

## Submission

John Dicus

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Good morning.

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Today ... I'd like to talk with you about "Submission."

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I'm going out on a limb here ... and say submission probably is not a real popular subject.

It carries a lot of baggage, doesn't it? And when is it ever easy to talk about?

Why do you think?

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For one thing, our culture debunks submission ... telling us it's a sign of weakness.

And what's our own experience with it?

It's not always constructive, is it? Especially if you're the one required to submit.

People with little power ... are troubled by the mention of submission.

A person "in charge" may demand submission, or may abuse their authority. Then the one who is subordinate ... who is in submission ... pushes back and resents the situation.

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I like to preach in story-form ... laying some groundwork ... then letting the story unfold.

But this morning, let's be different. Let's start ... maybe ... somewhere in the middle.

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The husband says, "You're my wife. You have to do what I say."

The wife says, "You're abusive. I won't. This is unfair."

Husband: "Yes you will. I'm your boss. The Bible says so. You have to submit to me."

Wife: "That's not what it says. I'll never let you run me down and push me around like this."

Husband: "You'd better, or else."

Wife: "Or else, what?"

Husband: "I'll show you what else."

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This is a familiar scene.

It plays out countless times, every day, in many ways.

The situation may escalate and turn physical ... even violent.

Sometimes the fallout is mental, which can hurt even more, cutting just as deep and leaving different kinds of scars.

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In our Wednesday Bible class ... "Marriage Matters: ... the subject of submission came up. Scripture tells us that a wife is to be in submission to her husband.

There was some conversation ... back and forth ... and we realized we needed to set apart a dedicated session to study further. We put "submission" in our "Parking Lot."

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The purpose of today's lesson is to help prepare us to work through the subject. Let's ignore what the world says about submission, and see what God has to say. As James says. In **James 3:13-17**, Man's wisdom is earthy, sensual, demonic, and full of disorder. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

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Consider that amazing scene in the Garden of Gethsemane ... when Christ humbly submitted to His Father's will ... and gave up His life for us.

Was Christ's submission a show of weakness? NO!

Did the Father, in any way, abuse the Son that He loved so much? NO!

Christ's prayers were heard because of His reverent submission and respect for God's order of creation. (**Hebrews 5:7-9**)

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So, here's one big take-away from this study. Submission is a form of sacrifice.

When we submit, we substitute another's will in place of our own ... another's wishes in place of our own.

An employee submits to the boss when he/she carries out the boss' instructions.

We submit to Christ when we renounce our own will and carry out His desires for us.

In the same way ... a wife submits to her husband's will ... when she replaces her own will with his

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When the boss requires an employee to be in subjection to him or her ... it must not be an arbitrary or abusive request.

It's the same with submitting to Christ. Christ's commands are never arbitrary or abusive.

We must recognize then ... that when a husband requires a wife to be in subjection ... he must never be arbitrary or abusive.

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Let's talk about the order of things

All things must be kept in their proper order.

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Perhaps some physical examples.

For a car to function ... we need to keep all the parts of our car in the exact order they were designed to fit.

For a company to function ... we need to keep all the elements of the business in the exact order they were intended.

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As pertains to spiritual things ... for the Church to carry out its Divine purpose ... we must keep all the elements of the Church in the exact order God designed. This includes ... of course ... Doctrine, Christ as Head, Elders, Deacons, Evangelists, Teachers, Members, Elements of worship, frequency of worship ... and so on.

And now ... to our concern for this morning ... "Marriage."

In marriage ... it's imperative ... that we keep all the elements of marriage and family exactly in the order that God (not man) ... intended them to be. if you expect your marriage to grow and last a lifetime ... do not mess with the order or function of things.

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Order is NOT generally an indicator of importance.

For example ... in a car, is a lug nut more or less important than a steering wheel. Is a door handle more or less important than piston?

In a business, is the boss more important than the employee?

In the Church, is any member more or less important than a teacher or an Elder?

No, No, and No!!

So then, in marriage, is the husband more important than his wife? Of course not. But they both have a role ... and are to perform their roles in their proper order as God intends.

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God the Father is the Divine Architect of all creation. Who are we to move things about in the Church and family ... and still expect them to function properly?

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There is a God-given hierarchy ... or chain of command ... an order ... to the Creation

Look at two passages ...

In **1 Corinthians 11:3** ... Paul writes ... "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

The order ... the flow of authority ... is from the Father to Christ, from Christ to man, and from man to woman.

From the perspective of submission ... the woman is subject to the man, the man is subject to Christ, and Christ is subject to God the Father.

The woman is to do as the man requires... as he follows Christ's will for him as Head of the wife. Man is to do what Christ requires ... as He follows God's will as Head of the man.

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And in **Ephesians 5:23** ... Paul writes ... "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body."

Paul is explicit ... there are a direct parallel relationships between Christ and His Church ... and between Husband and his Wife.

The order ... the flow of authority ... is from Christ to the Church ... and is from Husband to Wife.

As pertains to submission ... the Church is subject to Christ (who is her Head) ... and the Wife is subject to her Husband (who is her Head).

This is the order of God's design. Each performs their role. Each role is important.

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The Husband's Headship began in the Creation. It is part of God's divine plan for husbands and wives.

After God placed the care of the Garden under Adam's authority, He continued to show Adam's headship by issuing the first commandment to him alone.

The commandment regarding the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was given before Woman was formed. It was Adam's responsibility to pass this law on to his future wife.

