

Episode #314 Ephesians 5 Part 5 - Submission: Christ and the Ekklesia

I. In Ephesians 1-3, the Holy Spirit revealed to us all the glorious things that are true of us “in Christ.” Now, in Ephesians 4-6, we are told of the “worthy walk” that we should live in love and gratitude to God for the glorious position we have received.

II. In Ephesians 5:21-25, we saw that we are to submit to one another in the fear of Christ, yet there are still situations where submission is particularly appropriate. First is the wives are to submit to the husbands. Yet there is a response on the husband’s part: to love the wives

III. Submission - Wives to husbands: the husband’s response.

A. Ephesians 5:26. Christ hallows His outcalled, cleansing it by His word.

1. To hallow is to set apart to God for His special use. Those who will be part of Christ’s outcalled are part of Adam’s race and sinners like all the rest. For them to be part of Christ’s glorious outcalled, they must be set apart.
2. They also must be washed in a bath of water. Not a literal bath, but the washing away of their sins through the blood of Christ.
3. The “water” comes from the realm of the word of God. It is when we have faith in the Word that we are washed and cleansed.
4. Husbands should want their wives to be set apart from other wives with poorer husbands. A Godly husband wants to see her as a wife privileged to have a husband who cares about her and whose love makes her bloom like a flower, rather than whose selfishness makes her fade like dry grass. He should also want to see her washed by God’s word, and should be concerned with her relationship with God, even as he is with his own.

B. Ephesians 5:27. Christ's goal for His ekklesia: to present it to Himself a glorified outcalling, not having any spot or wrinkle, (that is, any defect,) but wants to see it achieve perfection in beauty with no spot or wrinkle. The awesome result of His true cleansing by His Word. He is concerned with the character of His ekklesia, not her appearance. Time and age will bring spots and wrinkles to even the most gorgeous of females. A husband’s true concern should be is to see her flawlessly beautiful in character. Rather than focusing on her meeting his selfish needs, he should desire to see her become a more Godly person because she is his wife!

C. Ephesians 5:28. The husband is to love his wife like his own body. This was the illustration of marriage from the beginning with Adam and his wife. Similarly, the husband is to consider his wife part of himself and love her body as he loves his own. Loving her is like loving himself; doing good for her is like doing good for himself.

1. Ephesians 5:29. We care for our own bodies (if we are in our right minds). No sane person hates his own body, but feeds and carefully cares for it. This is how he should treat his wife as well. This is how Christ treats His outcalled. The husband is to think of Him as the example in loving, just as the wife is to think of Him as the example in submitting. If both partners in a marriage will follow these instructions, theirs will be a very good marriage indeed, and will be a beautiful illustration of Christ-likeness.
2. Ephesians 5:30. We are members of His body. The Body. Is this speaking of a human body?
 - a. Most think of a human body here. But animals have bodies as well!

- b. Body = Greek *soma* (like English “somatic cell”). Used of the human body throughout the gospels, with perhaps one exception.
- c. Matthew 26:26. What did Christ mean by “body” here? Also parallel passages Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19.
- d. Romans 6:6. Sin is a concept, and does not have a human body.
- e. I Corinthians 10:16-17. Not Christ’s human body, nor are “we” a single, human body.
- f. I Corinthians 15:37-40. The body of grain plants, celestial and terrestrial bodies. The human body is certainly a terrestrial body. Is the resurrection body celestial or terrestrial?
- g. Ephesians 1:22-23. The ekklesia which is His body. Very similar to Colossians 1:18.
- h. What is “body”? We speak of a “body of water.” In the winter, you want clothes with more “body.” The “body” of paint is thick or thin.
- i. Scriptural clue: Colossians 2:17. What a word means can be defined by its opposite. Here, the opposite of “body” is “shadow.” The opposite of shadow is the substance of a thing. A body, therefore, is the actual, organized substance of a thing.
- j. The human body is the substance of a person, same with animal body. A body of water is the substance of the water, organized by the sides of the lake or stream. Body of cloth and paint are their actual substance
- k. “He is the Head of the Body” = He is the Source of the Substance.
- l. We are members of His body (partakers of his substance). He gives us of Himself, and makes us in measure what He is.
- m. The reference to flesh and bones takes us back to Genesis 2:23. As Eve was made of Adam’s flesh and bones, so the body of Christ partakes of His very substance and becomes in reality what He is. No wonder He loves His ekklesia so much! He sees in them what Adam saw in Eve.

IV. Conclusion: In spite of the greater truth of Christ and the ekklesia, the message regarding husbands and wives still applies. The husbands need to love their wives as they love themselves, even as Christ loves the ekklesia as He loves Himself since He has made them of Himself by pouring into them His character. The wife, moreover, needs to reverence her husband as the ekklesia is to reverence Christ.