

## Spirit Filled Submission by Wives Lesson Two

### Introduction:

**News Flash!** Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life. Something Satan probably loves would be to wreck your marriage, too. Satan hates marriage because God created and designed it. Further, Scripture declares marriage is a mysterious picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. After describing the roles of husband and wife in marriage, Paul wrote:

ESV **Ephesians 5:32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Satan wants to mar that imagery. Go with the flow of our culture and you'll be on the highway to hell with regard to wrecking your marriage. We must swim upstream, against the current of our natural inclinations, and align our lives and our marriages with God's original intent.

This series concerns what God has to say about family relationships. Here is a simple overview of what the Bible says: **Ephesians 5:22, 25a, 6:1a**.

To summarize what the Bible says about these relationships is very easy: Husbands love, wives submit, children obey. Living it out is much more difficult. I started to say, fleshing it out is much more difficult, but the last thing we want to do is attempt to live out marriage roles in the flesh. It is essential that we Spirit it out, not flesh it out!

Reread **Ephesians 5:22** (wives submit). In the Greek the word submit is missing. It must be supplied from the previous verse (**5:21**), which in turn is the direct result of being filled with the Spirit (**5:18**).

So, in Ephesians 5, before Paul launched into God's roles for men and women within marriage, he first wrote about the importance of being filled with the Spirit. Without the Spirit's direction, husbands love, wives submit and children obey is much less likely to occur.

**Last week:** We saw in Genesis 1-2 the foundations of marriage: one man, one woman, both made in God's image, together for life, with the man as the head and the woman his co-equal helper. "Marriage is divine in establishment, supreme in relationship and unconditional in commitment" (Rogers, p. 193).

Today we'll start by examining the impact of sin on marriage and why being filled with the Spirit is so important in overcoming the effects of the fall.

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### Genesis 3:17-19 ~ Work

**\*\*\*\*1. God gave Adam work to do in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world. Work is not a result of the Fall. According to Genesis 3:17-19, what changed about Adam's work because of sin? See Romans 8:20-21.** God cursed the ground so that Adam's work became much more difficult.

ESV **Romans 8:20** . . . the creation was subjected to futility . . .

ESV **Romans 8:21** [the creation is in] . . . bondage to decay . . .

### Genesis 3:16a ~ Procreation

**\*\*\*\*2. One of the commissions God gave Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and multiply (1:26-28). This commission was given before the Fall. It was not the result of sin. How did sin change our ability to be fruitful and multiply, based on 3:16a?** Pain in childbirth is a direct result of the Fall.

### Genesis 3:16b ~ Leadership

Last week we studied how Adam was created first and given work to do. Only later was Eve created. This models the headship of the man in the marriage relationship. It is important to note this headship existed before the Fall. There is order within the Trinity and there is to be order within the family:

ESV **1 Corinthians 11:4** . . . the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

**\*\*\*\* What impact did sin have on God's order within marriage, based on Genesis 3:16b?**

One impact of sin is that a woman's desire will be for her husband. Another is that he would rule over her.

### Her Desire

**3. In what sense is a woman's desire her husband a result of sin (3:16b)? Compare 4:7.**

ESV **Genesis 4:7** . . . sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.

This is a set up for the battle of the sexes. The same Hebrew word for desire found in 3:16 is used in **4:7** where sin was personified as a dangerous animal, crouching beside Cain's door, ready to pounce and master him. It was "hungering, desiring, longing for, intent upon" (TWOT #2352) ruling over Cain. So too because of sin women will be tempted to be discontent with their husband's leadership. They will want to take the lead. It is important to realize this desire to lead may more often be covert than overt (the real power behind the throne).

**Country Song:** Man and woman singing. The man croons, "I'm going wear the pants, Little Darlin'" and she responds: "And I'll tell you which pair to wear."

As believers we still have indwelling sin, a constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Even Christian wives will sometimes struggle with submission and the temptation to manipulate your husband so you actually are leading him.

