

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 11/10/91
Ephesians 5:22-24 "How to be a Wife that Pleases God"

Intro: Some of the funniest things that ever happen occur in the home! We love to laugh in our home. The family ought to be a place where barriers drop, and we enjoy each other. A couple of years ago I obtained a tape by D. Jeremiah entitled "Heart Medicine from the Home." The tape is nothing but humorous stories he has discovered that came from home situations.

Solomon wrote in Prov 17:22, "A merry heart does good like medicine."

Eg--Children's SS class learning days of Creation. What did God put in the water? One child said, "Chlorine."

Eg--Sister with little brother up in the tree, "Carol, Carol, down below, pucker up and let her go."

This morning, we are beginning a mini-series focusing on the family. I've entitled this 4-week study of God's Word, "God's Blueprint for Family Living." Please turn to Ephesians 5, the passage which will be the basis for our study.

"How to be a Wife that Pleases God" (5:22-24)

"Straight Talk to Husbands" (5:25-33)

"The Marks of a Successful Child" (6:1-3)

"How to be a Good Parent" (6:4)

Background for our Study:

Key: Christian homes ought to be different.

Why? Two reasons.

1. Because of the Christian's Identity.

Ephesians (1-3 Our Resources in Christ) (4-6 Our Responsibilities in Christ)

4:17 "Walk not as other Gentiles walk. . ." Christians are to be different. We are to walk in purity (ch 4). We are to walk acc to God's wisdom (ch 5). There ought to be a noticeable, obvious difference between the life of a Christian and the life of a non-Christian.

Listen. There ought to be a noticeable difference between the family of a Christian and the family of a non-Christian. What kind of difference? Paul's going to show us in Eph 5:22-6:4.

2. Because of the Christian's Influence.

Eph 5:18-21 "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit"

Please notice. The context for this section on family living begins in 5:18.

Key: Only Spirit-filled believers can have proper family relationships.

This is basic.

Q: How does a person obtain the Holy Spirit? See 1:13 Trust in Christ

Q: How does a person experience the filling of the Spirit? See 4:30

Q: What happens when a person is filled by the Spirit?

The Spirit affects 3 areas of your life (note the 5 participles):

a. The Spirit affects **Your Praise** (19).

V 19 "Speaking. . . singing. . . making melody"

b. The Spirit affects **Your Perspective** (20).

V 20 "Giving thanks always. . ."

The Spirit filled Christian lives with a different perspective. He's not a complainer. She's not a grumbler. Rather a Christian has a thankful spirit.

How are we to give thanks? Always. For all things. To God. In Jesus Name.

c. The Holy Spirit affects Your **Personal Relationships** (21).

V 21 "Submitting to o.a."

Key: 5:21 introduces the next major section in Ephesians. The theme of relationships. Paul is going to tell us that the effects of the filling of the Spirit are NOT limited to what happens in church on Sunday mornings! No. It's a very practical thing to be filled with the Spirit. When a person is filled with the Spirit, it affects the way that person relates to people.

Q: What kind of relationships should a Christian have?

A: Participle #5--"submitting yourselves to o.a."

Eph 5:21-6:9 is the "Submission Section" of Ephesians. Submission is not a popular word. Why not? Because of misunderstanding, of abuse. Actually the concept is vital. And it's God's design.

"submit"--Listen. God expects us to maintain proper relationships with each other. Please notice that ALL of us have a mutual responsibility. To do what? "To submit to o.a." How? "In the fear of God (lit. "in the fear of Christ")".

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. It's His Church. You belong to Him. I belong to Him. And what does He expect of us? To submit to each other. To serve each other.

What does that mean practically? Paul is going to tell us:

1. How Wives are to relate to Husbands (5:22-24)
2. How Husbands are to relate to Wives (5:25-33)
3. How Children are to relate to Parents (6:1-3)
4. How Parents are to relate to Children (6:4)
5. How Servants are to relate to Masters (6:5-8) = Employees/ers
6. How Masters are to relate to Servants (6:9)

Remember. If I am filled with the Spirit (18), it will affect all 3 areas: My Praise in Church, My Perspective in Life, AND My Personal Relationships with other people. Listen, men. The way you treat your wife is just as "spiritual" a matter as the amount of \$ you gave in the offering this morning. And teens, God's just as concerned about your attitude towards Dad and Mom as He is about your daily QT.

