

The Glory and Radiance of a Wife

By Jeremy Lucas

Ephesians 5 is Paul's delivery of our mysterious (verse 32) similarities in humanity to that of the Christ and the church. The latter part of the Scripture addresses the similarity of a marriage to Christ and the Body. But indeed, be forewarned as I move forward, there is a GREAT mystery in this Scripture. It is not my intent to "insert" a mystery into the passage, but to provide potential insight into what is ALREADY quoted as being a mystery.

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord." Ephesians 5:22

Not a complex statement, but let's examine it for the potential of miscommunication. :)

To be subject to someone or something is to be "dependant" upon that someone or something.

For instance, if I am "subject" to my boss at work, I am "dependant" on what he provides me every two weeks. If my conduct with my boss is unbecoming, my "dependency" will shift to another boss and the previous relationship will cease to function as it should. Am I "obedient" to my boss? Yes I am, but that's not what makes me "subject" to him. I'm "subject" to him because he gives me a certain security. Were he not to provide me that security and confidence, I would not remain "subject" to him. In fact, if I wasn't being given sort of security (financial or otherwise), I'd probably be looking for a new employer. Obvious enough, right?

So when we talk about "subjection," we're not DIRECTLY implying one's OBEDIENCE. Rather, we're directing the attention to one's DEPENDANCE (financial or otherwise) on another.

Ephesians 5:22 addressed two KEY nouns that we're going to focus on before moving into verse 23. The second was "subject," which we covered. But the first was "wives," which I'd like to address now. If someone is a "wife," what does that imply Scripture believes her to be? Let's look:

"An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels." Proverbs 31:10

In Solomon's final chapter of Proverbs, he describes the image of a godly wife.

"The heart of her husband trusts in her,"

Seeing as trust is ALSO an issue of dependence, even the husband "depends" on his wife.

"She works with her hands in delight."

She what? You mean she gets her hands dirty?

"She rises also WHILE IT IS STILL NIGHT, and gives food to her household."

You mean, while the husband and children are still sleeping, she's still thinking of her family?

"She considers a field and buys it."

And even writes the checks. ;)

"From her earnings she plants a vineyard."

She EARNs an income and USES it for her family IN ADDITION to the other things she does. (Chew on that one)

"She extends her hands to the poor;"

She cares.

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household."

She'll shovel her way out of the driveway if necessary to provide for her family.

"She makes clothing for herself,"

But wait...

"She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen."

So she's got a job outside the home as well.

"She smiles at the future."

She never gives up hope.

"Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also,"

Hmmm. You mean, the husband will PRAISE his wife? Maybe that's not what it means...

"A woman who fears the Lord, she SHALL BE PRAISED."

Yep. That's what it meant. :)

If we can, let's move BACK into Ephesians and consider what was just covered.

1. A wife, according to Scripture, is held to certain expectations (no less and no more than a man) of godliness, wisdom, and compassion. Simply because Solomon began that passage by saying, "who can find," does NOT mean that this TYPE of woman does not exist. Quite the opposite in fact...

"You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride; You have made my heart beat faster with every single glance of your eyes," Song of Solomon 4:9

I think he found her. So let's presume that though an excellent wife is worth far more than "jewels," she IS available to the one who searches for her.

2. To be "subject" to is to be "dependant" on. If indeed, the woman in Proverbs is NOT financially dependant on Solomon (or any other man for that matter), what is it then that she is "dependant" on him for? We'll get there, but for now, we'll contend to the possibility that "submission" is not simply "being obedient like a dog to its master," but rather, "submission" is being "dependant" (for whatever reason the individual is so) on someone or something (depending on what the "object of affection" is).

Moving on.

Point #3 is previously mentioned in Proverbs, but further elaborated on.

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, AS TO THE LORD."

How is the woman "subject" to the Lord?

"A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised."

Why would ANY of us fear the Lord? Because He holds our salvation in His hands. That's pretty intense. Whether we are Israel of old, or the Body of Christ, the Lord STILL holds our salvation IN HIS HANDS. He holds our entire security IN HIS HANDS. Such a reality makes "fear" equal to "trust." Why? Because we don't FEAR the Lord in such a way that we cease to function. We TRUST the Lord in such a way that we KNOW He will provide in our time of need. Right now, in this "age of Grace," we NEEDED security because the Law could not secure us. He gave us that security and our "fear" or "trust" in the Lord remains solid and secure. He did what was necessary to SECURE us and give us CONFIDENCE.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." Ephesians 5:23

Further summation of what was previously expressed. How is the husband the "head of the wife?"

"...as Christ also is the head of the church, HE HIMSELF BEING THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY."

Though Christ remains to be God and IS the dominant Deity in our lives, this Scripture MAKES A POINT of expressing its own meaning. Christ is the head of the church, NOT BECAUSE He is the SUPREME AUTHORITY, but BECAUSE He is the SAVIOR of the Body. How does that compare to a marriage?

Christ is our redemption and our SECURITY. When we are struggling, we DEPEND on Him because He IS OUR SAVIOR. We TRUST in Him because HE IS OUR SAVIOR. Not because He is the SUPREME AUTHORITY. Being the authority does not make one a Savior. The two can either be distinctly different or identically the same. In this case, Scripture defines itself as being DIFFERENT from authority, but moreso a "saving" and "protecting" mentality.

"For the husband is the HEAD of the wife,"

The what? The protector. The comforter. The replica of Christ to the Church. Do you visualize Christ as a DOMINEERING individual? Neither do I. My Lord is a GRACIOUS Savior. Wives, consider your husbands as such.

