

BELIEVERS' RELATIONSHIPS, PT. 1; EPH. 5:21-24 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

THIS MORNING WE TURN TO THE NEXT SECTION OF EPHESIANS, ~~~ 5:21 - 6:9.

▶▶ This section deals with believers' relationships in various settings, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ believers' relationships with other believers in general, ~ the marriage relationship, ~ children and parents' relationships, ~ and employee and employer relationship.

▶▶ Today, ~ look at believers' relationships in general ~ and a wife's relationship w/ husband.

VERSE 21 COVERS BELIEVERS' RELATIONSHIPS TO ONE ANOTHER IN GENERAL.

"^{21a} SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER ^{21b} OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST."

▶▶ I need to explain a technical note briefly here. ~ This verse seems to go with [verses 18-20](#), ~ and is translated that way here in the ESV.

▷▷ And it certainly can be looked at as a further result of being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

▶▶ But in terms of content, ~ it points forward, ~ i.e., ~ it changes the subject from [verses 18-20](#) ~ and forms an introduction to the subject of believers' relationships in various settings.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ it can be taken as an independent command.

▶▶ And the verse can be translated as: ~ "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." ~ And that is how I'm taking it.

IN VERSE 21a, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT BELIEVERS ARE TO "SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER."

▶▶ Submitting to one another means having a mindset of being meek, ~ gentle, ~ and humble toward one another.

▶▶ Mutual submission consists of a willingness to respect and honor the needs of other believers, ~ even giving them precedence over our own needs.

▶▶ It also involves a willingness to serve, ~ to learn from, ~ and to be corrected by ~ any other believer. ¶¶ 1/8

▶▶By nature, we want to promote ourselves, ~ to build ourselves up, ~ to look out primarily for ourselves. ~~ But in the family of God, ~ that's not the way it should be.

▷▷Jesus makes this quite clear. ~~ Mk. 10:42-44; ~~ "And Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ~~ ¶¶

↪↪But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."

WE SEE SIMILAR COMMANDS THROUGHOUT THE NT, ~ SHOWING US HOW important this mutual submission by believers is ~ and how much Jesus wants us to practice it.

▶▶In the context of how believers are to treat one another, ~ Peter, ~ in 1 Pet. 3:8, ~ writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷"Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind."

▷▷Basically, ~ Peter is calling us to live in harmony ~ and be united in purpose and attitude ~ with our fellow believers.

▷▷He is telling us to share the feelings of our brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ whether these feelings are joyful ~ or painful.

▷▷Peter is exhorting us to love our fellow believers with Christ-like love.

▷▷He is calling us to be deeply touched ~ and moved ~ by the hurts, ~ pain, ~ needs, ~ and adversity of fellow believers ~ and then act to alleviate them.

▷▷And Peter is urging us to be humble toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.

▶▶In Phil. 2:3a, ~ Paul writes, ~ "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit."

▷▷"Do nothing from selfish ambition" means that we are to do nothing because of selfish purposes, ~ self-interest, ~ the desire to get ahead, ~ or self-centered gain.

▷▷"Do nothing from . . . conceit" means that we are not to be motivated by a desire for praise ~ or by an exaggerated opinion of ourselves, ~ or of our achievements, ~ abilities, ~ etc.

▶▶The significance of believers submitting to one another and how much God wants us to carry it out ~ is also seen in Phil. 3:3b-4. ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ "but in humility count others more significant ~ [or, ~ more important] ~ than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." ~ Ok to care about own ~ Problem starts when that's all we care about.

↪↪ We are not to be interested only in our own lives. ~ We are to care about and be interested in the lives of our fellow believers.

→→ None of us should look out just for our own good. ~ We should also look out for the good of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

↪↪ We are to care about them just as much as we care about ourselves.

▶▶ In Rom. 12:10, ~ Paul writes, ~ NIV ~ "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."

▷▷ Paul is calling us here to love one another warmly and genuinely, ~ to be eager and to take delight in honoring other believers, ~ and to give them more respect that we give ourselves.

▶▶ And the importance of mutual submission by believers and how much Jesus wants us to practice it is clearly seen in Gal. 5:13.

