**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**Submit to Who? For What?**

 Ephesians 5: 21 -33

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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 The next passage of Scripture is, in my opinion, a message that we need to celebrate and give thanks to God for providing direction and stability in the management of life and family for the stability of a civilized society. God created a specific order in all things. We see a fine-tuned order from biology to the universe in the way the earth is positioned for life. Within this order, God has given us “free will choice” to recognize and participate with Him for the fulfillment of His plan.

Most of us recognize ordered systems and realize they are there for our benefit and protection. A simple example is the traffic light system. We see this brings order to road traffic and is intended to keep people from having accidents. Thus, avoiding property damage, personal injury and death.

In our society, we have cultural, business, sports and educational orders to name a few. When I served as a Houston Police Officer, we had an order of rank to identify who had the authority to make decisions. At one time, I had a woman Sergeant, Lieutenant and Deputy Chief. I did not reject their authority of rank because they were women. I followed the structure that made the system work and be successful.

**God’s Love Brings Respect for All of Us**

We need to keep in mind that God does not desire or want anyone to be placed in a role that lessens their value as a person under His design and created order. God has ordained that we all have a role and place to live life as He has planned. I see that God intends for all of us to be respected and valued with the roles in life He has set aside for each individual. We go back to Ephesians 2:10 . . . 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We note that God is an equal opportunity Savior who showers His love on all. It is up to us to receive His love and guidance.

**God’s Scriptural Guidance for Life and Family**

As we turn to the next passage of Scripture (Ephesians 5:21ff) in Paul’s letter to his friends in Ephesus, we know that some consider this passage to be contentious in our current times of equal rights for men and women in every environment. . . be it at work, play, church or home. I see this passage to be misunderstood and taken out-of-context.

**I Know. . . the secular world has a different view – Gender Equality**

As to the point of pursuing the goal of gender equality in “all things” as a goal of Western modern and post-modern society. . . which stands against God’s natural order of the creation regarding family and roles of men and women in the service of Him. This goal is pursued by the atheistic/agnostic secular anti-God politics of our day. I see this pursuit as another device to destroy God’s created order for family. We know that if God’s created order for family is removed then there is not any civilized society. In fact, we see this constantly taking place throughout history.

 When we consider the historical nature of humanity, there appears to be a rather patriarchal system in place by default due to the obvious physical differences between men and women. On average, men are more capable of physical activities particularly when it comes to personal protection. This is not to say that women are not physically capable. Many women I have known are competitive with their male friends and neighbors. However, the facts are. . . what they are. There are not any professional boxing matches, hockey, football, track & field or baseball games between men and women.

There are other obvious differences between men and women. We also know that without Frankenstein science involved. . . men cannot conceive and birth babies, and women cannot produce babies on their own. However, those are not the reasons for God to direct Paul to write the letter to the assembly in Ephesus. God has His unique individualized plan for husband, wife and family that has nothing to do with the fallen world’s culture of political correctness of atheistic secular humanism.

**Clarity of the Greek Text**

As we will see. . . a translation makes a difference as to the weight and substantive context that God was making in this text. It is one thing to make a point and another to drive an unintended wedge between people. Over the centuries translators have been used by God to preserve His Word. And praise be to God, we have an accurate Hebrew/Greek text of the Old Testament (Hebrew) and New Testament (Greek). When these texts are translated into a different language, there are always challenges to convey the original language’s meaning. The good news is. . . that there is not any difficulty in translating the substantive message of God’s Word. The challenge comes in conveying, in rare cases, the nuance of the Hebrew or Greek texts. Here, in Ephesians 5:21-22, we have such a challenge when the Greek text was translated into English regarding a social order for family.

From my review of the oldest reliable Greek text manuscripts, I see that there is an inconsistency with many of today’s English translations.

Based upon the oldest Greek manuscript evidence, over the course of time, there was an added word that created an issue beyond what God intended.

**Let us look at the text of Ephesians 5:21-24.**

21 and be subject to one another in the fear (reverence) of Christ.

22 Wives, be *subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (NAS)

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

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

 First, we see a change in focus from verse 21 to verse 22. In verse 21, Paul is addressing everyone in the assembly. We know this because of the context of the previous verses. In verse 22, Paul changes focus to the relationship between a woman and a man in the context of marriage. What was the purpose for Paul’s change in focus? Was it to drive home the point that women are inferior to men? NO. Paul is pointing to Christ’s role as Savior of the Church and, in comparison, pointing to the man (husband) as the one God assigned to be the savior role of the woman (wife) and family. For the Church’s protection and guidance, it is to follow Christ as its head. Therefore, for the wife’s protection and guidance, the husband is assigned by God the role of savior. This is an assignment by God to the husband, not a role earned after achieving some grand accomplishment. However, husbands need to pay attention to this God-given assignment. It is not to be looked upon as some glorious status in society.

