

## ORDER AS A GIFT OF THE SPIRIT AND AN IMAGE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

### Part I: The Gospel in God's Order: The Bridegroom and the Bride

**Summary of what we will learn:** Order is a good thing. God is a God of order, not of chaos. The Spirit teaches us how to order our days according to the Word of God. Most of all, the order of salvation is the lens through which we must understand all of life. Even vocations that find their beginning in Creation, before the Fall into Sin, have their greatest meaning as an image of Christ and the Church. Order and subordination do not need to be seen as part of sinful-world politics or class warfare and struggles. They can and should be seen in the Christians' life together as a reflection of the Gospel of our Salvation.

#### **Ephesians 5:21-33**

<sup>21</sup>submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup>This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

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**Review** – we must remember two things Paul said earlier that will inform today's discussion of order:

- (1) The preeminence of God, setting all things in their proper orders beneath Himself, with Christ now filling all things as head – this is a major thought in Ephesians and Colossians
- (2) The participle "submitting" in v. 21 takes us back to Eph 5:18- "be filled with the Spirit...addressing...giving thanks...submitting..." We now unpack that third one keeping in mind this submission or subordination is a gift of the Spirit within us.

**Dr. Winger:** "when wives submit to their husbands (Eph 5:21-24), children to parents (6:1-2), and slaves to masters (6:5-8), they recognize the headship of Christ himself over all that he has purchased and won; contrariwise, rejecting earthly headship is rejecting Christ himself. The divine order is for Christ to be the Savior and his people to be thus saved: 'but each in his own position/rank: Christ the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's at his appearing' (1 Cor 15:23). To reject the divine order by refusing to submit to those who represent Christ is therefore to put oneself in place of the savior, to upset not just the order of creation but also the order of salvation."

v. 22- "as to the Lord" is not a mere analogy. It is a specific *outgrowth* of v. 21's reverence and submission to Christ the ultimate head over all. Paul is saying "when you submit to your husbands you are submitting to Christ". He is not merely weighing in on household governance. He is directing all our lives towards a view of Christ and the Gospel.

v. 23 – Headship in marriage grows out of what? Natural Order? Order of Creation? Order of the Fall?

v. 24 – “wives should submit in everything to their husbands” – really?

**Dr. Winger:** “Paul does not so much *command* the wife to submit as simply *describe* the way things are for those who are filled with the Spirit (5:18): the wife willingly subordinates herself to her husband in everything. Her willing subordination is patterned on the subordination of the church to Christ, the contours of which have filled the previous chapters of Ephesians. The church receives Christ as her head (1:21-23), the cornerstone/keystone of her temple-like structure (2:20-21); she is rooted in his love (3:17-19), receives his many gifts (4:7-12), grows up toward him as he builds his body (4:15-16), lives in his love and forgiveness (4:32 – 5:2), and sings his praises (5:18-20). The wife’s subordination is like this.”

v. 25- What is the Greek word for “love” here and what does it mean?

*Does the Husband have a “bigger” job to do then?*

vv. 25-32 have Christ & the Church as the main focus, what doctrines are highlighted?

**vv. 32-33 – In Summary:** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband

Is Paul just being a *patriarchal* product of the culture of his day?

**Dr. Winger:** “While his teachings on the headship of the husband and the subordination of the wife would have raised few eyebrows in the ancient world, his exhortation to the husband to love his wife and sacrifice his very life for her finds few parallels in ancient thinking and demonstrates that while the ink was still wet on the papyrus, Paul’s words were already somewhat countercultural.”

What’s so important about *order* in the Church and Marriages?

***Subordination is not demeaning, but God’s order for the transmission of blessings***

It’s fine for faithful Bible-study-goers, but do we *have to* hear this at weddings? It’s so awkward!

**Dr. Stoeckhardt** on how pastors must preach on this at weddings, “These words, ‘the two shall become one flesh,’ ‘wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands as unto the Lord,’ may not seem palatable to modern ears, but no pastor should stoop to surrender these words for the sake of pleasing the whims of our modern generation. Christian spouses and with them Christian congregations will reap blessings and advantages if holy wedlock is honored and held sacred in accordance with the manner here outlined by the Apostle. On the other hand, all wholesome discipline, also that of the children, which is dealt with in the following chapter, will fall and give way to disorder and worse if **God’s order** is disregarded.”