

Marriage and the Gospel
Ephesians 5:22-33

Intro –

Listening to a marriage sermon can be very dangerous.

Self-righteousness

Frustration with your spouse

Discontentment in your marriage

Covetousness of another person's spouse or marriage

Looking only to jab an elbow or land a sideways glance at your spouse

Diagram of what to focus on

Matthew 7:1-5

Matthew 7:5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

How do you know you are seeing the problem clearly? Could it be that your vision is distorted. Like an umpire in a baseball game with a severe vision impairment – would you trust his judgment?

1. Marriage is designed to reflect the **gospel**.

Ephesians 5 tells us as much about Jesus and the gospel as it does marriage.

Because it is woven throughout the passage, I want to pull out these points at the beginning so we can see them all lined out.

Jesus is the head of the church (v. 23)

Jesus is the savior of church (v. 23)

The church is subject to Christ (v. 24)

We respond in glad obedience, we're not just here doing our own thing, we're following the mission He gave us to make disciples

Jesus loved the church and gave Himself up for her (v. 25)

Jesus died to sanctify the church and present her holy and blameless (vv. 26-27)

Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church because we are part of His body (vv. 29-30)

- i. Nourish – to feed and bring up to maturity, same word used in Ephesians 6:4 of parents "bringing up" their children
- ii. Cherish – to tenderly care for, literally "impart warmth"

1. **1 Thessalonians 2:7** But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children.

- iii. Friends, if you are in Christ and therefore part of the church, Jesus tenderly cares for you and wants to bring you up to maturity.

Marriage – can't focus on tactics and overlook the overall purpose

Can't focus on marriage "tactics" – 8 steps for better communication, 3 was to improve your sex life, etc. if we don't understand the "strategy" – What is marriage for? What is the meaning of marriage?

Or if you merely come to marriage and say, the Biblical view is man leads, wife submits. The end. Big problem! Leadership and submission aren't defined and there still isn't an end goal that clarifies anything.

2. A husband should reflect Jesus' loving leadership for the church. (vv. 25-31)

Deliberately covering these sections out of order. I think many of the reasons we struggle with the instruction to wives here is because we miss what it says to husbands.

Only one command for husbands – love. Leadership is assumed, but not commanded to lead, commanded to love. Love is at the heart of his leadership.

a. A husband should lovingly sacrifice (v. 25)

i. Jesus' love was demonstrated by the cross.

ii. *What are some ways that a husband can show sacrificial love for his wife? What might he sacrifice for her?*

1. What should a husband sacrifice? It doesn't say.

2. A thousand small ways – probably not one big event where you thwart a home invasion by tackling a masked intruder while telling your wife to run.

a. Getting up to give the baby her pacifier for the 10th time so an exhausted first time mom can get a little sleep.

b. Taking initiative to figure out what makes her feel loved on her birthday

3. Time, money, jumping in and covering a task that is usually considered "hers"

4. Consider the time wasters in your life, even if they aren't bad in themselves. What might you need to limit if you were married? Video games, watching SportsCenter 4 times in a row

iii. Tim Keller – "The deep happiness that marriage can bring . . . lies on the far side of sacrificial service in the power of the Spirit."

b. A husband should lovingly nourish and cherish his wife as if she is his own body (v. 29-31)

i. *What are ways that we nourish and cherish our own bodies?*

1. Feed it several times a day, nurture wounds, clothing

ii. In some cultural settings, these are words they need to hear. If you are concerned for the rights of women around the world – to be protected from abuse, sexual exploitation, to be educated – the Bible is an ally, not an obstacle.

c. A husband should lovingly lead for the benefit of his family

i. You can see parallels in other patterns of leadership in the Bible.

ii. **Matthew 20:25-28** But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and

whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

1. Don't lord authority over people, serve them – do what is very best for them

iii. **1 Peter 5:1-3** Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

1. Elders – shepherd, exercise oversight – so there is a leadership component to the authority

2. But do it voluntarily, not for sordid gain (merely what you can get out of it)

3. Don't lord it over those allotted to your charge (again, there is a responsibility, a burden with leadership) but be examples – leadership is first by example. It isn't only by example but if the example is lacking then the leadership will be severely flawed.

d. A husband should lovingly learn about his wife

i. **1 Peter 3:7** You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

ii. What is your wife most worried about right now? What would make for a special night together? What does she appreciate when you do around the house?

iii. Not just understand – but live with her in an understanding way. Act on it!

iv. "as with someone weaker" – may be referring to the general principle that women are usually physically weaker than men. Men should not use that as an excuse to abuse their wives or threaten them to get their way though. They should show them honor.

v. If you are concerned about the abuse of women around the world, the Bible is your ally, not your enemy.

3. A wife should reflect the church's willing, trusting submission to Jesus' leadership (vv. 22-24, 33; 1 Peter 3:1-4)

There can be an understandable trepidation with the concept of submission. Many men have surely misused perhaps this very passage to abuse their wives, to lord their leadership over them, to micromanage their lives. The fact that some distort the meaning to be self serving does not negate the true meaning in the passage.

If we conclude that this (submission) is a bad deal then what Jesus calls us to is a bad deal, or we misunderstand what is being taught here.

