

Embracing God's Design

I. Considering God's Design of Differences

- A. What does God say is the most significant difference between you and your fiancé?
- B. In Ephesians 5: 22-33 God takes us deeper than superficial differences that exist between husbands and wives. He reminds us of the profound difference in our marriage roles. And God reveals a mystery rooted in creation, unveiled now in distinctly Christian marriages.
- C. God displays the glory of Christ in marriages shaped by his design.

II. Christian Wives and the Glory of Christ

A. Submission (5.22-24)

1. Submission defined:
 - Submission means to voluntarily place oneself under another to support that person.
 - It does not mean inferiority and it does not imply male dominance. The wife is equal in worth with her husband, is created in the image of God like her husband, and is an heir of the grace of life along with her husband. The wife is called to support her husband.

- A wife is called to voluntarily place herself under **one man**, her husband.
2. A wife's submission looks beyond her husband, his maturity, his gifting, and his intellect. Her allegiance is lifted up to the highest realm to her Lord.

She submits...as to the Lord (vs. 22)

“God has ordained our husband's authority, and here Scripture requires us to place ourselves under their leadership.”
(Feminine Appeal, Carolyn Mahaney)

3. A wife aligns herself to her husband, as the Church to her Savior.
 - The church is Christ's body
 - Christ is himself the church's Savior
 - In light of Christ's loving and protective authority, there is a corresponding allegiance; and the church is characterized by an inclination to submit.

B. What submission is not

1. Submission never implies that a wife should follow her disobedient husband into sin. Her submission is *“as to the Lord.”* (v.22)
2. Submission does not mean the husband knows more than the wife or that she must agree with everything her husband says.

C. A Wife's Temptations

1. Seeking to take over your husband's leadership role.
 - When you have concerns do you share them in love or seek to take the reins of leadership?
2. Unappreciative of your husband's attempts to lead.

- Are you encouraging his leadership and embracing opportunities to follow him?

D. Questions to ask your Husband

1. If you knew I wouldn't become angry how would you honestly evaluate my submission to and support of your leadership?
2. What is one way I can grow in support of your leadership?

III. Christian Husbands and the Glory of Christ

A. Love marked by sacrifice (5.25-30)

1. Husbands are to love their wives sacrificially, with a God-given vision of what that love produces.
2. Paul unveils the model for every husband to observe: Christ, the Sacrificial Savior. The supreme display of love, the ultimate statement of his love for the church occurred atop the Hill called Calvary.
 1. **He died to sanctify.** To sanctify means to “set apart.” Christ died so that he might purify a people for himself, the Church.
 2. **He died to Present:** Christ is setting the Bride apart for himself, in preparation for a wedding day. Through his sacrifice she will appear in splendor, holy and without blemish.

B. A Husband's Temptations

1. **Abdication:** Our temptation as men is to reject godly leadership and cultivate passivity.
2. **Domination:** A second temptation is to reject servant leadership and selfishly dominate our wives.

C. Questions to ask yourself

1. Do I nourish her like I do myself?
2. What blesses and serves her?
3. What Scriptures would encourage her in this season?

D. Questions to ask your Wife

1. If you knew I wouldn't become angry how would you honestly evaluate my leadership of you?
2. What is one way I can serve you more effectively?

IV. What is the profound mystery of marriage?

A. The mystery of marriage points to Christ and the Church--the Savior and His bride. (5.31-32)

1. The leaving and cleaving husband points to Christ, who left his Father to redeem his Bride.
2. The bride who joins her husband points to the Church who forsakes all to follow her Savior.
3. The one flesh relationship of a husband and wife mirrors the union of Christ and the Church—spiritual, eternal, and perfect.

B. The mystery of marriage is revealed in everyday life. (5.33)

1. Through a Husband's Loving Leadership
2. Through a Wife's Respectful Submission