting excites you, you need to check your heart a little bit. It's an incredible responsibility to take the role of headship, it requires humility. So, if you're all bowed up at this teaching, you might need to call a time out and do some heart surgery.

Okay, so we've looked at what submission is NOT. Now, let's look at...

2) What Submission is.

I hope that we have cleared up some of the misconceptions surrounding the word "submit." So, now, I want to further grab ahold of this teaching by

considering what Biblical submission is. We know what it is not, let's look at what it is. First, submission is...

A) Personal.

I've already mentioned that the Bible's instruction for submission is to your own husband only. Therefore, submission is personal in that way. But submission is also personal in that it is a decision.

The word, "submit," in the original language was a military term.^{vii} It means to place oneself under another.^{viii} It is also in the middle voice.^{ix} In English, we have two voices, active and passive. But in Greek there is middle voice. The word translated, "submit," in the middle voice, means submission is something you determine to do. Now, Paul is clear in verse 24 that wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. That's the structure, but submission should be done so willingly.

Now I will say, wives, if you are finding it hard to submit to your husband's lead, that is a heart issue that you need to deal with. And it could be that difficulty in willingness to submit to your husband is rooted in some form of abuse you've experienced by another man. Hear me, abuse in any form is not okay. And if you have been or you are currently being abused, you need to get out and get help. We can help you. But the point that Paul makes here is that submission to your husband is done so personally and needs to be done willingly.

Like we worked on a definition for oppression, we also worked on a definition for submission. Look at them side by side. Oppression is an outward decision, made by someone else, identifying themselves as superior over you.

Submission, however, is an inward decision, made by you, identifying your husband as spiritual leader.^x You see how submission is actually the opposite of oppression.

So, submission is personal. Secondly, submission is...

B) Following Jesus.

When wives choose to submit to their husbands in everything, they follow Jesus' example. One of the most challenging yet richest doctrines of our faith is the doctrine of the Trinity. God The Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are three persons in one Godhead. Each person of the Trinity is co-equal and co-eternal.

So, when Jesus was incarnate, that is when He was born, He was God in the flesh. Yet, when Jesus took on flesh, he submitted to God The Father. Let me show you that in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 27 and 28. *27For God [The Father] has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28When all things are subjected to him, then **the Son** [Jesus] **himself will also be subjected to him** [to God The Father] **who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.** So Jesus, God the Son, submitted to The Father. Ladies, when you submit to your husbands as to The Lord, you are following Jesus’ example.*

So, submission is personal and follows Jesus’ example. Thirdly, submission is...

C) Dignified.

Our culture has mistaken the biblical teaching of submission and has labeled it as degrading to women. But wives submitting to their husbands is far from that. It is a very dignified position. Let me explain.

The culture in which Paul was writing, Roman and Jewish culture, had a very low view of women. Christianity actually brought significant change in status for women. The Gospel elevates the value of women. Paul even went as far to say in Galatians 3:28, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* This kind of equality in value flew in the face of popular opinion of the day.

In the first century world women were viewed as inferior, minimally educated, their testimony was considered invalid in court. Women could not own property, were kept from public life, they were not included in the population census. Men were instructed not to talk much with a woman.^{xi} Which is why when Jesus was talking to the woman at the well in John 4, His disciples were shocked.

See, Jesus gave women dignity. In a culture that oppressed women, Jesus gave women value. And it is in this new elevated and dignified role, given by the Gospel, that wives feel freedom to willingly submit to their husbands.^{xii} Western culture has it all wrong. Submission is not demeaning, it is dignified.

So, submission is personal, following Jesus’ example, and dignified. Finally, submission is...

D) Purposeful.^{xiii}

Look again at two verses. Verse 23 and verse 32. There are two purposes for submission. First, verse 23. *23For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.*

The first purpose of a wife’s submission is that it enables the husband to play his role. Ladies, it could be that your husband isn’t leading because you won’t allow him to lead. Men, it could be that your wives aren’t submitting because you are not leading. Husbands lead, and wives are to follow their lead. And when you do, you encourage your man, and he often rises to the challenge.

But submission is also purposeful in that it illustrates Jesus and the church. Verse 32 says, *“32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”* Marriage is to model the relationship between Jesus and the Church. The Bible often uses marriage as an illustration for how Jesus relates to the church. He is the head of The Church, and we all submit to His leadership. When we play our roles, we communicate to the world this truth.

Then verse 33 sums up the roles we are to play. *33However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* That’s our roles.

ILLUSTRATION: Love and Respect

In the time we have left, I want to show you some cycles of the roles that we are to play. I am borrowing this from Emerson Eggerichs’ *Love & Respect*^{xiv} book. But I want to show you the roles we are to play, how we get off track, and then how we get back on track.