↪↪ Paul writes, ~ "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

▶▶ Of course, ~ Jesus has set the example for us. ~ Mk. 10:45, ~ "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

▷▷ We see His servanthood when He washed the disciples' feet in the upper room the night He was betrayed. ~

↪↪ Jn. 13:3-5, ~ "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him." ~ This was an act that only slaves performed.

▷▷ And of course, ~ the most powerful demonstration of Jesus' servanthood was when "he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

▶▶ So we see how vital it is that believers submit to one another ~ and how much God wants us to practice it. ~ And we also see whose example of servanthood we are to follow. ↯↯ 3/8

IN VERSE 21b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT IT IS "OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST" THAT WE are to "Submit to one another."

▶▶The idea here is that believers' obedience to and respect for Jesus will lead us to submit to one another.

▷▷So this simply means that if we truly respect and obey Jesus, ~ we will willingly submit to one another.

IN VERSES 22-33, ~ PAUL ADDRESSES A BELIEVER'S MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.

And in verses 22-24, ~ HE ADDRESSES WIVES, ~ WHICH, ~ AS WE SAID EARLIER, ~ we'll cover today.

▶▶Keep in mind that he's instructing wives who are believers.

IN VERSE 22a, PAUL SAYS, ~ "WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS."

PAUL IS CALLING WIVES TO WILLINGLY RECOGNIZE, ~ ACCEPT, ~ AND YIELD TO THE authority and leadership of their husbands.

▶▶Notice ~ that this is a command. ~~ not something optional. ~~ Paul is not saying, ~ "Wives, ~ if you feel like it, ~ submit to your husbands."

▶▶It is God's command to wives that they submit to their husbands.

▶▶It is not something dreamt up by Paul ~ or by some committee made up of husbands.

▶▶It is God who is directing wives to willingly recognize, ~ accept, ~ and yield to the authority and leadership of their husbands.

IN VERSE 22b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT THIS SUBMISSION IS TO BE "AS TO THE Lord."

SIMPLY PUT, ~ PAUL IS SAYING HERE THAT A WIFE SUBMITTING TO HER HUSBAND IS a means of honoring the Lord.

▶▶In Col. 3:18, ~ Paul writes, ~ "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

▷▷I.e., ~ Paul is saying that the wife is to submit to her husband because it is the appropriate thing to do since she is a believer.

▶▶So willingly recognizing, ~ accepting, ~ and yielding to her husband's authority and leadership ~ is suitable behavior for a believing wife ~ and honors the Lord. **↴ 4/8**

IN VERSE 23a, ~ PAUL GIVES THE REASON WIVES ARE TO SUBMIT TO THEIR husbands.

"FOR THE HUSBAND IS THE HEAD OF THE WIFE."

▶▶ Now, ~ Paul is not saying ~ women are second-class citizens or inferior to men, ~ or that our wives are our slaves.

▷▷ Paul is saying that God has set up a leadership structure in marriage.

↳↳ And the husband, ~ not the wife, ~ is the God-ordained leader of the marriage.

▶▶ Wives who are believers enjoy all the privileges, ~ obligations, ~ and inheritance rights of God's children.

▷▷ In Gal. 3:28, Paul writes, ~ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, ~ there is neither slave nor free, ~ there is no male and female, ~ for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

↳↳ Being citizens of heaven makes us all united and equal. ~~ In God's kingdom there is no spiritual superiority or inferiority.

→→ A man is not more accepted in Christ than a woman, ~ nor is the Jew more justified than the Gentile.

↳↳ All citizens of heaven share the same standing before God.

▶▶ But God has set up leadership structures.

▷▷ In the church

▷▷ And in marriage.

↳↳ God calls upon the wife to willingly recognize, ~ accept, ~ and yield to her husband's God-ordained authority and leadership.

▶▶ Now, ~ obviously, ~ the society in which we are temporarily residing does not look favorably on this doctrine.

▷▷ But we do not get our marching orders from society ~~ Our marching orders come from Scripture.

