

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 5:17 — *“On this account, do not be foolish but be understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

Study Number Ten – His Plan for the Husband and Wife Relationship – Ephesians 5:21-33

Lovett wrote a commentary called *Lights to Layman* on the book of Ephesians. This is what he says when he gets to chapter 5:

(Lovett’s Lights for Laymen by C. S. Lovett)

The filling of the Spirit is not limited to power, praise and joyous thanks. It is further seen in our behavior toward each other. If the blessing comes through submitting ourselves to our Master, still further blessing must come as we submit to each other. Paul would have us go so far as to esteem others better than ourselves. Our voices should never be raised in bluster or self vaunting as though we have special privilege of the Lord. There is always the danger that one who has sampled much of God’s might and joy may easily lord it over some brother who hasn’t, particularly is Paul anxious to apply this submissiveness to the marriage situation.

(source unknown)

We think of that passage in Philippians 2: 3 and 4 where Paul tells us not to do anything through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind to look on others and on their things and be concerned and esteem them as better than ourselves.

The apostle has stopped in the letter at verse 20 where we left off. We come now to study #10 that picks up at verse 21 and concludes the chapter.

Our next two studies will be in chapter 6 and then we'll finish the book.

Our KEY VERSE in our study we have called:

His Plan for the Husband and Wife Relationship.

The KEY VERSE is the last verse:

Ephesians 5:33

However, let each one be loving his own wife as himself and the wife that she respects her husband.

Now what the apostle does here is he gives a COMMAND. He tells us to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

Then he gives us FOUR MANIFESTATIONS of the fact that we are filled with the Spirit. We looked at three of them:

1. We are “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (ref. Eph. 5:19),
2. We’re” singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord” (ref. Eph. 5:19),
3. We are “giving of thanks” (ref. Eph. 5:20), and
4. We are submitting ourselves one to another (ref. Eph. 5:21).

A lot of times women forget that verse precedes what’s taking place in the marriage relationship.

v. 21 putting yourselves in subjection to one another in respect of Christ.

“putting yourselves in subjection to one another in respect of Christ.”

Men sometimes tend to lord it over their wives by hitting them over the head with this submission business without reading the twenty-first verse.

What verse 21 tells us is that if we’re filled with the Spirit, we don’t have any problem submitting ourselves to our brothers and sisters. There’s not a clamoring for authority, for prestige and for position among Spirit-filled believers.

They are able to flow into one another's lives without any problem of who's exercising authority. It works because they're contributing together to this. It's like a symphony.

So when we come to the marriage relationship, we start with verse 21 because as men we have to see that.

The hardest thing in the world for Christian women—especially in a day of women's rights and all this other stuff—is to see that the Bible paints a totally different picture of the woman's role and her place.

Submission comes easy if our will and our rights have already been submitted to our heavenly Father. And if we have a problem with submission on this level, we have a problem on that level.

We're still fighting God in some areas. We're still not yielding up our rights. We're still not really turning it over to Him. If we have problems down here with authority, we have problems with authority in that relationship.

When we get that settled we can sing with Hudson Taylor "Jesus I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art. I am finding out the greatness of your loving heart." And when we're through fighting Him and we enter into His rest, we hear Him say "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Just take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart. You'll find rest for your souls." (ref. Matt. 11:28-29)

It'll be an amazing thing, the peace, the contentment, the relaxation, the joy that is ours, when we finally quit trying and we start trusting and we turn it over to Him, and we submit the authority to Him.

Then it's easy, once we've done it there, to do it in the realm of our relationship with brothers and sisters and let them also function in our life to minister to our needs.

So what's he saying? The key to body-life, the key to our relationship with each other is not authority. It's exercising gifts together. It's submitting ourselves to one another for the edification of the body.

We have learned SUBMISSION and we've learned DEPENDENCE.

Creath Davis hits the nail on the head in his book *Beyond This God Cannot God* when he says:

(Beyond This God Cannot God by Creath Davis)

It seems that before conversion, we try to play God for ourselves and after conversion we try to play God for everyone else. I tried it and was a miserable flop. I had to face again the reality that something in me resists being totally dependent upon God. My pride wants me to achieve but to see again that this is His deal and I am His, and to relax and let Him take over was a tremendous relief.

