

The Purpose of Your Marriage is to Proclaim the Gospel (Eph 5:22-33)

Intro: General submission of the congregation to each other as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

-The command is to be filled with the Holy Spirit in v.18, the following participles are exegetical: speaking, singing, playing instruments, giving thanks, submitting.

-*Submission is part of being filled with the Holy Spirit*

A marriage where romance, companionship, servanthood are all oriented to Jesus Christ will bring people to one flesh, and wherever that happens the world will sit up and take notice. A few will try to discredit it; some will envy it. But many will come to bask in its light and take away a new understanding of what God may have for them.

~Gordon MacDonald

A. Specific Spirit-Filled Submission: Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands.

1. Wives, submitting is your obedient responsibility
 - a. Lit. "submit yourselves"
 - b. Husbands, it is not your role to make your wives submit
 - c. How does the church submit to Christ?

2. Submission is placing your gifts and purposes behind your husband's purposes
 - a. Concept of "Head" of the church or "Chief"
 - i. 1 Cor 11:3 – God – Christ = Man – Woman
 - b. Not my will, but your will (Jesus to the Father)
 - c. Follow me (did Jesus use the disciples gifts for His purpose?)
 - d. How does the church place its purposes behind Christ's purposes?

3. Submission is not inequality (it is a role, not a definition)
 - a. Roles of Authority in the Trinity
 - i. Son submits to the Father
 1. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 14:28
 2. Phil 2:6
 3. Luke 22:42
 - ii. The Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son
 1. John 14:16, 26; 15:26
 - iii. But they are equal:
 1. Jesus' deity: John 1; 8:58; 10:29-30; Phil 2:5ff; Matt 13:41; Hebrews 1; Mark 13:20; etc.
 2. HS deity: Acts 5:3-4; John 16:8-11; Matt 28:19
 3. Formulas: Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6
 - b. Jesus submitted to others in authority, even though He was the God-Man
 - i. Luke 2:43-51 – submitted (same word here) to his *parents*
 - ii. Matt 27:14 – made no defense of Himself to Pilate, the *governor*
 - c. The New Testament clearly teaches the qualitative equality of men and women
 - i. 1 Cor 7:2-4 – Husbands and Wives have equal conjugal rights
 - ii. 1 Cor 12:4-13, differing gifts, equally important
 - iii. Gal 3:28 – all one in Christ
 - iv. Eph 2:15 – God has brought all together under Christ

4. Submission is not being a doormat
 - a. Submission is using your gifts to further the purposes of another. **USE YOUR GIFTS!!** Speak Scripture with a bold humility to your husband. Encourage and challenge him **WITH** the Word of God.

- b. There are times in which to draw lines
 - i. There is a time for separation
 - 1. for safety
 - 2. but the general acts of submission remain the same
 - ii. not divorce, but separation.
 - iii. No abuse! No disobedience to Christ!
 - 1. Acts 5:29 – must obey God first
 - 2. If the circumstance arises where there must be a choice made between sinning against Christ and submitting to one’s husband, one must obey Christ.
 - c. There is always means for help through Jesus and His Church
5. Submission needs trust to work the best!!
- a. It is easier to submit to someone when you trust them
 - i. This is not an excuse, however, for not obeying the Lord
 - ii. Our trust needs to be in Jesus, for He is trustworthy and sovereign over our situation, so we can obey Him knowing that He is for His glory in our good
 - b. We are called to submit, however, even without trust
 - i. We can win our spouses by our humble hearts and chaste behavior
 - 1. Matt 5:16 – good works glorify God
 - 2. 1 Pet 3:1-2 – pure and honorable attitude and behavior can win spouses to the Lord
6. Look to Jesus in order to submit
- a. “He, Himself, is its Savior”
 - i. Jesus is the Savior of the church
Jesus Christ is your life, and as such He must be your strength, your wisdom, your ultimate resource from which you are to draw continuously, and upon whom you must continuously depend. ~Charles Price
 - b. Wives, you will only be able to submit in a godly manner if you keep your dependence upon Jesus. He is your Savior.
 - i. When it gets difficult, and you feel that you cannot obey the Lord is submitting to your husband because it’s hard: look to Jesus
 - ii. Believe the promise that you are righteous before God because of the blood of Christ.
 - 1. You do not need to defend your righteousness to your husband
 - 2. You can give up your own power and be seen as weak
 - 3. Christ is your glory, you don’t need your own glory

KEY: As the church submits to Christ, so also wives submit themselves to their husbands

B. Specific admonition to husbands: Love your wife in the same way that Jesus loves the church

- 1. He gave Himself up for her, you do the same
 - a. Forgive, as Christ forgave us (Eph 4:32)
 - b. Be gracious (even romantic...out of the blue) (1 Tim 1:14; Acts 15:11)
 - i. Song of Sol 1:2, “May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.”
 - c. Serve your wife (Matt 20:28)
 - i. Jesus “let His power go” in order to redeem His Bride (Phil 2:6)
 - ii. Husbands, are you letting your power go, or are you demanding respect?
 - a. Look to Jesus! Let Him be your treasure and your surety.

