

Intro: God's institution of marriage has never been under siege more than it is today. More people than ever are not staying married while fewer people than ever are getting married. Even who will be married is up for debate. Therefore, it is good to be reminded once again about what the loving God intends for marriage and for husbands and wives who are united in marriage. Paul raises the wholesome relationship between a Christian husband and wife who live in their God-assigned roles as husband and helper in mutual love and respect to the same level as that of the relationship between Christ and his Church, that *Una Sancta*, the gathering of all true believers and marvels at the same. Therefore, if we are to know what God desires from a Christian couple united in marriage and desire to share that knowledge with others we must first understand Christ's relationship with his Church because **Christ's Love For His Church Informs Christian Marriage**. What we learn from Christ's love for his Church and apply to Christian marriage is that **1) As Christ loved the Church so husbands will love their wives** and **2) As the Church submits to Christ so wives will submit to their husbands**.

I. As Christ loved the Church so husbands will love their wives (25-32)

- A. He is the Church's Savior
 - 1. his great love for the Church
 - a. Paul speaks often of Christ's love for his Church
 - b. but the word 'love' is a very misused and misunderstood word in our day
 - c. you can love your dog, pizza, your new car
 - d. you can also love your friends
 - e. and sometimes love is just another word for physical attraction, lust, and invitation to sexual intercourse
 - f. but, when Paul speaks about Christ's love for his Church he is speaking about love on a much higher plane, in fact, the highest form of love
 - g. it is the agape love that is mentioned so often in the Bible and carried out by the true God on behalf of human beings
 - h. Christ's love is a selfless, self-sacrificing love
 - i. a love of choice not a merited love
 - j. an unselfish love motivated only by grace and not reward
 - 2. showed that love in death
 - a. Christ demonstrated the supreme example of that type of love for his Church
 - b. when "he gave himself up for her to make her holy"**
 - c. when he literally gave himself voluntarily to his enemies
 - d. and gave up his life on a cross
 - e. to make his Church his own special people
 - f. by "cleansing her by the washing with water through the word"**
 - g. and making her "without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"**
 - h. which means that Christ purified his Church from every stain of sin and its guilt
 - i. so that she might be a glorious and radiant Church
 - j. blameless before God in this life and in the one to come
 - k. Paul, when speaking to his fellow pastor Titus, speaks of (Ti 2:14, "...our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own...")**
- B. He is the Church's head
 - 1. it's loving Leader

- a. by showing such love and saving his Church, Christ became the Head of his Church
- b. its loving Leader
- c. while all those in the Church are now his members
- d. those who are connected to him by faith
- e. indeed, a unique oneness exists between Christ and his Church
- 2. its loving Provider
 - a. and Christ now and forever takes care of his body, the Church
 - b. he is her perfect Provider
 - c. blessing her with many and varied material and spiritual blessings
- C. A Christian husband imitates Christ's love in his relationship with his wife
 - 1. a Christian husband is the head of his wife
 - a. a Christian husband will strive to imitate Christ's demonstration of such selfless and caring love
 - b. as he carries out his role in marriage
 - c. when a husband and wife are united in marriage they **"become one flesh"** as we read in Genesis chapter two
 - d. he becomes part of her and she becomes part of him as if they were actually one
 - e. he is incomplete without her and she is incomplete without him
 - f. in this new and God-ordained relationship, then, "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body..."**
 - g. this role of head was assigned to him already at Creation
 - h. since man was created first
 - i. and woman came from man and not man from woman
 - j. this principle is laid out by Paul in (1Ti 2:13, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve.")**
 - k. and again by Paul in (1Co 11:3,8-9, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man...For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.")**
 - l. yet, even though a husband is the head of his wife,
 - m. he will never use his headship to be a tyrant or dictator over his wife
 - n. nor will he be selfish or domineering in his relationship with his wife
 - 2. a Christian husband will love his wife as Christ loved the Church
 - a. a Christian husband will always keep Christ's love for his Church in the forefront of his mind
 - b. as he seeks to fulfill his role as head in the husband and wife relationship
 - c. he will have a selfless, self-sacrificing love for his wife
 - d. he will love and care for her as he does his own body
 - e. careful never to hurt her with sinful, harmful words or actions
 - f. moreover, a Christian husband will make sure of his wife's happiness
 - g. because her happiness is his happiness since they are one
 - h. and he will be appreciative of what his wife brings to their relationship
 - i. seeking her input and wisdom as he carries out his role as the head of their household
 - j. a Christian husband will do well to heed Peter's exhortation (1Pe 3:7, "Husbands...be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life...")**
 - k. that is a tall order to fill – to love your wife as Christ loved the Church
 - l. what is a Christian husband to do?
 - m. a Christian husband will find the will and the way to love his wife in such a way
 - n. in the example of Christ's love for him as part of the Church

Trans: Christ's love for his Church informs a Christian marriage when a Christian husband seeks to mirror Christ's love for his Church as he loves and cares for his wife. Furthermore, Christ's love for his church informs a Christian marriage when...

