

The Difficult Doctrine Of Submission

Ephesians 5:21

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 8, 2020

And with that said, while we're talking about that this morning, while we're talking about the Lord and His attributes, I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to a book that talks about that, and has a lot to say about God's attributes, and that is the book of Ephesians. So if you have your Bibles with you this morning, if you would, please open them to the book of Ephesians. And we're in chapter five together. Ephesians chapter five, which I would like to read to you before we get started. If you would look in Ephesians 5:18. There Paul writes this and he says,

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be 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 might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself at church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands also ought 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 does the church, because we are members of His 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'm speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also has to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

We will end the reading there. But just to say a few words about this, if you're joining us, for the first time this morning, we've been in the book of Ephesians, for a while now as a church. We've been in it for over a year, which means we've covered a lot of ground with this book. And we've talked about a lot of things concerning salvation and the Christian life and our growth in Christ. But this morning, we come to a new part of the book. This morning, we come to a new section and just to explain it to you, in verse 18, which falls at the beginning of this, it falls at the beginning of the passage, which we just read, Paul says, “and do not get drunk with wine for that is a dissipation but be filled with the Spirit.” I've told you before, that's a strange passage. When you read it, it sounds kind of odd, but the word ‘filled’ here is

the Greek word ‘plérōo’, which means to fill up or fill to the top. One Bible dictionary said it means to fill something until it runs over, until it spills out over the sides. And Paul says you need to do that with God. You need to do that with the Spirit because that's how you defeat sin. Chapters four and five in the book, if you remember, they're all about sin. They're all about how to defeat it. And Paul says, ultimately, this is how you do that. This is how you defeat sin. You need to be filled with the Spirit. It means filled with Scripture, filled with the Word of God. That's how you fight your sin nature. And verse 19, says, as you do that you will worship. You'll sing with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, that's what it says in the passage. You'll give glory to God. Verse 21 says, as you do that, as you worship God, this is what happens next. This is the next thing in the passage. It says you will submit. In its own words, verse 21 says, you will be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. And that verse kind of starts to break in the book of Ephesians, it starts the transition, because everything else in the rest of the book is going to be about this topic. It's going to be about what it means to subject yourselves to one another. The word for ‘be subject’ here, is an interesting one. It's another interesting word. It's a word ‘hupotassó’ In Greek. It's a compound word from ‘hupo’, which means under and ‘tassó’ which means to put. It means to put your yourself under someone, to willingly follow their lead.

At this time, it was a military term, it was used for soldiers in the army, because if you're familiar with the army, you'll know this is how it operates. There's a chain of command. So one soldier puts himself under another soldier, and a private comes under a sergeant and a sergeant comes under a lieutenant, and a lieutenant comes under a major or a general. That's what this word refers to here. Paul says, This is how the church operates. This is how the body of Christ works. We are to be subject to one another. When he says one another here, that means to one another as Christians, one another in the church. In other words, this is not talking about lining up under the world, this is lining up under the church. This is not what you do with people out there, this is what you do with people in here. Paul is going to spend a lot of time on this book, on this subject, he's going to spend a lot of time telling us what this looks like. For the simple reason that this is hard to do, right? If you can just read this passage and tell, this is not an easy subject. We've talked about a lot of unpopular subjects in the book of Ephesians. And we've talked about sexual sin, homosexuality, we've talked about anger, pride, you name it, we've talked about some tough stuff. But this is, this is another one of them.

Because it's one thing to be a Christian on Sunday. It's one thing to do it one day a week. But it's another thing to do with the rest of the time. And it's another thing to be a Christian the rest of the week. It's one thing to do it when you're in here, and you're in the church, and everyone's on their best behavior. And everyone's nice and friendly, and doing good things because they know they're supposed to; it's another thing when you go home and they're not. It's another thing to do it when people are at each other's throats, and that's what this is referring to here. You need to be a Christian when you go home. You need to be a Christian wherever you go. All the time. Someone once said that the Christian life would be easy if it were not for the people. But that's the wrong way to look at it. Because what Paul is saying here is that you can't be a Christian apart from the people. You can't be a Christian apart from those from your family. From those in your home. Someone else wants told me that they said they do so well in the

Christian life. And they do so well at defeating sin and killing it and all this stuff, when they're alone, when they're in their prayer closet. But as soon as they leave the prayer closet, it all falls apart. What Paul says here is that that's not the way to look at this either. You need to do this when you leave your prayer closet. This is supposed to go with you when you go out into the world.

