

# DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

*Verses & Notes April 23, 2008*

## *Ephesians 5:21-33 [Part 2]*

- 21: Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- 22: Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.
- 23: For the husband is the head of the wife  
as Christ is the head of the church, his body,  
and is himself its Savior.
- 24: As the church is subject to Christ,  
so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.
- 25: Husbands, love your wives,  
as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,
- 26: that he might sanctify her,  
having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
- 27: that he might present the church to himself in splendor,  
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,  
that she might be holy and without blemish.
- 28: Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.  
He who loves his wife loves himself.
- 29: For no man ever hates his own flesh,  
but nourishes and cherishes it,  
as Christ does the church,
- 30: because we are members of his body.
- 31: *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,  
and the two shall become one flesh."*
- 32: This mystery is a profound one,  
and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church;
- 33: however, let each one of you love his wife as himself,  
and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

**Introduction:** Today we continue studying some Scriptures from Ephesians on marriage, family, and work that many people consider difficult, outmoded, old fashioned, even down right chauvenistic. Why? Because St. Paul is giving clear, strict, unappologetic instructions on the hierarchical structure within the family. But he's not intending that we hear this as a laying down of rules & regulations, but rather as behavioral guidelines by which we are to form our conscience. These are not rules that we are to lay on someone else, but rather instructions for ourselves on how we are to treat others. This is what we will be discussing today on ***Deep in Scripture***.

### **House cleaning items...**

- Today's Special: ***"First Comes Love" by Scott Hahn***
- We want your input!!! Phone: On air phone number: **1-800-664-5110** Off air: **1-740-450-1175**  
Email: [marcus@deepinscripture.com](mailto:marcus@deepinscripture.com)  
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### **REVIEW: Today we're continuing our discussion of Ephesians:**

- **In the first three chapters**, St. Paul describes the changes that take place in our lives once we have heard, believed, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit in baptism, while **in the second half of Ephesians**, St. Paul exhorts the newly baptized Gentile believers how they must live out this new life, which requires surrender and faithful obedience.
  - St. Paul's summarizes this in 4:22-24,

22: Put off your old nature  
 which belongs to your former manner of life  
 and is corrupt through deceitful lusts,  
 23: and be renewed in the spirit of your minds,  
 24: and put on the new nature,  
 created after the likeness of God  
 in true righteousness and holiness.

- From a sermon by Saint Peter Damian (1007-1072), Bishop of Ravenna, (preaching about Saint George): [from today's Office of Readings]
 

*"We must now cleanse ourselves, as Saint Paul tells us, from all defilement of body and spirit, so that one day we too may deserve to enter that temple of blessedness to which we now aspire. Anyone who wishes to offer himself to God in the tent of Christ, which is the Church, must first bathe in the spring of holy baptism; then he must put on the various garments of the virtues. As it says in the Scriptures: "Let your priests be clothed in justice." He who is reborn in baptism is a new man. He may no longer wear the things that signify mortality. He has discarded the old self and must put on the new. He must live continually renewed in his commitment to a holy sojourn in this world. Truly we must be cleansed of the stains of our past sins and be resplendent in the virtue of our new way of life."*
- All that St. Paul teaches on marriage is to be understood in the context of growing in holiness, not as a set of rules to constrict or control the marriage relationship.
- **Two weeks ago, we began studying 5:21-6:10 on the relationships of marriage, family, and work within the context of the Body of Christ.** (Please check archives for mp3s and notes from these DIS programs.)
  - **Last week we began examining the rolls of Husband and Wife:**
    - The importance of formation of Conscience:
      - Consists of knowledge of unchangeable truths, learned truths, and learned behavior (shoulds & oughts);
      - Our mind can be understood as a battle of "voices":
        - Conscience vs "The voices" of the world, the flesh, & the devil.
        - All of our external battles involves these internal battles.
      - In these passages, St. Paul is instructing our consciences so we can successfully fight both the internal & external battles, specifically within marriage.
- **What are the unchangeable truths within the passage?**
  - (1) **The Mystery of Christ and the Church:**
    - The Church is the Body of Christ (5:23)
    - Jesus Christ is the Savior of the Church (23)
    - Christ is the head of the Church, his body (23)
    - The Church is subject to Christ (24)
    - Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her (25)
    - **Why?** "that he might sanctify her..." (26-27)
    - Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church (29)
    - We are members of the Church, his body (30)
  - (2) **The Scriptural / Traditional understanding of marriage (they had been taught):**
    - The exclusivity & oneness of the marital bond (31) from Genesis 2:24 (LXX)
  - (3) **The husband is head of the family (23):**
    - *"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body..."*
      - Not presented as a negotiable opinion but as a fact;
      - Possibly a truth of natural law ... but at least a firm tradition based upon the truth of the headship of Christ & the hierarchy of the Church.
- **What voices were they battling:** (see last week's notes)
  - **"the World":** Jewish & Gentile / pagan Greek cultures.

