

“What’s A Wife To Do?, Part 1”
Ephesians 5:21-24
Sermon Series: “Jesus And My Marriage”

Introduction: Danny Akin has written, “From its very founding, the institution of marriage was designed to image forth the relationship that Jesus Christ has with the people of God, the Church. The man leads, loves, and serves his wife because that is how Christ gives himself to his bride. And the wife respects, submits to, and helps her husband, because that is how the Church of God follows the risen Lord Jesus.”

Main Idea: The husband’s position is headship so his role is leadership, and the wife’s role is to follow her husband’s leadership through submission.

Review:

- The husband’s position is headship so his role is leadership.
- This leadership is to be rooted in or expressed in the context of loving his wife like Christ loves the Church and being one with her.
- It is to be Christ-like leadership, which is servant leadership, so leadership makes us first in responsibility and last in rights.
- It is spiritual leadership because the goal is leading our families to do the will of God.

Today we will focus on this part of the main idea. **The wife’s role is to follow her husband’s leadership through submission.**

1. Husbands and wives are equal persons (Genesis 1:27, 2:18) with different roles. His role is leadership and hers is voluntary submission. The Trinity, Church, and government provide examples of this equality with voluntary submission. How should submission be defined? “Submit” is translated from the Greek word, *hupotasso*. It is a military term that means to “line yourself up under someone else’s authority.” Another definition is “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.” It is in the middle voice in Greek, which means that it is an action that you do to yourself. In other words, it is not forced or coerced but done voluntarily by the wife out of obedience to God. However, husbands should strive to love and lead in such a way that it is easy for a wife to do. In essence, it means that the husband and wife are an equal team who work together, but the husband has been given leadership of the team by God, and the wife is called to come alongside him and work together with him. **This view is called complementarianism as opposed to egalitarianism, which asserts there are no role distinctions between males and females.**

2. There are three aspects of submission pictured here: first, submission to the Lord, then to each other mutually (v. 21), and also the wife to the husband.

3. Here are some common myths about submission. It does not mean:
-that women are to submit to men in general

- that the wife is inferior in any way
- that the wife is less capable because she is a woman
- that the wife is to be a silent partner
- that the wife has to passively accept mistreatment
- that the wife is a slave
- that the wife's personality is to be squelched
- that the wife is to treat her husband like God
- that this prevents the wife from working outside the home

4. A wife's submission to her husband is not unlimited because his authority is delegated, and therefore, limited. The word, "everything," in verse 24 may sound unlimited but is actually limited by the fact that the analogy is based on the Headship of Jesus over the church so the man's authority is limited under the authority of Christ. A wife is not required to follow her husband outside the authority of Christ. She can appeal to the higher authorities of God, government, and the church. I would caution that these should be genuine exceptions and not excuses to disobey Scripture. So, when should a wife not yield to the leadership of her husband? Here are six categories paraphrased from Steven Tracy:

- When following his leadership would go against Scripture
- When following his leadership would hurt her relationship with Jesus
- When following his leadership would violate her conscience
- When following his leadership would compromise the care or protection of her children
- When following his leadership would enable her husband to sin
- When following his leadership would subject her to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse

5. Submission is spiritual in nature because it is ultimately between a woman and God.

Verse 22 says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, **as to the Lord.**" Here are some of the ways this is a spiritual issue:

- Submission is ultimately an act of obedience and submission to the Lordship of Jesus. In other words, this flows out of your walk with the Lord.
- This means that you cannot be unsubmitive to your husband and submitted to God at the same time (1 Peter 3:1-2).
- Submission is trusting God with your husband.
- The ultimate purpose of our submission is to please the Lord.
- Submission is following the example of Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8, Garden of Gethsemane).

6. Some practical and societal issues to consider:

- A. Does this apply to areas outside of marriage like work or elected offices?**
- B. How does it apply in churches? Can women be pastors, for instance?**
- C. How should Christians view the MeToo movement?**

Conclusion: Are you surrendered to Jesus? Ladies, are you following your husband's leadership in a biblical way? Are you committed to following Scripture in every area of life instead of conforming to the pattern of culture?