To say it another way as we're approaching the subject. This is important to talk about because the idea of submission has fallen on hard times today. This whole idea is fallen on difficult times, because it is so offensive to some people. It is so vitriol to talk about submission because it brings up ideas of violence and slavery and oppression. It brings up ideas of women being forced to stay home and do the dishes while the husbands go out and drink. And so we need to clarify some things about this doctrine. I want us to stop and just talk about one verse this morning because we've got to clear up some of the confusion. Because if our society needs anything right now it's this. If we lack anything right now, it is this. We simply don't know how to submit anymore. We don't know how to follow one another. Because everybody just does what they want. Everybody just goes off on their own tangent.

I mean, you guys have seen the latest statistics for this. This is probably not news to you. But the latest statistics say that half of all marriages in Canada end in divorce, half of them. That's 50%. That means if you go to two weddings on two weekends, one of them statistically will not make it. Which means that this country is full of broken home after broken home. It's just one marital disaster after another. And if you wonder why, the reason is simple. It's because everyone just does whatever they want. Everybody wants to be the boss. Everybody wants to be in charge and it just doesn't work that way. You see the same thing happening with kids. You see the same thing happening with children. This generation of children in Canada are some of the smartest and brightest we've ever produced. They are sharp, they are brilliant. And they are miserable. Because they can't get along with anybody. They fight all the time, they fight their parents, they fight their teachers, some of them fight the police, for the same reason. They just want to do their own thing. They don't want to submit to anyone anymore. And what Paul says here in this passage is that it doesn't need to be that way for us. What he says here is it shouldn't be that way in the church, because we can show them something better, we can show them something different because of Jesus Christ.

One thing you notice, as you read this passage, and this is why I wanted to read it to you, is you notice how many times it mentions Christ. Over and over again, His name just keeps popping up, I think the name Christ appears like five times in this chapter. And if you put the pronouns in there, it appears like 10 times. Because He's the one who shows you how to do this. He's the one who makes it possible for you to submit to one another, because that's what He did. He submitted His will to God, so you can do the same. But it all goes back to Christ. If you think about it, this is something that we get wrong so many times, because when we have trouble in our marriages, what do we do? We go to the experts and the psychologists, we go to the specialist, and we pay them \$200 an hour for a seminar or a consultation. And what Paul says here is, it's more simple than that, you can just go to Christ. When you have a problem in your marriage, you can cry out to Him and He will take care of it, for free. No charge. Just to

show you a few times where you see this in the chapter. A few times when you see Jesus' name, if you want to look in verse 22. There Paul writes, and he says, "wives be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. And that could be translated as to Christ because that's the Lord that he's talking about. In other words, He is your example in this, He is the one you follow. You follow Christ. You are to take Jesus into your home.

Verse 25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loves the church." And that means you are to love her with the same intensity and devotion and sacrifice that Christ had, which is an incredibly high standard. There is no man in this room, or in this world that has ever done that perfectly. But that's the standard. Verse 28 says, "So husbands ought also to love their wives, as their own bodies, just as Christ also does the church." And that's an interesting passage there, because nothing is as close to you as your body, nothing is as dear to you as your own flesh. And Paul says, This is how a husband should treat his wife. This is the relationship they should have, because this is what Christ has done for the church. But it all goes back to Christ. If you ever wonder if the Christian faith is a personal thing, Paul says this is very personal. This is very personal, your marriage, your home is the most personal thing you have. And it's the most intimate part of your life. And Paul says here, w you are to take all of these things you've been learning in the book of Ephesians, all of these wonderful truth in chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, and you're to put them into your home. You're to put them into your family. And this is something we're going to be talking about for the next couple of weeks. I mean, this is such an important subject, that it's going to take us a little while to get through it.

