

SUBMISSION

Submission is God's perfect design, corrupted by the Fall but restored and empowered by the Gospel.

Ephesians 5:22-24 - NOT contradicted by v21...!

And infinitely different to worldly stereotypes...

A definition of submission:

Submission is the Christian wife's heart attitude that freely and gladly receives the honour of the first place conferred by the worthy headship of her husband - so affirming and strengthening such headship.

A free heart attitude...

Glad receiving...

Worthy headship...

Affirming...

Strengthening...

AN EXTREME CASE: 1 Peter 3:1-6

Submission is not a setback to women but the power God has granted to women.

What Submission Isn't

...surrendering your viewpoint (v1)

...abandoning what you believe (v1)

...giving up on your husband (v1)

...assertive, hectoring or nagging (v2)

...overruling the headship of Christ (v5)

...seeking strength from others (v5)

...driven by fear (v6)

What Submission Is

Constructive – seeking to win the husband over (v1)

Proved in action/conduct (vv1-2)

Respectful (v2)

Pure (v2)

Modest (v3)

Heartfelt (v4)

Imperishable (v4)

Empowered by God (v4)

Faithful to Jesus (v5)

Honoured in history (vv5-6)

Boldly courageous, dignified, strong and unwavering (v6)

What Submission Does

Beautifies

Empowers

Encourages

Ennobles

Wins over

Transforms

Widely influences

Honours God

Models and displays the Gospel

Builds God's Kingdom.

COMPLEMENTARITY

Summary So Far: Men and women:

Equal...

Different...

Complementary...

Corrupted...

Redeemed...

Modelling the Gospel...

In HEADSHIP...

And SUBMISSION...

Working together (complementarity)...

COMPLEMENTARITY

Satan's great con trick...

Headship and Submission is God's creational design - therefore universal and enduring, not cultural and transient.

Headship and Submission is the expression of equality.

Headship and Submission is dynamic - not static.

Headship and Submission must be understood in principle.

Headship and Submission must be applied in practice.

Headship and Submission is independently brought.

Headship and Submission cannot be demanded - only worthy.

Headship and Submission opposes its corrupt stereotypes.

Headship and Submission is powerful.

Headship and Submission models the Gospel.

Headship and Submission should be practised in church.

Headship and Submission should be witnessed in church.

Headship and Submission is at the heart of church.

Headship and Submission is at the heart of God's ultimate purposes.

Headship and Submission is only possible in Gospel power.

An inspiring case history...

Some scenarios...

A final encouragement to men...

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER...

If you are a Christian single...

...your singleness is not an accident or mistake. God is sovereign and he makes all things work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

...you are not less than whole. You are complete in every respect.

...you are a treasured member of the only family that truly matters - God's family, the church. This is the family for which the universe was brought into existence. Your membership of it is the greatest privilege you could possibly enjoy.

...you may be sure that God will keep you and care for you - especially if you are burdened or vulnerable.

...your freedom from the responsibilities and pressures carried by a married person is a gift from God to be put to work in his service and for his glory. You have awesome opportunities for ministry.

...for the sake of the Gospel, God promises you a hundredfold compensations in this life.

...and unhappy with your singleness, be patient, stay godly, don't compromise and don't change course. Stay faithful to God.

...and a single parent or have become single through bereavement, remember that God has a special concern for you. (Exodus 22:22-24, James 1:27). And remember that your church, the body of Christ on this earth, loves you.

...don't complain, mourn or drift. Plan ways in which to serve God now. Commit to do something really effective with your life. Make it count.

A MESSAGE TO CHRISTIAN SINGLES

APPRECIATE YOUR STATUS:

Your condition is not an accident or mistake

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."
(Romans 8:28)

You are not less than whole or incomplete

"...there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.." (Matthew 19:12)

You can live out your manhood and womanhood to the full

"As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"
(Luke 11:27-28)

You are living in line with your final destiny

"For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." (Mark 12:25)

APPRECIATE YOUR BLESSINGS:

You are a treasured member of God's family

"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

God has special concern for any vulnerability you might have

"You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry and my wrath will burn..." (Exodus 22:22-24)

"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction..." (James 1:27)

You are spared the pain of an unhappy marriage

"It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." (Proverbs 21:9)

You are promised enormous compensations in this life

"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."
(Mark 10:29-30)

APPRECIATE YOUR POTENTIAL

You have a gift from God

"I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am."
(1 Corinthians 7:7-8)