- **“the flesh”**: The ongoing battle for supremacy within marriage (Genesis 3:16) (driven by selfishness, pride, bitterness, anger, jealousy, etc.: “What about me?!”)
- **“the devil”**: (6:12; 1 Peter 5:8-9) The devil will attempt to destroy the Body one cell at a time.
- **So what behavioral instructions (shoulds & oughts) does St. Paul give?**
  - **Mutual submission of all within the Body of Christ (21):**

*“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.”*

    - What does “submission” mean?
      - This is based on living out Christ’s instructions: John 13:34-35
 

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
      - Means treating one another as Christ treated / treats us: 4:1-3
 

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*
      - St. Paul describes this elsewhere as “other centered” love: Romans 12:9-10
 

*“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.”*
      - St. Peter describes this as humbling ourselves: 1 Peter 5:5-6
 

*“Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you.”*
    - Life within the Body of Christ requires this mutual humbling and living for the other members;
      - We are not to force others to live this way;
      - We are to live this way regardless of how others treat us.
  - **Wives are to be subject in everything to their husbands (22-24):**

***“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.***  
*For the husband is the head of the wife  
as Christ is the head of the church, his body,  
and is himself its Savior.*  
***As the church is subject to Christ,  
so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.”***

    - St. Paul bases his instruction on the assumption of the submission of the Church to Christ;
    - St. Paul repeated this to the Colossians (3:18):
 

*“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”* Why did St. Paul address the wives first?
    - Why did St. Paul address the wives first? (also in Col 3)
      - Maybe because, as in Corinth & as throughout history, enthusiasm outraces conversion; freedom outraces order and formation of conscience.
      - At Corinth, for example, St. Paul needed to reign in over zealous enthusiasm: (11:2-16)
 

*2: I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.*  
*3: But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*  
*4: Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head,*  
*5: but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled*

*dishonors her head -- it is the same as if her head were shaven.*

*6: For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil.*

*7: For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.*

*8: (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.*

*9: Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.)*

*10: That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels.*

*11: (Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman;*

*12: for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.)*

*13: Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?*

*14: Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him,*

*15: but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering.*

*16: If any one is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.*

- Do these instructions still apply?
  - Show the problem of *sola Scriptura!* Thousands of opinions!
  - *Why we were given the Church: We within the Body submit to the leadership of the Body / the Church as the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, submits to Christ.*
  - Since these are not matters of unchangeable faith or moral but rather customs, The Church can make changes as cultures & needs change.
- May have been, therefore, that the most noticeable enthusiasm that needed to be checked, in the early church, was wives challenging their husbands authority; however, St. Paul certainly does not let husbands off the hook, as we will see later.
- Submission is not groveling subservience, for this is not how the Church is ever described as submitting to Christ:
  - The Church, and her members, can freely submit & give themselves to Christ BECAUSE he has demonstrated his complete trustworthiness, his fairness, his sacrificial love; there is no reason whatsoever to hold back!
  - The submission of the wife assumes this, and this is why, if a husband complains that his wife doesn't submit, the answer to the husband is not to force her, but to focus on his responsibility: love her!
- Submission also doesn't mean detached obeisance, but includes respect (33):

*"...let the wife see that she respects her husband."*

  - *Note: "respect" = phobatai = reverence; fear.*
- **Husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church (25-30, 33a):**

*25: Husbands, love your wives,  
as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,*

*26: that he might sanctify her,  
having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

*27: that he might present the church to himself in splendor,  
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,  
that she might be holy and without blemish.*

*28: Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.  
He who loves his wife loves himself.*

*29: For no man ever hates his own flesh,  
but nourishes and cherishes it,  
as Christ does the church,*

30: because we are members of his body.

33: ... let each one of you love his wife as himself...

- **What is the model of Christ?**

- Servant Leadership (Mark 10:42-45)

*"And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

- Unselfish love (5:25-27)
- Caring, nourishing love (5:28-30)
- Reminded for favorite song from Camelot: "How to Handle a Woman"

*"How to handle a woman?  
There's a way," said the wise old man,  
"A way known by ev'ry woman  
Since the whole rigmarole began."  
"Do I flatter her?" I begged him answer.  
"Do I threaten or cajole or plead?  
Do I brood or play the gay romancer?"  
Said he, smiling: "No indeed.  
How to handle a woman?  
Mark me well, I will tell you, sir:  
The way to handle a woman  
Is to love her...simply love her...  
Merely love her...love her...love her."*

- **Note:**

- In neither case, is one spouse to force the other to live out their rolls.
- Each to live by their conscience in reverence (fear) of Christ.
- In the same way, we give our love & obedience to Christ freely, out of gratitude, so are a husband and wife to give love & obedience to each other freely.

- **So, how does this apply today, in today's world?**

- St. Paul's words to the Corinthians still apply:

*"Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ. I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."*

- We must correctly form our consciences & live by them, not by the voices that try to destroy the Body of Christ by destroying our marriages.
- We must correctly form the consciences of our children, both by words & our model...we must be able to tell them as St. Paul tells us, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ."