

“The Christian Marriage”

Ephesians 5:22-33

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October 4, 2020

Teaching Aim: To examine the God-given roles within the Christian marriage as described in the Bible. To explore the mystery of Christ and His Church as it relates to a healthy Christian marriage. To recognize the Christian husband has been called by God to be the spiritual leader of his household. To understand it is the will of God for Christian husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and for Christian wives to respect their husbands.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The God-given role of the Christian wife (Eph. 5:22-24)

1. Why do you think God’s command for wives to submit to their husbands is such a fiery topic today (**vs. 22**)? Should it be? What does submission mean to you? How does the dictionary define the word “*submit*?” (See Dictionary) Does submission always mean inferiority? Why or why not? Does submission mean that the wife should be a doormat to her husband?

2. Who is the ultimate example of submission in the Bible? (See **Jn. 8:28-29; 10:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:3-4**) Who do we find Jesus submitting to? Is God the Son inferior to God the Father in deity? Is He different in role? What different roles do we find among the members of the holy Trinity (Father, Son & Holy Spirit)? (See **Psa. 110:1-4; Eph. 1:3-7, 13-14**)

3. What steps should be taken by Christian husbands and wives when they have an important decision to make? How about when an agreement can’t be reached? In the rare case that a decision has to be made, these steps have been followed and there still is no agreement; who is responsible before God to make the final decision? Why?

4. Why does God warn believers to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers? (See **2 Cor. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 7:1-16**) What are some of the specific challenges unequally yoked couples will face? If a Christian is in an unequally yoked marriage, how can the believer reflect Jesus Christ to the unbeliever? Why is it so important for the believing spouse to hang in there, especially when children are involved? (See **1 Cor. 7:14**) What are the only Biblical exception clauses for divorce? (See **Matt. 5:31; Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7:12-16**)

5. According to **verses 22-24**, why is the Christian wife to submit to her Christian husband? Does **verse 23** mean that the husband can lord it over His wife? What does it mean? Why is it so important for the roles of a husband and wife to be so clearly defined in Scripture? Some have tried to use **Gal. 3:26-29** to override **Eph. 6:22-23**. What is the underlying theme of **Gal. 3:26-29**? Why do you think Shoreline Community Church put the following comment in their Statement of Faith? *"We believe that marriage is ordained of God to be between one man and one woman. God's design for marriage is that it last for a lifetime (Gen. 2:23-24)."*

6. Would Christ ever ask the Church to do anything contrary to what is stated in the Word of God (**vs. 24**)? Why or why not? Does **verse 24** mean that wives are to be subject to their husbands in *"everything?"* How about when the unbelieving husband asks his wife to violate the principles of God's word? How should the Christian wife respond when her unbelieving husband doesn't want her to go to Church or Bible study? (See **Acts 5:29; Heb. 10:24-25**)

7. What chapter of the Bible presents a remarkable picture of the virtuous wife? (See **Prov. 31**) In reading **Prov. 31**, how many virtues of a godly wife can you pick out?

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Part II: The God-given role of the Christian husband (Eph. 5:25-30)

1. Initially, it seems like men get off easier than women, but under closer scrutiny we find just the opposite to be true. Paul spends twice as much time defining the responsibilities of the husband as he does the wife. The wives are told to submit to their husbands while the husbands are told to die for their wives. What command is given to the Christian husband in **verse 25**? How did Christ demonstrate *"agape"* love for His Bride (the Church)? NOTE: *"agape"* means: *"An unselfish sacrificial love."* Why do you think husbands have such a hard time fulfilling this command? Is this an area you struggle with in your marriage?

2. God has ordained a divine order within the marriage relationship, what is it? What relationship should be first in the life of every Christian? How about second? Third? Fourth? Why is it important for us to keep our relationships in this order? According to **1 Pet. 3:7**, what happens when a husband is not right with his wife? Is this true for the wife as well?

3. According to **verse 26**, how does Christ sanctify (*or set apart*) His Bride (the Church)? (See **John 3:1-5; 15:3; 17:17; Tit. 3:5**) What does **verse 26** teach us about the spiritual headship of a husband within the marriage relationship? What are some of the best ways for a Christian husband to sanctify his wife? How will Christ present His bride to Himself at the wedding supper of the Lamb (**vs. 27**)? According to **Gen. 2:24** and **1 Cor. 11:7-9**, who did God create to be man's glory? What are some ways that a Christian husband can remove the wrinkles and blemishes from his wife spiritually (**vv. 26-27**)?

4. What do verses **28 & 29** teach us about a husband's responsibility to physically and emotionally take care of his wife? What can Christian husbands learn today from the way Christ takes care of His Bride (the Church)? Men, how are you doing in your role as a Christian husband? What are some areas that you need improvement on?

5. According to **verse 30**, what unusual relationship do the Christian husband and wife have with the Lord Jesus Christ?

Part III: The "oneness" of the husband and wife relationship (Eph. 5:31-33)

1. A big problem for many married couples today is their relationship with their parents and in-laws. Why do you think these relationships cause so many problems? What does **verse 31** indicate about where priority should lie when it comes to the marriage relationship? When was this ordinance first given? (See **Gen. 2:24**) Who confirmed this truth in the New Testament? (See **Matt. 19:4-6**) How does the wedding ceremony beautifully portray this transition?

2. What is "*the great mystery*" referred to in **verse 32**? (See Commentaries) What is the husband commanded to do in **verse 33**? What are some ways that a husband can show that kind of love in our society today? What is the wife commanded to do in **verse 33**? Why do a lot of wives have trouble with this?

3. In what way is the respect commanded of a presiding judge in a court of law a good example of the kind of respect wives should have for their husbands? Is the judge always right in his or her decisions? Is the judge always worthy of respect as a person or in position only? In what way should the wife respect her husband?

4. Charles Spurgeon said, *"The True Christian husband ought to be to his wife as Christ is to His church."* Do you think wives would have trouble submitting to and respecting their husbands if their husbands would only treat them like Christ treats His Church? What is the biggest obstacle of the wife respecting her husband?

5. Husbands, what are some practical ways that you can love your wife like Christ loved the Church? Will you commit today to be the spiritual leader of your family? Wives, how can you better fulfill your role as a godly wife? What are some practical steps you can take today to demonstrate respect for your husband?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for life!*

- All Christians should submit to one another out of reverence for God.
- Wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord.
- The wife is in no way inferior to her husband spiritually, but simply has a different role.
- Christian husbands are called by God to be the spiritual leaders of their families.
- Wives are commanded by God *"to respect their husbands."*
- Husbands are commanded by God *"to love their wives"* with the same kind of self-sacrificial love that Christ loved the Church.
- Marriage done God's way will get better and better, becoming a taste of heaven on earth.