

Bible Study
Ephesians 5:18b, 20-33

Introduction: “The worst is the corruption of the best” analysis.

What do you remember about the husbands and wives of these TV shows: The Cleavers? The Flintstones? The Bradys? The Hecks from Malcom in the Middle? The Belchers from Bob’s Burgers? Everyone Loves Raymond? The Simpsons?

Which show reflects the way everyone gets (or got) along in your family?

Read Ephesians 5:18b, 20-33.

1. The reality of submission. Read Matthew 23:24. What does it mean to strain at a gnat while swallowing a camel?

Titanic example. Wildfire example. Gas prices and video lottery example.

What do you think the relationship is between “blindness” and “straining out a gnat” while “swallowing a camel”?

Sturgis example. Orbit, axis, atmosphere, and spin example. The body’s need for food and water and dignity example.

- a. Since we submit in virtually every component of our life, why do you think submission is viewed so negatively?
- b. How can we distinguish between proper and improper submission?
- c. Author(ity) analysis, Psalm 104:1-10, 24-29. Why does creation give God authority?

How does sin make submission impossible?

- d. What do the following verses tell us about submission?
 - i. Luke 2:51.
 - ii. Luke 10:17, 20.
 - iii. Matthew 28:18.

iv. 1 Corinthians 15:27-28.

v. 1 Peter 3:21-22.

vi. Ephesians 5:24.

vii. Hebrews 12:9.

2. The *order* God has put in place is a tremendous blessing for us, both the order of salvation and the order of creation. Essentially, as Christians, we confess that God's will is best for us. Where do we see one of the clearest summaries of God's will for us?
3. Read analysis on Ephesians 5:22. Now looking at verse 23, what is the headship of Christ over the church? Love...not of control. Nurture...not of suppression. Sacrificial love versus transactionalism.
4. According to Ephesians 5:31-33, of what is marriage a reflection or what is it meant to help us understand?
5. If the wife were the head of the husband, then what would that say about the church's relationship to Jesus?

“Paul assumes, as do most cultures, that there are significant differences between men and women, differences that go far beyond mere biological and reproductive function. Their relations and roles must therefore be mutually complementary, rather than identical. Equality in voting rights, and in employment opportunities and remuneration, should not be taken to imply such identity. And, within marriage, the guideline is clear. The husband is to take the lead—though he is to do so fully mindful of the self-sacrificial model which the Messiah has provided. The church became the Messiah's bride, not by being dragged off unwillingly by force, but because he gave himself totally and utterly for her. As soon as “taking the lead” become bullying or arrogant, the whole thing collapses.

If this guideline seems outrageous in today's culture, we should ask ourselves: do our modern societies, in which marriage is often a tragedy or a joke, really offer a better model of how to do it? Does the specter of broken home littering modern Western culture indicate that we've got it right and can tell the rest of human history how we finally resolved the battle of the sexes? Or does it indicate that we still need to do some rethinking somewhere?”

—N. T. Wright