Woman was not formed from the dust of the ground as was Man. She was formed "from" Man.

God had already demonstrated Adam's authority over all the animals by allowing him to them.

God again demonstrated Adam's headship in marriage, allowing him to name the Woman.

When God presented her to Adam, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." A bit later he gave her the name, "Eve."

Paul wrote ... in **1 Corinthians 11:8-12** ... "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. However man is not independent of woman, nor is woman independent of man. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman."

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Let's talk about roles.

We have problems understanding roles. We wrongly associate different roles with different levels of importance. Our pride and hubris gets in the way.

Do we think less of Christ because He is in subjection to God? No!

Should we think less of man ... created in God's own image ... because he is in subjection to Christ? No!

Should we think less of a woman ... created for man ... also in God's own image ... because she is in subjection to man? No!

Man has a role. Woman has a role.

Husbands have a role. Wives have a role.

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The following is as excerpt from a commentary.

Both men and women were created by God to equally reflect, in gendered ways, the nature and character of God in the world.

In marriage, husbands and wives are to submit to one another, yet there are gender specific expressions: husbands model themselves in relationship with their wives after Jesus' sacrificial love for the church ... and wives model themselves in relationship with their husbands after the church's willingness to follow Jesus.

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Christ will never abdicate His role as Head of the Church, King of the Kingdom, High Priest, and Mediator. Nor will He ever try to assume His Father's role. Or, as crazy as it sounds, Christ would never take over Man's role. The results would be disastrous.

In the same vein, if man attempted to take over Christ's role, it would spell disaster. Or if man abdicated his God-intended role as a man and as head of the wife and leader of the family, nothing but trouble would result.

And if a wife tried to assume the role of her husband, or abdicated any part of her God-intended role as a woman and wife and mother, again we'd have problems.

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Anytime someone abandons a role God intends for him or her to fulfill, problems arise. Likewise, any time someone attempts to assume a role that does not belong to them, problems arise.

We must not associate our role with importance. All roles are necessary and important, in their proper order.

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Let's read ... **Ephesians 5:22-31**

**Ephesians 5:22** ... The Apostle Paul writes ... "Wives, be subject to (in submission to) your own husbands, as to the Lord.

When a wife submits to her husband ... she is following God's will for her.

**Ephesians 5:23** ... The "why" ... the "reason." ... "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Just as the body of a person follows what the head commands, the Church is to obey the commands of Christ, and the wife is to obey the commands of her husband.

Christ redeemed the Church with His own blood. Likewise, the husband must be willing to protect his wife with his life.

**Ephesians 5:24** ... But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

We understand that the Church is in subjection to Christ. Christians willingly obey Him. And so we must also understand that wives are in subjection to their husbands. They are to willingly obey them.

Anything a husband asks of his wife is to be lovingly in accordance with God's will. If this safeguard is honored, the wife can easily do as her husband asks.

**Ephesians 5:25-27** ... "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her (set her apart for a special purpose), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word (teaching and baptism), that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

This is the pattern for marriage. You can't help but see the tender love in the sacrifices Christ made for His Bride ... the Church.

This is what God expects from husbands. It's what God demands

**Ephesians 5:28** ... "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body.

If all is done in marriage as we just read here, submission becomes ... not a thing to be feared ... but a thing to be cherished. A thing to be appreciated.

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And now for verse 31.

**Ephesians 5:31** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Why is this verse here? This reminder?

Paul quotes **Matthew 19:4-6**, wherein Jesus repeated what God said in Eden in **Genesis 2:24**.

Adam had just said about Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.

Man and woman belong together, just as Christ and the Church belong together. They were made for each other. Their roles and order is of Divine design. Christians have part of Christ in them, just as woman has part of man in her.

Husband and wife are to grow into each other ... so as to become ONE being ... just as Christians are to become One with Christ as they grow together.

These two unions are to happen alongside each other. Each reflecting the other. This cannot happen unless wives are in submission to their husbands, and the Church is in submission to Christ.

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Circling back up to **Ephesians 5:21** ... "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

This verse makes it clear that submission is not just for wives, but for both spouses. Both the husband and wife are called to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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Scripture places a lot of constraint on those in authority. They have a responsibility to treat those in subjection to them very carefully.

Husbands who ignore the proper way to treat their wives ... make it difficult for wives to submit to their husbands. Such husbands will have to answer to God for their abuse of power.

Yet, wives who have no regard for their husbands make it difficult for husbands to assume their responsibilities. They too will be held responsible.

If both husbands and wives conduct themselves in a Godly manner, the marriage relationship will work smoothly. And both will be fulfilled and respected.

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**1 Peter 3:7** ... "You husbands, likewise, dwell with your wives with understanding, giving honor to them, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered"

**Colossians 3:18-19** ... "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."

**Colossians 3:20-21** ... "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

**Colossians 3:22-24** ... "Servants, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ... It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

**Romans 13:1** ... "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

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Men and women were designed to fit together perfectly in all ways—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. When a husband and wife become one flesh, together, they become stronger and more magnificent than they could ever be alone. The strengths of each compensate for the weaknesses of the other.

When a husband thinks about his wife, he should see her as God's suitable companion. When a wife thinks about her husband, she should see herself as God's perfect fit for him.

We should thank God for His wonderful design and do everything we can to fulfill the roles He has given us. Only then can we truly experience healthy, joyful marriages.

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Thank you!

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Invitation