

Roles of Wives and Husbands

Ephesians 5:22-23

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A wife was going to be 55 years old next week, and so that caring husband said, “Sweetie, what would you like for your birthday?” She thought for a minute, scratched her head, and said, “I’d like to be 10 again.” So on her birthday, the husband comes up, grabs her, and says, “We’ve got a full day planned!” He takes her to Six Flags Over Texas in which they commence to go down Judge Roy Scream. They go to all of the roller coasters, and they get on that Star Wars thing that makes you sick. Then they go and eat all things fried. They have a corn dog or two, and they have a chili pie, and it is all good. Then afterwards, he takes her to McDonald’s in which she gets a Happy Meal—super sized. He tries to get her to crawl through all of the jungle paraphernalia that is out there. By that evening when he gets her home, she is disheveled and tired, and he looks at her with a big smile and says, “Well, how was it to be 10 again?” She looks up with one eye and said, “I actually meant my dress size.” The truth of the matter is, sometimes communication is not always what we hope it will be. Men and women are different. We really are, and our text today is going to demonstrate for us just exactly how different men and women are.

I think men and women also communicate in different ways. When you look at it as far as communication, men often are like Jack Webb, “Just the facts, ma’am. Just the facts.” Women, on the other hand, they might want all the juicy details, “... and then what did he say?” They want to go a little bit deeper. Concerning facing problems, men might be Mr. Fix-It, whereas a woman might say, “Well, now help me talk through this thing. Let me get my arms around this.” Coping with stress, men often conceal their feelings while women want to reveal their feelings. It is really quite different. In regard to the value of expression, for men only the biggies count; for women, every gift counts the same. Men are motivated by, “I want you to appreciate me for what I do.” Whereas a woman might say, “I want you to cherish me for who I am.” Indeed, we are different.

What we are going to see here in this highly contested, highly debated, and highly taken-out-of-context passage of scripture is what God has to say about this big word that people like to talk about and that people get so confused about. What does the word *submission* mean?

If you want to take it all the way back to Genesis 1:1, God is in the business of bringing order out of chaos. Therefore, God has established two different pillars of society. All of society rests on these two pillars—authority and submission. All of society has to do with authority and submission. I suggest today that if you have a problem with authority, you will probably have a problem with submission. If you have a problem with submission, then you will probably have a problem with authority, not realizing that God is trying to bring order out of chaos in the home, in the church, in government, in all of society. What has happened is that somewhere along the line, someone has misunderstood the meaning and content and intent of these words, and they have totally messed it up and turned it upside down. But God works in bringing order out of chaos.

Let's look in Ephesians 5. We are going to focus on verse 22. But before we read verse 22, we must read verse 21. This is significant. Notice in chapter 5 and in verse 21, the Bible says, "*Submitting yourselves one to another.*" That is a very interesting word "*submitting yourselves.*" It actually comes from the Greek word *hupotasso*. *Submitting* comes from that word. *Hupo* means *to be underneath*, and *tasso* means *to line up*. So what this word says in verse 21, we are to line up underneath each other—submitting to one another. If we don't get any further today, we need to understand that God is about mutual submission. From time to time, we are all to submit one to another.

The Bible says something very, very helpful to us in Psalm 127:1, "*Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain.*" You can try harder, and you can watch Oprah or whatever you are in to, and you can try to get all of the self-help stuff you want to, but unless God is building the house, you don't stand a chance.

Our text today begins in verse 22, and we are going to go all the way through this, the Lord willing. We are going to talk today about the roles of wives and husbands. In verse 22, the Bible says, "*Wives, submit to*" (remember that *hupotasso* means *to line up under*), "*your own husbands as to the Lord,*²³ *for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.*²⁴ *Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives should [submit] to their husbands in everything.*"

We love our church. I will tell you that I have people all around our area say to me, "I read your billboard." I can't believe your billboard is saying "Orange Power" or "Boomer Sooner," and you might be wondering that yourself. Why are we promoting football games on Saturday on our marquee? Because it gets people to read it. It is amazing how many people tell me they read our marquee. Have you wondered why we are doing that? One guy told me he was reading it and he started looking at it in the rearview mirror to see what it was going to say. So next time, they are going to be reading it, and we are going to be saying a good word for Jesus. We are building our clientele.