But this morning, what I want to do is I just want to talk about the issue of submission. So if you're taking notes this morning, we're going to look at four steps to biblical submission. That is our outline for today. That's what we're going to talk about in Ephesians 5, verse 21. We're going to look at four steps to biblical submission. And we're going to do this because this is where it all begins. When we're talking about the home, when we're talking about the family, this is where Paul starts. He doesn't give you a bunch of rules. He doesn't give you a bunch of commandments first. First and foremost, he talks about what it means to submit, and we need to talk about this, because it is such a controversial subject today. We're going to look at four steps to biblical submission.

And the first one is this, this is the first step, you need to understand that **submission is universal**. So the first step to biblical submission is that you need to understand that submission is universal, which means everyone does this. Everyone is called to submit even though it shows itself in different ways in different forms. We're all called to do this. And if you look in verse 18 again, I just want to read to get the context. And Paul writes, and he says, "and do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father, and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

As you read that passage, you can tell that all the verbs in here sound alike. They all have the the ‘-ing’ ending, which means they're participles. They modify a verb, so the terms speaking and singing and making melody and giving thanks, they all modify the verb ‘be filled’ in verse 18. So this is what it means to be filled with the Spirit. This is what it means to be full of Him, you're singing and making melody in your heart. And you're submitting. This doesn't come across real well in the New American Standard Bible, but if you have the English Standard Version, it has a helpful translation of this, and it says, literally says that, it says you need to be submitting to one another. And there you see the same ending there. The ‘-ing’. And what Paul says is, this is what it means to be filled with the Spirit, you're to have a submissive heart.

I've told you before, some people think they're filled with the Spirit, simply because they had a good experience in church. Some people think they're filled with the Spirit, because they heard a good song on the radio, or they like the band on the Sunday and, and that sort of thing. And then they forgot about it. But what Paul says here is that's not what this means. This is not something you forget about, this is something you do every day. The term ‘submitting’ here, it's an ongoing thing, it's a regular thing. You are to do this over and over and over again. And I might have mentioned that this has prompted a lot of discussion. I mean, this verse has prompted a lot of debate. And we'll get into some of the debates about men's and women's roles in the home. But just to look at this one verse and talk about that a little bit.

You know, some people think that it means that there there are no roles in the home anymore. If we're submitting to one another, that means there's no roles in the family, because we all submit, and the husband submits to the wife, just as the wife submits to the husband. But that's not the case. Because if you look on in verse 22, it goes on to say, “wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord”. In other words, there's a distinction here. There is a difference in the roles because the wife submits to the husband, she follows him. So that's not what this means. And some people might think, there's another debate, that it means that there is no leadership in the home, there's no authority. Because if we're all submitting to one another, it's kind of just sort of a free for all. But if you look in verse 23, there it says, “For the husband is head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church.” So that's not what that means either. The husband is the head of the home, is what it says here. So the idea here seems to be that of respect. The idea behind verse 21 is that when we come to the discussion of marriage, when we come to this discussion of the home, we have to do it with a tone of respect for one another. In fact, at the very end of the chapter, Paul says a wife is to see to it that she respects her husband. That's down in verse 33. But that's the idea here as well, we're gonna have a tone of care and admiration for one another because we're all the same before God. No matter what your role in the home, no matter what your role in the family, you're all the same before Him. That's how this begins.

As one commentator said, “There must be a willingness in the church to serve anybody at any time, regardless of their age, sex or class divisions. Because none of that matters to God, none of that is important to Him.” And it shouldn't be important to us either. And I've got to bring this point up, I'm taking a little time to belabor this, because I can't tell you how many times I've heard a wife say, she

would submit to her husband, if he if he wasn't such a jerk. She would follow her husband, if he would just respect her and treat her with some kind of decency. It's a common problem, it happens all the time, or I can't tell you how many times I've heard kids say that about their parents, you hear children say that they would follow their parents, they would submit to them if they wouldn't be so mean to them all the time, if they'd show a little grace and mercy. It's a problem of human nature. This is a problem of fallen men, men and women, that people just love to flaunt their authority. They love to abuse it and talk down to others and say "I'm in charge. So you need to do what I say, I'm in control. So you need to, you need to obey me." And Paul says at the beginning here, you can't do that in the church. This is not the tone of this discussion. Because we're all equal in the body of Christ. No one is better than anyone else.

