

## LOVING SUBMISSION AND SUBMISSIVE LOVE (2)

Ephesians 5:22-33

### Marriage

- ‘People in lasting marriages are by far the happiest group in society’ – Bettina Arndt, ‘Better off Wed,’ *Bulletin*, 23/11/04
- Ideally, any two people could marry and make a happy marriage.
- Successful marriage depends primarily on attitude and commitment
- In particular the role of a husband

### The role of a husband

Like all believers—

- An ‘imitator of God’ (Eph 5:1)
- Living a life of love (Eph 5:2)
- A person of integrity (Eph 5:3ff)
- Spirit-filled (Eph 5:18)
- Submissive (Eph 5:21)

There are three specific roles given here (23, 25)—

- Leader
- Saviour
- Lover

### 1/Leader (23)

The word ‘head’ has been interpreted in different ways—

- source
- chief, principal, superior
- position of leadership
- authority, top, summit

Basically means LEADER. Husbands should provide spiritual and emotional leadership in the family.

A husband’s role in marriage is compared to Christ’s role in the church (Eph 5:22ff) Ask the right question: NOT who is the head? BUT who is the servant? So to be ‘head’ is to act like Jesus!

### What it doesn’t mean —

- You are not Henry VIII: you don’t have absolute power
- You are not Einstein: you don’t have to solve every problem
- You are not Arnold Schwarzenegger: you don’t have to overcome every obstacle
- You are not Aaron: you are not the only priest in the family (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

What if your wife is more talented than you are?

- Good leaders know how to delegate
- Delegation means using the best talents around you eg in keeping accounts, cooking, gardening, family devotions etc.

### **2/Saviour (23)**

- As Christ saved the Church so husbands 'save' their wives
- They live sacrificially for their sakes
- Three basic rights of a wife (Ex 21:10) – Food, clothing, marital rights

### **3/Lover (25)**

Three kinds of love—

- Eros—sexual love
- Philia—affectionate love
- Agape—unconditional love

### **1/Eros**

- 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'
- Sexual intimacy is an essential ingredient of marriage
- This passage occurs five times in Scripture
- Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7-9; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31
- Physical union is the unique expression of the marriage commitment
- Eros is very powerful (Song 8:6-7)
- Modern society is preoccupied with it
- People do extraordinary things for love
- This is why it needs to be harnessed within the safety of marriage

### **The biblical norm**

- Purity before marriage
- Fidelity within marriage

### **2/Philia**

- Affection (Lk 7:25; 15:20)
- Touch (John 13:23; 20:2)
- Warmth (John 11:35ff)
- Spontaneity (Lk 22:33)

According to a recent report we need—

- Four hugs daily for survival
- Eight hugs daily for stability
- Twelve hugs daily for real psychological growth

### **3/Agape**

- An act of choice or will

- Unconditional (25)
- As Christ loved (25)
- Everything for the bride (27)
- As you love yourself (28)
- Therefore, we can learn to love!
- John 13:34,35; 15:12

Love is not just something I feel; it's something I choose to do.

*Husbands have the great privilege of modelling the love of Christ to their wives and families every day of their lives!*

A question—Does love lead to marriage, or, Does marriage lead to love? Eg The song ‘Do you love me?’ in *Fiddler on the Roof*—

‘The first time I met you was on our wedding day...  
But my father and my mother  
Said we’d learn to love each other...’

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Now read it again and put your own name in place of the word ‘love’. Now how true is the passage of you?

### **The role of a husband**

- Of all the roles a married man has, that of husband is the most important.
- If we succeed in our careers or professions but not in our marriages, we have missed the greatest achievement of all.

### **A covenant of love**

God’s Word through Hosea is the ideal (Hosea 2:19,20)

## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

Read: Ephesians 5:25-33

1. The verb ‘love’ in this passage means to love unconditionally. In what ways was Christ’s love for us unconditional? After you have thought about this, read Romans 5:6-10.
2. How many adverbs (ie words like ‘unconditionally,’ or ‘willingly’) can you think of to describe Christ’s love for his church? (There are at least 30!)
3. What are the results of Christ’s love for the church? (26, 27).
4. Paul gives husbands two standards of love. What are they? (25, 28, 33).
5. Why do you think Paul tells husbands to love their wives as their own *bodies*? Why not *souls*? Or *spirits*? (28) Give ‘real-life’ (although perhaps anonymous) examples of how this works out in practice.

6. Read 1 Cor 13:4-8A. Give one example for each of these sixteen qualities of love or how it might work out in practice. (Don't talk in generalities. Be specific eg 'patient' = not getting angry when he/she is late getting ready for a night out.) Share your examples with the group.
7. Australian and Asian males often find it hard to express love. Why do you think this is? Maybe the women in the group could tell what they expect from a husband in this area. (Be careful here! – avoid being critical.)
8. If you are married, you could also discuss question 7 privately with your spouse. If you are doing this study alone, ask your friends about question 6 next time you are sitting together over a cuppa.
9. Why do you think Paul calls marriage a 'mystery'? Is he feeling like the Proverb writer? (Prov 30:19). Or is there a deeper reason? If so, what is it? (32)
10. Re verse 31. Who said these words originally? And what was Jesus' attitude to them? (See Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5.) What does this tell us about how we should respond?
11. If you are not currently married, what is the significance of this passage (Eph 5:25-33) for you? Or, if you are married you could pray together for your marriage in the light of this passage.
12. If there are married couples in your group, you could spend some time praying for them. Pray also for those who are thinking of marriage in the future. And for those who have memories of a marriage that has now ended. Also for singles who need lots of brothers and sisters in Christ.

*Want to read more by Barry Chant? Easy. Just go to [www.barrychant.com](http://www.barrychant.com) and browse around. There is something for everyone – Bible studies, children's stories, articles, devotional materials, poems, short stories, Christian resources, pioneer Pentecostal research and more. And lots of it is free. Dr Barry Chant is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is an ordained minister in the CRC Churches International and was the founding president of Tabor College, Australia. He is married (to Vanessa) and they have three adult children and twelve grand-children.*