Some of you are Oklahoma State Cowboy fans. That is great. Some of you are Oklahoma Sooner fans, and that is great too. Who is the most valuable player on your team? You have a great running back. You could certainly say he is the most valuable. On the other hand, you might have the leading receiver in the nation. But when they get to the huddle, who is talking? The quarterback. He is the only one talking in the huddle. When they get together to huddle, who calls the plays? Who is the most valuable player on the team? Probably the lineman. If they never hike the ball to the quarterback, the quarterback can never do anything, and so it is really a team effort. But somebody has to be bringing order out of what would be a chaotic situation. God has delineated and has set up certain structure and order. In football, it is the quarterback who is calling the shots. I don't know why, but there is a reason that God has said there is an order in the home. We are to submit one to another.

Let me give you a definition here of submission. See if this might help you. Submission is when two people equal in God's eyes voluntarily recognize the God-designed order of the other. Two people equal in God's eyes see this order which God has set up. I think it is really significant that there is this order.

I. The Role of the Wife

The role of the wife is submission. I did not say it. We are going to explain why I think the Bible puts it that way. It is not a bad word. I said a minute ago we are equal. Well, we are not the same.

Which is more valuable? Denim or silk? Denim for men. Silk for women. Which is more valuable? Stoneware or fine china? To me, the fine china is really more valuable, and it is more precious, but they both serve the

purpose, if you will.

The only wifely duty that Paul insists on in verses 21-22 is submission. It is the only thing that she is asked to do. Here are three keys to submission:

A. Submission is Earned by the Husband

Submission is to be earned by the husband. When submission is prompted by the unselfish love of a husband, then we won't have a problem. Wives should have no problem submitting to a loving husband.

B. Submission is Voluntary by the Wife

Not only is submission earned by the husband, but submission is also voluntary by the wife. You might find this phrase in verse 22 interesting, but it is not a positive command here. It is a strong appeal, "*Wives, submit to your own husbands.*" Every institution must have a head. A church has a pastor. I know there are those of you who maybe feel like you could do better than me, and I would say, "Great! Go with everyone else and start you one." But God has called me right now to lead us. You have to have a head, and you have to have a leader. Anything without a head is dead. Anything with two heads is a what? A monster. You have to have some order in the midst of chaos.

C. Submission is Patterned After the Church

Submission is also patterned after the church. We are to submit, the Bible says, in everything. That is the context of the home. It is a team effort.

Wives, this is just between us. Here are several things that your husband needs:

- A husband needs a woman whose hope is in God. You can see it right there in our verses. Her hope is in God.
- A woman whose inner beauty is more significant than her outer beauty.
- A woman who respects the husband.
- A husband needs a lover, not a mother. A Biblical example is Solomon's wife. Listen to the Bible in the Song of Solomon 2:14, "*My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crevices of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.*"
- A husband needs a friend, not a critic. A Biblical example is Job's wife. She said, "Hey, why don't you just curse God and die?" A husband needs a friend, not a critic.
- A husband needs respect and not ridicule. Our Biblical example of this is Esther. The Bible says in Esther 5:1-2 that she showed her face, and her husband, the king, was proud of her.

II. The Role of the Husband

The next part of the text is really significant. Notice what the text has to say. I'm in Ephesians 5, and I'm going to begin in verse 25, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her,*²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her in the washing of water by the word.*²⁷ *He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless.*²⁸ *In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*²⁹ *For no one ever hates his own flesh, but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,*³⁰ *since we are members of His body.*³¹ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*"

I think the world has tried to get this upside down because the world has said, "Women, you are a woman. Watch you roar. You don't need to submit to anyone." But the truth of the matter is, the stronger indictment is on the husband. Would you rather be asked to line up under someone or be willing to die for someone? Husbands, you are to love your wife as Christ loved the church. What did Christ do for the church? He died for the church. If your wife and your family believes that you love them so much that you would be willing to sacrifice yourself for their wellbeing, there would be no problem with mutual submission in your household. What if a wife thought, "This guy loves me more than he loves his own self!" The role of the wife is to submit. The role of the husband is to love.

I have asked myself this all week as I have been trying to prepare for you, "Why would the wife be asked to submit, and why would the husband be asked to love and not vice versa?" I think it has to do with the fact that we are different, and we are motivated differently. The supreme duty of the husband is to love your wife—to delight in your wife.

Verses 25 says, "*as also Christ loved the church.*" The husband loves the wife by meeting needs. The Bible never commands a wife to love her husband. I think that is interesting. I think a part of that is there is something innate, there is something maternal, there is something naturally loving about the female. You know, we are different—equal but different. We see, I think, very clearly that the husband is to love the wife "*as also Christ loved the church.*" In verses 28 and 29, as His own body but furthermore with a love that is above all other relationships. The love of the husband must be for his wife greater than his love for his parents, greater than his love for his children.

