

Devotional Guide
Pattern for Submission
Ephesians 5:22-33

Monday

Ephesians 5:21 – 24; Romans 1:1; Luke 17:7 - 10

Paul applies the meaning of the imperative "be subject to one another" as it relates to wives and husbands. Wives are to be subject to their husbands, as the church is to Christ, in everything. The term *doulos*, translated "servant" or "slave", appears 141 times in the New Testament; it is used metaphorically of the Christian to describe the willing decision to submit to the Lordship of Christ, disregarding one's own interests for the sake of Christ and the Kingdom of God. It is this willing submission, born out of love, that is to characterize the relationship of the wife to her husband.

Think About It: What insight does Luke 17:7 – 10 provide regarding the subject of submission? What is my attitude regarding submission to authority? What are some of the things that hinder submission to authority?

Prayer: For the humility to recognize myself as a slave of Jesus Christ, and to submit to those God has placed in authority over me.

Tuesday

1 Peter 3:1 – 6; Genesis 12:10 – 20; Genesis 20; Genesis 22:1 – 3;
Proverbs 21:1

1 Peter 3:1 – 6 provides several imperatives for wives: to submit to their husbands, to conduct themselves in a pure and respectful manner; not to focus on outward appearance, but on the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Think About It: In 1 Peter 3:5 – 6 Sarah is used as an example of a godly woman, who hoped in God and called her husband "lord". What special challenges did Sarah face in calling Abraham "lord"? What are some of the reasons she might have had to fear doing that? How did God honor her submission to Abraham? Do I trust in God's ability and willingness to preserve me in the event that someone in authority over me makes what looks to me like a bad decision?

Wednesday

Ephesians 1:22 – 23; 5:23; 28 – 29; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 1:18; 2:10

Ephesians 5:23 explains why wives are to submit to their husbands: because the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church. As God has placed the church in a position subordinate to Christ, so God has placed the wife in a subordinate position to the husband.

Think About It: Does subordinate mean "unequal" in God's sight? What was God's purpose in placing the church in a subordinate position to Christ? Was it to degrade the church, or punish the church in some way? What implications does this have for wives in relation to their husbands? Am I willing to accept the authority structure that God has ordained?

Prayer: Lord, grant me faith and insight regarding the issue of submission to Your order of things.

Thursday

Romans 8:21; Galatians 5:1; Romans 6:7, 18

There are inherent blessings for the believer in submission to Christ. Ironically, one of the greatest blessings of that submission is freedom.

Think About It: What is the nature of the freedom that comes as a blessing for those who submit to Jesus Christ? What freedom might be inherent in a wife's submission to her husband? (Think of the example of Sarah and Abraham).

Prayer: Praise God for freedom from the bonds of sin.

Thursday [This is a very special week. It has 2 Thursdays in it! Don't know why. Lol]

Ephesians 5:25 – 30; Philippians 2:6 – 8

In the light of 21st century gender politics, the imperative for wives to submit to husbands is no doubt difficult and controversial. (Of course it remains an unchanged imperative in God's Word). But much more challenging than the imperative given to wives to submit is the imperative given to husbands to love their wives *as Christ loved the church*.

Think About It: According to Ephesians 5:25 – 29 and Philippians 2:6 – 8, how exactly does Christ show His love for the church? What, point by point, does this mean for husbands? Be encouraged: Mark 10:27.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen me to love as You have loved me.

Friday

Ephesians 5:31- 32; Matthew 19:4 – 6; Mark 10:7 – 8; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20

Christ nourishes and cherishes the church because it is His own body; the church has become one with Christ. In the same way a man becomes one flesh with his wife.

Think About It: What are the implications of the Scripture passages for today regarding how a husband is to love his wife? What does it mean for a husband to “cleave” or “hold fast” to his wife? What are some ways that husbands might fail to do this?

Prayer: For fidelity in my walk with Christ, and in my marriage.

Saturday

Matthew 11:29 - 30; Matthew 12:20; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6

Jesus, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, has a very specific approach in this time prior to His Second Coming, regarding the exercise of His authority.

Think About It: What is Jesus’ approach to the exercise of authority? What are the implications of this for husbands? For wives? What should characterize the exercise of “headship” by a man regarding his wife?

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow in Your steps, regarding the exercise of, and submission to, authority.

Sunday

Ephesians 5:32 –33; 1 Peter 3:7

The most important aspect of Ephesians 5: 22 – 33 is what it teaches about our relationship with Christ; namely to respond to Christ’s invitation to take His yoke upon us, to submit willingly; to put serving Him before our own needs. The next most important aspect is for a man to love his wife as he does himself, and the wife to respect (fear, be in awe of) her husband.

Think About It: What are some of the specific challenges faced by husbands and wives in following the direction of Ephesians 5:33? According to 1 Peter 3:7, what are the consequences for a husband if he fails to live with understanding and respect for his wife as a fellow-heir of grace?

Prayer: Lord, strengthen me to follow Your instructions.