The next verse clarifies the function of the husband’s role and it is to be compared to hanging on the Cross for the salvation of the Church. The major role is not to be “the-boss-of-the-wife”.

**25** Husbands,

love your wives,

just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

**Wow**…. We have made some traditional wedding vows, but they do not encompass this verse. The closest vows come to the gravity of Ephesians 5:25 is the “till death do we part”.

"I, \_\_\_, take thee, \_\_\_, to be my wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, **till death do us part**, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith [or] pledge myself to you."

 Let us consider more accurate biblical vows. We can add a sentence before or after “*till death do us part*.” Consider . . .

 The husband is to love and to cherish his wife by, if need be, to be sacrificed on a cross to save her from harm, according to God’s holy ordinances. Therefore, I, husband, pledge my faithful life to sacrificially serve the Lord in marriage to you.

 Yes. The return to CHIVALRY. The Bride’s Knight in shining armor. Gallantry, courtesy and honor should be proclaimed, as the duty of the husband on the wedding day. Now . . . the closest thing we have to men rattling a saber in their role as husband of their new bride on their wedding day . . . is the cutting of the wedding cake with a butter knife.

But wait. . . there’s more for the husband to do under God’s plan for marriage, as we will see in verse 26. Let’s focus on the Greek text for verses 21 and 22.

**Focusing on verses 21 and 22 . . . What does the Greek text say?**

**21** and be subject to one another in the fear (reverence) of Christ.

**22** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (NAS)

 **In verse 21**, the Greek text actually uses the word “subject” (Greek Ὑποτασσόμενοι (BGT) but in context of addressing the whole congregation. In verse 22, the focus shifts to the marriage relationship.

In addition, in verse 22, many English translations supply the word “be subject/ submit” even though it is not in the oldest Greek manuscript (about 200 A.D.). The NAS translator’s *italicized* words to let the reader know they were supplied. However, most people do not know this as they do not read the notes at the front of their Bible.

**Nestles - Aland 28th edition. BGT**

**verse. 22 texts from Jeter Beatty P-46 from about 200 A.D.**

This Greek text is the premier Greek Text used by scholars around the world. It has the most up-to-date and extensive critical apparatus considering the oldest papyri texts. The critical apparatus does note later manuscripts such as the Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Vaticanus (Uncial on Vellum) from the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. The critical apparatus is an index (foot notes) of sources considered.

 We can see the Greek text below. Verse 22 does not contain the Greek word Ὑποτασσόμενοι.

**BGT****Ephesians 5:21** Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ,

**BGT****Ephesians 5:22** αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ,

 The woman/wife your own man/husband as the Lord

So, after 200 A.D., a word was added to the Greek text (hypotassetai) and appeared in the 4th and 5th century Greek manuscripts.

 Why? We can only speculate. Here are two Greek texts compiled from later Greek manuscripts in 1995 for the BYZ or Byzantine text and the 1894 Scrivener Greek text. We can see the Greek word [ὑποτάσσεσθε] is supplied.

BYZ **Ephesians 5:22** Αἱ γυναῖκες, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν [ὑποτάσσεσθε], ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ.

SCR **Ephesians 5:22** Αἱ γυναῖκες, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν [ὑποτάσσεσθε,] ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ.

 The wife your own husband [be subject/submit] as the Lord.

It is of note that the King James Bible of 1611 was a product of the Greek New Testament prepared in 1516 by Desiderius Erasmus who put his Greek New Testament together from manuscripts dating no earlier than the 12th century A.D. Since that time, there have been Greek papyri manuscripts found from the 200’s with a portion of the book of John (18:31-33) dated to about the year 110 A.D. called Ryland Papyrus P52, currently on display at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, UK. <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/02/15/the-earliest-new-testament-manuscripts/>



https://brentnongbri.com/2020/09/25/a-new-article-on-p52-in-new-testament-studies/

Again, verse 23 clarifies verse 22 giving the “sacrificial” reason the husband has been assigned the role as head of the marriage and family.

**23** For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

**24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

**BGT****Ephesians 5:23**

ὅτι ἀνήρ ἐστιν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς

For husband is head the wife as also the Christ

κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος·

head the church himself savior the body

**BGT** Ephesians 5:24

 ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ,

 but as the church subject the Christ

οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.

Thus and/also the wife the husband in all

**Verses 25 - 33** further clarify God’s intent and plan for the husband and wife’s role. Above all, the husband’s role is to spiritually protect his wife and family. Verse 25 directs husbands to give their life for their wife. In verse 26, God directs husbands to teach the Word of God to their wives in their sanctification process. Sanctification is a process of maturing in God’s Word.

**25** Husbands, love your wives,

just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

**26** so that He (Christ) might sanctify her (The Church),

 having cleansed her (The Church) by

the washing of water **with the word, ἐν ῥήματι,**

This is so important for everyone to see, for every man, husband and father to receive this teaching. The Greek word rhemati must be understood. Below are three leading Greek dictionaries which all define rhemati the same. Rhemati in this context carries the commission for the husband to teach God’s Word to his wife and by extension to his family.

