

December 10, 2006 PM

**BEARING THE DIVINE IMAGE IN THE HOME:
HONOR AND OBEY
EPHESIANS 5:21-24, 33**

5:21- introduces the section. But how does this relate to structures in the home?

“Submit yourselves” - broader meaning than the narrow “obey” that we can sometimes give it. It includes obedience in many instances, but it is not limited to it. Root idea has to do with order, things being in proper places, fulfilling proper roles.

So “subjection” or “submission” takes on a different shape for the husband, father and master than it does for the wives, children and slaves. Yet, it still applies to them

Note also the connection with the command given in **5:18**: “be filled with the Spirit.” Paul might say this in other places like this: “walk in the Spirit” (**Gal 5:16**) or “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (the parallel to this verse in **Col 3:16**).

Characteristics of being filled with the Spirit: “speaking to themselves” in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (**5:19**); “giving thanks” to God the Father for all things (**5:20**); “submitting yourselves” to one another in the fear of Christ (**5:21**).

If you want to know if you are “Spirit-filled,” one place that will certainly tell you is your home-life.

Focusing on the wife today: **1. SUBMISSION (22-24)**

Clear: submit yourselves. Has to do with order in the home; finding and living in the place that God has appointed. If proper order is to be restored, our homes must reflect the order that God has ordained for them.

“submission”- quite broad; but it has the idea of conformity to a proper order, obedience or walking in lock-step; placing yourself under someone else’s authority. You are willingly conforming your will to the will of another in some form or fashion.

To your *own* husband: not a general command for women to be submissive to men. Husband is primary authority.

“As to the Lord”- husband mediates the authority of Christ. Therefore, in the home, to disobey your husband—to get out of order—*is* to disobey Christ.

Now why is the wife to submit to the husband? **5:23**: because he is the head. The home is only ordered properly when the wife acknowledges the husband’s headship with her willing submission.

Obedience or disobedience to God is determined in the ordering of the home by the way you respond to *his word* concerning your relationships. In other words, this is a matter of *faith*.

Faithfulness is wrapped up in submitting yourself to God’s word. And God’s word concerning the home is that the man is the head and the woman is the helper. To turn these things around is rebellious unbelief.

“in all things” (**5:24**) - Since always husband and wife, the responsibility never ceases. If it is not sin it is within the bounds of his authority.

A. *You must fight the desire to dominate your husband.*

Cf. **Gen 3:16** - This desire is a perennial weakness of the woman. But the woman must rule over her desire to rule her husband.

Desire to dominate takes on many forms. Two examples: domineering and manipulative.

Domineering - She is assertive and controlling. If you were to give her a personality type, she is type A. Or on another scale she is choleric to the bone. She is bossy and tends to voice her opinion about everything. She wants to run the show. Nothing wrong with a strong personality. But its weaknesses (e.g., the desire to rule the husband) must be controlled.

Manipulating - passive-aggressive; works the situation around the way she wants it in order to get what she wants. Emotional manipulation, withholding herself from her husband, (mis)uses feminine “charm.”

Ladies have tremendous power within your marriage. That too is God-given. Use that power wisely in order to serve your husband and not to try to dominate him.

B. *You must concede your personal agenda and submit to his working together to accomplish God's calling for your marriage.*

“Submit yourselves as unto the Lord” includes the manner in which we are to submit to the Lord.

The church does not have her own agenda. Our agenda is given to us by our Lord, our husband. We are called as the bride of Christ to conform our agendas to his, conceding any agenda that comes into conflict with that agenda.

Wives are to give up their lives for their husbands. His mission becomes your mission. Your vocation is geared to his vocation. You are the helper. He is the head.

This is anti two-career mindset; i.e., the husband and wife basically having two different lives.

“One flesh” means more than just sexual privileges. It means a shared life in all of its dimensions.

C. *You must submit even when you don't feel like it.*

Sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do because it is the right thing to do. So it is with the wife.

2. RESPECT

5:33 - summary of wife's responsibility to her husband: “that the wife reverence/fear her husband.”

Submission and respect, or reverence, are tied together. Submission includes respect because respect recognizes and honors the office of the husband.

In general, respect acts appropriately toward others. It treats others with the dignity afforded them as being image-bearers of God. Specifically, when dealing with someone who holds an office, respect acts appropriately toward the office-bearer. It acknowledges that a person deserves a particular honor because of the office that is occupied.

A. *Respect is expressed. That is, it can be seen and heard.*

1 Peter 3:5 “... calling him lord ...” Here Peter puts submission, obedience and verbal expressions of respect all together as commendable of holy woman.

“Lord” = “sir” today. It is a title of respect, of honor. It appropriately recognizes his office.

The wife needs to recognize that her husband occupies a different and higher office. And that respect needs to be expressed. It may not be with the title ‘lord,’ but it needs to be expressed.

Respect can be seen and heard. There is no separation between some unprovable “heart attitude” and behavior. The properly adorned “inner life” that is spoken of by Peter in the same passage mentioned above is exemplified in Sarah who called Abraham ‘lord’ (cf. **1Pe 3:3-4**).

Respect is not only expressed in particular words but also particular tones.

B. *Sometimes you must simply salute the uniform.*

The guy stuffed inside the office may do some unrespectable things. He is still to be given a proper honor because of his office.