

Ephesians 5b

5:21-6:9

21 Most translations put the topic division after verse 21. Verse 21 seems to be the introduction for the next topic. Paul begins explaining relational submission which goes from 5:22 to 6:9. In the military sense, the word submission (*hupotasso*) meant to arrange in a military fashion under a leader. Since the following passage is about spiritual warfare, we might conclude this was the intended meaning. The other usage was a voluntary giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility. The verse seems to imply that the Leader is Christ, and that when we submit to one another, it is so that we will function as we should as soldiers of the cross. Submission requires humility. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church always lived this? It takes love and the fear of the LORD. Hebrews 13:7 Those who would lead must give an account to the LORD as to how they led. 1Peter 5:5

22 The first example of mutual submission is a wife to her husband. Perhaps the Holy Spirit lists this first because it is one of the most difficult of relationships. Genesis 3:16; Colossians 3:18; 1Peter 3:1 Submit as to the LORD. What does that suggest? Is it more difficult for some than others? Is this just a cultural suggestion?

23 As Christ is the head of the church, the husband is the head of his family. Since couples are to work together as one, someone must lead. Christ has given that position to the man. He carries the responsibility. 1Corinthians 11:3

24 It seems Paul had to make his point very clear. There was probably as much opposition to this instruction then as there is now. What if the husband is ungodly?

25 Now we have the man's part. Which is harder, the command to submit in everything, or the command to love and give of yourself like Jesus? If the husband will do his part, the wife will not have difficulty with hers and vice versa. Colossians 3:19 Men are forbidden from being harsh. 1Peter 3:7 They are to be considerate and respectful, considering their physically weaker frame.

26 Christ gave Himself up for the church to sanctify her by washing her with the water of the Word. We are to do the same for our wife. We should be sharing Scripture that will help our wife mature in the LORD and into the calling He has for her. When was the last time you shared a Scripture your wife needed?

27 Jesus gave Himself to us with a goal in mind. He is transforming us into a radiant bride. Colossians 1:28 Are we helping our wives to be transformed by sharing the Word with them so that they will mature into spiritual beauty?

28 As your wife matures spiritually, you will love her all the more. The two of you are one. Mutually maturing helps your ministry as a team and individually. As she is blessed, you are blessed. As you help and bless her, you are blessing yourself. Matthew 19:5

29-30 Caring for her is caring for yourself. The more you realize this, the more you will bless your wife in every way you can. Just as Christ cares for and feeds the church, so we should our wife.

31 Genesis 2:24 It is important for newly weds to make their own independent life. The bride's father nurtured and taught her before, but now it is the husband's place. The mother looked after her son's needs. Now it is her daughter-in-laws place. When the old roles aren't left behind there are always problems.

32 Genesis 2:24 is about Christ and the church. Marriage is a picture to help us better see our relationship with Christ. Are you learning from the picture in your own life?

33 He summarizes the husband and wife roles. The husband is to love, and the wife is to submit. When you see these roles fulfilled, you will find a very happy marriage.

6:1-3 Now the parent and child relationship of submission is addressed. Deuteronomy 5:16 is quoted. Children are to submit by obeying their parents. They are promised long life if they do. "Don't run out in the street! Don't play near the edge of that cliff." Parents give instruction because they are concerned for the safety of their children. The promise surely goes even deeper. Prov 6:20

4 Fathers are told not to exasperate their children. Don't demand too much. Don't expect perfection. Train and instruct them in the way of the LORD. Colossians 3:21; Deuteronomy 4:9

5-8 The role of slaves is to serve as they serve the Lord. Colossians 3:17 Many in the first century church were slaves. This would have been a radical departure from the way most slaves felt. It was a powerful witness. Notice the contrast of wholeheartedly and just to be seen. Can we apply this to employees and employer?

9 This was even a greater departure from the norm. Owners of slaves are suppose to have the same attitude, respect and the fear of the LORD. Romans treated their slaves like tools. A Christian slave owner had to get a whole new attitude. Would you fear the slaves taking advantage of your new gentle respect? If a slave did not work hard, or obey commands, threats were a way to motivate them. Paul said that the threats had to go, because God sees you and your slaves as equals. Do you see the theme of submission running through all relationships? Has anything changed? How would we apply this to our relationships in the body of Christ? Our church government?