

Gender in Marriage

Questions

What is biblical marriage?

What role does gender play in marriage?

What is submission?

What is submission look like in marriage?

What does submission look like between a non-married couple, especially in today's society/workforce?

How might we improve this dynamic in the future?

Colossians 3:18–19 (NIV)

¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

- Principle laid out

Ephesians 5:21–33 (NIV)

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- Principle explained in detail

1 Peter 3:1–7 (NIV)

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴ Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way 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, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

- Principle illustrated

From Gender Task Force

Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19 — Role of Wives & Husbands

- The concept of headship is described in several passages relating to households and the assembly, where the “husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.” Headship should not be used to exercise authority over another person but is an imitation of Christ’s headship of the Church, demonstrated by laying down his life in self-sacrifice.
- Other “headship” scriptures include 1 Corinthians 11, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7 & Titus 2:3-5.
- The general principle in Ephesians 5 is mutual submission with specifics given to each gender to help them carry out that teaching (v.21).
- Paul’s teaching was radical for the day in that he addressed men with specific teachings that corrected existing patriarchal practices.
- Wives should submit to their husbands, and husbands should “submit” to their wives through the lens of self-sacrificing love and consideration (1 Peter 3). Decisions within the family should not be made by either party without consulting the other. Husbands should be willing to alter their decisions based on love and consideration, and in that way “submit.”
- These scriptures have been misused to silence women in the household and sometimes even women in broader contexts. This practice needs to be corrected. Note that this passage is directed to wives and husbands and not men and women in general.
- Outside of the marriage relationship, mutual submission is the expectation. Any attempt to call women exclusively to submit to men in other relationships should be prohibited.

CONCLUSION

- Let us continue this discussion on marriage
- Let the Bible inform and direct your view on marriage

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4. What does submission look like in a marriage?
5. What does submission look like between a non-married couple, especially in today's society/workforce?
6. How might we improve this dynamic in the future?