II. As the Church submits to Christ so wives will submit to their husbands (22-24)

A. The Church submits to Christ

1. a voluntary, unforced submission
 - a. the word 'submit' is used four times in our text
 - b. in English that word has a very negative connotation
 - c. something like: to allow one's self to be subjected to someone else or to yield to the power, authority, or control of another
 - d. but the Greek verb $\upsilon\pi\omicron\tau\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$ has no such connotation
 - e. it has a more neutral tone
 - f. it means: to rank people in order under some specific pattern
 - g. like soldiers, for example
 - h. it does not in any way imply inferiority or lesser value
 - i. as does the English word
2. the Church responds to Christ's love by submitting to him
 - a. as a response to Christ's love for her
 - b. when she sees how he loved and still loves her
 - c. when she sees how he cares for her
 - d. and realizes the blessings that come to her through him
 - e. the Church submits herself to Christ
 - f. she voluntarily allows Christ to be her head over her
 - g. in view of Christ's love for her, the Church is more than happy to have Christ as her head

B. Wives submit to their husbands

1. wives respond to Christ's love by submitting to their husbands
 - a. now, Christ's relationship with his Church informs a wife and her relationship with her husband
 - b. as the Church submits to Christ in that voluntary submission
 - c. as motivated by Christ's love for her
 - d. so a wife will submit herself to her husband **"in everything"**
 - e. as a response to Christ's love for her as part of the Church
 - f. and this will be made all the more easy for a wife to do
 - g. when she sees and feels her husband loving her with the same kind of selfless, self-sacrificing love as Christ showed and daily shows to his church
 - h. when she sees her husband caring for her, supplying all her needs, and being concerned for her happiness
 - i. and when she realizes all the blessings that come to her through him
2. a wife's submission equals living in her God-assigned role
 - a. a wife's submission to her husband is shown simply when a wife lives in the role God established for her already at Creation
 - b. that role being: man's helper and his complement
 - c. a role God intended for wives as shown by the order of her creation
 - d. she was created after man and was created for man
 - e. in this role, a wife will acknowledge her husband as the head over her and their household
 - f. that is a tall order to fill – to submit to your husband in everything
 - g. what is a Christian wife to do?
 - h. a Christian wife will find the will and the way to submit to her husband
 - i. in the example of Christ's love for her as part of the Church and the Church's submission to Christ

- j. indeed, when a Christian husband and wife live together in their God-ordained roles in mutual love and respect it is a wholesome arrangement
- k. worthy of comparison to the relationship between Christ and his Church

C. Law and gospel

1. law
 - a. but husbands are you, like me, feeling a little ashamed and guilty right now?
 - b. you would admit, along with me, that sometimes we have abused our headship sometimes
 - c. maybe we've been domineering and selfish in our relationship with our wives
 - d. or maybe we've bullied or hurt our wives with sinful words, attitudes or maybe even actions
 - e. or maybe we've been unconcerned about our wife's needs and feelings
 - f. basically, we haven't always loved and cared for our wives as Christ loves and cares for us
 - g. and wives, are you, likewise, feeling a little ashamed and guilty right now?
 - h. have you ever chafed in your role as helper and clamored for equality with your husband?
 - i. have you allowed the sinful world to influence your thinking in regard to the role God has assigned to you?
 - j. have you been unhappy in your God-assigned role and complained about it openly or silently to God about it?
 - k. basically, you haven't always, in love, submitted to your husband as the Church, in love, submits to Christ
 - l. all of us, both husbands and wives, are equally guilty of failing to live faithfully in the roles God has assigned to us
 - m. and, thereby, have sinned against our holy God
 - n. and incurred guilt before him and for which we deserve his punishment both now and forever in hell
2. gospel
 - a. but we always need to remember that what Paul has just told us in our text
 - b. Christ gave himself up for me and for you
 - c. to pay for and take away our sins
 - d. and he cleansed us from every stain of sin and its guilt
 - e. and made us his own through the precious Means of Grace
 - f. the gospel in Word and Sacrament
 - g. so that we are holy and blameless in the sight of our Father in heaven
 - h. and will stand before him in that same condition on Judgment Day
 - i. and be welcomed into our eternal heavenly dwelling
 - j. to live in glory now and forever

Concl: God's institution of marriage is under serious attack. May these words of our God instill in us an even greater appreciation for marriage we have or have had And may they empower us as we seek to live in our God-ordained roles as husbands and wives or husbands and wives yet to be.