

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for February 24, 2019

The Spirit-Filled Wife
Ephesians 5:22-24

Review:

- “We could graphically depict the progression in the following way:
 Be filled with the Spirit ... (5:18)
 by submitting to one another (5:21)
 and, specifically, by wives submitting to their husbands (5:22)”¹
- The Spirit-filled wife is a submissive wife
- There are three characteristics of a Spirit-filled and submissive wife

I. The submissive wife exalts the Lord (5:22)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

- Submission dominates Scripture’s teaching to wives
 - Titus 2:3-4 “Older women likewise are to... teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”
 - Colossians 3:18 “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”
 - 1 Peter 3:1 “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands...”
- Submission does not imply inferiority or inequality (not ontological)
 - Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
 - Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- Submission is functional
 - “Rather, it is an appeal to one who is equal by creation and redemption to submit to the authority God has ordained.”²
 - “The basic idea presented here and repeated in 5:24b is that women should not seek to assert themselves in the home in a way that could be viewed as ruling, controlling, or dominating. Rather, they must acknowledge the God-given role

¹ Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI:

² George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 168.

assigned to the husband and respect the leadership he endeavors to provide for the family.”³

- Submit is a middle/passive verb
 - Meaning of *hupotasso* is “submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love.”⁴
 - “The New Testament never commands husbands to subordinate their wives, i.e., to force them to submit.”⁵
- Other examples of functional submission
 - Congregation to church leaders
 - Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”
 - 1 Peter 5:5 “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders...”
 - Citizens to government
 - Romans 13:1 “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities...”
 - 1 Peter 2:13-14 “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.”
 - God the Son to God the Father
 - 1 Corinthians 15:28 “When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”
- How does this type of submission exalt the Lord?
 - Considering the example of God the Son submitting to God the Father, the submission of wife to husband exalts the Lord’s own submission in the Trinity
 - Paul states plainly that the submission of a wife to her husband is to be done “as to the Lord”
- False understanding of “as to the Lord”
 - Husband might think that he deserves the same degree of submission from his wife as Jesus might expect from his wife or any other believer
 - This is obviously not Paul’s point here in this verse
- Correct understanding of “as to the Lord”
 - This phrase communicates that the wife’s submission to her husband is an act of worship unto God

³ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 380.

⁴ George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 168.

⁵ George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 168.

- Thus, this phrase (or a variation of it) can be found in the next two sections of Ephesians
 - Ephesians 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”
 - Ephesians 6:7 “rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man”
- “This makes the burden light and the yoke easy, for every service which the believer gives to Christ is given with alacrity and joy.”⁶

II. The submissive wife embraces authority (5:23)

23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

- What does headship mean?
- Some have indicated that headship only means source, thus there is no concept of authority in the term “head”
 - Ephesians 4:15 “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”
- Headship means authority
 - Immediate Context
 - Verse 23 “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church”
 - Verse 24 “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”
 - “The two concepts mutually explain one another: the church submits to Christ’s authority because He is the head or authority over it.”⁷
 - Context of Ephesians
 - Ephesians 1:22 “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,”
 - Context of New Testament
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3 “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”
- How is Christ the Head of the church?
 - Christ commands the church to observe and obey all that He has said
 - Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all

⁶ Charles Hodge, Ephesians, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 183.

⁷ George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 169.

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- How is the husband the head of his wife?
 - He is the leader and authority of the one flesh union between husband and wife
 - Headship argued from Genesis 2
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3 “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”
 - 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 “For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.”
- Headship confronting culture
 - Traditional conservative headship over women/wife in 1st Century Rome
 - “However, in the later Republic and in the early Roman Empire (Paul’s day) there was a trend toward the bride entering *sine manus*, that is, the father, not the husband, had authority over her as long as he lived. Therefore, she was independent from and not legally subject to her husband, she could seek divorce from him in conjunction with her father, and, in fact, the father could even initiate a divorce. Thus, Paul’s injunction of a wife’s submission to the husband as the head of the family confronts the family structure of that day. Paul states that the husband, not the father, has the authority over the wife, and consequently, he is the head of the new family (cf. v. 31 which quotes Gen 2:24).”⁸
 - Progressive feminist beliefs
 - To think that headship means authority is chauvinistic and oppressive
 - God would never do such a thing!
 - God would never permit such a design!
- The goodness of God in the headship of Christ
- “His body, and is himself its Savior”
 - Would any true member of the body of Christ complain against the thought of Christ’s authority?
 - Absolutely not!
 - Why?
 - How could one complain against the One who opened your eyes
 - How could one complain against the One who cleansed you from sin

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 741.

- How could one complain against the One who raised you from death to life
 - The world complains and shouts chauvinism and oppression at such a design because they are still dead in their sins and they are loving it!
 - True members of the body of Christ have no qualms with God's authoritative structure in Christ as the Head of the church
 - Christ is not merely the Head by decree
 - Christ is the Head by self-sacrifice and humility
- What is the purpose of such a phrase?
 - Paul is providing balance to those who might be thinking that wives got the short end of the stick
 - In the following verses, Paul will charge husbands to model the high calling of Christlikeness in their leadership
 - When a husband strives to lead like Christ, it would be surprising to hear of a wife who does not appreciate being led in such a manner

III. The submissive wife exemplifies the gospel (5:24)

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

- “Now as the church submits to Christ”
 - How does the church submit to Christ?
 - Eager and immediate obedience
 - When Christ speaks, the church moves
 - When the head speaks, the body moves
 - The church has the words of Christ and the church eagerly seeks to obey and carry out His words in submission to Him
- “So also wives should submit in everything to their husbands”
 - First, notice the entirety of the submission that is called for (“in everything”)
 - Exception of phrase “in everything”
 - Acts 4:19-20 “But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’”
 - Acts 5:29 “But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”

- Marriage is the place where two equals come together to display that good news of peace and relationship that mankind can have with God in the church
- Wives must see their role of submission as a privilege to point to the greater work of Christ in leading the church
 - The world will think this is stupid because they despise the idea of authority and submission
 - However, we know that God does everything for His glory and our good
- “Just as the church should willingly submit to Christ in all things and, if it does so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying of growth and freedom, so also wives should willingly submit to their husbands in all things and, if they do so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying.”¹⁰

¹⁰ George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 170.