Just to highlight this, if you notice the phrase 'be subject to one another', that's a command isn't it? That's an order. Because of the way it's written. Which means Paul is not giving you an option, he's telling you to do something, if you're a Christian, you have to respect each other, it's a sin not to do that. It's an act of disobedience. When a husband tells his wife, you need to do what I say. And I mean an angry tone, that is a sin. He is not doing what Ephesians 5 tells him to. Or when a wife says to her child, you know, I'm in charge, I'm the boss, just do it in a belligerent tone, same thing. The world may approve of that sort of thing, God doesn't. The culture may say that's okay, God doesn't do that.

I think we all understand. We're to respect our leaders and respect those in authority, we get that I mean, that's pretty obvious. But what Paul says here is you need to respect everybody else as well. You need to respect those who are under authority too. Because you're all the same in the eyes of God. For an example of this, we just read to James chapter 2, the apostle James says it this way in James 2, he says,

"My brothers and sisters, do not hold your faith with an attitude of favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring, and he's dressed in bright clothes, and a poor man comes in with dirty clothes, do not say to the rich man, you sit here in a good place and say to the poor man, you sit at my feet."

He says that's wrong, because if you do so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves? And you could add to this, that you could put it this way, have you not made distinctions that God has not made? Because that means nothing to Him. Money means nothing to Him. In that society, to have money was to have authority, to have riches was to have power. And the church was starting to put people in power on a pedestal and put everyone else on the ground. And what James says is you can't do that. You're all on the ground before God. When your roles in the family mean nothing to God in this sense, that you're all beneath Him. God doesn't see husbands up here and wives down here.

God doesn't see that. And never has. He doesn't see parents up here and children down here. He sees you all down here. We're all broken at the cross. Theologians actually have a term for this, they have a fancy word for it called complementarianism. We're gonna get into some of the fancy terms as we go through this study. But complementarianism means that even though men and women are equal in the sight of

God, even though they're the same, they're different. But they are to complement each other in that, this is not a power play. Marriage is not a rat race or a competition. We're supposed to be helping each other. We are to submit to one another in love.

Which leads to the next point to talk about this morning, it leads to the next step for biblical submission. The first one is that you need to understand that submission is universal. The first step for biblical submission is that it's universal, which means that everyone does this, everyone submits. Nobody gets a pass, nobody gets out of this. We all have a part to play even though we have different roles. And that leads to another point to talk about, another step for biblical submission. And that is that you need to understand that **submission is spiritual**. First, you need to understand it's universal. But second, it's also spiritual, which means it's a personal thing. It's something that occurs first and foremost between you and God. It plays itself out in your family, it plays itself out in your home, but it occurs inside of us, before it occurs outside of us. And I won't read this for the sake of time. But if you look back over what we've read in verses 18 through 21, one thing you notice as you read that passage, is that there's a spiritual emphasis in here. There's an emphasis on the personal side of things.

In other words, as Paul talks about worship and giving praise to God, he doesn't focus on physical things. He doesn't focus on things like the band or the instruments or that kind of stuff, he focuses on the heart and giving thanks. Because that's more important to God. That's what God cares about when you worship. And it's the same way with this. In verse 21, if you notice, if you want to read that, again, it says and be subject to one another, in the fear of Christ. And that phrase in the fear of Christ, that means that this is what true submission is, this is what it truly looks like. It is done in the fear of Christ. It's not done in the fear of your husband. It's not done in the fear of your parents. It's done in the fear of the Lord. It's done unto Him. Which means that no matter what your parents or your spouse does, you do it anyway, because He's the one you're trying to please.

