

Submitting to one another in love

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

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Ephesians 5 (NIV)

- ¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5 (NIV)

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5 (NIV)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 5 (NIV)

²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – ³⁰ for we are members of his body. 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.’ ³² This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- Teaching may be radical for some of us
- These verses have been massively misused and abused by the Christian church and by men in particular
- The greatest revelation of God and his character is in Jesus on the cross.

God's ideal is for equality in all our relationships

1. Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, "it is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

- 'Helper' – not subordinate. Perfect complimentary partner.
- Psalm 118:7 "The Lord is my *helper*. I took triumph on my enemies"
- Hebrews 13:6 "The Lord is my *helper*, I will not be afraid'

God's ideal is for equality in all our relationships

2. Genesis 2:23-24

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man."

- Statement implies equality
- One flesh

God's ideal is for equality in all our relationships

3. Genesis 1:27

“So God created mankind in his own image,
In the image of God he created them;
Male and female he created them.”

- Both equally created in the image of God

God's ideal is for equality in all our relationships

4. Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

- *Both* ruling together

So what happened??

Genesis 3 – sin enters the world

Broken relationships

Broken humanity

Broken world

God's ideal is broken

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said, “...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”

- Written in the descriptive / indicative mode (not prescriptive / imperative)
- NOT a prescription for marriage
- Desire (manipulate cf. Gen 4:7)
- Rule (tyrannize)

God's ideal is for equality in all our relationships

In all our relationships – equality and serving others

Gal 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Imitating Jesus means submission

Eph 5:1-2 – be imitators of God

Eph 5:8-10 – live as children of light

Eph 5:21 – submit to one another out of
reverence for Christ

cf: Philippians 2:5ff, John 13 1-11, 34

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Submit to one another in love

Eph 5:21 – mutual submission

Eph 5:22 – wives have to submit (1st century).
Do it as you do to the Lord.

Eph 5:23-24 – analogy of Christ and the church.
Wives - completely counter cultural
submission

Submit to one another in love

Eph 5:25-31 – Husbands have all the power (1st century). Use it like Christ.

Jesus as head

- Willingly lays down his life for the church
- Equips the church
- Submits, humbles himself and bears our sin
- Loves us unconditionally

Submit to one another in love

- Kingdom relationships
- Mutual submission – leading by gifting

Phil 2:5

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ...”

See Greg Boyd “Who’s the Boss?”

<http://whchurch.org/blog/9125/whos-the-boss>

“Heirs Together” by Patricia Gundry



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