

## Marriage: The Tie That Frees • Part 2

### The Roles Of Marriage • Ephesians 5:22-32

#### I. INTRODUCTION

##### A. *Counting Ribs*

1. One night Adam stayed out very late and Eve became upset.
2. When he got home she said "You're running around with other women aren't you?"
3. Adam replied, "That's ridiculous! You're the only girl for me. In fact, come to think of it, you're the only girl!"
4. Well, the quarrel continued until early in the morning until Adam finally fell asleep
5. He woke up a couple hours later to find Eve poking him in the side
6. He asked, "What do you think you're doing?"
7. "Counting your ribs," she said.

##### B. *The Maker & His Instructions*

1. One of my favorite praise choruses right now is *I Have A Maker*
2. We do have a Maker! - and not only did He create us but He has given us instructions for how to live successfully in every area of life
3. Some of His most detailed instruction about how to live deals with marriage
4. In our first study on marriage last Sunday we discovered both the *purpose* and the *goal* of marriage as it's revealed in Genesis 2
  - a. the *purpose* of marriage is to solve the problem of loneliness
  - b. the *goal* of marriage is to become one; through the process of living together we blend our lives in an intimate companionship of knowing and being known
  - c. this is where any study of marriage has to begin - with understanding it's purpose and it's goal
  - d. knowing this frees us from merely selfish expectations for our marriage and allows us pursue what God intends for us
5. To the end of attaining intimacy, God has given even more specific instruction about the roles of the husband and the wife
6. Remember as we take a look at these things this morning that what we are going to read is not merely the writing of a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish rabbi
  - a. these aren't the ramblings of some kind of old-fashioned male chauvinist
  - b. this is inspired by the Holy Spirit
  - c. these are the instructions of our Designer and Maker
  - d. it is nothing less than the counsel of God for how to have a healthy and happy marriage

##### C. *Wives Today, Husbands Next Week*

1. When I began to study for today, I intended to cover the roles of both the husband and the wife
2. But the more I worked, the more clear it became that it's going to take us *two* weeks to get through this in one day
3. So today, we'll take a look at the Role of the Wife
4. Next week we'll examine the Role of the Husband
5. And that means that you men might want to reserve any pointed barbs you think up during today's message until after you've had a chance to hear about your role next week
6. Besides, there will be enough for *you* to think about in what we'll examine today

## II. TEXT

### A. *Where It Begins . . .*

1. Our focus this morning will be verses 22-32
2. But as is typical for the Apostle Paul, this section is drawn from what comes before it
3. So we have to begin at v. 18 . . .

**{18} Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,**

**{19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,**

**{20} giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**{21} submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

4. The next verses launch in to Paul's instructions to husbands and wives
5. But that flows from what we find here
  - a. we must be filled with the Spirit and walking in the Spirit
  - b. we need to cultivate and maintain a heart of gratitude rather than resentment and bitterness
  - c. and we must put others first, rather than demanding our own way and living selfishly with an eye just to what we are getting
6. The instructions for husbands and wives doesn't begin at verse 22, it begins at verse 18!
7. A good marriage begins with a right and vital relationship with God through faith in Christ

### B. *The Role of The Wife*

**{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.**

1. Paul begins with the wife because his instructions flow cleanly out of what he

- has just said in v. 21
- a. so much so that the word "submit" in v. 22 isn't even in the original Greek
  - b. literally what it says is this . . .
  - c. "We are all to be submitting to one another in the fear of God. Wives, to your own husbands, as to the Lord."
2. You see, the principle of *mutual* submission is laid out in verse 21, then beginning in verse 22 all the way through chapter 6:9 Paul shows the *different shades and expressions* submission is to take between . . .
    - a. husbands and wives
    - b. parents and children
    - c. and finally, on the job between workers and their employers
    - d. the idea in all these verses is that our submission to one another is based on the *fear of God*
      - 1) fearing God means living in right relationship to Him -
      - 2) *and* to every other part of the creation
    - e. as we have different relationships with different people, our mutual submission to God and to one another will take different *forms*
  3. A wife's submission to her husband is to take the same form she shows to the Lord
  4. And the reason she is to demonstrate her submission in this fashion is because in terms of their relationship, God has appointed the husband as the head, just as Jesus is the head of the Church
  5. So, in the same manner that she shows her deference and submission to Jesus, she is to defer and be submitted to her husband