**Head/Neck:** It has been said that man may be the head, but the woman is the neck, and she can turn the head whichever way she pleases. This is what we have to watch out for.

**Chaucer:** A knight had been tasked by the queen with discovering what thing women most desire. After great inquiry the knight was finally ready to answer. "Everyone was commanded to keep silence, and the knight was commanded to tell in open assembly what thing it is that secular women love best. This knight did not stand in beast-like silence, but answered to his question at once with manly voice, so that all the court heard it: 'My liege lady,' he said, 'generally women desire to have dominion over their husbands . . . and to be above in mastery; this is your greatest desire, though you may kill me; do as you please, I am at your will here.' In all the court there was neither wife nor maiden nor widow who contradicted what he said . . ." (*The Wife of Bath*, p. 229).

ESV **Genesis 3:16** . . . Your desire shall be for your husband . . . [This makes submission difficult].

### He Shall Rule Over You

**4. In what way is the rule by the husband over the wife a result of the curse (3:16)?** Male headship is not the result of the Fall. This penalty may refer to sin's effect in causing some men to rule over their wives harshly, selfishly, insensitively or brutally. Imagine the cave man with a large club dragging his wife along by her hair (brute force). Think of the way Herod treated his wives, or how King Ahasuerus treated his wives (including Esther).

Conversely, Spirit filled leadership is servant leadership, it is loving leadership, it is self-sacrificing leadership.

### — Ephesians 5:18 —

\*\*\*\***What two commands are we given in Ephesians 5:18?** The two commands are that we not get drunk but rather be filled with the Spirit. Everything else is the result of being filled with the Spirit.

**In 5:18, what reason was given to not get drunk?** It leads to debauchery (ESV). The Greek word here is *asotia*, which primarily denotes wastefulness (*NIC*, p. 125). A waste land is not a place you'd want to live.

**Application:** Some people's marriages are wastelands. They are relationally drunk with respect to understanding and living out God's will for their roles with marriage (husbands love, wives submit, children obey). They are not informed by the Spirit.

**5. How does the contrast with being drunk help us understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit (5:18)?** A person drunk with wine is controlled by the wine, is influenced by the wine. A person filled with the Spirit will be under the influence of the Spirit.

**Contrast:** Being drunk with wine leaves a man passive, with no control over his senses. In contrast, being full in Spirit doesn't mean losing one's self control. It means you are voluntarily led by the Spirit; that you chose to be obedient to the Spirit.

**Filled:** A person said to be filled with rage is under the control/influence of anger. A person filled with fear is often paralyzed by the fear. So too a person filled with the Spirit is moved by the Spirit, captivated by the Spirit

Also, to be filled with something means there is no room for other things (such as sinful thoughts/actions).

**Middle Voice:** "Filled" is in the middle voice, meaning, "allow yourselves to be filled with the Spirit." Since "be filled" (5:18) is in the middle voice it shows that we have a choice in the matter; we must cooperate with the Spirit (*ICC*, p. 161). To be filled with the Spirit we simply listen to the Spirit's voice within, being sensitive to his promptings, and obey what He says.

ESV **Ephesians 4:30** . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God

**An Ongoing Process:** "Filled" is a present imperative, which carries the idea of "keep on being filled with the Spirit." It is a lifestyle. It is not a onetime event but rather should be an on-going state of being.

**Application:** When it comes to husbands love, wives submit, children obey, it takes the continual filling/leading/influence of the Spirit.

6. In Ephesians 5 Paul commands everyone to be filled with the Spirit, which will result in singing and thankfulness (5:18-19). Then he wrote for wives to submit, husbands to love, and children to obey. Paul penned Ephesians and Colossians at the same time, while in prison. The two letters are remarkably similar at this point, but he left out being filled with the Spirit. **What parallel to being filled with the Spirit does Paul lay out in Colossians 3:16-4:1?**

ESV **Colossians 3:16-19** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

**Meaning:** Being filled with the Spirit is clearly the same as letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. One helps explain the meaning of the other. To be filled with the Spirit is to let the Word of Christ infuse every part of our being, to let the Spirit inform our thoughts and actions (McArthur, p. 252).

