

Ephesians

Chapter 5:23-33

July 24, 1994

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In our last look at Ephesians, Paul gave specific instruction to the wives that they submit to their husbands as to the Lord. We saw that this submission was exhaustive ("...in everything" vs. 24) although bound by the phrase "...as to the Lord." In verse 23 Paul gives the reason for this command to wives. In giving the reason for his last command he provides a lengthy discourse on the theology of husbandry. Therefore in this sermon we will focus primarily on this theology and next week we will study practical implications of the theology.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

- Paul gives a reason for his command which precedes this verse. The reason why the wives are to submit to their husbands is because their husband is their head. Note that this is not the same as saying that the husband should be or should act like the head; he is her head. It is never a questions as to whether the husband is the head of the wife but rather is the husband a good head or a bad head.
- Too often Christians will trivialize the glory of this verse by thinking that the headship of the husband simply means that he gets his way or that he's the boss. Then when they consider that historically some men have not used their headship for the benefit of their family, many will reject this teaching. But rather than explaining it away, we shall see that the headship of a husband is glorifying to the wife and especially God.
- The authority of the husband is exhaustive. Just as Christ is Lord of the church, so to wives must acknowledge the authority her husband has been given.
- What does it mean to be a head? In verse 28 we are given the analogy of our own bodies. When you think of a human body, you don't see a body separated from the head. A decapitated body is a horrible sight. In addition, the relationship between the head and the body is not just one of proximity. The head is not just near the body, but rather, the head is connected (a working connection) to the body.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 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.

- Here, Paul does not quantify the amount of love that a husband must have for his wife. Instead he tells us that it should be like the love that Christ has for the church. Well, how is that? "...and gave Himself for her" this is the caliber of the love that husbands are to have for their wives.
- It is crucial to understand that husbands are responsible for everything that goes on in their marriage. Although the wives still must grow in grace and maturity, the husbands are responsible for it. You might ask, "Well that sounds good but what if my wife is in sin?" The wife is the one *guilty* of the sin; the husband is the one *responsible*. The husband must see to it that the situation is resolved; it is *his* problem.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

- Paul provides another illustration to further clarify the previous command. It is in the best interest of the husband to sacrifice himself for his wife because as she becomes more and more godly, she becomes a greater encouragement and blessing to him.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
(NKJ)

- Despite the fact that a human marriage has been a picture of the relationship between the church and Christ (the great mystery), Paul summarily gives the commands again into two basic instructions. Husbands must love and wives must respect.