**WIVES AND HUSBANDS**

Ephesians 5:22-33

Key Verse: 33

“However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

**Introduction**

By God’s grace, we became one new humanity in Jesus Christ. All of our relationships are new based on the truth of God. Among them, the relationship between husband and wife is basic and fundamental. If believers can’t get this relationship right, the church cannot stand and all of society can only become dysfunctional. However, when there is harmony and peace between a believing husband and believing wife, the family is healthy. Then the church and the society can become strong. This highlights the importance of husbands and wives becoming one. May our Lord Jesus have mercy on us to understand this profound mystery and practice these Godly principles. Again in verse 21, Paul gives a general principle that applies to all relationships in Christianity. It says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” The word “submit” means “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.” This is not one-sided, but mutual. Christians should not be too self-assertive, but rather submissive to one another. Being submissive may seem impossible for sinful human beings. But when we follow the example of Christ it is possible. Christ bought each person with His precious blood. When we realize how much Christ loves and values each person, we should be submissive as we listen to, serve, and build each one up in faith. As we study these teachings we should not apply them to our spouses or to someone else, but to ourselves. For those who are not married, this passage still applies to them as the bride of Christ, a member of his body.

1. Read verses 22-24. What is a wife’s duty towards her husband? (22) Why should wives submit to their husbands? (23) What can help them to do this? (24)

1-1, Read verses 22-24.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

1-2, What is a wife’s duty towards her husband? (22)

***Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.***

* Here the word “submit” is to apply for wives to submit to their own husbands in a marriage.
* Men have no exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education, and etc.
* To **submit** means that you recognize someone has legitimate authority over you. It means you recognize that there is an order of authority, and that you are part of a unit, a team. You as an individual are not more important than the working of the unit.
* It is by submitting that they keep the order established by God. It is where a wife finds her standing in the Christian household.
* A wife can follow this word when she recognizes the Lord’s sovereignty in her family.
* A wife is submitting to her husband as you are doing it for the Lord Himself .
* Thus, “as you do to the Lord” is included in this verse. A Christian wife can be submissive to her own husband as she submits to the Lord.
* When a wife doesn’t obey this word to submit to your own husband, as to the Lord, she is falling short as a follower of Jesus Christ.
* This has nothing to do with a husband’s intelligence or ability. Rather it has to do with honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.
* Instead of looking for an attractive man, for a wealthy man, or for a romantic man, a woman should first look for a man she can respect.
* If you want to please Jesus, if you want to honor Him, then submit to your own husband as to the Lord.
* Submission does not mean inferiority. Submission means “sub-mission.” There is a mission for the Christian marriage, and that mission is obeying and glorifying God. That mission is more important than my individual desires. I’m not putting myself below my husband. I’m putting myself below the holy mission God has for our marriage.”

1-3, Why should wives submit to their husbands? (23)

***For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.***

* “For” - Here Paul also gives reason for His command. He wants us to understand the principle behind the command.
* This means that it is because the husband is the head of the wife. Head means ‘headship and authority.’ It is appropriate to submit to someone who is our head.
* There is a priority by creation for man. The Scriptures also emphasize the fact that woman was made out of the man. ‘Taken out of the man’ shows a connection to the man and that the woman was meant to be a helper for the man.
* Man was created first. Not only that; man was also made the lord of creation. It was to man that this authority was given, over all the other creatures. Man was given authority over them and a commission to name them.
* Here are indications that man was put into a position of leadership, lordship, and authority and power.

1 Corinthians 11:7-10 reads,

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. **8** For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; **9** neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. **10** It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. **11** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. **12** For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

* When a woman gets married she gives up her name and takes the name of her husband. That is Biblical, and also the custom of the whole world. This teaches us the relationship between the husband and the wife.
* A husband and wife are compared to Christ and the church. Christ is the head, and the church is his body. The head and the body are inseparable.
* Suppose the kidney says to the head, “I don’t want to filter waste from blood anymore. Stop telling me to do that?.” Then what would happen? The whole body would suffer and malfunction.
* Likewise, when wives are rebellious to their husbands, conflict and chaos begins. Children become wild without proper discipline.

1-4, What can help them to do this? (24)

***Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

* Here Paul explained another reason for a Christian wife’s submission to her husband.
* She should submit because the relationship of the husband and wife is a role model of the union between Jesus and the Church.
* The headship of Jesus Christ is unquestioned. So is the husband the head of the “team” that is the one-flesh relationship of husband and wife.
* As Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, so the husband nourishes and cherishes the wife. That is her position in this relationship.
* The initiative and leadership are ultimately the husband’s, but the action must always be co-ordinated. There is no sense of inferiority suggested by this.
* The wife is different and working together beautifully before God.
* To their own husbands in everything: Paul says that the wife should be subject to her husband in everything.
* When the husband asks or expects the wife to sin, she is free from her obligation to submit.
* When the husband is physically abusive or violent, the wife is free from her obligation to submit. She does not have to submit to his violence.
* When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery, a wife does not have to submit to her husband’s adultery.
* She is allowed to divorce him but many chose to forgive with Jesus’ love and keep their marriage for the sake of children. The point here is our free choice to seek God’s glory as well as children’s wellbeing in spite of our personal rights.

