

Submission In The Marriage Relationship

Ephesians 5:22-23 [New King James] *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.”*

One of the most abused and misunderstood concepts about marriage is a wife’s submission to her husband.

Anyone who has read God’s Word, the Christian Bible, knows what is said about the subject of submission but few know what it means.

Probably at no time in human history has the marital relationship between husbands and wives been fully understood and properly practiced.

Because there have been so few positive examples, the truth has often been distorted.

Frankly, throughout most of human history, women have been put down, impeded in development and even abused.

As a result of this, to many feminists the Christian Bible has appeared to be a male chauvinist book exalting men and degrading women.

Some women’s liberationists have totally misunderstood the writings of the apostle Paul regarding the marital relationship and believe he hated both marriage and women.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Paul hated neither women or marriage, but he did teach God’s way of life regarding marriage.

To have a happy and fulfilled marriage what the Creator God inspired Paul to write must be followed.

God is **not** a male chauvinist.

Why male and female?

In the beginning, the Creator God did make humans either male or female, by design and perfect forethought.

The woman was not a second consideration.

The order of creation implies no superiority in quality or value.

The female was not, is not, never will be a subspecies to the male, for at least two great purposes, God designed humans male and female.

The most obvious reason is for human reproduction.

When God created Adam, He permitted Adam to be alone for long enough for him to discover that in all the rest of the physical creation, *“there was not found a helper comparable to him,”* [**Genesis 2:20**].

Adam alone would never have been able to reproduce, as God had commanded humanity should, [Genesis 1:27-28].

Genesis 2:21-23 [New King James] *“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam 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.’”*

So God took of the same body, Adam, and made that suitable, comparable, missing dimension in Adam’s life, Eve, together male and female could reproduce.

But in addition to reproduction, God made the man and woman capable of the very foremost character of the Creator God, love.

1 John 4:8 [New King James] *“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”*

The very creation of the man and woman is an expression of God’s love.

God at creation placed in humans the potential of the greatest of all qualities, love.

This love can be expressed in many ways, but none greater than the love shared between husbands and wives.

Equal but different

From the moment of creation, the ultimate spiritual potential of male and female has been exactly the same.

Matthew 22:30 [New King James] *“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”*

When Jesus Christ spoke of this great future potential He assured us that both male and female were the same.

Marriage between humans will **not** be part of the new world after our resurrection.

But now as physical beings male and female do marry.

Physical male and female are quite obviously different.

There are physical differences, emotional differences, personality differences, different needs and responses.

These differences between male and female were designed by the Creator God to complement one another.

A husband and wife should form a team, two individuals becoming one in marriage.

Genesis 2:24 [New King James] *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*

This was the first marriage ceremony.

1 Peter 3:7 [New King James] *“Likewise you husbands dwell with them, [your wives] with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the [physically] weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

Women are not mentally or emotionally inferior in any way. But by design women are, generally, not as physically strong as men.

Husbands are designed by the Creator God to provide for the family and supply strength and leadership, [1 Timothy 5:8].

Deep down, most women have to admit they yearn for a man of such stability.

Husbands and wives should spend their lives together striving for the same goal, to be in God's Kingdom for all eternity.

So in spiritual potential men and women are equal.

So what about this submission?

If men and women are equal but different, why does the Christian Bible talk about submission?

Ephesians 5:22-24 [New King James] *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”*

Taken out of context, twisted and distorted, many have assumed these verses allow husbands to become dictators.

That is **not** what it says at all.

This is a matter of responsibility, for Paul is using Jesus Christ and the Christian Church as a teaching analogy.

The Church of God should be subject to Jesus Christ. Members should want to obey His instructions and live by His example.

Submit is not a horror word.

This scripture does not by any means give any man the right to abuse a woman.

Notice the context to obtain a balanced meaning of these words.

Ephesians 5:25-29 [New King James] *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.”*

Jesus Christ died for His Church, so any husband who really loves his wife should be willing to die for her.

If more husbands conveyed this kind of feeling, care, warmth and love, fewer wives would have trouble with the word submit.

For that reason, a young woman ought to think long and hard about the man with whom she is going to spend the rest of her life.

If a certain young man to whom she is attracted turns out to be indecisive, weak, lacking character and self-discipline, it will be hard to respect him, so harder to submit, yield or defer to him.

On the other hand, if a man is dictatorial, cruel, demanding and abusive, who would want to submit to that kind of life?

It is not easy finding the right man, but ladies, think first about the kind of man you can respect, love and in the right way, submit to.

A matter of government

God the Father is over Jesus Christ, [**John 10:29; John 14:28**], and Jesus Christ is head of the Church, [**Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18**].

Someone has to be in charge.

Nations have kings, presidents or prime ministers, cities have mayors.

Families have husbands and fathers who are responsible.

In this context, a wife submits to the God-given authority of her husband, who should set an example of loving care.

The husband and wife then become an example to their children, who will grow up understanding the proper role of husbands and wives.

Romans 13:1-5 [New King James] *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake.”*

The same attitude to authority outside of the family will be learnt by the children, through the parents’ personal example.

Conclusion

So to submit does **not** mean to give up identity or to remain uneducated, unfulfilled and unhappy.

But to properly respect and submit to a husband is the God-given responsibility of the wife.

Even in this modern age, it is possible to live by the principles, teachings, and laws of the Christian Bible.

It may not be easy, but with a great deal of prayer and effort it can be done.

For submission to God’s way of life by both husband and wife is the only way a marriage will truly work.

One final thought to consider

Revelation 19:6-9 [New King James] *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write:*

“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”

The physical marriage union is the very best way for all human beings to prepare for this eternal union with Jesus Christ.

This is the marriage we all should be preparing for, and the guidelines are there for us in the Word of God, the Christian Bible.

Please read and meditate on all the scriptures pertaining to the physical marriage union, this is the personal advice of one who has just celebrated 63 years of marriage!