### **C. Not Popular**

1. I realize this is not a popular subject today
  - a. the fact of the matter is - it's never been a popular subject
  - b. it wasn't popular when Paul first penned these words
  - c. today - it not only isn't popular, it's politically incorrect!
  - d. the women's movement has effectively quashed any attempt to subject women to men
  - e. and you know what - that's good; because women are *not* inferior to men
  - f. on the contrary - the bible says that before Christ, we are all equal, including men and women
  - g. but where the women's movement errs is in thinking that equality of essence means *sameness*
  - h. it ought to be evident to anyone with a brain in their head that men and women are different- we all know this - in fact, we like it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
  - i. and as God has designed men and women to be different, He has assigned them different tasks and roles in life, including marriage
  - j. the wife has a role, the husband has a role
  - k. the husband's role is to be the head of the home, the leader, the one with whom the buck stops
  - l. therefore, by necessity, the wife's role *toward* her husband has to be one of *submission*

2. Let me make this crystal clear: The husband is the head of the home because God says so!!!!!!
  - a. no amount of social tinkering with marriage can change that
  - b. a man cannot abrogate his duty to be the head
  - c. he cannot *relinquish* it to his wife and she cannot *wrest* it from him
  - d. the husband has only one of two options,
    - 1) embrace his role and be a good leader -or-
    - 2) neglect it and fail
  - e. in the same way, a wife can never assume the leadership in her marriage
  - f. she too has only two options
    - 1) be in submission to her husband's headship -or-
    - 2) be in rebellion
3. Notice that Paul says a wife is to be in submission *to her own husband*; not men in general
4. Paul no where teaches the superiority of men and the general subjugation of women
5. No - submission is a husband-wife thing
6. So, what does Paul mean then when he says that a wife is to submit to her own husband as to the Lord?
7. Exactly what it says; and v. 24 reinforces it . . .

**{24} Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

8. To submit, means to *defer* to another
  - a. it pictures someone who *yields* to someone else
  - b. far from being a word which describes *weakness* - it speaks of tremendous *strength*
9. We have the goofy idea that submission implies weakness
  - a. inevitably when we talk about the wife's submission to her husband there are those ladies who ask if that means they are to let themselves be a *doormat*
  - b. absolutely not!
  - c. submission speaks not of weakness -
  - d. it isn't the surrender that comes at the end of battle in which you've lost
  - e. submission speaks of the strength to control the self and make the decision for one's self that they are going to yield to another
  - f. think about it: Demanding my way reveals my weakness over myself - Submission shows strength!

#### **D. In Everything!**

1. A wife's submission to her husband is patterned after her submission to Christ
2. In v. 24, Paul says she is to submit "in *everything*"
  - a. that means more than merely *outward compliance*
  - b. it's *deeper* than just a tight-lipped surrender
  - c. quite frankly, submission deals more with the posture of the heart than with actions
3. A lot of wives think submission merely means giving in *outwardly* while