(source unknown)

1 Peter 5:5, 6

You younger men, follow the leadership of those who are older and all of you serve each other with humble spirits for God gives special blessings to those who are humble but sets Himself against those who are proud. Permit yourselves to be humbled under the mighty hand of God in whose good time He will lift you up.

It's almost like a horse. The horse has to be broken to the bit and the bridle before that horse is of any value at all. Once the breaking process takes place, then the horse is ready to be used.

The Lord must have a victory **OVER** us before He will be giving a victory **THROUGH** us in the lives of others.

He first has to break us. He has to break us to the point where we are willing to allow Him to lead and to direct our lives under the direction of His Holy Spirit and through the direction of His Word.

Now having done that, as a Spirit-filled believer, immediately the apostle wants to make it practical. He wants to take the critical area of **MARRIAGE** and show us how this is supposed to work.

If we lived by Ephesians 5, there wouldn't be as many

problems in marriage. And the failures in marriage would be far, far less than they are today.

Much of the failure in marriage is a spiritual problem.

At our ministry couples conferences we say, “Just before you go to bed, do us a big favor. Would you pray together before you go to bed? We’ve had three sessions on the marriage relationship now would you just take time tonight in your room, the two of you, to pray together.”

It’s amazing the number of people the next day will say, “Well that’s the first time in our lives. It’s the greatest thing we’ve had. We prayed together.”

Much of marriage failure comes right back to the spiritual. When all else fails read the instructions.

If we want our marriage to work, then listen to what the Lord is saying and teaching us about it.

Now ladies can take the bit and fight submission all you want. We’re here to be a vehicle of the way the Lord designed marriage to work. If we want to run the risk of fighting the instructions that are given in the best way we know how to give them, we’re going to temper it some. If we want to fight that, that’s okay. It’s going to hurt our marriage.

If husbands want to exercise cold, dictatorial leadership and take the lead and let everybody know who’s the boss and run

the show instead of learning to love your wife as Christ loves the church, that's your deal. It's your marriage. Play it against this and it'll be an incredible thing.

Now this submission is to be made “in respect to Christ.”

The more we submit to Him, the easier it is to submit to one another. The more dependent we are on Him, the more dependent we are on one another.

v. 22 Wives, be putting yourselves in subjection to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

“Wives, be putting yourselves in subjection to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

Just like we learned to find the peace and rest of submitting our will to the Lord, we are to find the same peace and rest by submitting our will to our husband.

Now what's involved in submission?

Here's a little prayer that fits here:

Lord, I wonder why today
I should suddenly remember
One of our first ridiculous quarrels.
It wasn't at all funny then
But I smile now when I recall
My stubborn resentment—

My blatant retort:
“I wish you’d go fly a kite.”
In one shining moment, God
You seemed to pour all of the love
from all the corners of the world
Into my husband’s gentle voice:
“I will” he said disarmingly.
“If you’ll fly it with me.”
We’ve been flying it together
for thirty-eight years.
(source unknown)

That’s the kind of relationship that we’re talking about. It’s learning to relate together and to fulfill the function and the role.

When one fails, the other is there with their function to pick up and bring healing. When the other fails, the other is strong and able to be of help and of encouragement.

Now granted there’s a whole lot of wrong teaching on the subject of submission and God never meant for a woman to have a ball and chain around her neck and be inferior to her husband and not be able to function.

What is meant by this whole business of submission?

Every passage that talks on marriage has one word in it that’s common to all of the passages. Yuck! SUBMISSION.

It's in Colossians chapter 4.

It's also in 1 Peter:

1 Peter 3:1

In like manner, wives be putting yourselves in subjection to your own husbands.

Peter agrees with Paul, comes out in Colossians, comes out in Ephesians. So wherever it is in the marriage relationship, the whole business of submission comes to the floor.

Is submission a spiritual problem? It is initially, isn't it? Because we have to learn how to submit ourselves to our Lord.

