

Marital Submission

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From a Grace Theological Seminary Assignment

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Marital Submission is ultimately about placing ourselves under the authority of God. Submission is to yield, resign or surrender to the power, will or authority of another.¹ God has given us the best example of submission starting with Himself, for God's rule and administration creates order, rank and roles.²

There is order and rank in the God-Head. There is only One true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal and consubstantial Persons.³ Even though each Person is equal in being and essence (Equality of Ontology), there is a voluntary chain of command (Subordination of Economy); there is rank and order and distinction in the roles. In the unity of the Godhead, the three Persons have distinct relationships:

- The Father is not begotten nor does He proceed from any person.
- The Son is eternally begotten (generated) from the Father.

¹ Webster's 1828 Dictionary, Electronic Edition

² Grace Theological Seminary; Systematic Theology II; Dr. David Plaster, Professor; Based on homework assignment "Worksheet #13: Man (and Woman) in the Image of God, and #5: Is God One Person or Three?", submitted by Brenda Burch.

³ Ibid.

John 1:18 MKJV - No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 3:16-18 MKJV - ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸He who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

1 John 4:9-10 MKJV - ⁹In this the love of God was revealed in us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation concerning our sins.

- The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.⁴

John 14:26 MKJV But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.

John 16:7 MKJV But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send Him to you.

⁴ Paul P. Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL; Electronic Edition.

The One essence of God cooperates in three Persons. God the Father initiates, God the Son complies, God the Holy Spirit performs the will of the Father and the Son:

- God the Father – decrees and determines the plan
- God the Son – whose death enables the plan
- God the Holy Spirit – who implements the plan⁵

There is order and rank in the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit of God implements the plan of God and continues to form and build the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 KJVR - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Christ is the Head of the Church and is guiding and controlling the Church; and God the Father is the Head of Christ.

Colossians 1:18 KJVR - And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

1 Corinthians 11:3 KJVR - But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

⁵ Grace Theological Seminary; Systematic Theology II, Worksheet assignments Brenda Burch

There is Order and Rank in the Male/Female Relationship. Both male and female are created in the image of God. Adam was created in the image of God, and Eve was created and constructed by God from man; therefore, the woman was created in the image of God, and in the image of man.

Genesis 1:27 KJV - So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 2:21-25 KJV - ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1 Corinthians 11:8-9 KJV - ⁸For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. ⁹Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Both, being created in the image of God, have equal value in God's eyes.

Galatians 3:26-29 JUB - For ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as have

been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸Here there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if ye *are* Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Since both are equal in the image of God, mankind was blessed with a special relationship. In the creation of the female, God established the institution of marriage. God made one woman out of the man, to be a companion and an equal partner that complemented his nature. (Genesis 2:24)

After Eve was deceived by the serpent, she was “reminded” of her order, rank and role in the marriage relationship. Adam had authority over her before, but now he would rule with less kindness, less gentleness, more firmness and strictness.⁶

Genesis 3:16 KJV - Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

A more strict and firm authoritative rule from Adam, was part of Eve chastisement (and all wives after her) since she did not ask the advice of her husband (nor did Adam offer advice, even though he was also there with her).

⁶ John Gill (1690-1771), John Gills Exposition of the Entire Bible, Electronic Edition.

Genesis 3:6 JUB - And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* desirable to the eyes, and a tree of covetousness to understand, she took of its fruit and ate and gave also unto her husband with her; and he ate.

Without Adam's will and consent, Eve made a decision to disobey the counsel of God and then persuaded Adam to do the same.⁷ Since Adam did not enforce his authoritative role during the confrontation with Eve and the adversary, and also being the last to participate in sin, he was not excused from chastisement.

Genesis 3:17-19 KJV - ¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Male and Female Have Distinct Roles in Marriage. God created mankind with a difference in the distinction of gender. This distinction reflects a difference in roles. Women are created on the same level as man (in God's image) however, their role is different.

⁷ Ibid.

When a man and a woman marry, there is to be a set order to their union.

Just as God, who is **One** in Essence, has rank and order in the roles of the Trinity, there is also to be order and rank in the relationship of the husband and wife (who are cleaved as **one**). The Person of God the Father is the Head; the Person of Christ (**Who is the Incarnate Image of God**) is in submission to God the Father. The husband is given headship (since Adam was created first in the image of God). The wife ranks under and is in submission to her husband (since Eve was **created in the image of man** to be a partner for the man). They both are placed under the Headship of Christ.

1 **Corinthians 11:3 CJB** - But I want you to understand that the head of every man is the Messiah, and the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of the Messiah is God.

1 **Corinthians 11:7-9 CJB** - ⁷For a man indeed should not have his head veiled, because he is the image and glory of God, and the woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man was not made from woman, but woman from man; ⁹and indeed man was not created for the sake of the woman but woman for the sake of the man. ¹⁰The reason a woman should show by veiling her head that she is under authority has to do with the angels. ¹¹Nevertheless, in union with the Lord neither is woman independent of man nor is man independent of woman; ¹²for as the woman was made from the

man, so also the man is now born through the woman. But everything is from God.

There is Order and Rank in the Roles of Husband and Wife.

The husband is the servant leader of the family, appointed to meet the needs of the family. He is to love his wife as himself and not let his 'authority' go to 'his head'. Since both he and his wife have equal value in the eyes of God, he is not to treat his wife as inferior or subordinate.

The role of the wife is to be a respectful follower, supporter and aid to her husband. Their relationship is one of cooperation, not suppression. She allows herself to be placed under the authority of her husband. It is part of her God given duty as a wife. It is part of her discipleship in Christ. It is God's Word.

