

GOD'S WISDOM FOR MARRIAGE I STAND IN AWE!

“...submitting to one another in the fear of God. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Eph. 5:21-33)

I am in awe, in awe, in awe of the wisdom in this passage. This passage has 3 interchangeable pairs, Christ - church, physical head – physical body, husband – wife. The mystery of how one of the pair is to relate to the other is revealed in this passage. To see how husband and wife are to relate to each other, see how Christ and the church relate to each other, and see how the physical head and the physical body relate to each other.

Submit is a good word. Everybody submits to someone or something. The one they submit to is their head. They rely on that head to lead and protect. Men are to submit to fulfilling God’s created purpose of being the head with all its responsibilities and accountabilities before God. The husband gets to give his life for his wife. One way he does that is similar to the nonhireling shepherd for the sheep. It has already been settled beforehand that the shepherd is between the sheep and the wolves. It matters not whether it is a male wolf, a female wolf, or a child

wolf, or packs thereof. He protects with his life. Once the husband enters this courage realm, then his words of love have great power. They can sanctify and cleanse the wife just like Christ's words do the church. The husband is to nourish and care for the wife this deeply.

When a person submits to God they are blessed. When a person submits to God's will, they are blessed. The wife submitting to the husband is God's will, so they are blessed in doing it. Sadly, today women are indoctrinated against submitting in this way. But recall, everyone submits to someone and the one they submit to is their head. Who are so many women submitting to today instead of their husband? The answer is a group of worldly feminist women that scorn the idea of the wife submitting to their husband. Those that have that group as their head fear their scorn and contempt. They are enslaved by fear to that group. Men that shrink back and do not live out God's purpose of headship can be likewise submitting in fear also and likewise be enslaved. The Word says, "Fear of man is a snare." (Proverbs 29:25). Similarly, fear of woman is a snare.

When a person scorns and despises a scripture, they will scorn and despise someone that embodies that scripture. Good news though...whenever you embody God's will, whenever you embody a scripture, you experience what is called "overcoming embodiment." It says in 1 John 5:4 that whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Certainly, God's will is born of God and when you embody God's will you overcome the world. You overcome strife in the family; you overcome divorce and children being passed around, you overcome bitterness, you overcome bad relationships with children all by the grace and mercy of God.

Ephesians 5:21 I believe is saying there needs to be a whole lot of submitting going on and here is the way it is to be and who is to submit to whom all unashamedly: husbands submit to being the head with its accountability to God and its cost for giving his life for the wife, wives to their own husbands, children to their parents, slaves to masters (employee to employer), masters to God. (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)

If a husband shrinks back from being head and then has a disobedient child, then if the child is told it is in God's word that you obey the

parents in the Lord, the child can say why aren't you being strong, courageous head...that is in the Bible....and they got you. If a wife does not submit to her own husband, just plain ole rebels against that part of God's word and a child then does not obey her, how can she say with any loving power that it is in God's word that the child is to obey their parents in the Lord. The child can say to the mom, you are not doing what the Bible says, why should I. It is much like parents that habitually speed and then the time comes that a child gets their driver's license and have their first night out without their parents, but with their friends in the car and the parents' parting words are "don't speed." What power do those words have? There is so much loving power for the good in joyously submitting to God's good will. He is all good and so is His will. Then when you speak from a position of being in God's all good will, there is the power of the all good love anointing on the words that bring life and peace to the situation. Recall, we have seen earlier, that if the husband gives his life for his wife, then his words are then anointed with great power for good for the wife.

If you follow unashamedly God's will for submitting relationships as outlined in Ephesians, there will be goodness that you experience that is deep, rich and good. Oh yes, there is one other thing...you will be hated. I remember when our daughter-in-grace (daughter-in-law sounds like too harsh a name for such a blessing, like son-in-law is not as good a name as son-in-grace) was taking philosophy classes at New York University, she was persecuted. Guess what for...for being married! These days the current needing-of-change environment we live in can try to make you feel uncomfortable for being married for 45 years like we have. This man stands against that environment. This man stands for the goodness of God, the goodness of His will across the board and specifically applied to marriage. I want good for others; God wants goodness for others; that is why he gives us His will, for us to experience goodness.

A mystery of how we are to respond to God's will is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus was tested by a lawyer. Part of Jesus' response to him to love your neighbor as yourself. Verse 29 says that the lawyer wanted to justify himself by asking who is my neighbor. Jesus then told the parable of the good Samaritan. I believe Jesus answered with this parable the question the lawyer should have

asked. The lawyer should have said, "You mean it's God's will for me to love my neighbor as myself. Since God's will is all good tell how I can love my neighbor as myself and be **made** what you want me to be (see teaching on MADE WHAT YOU BELIEVE). Now the application of the revealed Good Samaritan mystery to the Ephesians passage: our response to the Ephesians 5 passage being studied should be, "God you mean it is your will that I am to submit and be the way mentioned in that passage, teach me how to be that way." Instead, many like the lawyer in the Good Samaritan parable section it can be said...they trying to justify themselves said, "Well, what if my wife acts such and such." Or "Well, what if my husband acts in such and such way." If those are the first thoughts popping into our mind after reading Ephesians 5 then sadly the scene in the Garden of Eden is being lived out all over again...the wife being seduced by worldly teachings and the husband caving in to the wife. It was not good then. The fruit is not good now.

We live in an era of men's conferences and women's conferences. If they do not glorify Ephesians 5 ways and teach how can I do that, then steer clear. Watch out for worldly psychological substitutes for God's word. If it is not God's all good will (see teaching GOD IS ALL GOOD), steer clear of it.

David said, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart." (Psalm 119:34) Let me give understanding on the goodness and power of submission. In James 4:1-8a) it starts out telling about evil devil activity that needs to be overcome. Then in verses 6 through 8a it reads, "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." In a mystery grace is revealed here as a power we Christians are to be empowered by to overcome the devil and then draw near to God. We get that grace by submitting to God. Submitting to God is the definition of humility...you go God's way, not your own way. So when you submit to God, you are humbling yourself. God gives grace to the humble. That grace from God is applied to resist the devil and he flees. We can then draw near to God. The challenging way God resists the proud is that God empowers the humble, the submitters, with grace and the graced submitters defeat the proud devil and his devilish activity (like strife in marriage) by graced

devil resistance . Now that you have understanding that submitting to God, humbling yourself to do God's will gives you grace to overcome, submission can be a better word to you and you can want to do it to please God. We need to make sure that our submission is to God and not something else.

Have a wonderful marriage and family life by courageously embodying this Ephesians 5 passage. Oh yes, grace and courage to you in overcoming the persecution as well.