

THE CONCEPT OF LOVE AND SUBMISSION - PART 2

Reasons for a Christian wife's submission – Ephesians 5:22 - 24

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.

The command given in Ephesians 5:22 is difficult. God knows this, so He also includes *reasons* for His command. He wants us to understand the principle behind the command, and to understand that God isn't simply making up rules.

- a. The first reason for a Christian wife's submission to her husband is found in Ephesians 5:22, in the words **as to the Lord**. This means that the motive of her submission must be **obedience and respect to Jesus**, instead of obedience and respect to her husband.
- b. The second reason for a wife's submission to her husband - **For the husband is the head of the wife**: Paul states here it is because the husband is **the head of the wife**. In its full sense **head** has the idea of *headship* and *authority*. It means to have the appropriate responsibility to lead, and the matching accountability. It is right and appropriate to submit to someone who is our **head**.
 - i. When you look at the Biblical idea of headship in other passages such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 3, the emphasis is put constantly upon the fact that the man was created first and not the woman. So there is a natural priority for man. The Scriptures also emphasize the fact that woman was made out of the man, taken out of the man to show a connection to him, and that she was meant to be a 'help' for man, a help for man that was 'meet' for him.
 - ii. Man was created first. But not only that; man was also made the lord of creation. It was to man that this authority was given over the brute animal creation; it was man who was called upon to give them names. **Here are indications that man was put into a position of leadership, lordship, and authority and power**. He takes the decisions, he gives the rulings. That is the fundamental teaching with regard to this whole matter.
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 11:7-10 applies the same principle to the issue of leadership in the church: *For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.* (1 Corinthians 11:7-10).

This passage makes the point clearly and strongly. God created Adam first, and gave Him responsibility over Eve. This happened *before* the fall. Therefore, this passage makes it clear that before and after the fall, God ordained there be different roles between husband and wife. The difference in roles between husband and wife are not the result of the fall, and are not erased by our new life in Jesus.

- iv. What Paul is saying is that the woman is different, that she is the complement of the man. What he does prohibit is that woman should seek to be manly, that is, that a woman should seek to behave as a man, or that a woman should seek to usurp the place, the position, and the power which have been given to man by God Himself. It is not slavery something that God has ordained.

- v. When a woman gets married she gives up her name, she takes the name of her husband. That is biblical, and also the custom of the whole world. That teaches us the relationship between the husband and the wife. It is not the husband who changes his name, but the wife.

- c. The third reason for a wife's submission to the husband is given as - **As also Christ is head of the church . . . Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands:** the wife should submit because the relationship of the husband and wife is a model of the union between Jesus and the Church.
 - i. This point is simple and clear. We have a model for the marriage relationship: the relationship between Jesus and the church. In that relationship, the headship of Jesus Christ is unquestioned. So also is the husband the head of the "team" that is the one-flesh relationship of husband and wife.

 - ii. Perhaps the Christian wife doesn't want a "head." Perhaps she doesn't want a "leader" of the team between husband and wife. If that is the case, the wife does not understand a Biblical marriage, and will always be working against it in one way or another. It is the same dynamic as a Christian saying he doesn't want Jesus to be his "head."

To be continued ...