Notice in verse 31b it says, "*and be joined to his wife.*" That word *joined* actually means to be bonded, to be glued. Do you remember the commercial for Crazy Glue where the guy has the work helmet on and he is holding on and he is dangling with the Crazy Glue? He could not be separated. Nothing could break the bond. Well, that is the picture we get—that a husband should be bonded and bound to his wife.

We are being practical today. Husbands, your wife needs you to love her as Christ loved the church. Husbands, your wife needs you to be a protector and a provider. What I believe women want more than anything is security and for you to provide an atmosphere that is secure, that is safe. That will breed a wonderful home relationship.

To be understanding of her needs, to show her honor. The Bible calls it a weaker vessel. Think of silk and denim. Which is more valuable? Silk. Which tears easier? Silk. I think that is what is means by this idea of the weaker vessel. We could go all the way to Genesis 1 if you would want to.

How do you accomplish this, men? By having a passion for the Word of God. It is not by working harder. It is not by making more money. If your wife sees that you are trying to lead your home by the precepts and by the principles of the Word of God, that will breed security in your home, even when there is more month than there is money left in the month. That will breed security.

Finally, God wants you, men, to be a Godly warrior. Now, I think we do a lot of things very well at our church. The thing that we probably do as well as anything in our church is karate. Right now we have like 150 people a week in our church in karate. I'm in there with my grandkids. One thing I'm learning from our Sensei is about a warrior, and God has called us to be a Godly warrior. A warrior does a couple of things. This is what Sensei

says. You will always see throughout the Bible that a warrior is running. I'm getting kind of in the vibe to run a little bit because the Bible calls us to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint, but also a warrior is to be one who is a fighter. Interesting. I mean, that nomenclature might not work for you, but the fact is we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness. I think that we are in a fight. I believe we are in a spiritual battle. I believe, men, if we will stand up on the authority of the Word of God and we can say, "In the name of Jesus, I'm going to stand against the world," I think that is going to bring unbelievable security in the life of our home. God wants us to be a Godly warrior.

Six things that your wife needs:

- Your wife needs to be a partner not a possession.
- Your wife needs conversation not competition. You come home after flapping your jaw all day long. You know, men only speak so many words a day. You have already used your words up by the time you get home, and mama just wants to talk. How do you talk? With your eyes. That is why there is a pause button on the remote. Because for whatever reason, she always wants to talk at the most critical time of the game. And so you say, "Yes, dear," because you know that proverbial game is going to be there when you get back.
- A woman needs compliments not condemnation.
- A woman needs affection not abuse.
- A woman needs a leader not a loner.
- A woman needs love not a lecture. She needs to see a husband that loves her in a sacrificial way—the Bible says, in a sanctifying way, in a cleansing way, and in a supreme way.

A guy by the name of Ogden Nash said this, "To keep your marriage cup brimming with love, in your loving cup, whenever you are wrong, admit it; whenever you are right, shut up."

III. Nine Words That Will Change Your Marriage

I have given you a lot of numbers today. I think this is like the best stuff so far. I have 9 words, husbands or wives, married or not married—maybe one day, maybe never again. Whatever your case is, these are 9 words that are going to help you in your relationship.

The first three words come under the category of *honesty*: "I was wrong." The Bible says, "*Don't let the sun go down on your anger.*" (Ephesians 4:26). So there are the first 3 words.

The next 3 words of the 9 great words that will change your marriage are: "Please forgive me." I think for some of us we think if we get too vulnerable, if we get too real, if we say too much, it is going to lose some of our torque. Here is what is really cool. If you will combine these two sets of words, "Please forgive me. I was wrong." That is powerful!

Here are the last 3 words that are going to help change your marriage. The first 3 have to do with honesty, "I was wrong." The second 3 have to do with humility, "Please forgive me." That is not just remorse or regret, but it is really repentance. The last 3 words have to do with harmony. "I forgive you." Let me say a word about forgiving. Forgiving is not forgetting. Forgiving is forgiving in spite of remembering. If you have really ever been hurt, you are not going to forget it. What you do is you choose. It is choice. I choose to forgive you. In spite of the fact that you really hurt me, I forgive you. These are 9 words that will change your marriage. "I was wrong. Please forgive me. I forgive you."

The promise of marriage has certain criteria, certain bases if you will. First of all, marriage is made before God. Witnessed by others to be faithful, to honor one another, to love one another, to cherish one another, and it is

kind of an unconditional thing for a lifetime. God wants to deal with you where you are today, not where you have been. I think if you sought forgiveness and repentance, God has cast that as far as the east is from the west. But God wants to deal with us starting today. Hallelujah! Hallelujah to the King of Kings. He wants to deal with us today just as we are.