

**Sermon Series: It Starts at Home****Sermon Title: The Godly Woman****Sermon Text: Ephesians 5:21-33**

**Sermon Summary:** This study looks at the concept of submission as it relates to a follower of Christ, the church family, a Godly woman, and specifically a Godly wife. Because of the context of the passage this is really part one of a three part study on submission as it pertains to marriage and family. Submission is a vital concept when it comes to a person's relationship with God and with their family. Over the course of the next three weeks we will look at the Godly woman, the Godly man, and Godly Children. Submission displays reverence for Christ, destroys pride by placing others' needs ahead of your own, places responsibility in its proper place and finds its greatest example in the family of God's submission to Christ.

**Full Sermon Notes:**

"I cast my mind to Calvary, where Jesus bled and died for me  
I see His wounds His hands His feet, my Saviour on that cursed tree"

When I think about that kind of sacrifice and that kind of love, I realize that submitting my life to someone who loves me so completely, so sacrificially, so unselfishly, submitting my life to the God who so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Begotten Son, Jesus for me, that submission should be without hesitation, and 100%! Why? Because we can trust God and His intentions for us! Paul tells us this has far reaching implications for our families as well. Let's pray and we'll begin our series, "It Starts at Home!" Let's pray!

Remember last week I said this about submission...

Submission is the key to Spirit filled relationships! The word submission is a word that so many people view negatively! However, submission in Christ and under the control and guidance of The Holy Spirit is a beautiful and freeing concept! Why? Because it's a voluntary submission and comes with the understanding that submission to someone who has your best interest at heart is a good thing. We know from Scripture that God has given us free will to choose whether or not we will submit to His leadership and will, but we also know from Scripture that God's heart and purpose for us is 100% pure. How do I know this? Well I've already mentioned John 3:16, but let me remind you of 1 John 3:16...

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

What does it look like to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ? Does this mean we actually die a physical death for them? Let me first say this: Jesus submitted to the will of the Father in order that we might be adopted into God's family through Jesus and in order for that to happen Jesus did have to sacrifice His life for us! But of course, we know that's not the end of the story and He rose again to new life, as we just sang about! John is telling us that we should be willing to submit to the will of the Father when it comes to our brothers and sisters in Christ! And while that rarely involves actually losing our physical life, a part of submitting to the

Father, for you and for me, is to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, out of respect for and honor of what Jesus did on your behalf and my behalf! He did this on behalf of His Church, which is the Bride of Christ! This all goes together and paints a beautiful picture of how the Body of Christ, the family of God, the Church should function and work together. Where do we find that picture? I believe a good picture of this is found in our text for today and for next week. Yes, you heard me right. I'm going to read our text for this week and for next week because you need to see today's message in the context and bigger picture of what Paul is trying to paint with his words! So if you would, take your Bibles and turn with me to Ephesians 5 beginning with verse 21 and we'll read through verse 33. While you are turning to our text, let me say this: Some versions take verse 21 and place it with the previous verses and begin a separate section starting with verse 22. However, most scholars and commentators believe verse 21 is a bridge between the previous verses on Spirit filled living and also an introduction to what Paul is about to tell us about submission within the context of the family. The Broadman Commentary states that there was a form of writing where they would use "the rhetorical device of "inclusio" by which the opening and close of a discussion match and so form the terminal points of a section of classical prose." You'll see this in Paul's use of the word reverence in verse 21 and respect in verse 33. This is important and the context of this passage is important because some of our verses today have been taken out of context and used in an un-Christ like manner. Okay, with that in mind, let's dive in...

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

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

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.

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.

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

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.

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."

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

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

Paul states that we should submit to one another out of reverence for Christ and then gives the specific example of a wife's submission to her husband as the church submits to Christ. He

goes on to talk about the love a husband should have for his wife which should be like the love Christ has for the church. Paul is clear that submission plays an important role in the life of a Christian and is showing us how submission starts at home. We need to understand the very important role of submission in our lives and families, and I guess Paul was being polite when he begins by talking to the ladies first! So ladies, there will be some attention given to your unique roles and how submission applies to you and especially to a married woman, but remember that submission is a concept, and principle that applies to all of us, women, men and children! Remember the very first verse of this section of Paul's letter to the Ephesians helps us to understand that...

