

The Ephesians 5 Husband and Wife

Bill Brinkowrth

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord... 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” Eph. 5:21-33

Ephesian 5 takes a position that has been hated and rebelled against for generations. Unfortunately, the refusal to follow God’s commandments in this area has resulted in a divorce rate of nearly 50%. In Ephesians 5:21-33, Paul discusses submissiveness between a married man and woman.

Noah Webster defined submitting as “yielding or surrendering to an authority.” The first surrendering in Eph. 5:21 is for both husband and wife to concede to each other because they respect God’s commandments!

They are to submit to each other because God tells them to, and they should know God’s way is always best. God ordained the union between man and woman, so He knows what works. No other way will be successful!

A wife is to submit to her husband (vs. 22). When she is humbling herself to do so, she is doing it “unto the Lord.” What a step of faith it takes for a wife to trust the Lord that way.

Many women shudder at that point, thinking about all kinds of situations: “What happens if I

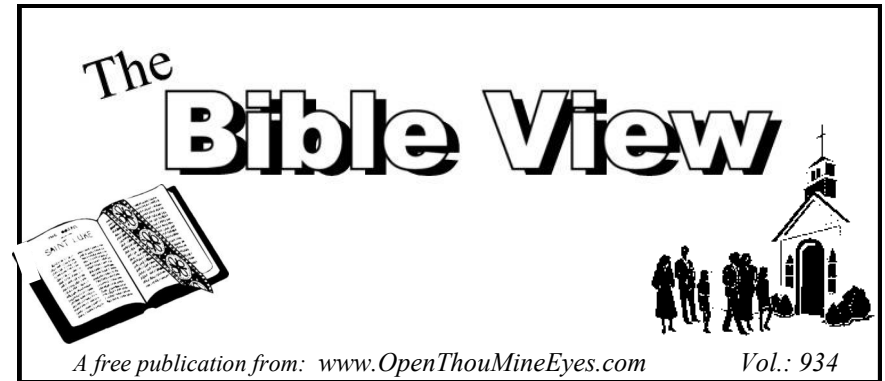
submit to him, and he mistreats me?”, “What happens if I let him be the authority and decision-maker, and he makes wrong decisions?” and other scenarios.

Those situations happen if the husband does not hold up his commitments. That is why it is so vital that marriage is between believers (II Cor. 6:14). However, there are no retractions for bad decisions in marriage partners in God’s Word. No matter the spiritual status, one is still committed to holding up his part of the marriage, as the Lord commands.

Many marriages fail because couples did not adhere to God’s way but cohabit the way “everyone else is doing it.” When a marriage fails, it is usually because one is not holding up their end of God’s commandments.

Submission in a marriage is not just the wife’s responsibility. The husband also has a part in making a marriage work. His part is not just surrendering to his wife, but he is to love his wife as Christ loves His church (vs. 25) and as much as he loves his own body (vs. 28, 33). One should not want to do wrong to his body, so he must only want to do what is right and best for his wife.

Marriage pictures Christ (vss. 23, 25, 27, 32) submitting His body to die for man’s sins. Jesus submitted to His Father and allowed Himself to be payment for our iniquities. As we submit ourselves to Christ, we should also submit ourselves to each other. God’s way works!



A Godly Example

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Mary, Jesus’ mother, was a remarkable woman God could use. Luke 1 speaks much of this willing servant God used mightily.

Here are some of what the Bible says about Mary, the mother of Jesus:

❖ God had planned to use Mary long before she was born. She was from the lineage of King David, which was the line where the prophesied Messiah would be born.

❖ She was obedient in relations with men. She remained a virgin before she was married (Luke 1:27, 34).

❖ God saw she had a good testimony. She was highly favored in His eyes (Luke 1:28, 30).

❖ God had unique plans for her. She was going to have a child in a special way that would require her to have a good character and testimony (Luke 1:31).

❖ God would use her child, Jesus (Luke 1:32, 35).

❖ Mary was obedient. She was

willing to do whatever the Lord required (Luke 1:38, 46).

❖ Mary was humble. She did not think highly of herself (Luke 1:48). She would be angered at how people venerate her above Christ in some religions.