Colossians 3:18-19 CJB - ¹⁸Wives, subject yourselves to your husbands, as is appropriate in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and don't treat them harshly.

Ephesians 5:33 KJVR - Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

Titus 2:2-7 CEV - ²Tell the older men to have self-control and to be serious and sensible. Their faith, love, and patience must never fail. ³Tell the older women to behave as those who love the Lord should. They must not gossip about others or be slaves of wine. They must teach what is proper, ⁴so the younger women will be loving wives and mothers. ⁵Each of the

younger women must be sensible and kind, as well as a good homemaker, who puts her own husband first. Then no one can say insulting things about God's message. ⁶Tell the young men to have self-control in everything.

In the case of the husband coercing the wife to do things outside of God's will: I can only describe how it works (ideally) in my home: by rank and order. God is the General. My husband is the Lieutenant. I am the Sergeant, and our children are the Privates. The Lieutenant is the servant-leader and spokesperson who meets and fulfills the major needs of the family. He provides firm leadership and supervision at a high (non-detailed) level. The Sergeant is the leader that operates in the area of detail: responsible for the personal care and training of the Privates, maintaining the home and reporting any discrepancies to the Lieutenant.

Normally the Lieutenant does not give many detailed directions, since the Sergeant usually executes as expected. If the Sergeant gets "off track" the Lieutenant provides guidance; agreement is reached and the course is corrected. If the Lieutenant gets "off track", confidential discussions occur between the Lieutenant and the Sergeant. If there is still no agreement, then jointly the Lieutenant and the Sergeant seek the consultation of the General for clarification. The General has the ultimate authority.

With that being explained, if the husband tries to coerce the wife into doing something against the will of God, then God's will takes precedence.

In the Case of the Abuse of Power in the Marriage Relationship.

Executing abuse is not of God, and allowing someone to abuse you is not of God. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 **Corinthians 6:19-20 JUB** ¹⁹What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom ye have of God, and that ye are not your own?
²⁰For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The abused spouse should not remain in danger. Separation with the goal of marital reunion (reconciliation) is in order.⁸

1 **Corinthians 7:10-11 MSG** - ¹⁰And if you are married, stay married. This is the Master's command, not mine.
¹¹If a wife should leave her husband, she must either remain single or else come back and make things right with him. And a husband has no right to get rid of his wife.

During the time of separation, the abuser needs to seek help for anger management, and the abused needs to seek counseling for “enabler” tendencies. If the abuser refuses help, the response is in essence stating that marital reconciliation will not take place. If the

⁸ Kathi Edwards, Battered Helpmate, http://members.tripod.com/~Battered_Helpmate/index-2.html; accessed 18 March 2008.

abuser is a Christian, then local church discipline should be utilized to help the member live a life in compliance to spiritual maturity. If church discipline is tried and the abuser refuses discipline, the local church should pray and deal with the abuser as an unbeliever.⁹

Matthew 18:15-17 CEV - ¹⁵If one of my followers sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won back a follower. ¹⁶But if that one refuses to listen, take along one or two others. The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true by two or more witnesses. ¹⁷If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector.

Christian believers should work toward forgiveness and reconciliation for their marriage. Scripturally, the option for divorce lies with the unbelieving spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:13-15 CEV - ¹³If your husband isn't a follower, but is willing to stay with you, don't divorce him. ¹⁴Your husband or wife who isn't a follower is made holy by having you as a mate. This also makes your children holy and keeps them from being unclean in God's sight. ¹⁵If your husband or wife isn't a follower of the Lord and decides to divorce you, then you should agree to it. You are no longer bound to that person. After all, God chose you and wants you to live at peace. ¹⁶And besides, how do you know if you will be able to save your husband or wife who isn't a follower?

⁹ Ibid.

More Scripture references on marriage:

Romans 7:1-3 CEV - ¹My friends, you surely understand enough about law to know that laws only have power over people who are alive. ²For example, the Law says that a man's wife must remain his wife as long as he lives. But once her husband is dead, she is free ³to marry someone else. However, if she goes off with another man while her husband is still alive, she is said to be unfaithful.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2 CEV - ¹Now I will answer the questions that you asked in your letter. You asked, "Is it best for people not to marry?" ²Well, having your own husband or wife should keep you from doing something immoral.

1 Corinthians 7:4 CEV - A wife belongs to her husband instead of to herself, and a husband belongs to his wife instead of to himself.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 CEV - ¹⁰I instruct married couples to stay together, and this is exactly what the Lord himself taught. A wife who leaves her husband ¹¹should either stay single or go back to her husband. And a husband should not leave his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:39 CEV A wife should stay married to her husband until he dies. Then she is free to marry again, but only to a man who is a follower of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22-33 CEV - ²²A wife should put her husband first, as she does the Lord. ²³A husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head and the Savior of the church, which is his own body. ²⁴Wives should always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first. ²⁵A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶He made the church holy by the power of his

word, and he made it pure by washing it with water. ²⁷Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws. ²⁸In the same way, a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows that he loves himself. ²⁹None of us hate our own bodies. We provide for them and take good care of them, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰because we are each part of his body. ³¹As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife." ³²This is a great mystery, but I understand it to mean Christ and his church. ³³So each husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband.

Colossians 3:18-19 CEV - ¹⁸A wife must put her husband first. This is her duty as a follower of the Lord. ¹⁹A husband must love his wife and not abuse her.

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