

Sermon Series: It Starts at Home

Sermon Title: The Godly Man

Sermon Text: Ephesians 5:21-33

Sermon Summary: This study looks at various aspects of submission through Paul's instructions for marriage and puts an emphasis on the husband's role. There are six aspects covered, although the first four are looked at in detail and the final two are seen as summary points. There is the principle of submission, the pattern of submission, the purpose of submission, the plan of submission, the picture of submission and the prescription of submission! Because Jesus is the pattern of submission we all should follow, a significant amount of time is devoted to His example of submission to God's will!

Full Sermon Notes:

"In the darkness we were waiting, without hope and without light, till from heaven You came running there was mercy in Your eyes..."

Because of Jesus' humble submission to the will of The Father, He willingly gave His life as a sacrifice for you and me! As a result we are offered forgiveness from our past, power to live in the present, and hope for our future. Notice I said offered! We must be willing to humble ourselves to admit we are sinners in need of forgiveness, believe Jesus gave His life to free us from the power of sin, and then receive His offer of hope for eternal life. If we are then willing to live in submission to Jesus as Lord of our lives, then we can experience God's presence and power in our lives in amazing ways! And speaking of submission, today we're going to talk about submission as it applies to the Godly Man. Let's pray!

So last week we talked about the Godly Woman and discussed the concept of submission with some specifics for married women. Today we turn our attention to men and especially husbands. Men, it's your turn to be in the spotlight! I want us to look at our text for the message today, beginning with Ephesians 5:21, which we know from last week is the transition verse from Paul's words on Spirit filled living to his words on submission in the context of marriage and family. We will then look at verses 25-33. So today we are going to look at six aspects of submission! The first aspect of submission is...

1. The Principle of Submission

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Once again, the principle of submission comes to play in our message today! If a man does not understand or follow the principles of submission in his life and especially in his relationship with The Lord, then there's absolutely no way he will be able to be a Godly man, a Godly husband or a Godly father. The author of the NIV practical commentary on this passage has this to say about this verse and the principle of submission...

"The last participle describing life in the Spirit is perhaps the most surprising. People led by the Spirit "submit to one another" (v. 21). Many are offended by the word "submission," as if it points

to a passive, weak life dominated by a negative self-image, a giving up of control and free will. This is not Paul's intent, except for the fact that control for Christians has already been given over to Christ." Snodgrass, K. (1996). Ephesians (p. 292). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

What is this theologian saying when he says "control for Christians has already been given over to Christ?" I believe I can answer this question by pointing you to some things that have already been stated in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Check it out...

Ephesians 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

Ephesians 1:23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

You see God placed all things under Jesus! He is the head over everything for the church! The church is to be submitted to Him and filled up with Him in every way! Paul also said this, which we recently read...

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Ephesians 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

You cannot and will not be filled with His strength, His power, the fullness of His love that surpasses knowledge, and to the measure of all the fullness of God if you are not submitted humbly to the leadership of the Holy Spirit! The NIV commentator put it this way...

"Submission was so important for New Testament writers because it described the self-giving love, humility, and willingness to die that are demanded of all Christians."n Snodgrass, K. (1996). Ephesians (p. 292). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

One of the most powerful Scriptures on what this looks like is Galatians 5:13-14...

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 5:14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

But of course there are people who reject this admonition from Paul. Ever wonder why people who act in un-Christ-like ways act the way they do? God's Word's has an answer for that...

Romans 8:7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Men, you must hear this truth: If we are not submitted to God then we are governed by the flesh, and the flesh is hostile to God! So how can we make sure we're not hostile to God, but are submitting to God? How do we get to a place of complete submission to The Lord? Well, we need a good example. Where do we find this good example? In the second aspect of submission...

2. The Pattern of Submission

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave his life for the church. I've heard men talk about how they loved their wives, but when I observed how they treated them, I didn't believe them. I've heard guys say they would die for their wife, but they refuse to live for them. What do I mean by that? If you truly love someone enough to die for them your life should reflect that level of love! Jesus not only died for the church He poured His life into the men who would become the leaders of the Church. He disciplined them not only by teaching them about life, but by showing them how to live. Before Jesus died for us, He lived for us! And when it came time for Him to die for us, He laid down His life at the young age of 33, so that we might be saved. But did you know that Jesus was tempted on at least four occasions to abandon the way of the Cross? It happened early on in His ministry...

