

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Ephesians 5:22-24

Lesson #36

Wives and Submission

04/22/2018

The "family" is a theme in Scripture

- God is called "**Father**", we are His "**children**".
- The Old Testament is the story of a family whose father was **Abraham**.
- Members of the church are called "**brothers and sisters**".
- The core of family are **husband and wife**.
 - ✓ Heaven is pictured as a "**marriage feast**".
 - ✓ The church is called the "**bride of Christ**".
 - ✓ The relationship of husband and wife is a picture of "**Christ and the church**".

1

Family "facts"

- Experiments to replace the family have not proven successful.
- Families throughout history have been patriarchal.
- Dysfunctional families are a chief source of social dysfunction in a society.
- Families are fragile and need the support of a broader community.
- Christians have made both good and bad contributions to family health.

2

"²¹ and be **subject** to one another in the fear of Christ."

Submission and service to others
is a fundamental part of our
submission and service to Christ.

**The test of a servant's
heart is how he or she
responds when treated
like one.**

3

"²¹ and be **subject** to one another in the fear of Christ.

²² **Wives**, be **subject** to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ 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. ²⁴ But as the church is **subject** to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands **in everything**."

4

Colossians 3:18

"Wives, be **subject** to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

1 Peter 3

"¹ In the same way (**as Christ submitted to suffering 2:21-25**), you wives, be **submissive** to your own husbands so that even if any of *them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and **respectful** behavior."

5

Gender based roles in marriage

- This has been the historic understanding of Apostolic teaching.
- This has been the general pattern throughout Scripture.
- This has been the church's practice for nearly all of its history.
- This has one of the great stumbling blocks for the Gospel in the modern era.
- This has been the occasion for abuse within Christian marriages.

6

In what kind of civilized world can this "sexist teaching" ever make sense and not be degrading, abusive, and unfair?

It challenges the very core of Western culture's values.

- **Social justice** - Roles in a just society should be achieved, not ascribed by gender, race, religion, etc.
- **Pragmatic efficiency** - Ability (gifts) should determine roles and position.
- **Psychological health** - Self worth is linked to freedom to compete for social position, respect, and power.
- **Human rights** - Individuals are to be responsible and free to determine their own roles and positions in life.

7

How has this teaching been explained?

1. **Paul has been misunderstood.**
 - We read our cultural bias into the text.
 - Paul contradicts this teaching in other texts.
 - The "problem passages" can be explained when we understand their cultural context.
2. **Paul teaches gender based roles BUT -**
 - **He is mistaken** - a product of his culture and time, bias against women, a lapse to his rabbinic training.
 - **His teaching is occasional** - restricted to the early church for evangelistic purposes.
3. **Paul's teaching transcends time and culture** - It is applicable (in principle) to the Christian family today.

8

In what kind of civilized world can this "sexist teaching" ever make sense and not be degrading, abusive, and unfair?

This critique is persuasive, but only **IF WE DO NOT** -

1. **Take our baptism seriously** - A world where the Cross of Christ is not only about atonement from sin but also a call to a counter culture life style.
2. **Take our union with Christ seriously** - Where the Christian finds security and significance in a relationship with Christ not in their role in this life.
3. **Take our mutual cross bearing seriously** - Where the Christian expects to share Christ's suffering in this life.

9

Two critical issues

1. **How is this teaching to be applied?**
(The devil is in the details.)
 - When the inner posture is right, the outer decisions can be very flexible.
 - The husband is not responsible for his wife's response. The husband has his own role to attend to.
 - A wife faces two temptations: 1) to manipulate her environment, 2) to withdraw into the worldly culture of "victim" or "autonomy".
2. **Is this teaching contrary to our nature?** It is contrary to 1) modern Western culture and 2) our natural impulse to find our security in its values.

10

"²¹ . . . subject to one another

- It applies to **all believers** but in different ways.
- **Husbands** are never told (**directly**) to submit to their wives.

in the fear of (as is fitting in) Christ

- It is a show of respect (**worship**) to Christ.

"In the end, dear friend,
it is always between us
and God, not between
us and them."

Mother Teresa



11

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²² . . . wives to your own husbands,

- It is not to all men but **only** your mate.

as to the Lord.

- The same kind of respect you give to Jesus as your “head” is **mirrored** in your posture toward your mate. (Matt.25:40)

12

“²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church,

- The term “**head**” can have two meanings when applied to human relationships - (**source**) “Head of the family tree”, (**authority**) “Leader of an army”
- **Specific spheres** of life are key - examples: policeman, director, bus driver.

He Himself being the Savior of the body.

- The **self sacrificing service** of Christ is the model for the husband.

13

“²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be

- Head (**source**) is linked to (**authority**) and therefore submission.
- How is the church subject to Christ? - **building, body, bride, branch, sheep.**



Building and Cornerstone
2:21



Body and Head
4:4



Bride and Bridegroom
5:32

*In each case
the church
responds
to Christ*

14

“²⁴ to their husbands in everything.”

- This is a **whole person** subjection, not just a head covering in worship.
- “Everything” should be taken as “**in all areas of life**” rather than “in every detail”.

15

Mistakes to avoid

- **Reducing roles to fixed outward behaviors** - rather than an inner willful response to Christ.
- **Pressuring women and men to compete** - in order to have value or feel empowered by worldly standards.
- **Demeaning wives for taking “submissive” roles** in serving their husbands and families.
- **Discouraging husbands from taking responsibility** as protector, provider, perfecter of the family.
- Failing to see that **both husband and wife are to yield in sacrificial service to the other** but in different ways.
- Failing to see that **marriage is to glorify God through gender roles** not just for the will of husband or wife.

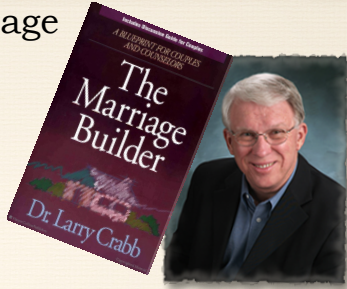
16

1 Peter 3

“³ Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being **submissive** to their own husbands; ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right **without being frightened by any fear.**”

17

"In a healthy marriage
I MINISTER to my
mate, and I don't
MANIPULATE
them to fulfill my
selfish agenda."



Dora Matt

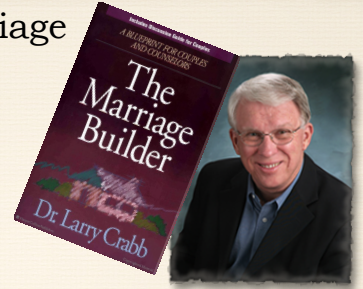


I.M. DeHead

A match made in a corrupted culture!

18

"In a healthy marriage
I MINISTER to my
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MANIPULATE
them to fulfill my
selfish agenda."



**Are you willing to view Christ as your
source of security and significance and
your mate as your primary ministry?**

**Are you going to free your spouse from a
messianic role that they will not find possible
and that you will not find adequate?**

19

**Submission and service to others
is a fundamental part of our
submission and service to Christ.**

**The test of a servant's
heart is how he or she
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like one.**

20

"You and I do
not see things
as they are.
We see things
as we are."



Henry Ward Beecher

21