“Yeah but the Lord and my husband are sure a whole lot different!”

Marriage is a laboratory to teach us how to live in a right relationship with your Lord.

God gave marriage to teach each of us how to prepare ourselves for eternity when we're going to be living for one Person only and that's for the Lord Jesus.

In the marriage relationship, we are learning, in the process of how to prepare ourselves for eternity.

We are preparing to enter a laboratory, preparing us for

eternity. That's the reason God designed the marriage.

Now in the marriage relationship somebody has to be responsible. Wives are to put themselves "in subjection to their own husbands, as to the Lord."

v. 23 Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body.

"Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body."

What is the REASON why the woman is to submit herself to the husband?

Because the husband in the marriage relationship, is just like Christ is to the church, His body that he's been talking about back in chapter 3.

"the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He himself being the [head] of the body."

Now, what does that mean? That means that just like Christ functions in a relationship to the church, so the husband functions in a relationship to his wife.

Submission a lot of times would be a whole lot easier if the husband were fulfilling his role. We're going to get to the husband in just a minute.

Sometimes in the Bible there are excuses for not submitting. For instance, way back in the book of Exodus the mid-wives were told to slay all the little Hebrew children. They chose to hide those Hebrew children and disobey the authority that was over there. And it said God blessed the mid-wives for their decision.

So there is a time and a place where there's restriction upon submission.

In Acts 5 when the apostles had been commanded by the authorities not to preach and they say "Whether to obey God or man, judge ye." (ref. Heb. 5:29)

They were blessed in their ministry as they continued to pursue it.

And granted, if we have gotten into a marriage relationship where we are unequally yoked together and we have a believer and an unbeliever, then we have a problem here. Something that has to be dealt with regard to how far this goes.

If a husband is fulfilling his God-designed job description in the marriage, a woman finds it terribly easy to submit.

A lot of times women don't submit because of the insecurity of the relationship, knowing that the husband is not fulfilling his role. Many times this seems to come to the floor in this area.

“Because the husband is the head of the wise,”

Now what does that mean? That means that somebody has to be responsible before God for this unit that’s been brought into existence.

Now ladies, there’s a wonderful truth here. When somebody else has the responsibility for the whole thing, it sure does make it a lot easier if we’re willing to accept it.

Before God a husband is going to have to stand before God, he’s going to be held accountable for the condition of his wife and his children, his money, the minutes and the time that he spent at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Women don’t have that responsibility—he does. He’s the “head of the wife.” He has a stewardship and responsibility. Women ought to respect and not fight against it. They ought not wish to take his place.

It’s a wonderful thing to recognize that God didn’t design this for him to be some kind of superior dictator. It’s just somebody has to have the responsibility.

It’s like in Matthew 25. Remember the parable of the talents? Some guy was given five, another guy was given two, another guy was given one. Everybody was responsible for what they had.

A man is responsible for the condition of his wife spiritually because he has led and lived with her and cherished and

nourished her over the years of this marriage relationship, and he's held responsible for that according to what we learned in this passage.

So submission is not a hard, cold, difficult word. Somebody has to be responsible.

“[Even] as Christ is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body.”

How did He do that?

1. It cost the giving of Himself to make it possible.
2. He's interceding 24 hours a day at the right hand of the Father for us—the church, the body of Christ—right now.
3. He's coming back to take us to be with Himself.

So submission to HEADSHIP involves headship being INVOLVED, in the same way that Christ is involved with the church, the body of Christ.

He nurtures us. He's the “Savior of the body.” He's the protector. He's the provider—so the husband is.

v. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be subject in every thing to their husbands.

“But as the church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be

subject in every thing to their husbands.”

Sometimes it’s funny how in the process we make it a joint-venture for a while. We’ll be submissive in some areas but we won’t be in the other.

“in every thing”—in the marriage relationship, the husband is held responsible. The wife is submissive to the husband’s leadership in this regard.

“[Even] as the church is subject to Christ,” so the wife is to “be subject in every thing” to her husband.

