

The Right Relation of Christian Wives and Husbands to Each Other.

Text: Eph 5:22-33

1) Wives

Suggested Hymns:

2) Husbands

588, 301, 584, 286, 164

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Ephesians 5:22-33, ²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* 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.*

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.*

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.* 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. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Unhappy marriages and broken homes are numerous in our country. There are many newspaper accounts of tragedies in the home which are caused because husband and wife, as it is phrased, “cannot make a go of it.”

The rising tide of divorces, a tide which threatens to engulf many homes, is brought about because husband and wife cannot agree, and they are always at loggerheads. Each wants to do all the ruling, rightly or wrongly.

Since divorces are multiplying, the enemies of the old marriage relationship are raising the cry, "*Marriage is a failure. It shackles true love. We must have free love and easy divorces.*" The standards of marriage have become appallingly low with very many people.

Where the standards of marriage are lowered, we will soon have the situation where marriage may be entered into and dissolved again as easily as you can buy or sell a car. The sanctity of marriage is to a great extent lost to our nation. The news that a certain person has marriage for the fifth, sixth, or seventh time scarcely causes a ripple.

Newspapers and magazines are filled with criticism on the matrimonial estate of one man and one woman. We can see how Marriage has been lowered in the eyes of the public with the approval of same-sex marriage. To many people it is simply a contract on a piece of paper.

Is the institution of Holy Wedlock to be blamed for all this? Certainly not! The people are. God's Word has either been forgotten or even rejected by some people.

The wife wants be married and free at the same time; she wants to strike out the "obey" in the marriage vow. The husband wants have a wife and at the same time live with other women in "free love."

But God's Word must be the basis, not only when one man and one woman become engaged, but, also throughout their whole married life. It alone can set forth the right relation between man and wife. And Christian wives and husbands will heed God's Word in the matter. Without it marriage will always be in danger of shipwreck.

Let us, then, consider *The Right Relation of Christian Wives and Husbands to Each Other*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Wives, Submit To Your Own Husbands, As To The Lord.

Our text says concerning wives, ²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* 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.

Despite all that is said and written, the husband is the head of the family. Even heathen peoples recognised this to be the proper thing. There cannot be two heads to any organisation.

The home is the most important unit in the world. It is the foundation of both the State and the Church. God Himself has specified who is to be the head of the home, namely, the husband. We read in Colossians 3:18, ¹⁸ *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

And in 1 Peter 3:1-6 God tells us how wives should live. 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.*

The wife is to submit to the husband “*as to the Lord,*” to obey him. Behind the husband stands the Lord Himself. Thus the obedience is characterised. The obedience of the wife is to be rendered not to the husband as man, but as to her ‘own husband,’ in and by whose person the Lord is honoured who has established the relation, whom the husband himself must obey.

The wife is to regard the obedience she has to render to her husband as an obedience rendered to Christ, the Christian husband being head of the wife and representing to her Christ, the Head of the whole Christian body.

The wife, then, is to be subject to her own husband, and that “*in everything,*” in every respect. This means, of course, where the demands of the

husband are not against the Word of God, or as long as he does not demand something unreasonable or unnatural.

The husband is to be the managing, controlling, deciding factor in the family. In one way nature shows this: the husband is generally the stronger, the bolder, built for toil, and able to support and protect the offspring and family. The wife is the weaker vessel, made to be his helper, and to bear children.

Among indigenous races the women adored the men who demanded their obedience.

However, the Word of God decides the matter for the Christian. The reason given by the apostle is that Christ is the Head of the Church. The Church obeys Him, and is subject to Him. He is the Bridegroom, the Church is the bride.

Of course, there is this great difference: Christ is the Saviour of the body, the Church, whereas this does not hold true of the husbands. In spite of this, however, the wives are to be subject to the husbands *“in everything.”*

That wives should submit themselves to their husbands is a sore point in our days. Scoffingly it is said: “Who made man Lord? Does the Christian Church degrade the wife to the status of a slave? The old notion that the wife should be subject to the man should be done away with.” They say that women must have equal rights with the man in all things, including have all the controlling and deciding.