And just to explain this, there's a couple ways you can interpret this verse, there's a lot of rich things to draw out of this. The one thing you can interpret it as meaning this, all human relationships fall under the authority of Christ. As we're going to go through this the rest of this chapter, you're going to see a lot of different human relationships, marriage, family, work relationships, all that falls under His jurisdiction. So whether you're a husband or a wife, the point here is you're not the boss, Christ is. You're not the one calling the shots, He does, because you ultimately submit to Him. So that's one way to interpret this. Another way is this. This means that this is why you submit to difficult people. This is why you follow difficult people, because you ultimately submit to the Lord. Well, let's be honest, some people are hard to submit to, amen? You can say it's okay. Some people are hard to follow because they're mean and nasty and crusty and they get on your nerves, and they're annoying. But Paul says it doesn't matter because you do it anyway. Because you do it out of the fear of Christ.

This we talked about a moment ago, you need to take your mind off the things of this world and put them on higher things. Well, this is the higher thing to put your mind on. There's a higher calling here

for your marriage, and your home. And that is you're to do it in the fear of the Lord. The word 'fear' here is the word 'phobos' or 'phobia'. It can mean fear or dread or terror. But the way it's worded here, it's got a better connotation. And that simply means all. We are to do this in the all of Christ. We're to do this as an act of worship. Again, you see the connection between verse 20 and verse 21 here, but we submit to others ultimately out of worship for Christ. We do this for Him. Which means you do it whether someone's looking or not. You do this whether anyone sees it or not. Because you do it for Him.

I remember talking to a friend of mine, several years ago who was a dental hygienist, she worked in a dental office, cleaning teeth. And one year during the annual review, her boss said, "You know, I want to tell you, I'm giving you the highest marks this year, I'm giving you a raise, because you've done such a good job of making us look good as an office." And my friend said, "You know, I really appreciate that. Thank you very much. But I have to tell you, I didn't do it for that, I did it for Christ." She said, I didn't do it to make you look good ultimately. I did it to make him look good." She said afterwards, there was a long kind of awkward pause. The boss didn't know how to take that. But that's the point here. We do this to make Christ look good. We do this for Him. And I just want to stop here and say a few words about that. Because so many times I think we forget this. We ignore what Paul is saying here because we try to do all this without Him. What I mean is we try to do our marriage and our homes and our families without Christ. Because we come to church on a Sunday, we come to church once a week, and we talk about Christ here. And we study Christ and we learn about Him and sing to Him. And then we go home and forget it, don't we? We go home and act like different people. It never leaves this walls. We read our Bible at church, we study our Bible one day a week and we learn the Bible and read the Bible and sing about it. And then we do the same thing. We go home and forget it all together. And as a result, we fight and argue and bicker. Our kids wonder who those people were that they saw at church on Sunday morning. And we do that, friends, we do that, here's what you got to remember, we do that because we live like we're under no authority, at all. We do that because we live like we can do whatever we want. And what this passage says here is you can't do that, you can't do whatever you want, because you're under the authority of Christ now. You're under His control. And you will give an account to Him one day, you will give an answer to Him. And the good news you have is that He is a good taskmaster. And the good news you have is He is a gracious Savior, but He is the one we seek to please.

One author said a Christian home should be a miniature representation of heaven. It should be a representation of the home that God has made where Jesus is the head, and we're all following Him. But our home can't do that, if Christ is not in it. It all goes back to him. He's the foundation for everything. Submission is a spiritual thing, which means that your marriage is spiritual and your home is spiritual. The relationships you have with your kids are spiritual. Because it is what you make it. If you -put sin into it, you get sin out of it. If you put garbage in, you get garbage out. But on the other hand, if you put Christ in, you get Christ out.

You know, it's been said that it's not the water outside of the boat that sinks the boat, but the water inside of it. It's the same way with our homes. It's not the water outside your home that sinks it, it's the water

inside, it's the sin inside your heart. Because this is a spiritual battle. We don't turn to the world for help with our families. Because the world can't help us on this level. It can't do that. It doesn't know how. We turn to Christ.

