

***Spirit-Filled Submission***  
***Ephesians 5:21***  
***Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher***

**INTRODUCTION**

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn to Ephesians chapter 5.
2. We are looking this morning at verse 20 which says, "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."
3. This is the third consequence to being filled with the Spirit.
4. The first two were singing and thanksgiving and now Paul gives the third that begins in verse 20 and runs through verse 4 of chapter 6.
5. As Paul says in verse 21, all of us are called to submit to "one another in the fear of Christ."
6. Whether it's a wife to her husband or a husband to his wife or children to their parents or parents to their children or slaves to their masters or masters to their slaves or citizens to government or government to citizens—everyone is called to submit "to one another in the fear of Christ." And that's where Paul begins in verse 20.
7. Submission is required of all relationships because it is God's will.
8. And God's will encompasses every facet of our lives.
9. We see God's will in our salvation when Peter says in 2 Peter

3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward **you**, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

10. The context of this verse indicates that the audience in verse 8 is the “beloved,” God’s children.
11. God is not willing that any of His children perish but that they all come to repentance. That’s election and predestination. Because He chose them before the foundation of the world, He will grant them faith and repentance in order for them to be saved.
12. Romans 8:29-30 says, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”
13. Another aspect we see in God’s will is what Paul says in Ephesians 5:15-18, “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”
14. God doesn’t want His children to conduct themselves as “unwise men, but as wise” noting carefully how they conduct their lives because this too is God’s will. But it doesn’t stop there. He says in verse 17, “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” and then in verse 18 says what God’s will is: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

15. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 Paul notes another aspect of God's will—sanctification or holiness.
16. He says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”
17. God's wills His children to be holy and to “abstain from sexual immorality.”
18. As we learned in our last study, God also wills that we give thanks.
19. He says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”
20. But God's will doesn't end there, Peter said in 1 Peter 2:13-15, “Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.”
21. In Philippians 1:29-30 we see another aspect of God's will that we don't usually hear about—suffering.  
  
Paul says, “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”
22. Whether its salvation, Spirit-filling, sanctification, saying thanks, submission or suffering, God intends His people to do

His will.

23. We could probably say then “submission” is the key.
24. As we noted in Ephesians 5:18, the words “be filled” (pleroo) is in the middle voice.
25. That’s means you are the recipient of the Spirit’s filling not the active cause.
26. In order to be filled you have to submit to the Holy Spirit. You have to be being kept filled with the Spirit which means you have to submit to the Word of God.
27. The only thing that will hinder that is sin.
28. Where do we see sin present when it comes to “one another,” usually in our lack of submission.
29. In Exodus 32:9 “the LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.’”
30. Why did God refer to them as an “obstinate people?” Because they refused to submit to His Word.
31. They had fashioned a golden calf and worshiped it which was a violation of the first two commandments He gave them in Exodus 20:3-5.

God told the Israelites, “You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.”

32. In 1 Samuel 15, God told King Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites and “do not spare them” (v.3) but according to verse 8 Saul “captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive.” Verse 9 says “Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.” Verses 10-23 records what happened next.
33. Psalm 78:8 says, “And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.”
34. After David confessed his sin of adultery and murder, he said in Psalm 32:9, “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you.”
35. When Israel rejected Stephen’s message, he told them in Acts 7:51, “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.”
36. In verse 22-6:4, Paul shows us how being “subject to one another in the fear of Christ” relates to the command to be filled with the Spirit.
37. Before we look specifically at this, notice one again that *submission is God’s will.*

## **I. Submission is God's Will**

### **A. This is Demonstrated by Jesus Christ**

#### **1. He submitted to the Father**

- a) Romans 15:3 says, "For even Christ did not please Himself."
- b) John 6:38 says, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

#### **2. His submission included every dimension of His earthly life**

- a) Prior to coming into the world He submitted to God's plan of redemption - John 1:1, 14
- b) In Luke 2:51 we see that even as a child He submitted to God by submitting to Joseph and Mary

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. "

- c) Even throughout His earthly ministry we see that He submitted to God

Matthew 4:1-2 - says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry."

During His time of temptation and hunger, He submitted to God. Even though the devil tried by every means to stop Him. Because He was hungry he tempted Him with food in verse 3 but Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (v.4). Next he sought to tempt Him to jump off the pinnacle (highest point) of the temple saying that His angels would protect Him. But Jesus said, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (v.7). Having failed at those two attempts, he then told Him he would give Him “all the kingdoms of the world...if You will fall down and worship me” (vv.8-9). But Jesus said, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (v.10). Jesus subjected Himself to the Father.

- d) In John 13 He submitted to the disciples by washing their feet
- e) In Philippians 2:5-8 He demonstrated submission to God by willingly going to the cross

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

B. This is Demonstrated by the Word of God

1. We are told to submit approximately 15 times in the Bible
  - a) “submit” - 11 times
  - b) “submission” - 4 times
  - c) “subjection” - 8 times
  - d) “subjected” - 2 times

The words “be subject” (hupotassomai) means “to line one’s self up under, to submit. Used in a military sense of soldiers submitting to their superior or slaves submitting to their masters. The word has primarily the idea of giving up one’s own right or will, i.e., ‘to subordinate one’s self’” (Fritz Rienecker, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, 538).