Have you ever noticed the unrest in families where the wife is the head of the family, makes all the decisions, and has the greatest to say on any matter, instead of the husband?

To refuse to submit to the husband is to refuse to submit to Christ. And whoever will not submit to Christ does not belong to His body, the Church. The Church, the bride of Christ, obeys its Head, the Bridegroom, in all things, and does so in humility and love.

Likewise the wife obeys her husband, her head, whom God has given this position, in all things. In this way Sarah obeyed Abraham; and in this way all Christian wives should obey their husbands.

2. Husbands, Love Your Wives, Just As Christ Also Loved The Church And Gave Himself For Her

Our text continues, *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.*

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.* 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.”*

This concerns God’s rule to the husband. The husband should love his wife, should not look upon her simply as the tool to satisfy his lust, but should give her honour as the weaker vessel. He should take her frailty into consideration and never forget that she is his helper.

We read in 1 Peter 3:7, ⁷ *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Again we have the picture of Christ and the Church, *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..*

Christ loved the Church. Love prompted Him to give His life for all people, also for Christian men and women, to win for them forgiveness of sins and righteousness.

The water of Baptism cleanses from sin, this water connected with His command, and also with His promise written in Mark 16:16, ¹⁶ *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.* This water sanctifies as we read in Hebrews 10:22, ²² *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Now, the Church is Christ's bride. He loves His bride, He gave Himself for the Church, *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.* His bride, the Church, has no loathsome stain, no spot, no wrinkle, no disfiguring mark, but is holy, and without blemish.

It is one with Him, united with Him indissolubly. Listen to these Scripture verses which tell of the wonderful glory that is of the Bride, the church, which is you and I.

Song of Solomon 4:7, ⁷ *You are all fair, my love, And there is no spot in you.*

Romans 8:18, ¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Romans 8:30, ³⁰ *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Jude 24, ²⁴ *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

And Colossians 1:22, ²² *in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.*

So husbands should love their wives. The wife is one with the husband, is of his flesh. By loving her, he loves himself. No man ever hated his own flesh. We read in Ephesians 5:29, ²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.* He nourishes and protects it.

So should the husband nourish and protect his wife and esteem her highly. The wife should not be regarded as a slave, but as his helper, whom the husband is not to use simply for his selfish ends, but whom he is to love, honour, support, and guard.

So the Lord does with the Church. He nourishes it with His Word and the Sacraments, and His continual presence. He protects it from all its enemies. He does so because it is His body, for the Christians are members of His body as we read 1 Corinthians 12:27, ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

The wife stands closer to the husband than anybody in the world, closer than father and mother. Our text says, ***“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”***

The foundation of marriage is given in Genesis 2:23-25, ²³ ***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.”*** ²⁴ ***Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*** ²⁵ ***And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.***

The love of Christ for the Church, His love for the believers even before they became Christians, His care for the Church, and also the union between Christ and the Church, is a mystery.

“Nevertheless,” and here the apostle directs himself to every Christian wife and husband, ***let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*** Since man and wife stand closer to each other than to any other human being, the ***“You shall love you neighbor as yourself”*** applies here most forcibly.

The wife is to submit, obey. The husband is to love his wife, esteem her, support her and must not be abusive or tyrannical.

In conclusion, we can see that the love of Christ toward us should lead us to love one another. Christ is the Head of us all. We as His body should therefore obey Him, and heed His Word. And in this Word He has shown Christian wives and husbands how they are to conduct themselves toward each other.

Do not allow the world with its free and loose living in the field of marriage to lead you astray. Rather, if we follow the words of Christ, all will be well with us in the married estate. Then the “Happy though married” will not be looked upon as a humorous saying, but as a foolish saying.

We cannot but be happy when we take Christ with us. Difficulties, to be sure, will arise, but they will be overcome. Disharmony will show itself now and then, but harmony will prevail. Conditions in the home will be as they should be. Husband and wife will walk the way of life with Christ as their common Head, to be glorified with Him there in eternity. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.