

## **The Book of Ephesians – Part 8**

### **Introduction:**

Last week we covered the first part of Chapter 5, verses 1-17, which instruct the believer to forsake the works of darkness, walk away from their former lifestyles, and walk in the light of God.

Verses 18-20 tell us that we should be filled to excess with the Holy Spirit, speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then verse 21 transitions us to the topic of submission which segues into a discussion of Christian marriage.

### **Christian Marriage**

#### **<sup>21</sup>Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.**

- It is interesting to me that Paul introduces the topic of submission, which can be controversial, by reminding us that as believers, we should submit to one another in the fear of God.
- Since he jumps right into Christian marriage in verses 22-33, it's hard to miss the point he's making.
- The point is, that even in marriage, husbands and wives should be willing to submit to one another in the fear of God.
- Also noteworthy is this: Proper submission is done in the fear of God so there's no scenario, even in marriage, which allows you to compel your spouse or anyone else to do something that is sinful or ungodly.

- What is also clear is that submission is a voluntary thing.
- We must submit ourselves to God, and submit ourselves to one another as a choice, not because we are forced to do so.
- So when we read verse 22 and other verses which instruct wives to submit to their husbands, we should read it with the knowledge that there will be plenty of occasions where husbands will need to submit themselves to their wives as well.

**<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.**

- If we are to be scripturally accurate here, it is clear that there is a greater degree of submission required on the part of the wife than for the husband.
- Because, there will be occasions where there will be gridlock, and someone is going to have to break the tie. And according to the Word of God, that responsibility falls on the man.
- Having said that let me tell you how I think husbands and wives should put this into practice.
- If it's a decision that absolutely has to be made at a certain time for whatever reason; and I think that is rarely the case, and you're not in agreement, the wife should defer to the husband's judgment and be at peace with whatever he decides.
- But if it's a matter of utmost importance like a change of assignment, a major move, a major financial investment, starting a ministry, or choosing a new church, I believe that husbands and wives should wait until there is complete agreement before moving forward.

- One more thing: It's clear from the context that women are not commanded to submit to all men, but only to their "own" husbands as unto the Lord.

**<sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**

- Concerning the husband being the head of the wife, I'd like to make a military analogy which I think is helpful in understanding how this works.
- The General and the Colonel in an army are equal in the eyes of God.
- And they both have a measure of authority in him.
- However, the General is the final authority when it comes to decisions that involve the Colonel and the rest of the men under his command.
- So it is with the family.
- Although the husband and wife are equal in the eyes of God, the husband is the head, the wife is slightly below him in rank, and their children are under the authority of them both.
- The last part of the verse makes it clear that the husband is charged with physically protecting his wife as the "savior of the body."

**<sup>24</sup>Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.**

- Again, Paul repeats and emphasizes the concept that wives are to submit to their "own" husbands, not to all men.

- And by the way, let me mention this: There is a teaching that the husband is supposed to be the high priest of the household.
- I know what they're trying to say but I don't believe that's exactly right.
- Yes, the husband is the head of the family and he should set a godly example for his wife and kids to follow,
- However, **Galations 3:28** makes it clear that there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus.
- Therefore, the husband and the wife have equal access to God through Jesus Christ our High Priest with no other mediator required.

**<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

- This is a powerful verse and if you're not careful, you'll miss that with just a surface reading.
- Jesus loved us with such intensity that he was willing to give his life for the church. To submit himself to torture and death in order to save us.
- Husbands, do you love your wife like that? That you would be willing to lay down your life so that she might live.
- So anytime a husband starts feeling like he's somebody special because he has authority over his wife he should remember this axiom:
- With great authority comes great responsibility.

- Husbands must be willing to give their lives for their wives both literally and figuratively.

**<sup>26</sup>That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,**

- I believe one of the main ways we can give our lives for our wives is to speak and pray the Word of God over them continually.
- Husbands; sanctify and set her apart by the words that you speak over her. And make sure there are times when she hears you praising her with your words.

**<sup>27</sup>That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

- Husbands should constantly be declaring that their wives are becoming the glorious woman of God that they were created to be.

**<sup>28</sup>So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.**

**<sup>29</sup>For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:**

**<sup>30</sup>For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**

**<sup>31</sup>For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.**

- Verse 28-30 say that men ought to love their wives like their own body. Much like Jesus is the head and loves all believers because they are part of his body.
- So husbands, you should care for her body as much as you care for your own because she's part of you.
- Verse 31 is actually a prophecy that was spoken by Adam in **Genesis 2:24**. He was quoted by Jesus in Matthew and Mark's gospels, and now here, he is quoted by Paul.
- When Adam first laid eyes on Eve who was literally built from part of his body, he prophesied that the marriage relationship would cause a man to leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife, before there was such a thing as a mother and a father.
- That's amazing to me.
- So, once again, if the husband and wife are one flesh then the wife's body is also his body and his body is also hers.
- Lately I've begun to extend that concept into speaking and praying health over my wife's body from the perspective that is also my body.

**<sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

- I think the traditional interpretation of these last verses is about as accurate as any I've heard.
- The unity that results when a man and a woman are joined together in marriage is a model of the "mystical union" between Christ and the Church.