Lovett says this:

The obedience of the wife is a profoundly spiritual matter. It is because Jesus asks it that she dethrones her own will to install her husband as lord. The wife who can accept the truth of her spiritual nature finds her greatest joy through submission. Insubordination of wives has also been a fertile source of marital sorrow. Paul says the wife’s role is based on the church’s relationship to Christ and therefore more noble than it appears on the surface.

(source unknown)

“in every thing” means we’re taking the responsibility out of our hands and we’re placing it in the hands of our husband and saying “Here. This marriage is your responsibility. You’re going to be held responsible before God for it. What are you going to do with it? It’s yours, it’s not mine.”

Women it's not going to work if you're going to wait until your husband becomes a spiritual leader before you submit. You will never, ever solve the problems in your marriage relationship until you decide that you're the problem.

Most of the time in counseling when couples get together none of them will say, "I'm the problem." They will always point to their mate and say, "If it wasn't for this creep, everything would be great."

It's just exactly like the Garden of Eden. The Lord came down and tried to figure out who ate the fruit. It went from Eve to Adam to the snake. Nobody wants to take the responsibility.

But when we take our God-given role and responsibility and we change, then people will change and respond to us. We will never change somebody else by an act of our will.

We can't sit around on a barbed-wire fence waiting for somebody else to fulfil their function. We hear a lot of women say, "My husband's not the spiritual leader." So because he's not the spiritual leader they assume that it's alright to do their own thing. Go to their Bible classes, go to church, neglect their family, their kids and their husband, and make their husband feel inferior spiritually. Learn all those great truths so he feels like a nerd when it comes to trying to lead the family devotions because she knows the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

So many men say, “I could not keep up with my wife. She’s going to all these Bible classes all day long while I’m working out there in field and I can’t keep up with her so why should I be the spiritual leader?”

We have the women in a stand-off. They say, “Well I’m not going to submit until he’s the spiritual leader.”

We have the men saying, “I can’t be a spiritual leader with that giant around the house.”

What do we have? We have a mess!

Women have to be willing to submit themselves to their husband just the way he is. Because she isn’t perfect either.

We’re both bought by the blood of Christ. We’re far from what we once were and we have a long way to go. When we learn to accept each other right where we are, our expectations are close to the reality. And we accept each other like we are, then we begin to develop a really special relationship.

Now, that’s the wives. Let’s get to the husband.

v. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

“Husbands, love your wives, even as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her;”

Now, the definition of the word “love” today is the problem. Men say “I love my wife.”

One guy said “I told her 25 years ago and it stands unless I revoke it.”

“I mean that’s a really big deal, boy. I told her I do. She’s got to know I do, I spilled my insides out there in the arena of conflict every day and pay for all of her charge cards and all that stuff. I take care of everything.”

One guy said, “Boy my wife, the only decision she’s got to make today is to decide whether she’s going to play tennis or golf and at which country club. And I’ve got to go to work.” And he said “And boy she’d kill me if she heard me say that.”

A lot of times that’s the feeling that men get. “I love my wife!” With that, they stop right there.

“even as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her;”

Men it’s time to define love and we’re going to define it a whole lot differently than probably we’ve been living it.

Love involves FOUR DIMENSIONS. We can’t tell our wife that we have *agapé*—that’s the word here—love for her.

Love is produced by the Holy Spirit, unless we have gotten involved in the spiritual, the emotional, the mental and the

physical aspects of the relationship.

A lot of guys equate love with only the fourth—the physical.

“If the sex is great, then she understands that I love her. She responds to me when I came to hit the sack at night, everything’s fine.”

It’s hitting on one cylinder and there are four:

Spiritual—Emotional—Mental—Physical.

The SPIRITUAL—we are developing a relationship that has great spiritual ramifications. The minute we start praying together, there is going to be some oil in that marriage that hasn’t been there.

Read the Word together and pray together and watch it begin to smoke. It will be fantastic!

That’s the first priority in the relationship. That’s what Paul’s saying. It’s like Christ and the church—spiritual.

What about the EMOTIONAL? The emotional is the phone calls. It’s saying, “Honey I love you. I don’t deserve someone as wonderful as you. I appreciate what you do.”

