

Marriage: Submission and Agape - Colossians 3:18-19

August 10, 2008 - Skip MacMillan

What God's Church looks like:

Colossians 3:12-17

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved . . ."

Plunge your heart into (virtues of God): compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bear with each other, forgive and love each other.

These virtues are a lifestyle, not based on location.

God's Church at Home

Integrating belief and practice into every area of life.

"If the home is to be a means of grace it must be a place of rules . . . the alternative to rule is not freedom but the unconstitutional (and often unconscious) tyranny of the most selfish member" -CS Lewis.

"Wives, submit (be subject) to your husbands, as is fitting to the Lord."

1. Why is this so difficult and even embarrassing in our day?

Mistreatment of women in the past

The effects of the Fall.

"In May 1919 the House of Representatives again passed the amendment (304 to 89) and on 4th June 1919 the Senate finally gave in and passed it by 66 to 30. On 26th August 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was certified by the Secretary of State, when Tennessee, the thirty-sixth and final state needed, signed for ratification." Women could now vote. -Spartacus.com.

The Word

Negative, oppressive, suppressive, humiliating, exploitive, and out of date.
Bosses, companies, governments.
Forced, demanded, and absolutely nothing good or positive.

Out of Context

Pulling one verse out of context without looking at all of Scripture and the entire chapter.
Taken to mean women are not equal, inferior, not as intelligent, not as able, etc.

2. The Context

Women in the context of God's Kingdom:

Jesus Christ:

Healed, cared for, spoke with, and gave hope to, had as some of His closest followers, and appeared to women first after His resurrection; he held up women in a culture where the Jewish morning prayer gave thanks that God had not made him 'a gentile, a slave or a woman;' she was considered a thing, no legal rights, a possession.

What Scripture says:

In the Image of God – Genesis 1:26-27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Equals and Heirs – Galatians 3:28-29

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Interdependent - 1 Cor. 11:11-12

“In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”

Different - Genesis 2:7, 22

Different, men were formed and women were fashioned by the hand of God.

One, yet a man and woman become one when they marry.

Equal but different, with different God-given roles.

Fruits of the Spirit, equal but different (hospitality, teaching, healing, giving, leading).

Trinity, all three persons of the Godhead are equally God, yet have different roles.

Free in Jesus Christ – Galatians 5:1

“It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

Roles of Women in Scripture: Mother of all (Eve), judge of Israel (Deborah), toppling governments (Rahab), Proverbs 31, romance of Song of Songs, to the giving birth to and raising of the Son of God (Mary).

God rescues Hagar, elevates Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth.

However, no matter who you are (David or Mary) God always wants you to use His God-given freedoms and positions to serve others. For women this is demonstrated by submitting to their husbands.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 - “Everything is permissible” but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

Submission in the context of God’s Virtues, Colossians 3:12-17

Plunge your hearts into: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bear with each other, forgive and love each other.

Submission in the context of Agape Love

God’s unconditional, self-sacrificing, self denying love for you, Ephesians 5:22-33.

God calls husbands to love (agape) their wives.

3. The Word means:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

“. . . to yield oneself (willingly) to the authority or will of another; to defer to or consent to abide by the opinion or authority of another, to cease resistance” -Merriam Webster.

“A humble recognition of the divine ordering of society” -Stott.

Accepting God’s ordering of family, recognizing the equality among genders and their different God-given roles.

“Power and freedom under control;” image of God, free in Christ, equal in value yet voluntarily placing yourself under your husbands leadership, trusting God and trusting your husband.

Submission’s Limits:

“We submit right up to the point where obedience to human authority would involve disobedience to God. At this point civil disobedience becomes our Christian duty” -Stott.

“. . . we must obey God rather than men.” Peter, Acts 5:29.

Voluntary (you are free)

The Greek grammar “shows that the submission is to be voluntary” -FF Bruce.

Voluntary means you don’t have to, it is a willing choice to set aside your life for another.

Jesus (Philippians 2), who has ultimate authority but laid His life down for His church.

Willingly setting aside personal freedom, setting personal limitation, using self-restraint.

“The wife must (willingly) forgo the temptation to rule her husband’s life, using perhaps one of the many varieties of domestic blackmail” -NT Wright.

God speaking to wives not husbands to their wives

Whatever you do, do not abuse this call God has placed on your wife.

Submission is never to be forced by her husband

If this is where you are, husband, you lost a long time ago, the game has been over.

Submit is a Verb, it is something you do, not just say; it all sounds good until you’re faced with actually doing it.

4. Comments:

Submission and Love

Work best when both are lived out simultaneously.

Feed off each other and one promotes the other: the more I love her the more she is willing to submit and vice versa.

Similar in that they both require the setting aside of yourselves for the good of the other.

Within the act of submission is love and within the act of love is submission.

Jesus is our perfect example of living in love and submission, Phil. 2:1-11.

It’s a matter of who will move first?

Husbands you move first.

Make it easy for her to submit to your decisions by creating a history of you genuinely caring for her.

Wives, what effect does your submission have on your husband?

Shows your trust in him and it builds his confidence as the leader in the family.

He doesn't know any more than you do, he is trying to live out his God-given role; help him. Your husband needs your trust, he needs confidence, needs your help, he needs you.

Mom, what effect does your submission have on your children?

Gives a real-life example of God's design for marriage, healthy submission, and Agape love.

Little girls are taught their freedom in Christ, image of God, equality and differences; they learn how to treat their future husband.

Little boys are taught how to love, how to respect you laying down your life and how to treat their future wife.

What a beautiful picture of trust and love.

Wives, your homework is to figure out ways you can show your love for him through your submission.