

Ephesians

Chapter 5:22

July 3, 1994

Ephesians 5:22

Introduction - Building on Paul's previous command for all saints to be in submission to each other, Paul moves on to specific relationships for further clarification. Because we believe that God created us and the institution of marriage, His commands and instruction are to be normative within the Church. We must never apologize for God's word, nor should we succumb to the world's demand that we explain away the truth. We are bound to seek understanding from God about His word and pray that He would make application in our individual lives and families.

This is a tremendously important verse and we will analyze it a word at a time.

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord., (NKJ)

Wives

- Of first importance, note that this command is addressed specifically to wives. Paul does not give this to the husbands but rather he expects that the women will be hearing the reading of the letter and seeking to make application. It is obviously not enough that your husband knows these things, the wife is expected to comprehend what he is saying and to following the admonition. Wives must be growing in their relationship with God.
- As we would expect, some day there may be those in the world who tell us or accuse our church of being sexist. Our response to this would be *-absolutely*. Here Paul differentiates being a wife from being a husband. Many will quote Galatians 3:28, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (NKJ) as some kind of justification of eliminating all gender references and distinctions. This is simply a God hating, man-loving distortion of God's word. It's also bad exegesis - this verse deals with our position in Christ with regard to salvation. Paul plainly addresses and instructs the wives differently than he does the husbands.

submit

- The world hates the concept of submission and the Church has attempted to make this command something other than it is for the sake of the world. But I hope that we understand that the proper understanding of the verse is very clear and when really understood, it is glorious.
- We can't try to limit or explain away the word by referring to the Greek because it means the same thing as in English.

5293 hupotasso (hoop-ot-as'-so); from 5259 and 5021; to subordinate; reflexively, to obey:

KJV-- be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto.

- We also can't limit the verse by asking "Yeah, but, how much should I submit to my husband?" Note that in verse 5:24 the command is limitless "...in everything" yet it is constrained by 5:22 "...as to the Lord."
- It is also important to know that this kind of submission is not commanded as a result of feminine inferiority. Women aren't second class citizens in the kingdom of God.
- Your husband needs to know that you respect him and he will know this by your actions. You should seek to demonstrate your willingness to place yourself under his headship-especially in the small things. You should frequently tell him your appreciation

of his leadership and demonstrate it in the things you do. For instance:

- Contentment
 - God's design of marriage
 - Your finances, house, clothing
 - Your family
- Activities
 - Your plans, preferences and relationships
 - Speaking to others
 - Respecting others
- Strive to make his job easy. It would be of no benefit to you for your husband to have strife added to the burden that has been placed on him. This can also be seen in the relationship between the church and its elders, Hebrews 13:17 *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."* (NKJ)
- Your obedience to this command in faith is evangelistic. This is the express means by which the Bible has commanded that Christian wives evangelize their unbelieving husbands.

to your own husbands

- This command applies where the marriage covenant exists; it is not a general condition which exists between men and women.

as to the Lord

- This further clarification of the command adds an element of the fear of the Lord. You must believe that when you submit yourself to your husband it is a physical manifestation of your trust in God. Note how Peter gives much the same admonition in 1 Peter 3:1-6

1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward-- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel--

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

- *6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. (NKJ)*