“Spirit-filled Christians rank themselves under one another. The main idea is that of relinquishing one’s rights to another person” (John MacArthur, *Ephesians*, 276).

2. It is specifically stated as being God’s will at least two times
  - a) Ephesians 6:5-6 - “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”
  - b) 1 Peter 2:15 - “ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of

foolish men.”

## II. Submission is Required of All Relationships

William Booth said, “The greatness of a man’s power is the measure of his surrender” (Drapers).

### A. Wives to Husbands

#### 1. The husband is the head of the wife

1 Cor.11:3 - “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

#### 2. Since the husband is the head of the wife she is called to submit to him

a) Eph.5:22-23

b) Col.3:18 - “Wife, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

c) Titus 2:5 says that the younger women are to be “discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.”

### B. Husbands to Wives

a) Eph.5:25, 28

b) Col.3:19, “Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.”

### C. Children to Parents

#### 1. Paul says in Ephesians 6:1-3 that it is right for

children to “obey [their] parents in the Lord.”

He says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

“Children” Gr.tekna, “does not refer particularly to young children but to all offspring” (MacArthur).

“Sons and daughters still under their parents’ roof are to obey and honor them. Obey has to do with action, and honor has to do with attitude” (John MacArthur, *Ephesians*).

Eph.5:31 says that men and women are no longer under the authority of their parents once they themselves marry but “special respect and concern for their parents should continue as long as they live” (MacArthur).

“Obey” Gr.hupoakouo (pres.act.imp.), “to listen to, to obey” (Rienecker), “to be subject to” (UBS), lit. “to hear under,” that is, “to listen with attentiveness and to respond positively to what is heard” (MacArthur).

2. Paul tells Timothy that an elder is to “rule his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence” (1 Tim.3:4)

That same qualification is echoed toward the deacons who are men in v.12.

#### D. Slaves to Masters

1. Slaves are to serve their masters “as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph.6:5-8)
2. Paul mentions this same truth in Colossians 3:22-25

“Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

Paul uses the word hupoakouo in both passages.

#### E. Citizens to Government

1. We are to submit to the “governing authorities”
  - a) Rom.13:1- “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”
  - b) Tit.3:1 - “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.”
2. This means that we are to “submit...to every ordinance” - 1 Pet.2:13-14

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as

supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.”

F. Believer to Believer

1. We all are to submit to one another - Eph.5:21

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

2. We are to devote ourselves to the ministry of the saints - 1 Cor.16:15-16

“I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.”

A.W. Tozer said, “The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they have not yet come to the end of themselves. We are still giving some of the orders, and we are still interfering with God’s working within us” (Drapers).

### **III. Submission is Required of the Church**

- A. We Are to Submit to God (James 4:7)

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

“Submit” Gr.hupotasso, “to place or rank under, to subject, to obey” (Strong), “to align one’s self under the authority of another” (Rienecker)

B. We Are to Submit to Jesus Christ (Eph.5:24)

“Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ.”

“Subject” Gr.hupotasso

A.W. Tozer again says, “The man who surrenders to Christ exchanges a cruel slave driver for a kind and gentle Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light” (Drapers).

“If you don’t surrender to Christ, you surrender to chaos” (E. Stanley Jones [1884-1973], Drapers).

C. We Are to Submit to the Elders of the Church

1. We are to know “those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thess.5:12-13).

John MacArthur says, “This does not mean simple face recognition, but that the people are to literally know their pastors well enough to have an intimate appreciation for them and to respect them because of their value. The work of pastors is summarized in a 3-fold description which includes: 1) laboring, working to the point of exhaustion; 2) overseeing, lit. standing before the flock to lead them in the way of righteousness; and 3) admonishing, instructing in the truths of God’s Word” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*).

“In addition to knowing pastors, congregations are to think rightly and lovingly of their pastors, not because of their charm or personality, but because of the fact that they work for the Chief Shepherd as His

special servants (cf. 1 Pet.5:2-4). They are to submit to their leadership so that ‘peace’ prevails in the church” (*The MacArthur Study Bible*).

2. 1 Peter 5:5 says, “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders.”
3. Heb.13:7 says, “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (NKJV).
4. Heb.13:17 says, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (NKJV).

The NASB says, “Obey your leaders.”

#### D. We Are to Submit in Order to Be Saved

“If you do not submit to Jesus for salvation you will not be saved.”

Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; 10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Luke 9:23-24 says, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Have you submitted to Jesus for salvation?
2. Are you submitting in all your relationships?
3. Warren Wiersbe said, “Submission has nothing to do with the order of authority, but rather governs the operation of authority, how it is given and how it is received.”
4. We are to esteem others “more important than ourselves” (Rom.12:10).
5. Let’s pray.