### **1. Submission Gives Reverence to The Lord**

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

When we are willing to live humbly before the Lord and submit to one another, by putting others and their needs ahead of ourselves we show reverence for Christ. How so? Submission was a characteristic of Jesus and when we have that characteristic it shows that we revere and respect the life and attitude of Christ. And Paul is about to talk about how this principle is so important and vital for the family! With that in mind, I want to read to you our denomination's statement on marriage and family. We are Great Commission Baptist, also known as Southern Baptist. Here's the statement and I believe it to be very well stated and very much in line with God's precious Word and helps us understand the concept of submission from a proper perspective...

“God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church, and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle, example, and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.”

Again, I believe that's a good, Biblical description of marriage and family! But make no bones about it, when it comes to marriage and family, Satan is all about distortion, deception and destruction of God's design! Here's a couple of questions for us...

How can our church family be healthy if our church families are not?

How can we minister effectively to those outside the church if those inside the church are being devastated by the same things that are devastating the world? Earlier in his letter, which we talked about a few weeks ago Paul pointed out the difference between those who are submitted to Christ and those who are not...

Ephesians 4:17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

Ephesians 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Ephesians 4:19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

Ephesians 4:20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned

Ephesians 4:21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

Ephesians 4:22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Ephesians 4:23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

Ephesians 4:24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Folks, when we submit ourselves to the life changing power of Jesus Christ through His precious Holy Spirit, the first place things will begin to change is at home! Our marriages, our families and our priorities will change at home and will flow out as a shining light to the world. Now for the remainder of our message for today I want to point out why submission changes us for the better, and again, today, we let the ladies go first. Why is submission so important for a woman to be a Godly Woman or if she's married, a Godly wife?

## **2. Submission destroys pride by placing the needs of others ahead of your own needs.**

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

When this verse is read some men want to say "Amen", and some of the ladies want to say "Oh Me!" I've had so many men down through the years that have tried to quote this verse for the selfish reasons of wanting their wives to just obey them regardless of what they were asking or how they were asking, and I'm here to tell you that's not what this passage is talking about. It's not that kind of submission. Husbands, we're talking about a woman submitting to her husband as she submits to her Lord. And I can tell you that she can submit to her Lord because she knows her Lord loves her and has her best interest at heart! She knows Jesus respects her and is never acting selfishly when He asks for her obedience. I'm going to talk with you about that

next week, so get ready! God would never have a woman submit to a man who is abusive, self-serving, demeaning and seeking to use his wife in ungodly ways. Now ladies, don't expect your husbands to always be perfect in everything, and if your husband is not being abusive, or unreasonable, if you work with him in the loving Spirit of Christ, you might just change his heart! And if your husband is not a believer, you might even win him to Christ! In fact God's Word says this in 1 Peter...

1 Peter 3:1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,

1 Peter 3:2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

When we submit ourselves to the Lord, we then become concerned about the other people God has put in our lives. And when you're married, your spouse should be a priority, just behind the Lord. We read this recently, but it's so important...

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

Philippians 2:4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

One of the most beautiful examples of this kind of loving thinking in a marriage relationship is found in Proverbs 31...

Proverbs 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Proverbs 31:11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

Proverbs 31:12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

Proverbs 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

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

Proverbs 31:27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Proverbs 31:28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

Proverbs 31:29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Proverbs 31:31 Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

And that verse that says a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised is powerful and it's not talking about being scared of the Lord, but being respectful of The Lord and honoring The Lord and His position in our lives. The same should be true of the marriage relationship. If the husband takes his responsibilities as a leader, not a dictator, in the family, then a Godly Wife will

have no problem submitting to his leadership. And this leads us to a very important principle that may encourage you ladies...

### **3. Submission Places Responsibility in the Proper Place**

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.

Now before you ladies get up and leave, I need for you to understand something. There is a huge cultural difference between today and when this text was written. This does not change the truth of God's Word in any way, but we have to understand it does affect the way we apply the underlying principles. Back in the days when Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians, the prevailing cultural understanding and practice was that women were property. That's unfathomable to us today, and reprehensible. Jesus didn't like it either! Jesus broke all kinds of cultural norms. He spoke to women in public. Jesus spoke to a Samaritan woman whom the Jews considered unclean. Jesus protected a woman who was about to be stoned for adultery and He pointed out the hypocrisy of the self-righteous men who wanted to stone her. She had been caught in the act of adultery but they didn't haul the man out to stone him. Paul and others knew they were navigating a minefield. Some in the culture were anti Christians because of the respect and honor women were given by Christ and His followers. In fact Paul had stated it this way in his letter to the Galatians...

Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,

Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 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.

Those were scandalous words back in Paul's day, but true words nonetheless and very bold words for Paul to write. But having said that, it doesn't mean that there are not complementary roles God has given to us in the family and marriage structure. There is a huge advantage given to us as children of God when we are submitted to God's leadership in our lives and a huge advantage given to a wife who sees her role to support her husband in his spiritual leadership of the family, and again, I emphasize, spiritual leadership not spiritual dictatorship! What would that advantage be? When we are submitted to Jesus as the head of the church and as our Lord, He becomes responsible for our salvation, our protection, and our provision for life! And when a husband assumes the leadership role in a marriage and family, he assumes responsibility for the safety, protection, provision and all around well being for the family! That does not mean that followers of Christ are responsible for nothing and sit around and do nothing, and it does not mean that the wife is responsible for nothing and sits around and does nothing, but it does mean that a huge burden is taken off her shoulders when she allows the husband to assume his role as protector and provider under God's leadership, under God's leadership, because ultimately we all need His protection and provision. I love the way the scholars of the NIV Application Commentary put it...

“This text is not intended to grant husbands a position of privilege or to teach that women are inferior. It’s intent is to avoid offense to outsiders by encouraging mutual submission--a submission on the part of the wife and a self-giving on the part of the husband--with both partners having their lives determined by and motivated by Christ’s”own self-giving love. Still, a priority is placed on the husband, a priority that gives him a greater responsibility to care for his wife.”

And let me just say this: If you are not married, or if you are a single Mom, then you look to The Lord to be your protector and provider and you submit to His leadership and guidance and trust that He will take care of you! A good Scripture for all of us to remember is this...

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

#### **4. Submission Finds its Example in the Family of God’s Submission to Christ**

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

The Church, as the Body of Christ, the family of God, and the Bride of Christ, has a healthy and good relationship with Jesus the head of the Church if it is walking and living in complete submission to Jesus. It can’t be half-hearted. It can’t be, “well I’ll submit the things that I don’t really care about or that don’t matter to me to the Lord, but the important stuff, I’m doing my own thing!” If that’s the nature of your submission in your walk with God or your marriage, then there will always be conflict and struggles. Submission comes down to a matter of trust! For all of us, it comes down to this: do you trust God enough to submit to His leadership, His will, His plans, and His guidance, His Lordship? And that’s for women, and men, single or married! And then, if you are married, the question of what your submission to Christ looks like, when it comes to your marriage relationship, is a most important question! I want to read you a passage of Scripture I feel describes what our submission to Christ looks like as members of the family of God and I believe you will see why we should follow this example in our marriages. And it’s pretty amazing because it is Paul’s rules for holy living found in his letter to the Colossians and it’s found just before he gives them some of the same rules for Christians households we read today in his letter to the Ephesians. This passage will set the stage for the remaining two sermons in our series, It Starts at Home. Check this out...

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

What kind of marriage would you have if you followed those principles of submission? I think it would be pretty amazing and awesome! We'll be talking more about what we just read next week, but I want to close today's message with a couple of things I think are pretty significant when it comes to submission and especially as it pertains to a Godly wife. These two observations come from a Scripture from Genesis...

Genesis 2:21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

Genesis 2:22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Genesis 2:23 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."

**First thing:** Isn't it interesting that the first woman came from man and from then on, the man is born of the woman. In a wonderfully mysterious way, this teaches us that we need each other! And if you think I'm misinterpreting this passage when I say that, you're going to have to take that up with Paul the apostle! He said this in his 1st letter to the Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 11:11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

1 Corinthians 11:12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

**Second thing:** Matthew Henry, one of my favorite practical, devotional commentators from England, made this observation concerning this passage in Genesis back in 1708, about 313 years ago, and I just think it's pretty powerful...

"God did not take a bone from Adam's head that she might rule over him nor from his foot that he might rule over her, but from under his arm that he might protect her, from near his heart that he might cherish her!"

Let's pray!