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Matthew 4:3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Do you know what Satan was trying to get Jesus to do here? What was the real temptation? Was it food! Of course Jesus would have been extremely hungry, I know I would have been. 40 days and nights without food! I can't even imagine the temptation to use His power to create food. I've fasted before and after I miss one meal, just the sounds coming from the kitchen make me hungry. Set homemade rolls in front of me and all bets are off. However, Satan's temptation wasn't food. It was the temptation for Jesus to avoid the Cross! It was a temptation to turn the arid, rocky, land into an agricultural mecca! In other words, make this area a profitable bread basket and the people will follow you because you will have made them wealthy with this world's goods! You'll win them over by giving them what they want, wealth and creature comforts. But you see that would have garnered Jesus followers, but it would not have saved their souls. In fact, it would have worsened their sinful situations. So many people think if they just had more money and stuff they would be truly happy. But we all know that's not true! Jesus told Satan this...

Matthew 4:4 ... "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

You see, Jesus wanted people to love Him not because of the things He could give them, but because of who He was and the love He had for them! Only Jesus' love, offered through His sacrifice on the Cross, could save humanity. But Satan was trying to get Jesus to take another route. And speaking of another route, the temptation was not over...

Matthew 4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

Matthew 4:6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

What was the temptation here? Satan was tempting Jesus to "wow" the people! "Do some magic! Let the crowds see you jump off the temple and be floated to the ground! Then they'll have to believe! They'll follow you then! You'll be so popular!" People love to be dazzled. Jesus would have instant fame. Front page headlines. Reporters from far away would want an interview. People would gather for repeat performances. His popularity would skyrocket. Forget the Cross. Forget the suffering! Problem with this is that relationships built on fame, popularity and performance are always shallow. They mean very little. People will love you until someone comes along who can do something more spectacular. Furthermore it would in some ways have been like taking the Name of the Lord in vain. It would have been a disrespectful use of God's power. It would be taking advantage of God's promise of protection just to prove a point. It would be a mis-appropriation of God's kindness. Jesus put it this way to Satan...

Matthew 4:7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

And we must never forget Jesus didn't want people to follow Him or to love Him because of His power to do miracles. He wanted people to turn from their sins and to turn to God in repentance and to fall in love with God because of who He is, not because of what He can do! And let's face it, God has the power to force and coerce submission from His followers, but that would not result in a loving relationship. Men we are to follow the example of the Lord. Forcing submission will never result in a loving relationship! We must follow Jesus' example of humble submission to God's will in our leadership of our homes! But the temptation was not over for Jesus to abandon the concept of submission to God's will...

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

Matthew 4:9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

What was the temptation here? Jesus was not for a moment tempted to worship Satan. The temptation Satan offered was to give to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world along with the authority to make everyone believe whether they wanted to or not. Satan was offering to release

his power and clutch over all the souls alive at the time of the temptation. Jesus could have every soul alive at that moment without going to the Cross! Tempting, for Jesus, I'm sure. Every soul alive, kingdoms, and authority. The problem? What about future kingdoms? What about the souls of the future? What about you and me? Jesus was not willing to negotiate away the possibility of salvation for you and me. He knew the real temptation again was to forgo the agony of the Cross. He knew the Cross was the only way to give everyone an opportunity for salvation. Satan was trying to get Jesus to fight with the same weapons Satan used. Jesus flatly refused!

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Satan was puzzled by Jesus' refusal to take the easier way out. Satan didn't understand and this would not be Satan's last attempt to get Jesus to avoid the Cross. In fact, we read this in Luke's Gospel...

Luke 4:13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

What opportune time would that be? There were several. Later on in Jesus' ministry this happened...

