**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Spirit Filled Living: Wives Respect Husbands Leadership**

**Ephesians 5:22-24**

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We are in chapter five of our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together as we continue looking at what Paul says about walking wisely and Spirit filled living. Last week we saw God’s vision for Marriage is to display Christ’s relationship with his church. The next few weeks we are looking at the marriage relationship in 5:22-33. Today we are focusing on the wife’s role and responsibility in 5:22-24. Next week Matt will be preaching on community and we will then be back in Ephesians on September 15, looking at the husbands role and responsibility in marriage.

Let me outline the passage before we read it. First, Paul gives the *instruction*, wives submit to their own husbands. Then Paul gives an *illustration*, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Then Paul makes an *application*, in the same way the church gladly and willingly submits to Christ, so wives are to submit to their husbands in everything.

Big Idea: Spirit Filled wives respect their husband’s leadership.

Recapping, this present evil age seeks to draw us away from Christ so we must walk wisely, seeking to be filled with the Spirit by thirsting for Jesus (Jn 7:37-39); by filling ourselves with Scripture (Jn 6:63; rom 12:1-2); and by making time for prayer (Lk 11:13). The result of being filled with the Spirit is a worshipful heart, a grateful heart, and a submissive heart. Then Paul applies submissiveness to the authority structures in the home, marriage, family, and slaves and masters or work employer and employee relationships. Today we look at the wife’s role and responsibility in marriage and how that illustrates Christ’s relationship to his church. My big idea today is that wives display God’s vision and beauty of marriage by respecting their husbands’ leadership or in brief, Spirit Filled wives respect their husband’s leadership.

**The instruction (22)**

Wives are to submit to their own husbands. That is, as a result of being filled with the Spirit, wives are to voluntarily submit out of love and respect to their husband’s leadership (33). The bible describes the husband and wife roles as complimentary, equal but different. Husbands lead and love; wives respect and submit. Though the wife’s role differs from her husbands, she is not any less significant nor inferior. Wives are called to voluntarily submit to husbands *in everything* (33). That covers everything but excludes a husband demanding his wife submit to something that conflicts with biblical principles. For example, Paul has told us that Christians are not to participate in works of darkness (5:11), nor be foolish (5:15), like getting drunk (5:18). So, he cannot be telling wives to submit to or following abusive, sinful and foolish husbands. Unfortunately, abusive husbands have used this text to demand wives to submit to them and foolish pastors have counseled wives to stay with and submit to abusive husbands. The connecting word, as, tells us that Paul is making a comparison, wives submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. He is talking about a disposition, an attitude in the wife. Wives are to submit to their own husbands as they gladly and willingly submit to Christ. Then Paul gives an illustration that connects marriage to Christ relationship to the church.

**The Illustration (23)**

Look at the first word in verse 23, ‘for’ is a connecting word that gives the reason wives are to submit to their husbands, for/because ‘the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. The illustration points us to Christ, the head of the church, who is both the source of life to the body and the leader over his body. Head means leader, the one in authority over others (see also 1:22-23; 4:15). Christ is the head united to his body, the church. Because he is the head, he is also the source of life for his body like a vine is the source of life for the branch. In a similar way, Christian marriage is a covenant that unites a man and a woman in a one flesh union, one body. Husband and wife are no longer two but one united not so much by love but by covenant. Then he tells us the means by which this union is possible, Christ is the Savior! He rescued the church from her sins and made her his own body and bride. Finally, Paul draws an application (24) from what he has said about so far.

**The Application (24)**

As the church gladly and willingly submits to Christ as its leader, so too wives are to gladly and willingly submit to their own husbands in everything. Wives are to submit to their husbands because God has ordained or set them in place as the head or leader in the marriage covenant. This application prepares us for the purpose of Christian marriage as the stage to display Christ’s relationship to the church, his bride. When God originally created marriage as described in Genesis, he already had his eternal plan of redemption in mind. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves his church with a covenantal love that sacrifices for the church and serves the church. Wives are to respect their husband’s leadership and so gladly and willingly submit to him.

I know some of us are struggling and discouraged in your marriage; others are miserable and feel hopeless. There are also singles or those single again who long to be married or fear marriage. Christ promises that “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2 Cor 12:9).” That promises you this –he may not take away your pain or difficulties but he will give you grace, his empowering presence, to sustain you so that your life and your marriage can be a picture to the world around you of Christ’s relationship between Christ and his bride, the church. When his grace is sufficient for you, you will be able to offer hope to those around you struggling with similar issues.

Response:

* How is God speaking to you?
* Does your life reflect a desire to be filled with the Spirit?
* Wives, are you respecting your husband’s leadership
* Are you ready for marriage?

**Life Group Questions:**

1. Do you feel desperate for the fullness of the Spirit in your life?
2. How are you seeking to be filled with the Spirit?
3. What doe you think of when you think of your own responsibly and role in marriage?
4. What is your biggest struggle with the role has given you as husband, as wife?
5. How is God speaking to you in this message?
6. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
7. How does this message help you in making disciples?