Hiding little notes, doing special things—flowers, candy—all the stuff we did during courtship. We don’t have any trouble during courtship satisfying the emotional needs. It’s only after

we get them in the corral that we have problems with emotional things.

Men get hard about that. They really do! They just kind of turn it off. Once we have them nailed down man, we don't have to be emotional anymore. We can be the macho, tough man again now. Mr. Macho. We don't have to do all those things.

A woman is an emotional creature. And if we really love her, she expects to see demonstrations of that to satisfy her emotional needs.

Thirdly it's MENTAL. As we think in your heart, so we are. If we're thinking of other women and we're watching some of this trash and reading those dirty magazines, only because we're wanting to try to be able to be an effective lover to our wife. That kind of desecration of the marriage relationship and that kind of thinking is going to come out. The first conflict we have, what we have been thinking is what is going to be said. And it is going to hurt, hurt, hurt.

We have to deal with the mental. We have to reinforce ourselves with thoughts that are positive so when the conflict comes there's constructive involvement rather than destructive bitterness that can never be brought back to a place of healing.

Oh some of the horrible things that are said. Things that just scare and score to the point where a woman shrivels up and is

unable to respond simply because it's been thought about and then it came out.

It's just like squeezing an orange. We begin to squeeze it and out comes what's inside. The thinking part of it, the mental part of it's critical.

Remember how easy it was to think about her? Before we were married? We thought about her the first thing in the morning. We thought about her all day long and everything that happened we always related to her. It made us kind of laugh inside when we thought about something that happened while away from her.

For some strange reason we get our minds off in left-field and the mental part is neglected.

When the spiritual, the emotional and the mental are on target, the physical is a piece of cake. We don't have to work at the physical if we're a normal, red-blooded individual. It will be incredibly satisfying and everything will be beautiful. God designed that on the far-end of the thing to be the frosting on the cake when we're working on the others.

If we have a problem down there on the back-end of the thing, just back up to one of the other three and find the reason for it and begin to be honest about it and talk about it.

Alright now men, submission on the part of a woman would be a piece of cake if we were doing what would make them

respond in their femininity to what they were designed to.

Submission will take place if we will do these **FOUR THINGS**. We won't have to work at it and they won't have to say "I'm going to do it!" It'll happen. It'll work.

1. Assume the **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**. Start to pray and read the Word together.
2. Learn to be a **SERVANT**. Jesus Christ came and He said "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give my life a ransom for many." (ref. Matt. 20:28)

Start being a servant. Start around the house doing some of that stuff that was delegated totally to the wife. Learning to be a servant—**SERVANT LEADERSHIP**.

3. Concentrate on focusing on the wife's needs of **SECURITY** and
4. **SELF-IMAGE**.
3. **SECURITY**. Let her know that no matter what happens, you'll always be there.

"Even under the graying of your hairs I'll be the same." (Isa. 46:4)

That's security. They're thinking "I'm getting older and not many men are looking for older women but a lot of younger

women are looking for older men.” Focus on that security and those security needs.

4. SELF-IMAGE. Always make her feel special. Make her feel like and know that she is just indispensable.

Put those four things together. Submission will not be a problem in marriage.

WOMEN ARE RESPONDERS.

Women are like computers. What we put in is what we get out. Women are just like the mind. What we sow we reap.

Want a critical, nagging wife? Don't talk to her. Don't fulfill these functions and they'll drive us up the wall because they're trying to get us to respond to them. And as we do our job, women respond.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;”

What's that tell us? That's LOVE that is INVOLVED.

Listen to William Barclay:

This love is to be a love which never exercises a tyranny of control but a love which is ready to make any sacrifice for her good.

(source unknown)

We get the idea that love involves the tyranny of CONTROL rather than the SACRIFICE of our interests for her best good.

Someone said:

Sacrifice is the thrill of giving the best we have to the one we love the most.

(source unknown)

That's the kind of love that's being talked about here.

v. 26 in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

“in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word,”

What did Christ do?

First, in the PAST, He gave Himself for the church. He died on the Cross.

John 15:13

Greater love hath no man than this, than a man would lay down his life for his friends.