Which leads us to another point to look at, another step to biblical submission. And that is this and we'll go through this one a little quickly. But you need to understand **submission is selective**. We're kind of looking at submission from a big picture perspective. So we're kind of looking at it from different angles, but it is universal. It is spiritual, because it goes back to Christ. And third, it is selective, which means we don't all do it the same way. It's particular, it's specific because while everyone submits and we all respect each other, it looks differently from different people. And if you read on in verse 21, you see this here. And he says, "And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the savior of the body, but as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be to their husbands and everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for her." And just to say a few words about this, we're going to talk about this passage in the weeks to come. So if you have questions, come back, and we'll talk about it then. But what I want you to notice is that after saying, be subject to one another, just so there's no misunderstanding, and just so it's clear, Paul says, wives be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. And then he goes on and says, husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loves the church. In other words, what Paul is saying is that there is a distinction here, there's a difference in the role between husband and wife. While there's mutual submission in the home, there's not mutual headship. You don't see that here. It's not what this says. While there's mutual respect for one another, an admiration for each other, there's not mutual authority, because the authority has been given to the husband. That's his role. And it's the wife's role to be subject to your own husbands.

If you want to look at this from a theological perspective, you can say this, you know, God has made us different. He's made us unique, and so our roles are unique. Our roles in the family are different. The parts that we play are different God could have made us all the same God could have could have created two men, or two women in the Garden of Eden that were exactly alike and had no differences. But he didn't do that. If you want to say it in a controversial way, it's been said that God created two sexes and two genders, the world created everything else. Sin created everything else. And He did that so that our marriage would reflect this, our home should reflect this. Aren't you grateful to God that everyone's not just like you in the home? Aren't you grateful? I mean, how boring would that be? How contentious would that be? You guys fight with yourselves all the time. It's His mercy that things are different. It's His mercy that we're not all the same. And to put this in perspective, I mean, Paul understood how difficult this would be. I mean, he understood how hard it would be, particularly for the wife to submit to the husband. So if you notice in verse 22, he says, they're to do this for their own husbands. That means wives don't have to submit to every husband. They don't have to follow every man that comes along. That's one concern people have with this passage. And rightly so, it's one of the issues that's raised, because some read this and think that Paul is telling women to just submit to

everybody. He's telling them to be a pushover to every man they meet in society. And that's not what this says. He says a wife is only only to do this with her own husband. In other words, this is a selective submission. It's specific.

It's universal, but it's discriminatory. It applies to everybody, but not in the same way. The word 'wives' here- it's not qualified, doesn't come with a list of stipulations, because it applies to every Christian woman. Even if she's smarter than her husband, or more successful or those things, it still applies. But at the same time, it only applies to her husband.

And we might add, again, these are some things that we're going to get to as we get through in this series, and I don't want to add too much here, but we might add this. This doesn't mean that a wife can't work outside the home. That's another misunderstanding with this verse. It doesn't mean that she can't have a job elsewhere. She can do that if she chooses. The excellent wife in Proverbs 31 did that. If you remember Proverbs 31, the excellent wife there worked outside the home and considered a field, and she bought it and from her earnings she planted a vineyard. I mean, obviously, there's a lot of stuff that went on outside the home in that process.

But the point Paul is making here is when she was home, she was subject to her own husband. That's the idea that he's communicating here. When she got home, she followed him. Not forcefully, but willingly. And that needs to be said here. She is to submit, she is not to be submitted. That's a difference between Christianity and Islam by the way. That's a difference between the Bible and the Quran. Because the Quran says, if your wife is not submissive, forsake her in bed and beat her. That is not what this is saying. This says she does this out of her own free will, she does this out of her own decision.

Revolutionary at the time. Personally, I don't think there's ever a place for a husband to tell his wife to submit to Him, I don't see that here. That's not the tone of this. I don't think there's a place for him to bully her or coerce her or harass her into this, give her a guilt trip. I think a husband can remind his wife of this passage, I think the two of them should go through it together and talk about what it means and how it applies to their lives. But the choice is up to her, is the point here. On her end, she is to be submissive. On his end, he is to lead and love her as Christ did for the church. But the point is, there's a difference in these roles. There is a distinction here. We all submit, but we do it in different ways.

