

Marriage

“Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, wives to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself the savior of the Body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing water with the word, that He present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also the church, because we are members of his own body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife, that she must respect her husband”. Ephesians 5:21-33

There are probably not many passages in the entire bible that holds the magnitude and power within it more so than this one. This passage is so high and beautiful that only a thorough study will bring to light all it contains. All of chapter five is the follow up for the above and therefore we will make reference to its pertinent information as the subject develops. This study will dedicate its focus towards Christian marriage but we must reflect on the extreme significance of verse thirty-two; this verse is the key that unlocks and enables this chapter of Ephesians to have the impact that God intends. Without a deep understanding of this passage, the growth and orderly function of a church body and marriages within it will be impaired because of Satan’s attack. This attack will either strengthen or destroy the church’s functions of love and unity along with the marriages within. Now let’s look at Verse Thirty-two again.

*“This mystery is great but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church”
(vs. 32).*

The key word in this verse is the word «reference». All success in Christian marriage will depend on a greater relationship than the marriage itself: Christian couples willing to *refer* to Christ and His Church will be the key to enjoying a good marriage. The Greek in this verse actually expresses the idea of being inside Christ and in His Church. The point being we will not be able to have the marriage relationships we want if we are not giving priority to our relationship with Christ and, also, to His Church. Once we belong to Christ we are not going to be happy unless we follow Him. We are not following Him unless we are among His other Children that are following Him. This is an interdependence without which we will never be fully settled in our marriages. At the point we trusted in Jesus Christ we were all filled with the Holy Spirit. This indwelling

Holy Spirit places us into union with Christ, placing us in the family of God, and causes us to have a need for one another that was not there before we tasted of God's kindness. We can start feeling a sense of weakness, loneliness, and even oppression that we didn't have prior to being saved. Before being saved we were able to feed off the world and it felt ok in our stomach; but after we are saved the old food is not enough and is even destructive if it involves sin; if we continue to consume the world the way we had in the past, we are losing out on greater opportunities we have in our relationship with Christ and His body. So often it is necessary that we are given pain and weakness to motivate us to make the proper connections with God and His people. If we are forsaking the assembling together with other believers on a regular basis then many problems are inevitable, and therefore our marriages will suffer. Once we are functioning regularly within a Church Body we will start experiencing the benefits of the relationship with God and His Body, the Church. The greater marriage is our marriage with Christ and His Church. In our marriage with Christ there are various responsibilities God has for each of us that only function within the relationship of Christ and His People. These responsibilities are mutually beneficial for all. We will all have certain weaknesses becoming apparent and we will only find relief for these problems through the Body's interaction. The main point is this: if we're not going to Church all the time, then we will have more problems with our marriages. The solutions to all marriage problems between Christians are solved within the greater family, Christ's Church. To me it is a comforting thought that we all need each other and we are not going to be complete without one another. If you are having difficulty with this, then it could mean that you have some selfishness inside; many will suffer because of it. The only way to cure that selfishness is to join with other believers and come to know the love of Christ who gave His own life for ours. Now He wants us to give our all to each other and provide relief for each other.

We will now progress from verse Twenty-one. In this verse Paul is speaking in General regarding the Church as a whole; reflecting our responsibilities to one another i.e. Christ's Body. Even if we do not realize it, we are needed by others in some way; we all have a spiritual gift that God expects us to use for the benefit of the rest of the body: 1Cor 12:7. If we are not going to Church or we are not going to the church God wants us to, then we are going to suffer because of it; and know for sure that others are suffering because we are not there: 1Cor 12:26. This suffering from the Holy Spirit gives us sensitivity towards the other members of the Body. When we hurt, we need to look around to see who else is hurting and take the appropriate measures to alleviate that suffering; then the suffering we have goes away until next time we need to make this type of connection. The point being God wants us to know we are really connected spiritually and that we in fact need each other. Verses twenty-two thru twenty-five reflect that the wife's lot in life is to be their husband's servant just as Christ is the head and the leader of the Church and rules over (Her.) The man is the Head of the woman and rules over her likewise. This means the man is to be the leader of the woman in the Marriage. This leadership of the man is to be like that of Christ. This is a sacrificial Love that regards and guards the life and happiness of the wife as he would protect his own life and Happiness. The Christian husband will learn, to a greater extent, what fairness means if He chooses to learn and love the ways of Christ and His dealings with the Church. Another way to describe the man's responsibilities is he should not withhold any good

thing from his wife that he would want and get for himself. Yet the woman is to be subject to the man in everything. And the man is to cherish her. This is something very beautiful that Satan likes to distort and destroy if he can, he is often successful because the man is not being subjected to Christ in the way he should be.

Also in the scriptures we see that there are men doing God's will and the woman leaves the man because of it; this is seen in the cases of Hosea and Moses; where Moses's wife, Zipporah, let him go on his journey, not following him: Ex 4:20, 24-26; and in the case of Oseah, he married, and his wife became an adulteress: Os 1:2; 3:1. In the case where one spouse believes in Christ and the other partner remains an unbeliever; the believing partner can't leave the unbelieving, but the unbeliever can leave the believing spouse. For those not yet married the scriptures give fair warning that there will be the normal problems related to marriage: 1Cor 7:28.

Additional notes

It seems that only a few in every generation will know the great a high love that God has designed for a man and woman in marriage. Despite even the best circumstances, marriage will represent one of the greatest challenges man and woman will have in this life. Marriage should only be between two believers or two unbelievers; never a believer and unbeliever together: 2Co 6:14. Despite so many thinking they can get away with such a union, the Word of God will be found true. There will be much misery for those choosing to set aside God's Word and marry an unbeliever. History has proved this over and over again. A decision against the Word of God sets a person on the road to misery. Satan actually seeks to enslave believers in Jesus Christ in this unholy bond of souls. Satan seeks to entice and deceive; yet the only decision a believer can make regarding relationships with unbelievers is saying "No" to any and all opportunities; waiting for our Lord's provision, and that being in His timing. This is a decision that most young believers will face prior to the Lord bringing the Right Person. It's always a test to say "No" to things that would compromise our relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When we say No to these offers, God is then bound to provide the Right Mate. Beyond having the right mate God is pleased with those maintaining a close relationship with His Body, the Church. Having the right mate is the base of all human relationship yet a distraction to our relationship with God. Staying close with God keeps the marriage solid, providing the best of opportunities for children.