**Application:** We are to be so satiated with the Spirit's teachings (the Word of Christ) that we fully realize our roles within marriage and purpose to live them out. We are to yield to what the Spirit and the Word of Christ say to us about our roles in a family: husbands love, wives submit, children obey.

— 5:19-20 —

\*\*\*\*7. **Based on 5:19-20, what are some results of being filled with the Spirit (5:17)?** Those filled with the spirit will be characterized by singing and thankfulness. Singing and thankfulness are both conscious choices we are to make.

— 5:21 —

\*\*\*\***In 5:21, what final evidence of being filled with the Spirit is given?** Those filled with the Spirit will have a general attitude of submission toward other believers. We don't demand our own way. We are to prefer one another in love.

**8. What reason for mutual submission did Paul offer in 5:21?** We are to do so out of reverence for Christ. It is not about the worthiness of other people, it is about the worthiness of Christ! We are to see Jesus in those to whom we submit. Our duty does not depend on their personal character (Westcott, p. 83). Jesus is God, yet He came to earth as a servant, washing feet.

In general, we are to prefer one another in love, we are to serve one another, to submit to one another. Similarly:

ESV **Galatians 5:13** . . . through love serve one another.

ESV **Ephesians 4:2** . . . bearing with one another in love . . .

This general attitude of considerate submission toward each other does not obliterate other, more specifically defined, areas of submission. Whereas we are to have a general attitude of submission each to the other, there is still to be submission of the church to its elders (Heb 13:17), wives to husbands (Ep 5:22) and children are to obey their parents. Christian slaves were still to obey their Christian masters (Ep 6:5). Citizens are still to submit to the governing authorities.

— 5:22-24 —

\*\*\*\***Even though all believers are to have an attitude of submitting to one another, what specific situation does Paul point out in 5:22-24?** Wives are to submit to their husbands.

**Palatable:** Many (most) Americans today find 5:22 to be quite offensive. Several times Christian couples (for whom I was performing a wedding) have asked me to leave the "obey" line out of the vows (to love, honor and obey) so as not to offend relatives attending the wedding. Yet the Scriptures are very clear at this point: Christian wives are to submit to the husband's leadership. It is a fruit of being filled with the Spirit and letting the word of Christ dwell in you (Col 3:16). If I had written Ephesians, I would have started with the command for husbands to love their wives before I dealt with wives submitting to their husbands (it seems more palatable in that order). However, the Holy Spirit knew it was best to start with the role of a wives submitting to husbands. Understanding submission is a fruit of being filled with the Spirit and letting the word of Christ dwell in you (Col 3:16).

**Good news!** Many women are far superior to many men in intellect, spirituality, ability, maturity, training, etc. This verse is not teaching that women in general be submissive to men in general. A woman has only to be submissive to the man who is her husband.

**Joke:** The Greek word for “own” is *idiois*, basis for the English word idiot. So, perhaps a dynamic translation would be, “wives, submit to your idiot husbands!”

**Review: According to 5:24, what should wives do (5:24)?** They should submit, 5:22.

**9. How should wives submit, according to 5:22?** They should submit “as to the Lord” (5:22).

The wife is to regard submission to her husband as an obedience rendered to Christ (*Exegetical Greek Text*, p. 366). The subjection of the wife to the husband is well pleasing to the Lord (Lenski, p. 626). Submission is not an emotion, it is a choice.

ESV 1 Peter 3:6 . . . Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

**Disagreement:** Submission means nothing unless there is disagreement. If the wife and husband agree on everything, of course she will go along. The rub comes in when the wife thinks differently than her husband does. It is where there is disagreement that submission takes on meaning. **Examples:** How the household is managed, how the children are disciplined, the kid’s education, how money is spent, etc.

