

EPHESIANS 5:22-24

In the previous section, as Paul taught on love, he brought out a few points that could allow us to bypass a bunch of heartache and pain if we would only follow what the Lord was teaching through him. Just a few of the things he brought into the light that *walking in love* keeps forces us to be mindful of were:

- ... imitate God as children who are loved by Him
- ... love as Jesus loved (and loves) us
- ... flee *from* immorality, covetousness, crude and foolish talk, idolatry, unfruitful works
- ... flee *towards* wisdom, discernment, all that is good and right and true
- ... expose darkness
- ... do not be foolish, drunkards, seek debauchery
- ... seek God's will
- ... address one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
- ... give thanks always

And finally, he says something that is entirely counter to everything our culture teaches about relationships, something that is the basis and core of what he teaches in our passage for this lesson, something that the culture would call you foolish or backwards or even oppressive for believing or expecting.

He finishes his previous train of thought with these words in verse 21:

"submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Submit.

And in verse 21, Paul has not yet even broached the subject of marriage – his use of the word "submit" in verse 21 applies to Christians submitting to other Christians *in general*, and the reason we should submit to one another is because we revere Christ.

And Paul uses that reverence for Christ as a great segue into applying the truths about seeking goodness and submission to the marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:22-33 is a wonderful guide for marriage as it lays out what marriage is, what its purpose is, roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both the husband and the wife.

It is also exactly the opposite of what you hear from our current culture.

But first things first, you can't come to this passage on marriage with the expectation of applying what it is teaching without understanding or accepting what Paul has taught up to this point. You must be willing to submit, to address one another in holiness, to seek righteousness, to flee wickedness, to walk in love as Christ loves you, etc. And that's just from chapter 5!

Of course, we can do none of this on our own. If we seek to make our marriages what God intended them to be, we must lean on Him and learn from Him. We must listen to Him instead of social media. We must, as Jesus said "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

So, with that, let's listen to what God has to say to wives, through Paul, about our marriages!

1. Paul begins this section in verse 22 by addressing wives.
 - a. What command does he give to wives?

- b. How have you heard this idea misused and abused? Have you witnessed this command being abused?
 - c. What is your first reaction when you hear this?
 - d. How does the culture react to this?
 - e. Read the following passages to get some context around this
 - i. Colossians 3:18-4:1
 - ii. James 4:5-7
 - iii. Romans 10:1-4
- 2. In verse 23 and 24, after Paul gives a command, the “what”, he gives a reason for it, the “why”.
 - a. Why should wives obey this command?
 - b. Not only is the command hated by the culture, the reason is as well.
 - i. Read the following
 - 1. Genesis 3:16
 - 2. 1 Timothy 2:8-14
 - 3. Galatians 3:23-29
 - 4. Romans 8:12-17
 - ii. How do those passages illuminate the idea of submission and headship?
 - iii. How can you reconcile passages like Genesis 3 with the rest?
- 3. It’s amazing how three little verses can be so hated by the world.
 - a. Write down a few ways that the culture around us has misinterpreted these verses.
 - b. Write down a few ways that you have seen the church misuse these verses
 - c. What is the proper way to interpret these verses in light of the rest of the passages we have read?