↳↳ As Act 5:29 says, ~ "But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." ↴ ↴ 5/8

THIS IDEA OF SUBMISSION TO THE AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP OF ANOTHER is evident in Jesus' submission to His parents.

LK. 2:51 SAYS THAT JESUS "WENT DOWN WITH THEM [I.E., WITH HIS PARENTS] ~ and came to Nazareth ~ and was submissive to them."

▶▶ The sovereign creator of the universe, ~ the eternal Son of God, ~ the Second Person of the Trinity, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ took on flesh ~ and willingly recognized, ~ accepted, ~ and yielded Himself to the authority and leadership of His parents.

▶▶ Across the board, ~ believers are to follow Jesus' example.

▷▷ We are to submit to church leadership, ~ to the authority of human government, ~ and to the authority of our employers.

▷▷ Children are to submit to their parents.

▷▷ And wives are to submit to their husbands.

IN VERSE 23b, ~ PAUL COMPARES THE HUSBAND'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MARRIAGE with Jesus' leadership of the church.

FOR CONTEXT START AT 23a.

▶▶ "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."

▶▶ Here Paul qualifies the husband's authority and leadership by describing his headship as patterned after Christ's headship over the church.

▷▷ Jesus' headship over the church is expressed by his loving it and giving his life for it.

▶▶ We, ~ husbands, ~ are to lead our wives like Jesus does the Church. ~ And how . . . ? lovingly and sacrificially.

▷▷ Whoa, ~ that's a pretty tall order & heavy responsibility, ~ isn't it guys?

▶▶ And I've got new for us. ~~ Guys if we do this . . . ~ our wives (More)

PAUL CONCLUDES HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO WIVES IN VERSE 24. ¶¶ 6/8

"NOW AS THE CHURCH SUBMITS TO CHRIST, SO ALSO WIVES SHOULD SUBMIT IN everything to their husbands."

▶▶Genuine believers willingly recognize, ~ accept, ~ and yield to Jesus' authority and leadership.

▷▷And Paul says that this willing submissiveness should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands.

THE PHRASE "IN EVERYTHING" INDICATES THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE PREVAILING tendency of the wife toward her husband.

▶▶It means that a wife should cultivate an attitude of affirming, ~ supporting, ~ and respecting her husband's authority and leadership in the marriage, ~ **without holding back certain areas where she wants to assert or maintain control.**

NOW, ~ WE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE PHRASE "IN EVERYTHING" IS RESTRICTED as to degree.

▶▶E.g., ~ 1st, ~ just like with our submission to the government or employers or even church leaders, ~ there is a limit to a wife's submission to her husband. ~ **Peter and the other apostles set the precedent.**

▷▷Acts 5:27-29, ~ "And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, 'We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.' ~ **But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'"**

▷▷If government., ~ employers, ~ or even church leaders, ~ demand we do something that would cause us to violate God's word

▷▷The same principle applies to marriage. ~ If a husband demands that his wife do something that would cause her to violate God's word, ~ she is to obey God.

▶▶2nd, ~ "in everything" in vs. 24 does not mean ~ that the wife has to endorse her husband's foolish decisions, ~ or to show unquestioned acceptance of everything her husband does.

▶▶And 3rd, ~ nowhere does Paul suggest ~ that submission of a wife to her husband "in everything" requires the wife to be silent in the face of abuse, ~ physical or otherwise.

▷▷Abuse requires outside help. ~ And no wife should ever imagine that resisting abuse violates Paul's command. **⇓⇓ 7/8**

CONCLUSION.

RECALL BACK IN EPH. 4:1, ~ PAUL URGED US TO LIVE A LIFE THAT BRINGS HONOR AND glory to God as result of what God has done for and given us.

▶▶ And Paul shows us, ~ here in 5:21-24, ~ that believers submitting to one another and wives submitting to their husbands ~ is a proper response to receiving our great salvation and its accompanying blessings.

▷▷ Mutual submission between believers ~ and wives willingly recognizing, ~ accepting, ~ and yielding to the authority and leadership of their husbands ~ honors and glorifies Jesus.

LET'S PRAY 8/8