Submission is "as to the Lord" – not that she treats her husband as the Lord but that submission to your spouse is ultimately in obedience to the Lord.

1 Peter 3:1-4

Wayne Grudem in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*

a. What submission does not mean

i. Submission does not mean giving up independent thought.

1. Is there an assumed independent thought going on in this passage?
 - a. Absolutely! Wife is a Christian and the husband is not.
 2. Assumes that the wife has pondered, considered, understood, and respond to God's word herself even though her husband has not.
 3. There is still room within this framework for a wife to have an independent mind – to think, consider, and disagree with her husband.
- ii. Submission does not mean a wife should give up efforts to **influence** her husband.
1. She is encouraged to influence her husband to Christ. The passage simply shows her the best way to do that – more actions than words although words will come into play because someone can't understand the gospel apart from words.
 2. **Proverbs 21:9** It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
 - a. Not the kind of wife that makes her husband want to live on the corner of a roof because of her constant nagging
- iii. Submission does not mean a wife should give in to every **demand** of her husband.
1. Shouldn't abandon Christ if he told her to.
 2. Must maintain chaste (morally pure) behavior so can't follow husband into sin.
 3. Remember that the first priority of submission is to the Lord.
- iv. Submission is not based on lesser **intelligence** or **competence**.
1. The woman in Prov. 31 is highly competent
 - a. She makes great things with her hands, her husband trusts her, she considers a field and buys it and plants a vineyard from the money, cares for the poor, has a business selling clothes, speaks wisdom
 2. The issue isn't intelligence but order.
- v. Submission does not imply **inequality** of person.
1. Both are equally made in the image of God
 - a. **Genesis 1:27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 2. Both are equal in Christ
 - a. **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 3. Submission isn't a matter of value, worth, or equality. It has to do with functions and roles.
 4. Husband is told to show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life (3:7)
- b. What submission does mean
- i. An inner quality of **gentleness** that affirms the leadership of her husband
 1. To voluntarily place yourself under his leadership and empower his leadership.

2. Husband is never told to make his wife submit or punish her for not submitting, different than parent/child, govt/citizen, employer/employee
- ii. A willingness to follow his lead for the family
- iii. Submission is to your own husband
 1. Notice the call isn't a blanket command to be submissive to all men but to your husband.
- iv. What does this mean on a very practical level?
 1. Or in *My Big, Fat, Greek Wedding* – "The husband is the head but the wife is the neck and she turns the head anyway that she wants."
 2. In most situations it comes down more to attitude than action.
 3. It's not a card that the husband should play (we're going to do this because I'm the leader . . .)
 4. It's an attitude of respect toward the husband in such a way that he knows he has his wife's support.
 - a. She's not cutting him down with half-jokes, not rolling her eyes, not constantly pushing back at every idea he suggests or initiative he takes.
 5. However, if it comes down to a decision needing to be made, and after much discussion and prayer they still can't agree, then this would say that the husband has the responsibility to make that decision and the wife should support her husband in that decision.
 6. If she disagrees, she can share her concerns and opinions, pray for him and the situation, but in the end she should support him (maybe even saying, "Honey, I really don't think this is the right decision but I love you and will support you in this.")
 - a. In the end they own that decision together as a team
 - b. Undercutting a decision by constantly reminding him of his mistakes, sniping at him that he should make a different decision, etc. wouldn't work on a basketball team, would work in the military, wouldn't work at a job, wouldn't work at a church, and it doesn't work in a home.
4. The marriage union should reflect a Christian's union with Christ. (vv. 31-32)
 - a. **Genesis 2:23-24** The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
 - i. Leave, cleave, weave
 - ii. Leaving – cutting cords of emotional and financial dependence
 1. Not relying on parents for financial support, not going to mom or dad first when hurting or struggling but to your spouse, top priority for the holidays is no longer what your parents expect. There is still honor and respect for parents, but the loyalty changes.
 - iii. Cleave – loyalty and priority is for your husband or wife

iv. Weave – become one

1. Sexually in a union that can produce children who are literally a mixture of you and your spouse
 2. But more than sex – it is a sharing of a life together.
 - a. Bank account, house, dreams, goals, decisions
 3. Shows why loving leadership and respectful, appropriate submission are critical – how can you be unified if one or both parties pursues their own selfish desires without considering the other?
- b. Singles – marriage is the picture of the greater reality of Christ and the church. You may not be part of the picture but you're part of something greater – the reality.
- c. Have I responded to Christ in saving faith?

Additional resources:

The Meaning of Marriage by Tim and Kathy Keller

The Exemplary Husband by Stuart Scott

The Excellent Wife by Martha Peace

Rocking the Roles by Lewis and Hendricks

Tying the Knot by Rob Green (pre-marriage)

Marry Wisely, Marry Well by Ernie Baker (great for singles desiring marriage)

Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (available for purchase online or for a free download at <http://www.desiringgod.org/books/recovering-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood>)

The Role of the Husband and *The Role of the Wife* CD messages by Brad Bigney - available in the lobby or online at gbcmt.org → "ministries" → "Biblical Counseling" → "Biblical Counseling Conference" → click for 2015 and 2014 conferences to find these messages

It's an hour long – if you have a 10 minute drive to work you can finish it in 3 days!