Mat 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Mat 16:22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

Mat 16:23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Satan was using a very well meaning disciple, to once again tempt Jesus to avoid the Cross. Peter was probably quite confused by Jesus' words, but Jesus wasn't talking to Peter, He was talking to Satan. Listen to Jesus' prayer in the Garden...

Luke 22:41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, Luke

22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

What an example of submission! But even after Jesus was on the Cross, Satan tried to tempt Him to take an easier way! Remember...

Mat 27:40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

Mat 27:41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.

Mat 27:42 "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

Mat 27:43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Satan is still throwing the same temptation today. He is throwing it at the church. Take the easy way. You've got to make it easier on the people. This Cross thing has got to go. It is offensive. It is bloody. It is hard. Especially the fact that Jesus said His followers must take up their own crosses and follow Him. The cross as a piece of jewelry is fine, but don't preach the message of the cross. Wear the cross, just don't bear the cross! It's way too heavy, way too awkward, way too obtrusive. But Jesus didn't cave. He didn't quit. He didn't take the easy way. He took the only way. There was no other way but submission to the will of the Father! Another important aspect of submission is now discussed...

3. The Purpose of Submission

a. For Her Good

For this aspect of submission we must go back and read a few of the verses we read last week, for context.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Ephesians 5:24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

I must quote the author of the NIV practical commentary again because his thoughts on this I believe are spot on...

"...Ephesians 5:23 does not focus on authority, but on the self-giving love of both Christ and the husband. "Head" in this context suggests "responsibility for." The husband has a leadership role, though not in order to boss his wife or use his position as privilege. Just as Jesus redefined greatness as being a servant (Matt. 20:26–27), Paul redefines being head as having responsibility to love, to give oneself, and to nurture. A priority is placed on the husband, but, contrary to ancient society, it is for the benefit of the wife. The activity of both wife and husband is based in their relation to Christ and in his giving himself for the church. Snodgrass, K. (1996). Ephesians (p. 295). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

We see something extraordinary here in our passage. Paul says...

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

Ephesians 5:27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Jesus did what He did because of His love of the church and remember the church is not a building or an institution, it is the body of Christ, it is you and me, it is not brick or mortar or steeple, it is flesh and blood and soul of people!

Now I'm going to tell you something that may really surprise you. While it broke God's heart and was one of the most difficult things God ever faced, it was God's ultimate will for Jesus to die on the Cross, because He knew there was no other way to make us holy, cleansed of the stain of sin, without blemish and blameless! How do I know it was God's will? Listen to the prophecy in the Old Testament book of Isaiah...

Isaiah 53:8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

One of the motivations for Jesus to submit to God's will is found right there in those verses. It says...

"He will see his offspring"

We are His offspring. In the New Testament book of Hebrews we read this...

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The joy set before Him was you and me, His spiritual offspring given new birth through Jesus' loving sacrifice on the old rugged cross! So husbands, Jesus did what He did for the good of His Bride, the Church. Your servant leadership of your home should also be for the good of your bride! And by the way, for you single men, if God has it in His plans for you to be married at some point, your humble submission to God will prepare you to be the man of God your wife and family will need. And if God has called you to a life of being single, your submission to God as a part of His Church, the Bride of Christ, will allow you to live a life for God's glory that will be an awesome example to others and will grow God's kingdom in powerful ways! Think of how Paul the Apostle, a single man, impacted the church and the world for the cause of Christ!

b. For Your Good

Ephesians 5:28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

I could spend a whole sermon on this subpoint right here! When you submit to God's will for your life as a husband and love your wife as Christ loved the Church, you are doing yourself a favor. Talk about building your marriage and making your marriage relationship better, the way a Godly man, submitted to God, treats his wife will cause his wife to love and respect him completely! And when that happens, it's a good thing for her and it's a good thing for you. Paul says it simply...

Ephesians 5:28 ... He who loves his wife loves himself.

Let me say it like this: Satan's distortion is for husbands and wives to believe they don't need each other. I don't need her help. I don't need his protection. I don't need her advice. I don't need his leadership. Don't buy into Satan's distortions! My wife has been such an important part of the ministry God called me to do. And let me be quick to say, I believe God called my wife Debbie to partner with me in ministry. She has been a major source of strength, encouragement, inspiration and wisdom. Her willingness to allow God to speak through her to me continues to be a blessing in my life.