You are free to serve God with greater intensity

"...the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband."
(1 Corinthians 7:34)

You have enormous potential for fruitfulness in the work for which this universe was created and for which Christ died

"Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring..."
(Isaiah 53:10)

"For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."
(1 Corinthians 4:15)

"Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labour! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD. "Enlarge the place of your tent... For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.""
(Isaiah 54:1-3)

BE PATIENT

Don't rush into marriage

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem...that you do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." (Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5)

Don't marry a non-Christian

"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14) But...
"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives - when they see your respectful and pure conduct." (1 Peter 3:1-2)

MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT

"For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off."" (Isaiah 56:4-5)

27 May 2018
GENDER, MARRIAGE, SEX & SINGLENESS (4)

AN INSPIRING CASE HISTORY

PRISCILLA AND AQUILA

“After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.”
(Acts 18:1-3)

Priscilla, not a Jewess, but married to a Jew had loyally stuck by her man when the Roman Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome. Having moved to Corinth, they provided a home for Paul...

“Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.”
(1 Corinthians 16:19)

...and committed heartily (with courage and steadfastness) to local church ministry!

“After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila.”
(Acts 18:18)

Priscilla and Aquila then left their home in Corinth to accompany Paul on his journey to Syria and thence onwards to Ephesus.

“Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”
(Acts 18:24-28)

Priscilla and Aquila were doctrinally sound (ie Gospel-centred and knowledgeable in the Scriptures) and gracious in their manners - to great long-term effect, as the ongoing ministry of Apollos shows.

“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house.”

(Romans 16:3-5)

“...my fellow workers in Christ Jesus...” - A solid partnership that worked well - an active and practical commitment to the Gospel that submitted to apostolic (ie Biblical) authority and worked with the church.

“...risked their necks...” - Uncomplaining and courageous risk-taking that rested and leaned upon God. Evidently willing to uproot and enter inconvenient and dangerous situations with self-sacrificing flexibility. They left friends and security to encounter uncertainty, alien environments and persecution. They must have lived light to the things of this world.

“...to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well...” - Eliciting the thanks of Paul and all the churches. Exerting the widest possible influence, geographically and personally, attracting respect, affection and gratitude.

“Greet also the church in their house.” - But also committed to the local church in ways that served. Their hospitality reflects their overriding servant-heartedness.

But from where did all this power come...?

“Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.”

(2 Timothy 4:19)

In their first mention side-by-side, Prisca (the affectionate diminutive of Priscilla) is named second (after her husband, Aquila). But thereafter (four times more) when Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned together, Priscilla (or Prisca) is named first.

We are probably meant to see in this that she was the strength behind the throne, as it were, an ennobling encourager of epic influence - demonstrating the affirming, encouraging, strengthening and transformative power of submission.

But we mustn't overlook the evidently effective headship of Aquila either that must have nurtured and blossomed Priscilla. Here is true complementarity!

A couple have a day off together. The wife wants to go out for a walk. The husband wants to stay in and chill out together at home. What would headship and submission look like when practiced in this situation?

Answer: nothing spiritual is at stake - so the husband should lay himself down for this wife and serve her by going for the walk. Every time! The wife joyfully receives the honour of the first place.
(Eph 5:25)

A wife feels really unhappy in her marriage. She feels that her husband doesn't pay her enough attention, and that he doesn't lead the family spiritually. As a woman wanting to practice submission, what should she do and what should she not do in this situation?

Answer: Pray! Acting towards husband with real love and submission. Showing respect for him. In areas where she has to disagree with him, doing it gently and without reproach. Paying lots of attention to him and to his needs. Gladly supporting and encouraging any attempts that her husband makes towards leadership - not spurning them as being too few. Not seeking to end the marriage, or seeking male attention from other men - remembering that her marriage is a picture of the gospel.
(1 Peter 3:1-2)

After several years of marriage, a wife gets depression. She wants to withdraw from church commitments. What should the husband do in that situation as he seeks to live out Biblical headship?

Answer: Very tricky! Lots of things to take into account! Husband needs to lay himself down for his wife - serving, most importantly, her spiritual good! If she's able to go to church, encouraging her to go and bringing her along, even if she doesn't really want to come that week. Not getting angry with her. Might need to cut back on some things at church - husband will need to gauge what is best. But if that's the case, husband will do everything he can to encourage and support wife in her personal relationship with Jesus. He'll speak to her Christian friends and get them to visit. Keep going even when it feels thankless.
(Eph 5:25-26)

A husband and wife want to start witnessing to their neighbours. How might they go about this in a way that demonstrates headship and submission?