"But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."
Ephesians 5:24

The church, once again, is not SUBJECT in the form of BONDAGE and SLAVERY, but DEPENDANT in the form of GRACE, MERCY, and FREEDOM. So also the WIVES ought to be DEPENDANT on their husbands in similar fashion.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and give Himself up for her;" Ephesians 5:25

I've known men who say, "I'd die for my wife."

It sounds great on the surface, because it seems they're trying to characterize their love for their wives as being somehow similar to that which this passage implies. This is not the case. Think again with me,

".and gave Himself up for her;"

He what? He humbled Himself for her. He gave up His HEAVENLY AUTHORITY to become HER SERVANT. HE CAME DOWN from His HIGH ROLE and TOOK a LOWER ROLE in order that He might give her SECURITY! Praise the Lord!

"That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," Ephesians 5:26

Wow. How does a husband "sanctify" his wife by "dying for her?" Simple answer? He doesn't. A man is not God and his responsibility to a wife is much more physical. If a husband dies, his wife is NOT secure or confident anymore. Instead, she becomes scared, alone, and fearful of being without him.

So the statement,

"I'd die for my wife just like Christ did for us."

Well... it just doesn't fit. Better to say,

"I'd give up everything I have for my wife in order for her to be safe, secure, and free."

What a man, right?

"That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless."

We're talking about a VERY humble man giving up a HECK OF A LOT to make "her" look BLAMELESS.

"So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself."

Once again, we're not talking about a man who simply gives flowers to his wife on Valentine's. We're talking about a man who loves his wife as much as he loves his own body. How much is that?

Well, most men that I know try to build their bodies, or try to maintain a certain frame or build. Then there are men who opt to sit in front of a television while building a gut and wasting away their once young body. Men, what kind of husband are you or will you be when it comes to loving your own bodies?

"for no one ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church," Ephesians 5:29

Interesting. The theme of "cherishing" and "nourishing" continues from what was previously presented as "saving" or "securing." Between cherishing, nourishing, saving, and securing the heart of his wife, its apparent that a husband has MUCH MORE to concern himself with than "who is in charge." Very evidently, the presence of Christ and the church in this passage makes it QUITE clear that this is NOT an issue of "authority," but an issue of "security" and "dependence."

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh." Ephesians 5:31

Here is the core of the mystery which MANY will never comprehend. Even I, as I continue to study, find myself frustrated by the INCREDIBLE level of depth behind this Scripture. But due to its "mystery," I'll leave the "mystery" to the consistent student as I myself remain diligent in study.

"Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband." Ephesians 5:33

In the final verse, we have a CONCLUSION that REORDERS the original pattern of the message.

In the beginning, it was the wife who was described first. She was described as "dependant" on her husband.

Now, it is the husband who is described first. He is described as one who will LOVE his wife as he loves himself. Most certainly, as previously mentioned, a husband will not KILL himself (as generally applied to that which Christ did for the church). Rather, he will TAKE CARE OF his wife in such a way that the RELATIONSHIP is maintained and the security of the love is confident. Hence, it is the HUSBAND who is to be RESPONSIBLE to the wife (in more ways than just financial... for indeed, the woman in Proverbs didn't need Solomon's money). In doing so, the WIFE will then be RESPECTFUL of her husband because she will be CONFIDENT of his love for her.

How does a husband express his love to his wife? He becomes a servant to her. He becomes humble before her. He praises her. In doing so, he becomes a man worthy of what verse 33 states... RESPECT.

You don't just simply GET respect because its SUPPOSE to be yours, you GET respect when you SHOW YOURSELF humble enough to receive it.

Perhaps this presentation will transfer dialogue about women, but it is my hope that this presentation will moreso offer a refreshing insight into the "glory and radiance" of a wife.

Imagine the "ideal American home" for most men...

The wife makes breakfast and lunch for the kids and the husband. She shops for groceries with the money he's earned during the day and makes dinner for when he arrives home. When he arrives home, he eats the dinner that she's cooked and says nothing at all. After which time, he takes her into the bedroom and has sex with her WITHOUT saying a word. He falls asleep and the next day goes on the same.

Has the wife been praised? Has the wife been held? Has the husband given his wife ANY time for emotional affection? In essence, has the husband given the wife ANY REASON TO RESPECT HIM??? Not at all!

But to each wife is a different need for security. In each of those "different" wives, there remains ONE CONSTANT. She needs the attention and praise of her husband. Without that, she becomes cold. Without that, she ceases to care about his needs. Without that, love turns into hate.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. Some of you come from broken homes in which the husband had ONCE "wooded" his bride, but then ceased to care about her needs. He stopped giving her random flowers. He never sat down anymore to talk with her for hours.

You see, when we "date" or "court" a wife, we do all the HUMBLE things that a HUSBAND should do IN a marriage. Then when we GET married, we set aside all the things we did in the "chase" and the "dating." We stop caring.

If you are an unmarried man, TRAIN yourself and PREPARE yourself to be humble. Train yourself and prepare yourself to serve your wife. You'll do it as you try to "win her affection" (all guys do), but if you haven't trained yourself to CONTINUE doing it as a husband, you'll harden the heart of your wife.

Let her trust you. Make yourself worthy of her trust and respect by serving her in every capacity that she needs. But learn this BEFORE you get married. Don't learn the lessons after your wife has hardened her heart toward you. Divorce will be a hope of her future and you won't want to experience that hate. Let her trust you.

May the Lord be a blessing to your hearts as you consider the things presented to you and continue studying them to see if they are accurate to Scripture.