Illust:

I thank God for the Family! I thank God also that He has given us His Blueprint for Family Living. This morning, we'll focus on the wives.

Q: Ladies, how can you be a wife that pleases God?

Proposition: According to Ephesians 5:22-24, there are 3 things a wife needs to know if she is going to be a wife that pleases God.

I. Wives, know your Responsibility (22).

II. Wives, know God's Reason (23).

A. Based in Creation

B. Based in Redemption

III. Wives, know your Resolve (24).

I. Wives, know your Responsibility (22).

What is your responsibility?

V 22 "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands. . ."

Everytime a message is preached on submission in the home there is always great misunderstanding. We seem to be polarized between two extremes.

Illust: A man came home, "I am the boss and you are nothing. . ."

Illust: Harry Webster died. . . put his wife's name on the tomb!

Q: How should a Spirit-filled wife relate to her husband?

A: V 22 "Submit . . . as unto the Lord."

You should know 2 things about the word "submit". First it is a strong word. We've rejected it because it's been abused and perverted in the past. And the second interesting thing is this--the word "submit" is not even in v 22. In the greek, there is no verb. It literally reads, "Wives to your own husbands as to the Lord."

Why did the translators include the word "submit" then? Two reasons.

1. Because of the participle in v 21.

2. Because of the parallel passage in Col 3.

Col 3:18 "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

"Submit" = primarily a military term = "under" + "to arrange", hence "to rank under". Some object and say, "Wait! Gal 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. We are all equal in Christ! There are NO distinctions."

Is that true? It is true that all people, regardless of social background, of national identity, and of sex, can be saved without partiality in Christ. But is it true that Christ has erased all distinctions? And is it true that submission destroys freedom?

Look at other NT uses of this word:

Rom 13:1, 5 "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."

Does that mean gov't leaders are superior to average citizens? No. Listen. God has established 3 authority structures, 3 institutions: The Church, Government, and the Home. And to each, God has delegated authority. He is a God of order, not chaos. In the Church, He has authorized certain offices to lead. So too in society, He has established gov't leaders (A bad gov't is better than NO gov't!). And so it is in the home.

I Cor 15:27 (put under), 28 (subdued), 28 (be subject)

Wow! The Son is subject to the Father! Does that mean He is inferior? No.

Key: Submission has to do with Function, not worth.

Titus 2:4-5 "Teach the young women to be. . .discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands. . ."

But what if the husband is not a Christian?

I Pet 3:1

Q: Acc to God's blueprint, what is the responsibility of the wife?

A: Eph 5:22 "to submit. . ." = main idea is "order"

Defintion: Submission is a humble recognition of the divine ordering of society

There is a fuctional distinction in the home. God holds the husband ultimately responsible for the Home. We'll see more of that next week. And what is the wife to do? Submit to her "own husband" (not "to men" in general)

Caution: Some men abuse this verse. Some men don't know how to treat a woman. They're bossy, demanding, unkind.

Key: I'm convinced that the real reason for the unpopularity of v 22 with women is the failure of men to obey v 25. If a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, that wife will have little difficulty submitting to his headship.

Men, do you hold the door for ladies? Do you rise when a lady enters a room? Do you make it a point to communicate with your wife?

Q: In what way are wives to submit?

A: V 22 "as unto the Lord"

Key: The key to having the kind of family that God endorses is this. Put Christ at the center. Every member must recognize the centrality of Christ.

V 22 Wives submit. How? "as to the Lord"

V 25 Husbands love. How much? "Even as Christ loved."

6:1 Children obey. Why? Because you're "in the Lord."

6:4 Parents bring them up. How? "In the nurture of the Lord."

Application: Does your home revolve around Jesus Christ? I didn't ask, Does your home revolve around the church. Some homes revolve around the church that don't revolve around Christ. What's the key?

Relationships. Christ must affect the way we relate to each other in the home. The way we talk to o.a.

Illust:

Wives, know your responsibility.

Tran: But why? Secondly. . .