- It is the closest thing on Earth we have to the unity that is possible when we as the Church are connected to one another and connected to Jesus and the Father through the Holy Spirit.

**<sup>33</sup>Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.**

- Here again, if we're not careful, we can miss the impact of this verse by just a surface reading
- Women have an emotional need to feel loved and they derive security in knowing that they are loved completely by their husbands.
- Men, on the other hand, also want love, but more than anything they crave respect.
- They want to be respected by their peers and even more so, they want to be respected by their spouse.
- Of course, women should love their husbands. It is implicit in the analogy that if the Church loves Christ then wives should love their husbands in the same manner.
- But love without respect is not something that men can tolerate very easily.
- If a man comes home from work where he's been respected by his peers all day long, and then is berated by his wife because of his failings at home, it's a difficult thing for him to process.

- Conversely, if a man constantly berates his wife for her failings, she's not going to feel loved and she's not going to feel secure in their relationship.
- Just like the husband should be praying over and speaking the Word of God over his wife continually, the wife should do the same over her husband,
- declaring that he is a mighty man of God, some of the time where he can hear it, regardless of how much of a faith statement that may be at any particular time.
- One more thing before we move on from this last verse,
- Husbands; don't ever ridicule or humiliate or denigrate your wife, especially not in front of others.
- To do so will dash her image of you as the man that loves her completely and protects here at all times.
- Wives; don't ever harangue your husband or magnify his failings in front of his peers or in front of others in a public setting.
- To do so will humiliate him and rob him of the respect that he so desperately craves.
- Amen? OK. This was not intended as an exhaustive discussion of marriage but I did want to touch on some basics that are widely misunderstood, like submission, and the needs of a man and the needs of a woman in a marriage relationship.
- So as we conclude Chapter Five of the Book of Ephesians, I want to shift the discussion to something I call the Value of Marriage.

- I want to begin by sharing an encounter I had with the Lord Jesus at our home in Bossier City, LA, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at about 6 am, in the northeast bedroom of 9307 Belden Drive.

## **Jesus and the Puppy (Vision)**

- It was during this time that God began to deal with us about returning to our home state of North Carolina, returning to our spiritual roots and pastoring a church here in Wilmington.
- I was lying awake in the bed that morning when suddenly Jesus came into our bedroom dressed in a white robe with an overlaid tan shawl. He had long hair (looked curly brownish, almost blond).
- If I had to guess, I would say he had blue eyes, maybe hazel, and was about 5 foot 10 inches tall. He had a puppy in his arms, an English bulldog puppy, which was white with big brown spots.
- He walked to the foot of our bed, put the small puppy on the bed between our feet and said,
- and I'm paraphrasing because I don't remember his exact words, I just remember the gist of what he was saying and some very specific phrases.
- "You are entering a new season in your marriage.
- This season will bring forces to bear against you that will try to drive a wedge between you and your wife."
- As you go through this season, remember, your marriage is the most valuable thing you have on planet Earth."

- So, fight for it, contend for it, care for it, for it is extremely valuable and worth preserving.”
- I came out of the vision and looked immediately at the foot of the bed to see if the puppy was still there.
- I asked the Lord two things as I meditated on the vision over the next week or so.
- Have you ever used props in visions that you’ve given to other people?
- And, if so, why a puppy, and why an English Bulldog?

### **Jesus Used Props in Visions**

- As I meditated on the vision, the Lord reminded me of this passage from the Book of Revelation where Jesus used props when he appeared to the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos.

### **Revelation 1:20**

**<sup>20</sup> As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

### **Why a Bulldog Puppy?**

- 1) Just like puppies require constant care and affection, so does your marriage.
- 2) Bulldogs are known for their tenacity. You need to fight for your marriage with the tenacity of a Bulldog.

## **Why is Your Marriage So Valuable, Worth Fighting For?**

### **1) Marriage is a picture of the mystical union of Christ and the Church - Ephesians 5:31-32 (KJV)**

**<sup>31</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.**

**<sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

If you are married, and you are believers, your marriage is intended to be a statement to the world of what God is like.

It's meant to be a picture that the world can see of the unity and intimacy between Christ and the Church.

The love, the mercy, the power, and the glory of that relationship should be on display in a Godly marriage for all the world to see.

### **2) There is Power in Agreement, Especially Between a Man and His Wife**

#### **Matthew 18:18-19 (KJV)**

**<sup>18</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

**<sup>19</sup> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**

- If there is that kind of power available between two random believers when they come together to pray, how much more power should be available between two married individuals who are one in spirit, soul, and body?

- Coming together in physical unity as man and wife births things in the natural; children, which in turn birth more offspring, more children, in a perpetual manner, from generation to generation.
- But coming together in spiritual unity as man and wife births things in the spirit; visions, dreams, great exploits, and accomplishments for the Kingdom of God, in a perpetual manner, from generation to generation.

### **Conclusion:**

It has been my observation that Christian couples do not pray together as man and wife as much as they should, including those who are in full time ministry.

There is such untapped power in the prayer of agreement between husband and wife that I believe it grieves the heart of God.

Because so much that could be birthed, in the spirit, is not birthed, simply because we do not pray together as man and wife as much as we should.

Let's resolve to change that, beginning this morning!

Amen? Amen!