Guys, let me just say this, if you ignore the woman's perspective that comes through your wife, you do so at your peril. God knew it was not good for you to be alone, so why do you pridefully act like you don't need her advice, help and wisdom? You do. God created her to be a helpmate for you. Let her help you! Let me remind you of this Scripture we read last week about a Godly woman...

Proverbs 31:26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

c. For the Good of Others

Ephesians 5:29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

Ephesians 5:30 for we are members of his body.

Did you see that? The church is the Body of Christ and Jesus feeds and cares for His body the Church! In the same way a man should love his wife. And I must remind you that when we have strong marriages and families it is extremely good for the Body of Christ, the Church and helps us be the witness to the world God intended us to be. And have you ever thought about the fact that this was...

4. The Plan of Submission in Marriage

Ephesians 5:31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Paul was quoting Genesis 2:24...Listen to what we read just a few verses prior in Genesis 2:18...

Gen 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone so He took a rib from the man, created a woman and gave them the ability to create a family! Marriage and Family are concepts created by God for the well being of humanity! Marriage was God's idea and He intended for it to be a lifetime, till death do us part, covenant. Let me tell you something shocking. Some have taken the liberty to rewrite the marriage vows in this way...

Instead of "So long as we both shall live!"
Some are saying, "So long as we both shall love!"

What? So long as we both shall love? You mean, when the bubbly, butterfly, feelings in the tummy start to wane, you'll start to look elsewhere? You mean when you don't "feel" like you love them anymore, you'll go searching for a feeling? That's nonsense and Satan's distortion of what true marriage is all about!! You know what the problem is with this? Many people today are hooked on feelings, just like some people are hooked on drugs. If the feelings aren't there, the commitment is thrown out the window. Here's the problem. Feelings change! Feelings come and go! That's why God made marriage a covenant, a commitment, a promise, a vow! Here's an amazing concept...

If both husband and wife are willing to work on the marriage the feelings will follow, if not, the feelings will die! If you're not willing to work on the marriage, I don't care how great it was at the beginning, the feelings will begin to fade, atrophy sets in and the feelings will die. I just don't know if I can say it more plain than this: God's plan was for two people to become one in marriage and for that to last a lifetime. Now I understand that some of you have been through the tragedy of divorce. I know many in this room have had the unfortunate experience of divorce in your past. You know what I'm talking about.

By the way, let me tell you something I've never, ever heard from anyone who has gone through a divorce...

"It was a great thing and I fully recommend it!"

Never, ever heard that, not even once!

Here's what God says about divorce...

Malachi 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel...

This says, "God hates divorce not divorcees!" Why does God hate divorce? Divorce hurts! It hurts the husband and wife! It hurts the children! It hurts the extended family, like grandparents, who have to deal with the fallout! Listen, if you're divorced you have not committed the unpardonable sin! If you're remarried, do all you can to make this marriage a Godly marriage that will last the rest of your life! Don't repeat the same mistakes. If you're not remarried, don't just jump into another relationship! Seek God's will and pray for divine guidance! If you are contemplating divorce, please think again! Divorce rarely solves the problems and usually creates many more. If your spouse is willing, the hard work of reconciliation is worth every ounce of strength and energy you put into it. Marriage was and still is God's idea and it is God's ideal for human relationships. In fact, submission in marriage is...

5. The Picture of Submission

Ephesians 5:32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Here's the profound mystery: A Godly marriage is a reflection to the world of Christ's love for His Church!

And vice versa: Paul was using Jesus and His love, His commitment, His sacrifice on the Cross for His Church, His Body, as a picture of a Godly marriage. Paul was saying that this kind of deep, meaningful and committed relationship should be our example to follow in our marriages and that our marriages should be a picture to the world of what it means to be a follower of Christ, a member of His Body and His representatives to the world.

6. The Prescription - 5:33

Ephesians 5:33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

The prescription is pretty simple! Just do it! Love your wife, respect your husband! And for all of us...

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Let's pray!