The first cycle, the model cycle, is called the Rewarded Cycle. This is where husbands love their wives, and they do so regardless of their wife’s response. And it is also the cycle by which wives respect their husbands, regardless of the husband’s response. And when we play these roles, we portray a beautiful dance for the world to see.

But often, we fall into what is called the crazy cycle. Some of you might be in this cycle right now. The crazy cycle is that without love, the wife reacts without respect. And without respect, the husband reacts without love. This is a dangerous cycle and unless something changes, it spirals out of control. It’s

inevitable that you will find your marriage in this cycle. No marriage is perfect. But when you do, you have to create the energizing cycle.

The energizing cycle is what re-energizes your marriage. It is where the husband's unconditional love for his wife motivates her respect. And where the wife's respect for her husband motivates his love.

To get into the energizing cycle, it takes someone playing their role. And the other person must recognize that and play along. When you can get into the energizing cycle, you will eventually find yourself in the rewarded cycle.

Now, I know every marriage is different and the issues are nuanced. But, for the most part, men, I think that if you will recognize the crazy cycle and start loving your wife unconditionally, she will come around. It may take time, but you take the lead. And ladies, if you see that your man is trying to love you, begin respecting him for that. Nothing is more energizing than being recognized for doing right. And nothing is more draining than efforts not being seen.

I have practical ways that each person can play their role, but I will save that for another message. Time is short today. Husband's love your wife like Christ loves the church. And wives, submit to your husband as to The Lord. God will bless you for it.

CONCLUSION:

I'm going to ask Micah and the team to come back up and lead us in a time of response. Here's the question. What is The Lord leading you to do today?

Maybe you are here and you have never been born again. Playing the role God has asked you to play is impossible apart for a relationship with Jesus. There is a difference in knowing about Jesus and knowing Him. Do you know Him?

We will have elders at the front that will be ready to receive you and visit with you about what it means to have a relationship with Jesus. Maybe you have questions about whether you know Jesus. We want to visit with you. Simply take us by the hand and say three words, "I need Jesus." That's it! And we would love to visit with you on what that looks like.

Maybe husbands and wives need to come to this altar and pray together. Maybe you want to huddle up where you are and pray together. It is my prayer that you guys hear from The Lord and follow His lead.

I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but let's respond to the prompting of The Lord upon our hearts this morning. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1986; Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Connor Bales and Todd Kaunitz, *Gospel in the Home: Turning Chaos Back into Order*, Houston: Lucid Books, 2016; Charles R. Swindoll, *The Strong Family*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1991; Jerry Pipes, *Building A Successful Family*, LifeWay: Nashville, 2002; Al Janssen, *The Marriage Masterpiece: A Bold New Vision for Your Marriage*, Tyldale: Wheaton, 2001; Skip Heitzig, *Smart Home: Following the Blueprint: A Wife's Submission*, sermon preached at Calvary Church Albuquerque, August 26, 2018, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/30/sermon/263>; J.D. Greear, *Love Incorruptible: God's Laboratories*, sermon preached at Summit Church, March 19, 2017, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/gods-laboratories>; Jack Graham, *All in the Family*, sermon preached at Prestonwood Baptist Church, April 29, 2018, accessed online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6CT_FRXgJc; Michael Youssef, *Marriage The Way God Intended It: There is Freedom in Submission*, published by Leading The Way, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/listen/teaching/series/marriage-the-way-god-intended-it/part-3>; Vance Pitman, *Family Matters: Be Subject to One Another Part 2*, sermon preached at Hope Church Las Vegas, August 18, 2019, accessed online: <https://hopechurchlv.com/messages/be-subject-to-one-another-pt-2/>.

ⁱⁱ Quip taken from J.D. Greear.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pastor Jeff, Eric Jones, and myself worked to come up with this definition.

^{iv} Connor Bales and Todd Kaunitz, *Gospel in the Home: Turning Chaos Back into Order*, Houston: Lucid Books, 2016, page 63.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Snodgrass, page 294.

^{vii} Pointed out by Pastor Skip Heitzig.

^{viii} Strong's Concordance, 5293, hupotassó.

^{ix} Heitzig.

^x Pastor Jeff, Eric Jones, and myself worked to come up with this definition.

^{xi} Snodgrass, pages 302-303.

^{xii} Heitzig.

^{xiii} This section was greatly informed by Pastor Skip Heitzig's sermon.

^{xiv} Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires, the Respect He Desperately Needs*, Focus On The Family: Colorado Springs, 2004.