

Series on marriage and the family – sermon 2 – 14/03/10 (am)

# The Role of a Wife in Marriage

**Ephesians 5:22**

*Theme: Wives are to submit to  
their husbands as to the Lord.*

# The Controlling Principle over Ephesians 5:22-6:4

5:21 is a pivotal verse.

It concludes a list of responses that characterize the person who is *continually* filled with Spirit.

Then...

...it introduces the subject of *submission* (to be developed in 5:22-6:9).

Paul is saying that in these divinely ordered relationships the controlling/governing principle is 5:21.

5:21 says:

- *Submit to one another.* Submit to those God placed in authority over you.
- *Out of reverence for Christ. Out of fear (awe) more accurate.*

Each person's role in the family is *a form* of submission to those in authority.

No role is better than another!

Each role has value, worth, dignity.

Each role is God-given.

The wife is mentioned first because Paul is dealing with the matter of **submission** (*cf.* 5:21) and this is the *particular* role the wife has in marriage.

# **The Admonition to the Wife**

(5:22a)

Submit to your husband!

It is important to understand what is meant by **submission**:

**It does not mean:**

slavery, inferiority, oppression,  
denial of rights, silence,  
unconditional obedience.

**It does mean:**

the wife is to submit to husband's  
God-given leadership as he leads  
in a Godly way.

There is no inequality! The wife  
complements her husband.

She helps him in *his* God-given role  
through *her* God-given role.

It is a humble recognition of God's  
ordering.

# **Manner & Motive of the Wife's submission (5:22b)**

The Christian wife's submission to her husband is *as to the Lord*.

It is an *expression* of her submission to the Lord. This gives the wife a high, honourable, exalted calling.

# The Principles Concerning a Wife's Submission

**It is:**

- 1. voluntary.** The submission of a wife to her husband in marriage is God's will. If a woman does not feel she can submit like this, she should not get married.

**2. a submission to a God-given authority.** The husband has been given this role by God. This is his responsibility in marriage. The husband must realise this as well as the wife.

**3. an expression of love for her husband.** A wife who loves her husband and realises his role of leadership is God-given will express her love by submitting to her husband.

**4. a measure of a wife's spirituality.** The passage is about evidences of being *continually* filled with the Spirit (5:18b), so a wife's submission to her husband is a barometer of her spirituality.

# **Conclusion**

A wife has a glorious role in marriage. She is to submit to her husband as to the Lord.

It is not a sign of inferiority. It is not derogatory or debasing. It has no shame attached to it.

It is a God-given and God-glorifying role. It is an exalted role.

In this day and age when understanding of a wife's submission has been perverted, the demonstration of Biblical submission will be noticed, will elicit comment and will therefore produce opportunities to speak of Christ.

*Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.*