And it leads to one more point to consider this morning. leads to one more step to Biblical submission. Just to review these other ones that the first one is that you need to understand submission is universal. Which means everyone does it. This is something for every Christian to do, nobody gets a pass with this, nobody gets out of it. And second, we need to understand it's a spiritual thing. Biblical submission is spiritual, it's personal. It's something you choose to do, out of love for Christ. It starts with him. Third is it is selective, which means it's specific. We don't all do this in the same way, God has given us different roles and in our marriage should reflect that. It's okay to be different from your spouse. That's a good thing. Praise the Lord we're different from each other.

And that leads to one more point to consider and one more step for Biblical submission. And that is this, you need to understand that **submission is honorable**. A final step to Biblical submission is you need to see this as an honorable thing. Which means it's a good thing if it's done the right way. Obviously, it can be done in a dishonorable way. That's not what we're talking about. It can be done in a noble way, because Jesus did it. And if Jesus can submit so can we. I'm not going to read all this for the sake of time, read the entire chapter to you. But I told you before, as you go through chapter five and read the rest of it, one thing you notice is how many times Jesus' name pops up in here, pops up over and over again. And that's because your relationship is built on Christ. He's the foundation of it. And it's also because Jesus submitted. It's the reason His name appears over and over again. God is asking you to do this, because Jesus has already done it.

There's a contrast in this passage that's made between our marriage and Jesus' marriage, our relationship to each other and Christ's relationship to the church. And you see it several ways, several different places. And for example, verse 23, which we read a moment ago, it says, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior. And Paul mentions that, because this is why a wife should submit to her husband. This is why she should do this in the first place. Because Christ is her Savior. He's the one who died for her sins. He's the one who paid the price. So she can do this because of Him. And if you're wondering what that means, if you're wondering what it looks like for her husband to lead her, Paul says in verse 25, "husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her." In other words, this is how a husband leads his wife, by using Christ as his example, by using Christ as his standard. Husbands if you ever wonder how am I supposed to treat my wife, go read the Gospels. And treat her how Christ treated the people. You don't lead her in a mean and bossy way, you lead her with love, the way he did. And to add to that, if you're wondering what that looks like, verse 28 says "so husbands also to love their wives as their own bodies. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." And that phrase, nourish and cherish, it means that a husband should nourish his wife's body, he should provide for her that way, but he should also do it for her soul.

But the point is that this is an honorable thing. Submission is honorable, because Jesus did it. You can't get any higher than Jesus can you? I mean, as a Christian, you can't get any better than Him. And Paul says here that if Christ could do this, so can you. If he could submit in a God-honoring way, then you can do the same. There's no shame in this. There's no humiliation in doing what Christ has done. And the Bible tells us that Jesus submitted to the Father. Even though He was the same as God, even though He was one with him. When He came to this earth and died for our sins, He put His rights aside, and He bowed the knee to Him. Didn't have to do that. No one was forcing Him, He willingly did it.

If you remember in the garden of Gethsemane, on the night before He died, Jesus prayed, and He says, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done." That is a prayer of submission. Not my will. But your will be done. So much talk today in marriage about rights and privileges, and I deserve this. And I deserve that. And I I I I I-, Jesus gave all of that up when he

saved us. At another time, the Lord said, "For I've come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me." It's the same idea there. And what Paul says here is that you can do the same thing, because Christ did it for you. Listen, friends, this is not sinful, because Jesus never sinned. Does that make sense? Everybody get that? Submission is not evil, because Christ never did anything evil. This is not a product of the fall. Some people think that. Submission, headship, all of this is a product of the time when we fell. That's not the case. Because Christ did it before all of that. We can do the same. If you notice, there's something beautiful about this passage when you read it. There's something lovely about the way Paul says this, because it just keeps going back to Christ. It's almost as if he's saying, and Paul is a single guy from what we could tell he wasn't married. But it's almost as if he's saying, I know this is hard. I know that what I'm telling you is not easy to do. This may be a fight for you. This may be difficult for you, you may have to get down on your hands and knees and beg for God's mercy. But you can do it all because of Christ. Your marriage can change because of him.