Answer: husband taking initiative to talk to his wife about it - to plan together how they can reach out to neighbours. When they have neighbours round to a meal, husband taking the lead to speak about spiritual things - wife supporting him all the way, not undermining him. Husband debriefing with wife afterwards and talking about next steps with those neighbours and also taking the lead in getting them praying together for their neighbours.
(Gen 2. Esp v18)

A husband and wife have a big argument and aren't speaking to one another. What might headship and submission look like going forwards in this situation?

Answer: Husband taking the lead at seeking reconciliation - saying sorry first, and maybe planning a time to talk together about their disagreement and seek to reach a joint conclusion. Husband taking the lead in showing real forgiveness - not holding onto the hurt - but acting towards his wife just as before. Wife accepting his sorry - and being willing to say sorry too - not wanting to remain bitter or angry. Husband taking the lead in praying together to say sorry to God for their sin.
(Eph 5:25-26, 28)

A wife has been offered a promotion at work, which would involve more stimulating work, career advancement, slightly longer hours, and better pay. She talks to her husband about whether or not to accept it. What would headship and submission look like in this situation?

Answer: Husband taking the lead in the discussion. Really listening to his wife and seeking to understand all the repercussions of the situation. Leading his wife to a decision that will be best for their church involvement and spiritual life and family life - recognising that work life is less important than these things. Seeking the happiness of his wife, if those things aren't harmed. Wife agreeing with and accepting if he feels that it wouldn't be right for her to take it.
(Eph 5:23)

A wife feels that her husband has been acting inappropriately and flirting with some of his female friends. What might she submissively do in this situation?

Answer: First pray about it. Ask to speak to him about it. Not be nagging and accusatory. Gently outline her concerns. Not take the moral high ground.

A husband decides something for the family that his wife feels is foolish. What should wife not do in this situation? How can she approach her husband about this in a way that is submissive?

Answer: "Johnny I know you've thought a lot about this and I love it when you take the initiative to plan for us and take the responsibility like this, but I really don't have peace about this decision and I think we need to talk about it some more. Could we? Maybe tonight sometime?"
(Eph 5:33)

A husband wants to buy an expensive new car but his wife feels that it's a waste of money. What might headship and submission look like in this situation?

Answer: See above for wife's approach. Not a gospel concern, so husband should probably go with what his wife wants.
(Eph 5:25)

A wife is aware that her husband is not reading the Bible regularly by himself or praying privately. What should she do in this situation that would be in line with submission?

Answer: Pray for him. Set example in her own Bible reading and prayer. Do practical things for him so that he has the time to do it. Maybe speak to him about it, but be cautious and do it very gently and submissively.
(1 Peter 3:1-2)

A child has been very rude to their mum. How might the mum and dad go about discipline in a way that lives out headship and submission?

Answer: Mum could enact the discipline herself, but if both are involved: Mum and Dad discussing together the right penalty and following it through together. Dad taking the lead in discipline - making it clear that he is not ok with anything that disrespects Mum - and that the child must answer to him for rudeness to her. Mum letting Dad take the lead and supporting him.
(Eph 6:4)

A husband has been asked to give a gospel talk at a Vineyard table event and is spending a lot of time in preparation. His wife begins to feel disgruntled at the amount of time it is taking. What might headship and submission look like in this situation?

Answer: Wife not grumbling about her husband to him or to others. Recognising her role as a helper and supporter in his ministry. Doing everything she can to help him in his preparation. Praying for him, doing practical things so that he can concentrate on the talk. Husband working as hard as he can - not frittering away time so that it takes longer than necessary. Perhaps spending time with wife over supper, and then working late while she is sleeping, or out.
(Gen 2:18)

A child really wants to have something and is asking his parents repeatedly about it. The wife doesn't think that it is a good idea. The husband doesn't really mind, but feels that it would be easier to let the child have it. What would headship and submission look like when practiced in this situation?

Answer: Husband manning up and supporting his wife in bringing up the children. Not just seeking an easy life but seeing it as his responsibility to support his wife, if he has delegated most of the childcare to her. Husband being willing to face the disapproval of the children for the sake of his wife.