



Month of the Family



Love and Respect... The Woman's Role

Ephesians 5:22-24 – February 8, 2009

Love and Respect...two sides of the marriage coin! Over the next 2 weeks we will look at some powerful truths that have the capacity to change your marriage forever! Today we will look at the role of the wife. We will try and address the following questions: What does a respectful wife look like? What makes it hard for a woman to submit to and respect her husband? How are the ideas of submission and respect carried out in a real life marriage?

Background:

In the previous section, Paul emphasized the importance of mutual submission and now applies this general principle in the context of marriage. He outlines the duties and responsibilities of harmonious relationships...in marriage...in parenting...and even in the work place. The Christian life is one of reciprocal behavior and obligation. It wasn't a philosophy on which all the "duties" were all on one side. As Paul saw it:

- Husbands have as great (or greater) a responsibility as do the wives
- Parents have as great (or greater) duty as the children
- Employers have as great (or greater) obligation as do employees
- Rights and privilege are diminished while duty and responsibility are highlighted.
- The question becomes "What should I do for others" not "What should you do for me?"

I. Submission and Respect: A wife's responsibility (v. 22-24)

Submission has become a lightning rod of division in some churches. The **radical feminist** would have the very word purged from the Biblical record, while the male dominance view would pummel us with a "might is right" viewpoint. We have a distorted view. What is the balance?

²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

²³For 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.

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

A. Definition of Submission Greek: "Hupotasso".

1. An old military term:

- *to line up* (tasso)
- *under* (hupo);
- To get in order, to arrange.
- Has the idea of "rank" (Lieutenant or Captain).

2. Because it is a present participle it refers to an activity that must be continuous, and because it is the middle voice it must be voluntary – "to submit oneself".

3. A woman **voluntarily** yields authority to her husband out of **respect** for the Lord. This is illustrated by the relationship of the Church (The Bride of Christ) to Christ.

4. Marriage does not belong to you and I – it belongs to God. God has not given us that authority – husband and wife are under the authority and Lordship of Jesus and must carry out His will – "*What God has joined together, let no man put asunder*" (Mark 10:9).

B. 3 thoughts on submission...

1. Loyalty is reflected in our attitude as opposed to service rendered as a slave.
2. Submission is not yielding to the *needs* of another; rather it is yielding to the *authority* of another.
3. His personality doesn't invalidate his position!

C. Four things that destroy biblical submission.

* Flushing toilet/shower cartoon: Marge and Stan Murdock had worked out a signal to let each know when the other was spending too much time in the shower

1. **Qualifying submission** - I will follow my husband if...

The only occasion in which you should not follow your husband is if he asks you to go against God's Word... unethical, illegal, or immoral!

2. **Grudging submission** - I will follow my husband but I don't like it..

You follow but not joyfully.

Marriage is like flies buzzing around a screen door in the summer. All those on the outside want to get in and all those on the inside want to get out.

3. **Faithless submission** - I will follow my husband but I'm afraid he won't lead us properly.

You follow but you are not doing it with confidence in the Lord and in your husband.

Quote: "Just stooping low enough so God can have a clear shot at your husband."

4. **Forced submission** - I will make you follow me.

Husbands, you are never told to enforce this command. Your authority in the home is not a controlling, harsh, and uncaring dictatorship. It is to be a wise, prayerful, caring influence of leadership.

- *If you have to remind people that you are the leader, you probably aren't.*
- Barbed wire cartoon: Apparently I have done something to upset you!

II. Women Have a Hard Time Respecting their Husbands when...

A. They don't feel **loved**.

1. **FBI Cartoon:** Federal Bureau of Feelings, sir. It seems that last night you neglected to ask your wife how her day was. You have the right to remain silent!"
2. If their love language is words of affirmation, they won't feel loved if communication isn't a high priority!
3. Their emotional fuel tank is on empty
4. Don't confuse love/intimacy with sex.
 - "Women give sex to get love, while men give love to get sex"

B. Men aren't "**gentle or kind**"

1. We speak truth...but is it in love?
2. The more truth you speak, the more love is needed
3. Truth vs. Love diagram
4. We tell instead of ask. (Illustration: Cheryl's request in Puerto Vallarta).
5. How do you talk to her? Yesterday's argument!

C. Men lead **inconsistently**

1. When we act only when convenient or out of expedience.
2. Don't over promise and under deliver.
3. Lack of integrity...doesn't keep their word.

D. The wife doesn't feel like a **priority**

1. Job, sports, friends, church, exercise etc. always comes before her
2. What is most important to you?
3. **Conversation Cartoon:** "I'll just drop off to sleep, dear. I'm sure you will be able to keep the conversation rolling without me."

E. We are **selfish**

1. Are your decisions seen as self-serving? Selfish or selfless
 - A couple on their 50th wedding anniversary summed up their long and happy marriage. The husband said, “I have tried never to be selfish. After all there is no I in marriage.” The wife responded, “For my part, I have never corrected my husband’s spelling.”
 - “Any marriage in which everything is done for the convenience of one of the partners and where the other exists simply to gratify the needs and desires of the first is not a Christian marriage.” Bob Kraning
2. Example: chores around the house

F. We don’t “**leave and cleave**” (v. 31)

1. Men: do you need to cut the apron strings?
2. Leaving means...
 - Your decisions aren’t unduly influenced by your parents.
 - Supporting your wife by preempting “we/they” battles with your parents... especially your mother.
 - Making your wife feel treasured.

G. There is a habitual pattern of **sin**

1. **Pornography**

2. **Anger**

3. **Profanity**

4. **Abuse**

H. They don't see **God** working through us

1. "As to the Lord" (v.22)

2. As to God, not because we are God. A woman **voluntarily** yields authority to her husband out of **respect** for the Lord.

3. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of your Life

A conclusion: I have never met a woman who didn't lovingly submit to a self-sacrificing husband who loved her as much as Christ loved the church.

What woman would not want to submit to a man who...?

- Served her unconditionally
- Sought to please her
- Cared for her interests first
- Would sacrifice even his own life to protect her
- Love her through even the most difficult circumstances of life.

Table Talk:

1. What is the correlation between the church and marriage?
2. Why did God give us marriage instructions that seem so counter to our culture and our own instincts?
3. What are some ways that wives can show respect to their husbands?
4. Ladies only: When is it difficult for you to respect your husband?
5. Ladies only: Take the time to write your husband's a note describing specific things that you appreciate about him.
6. The times in our marriage that I have felt closest to you were...

Resources:

Love and Respect by Emerson Eggerich. I believe this is the best marriage book currently on the market. We also have the DVD seminar available for your home group.

Cracking the Communication Code by Emerson Eggerich is the sequel to his first book. He expands his teaching by giving practical illustrations on how to communicate in a pink/blue world!