

Series on marriage and the family – sermon 3 – 21/3/10 (am)

Reasons for Submission

Ephesians 5:23
(Genesis 2:4-7)

Theme: A wife is to submit to her husband because the husband is the head of the wife.

The Apostle Paul gives an instruction
to wives (Ephesians 5:22) ...

... then explains why (Ephesians
5:23).

Understanding Paul's Explanation

Ephesians 5:23 gives two reasons why a wife should submit to her husband:

- one drawn from creation;
- one drawn from redemption.

We must understand what Paul means by *head*.

There are two main views:

1. *head* means *source*;

2. *head* means *authority/leadership*.

It is convincingly clear that *head* means authority/leadership:

Textual evidence in ancient Greek literature. In a study of 2336 uses of the word *head* it always meant *authority/leadership*.

Textual evidence in the Old Testament. *Cf.* Judges 10:18.

...

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Textual evidence in the New Testament. *Cf.* Eph. 1:22.

Contextual evidence in 5:23-24.
The obvious meaning is *authority*.

Reasons for the Wife's Submission to her Husband (5:23a)

**Because of the Created Order
(5:23a *cf.* Gen 2).**

**This is God's ordained way for all
marriages!**

Some argue such headship arose **after** the Fall (Genesis 3:16) and that since Jesus' coming it no longer applies (*cf.* Gal. 3:28).

This is in error!

Two reasons:

1. Galatians 3:28 only applies to Christians. What about couples who are not Christians?

Galatians 3:28 is about **salvation** not being dependent on gender/status ***but on faith***, *cf.* Gal. 3:26.

2. The Created order was in evidence **before** the Fall:

- Man was created first (Gen. 2:7).
- God gave instructions to man (Gen. 2:16).
- Man was created Lord of creation (Gen. 2:19).

- Woman was made as a suitable helper for man (Gen. 2:21).
- Adam named his wife before **and** after the Fall (Gen. 2:23; 3:20).
- Satan sought to distort God-ordained roles (Gen. 3:1).
- Adam, not his wife, represented the human race (Rom. 5:15).

The Fall *distorted* previous roles. It did not introduce new ones!

Cf. Gen. 3:16: Adam's *considerate* husband-leadership was distorted.

Rule suggests uncaring use of authority.

Due to sin, Adam now had a tendency to *misuse* his God-given authority.

If a husband is harsh, domineering, abusive or cruel, he must realise he is sinning.

If a husband is *passive* and leaves leadership to his wife, he is sinning.

Eve's *willing submission* to her husband was distorted.

Desire suggests *desire to conquer*
– to usurp the authority of her husband, *cf.* Gen. 4:7.

If a wife is rebellious, resentful of her husband's leadership in the family or competing with her husband for leadership in the family, she is sinning.

If a wife is *passive* and contributes nothing to decision-making or does not seek to correct her husband if he is wrong, she is sinning.

Because of their sinful natures, it will be the tendency of husbands and wives to behave contrary to the Created Order.

**Conclusion – the way back to
pre-fall undistorted harmonious
created order**

Is there any way back?

Yes!....

When a wife submits to her husband as to the Lord and a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, the distortion of the created order caused by sin begins to be removed.

Is this not something to covet?

Something to aim for?