2. Read verses 25-30. What is a husband’s duty towards his wife? (25a) How much should husbands love their wives? (25b) What happened to wives when their husbands followed Christ’ example? (26, 27) Why should husbands love their wives as their own bodies? (28-30)

2-1, Read verses 25-30.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, **27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.**29** After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— **30** for we are members of his body.

2-2, What is a husband’s duty towards his wife? (25a)

***Husbands, love your wives,***

* Now Paul mentions about a husband’s duty in a family. The word “love” comes from the Greek word “agape,” which is God’s love. This love is sacrificial, takes the initiative, and is unconditional in contrast to other types of love.
* Eros is a word used to describe one form of love. This word refers to erotic love. This kind of love is driven by desire.
* Storge is another word for love. This word refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child. This love is driven by blood.
* Philia is another word for love. It speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship. It is considered as the highest love among men, without God’s help. But it is still driven by common interests.
* Eros, storge, and philia each speak about love that is felt. These describe “instinctive” love, love that comes spontaneously from the heart.
* But Paul’s real point is to address a higher kind of love, agape love. Agape describes a different kind of love. It is a love more of **decision** than of the spontaneous heart. It is as much a matter of the mind as the heart, because it chooses to love the undeserving.
* It is a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.
* So Paul meant here, “Husbands, continually decide to practice self-denial for the sake of your wives.”
* HuIn short it is husband who should die to himself for her. What a great challenge it is! Have mercy on us!

2-3, How much should husbands love their wives? (25b)

***just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her***

* After exhorting husbands to love their wives, Paul immediately mentions Christ’s love for the church. Christ’s love for the church should be practiced by husbands toward their wives. So we need to understand how Christ loved his church and the purpose of his love.
* Some husbands may think that because God said they are the head of the home and the wife is obligated to submit to them that they do not have to be humble, lay down their lives, and sacrifice for the benefit of their wives. They need to understand the difference in thinking, between worldly and godly headship.
* The words “gave himself up for her” recall Christ’s incarnation, life of serving, and death on the cross. To think of practicing this love is overwhelming.
* All wives should do is to submit their husbands. But husbands should give themselves up for their wives. Wow! By a husband’s own strength, this is impossible!
* Before we can practice this love, we must first receive this love from Christ. When a husband is moved by Christ’s love, he can practice this love toward his wife.
* This is why a husband must have an intimate love relationship with Christ. Husbands are also brides of Christ and Christ is our bridegroom.
* Although the husband is the head of the wife, the problem is how to exercise leadership. Intimidation, through physical and verbal abuse, is not an option for Christian husbands.
* Christ never abused anyone, ever, not even once. Rather, Christ gave up all his privileges, honor and glory, and humbled himself. (Php 2:6-7).
* As Christ humbled himself to become a man, husbands must humble themselves to truly understand their wives.
* This is more than listening to their words. It involves understanding their feelings and heart’s desires. Understanding is not the end.
* Rather, it is the beginning of serving. Christ served his church as a servant. Christ served his disciples by bearing their weaknesses with long-suffering patience, healing their sin-sicknesses, washing their feet, and inspiring them with hope.
* Finally he died on the cross, shedding his blood to cleanse us from our sins. In this way Christ exercised his authority over the church. Husbands can exercise authority over their wives only through practicing of Christ’s agape love.

2-4, What happened to wives when their husbands followed Christ’ example? (26, 27)

***to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.***

* The first thing Christ does for the church is to make her holy through the word and baptism which cleanses our sins and gives us new life in the Spirit. Then he presents her to himself as a glorious, beautiful bride without any stain, wrinkle or blemish. Such a bride is extremely happy and joyful.
* There is something cleansing about being under the teaching of the Word. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water that is by the Word.

John 17:17 reads,

**“**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

* This speaks of Jesus’ work for the church. Obviously, a husband cannot spiritually cleanse his wife the same way Jesus cleanses the church.
* Yet a husband can take an active, caring interest in his wife’s spiritual health. As the priest of the home, he helps her keep “clean” before the Lord. What a holy duty it is!
* He might present her to Himself as a radiant church - This means that Jesus Himself shares His prospects, His future with His bride.
* A Christian husband should also share his prospects and future with his wife. Even as a wife will share in the husband’s future, so we will share in the glorious future of our Lord.
* Not having stain or wrinkle - Perfect holiness was absolutely necessary in one who was to be the bride of Christ. He purposes to work that in her, and to make her as she will be eternally. We will certainly be joined together eternally with Christ!

2-5, Why should husbands love their wives as their own bodies? (28-30)

***28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body.***

* When a husband practices self-sacrificing love, following the example of Christ, it is not a losing business.
* When a husband loves his wife sacrificially, it builds up their own happy union.
* The single word ‘as’ is important. As Eve was a part of Adam, taken out of his side, so the wife is to the man because she is a part of him. Husbands should be reminded of the reality of this union always.
* You cannot detach yourself from your body, so you cannot detach yourself from your wife.
* The world relies upon overly romantic ideas about love and upon feelings to make marriage work, and never really makes a person think and understand God’s design for marriage.
* He who loves his wife loves himself - Simply speaking, when you love your wife, you respect or benefit yourself.
* It is better to put it in the negative: when you neglect your wife, you neglect yourself, and it will come back to hurt you.
* We all know what it is like to neglect something – like a noise or a maintenance issue on an automobile – and it comes back to hurt us. Husbands, it is even more true regarding your wife, because she is part of you.
* Yet in reality there are many foolish husbands who hurt or neglect their wives. As they do this, they are the ones who will suffer from their own actions.
* So husbands must never think of themselves in isolation or detached from their wives. The moment he does so, he has broken the most fundamental principle of marriage.

***No one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body***

* Any man in his right mind is going to take care of his own flesh, even if it is just in the sense of feeding and clothing and caring for his own body.
* He knows that if he doesn’t, he is going to suffer for it. In the same way, if we are in our right minds we will nourish and cherish our wives because she is part of us.
* Just as Christ does the church: The principle of oneness is also dominant in the relationship between Jesus and His people.
* We cannot exist without Jesus and He cannot exist without us. We will be glorified with Him.

3. Read verses 31-33. How can the profound mystery between Jesus and the church apply to becoming one flesh in marriage? (31-32) How should wives and husbands treat each other? (33)

3-1, Read verses 31-33.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **32** This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

3-2, How can the profound mystery between Jesus and the church apply to becoming one flesh in marriage? (31-32)

***“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.***

* Paul quoted this essential passage from Genesis 2:24. As the first man and the first woman were one – she was taken from him, and then brought back to him – so it could be said of every married man today that he is joined to his wife.
* It shows a fundamental principle for promoting oneness in marriage: there must be a leaving and a joining together as a single unit.
* Paul wants us to know that it also speaks about the relationship between Christ and the church.
* Adam was incomplete without Eve who is filling what was lacking in him. And that is exactly what the church does for Jesus.
* Ephesians 1:23 says of the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is his body, **the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”**

* Jesus also pointed out this unity in His high priestly prayer before His disciples.

John 17: 20-23 reads.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— **23** I in them and you in me—so that **they may be brought to complete unity.** Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

***This is a profound mystery***

* Through Christ, God reconciles all things to himself and restores the unity of his creation. Through Christ the relationship between a husband and wife is restored and the two can become one.
* Before marriage a husband and wife are totally different people. They are two. After marriage they become one. Mathematically it does not make sense. 1+1=1?
* They are one in love—not human love, but Christ’s love. This is only possible when Christ is Lord of the family.
* Christ makes husband and wife one and restores the glorious purpose of God to them. Christ works through their relationship to sanctify them both.
* The restoration of the family is an important part of bringing unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ephesians 1:8b-10 reads,

With all wisdom and understanding, **9** he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

3-3, How should wives and husbands treat each other? (33)

***33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.***

* Paul here came back to his original topic that was about “marriage”.
* Each one of you - Here, everyone is included. We can say this about every teaching on marriage.
* A husband must love his own wife as himself - Paul again stressed the husband recognizing this unity, letting it shape his thinking and his actions.
* The wife must respect her husband - This word “respect” is the same word often used of the reverence the disciples had towards Jesus. It is a strong statement.
* The wife is to recognize this Biblical and Christian view of marriage and to regard the husband as her head, the head of this new unit.
* They are both one, but there is a head to the unit, as there is a head to our body, as Christ is the Head of the church.

**Conclusion**

Our society lacks the Biblical concept of what is truly involved in marriage. Their unity is so loose that divorce has become a major problem. Many have never understood this unity in Jesus and are still thinking in terms of their freedom and individuality. Gradually two people are asserting their own right and ended up separating. May the Lord help us to keep today’s key verse 33, so that we would promote a healthy view of marriage and raise physical and spiritual children. May we continue to pray for America to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Amen.

**One Word: Each one of you must...**