

H O U S E o f W I S D O M

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Ephesians - Part 8 (Relationships)

This part of the study pertains to relationships and covers parts of chapter 5 and 6. Our way of thinking is always manifest by what we do - especially how we act in relationships with close family, friends and strangers. You might say, it is where the rubber meets the road - or, the proof of what you profess to believe. The things described in the Bible are to be applied primarily inward. However, the outward at times closely resembles the inward.

Ephesians 5:

Verses 21-23: 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.* 22. *Wives, submit ^(G5293) yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* 23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body.* A husband and wife are used as an allegory of the Christ and the church. The principles described in the next few verses apply to both, to marriage and to our being spiritually wed to Christ. So, a wife being subject to her husband is likened to members of the body being subject to Christ, and individuals being subject to what they believe. What is the Biblical concept of submission? How does this apply in our everyday life? What does submit or not submit mean?

Biblical submission IS NOT one person controlling another. It is not a wife being ordered around like a slave to every whim of her husband, nor any person treating another as they must do their bidding. That is the way the flesh operates. Look at verse 22 again: a key phrase regarding the wife's submission to her husband is, as unto the Lord. Does the Lord force submission? Or, is our submission by our own choice?

Psalms 106:39-42: 39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.* 40. *Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.* 41. *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.* 42. *Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection ^(H3665) under their hand.*

The same Hebrew word for forced subjection is used also for voluntary subjection. The word *kana* ^(H3665) is a primitive root with a primary meaning of to bend the knee. In a negative context the word would indicate *bring into subjection, subdue, humble*; and in a positive way to bend the knee would be *to show humility, obedience, a voluntary attitude of giving in*. In the example above, Israel became disobedient to the ways of the Lord, so when He backed away, the result was their enemies oppressed and subjected them to their ways. On a personal level, the main enemy is our corrupted way of thinking, which brings spiritual bondage. Therefore, every relationship must be personal AND as unto the Lord in order to work. There is always two sides in any relationship, and depending on the parties, different ideas may apply. While there is more said about husbands and wives, each entity is similar, as all submission is to be as unto the Lord.

Wife: *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church...* (Eph 5:23). **1 Corinthians 11:3:** *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.* The last verse outlines gospel order ordained by God, which in His

wisdom, is for the benefit of all mankind. This idea comes from the root of the Greek word *hypotasso* ^(G5293), which is derived from two words meaning *to arrange under in an orderly manner*. Jesus is our example of submission. Can you see how that false teachings about the Father and Son indirectly destroy gospel order in the family? As spiritual marriage to Christ is the strength of individuals and couples, the marriage institution is the strength of a nation. When families become spiritually dysfunctional, the whole nation eventually collapses.

The problem today is making gospel order work in a sinful environment. This requires every individual to do their part in having a proper relationship with Christ - i.e. Christ should be first. It requires a knowledge of how the change of one's thinking to a more spiritual level is reflected by a humble spirit. When this is done, husbands and wives are better able to work out together, decisions concerning finances, children, etc. and to cope with problems that come up from time to time. Personal and family prayer also, is an important part of the process.

Ephesians 5:24: *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. If the church is subject, then everyone in the church is subject to Christ in everything. ...and the wife see that she reverence her husband* (Eph 5:33). What does it mean for a wife to reverence her husband? It is to show a deep respect and honor toward him. **Colossians 3:18:** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

Husband: *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it* (Eph 5:25). This is a clear and strong statement for husbands, as Christ gave His life for the church. **Ephesians 5:28-29:** *28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church: How a man treats and cares for his own body is a metaphor of how he should treat his wife. As Christ is gracious toward the church, so should a husband be to his wife. **Colossians 3:19:** *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Ultimately, Christ is likened to a husband/bridegroom and saints as wife/bride. **Revelation 19:7-8:** 7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Any and all submission begins in the heart.**

Children: **Ephesians 6:1-3:** *1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou may live long on the earth. **Colossians 3:20:** Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. As a youngster, I was taught to speak and act respectfully to my elders, parents or not. How many children today are taught to say "yes sir" or "yes ma'am?" Are they being taught to stand when an elder enters the room, especially the young men when a lady enters?*

Verse three is a partial quote of the fifth commandment, but somewhat vague. Here is the last part quoted from the O.T.: *...that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee* (Ex 20:12). The last phrase in the N.T. should read *and thou may live long on the land* - meaning only the arable, or inhabitable land. In Paul's letter, he tells the children to obey their biological parents, but the fifth commandment stresses obedience (submission) to your spiritual parents. While "longer life" may be a secondary benefit, the primary promise is that we may live long in the "promise land," a type of the mind of Christ. Our heavenly Father births us spiritually through His Son with the word of truth. (Cf Jam 1:17-18; Jn 1:1 the word; Jn 14:6 the truth).

Fathers: **Ephesians 6:4:** *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The most important aspect of raising children is to teach them about God. **Proverbs 22:6:** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. This principle worked in my life, and I have seen it work in the lives of others. The most important part of training a young person is to live what you want them to learn. Be loving, caring, patient and kind, even with discipline. *Fathers,**

provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col 3:21).

Elders/Aged: Titus 2:2, 6-8: 2. *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in [love], in patience....* 6. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.* 7. *In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity (seriousness), sincerity,* 8. *Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

Titus 2:3-5: 3. *The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers* ^(G1228), *not given to much wine, teachers of good things;* 4. *That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,* 5. *To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.* Note: G1228 = *diabolos* translated devil 35/38 times.

Grandparents have certain wisdom because of their experience in life and learning from their mistakes. They can be very instrumental in teaching the young and having a positive influence on them. Again it comes down to living a life as it is in the Lord.

Servants/Masters: In modern times these terms relate more to employers/employees and to government leadership. **Ephesians 6:5-9:** 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;* 6. *Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;* 7. *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:* 8. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* 9. *And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.* Note - according to the flesh, not the spirit.

1 Peter 2:11-17: 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* 12. *having your conversation (conduct) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;* 14. *Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.* 15. *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:* 16. *As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* 17. *Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.* Again, this is according to the flesh and not in spiritual things. What if an ordinance goes against the conscience of a servant of Christ?

Three men, friends of Daniel, refused to obey the ordinance of the King of Babylon. They were prepared to give their lives to remain obedient to God: **Daniel 3:16-18:** 16. *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.* 17. *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.* 18. *But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* They were faithful in spiritual things. Seek the Lord and let your conscience be your guide.

This was not meant to be an in-depth study of these topics, and may generate more questions than answers for you. What ever the situation, what ever the questions, seek the Lord for answers and listen to the still small voice. **Ephesians 6:10:** *Finally, my brethren, be strong (empowered) in the Lord, and in the power (strength) of his might (ability).* As we learn to deal with the inward man, and become transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2), our strength in the Lord will grow. So will our positive influence on others and our spiritual subjection. We receive and plant seeds, and in the end, it is God who gets the increase. Amen.