What's He doing now? He is preparing His saints for eternity

by “the washing of the water of the word.”

We are SANCTIFIED—we’re cleansed. We’re prepared to spend eternity with Him. That’s the PRESENT.

We’ll see the FUTURE in just a minute.

William Barclay says:

Any love which drags a person down is a false love; any love which coarsens instead of refines the character, any love which necessitates deceit, any love which weakens the moral fiber, any love from which a person emerges a worse person, is not love. Real love is the greater cleanser and purifier of all of life.

(source unknown)

In this situation, the husband is to love his wife. Love which is involved in the giving of himself, love which is involved in the daily development of that woman spiritually and seeing that those needs are cared for.

v. 27 in order that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things; but in order that she might be holy and blameless.

“in order that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things; but in order that she might be holy and blameless.”

Jesus Christ is involved in our life in three big ways. Here are the three big theological terms:

1. Justification,
2. Sanctification, and
3. Glorification.

Justification in the sense that He died upon the Cross to provide for our righteousness, acceptable in the Father's sight. That is in the PAST—He gave Himself for us.

Sanctification means that He is daily, by the reading of the Word, making us holy. He's working in our life to help us grow in that relationship. To cleanse us, to make our life more what it ought to be for the glory of God. He does that with us on a daily basis. Why? So He can ultimately present us in glorification.

1 John 3:2

Soon we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

We have the PAST, the PRESENT and the FUTURE in the relationship.

Jesus is saying to men, if we love our wives like Christ does the church, we have had a concern over justification, over her

salvation. We've had a concern over her sanctification that daily she is being made more like Christ because of her relationship to us. And we're ultimately looking forward to the day when we present her in glory for what she is because she lived with us. She is there like Jesus Christ.

Justification, sanctification, glorification—past, present and future.

What does that tell us?

That's Song of Solomon chapter 2.

“His banner of me is love! He's proud of me! He wants to look forward to that day when He can present me throughout eternity! To show all the other saints what He's been able to do in my life.”

The Lord, because He loves the church, gave Himself. He nurtures the church and He ultimately looks forward to presenting the church to the glory of God.

That's what it means men, to love our wives “even as Christ loved the church.”

v. 28 Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. The one who is loving his own wife is loving himself;

“Even so husbands should love their wives as their own

bodies. The one who is loving his own wife is loving himself;”

Joint heirs of the grace of life. We are to love our wives as our own bodies. Nobody hates their own body. We take care of it. We nurture it. And in the same way, so husbands ought to love their wives.

Eadie, one of the Greek commentators, said:

So are husbands to love their wives as being indeed their own bodies. The language is based on previous imagery. The apostle calls Christ, the Head, and the church, the body. That body of which He is the Saviour. Christ loved the church, as being His body. Now the husband is the head of the wife and as her head, he ought to love her as being his body and therefore, he that loves his own wife loves himself. The phrase, loves himself, is not identical with the formula of the preceding clause as their own bodies; it is rather an inference from it. If the husband as the head of the wife, loves his wife, as being his own body, it is a plain inference that he is only loving himself. His love is not mis-spent, it is not wasted on some foreign object. It is a hallowed facet of self-love.

(source unknown)

v. 29 for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but is nourishing and cherishing it, even as Christ does the church,

“for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but is nourishing and cherishing it, even as Christ does the church,”

We're "nourishing" her. We're "cherishing" her. We're caring for her needs, "even as Christ does the church."

v. 30 because we are members of His body.

"because we are members of His body."

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

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

Genesis 2:24—that was the institution of marriage way back there in the garden.

Paul picks up on that verse to describe what it ought to be like.

v. 32 This is a great mystery, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

"This is a great mystery, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."

Marriage is a RELATIONSHIP just like that.

v. 33 However, let each one be loving his own wife as himself, and the wife that she respects her husband.

“However, let each one be loving his own wife as himself, and the wife that she respects her husband.”

There are TWO WORDS that stand out in the marriage relationship and they’re both in that last verse. That’s the reason it’s the KEY VERSE.

