

The Ephesus Letter

May 13, 2020 Volume 2 # 8

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives & Husbands

The Bible study for the previous study (Ephesians 4:25-32 "The Practice of the New Man" is available on your FBC app, on www.fbcselma.org, or on the Facebook site for Jerry Light

From v. 22 to the end he speaks of the duties of husbands and wives; and he speaks of these in a Christian manner, setting the church as an example of the wife's subjection, and Christ as an example of love in husbands.

I. The duty prescribed to wives is submission to their husbands in the Lord (v. 22), which submission includes the honoring and obeying of them, and that from a principle of love to them. They must do this in compliance with God's authority, who has commanded it, which is doing it as unto the Lord; or it may be understood by way of similitude and likeness, so that the sense may be, "as, being devoted to God, you submit yourselves unto him." From the former sense we may learn that by a conscientious discharge of the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures we obey and please God himself; and, from the latter, that God not only requires and insists on those duties which immediately respect himself, but such as respect our neighbors too. The apostle assigns the reason of this submission from wives: For the husband is the head of the wife, v. 23. The metaphor is taken from the head in the natural body, which, being the seat of reason, of wisdom, and of knowledge, and the fountain of sense and motion, is more excellent than the rest of the body. God has given the man the pre-eminence and a right to direct and govern by creation, and in that original law of the relation, thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Whatever there is of uneasiness in

this, it is an effect of sin coming into the world. Generally, too, the man has (what he ought to have) a superiority in wisdom and knowledge. He is therefore the head, even as Christ is the head of the church. There is a resemblance of Christ's authority over the church in that superiority and headship which God has appointed to the husband.

II. The duty of husbands (on the other hand), is to love their wives (v. 25); for without this they would abuse their superiority and headship, and, wherever this prevails as it ought to do, it will infer the other duties of the relation, it being a special and peculiar affection that is required in her behalf. The love of Christ to the church is proposed as an example of this, which love of his is a sincere, a pure, an ardent, and constant affection, and that notwithstanding the imperfections and failures that she is guilty of. The greatness of his love to the church appeared in his giving himself unto the death for it. Observe, As the church's subjection to Christ is proposed as an exemplar to wives, so the love of Christ to his church is proposed as a pattern to husbands; and while such exemplars are offered to both, and so much is required of each, neither has reason to complain of the divine injunctions. The love which God requires from the husband in behalf of his wife will make amends for the subjection which he demands from her to her husband; and the prescribed subjection of the wife will be an abundant return for that love of the husband which God has made her due. The apostle, having mentioned Christ's love to the church, enlarges upon it, assigning the reason why he gave himself for it, namely, that he might sanctify it in this world, and glorify it in the next: That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word (v. 26)—that he might endue all his members with a principle of holiness, and deliver them from the guilt, the pollution, and the dominion of sin.

1. What does the word "submit" mean? Is it easily misinterpreted?
2. Why is the requirement for husbands so different?
3. How does this passage deal with the potential of abuse or neglect within the marriage bonds?