Jesus was the teacher of all teachers giving God’s Word and clarifying God’s Word. By people receiving the Truth in God’s Word, they were set free. This spiritually protects wives and families from evil, sin and death while on this earth. So, husbands are not only commissioned to physically protect their wives and family . . . they are to teach them God’s Word. For this reason, they, too, must know God’s Word enough to teach. Well . . . I was not able to teach God’s Word when Renee and I married. The truth is. . . many are not prepared to teach God’s Word upon marriage. To address this biblical calling, the Church needs to make a major shift in preparing men and women for marriage.

**Friberg, Analytical *NT* Greek Lexicon**

**ῥῆμα**, **ατος**, **τό** (1) as what has definitely been stated, with focus on content, *(single) word, saying, utterance* (MT 27.14); often translated according to the context: *prediction* or *prophecy* (MT 26.75), *command* or *direction* (LU 5.5), *threat* (AC 6.13); plural, as a unified communication *sermon, proclamation, speech* (LU 7.1); *message* (JN 3.34), *teachings, doctrine* (JN 5.47);

**Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon***  **ῥῆμα**
**ῥῆμα**, **ατος**, **τό**—**1.** *that which is said, word, saying, expression* Mt 12:36; Mk 9:32; Lk 2:17, 50; J 5:47; 6:68; Ac 2:14; 28:25; Ro 10:8, 17; 2 Cor 12:4; Eph 6:17; Hb 1:3; 12:19; Jd 17. *Threat* Ac 6:13.—**2.** *thing, object, matter, event* Mt 18:16; Lk 1:37, 65; 2:15, 19, 51; Ac 5:32; 10:37; 13:42; 2 Cor 13:1. [pg 177]

**Danker,** *Greek NT Lexicon*  **ῥῆμα**
**ῥῆμα**,**ατος**,**τό** [εἴρω ‘say, tell’, cp. the pf. εἴρημαι] **– 1.** ‘a communication consisting of words’, freq. w. nuance of importance or special significance **statement, pronouncement, declaration** Mt 4:4 al. ῥήματα βλάσφημα *blasphemous statements* **Ac 6:11,** cp. **vs.13.** οὐδὲ ἓν ῥῆμα *not even one reply* **Mt 27:14. – 2.** in Heb. manner and in a species of metonymy, ‘someth. that arouses talk because it is remarkable or noteworthy’, **a matter, thing, event** Mt 18:16; Lk 1:37, 65; 2:15, 19, 51; Ac 5:32; 10:37; 2 Cor 13:1.

 **Verses 27-33** continue to tie the work of Christ to the husband. . . placing the responsibility on the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. Paul uses the word “mystery” μυστήριον (Eph. 5:32 BGT) which is used to say that the relationship between Christ and the Church and husband and wife is to be the work of God. Therefore, a husband that submits himself to God and His Word, passing it on to his wife and family, sanctifies them in this life in preparation for an eternal life with God the Father in His heaven.

**27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory,

having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing;

 but that she would be holy and blameless.

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

**29** for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

**30** because we are members of His body.

**31** FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

**32** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

**33** Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

**In summation**, I want to say that God’s plan for wives is for them to respect the “**position**” God has set aside for their husband. However, **husbands need to respect and live up to the position/role God has assigned them. God has not called husbands to be the “boss” but to be the sacrificial leader who leads by example.** I can see why wives do not respect or follow their husband’s leadership and walk all over them if they are spiritual wimps. I see that it is very hard for a wife to respect her husband and want to follow his lead in spiritual matters if the husband is a spiritually “dead-beat-hubby”. My experience in ministry with the general population. . . is that wives are more spiritual and have a closer relationship to God and His Word than their husbands. Many mothers fulfill the role of spiritual leader in their home. I have to say, that my mother was the more spiritually attuned parent. This was common in our culture. . . the norm. We men can do something about this failure. It was ten years into my own marriage when I made the decision to do something about spiritual leadership. I had to change.

Nine times out of ten, it is the “bride-to-be” who calls me inquiring about presiding over their wedding. I do see that most husbands who attend church have more of an opportunity to fulfill God’s role for them and, in fact, many of them are.

The failure of husbands in our general population to fulfill the role of the spiritual leader for their wives lends to fathers being spiritual failures for their children. Then . . . the cycle repeats itself in male children who do not have a spiritual role model in their father. And . . . we know that many children grow-up without a father. So, we have a society that perpetuates a failure in godly spiritual leadership in fathers. Look around – this is where America is at right now.

My advice. . . if husbands want their wives and children to respect their spiritual relationship with God. . . they need to start one or improve on the relationship they have. **AMEN**