

Walk in Love

Միմով Վարուեցէք

Ephesians 5:21-33

Once someone asked what the secret behind fifty years of successful marriage is, the husband replied: “When we first got married, we decided that I would make all the major decisions and my wife would make all the minor decisions. In fifty years of marriage, we have never had to make a major decision!”

“Well, Dad, what’s your New Year’s resolution?” Bill asked to his dad.

“To make your mother as happy as I can all year,” Dad answered.

“What’s your resolution, Mom?”

She answered, “To see that your dad keeps his New Year’s resolution.”

Humor tells us about something that happens in many households: CONTROL or DOMINATION. Who is in charge? Who dominates?

This takes many different forms:

Insisting one’s point over and over, nonstop argument, deceiving, playing games-manipulation, giving gifts with a catch, guilt tripping, yelling and screaming, or the opposite silent treatment, avoiding conflict, complete indifference, even physical violence, the list goes on and on.

What kind of unity do we have?

I want to start today’s message with these verses:

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:1,2 ESV)

This is a good foundation to start our sermon today. WALK in love....as Christ loved us...

And what kind of love did Christ demonstrate?

Gave himself up for us, for the church... for you and me....

Today’s sermon is examining how married couples can keep their married vows focused on Christ.

-Well, some of you could say, “Well, this sermon is not for me.” Let me explain. Some of you are married; some of you want to get married; some of you used to be married; some of you wish you never got married; some of you are single and have opinions about marriage; some of you have seen your parents who were married; some of you never have seen married parents; some believe marriage is old fashioned...Well, God ordained marriage, and it is very important. A healthy society has healthy marriages, healthy homes.

Our passage is a revolutionary passage. Women were treated badly, also the children, and the slaves (following week). The passage focusses on how couples, submit to Jesus. How Christ liberates us and gives us human dignity.

Let me bring forth three important biblical realities before I go to the role of the wife and the husband:

- First, the *dignity* of womanhood, childhood and servanthood;
- Second, the *equality* before God of all human beings, irrespective of their race, rank, class, culture, sex or age, because all are made in His image;
- Third, the even deeper *unity* of all Christian believers, as fellow members of God's family and of Christ's body.¹

Let us start with V21

submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph 5:21 ESV)

I believe we should start with this verse; we should submit to one another under the authority and love of Jesus. We should do it willingly, and not by force.

“The Greek word *hypotasso* (“submit”) literally means “arrange under”...

Submission was so important for New Testament writers because it described the **self-giving love, humility, and willingness to die that are demanded of all**

Christians.² . (Phil 2:3, Roman 12:3; Gal 5:13)

-Submission to each other out of reverence to Christ will put the foundation of the Christian marriage.

-Instruction to wives:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph 5:22-24 ESV)

Culturally in the US, this statement has been considered out of date. I can add that the concept of willingly to submit to Jesus, submit to God's will, is also not

acceptable to many. But if we think carefully, all of us are submitting to “something”. If that submission is not “God”, that means something else: your desires, your passions, your finances (money), your position.

Even atheist have their “gods”.

I rather submit to Jesus, who is the true God, and who gives real freedom in my submission. Coming back to wives:

1. You cannot submit to anything or anyone if you don’t love them. We submit to Jesus freely because we love Him. Wives are submitting to their husbands because they love their husbands. The bar is high, as they submit to Jesus. Because we love Jesus, then same way wives submit to their husbands.

Submission does not mean you lose your identity. Submission does not mean you are a doormat, your husband can walk over you. These instructions are for those who are Christian, and practice Christian values.

In the beginning I mentioned that God created man and woman equally. In fact, Christ elevated women, children, and workers (next week). God created in His Image Man and Woman. And each has their role in the family, in the marriage.

Submission is not to a tyrant man, or a dictator, who is controlling his wife.

Submission to a husband who is submitted to Jesus.

2. Submit to the head, the husband.

God authorized husbands to lead the family. Head does not mean tyranny, “My way or the highway.” Unfortunately, men have misused the headship role. Women were considered second class citizens, not important, don’t have any opinion. In many cultures until now women are treated badly.

The pendulum the went other way. Nowadays there is confusion about sexual identity. Also, there is confusion of roles. Women said, enough is enough, and their revolution towards men became so toxic that we live in a chaotic society.

Men, now listen carefully: “Divinely delegated authority must never be used selfishly.” NEVER....NEVER...NEVER.

