

“Submission—Marriage—Christ—Church,” *Ephesians 5:22-33*, page 1145

Introduction:

1. God has a very workable plan for each aspect of our lives.
2. In this New Testament book, the apostle Paul shares God’s plan for:
 - A. Marriage.
 - B. Church family.
 - C. Parent-children.
3. These relationships are built on the foundation of:
 - A. Love.
 - B. Respect.
 - C. Trust.
 - D. Obedience.
 - E. Submission.

I. Submission.

- A. Submission is a reality of life, and everyone is required to be submissive to something or someone.
 1. We submit to the laws of nature.
 2. We submit to the laws of our nation.
 3. We submit to parents.
 4. We submit to our boss at our place of employment.
 5. We submit to small bacteria that make us ill.
 6. We submit to the aging process.
 7. We will submit to death.
- B. In our scripture lesson today, the apostle Paul outlines the progression of submission according to God’s plan.
 1. Jesus is in submission to God, the Father. *Matthew 26:39*: “*He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’*”
 2. The church/individuals/husbands/are in submission to Jesus.
 3. The wife is in submission to the husband.
 4. The children are in submission to their parents.
- C. When this order of submission is followed, everyone will experience a life of harmony and well-being.
- D. It would be good to acknowledge there is no room for harsh dictatorial rule in this order of submission.
 1. The basis for submission must be trust and love.
 2. Submission also requires mutual respect and consideration.
- E. Mark Holmes:

“The first three verses, directed to wives, become distorted if they are not considered in light of the verses which follow. While the submission to one another may not be mutual by means of the same expression, it is mutual in the sense of responsibility. Any attempt to interpret this section with a ‘Me, Tarzan; you, Jane’ mentality distorts the first three verses, and must completely deny the instructions that follow. Wives are to submit to their husbands; **husbands** are to **love your wives** (5:25). In Paul’s instructions to the husbands, he presents two ways by which this love is to be expressed: **as Christ loved the church**, and **as their own bodies** (5:25,28).

Loving one’s wife as Christ loved the church can be summed up by one word—sacrifice. Paul states it as, He **gave himself up for her** (5:25). Here is a love that leaves self-gratification out of the relationship. Jesus, in order to express His love for the church, came among us to die. In His own words, he came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom (see Matthew 20:28). The husband’s love for his wife should exemplify these same attributes. His life should become secondary; the life of his wife becomes primary.”
- G. We started with submission in our consideration today because submission must be learned early in life.
 1. The quality of our Christian lives = submission.
 2. Our relationship to life = submission.

II. Marriage.

- A. A quality marriage does not come easily.
 1. Developing a good marriage is the most difficult task we will encounter.
 2. There are hundreds of obstacles to overcome as we strive to build a strong marriage.

- B. Every marriage takes two individuals: Man/woman put into an intimate relationship of living together twenty-four—seven.
 - 1. We have different parents.
 - 2. We were raised in different environments.
 - 3. Often we were taught different ways of doing daily tasks.
 - 4. We experienced different eating habits.
 - 5. We had different siblings.
 - 6. We were exposed to different life experiences.
 - 7. Many times we experienced a different style of family structure.
- C. Now, we expect two individuals to live together in love and harmony.
- D. I cannot speak concerning your marriage, but it is a miracle that Charlene and I have celebrated forty-three years of marriage!!!!
 - 1. Communication and mutual agreement is imperative in establishing a quality marriage.
 - 2. As an administrative leader, never cast a deciding vote.
 - 3. Just because authority is granted, it is seldom a wise decision to use that authority.

III. Jesus Christ.

- A. A personal relationship with Jesus makes submission and marriage a living reality.
- B. Jesus cannot—will not control our lives making us a robot, but Jesus will strongly influence our lives if we allow Him the opportunity.
- C. We must determine in our minds to give Jesus a chance by:
 - 1. Reading our Bibles.
 - 2. Taking time to pray.
 - 3. Listening to the counsel of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. Including some quality Christian music in our tape and C.D. library.
 - 5. Hanging out with the right kind of friends.
- D. We must understand what God is teaching us in the scriptures and then do our best to live daily those teachings.

IV. Church.

- A. Every physical family needs to fellowship with a good Bible-believing church family.
- B. This has been huge in how Charlene and I were raised.
 - 1. We attended the same church in Eaton Rapids.
 - 2. I think we were in the same youth group.
 - 3. My best friends attended that small church.
 - 4. We hunted together, went to ballgames, etc.
- C. The church/family is not perfect.
 - 1. We have our struggles because we are unique individuals.
 - 2. We have a variety of likes and dislikes.
 - 3. We come from different backgrounds.
 - 4. We also have many common beliefs and goals.
- D. Charlene and I have received many positive things from the various church families that we have fellowshiped with:
 - 1. Friendship.
 - 2. Encouragement.
 - 3. Worship and Bible studies.
 - 4. Recreation.
 - 5. Comfort.
 - 6. Inspiration.
- E. Our church families helped us establish our marriage and family.

Conclusion:

- 1. Developing strong relationships is the greatest challenge we will face in this life.
- 2. It begins with our relationship with Jesus Christ and extends to our spouses, children, extended families, and church families.
- 3. Quality relationships are hard work, but they also are the most rewarding aspects of life!
- 4. A quality life is realized when we find the biblical balance between submission—marriage—Jesus Christ—church.