**Joyful Submission:** It takes the teaching of the Spirit for a wife to submit. Yet remember that another mark of being Spirit filled is joy (5:19). How a wife serves her husband is very important. She can submit coldly and with resentment, or she can submit with joy. Attitude is everything (Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, p. 54). True joy comes from serving others anyway (not from getting your own way).

— 5:23 —

\*\*\*\***10. Why should wives submit (5:23a)? What reason is given?** According to 5:23 it is because (“for”) the husband is the head of the wife.

**Reality or Potential? What is the difference in meaning between “Close the door” versus “The door is closed”?** The first is a command or request and the second is a statement of fact (indicative). Does the Bible states that the husband should be head of the wife or that he is the head of the wife? It is a statement of fact, not a statement of potential. It does not say the husband ought to be the head. It is true that the husband the head of the wife (5:23) simply because God has declared it so.

**Respect the Uniform:** In the military, you respect the stripes (uniform) even if you don’t personally respect the man as a person. So too by virtue of God’s family order, the husband has been delegated authority from God to be the head of the family. Even if a wife is in the sad state of not feeling loved by her husband, he is still worthy of submission by virtue of the fact that he is the head (he has the stripes, the uniform).



**Inescapable Leadership:** Men, you already are the head of your family. You may be a bad head or you may lead through the vacuum of your absence having abdicated the throne, but you are the head. This is a state, a condition, a reality declared by God and there is no escaping it. We men would do well to meditate on this fact. You dominate your home. Absent men dominate by the empty chair at dinner. Wimpy men dominate by their passiveness. The only question is how you will dominate. *Will it be a loving Christ-like dominance or a tyrannical hateful dominance or dominance through absence?* (Wilson, p. 25).

**According to 5:23, in what way is the husband the head (5:23)?** He is head even as Christ is the head of the church.

**11. How does Christ as head help us understand what it means for the husband to be head (5:23)?** The husband is the head of the wife in the sense of being in authority over her just as Christ is the head of the church. Christ has authority over the church, but he is a loving authority, and authority who washed the disciples' feet! Jesus was servant leader.

**Teacher's Note:** Feminists are fond of saying the word head, *kephalé*, means source (as in the head of a river) and has no reference to authority (Adam was merely the source of Eve since she came out of his body, but not her authority). However, the Greek was not used in this way and an examination of various biblical texts clearly shows that *kephalé* is used in the sense of leadership. It is quite true that Christ is the source of the church, but it is also true that Christ is the authority over the church. It is special pleading to conclude that the Bible teaches anything other than that wives are to submit to their husbands as heads of the marriage. In any event, submit still means submit (5:22).

— 5:24 —

\*\*\*\* **In 5:22 we learn that wives are to submit “as to the Lord”. According to 5:24a, how else are wives to submit to their husbands?** Wives are to submit to their husbands just as the church submits to Christ.

**12. Based on 5:24b, how else should wife submit to her husband?** The text says “in everything”. This would include where you live (Sarah followed Abraham to Canaan), how you educate your kids (home school, public school, Christian school), where you go to church, etc.

**Teacher's Note:** Although the word “submit” is missing in 5:22, it is present and accounted for in 5:24. It is the same Greek word found in 5:21 (*hupotasso*). It means exactly what the translation says, “submit”. “Submit” (5:24) is from *hupotasso* and was originally military term. *Hupo* means under (as in hypodermic or hypothermia) or and *tasso* means to arrange; thus, to arrange under (in ranks). Imagine an army's organizational chart. There is no way around the fact that the word really does mean to submit.

**So What?**

**13. What is the wife's role in a marriage and what is the standard for that role?**

**14. What is the rationale for holding the husband in such high esteem?**

**Summary:** Ephesians 5:21 is clear that each believer is to have an attitude of submission to every other believer. Even though the wife in particular is to submit to her husband, the fact remains that he is also his wife's Christian brother. Even though the husband is the head, he is still to

serve his wife and esteem her as he would any other Christian in the church. He is to be a servant husband, even as church leaders are to be servant leaders.

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

- You can hear a recording of this actual lesson being taught at [www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF](http://www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF)

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