“If ‘headship’ means ‘power’ in any sense, then it is power to care, not to crush, power to serve, not to dominate, power to facilitate self-fulfillment, not to frustrate or destroy it.”³

-The head contributes many things to the body. There is a tremendous responsibility on husband to be the head. We get stuck with the word **authority rather than responsibility and care.**

-We make jokes about authority. Why? Because we are sinners, and we misuse authority. We are selfish and we rule badly. **We love to dominate...**
We say the head is the husband and the neck is the woman. So who is ruling who?

There is no word “authority” here in these verses. We will see later what Paul says about the role of the husband. **A servant leader who can only lead when he has submitted to Jesus Christ as his ultimate leader.**

-In Gen 3 we see because of the curse of sin, men should rule over women. **“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”**(Gen 3:16 ESV)

That is not the case here. Headship is leadership with servanthood, whose role model is Jesus Christ himself.

-Instructions to the Husbands

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (Eph 5:25-31 ESV)

(If wives got three verses, please notice how many verses written concerning how to be a godly husband.)

1. You shouldn't use your authority selfishly.

“Your responsibility as headship expresses care rather than control, responsibility rather than rule.”⁴

2. Your role is to love her, **as Christ loved the church.**

The bar is very, very, very high. Christ loved the church and gave his life for the church. Your responsibility as head to love, to serve, to care, and even to die for your wife.

I love the biblical image that Jesus is the groom and the church is the bride. Then the husband should act the way Jesus demonstrated his love and care for the church.

WOW and WOW and WOW.

3. Jesus made a covenant with the church **to love**. (fall in love or walk in love) **Husbands, love your wives 25... husbands should love their wives as their own bodies 28.... let each one of you love his wife as himself, 33.**

Three times, love your wives in these verses, three times.

Husbands and wives, our marriage relationship **is covenant of submission and love**. Do you see how deep this bond is.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

This is not just physical unity, this is much deeper unity, physical, spiritual unity.

I hate divorce, because it cuts the spiritual unity of the covenant of love.

All I see here is walking in love. Falling in love is nice, and romantic, and why not, God created it. But all marriages need to be on solid ground, based on covenantal love. Because that is the way Jesus loved us.

4. The husband's love, like Christ, sacrifices in order to serve.

Christ loved the church in order to cleanse her. Christ loved his disciples and washed their feet. Christ's love **had a purpose, to free the church from sin.**

he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle...

Only Christ can save us from sin. a

Husbands as leaders should be responsible to lead their homes towards Jesus who save us and sanctify us. Serve your family, please!

-Here I like to open a parenthesis. My mom became a Christian after her marriage. She prayed for my dad's salvation for 30 years. Dad attended church regularly. In fact, he was the treasurer of the church for so many years. After 30 years, one day dad took the Bible and started reading and he accepted Christ. Now, at home there was lack of spiritual leadership. Mom took that role. She has major influence on our family. Yet, dad was the head of the family. He led the family in humility. He knew about Jesus; I don't know how dad was leading the home without having a personal relationship with him. But I am thankful for my mom and dad being good models.

-Marriage is a Mystery

and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Eph 5:32,33 ESV)
The “marriage” relationship of Christ as the head and the church as the bride is a mystery. Two shall become one. Do you see here how important the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church. Same in the marriage, this unity is mystery. I see that only God can bring this unity as Jews and gentiles became united in the early church.

Application

If your marriage is abusive, you should not submit. You need help. You need to stop that abusive relationship. It is not healthy. There is no Christ in that unity. Find help please.

1. It is all about Jesus. It is all about submitting to Jesus daily. It is all about surrendering our ego, our selfish desires to HIM. It is not ME in marriage, it is US. Think this way, instead of controlling someone, (both women and men try to control the other) allow Jesus to free you from curse of the sin, allow Jesus to transform your heart and bring healing in your marriage.

2. There will be conflicts, face them under guidance of Jesus.
God ordained the marriage and the roles in the marriage. Husbands and wives, we are sinners, and we will have conflicts. Without conflicts we will not have harmony. Daily we learn to submit to Jesus and have harmony at home. Don't escape from conflicts, face them under love of Jesus, if needed, search help.

3. If you love someone, you submit. And if you submit to someone, it means you love.

What is to submit; it is to give up oneself for someone.

What is to love; it is to give up oneself for someone, as Christ did.

“Thus, submission and love are two aspects of the very same thing, namely of the selfless self-giving which is the foundation of an enduring and growing marriage.”⁵

May God give us humble heart to obey his Word.

1. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 168

2. Klyne Snodgrass, *NIV Study Bible Commentary Ephesians*, P 293

3. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 181

4. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 175

5. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 184