❖ Mary admitted that God had done great things through her (Luke 1:49).

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The Virtuous Woman

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Throughout the Bible, there is much advice given from father to son. Proverbs 31, however, relays a mother’s counsel to her boy.

Most likely, King Lemuel was a godly leader, as his name means “belonging to God.” His mother advised the King on how to continue to be a strong leader (Proverbs 31:3-9).

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A Godly Example

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❖ She knew about God's mercy (Luke 1:50).

❖ She knew about the mighty things God had done, His power, and His provision (Luke 1:51-53).

❖ She understood the Bible (Luke 1:54-55).

❖ She intended to marry a godly, obedient, hard-working man, Joseph, who paid his taxes and obeyed the law (Lu. 2:4-5).

❖ She humbly accepted what God allowed her to go through. She was willing to go through hard times and not complain about it. She had her baby in a barn (Luke 2:7).

❖ Mary had at least four sons and two daughters (Mark 6:3) after Jesus was born.

❖ Mary needed a Saviour. If she were the mother of God, as the Catholic church claims, she would not have needed a Saviour. She was a woman that God could trust to do His will.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Luke 1:46-47

❖ Mary was a godly vessel that God could use. Although no one will ever be used in the way she was, all can be used for God's glory if we obey and allow Him to use us.

The Virtuous Woman

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The mother helped her son know the important values to consider when picking the right wife. She knew a wife could make or break a man's and family's success. In the rest of the chapter, she helps him with one of the most crucial decisions in his life.

The mother's advice did not include picking a woman for her beauty and sex appeal. She suggested picking a woman who would be faithful to her husband, a hard worker, pure, moral, and industrious.

A good wife should be "virtuous." Beauty will change (Proverbs 31:30), but good character and morality will last a lifetime and benefit many.

Virtuous: *practitioner of duty, accomplished, and moral*

According to this Proverb, a virtuous woman:

- Can be relied upon and trusted (Proverbs 31:11).
- Will do a husband good and make him a better man (Proverbs 31:12, 23).
- Will be industrious, always helping and providing for her husband and family (Proverbs 31:13-15, 17, 27).
- Will look to meet not only

the family's current needs but what will benefit them in the future (Proverbs 31:16, 21).

- Is a hard worker (Proverbs 31:18-19, 24, 27).
- Is kind, even to those outside her family (Proverbs 31:20, 26).
- Provides for her own needs (Proverbs 31:22).
- Is honorable and has a strong character (Proverbs 31:25).
- Is wise (Proverbs 31:26).
- Is respected and relied on by her family (Proverbs 31:28).
- Is godly (Proverbs 31:30).

This type of woman was not uncommon in the past. Today, perhaps because of the changed values of women in the 1970s, they are not as prevalent.

Unfortunately, it has been drummed into many women's minds that they can do better than being stay-at-home mothers and wives. Many have been brainwashed into believing being a housewife is beneath them and they should seek a career in which they are worthy and is more important.

Being a wife and mother is not a menial task. The incredible abilities and responsibilities given to women are the backbone of a family and nation. It is the mother who can mold young lives and strengthen families and, eventually, even society. She is the silent strength and selfless worker who may not get much

limelight, but without her families and society stumble and crumble, as can be seen today.

Despite what the "unisex" movement tried to convince women to believe, men and women are different. Women have strengths and abilities that a man does not have. Vice versa, a man can do things a woman cannot. It does not imply that one sex is better than the other. Instead of changing their created purpose and trying to be what they are not, society would benefit if the sexes would again not be confused about their strengths and gifts and fulfill the purpose and unique abilities God has given them.

Since the confusion of the sexes proliferated, the divorce rate has skyrocketed. Many children now come from "broken" homes. Males and females are confused about who and what they are. An increasing number of couples are living together unmarried. Many children do not even know who their parents are. "Know-better-than-God" and making their own social guidelines have not worked! Humanity is suffering greatly.

Man and woman must return to living the way God wants them to and be the man or woman He desires them to be. Men and women, especially those who want to please God, should be virtuous, content, and proud of who they are and be the best they can be!

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." Proverbs 31:10