1. the word “LOVE” and
2. the word “RESPECT” or SUBMISSION.

That solves the whole problem of the marriage relationship.

If those two things are understood and they are fulfilled, we’ll have a marriage that will bring glory to God.

Here are the lessons from our study:

Lesson #1: Submission to designated authority relieves you of the responsibility before God.

Lesson #2: Submission is natural for a woman whose husband is a spiritual leader and servant, magnifying security and self-image.

Lesson #3: Love will give of itself to nurture and present the wife proudly.

Lesson #4: Submission and love summarize the New Testament teaching on marriage.

Lesson #5: To be subject to one's own husband involves the three A's: awareness, attitude and authority.

Lesson #6: When an obligation has to be forced, it is not submission, but slavery.

Lesson #7: To love and give of himself, the husband must be sensitive, sacrificial and a servant.

Lesson #8: Daily application of the Word of God is that which cleanses our lives from the defilements of living.

Lesson #9: Because of His work on Calvary's cross, the Savior is going to present us without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Lesson #10: Husbands have a moral obligation to be loving own wives as their own bodies.

Lesson #11: The husband is to be nourishing and cherishing his wife just as Christ also is nourishing and cherishing the church.

Lesson #12: The man is to leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife.

Lesson #13: The husband is to be loving his own wife even as himself.

Lesson #14: The wife is to see to it that she is respecting her husband.

Our heavenly Father, we thank You that as we look into this passage like it's just been expressed, we feel like we really fall short. We know that we cannot love our wives like Christ does the church, but that Your Spirit—the very first manifestation of the Spirit—is agapé love. And as You begin to produce that within us, we know that we can give of ourselves in constructive servanthood; in being positive and affirming to those around us, submitting to their authority without any problem—considering them more important than we do ourselves. Lord help us to add oil to the machinery by learning how to do that. Then Father we pray for these precious wives that You'd enable them not to feel guilty but enable them to discover their role the way You created them. And may they as they respond to the needs of the husband and the husband sees this, that the wife as well and the husband will meet half way and they'll be a new step taken; a new depth in marriage. A beautiful relationship that will continue to flourish and develop in the days that are ahead. Thank You and we pray that You might help us learn how to relate on all four of these levels we've talked about. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 5:17 — *“On this account, do not be foolish but be understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

STUDY NUMBER TEN – HIS PLAN FOR THE HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP – EPHESIANS 5:21-33

KEY VERSE 5:33

v. 21 putting yourselves in subjection to one another in respect of Christ.

v. 22 Wives, be putting yourselves in subjection to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

v. 23 Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body.

v. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be subject in every thing to their husbands.

v. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

v. 26 in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

v. 27 in order that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things; but in order that she might be holy and blameless.

v. 28 Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. The one who is loving his own wife is loving himself;

v. 29 for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but is nourishing and cherishing it, even as Christ does the church,

v. 30 because we are members of His body.

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

NOTES

NOTES

v. 32 This is a great mystery, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

v. 33 However, let each one be loving his own wife as himself, and the wife that she respects her husband.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Define the wife's role in the marriage relationship according to verses 22—24.

3. Define the husband's role in the marriage relationship according to verse 25.

4. What are the 3 purposes behind this command for sacrificial love on the part of the husband according to verses 26 & 27?

5. How are husbands to love their wives according to verse 28?

6. How is this love of the husband illustrated in verse 29?
In your own words define “nourishing & cherishing”.

7. Describe God’s original intention for the marriage relationship according to verse 31.

8. In verse 33 define the roles of both the husband & the wife.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Submission to designated authority relieves you of the responsibility before God.

LESSON #2: Submission is natural for a woman whose husband is a spiritual leader and servant, magnifying security and self-image.

LESSON #3: Love will give of itself to nurture and present the wife proudly.

LESSON #4: Submission and love summarize the New Testament teaching on marriage.

LESSON #5: To be subject to one's own husband involves the three A's: awareness, attitude and authority.

LESSON #6: When an obligation has to be forced, it is not submission, but slavery.

LESSON #7: To love and give of himself, the husband must be sensitive, sacrificial and a servant.

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