II. Wives, know God's Reason (23).

Note: I'd like to talk to those here today who are unmarried right now. I receive calls from time to time, "Will you marry my fiance' and me?" I'll tell you right

up front. I'm not in the marrying business. I'm in the "marriage business". When I meet with couples for their pre-marital counseling, I tell them, "You've come to me and want me to help you have a great wedding day. That's fine. But I'm more interested in helping you have a great marriage!"

It's appalling to me how the average person spends more time planning for the purchase of a new car than they do planning for a successful marriage. They'll spend months researching the Consumer's Guide, gathering information from Salespeople, etc. But when it comes to marriage. . .

Wives, you need to know Your Responsibility. And secondly, God's Reason. The fact that you are to submit does NOT mean that you are inferior.

Quote: "Equality of worth is not identity of role."

When Paul penned Eph 5:22, he lived in a world that had a very low view of women. The Jews did. Every morning a Jewish man would pray a prayer in which he gave thanks that God had not made him "a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." In Jewish law, a woman was not a person, but a thing. She had no legal rights. She was absolutely her husband's possession. He could do with her as he so desired.

The Greeks were even worse. The Greek expected his wife to run the home and raise the kids, while he pursued pleasure and companionship elsewhere.

The Romans were worse still. Immorality was rampant. A woman was like a slave. No rights. At the whim of selfish men.

That's the dark backdrop for Paul's teaching in Eph 5. And in Eph 5, Paul teaches that a woman has worth and value! He doesn't demean women. Rather He tells us the way God originally intended for husbands and wives to live.

Wives are to submit. Why? Two reasons given.

A. Reason #1 is Based in Creation

V 23 "For the husband is the head of the wife"

When God created Adam and Eve, He established their roles. Adam was to be the Head of the home. Eve was to be his helpmeet.

See: I Cor 11:3, 8-9

The husband is the head of the home. God expects men to lead.

Problem: It's been the too frequent neglect of husbands to lead that has prompted wives to usurp roles God never designed for them (Men, are you the spiritual leaders in your home?!)

Q: Is the authority of husbands unlimited? No.

If a husband misuses his God-given authority (eg--by commanding what God forbids or forbidding what God commands), what is the wife to do? The same thing Peter did when the delegated civil authorities told him to stop preaching Christ. What did Peter say in Acts 5:29? "We must obey God rather than men."

But this is the exception, not the rule.

B. Reason #2 is Based in Redemption

V 23 "Even as Christ is the head. . . and Savior"

Paul tells us that Christ is 2 things in relationship to the church:

1. Head (Lord)
2. Savior

Illust:

Tran: There are 3 things a wife needs to know if she's to please God. Your responsibility, God's reason, and thirdly. . .

III. Wives, know your Resolve (24).

V 24 "Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ so. . ."

Note: "subject" in v 24 is same greek word in v 21 "submit"

Q: How is the church subject to Christ?

A: Our #1 aim as Christians is to what? Please Christ. Make Christ attractive. Do His Will. Honor Him with our lives.

What ought to be the aim of every wife?

V 24 ". . . so let the wives be to their own husbands. . ."

I think we need to be careful about saying the Bible forbids women to work outside the home. Some do. I respect their conviction. But v 24 makes something very clear.

Wives, your God-given design is to support and promote and build up and be a helpmeet to your husbands. Your #1 aim and love and priority is to be, not your career, but your husband. That's God's design. Does that mean a wife loses her freedom? Does that mean a wife's role is less important than the man's?

Certainly not. In fact, instead of detracting from your womanhood, when you choose to accept your God-given role and responsibility, your womanhood is enhanced!

So what must you do today?

Resolve in your heart to implement God's counsel. Some here today are seeking to obey God's instructions. Others are not. Maybe it's you. And maybe you're wondering why your family relationships are in shambles.

Illust:

What about the men? Next week. . .!!

Challenge:

If you are NOT a follower of Jesus Christ, the message of Eph 5 may do one of two things to you:

1. It may irriate you. Why? You're reading someone else's mail.
2. It may overwhelm you. Why? You don't have the power to live up to God's standard. Why not? Remember, the power to keep v 22 is given in v 18. You don't have the Holy Spirit. Because you don't have Christ.

You need to experience v 23. You need to know Christ as YOUR Head (Lord), and as YOUR Savior. O, what a difference He could make in your life today!