- secretly they harbor resentment and defiance
4. Or maybe it's not so secret, "Okay George, whatever you say - but you're a jerk!"
  5. Think about it: When Paul wrote this, it was generally accepted that wives submitted to their husbands
    - a. women were considered little more than property in the world of Paul's day
    - b. a wife was a social convention by which one raised legitimate heirs to pass on the family name to
    - c. so why would Paul write something that was already so much an accepted part of life?
    - d. at first blush it seems as obvious as telling them to breathe
  6. The clue to what Paul is saying here is found in the grammar.
    - a. the verb "submit" is in the middle voice.
    - b. which means that Paul is saying that the wife is to "place herself in submission."
    - c. she is to sit down on the *inside* as well as the outside.
    - d. he's saying to the women of his day, "You've been sitting down on the outside because you had no choice. You have no power in society so you have to comply with your husband's wishes. But now God gives you this voluntary choice, this act of *will* rather than a legal requirement. You can submit from your heart too."
    - e. this is the "everything" he means
    - f. submit to your husband in everything;
      - 1) in your actions
      - 2) in your heart
      - 3) in your speech
      - 4) in your body language
  7. Rather than seeing Paul as some kind of male chauvinist who was merely seeking to subjugate women, realize that he was giving them a power they had never known before
    - a. it was the power to choose for themselves
    - b. he was making decision-makers of those who had been forbidden to make decisions before
  8. Ladies, the kind of submission God calls forth from you toward your husband isn't a weak and sickly kind of tepid resignation
    - a. it is a strong determination to yield to him and his leadership
    - b. far from being reluctant and melancholy, it's ready and joyous
    - c. submission isn't passive - it's highly active
    - d. you are to look for ways to affirm your husband's leadership
  9. And that leads us to the next point . . .

### **E. Build Him Up!**

1. What we often fail to notice in this passage is what these things tell us about our mate
2. In the role of the husband we learn something very insightful about the wife
3. And here in the instructions to the wife, we learn something profound about the

- husband
4. Ladies, understand something about you husband - HE NEEDS YOUR SUBMISSION!!
    - a. God made him that way
    - b. just as God appointed the husband to be the head of the home and the marriage -
    - c. He also designed men to *need* the wife's support and encouragement
  5. Remember the words of Genesis 2 when God said that it was not good that the man should be alone?
    - a. He said he would make someone who would be a *helper*
    - b. a companion who would complete him
  6. This completion, this filling out of the man takes place as the wife *helps* him
    - a. and the help he needs is her submission
    - b. again, not a weak kind of resignation
    - c. but a joyous, active yielding to him
  7. The wife's submission to her husband is to be patterned after our submission to Christ
  8. We know how *that* submission is given
    - a. it is active and unreserved
    - b. it's a thing of joy
    - c. why we might not always be perfectly submitted to the Lord -
    - d. at least we all recognize we should and strive to that end
    - e. in fact, we struggle to be ever *more* submitted to the Lord, in everything!
  9. The chief manifestation of our submission to Christ is our joyous worship and praise of Him
    - a. we lift our voices and hands - we sing of our love
    - b. we declare His goodness - and we proclaim his praises
  10. Listen ladies - God made you husband to need the same thing
    - a. a man *thrives* on praise - specially the praise of his wife
    - b. a man can be out in the world all day, doing battle with this and that, slaying dragons left and right
    - c. he comes home bloody and wounded - but he feels like a man because he's been doing the manly thing
    - d. but this big hunk of manliness can be reduced to a whimpering mouse in about 30 seconds if his wife meets him at the door with . . .
    - e. "Where have you been you louse? What have you done to your shirt, there's blood all over it? Is that you that stinks so bad? Why can't you stay clean? You're such a loser. I should have married Danny DeVito when I had the chance."
  11. Men have this thing called an "ego"
    - a. and it can take some pretty heavy hits from just about anyone except the wife
    - b. a wife has a unique ability to either affirm her husband's manhood or deny it
    - c. and the two main ways she does this is through her speech and through their physical relationship
    - d. one of the main ways your submission can find active expression is in your

speech

- 1) some time back, the space shuttle Discovery was grounded right before take-off
  - 2) not by technical difficulties or a lack of government funding, but by woodpeckers.
  - 3) Yellow-shafted flicker woodpeckers found the insulating foam on the shuttle's external fuel tank irresistible and pecked holes in it
  - 4) the foam was critical to the shuttle's performance.
  - 5) without it, ice forms on the tank when it's filled with the super-cold fuel, ice that can break free during liftoff and damage the giant spacecraft.
  - 6) the shuttle was grounded until the damage was repaired.
  - 7) just like those woodpeckers, marriages are frequently damaged not by big problems, but by the little things.
  - 8) petty criticisms and nagging can peck holes in a relationship and keep us from reaching the heights.
- e. even the Proverbs recognize the disempowering nature of a wife's nagging  
f. Prov 21:9 says

**Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.**

12. Ma'am - do you want a *manly* man for a husband?
  - a. I'm not talking about being macho -
  - b. machisimo is just what it sounds like: "male-cheesiness"
  - c. what I mean is, do you want a man who acts like and is a *man*?
  - d. who takes the responsibility for his leadership seriously
  - e. and then tenderly and lovingly leads you to the life together God always intended for you as a woman
  - f. do you want a *manly* man - a guy who will give you the attention and nurture you need and make you feel like a woman because he is being the man God intends him to be?
  - g. then submit to him - build him up - let him know that he is *the man*!
  - h. affirm his headship
  - i. when he leads - follow; readily and joyously
13. Let me prove my point.
  - a. notice that Paul says wives are to *submit* to their husbands
  - b. but to husbands, he says, *love* your wives
  - c. we don't read that wives are to love their husbands
  - d. now, of course they are - but the point is that wives show their love in a way a guy can read it as love by submitting to them
14. If you were to ask almost any man, "Which would you rather hear from your wife, 'I love you,' or, 'Honey, I just wanted you to know I think you are a real man!'" 99 out of 100 guys will tell you the later
15. Guys dig praise - about any and everything
16. Here are some of the more preferred lines you can use ladies . . .
  - a. Have I ever told you I think you're a great driver. I always feel so safe when you're driving. Did you ever think of a career as an Indy driver?

- b. No one makes better barbeque than you.
  - c. You look good in that shirt and those jeans - meow!
  - d. Is your hair growing back? It's so thick and full I just want to call you Fabio!
  - e. and here's the one to beat all others - What are you doing tonight about, oh, say 11:15?
17. I'll tell you what - while these are wonderful statements affirming your submission, they will make your husband putty in your hands!
18. In interviews with men who had affairs it was discovered the number one reason why they became attracted to the other woman was because she feed his ego
- a. she gave him the praise he wasn't getting at home
  - b. typically, the men who have affairs have wives who are constantly nagging them and putting them down
19. While men try to act all manly and secure, they are in fact, generally pretty insecure about their manhood
- a. that's why men tend to like competition
  - b. they don't necessarily have to win - they just have to compete, to do battle
  - c. but there is one battle that even if they win, they lose - the battle at home!
  - d. God intends marriage to be the one safe haven - the one battle-free zone
  - e. and it is here, in the safety of the marriage bond that a man's identity and security is most deeply nourished

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. *The Power Is Yours***

1. Far from submission being powerlessness -
2. It is a unique and singularly powerful means of strengthening your marriage
3. And as your marriage is strengthened and your husband is built up, the result will be greater blessing for you

#### **B. *To Men***

1. Want to end this morning with a word to the husbands
2. Show me where it says, "Husbands, remind your wives they are to submit to you."
3. You can't - it doesn't!
4. This is the Lord's instruction to your wife - next week we'll see what God says to you!
5. But in the meantime - meditate on what the passage we've looked at this morning and see what it says to you!
  - a. God has appointed *you* as the head of your marriage
  - b. you are the leader - so, where are you leading?
  - c. because you are the leader and initiator, the spiritual and relational temperature of your home is set by you
  - d. think about what your wife's submission to you means for her
    - 1) vulnerability!

- 2) ultimately, you are going to have to give account for the trust she placed in you by her submission
- 3) your decisions are going to affect her - and for this you will answer to God
6. And understand as well that her submission to you doesn't mean that she would ever consent to do something which is clearly forbidden in scripture
7. Her submission to you flows from her prior submission God - and if there is ever a conflict between the two - the Lord is going to win her loyalty - therefore, don't pit her between you and God - that's dumb!