The pastor Adrian Rogers, he once said, "The same Jesus who turned water into wine can transform your heart and life. He is still in the miracle working business. He can work a miracle anytime, anywhere, including right now in your home. You just need to ask him to, you just need to call out to Him." And that leads me to ask friends, will you call out to Him today? Will you ask Jesus to do a miracle in your home? Will you ask him to come into your family and come into your marriage and, and transform it and change it? So you can see all of this as a good thing. Not a bad thing. I asked you that, because He will. If you call out to Him, He will help you. Like I said earlier, this is not easy. This is difficult stuff. But you don't have to do it alone. The good news is you have a Savior to help you. There's not two of you in your home, there's three, right? You and your spouse, and the Lord. And He can help you do all of this. If you ask Him. So will you ask Him?

To ask that another way. I mean, are you having conflict in your marriage today? Are you having conflict in your home? Does it look mean and nasty like we just talked about, because people are saying mean and nasty things to each other? Is it like World War III., when you walk through the door? I ask you that because if it is, I can tell you the reason. If it is, I can tell you why people are doing that, it's because they're not doing this. If people in your home are fighting, it's because everyone wants to be the boss. Everyone wants just to do their own thing. And the good news is that God has an answer for that as well. Things can change. Things can be different if you turn to Christ.

And that's what we're going to be talking about in the weeks to come. That's what we're going to be talking about in this book, we're going to spend quite a few weeks talking about our home and our marriage. Because listen, friends, your marriage, your home, is the closest relationship you have on Earth. That's why Paul puts it in here. That's why he talks about it right after talking about being submissive. Nobody loves you more than your family. Nobody cares for you more than them. So this is very important stuff. We need to take this seriously. And we're gonna do that in the weeks to come.

You know, in my studies this week, I came across a story of a poor man from Tennessee, he was fighting in World War One. He was fighting in the trenches. And he kept getting letters from his wife. She kept giving him nagging letters that were pretty mean and harsh. And so finally he wrote her back and he said, "Dear wife, I'm tired of your nagging letters, please stop and leave me alone. Because I'm fighting in a big war and I want to enjoy it and peace before I go home." That's a terrible thing to say, isn't it? That's a terrible thing to say, I'd rather be at war than go home, right? It's more peaceful here where I'm getting shot at. I pray that none of you can say that today. I pray nobody can relate to that. But I bring it up to say if you can relate to that I've got good news for you. There's hope. We have a gracious God and a merciful God and He will help you. And we're going to talk about that more next time. Please join us for that. But for now, let's close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, as we approach the subject this morning that we've talked about, kind of with a heavy heart. And in many ways with a sad heart, because we know that there are homes among us that are struggling, families that are struggling. And as we come to this subject, this is a sensitive subject for that reason. Some of us are at war with our spouses, some are at war with our kids, some are at war with extended family, or maybe even relationships at work, relationships all over. So to read a passage like this is humbling because we feel like we fall so short. And we fail. And yet at the same time, these words are in Scripture for all time. This is the word of God to us. And so we don't want to change it at all. But Lord, we do want to ask for your mercy. Father, we do want our homes to glorify you. We do want our families to do that. Whether we have kids or not, whether the kids are young or old or out of the house, we want them to honor you. So Father, we come to you this morning as we approach this subject, as we are start several weeks study on this. We do ask for your help. Lord, I ask that you would use this what we learned to change us. Father that you would draw us closer to Christ and closer to the ones we love. We thank you Lord of all the hope we read in this text. You're not sending us out to to fight alone, you are with us. So Lord, I pray for your blessings on the study that's ahead of us. I pray your blessings as we learn more about marriage and seek to tie it into our lives to glorify you. Thank you for Christ. Thank you that He is the perfect example for us to follow and may we leave this morning seeking to follow Him more. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.