- b. Don't trust in your reputation or in your own righteousness and success
 - d. Be patient as Jesus is patient with us (2 Pet 3:15)
 - i. Keep your eyes on how patient Christ is with you, and love your wife out of the deep, deep, humility that the gospel provides you
 - ii. Trust in Christ as your treasure, not "your way" or your ability to transform your wife into who you would like to be (or even who God desires her to be)
 - a. Don't try to be the Holy Spirit!
 - e. Lead by example as you follow Jesus (Jesus and the Father)
 - i. Keep your eyes upon Jesus!
 - ii. When you start to trust other things, you will not love your wife for her sake, but for yours.
 - f. Sacrifice your own life and reputation for her benefit (Eph 5:2)
 - i. Jesus never ridiculed His church
 - ii. Jesus never acted selfishly toward His beloved
 - iii. Jesus drew away to be with His closest disciples (time together)
 - iv. Jesus said, "I love you more than life itself" and meant it, proving it by giving up his own life for His bride.
- 2. He desired her holiness, purity, cleansing
 - a. Are you putting your wife's spiritual well-being in priority over your toys? Your children? Your bank account?
 - b. Are you working toward encouraging your wife to wrestle with her own heart in response to the Word of God?
 - c. *Are you leading her to Christ every day?*
 - i. Remind her of Ephesians 1:3-6
 - ii. Of Colossians 1:21-23
 - iii. Of 2 Corinthians 4:17
- 3. He washed her in the water of the Word
 - a. The Word cleanses:
 - i. John 15:3
 - ii. John 17:17
 - b. First, are you leading by example by bathing in the Word yourself?
 - c. Are you challenging her with the truths of the Gospel?
 - d. Are you leading by grace, with patience, in kindness, speaking the truth in love?
 - e. He desires to present her in all her glory: beautiful, radiant, holy, blameless
 - a. Do you praise your wife?
 - b. Do you see the 99% of her desires and love for you, or do you only see the 1% where she slighted you?
 - c. A little praise of your wife goes a long way. A lot of praise for your wife sets her on fire!
- 4. Love your wives as you do your own body
 - a. -nurture, care, build it up, bring joy
 - b. Just as Christ loves and cares for His body
- 5. Bringing All Things *Together* in Christ
 - a. The Christ-Church relationship is the primary relationship for society and for humanity in the Kingdom of God.
 - b. The Marriage relationship reflects the Christ-Church relationship to the world and thus preaches the glory of Christ and the beauty of the gospel

KEY: In the same manner that Jesus loves the Church, that is giving Himself up for her sake in humility, servitude, to the point of death, so are husbands to love their wives

HUSBANDS, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND HONOR TO FORM YOUR MARRIAGE IN THE MANNER OF THE LORD JESUS AND HIS CHURCH.

1 Pet 3:7, husbands are held more responsible by God (prayers are hindered b/c of pride of not seeing wife as an honorable heir of *grace* in JC)

“Love” is the only command in this section. A wife has an easier time submitting to one whom she knows loves her, that she sees is working for her betterment, and is obviously desiring her holiness, godliness, and a strong relationship with Jesus Christ as her Redeemer.

Conclusion

What is the source of NOT wanting to submit? Is it not the desire to base our own worth and even security upon our own innate abilities or power. It is not wanting to be seen as “lesser than” what is expected and deserved. Lacking a humble and submissive heart is most often self-interested and rooted in wanting to defend MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, proving I’m right. It is self-salvation, the arrogance of NOT needing, NOT serving, NOT being saved by grace, but rather of proving myself worthy, deserving, servable, and self-sufficient. It is self-sufficiency, in actuality trying to avoid Jesus as Savior in deference to our own ability to save ourselves!! O, arrogant self-saviors, when will we learn that Jesus has done it all for us and there is nothing left to do?! We have nothing to offer God, nothing to provoke God to salvation, and nothing which beckons His grace toward us! It is solely with His love, for His glory, by His unilateral action that you are saved through faith. We cannot prove our worth to God by our ability, talent, righteousness, goodness, or wisdom. Or...are we not looking at God's opinion, but at other peoples' opinions?

Husbands, what is the source of NOT loving your wives in such a self-sacrificial way? Why can't we give up our own desires and self-serving goals so that our brides would be strengthened and built up in Christ? What is it that drives us to seek our own pleasure and attainment above the beautification of a godly woman in the splendor of faith and trust in God (i.e. not us)? Is it not the same root cause? We do not understand the grace that we've been given! We assume that we need to build our reputation in the eyes of our wives, our peers, and even in the eyes of God! We assume that it is more important that we succeed in the eyes of the world and our wives than that we live lives of repentance and deep, intense, desperate dependence upon Christ, immersing our gifts and talents in the building up of our wives in these things! O foolish, arrogant self-saviors, have you no idea that such arrogance is ANTI-CHRIST! It is not only unlike Him, is against Him! To be saved by His grace is to see that we do not deserve to be loved, to be honored, to be saved, and to see others as equally undeserving and to give yourself for them anyway out of love for Christ and for them!

My friends, there is so much conflict, tension, and selfishness in our marriages today. There is frustration and pain, woundedness and mistrust. The only way that our marriages will function to the glory of God is if we follow this pattern: Jesus and His Church. Both husbands and wives have roles to fill in this relationship of marriage and it starts with a deep humility in dependence upon Jesus alone for all that we have and a deep boldness that comes from knowing we are held secure in the arms of God because of Jesus Christ's infinitely powerful scarred hands.

If you are here today and your marriage is not what you want it to be, don't merely try to accomplish submission and self-sacrificial love. We need to go to the cross...the gospel. See Jesus now! Jesus died so that your heinous sin against God would be sentenced upon Him. He gave so that you could live. Start with your relationship with Jesus and your full dependence upon Him through the gospel, and your marriage will begin to change for the God's glory. Women you will be able to give up your power and submit because Jesus is your treasure and your trust. Men, you will be able to love without reciprocation or honor or respect because Jesus is your surety and success. He is your righteousness. Let us all learn to see that which is REAL, the glorious gospel of Jesus and live in loving submission to Him. Then, our very lives will proclaim the wondrous beauty of His grace as our marriages preach the gospel relationship between Jesus and His Bride.