

Wife Submission and Husband Responsibility

April 27, 2003

Main Passage: Ephesians 5: 22-31

Background

God is the supreme authority. All authorities derive their legitimacy from Him and are responsible to Him. A husband's authority is, as I believe you will see, outweighed by his responsibilities.

The family is the first institution which is set up by God. The family was created before the government and before the church. Gen. 2:24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. Repeated in Matthew 19:5

Importance of this principle is shown in its repetition.

Submission of wives

Passage establishing authority

1 Peter 3: 1-6, Ephesians 5: 22-24 , Colossians 3:18 , Titus 2: 3-5

A. The example of Sarah

- This was the second time Abraham said his wife was his sister. Genesis 12:11-20
- Sarah obeyed Abraham as she would obey God.
- Sarah left her family, her country, and her home to follow a prophet
- God protected Sarah

B. Explanation of the word for submit (hupotasso)

1) From a Greek military term

A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

2) Frequency of use (used 32 times in the New Testament)

- Most often used to describe God's authority (11 1/2 times)
- Second most common usage is a wife's submission to her husband (5 1/2 times)
- Civil government (4 times), Slaves to masters (twice), Church leaders (1 1/2 times), One another (1 1/2 times), Misc. (6 times)
- Note that the word is never used to describe how a child should obey his parents (hupakouo - to listen under).

3) In Ephesians and Colossians, the word hupotasso is in the middle voice - submit yourselves in KJV - which means woman choose to put themselves under their husbands.

- KJV translates the passage as "submit yourselves" which indicates middle voice.
- The middle voice means that women must choose to put themselves under their husband's authority.
- Note that husbands are not commanded to make their wives submit.

4) The word has a range of meanings

-Submission to God is absolute

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

There is never an OK time to disobey God. Submission to all other authorities must be secondary to one's submission to God.

*Is there ever a time when a wife should disobey her husband? Yes, when you must obey God instead.

-Mutual submission is the weakest, but no less important, form of obedience (as in Ephesians 5:21 "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.")

-The meaning for wives is very strong. Wives should submit "as unto the Lord" and "as the church is subject to Christ."

C. Submission is a way to win an unbelieving husband

1. Chaste conduct - pure, clear, exciting reverence

What kind of jokes do you laugh at? What kind do you tell

2. Respectful

What do you say about your husbands to others?

3. Gentle (meek) and quiet (tranquil) spirit

4. Your personality is your adornment

5. Does a wife only need to be chaste, respectful, and gentle if her husband is not a Christian?

Who is under this authority?

Some authoritarian type people will want to exercise authority over other men's wives. Wives are specifically told in Eph. 5:22 to submit to their OWN husbands (not someone else's).

Responsibility of husbands

Love your wife as Christ loved the church

Eph 5:25-28, Colossians 3:19, 1 Pet. 3:7

A. Sacrificial love is the type of leadership that a husband provides

-Last week we celebrated Christ's death and resurrection, this is our example to follow

-Look out for your wife's interests ahead of your own

*Memorize Philippians 2:3-4 Regard your wife as more important than yourself.

- If the choice is between your hobby and your wife, your wife should win

-Sacrificial love is a marathon - not a sprint

-1 Corinthians 13 gives a great definition of sacrificial love.

B. Cleanse your wife with God's word

-Share with your wife what you are learning from God's word (assumes us to be in the word)

-The goal is that your wife be holy and blameless (like Christ).

C. Live with your wife in an understanding way

-Your wife is not a duplicate of you

-Understand that your wife has times when her mood changes, life is more difficult.

-Put yourself in your wife's place

D. Grant her honor as a fellow heir

-What does honor mean?

**Mother's Day is coming up on May 11 (in two weeks), card, flowers, take children down to store.

-Train your sons to honor their mothers.

Look at life from your wife's perspective. You may think 2 blazer's tickets are as great an honor as you

-Remember, your wife will inherit the kingdom of God just as you will

-If you do not honor your wife, your prayers will be hindered.

Biblically sanctioned response to disobedience

None. Parents, the civil government, and the church all have biblically sanctioned responses to disobedience.

Husbands do not. The command to submit is directed at the wife.