



When it comes to men and women, who submits to whom?

In the church and in the home... both men and women should submit to **ONE ANOTHER!** Christians have a great opportunity to reflect Jesus' heart and attitude of humility and service. If we seek to "rule over" other people, we look like the world. The world cannot understand mutual submission. Paul instructed believers in Ephesians 5:21:

Key Term

ὑποτάσσω

hypotasso = Submit

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

The "Hinge Verse" - Ephesians 5:21

5:21 is significant because it serves as the "hinge verse" in a massively long Pauline sentence. The verse connects and concludes Paul's command to "be filled with the spirit," and at the same time it begins a new section called the "household code." The following verses work out what "submit to one another" means practically, illustrated ultimately by Jesus and the Church. In Christ, everyone should submit to one another, since we follow Jesus' example.

Should husband/wife submission only go "one way"? NO!

Who does Paul command?

In Ephesians 5:21-33, 0 (ZERO) imperative commands are given to women, while three commands are given to men. Husbands are told to "love" in 5:25, 5:28, 5:33. In the rest of the household code (through 6:9), men are given two more commands (five total), children have two, and slaves are given one, with zero commands for women. The verbs addressing wives are either: 1. Not present in Greek but are inferred by "ellipsis" from a previous verse. The text literally says, "wives to your husbands as to the Lord" (5:22) and "wives to your husbands" (5:24). Or 2. The verb in 5:33 is a very "soft" subjunctive, middle/passive verb, and translates "should/ought to respect."

What about the word head "kephale" in this passage?

Certainly, Jesus is King of kings, but in this passage, Paul describes him as the Savior, rather than Lord of Lords. Jesus humbly gives, serves, sacrifices, and saves. *Kephale* is the place where life, blessing, and nourishing care comes from. (See the One-Pager, *Isn't man the "head" of the woman?*)

Should I mutually submit to other brothers and sisters in Christ? **Yes.**

Should I submit to my own wife/husband, whom I love the most? **Of course, yes!**

Conclusion

Submit to one another...that was the example of Christ. That is also the goal of husbands and wives (brothers/sisters). Did Jesus limit himself, deny himself, humble himself, put his Bride's needs ahead of his own? Yes!

When men and women exemplify mutual submission as in Ephesians 5, the world will take note. We become a humble, harmonious, darkness-shaking model of Jesus!

Chiasm of Ephesians 4-6

- 4:1-6 Paul a prisoner
- 4:7-16 Jesus gives gifts/equipping
- 4:17-32 Relating to gentiles/neighbors
- 5:1-20 Relating as loved and holy children
- 5:21-23 Submitting to one another
- 5:24 Wives to husbands
- 5:25 Husbands to wives
- 5:25 Christ to church
- 5:26-27 Church to Christ
- 5:28 He who loves His wife Loves himself
- 5:29 Church to Christ
- 5:29 Christ to church
- 5:33 Husbands to wives
- 5:33 Wives to husbands
- 6:1-4 Relating as obedient children
- 6:5-9 Relating to slaves
- 6:10-17 Jesus gives armor/protection
- 6:18-20 Paul an ambassador in chains

Husband/Wife is the CENTERPIECE, the pinnacle, of an amazing chiasm!

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?