

Two Into One • Part 3: The Wife

INTRO • A Kid's View of Marriage & Love

Children were asked several questions on marriage. Here are their responses.

How Does a Person Decide Whom to Marry?

Kelly, 9 - "You flip a nickel, and heads means you stay with him and tails means you try the next one."

Carolyn, 8 - "My mother says to look for a man who is kind. That's what I'll do. I'll find somebody who's kinda' tall and handsome."

Concerning the Proper Age to Get Married

Bert, 5 - "Once I'm done with kindergarten, I'm going to find me a wife."

How Did Your Mom and Dad Meet?

Lottie, 9 - "They were at a dance party at a friend's house. Then they went for a drive, but their car broke down. It was a good thing, because it gave them a chance to find out about their values."

What Do Most People Do on a Date?

Martin, 10 - "On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date."

Craig, 9 - "Many daters just eat pork chops and french fries and talk about love."

When Is It Okay to Kiss Someone?

Allan, 10 - "You should never kiss a girl unless you have enough bucks to buy her a ring and her own VCR, 'cause she'll want to have videos of the wedding."

Kally, 9 - "Never kiss in front of other people. It's a big embarrassing thing if anybody sees you. If nobody sees you, I might be willing to try it with a handsome boy, but just for a few hours."

The Great Debate: Is It Better to Be Single or Married?

Anita, 9 - "It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them."

Will, 7 - "It gives me a headache to think about that stuff. I'm just a kid. I don't need that kind of trouble."

Recap

1. Let's Recap; from Genesis 2 ...

V18 = The **Purpose** of Marriage is to solve the problem of loneliness.

V24 = The **Goal** of Marriage is to Become One;

- By which we mean to be **intimate**; body, soul & spirit → **To Know & Be Known**.
 - That's how loneliness is dealt with; when two become one.
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The Bomb // → Eph 5

- Our main text tonight & next Wednesday is Ephesians 5.
- The Apostle Paul first sets out the role of the wife, then the husband.
- In v31, he explains **WHY** these are their roles.

³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

- The wife's role is **HOW** she moves toward her husband. His role is **HOW** he moves towards her.
- It's how they become one.
- But in v32 he drops a bomb when he says ...

³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

- Don't miss this!
 - Paul pens 9 vs laying out the roles in marriage,
 - Then flips the whole thing over & says, "I'm really talking about Jesus & His bride, the Church."
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- c. IOW: Marriage is a picture of our relationship with God.
 - d. So to understand better how to relate to our spouse, we can look to the relationship between Jesus and His redeemed.
2. God created us **for** Himself.
 - a. That's why He created us **in His image & likeness**; so we could have a **real** relationship with Him.
 - c. A husband & wife **crush** loneliness when they truly know each other & **still** love & respect one another.
 3. **That's** what Adam & Eve had **before** the Fall. They were naked & without shame.
 - a. But that innocence was **lost** when they sinned.
 - b. Gen3 says when they ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened & they realized they were naked, so they tried to hide, from God & each other.
 3. We're going to **unpack** what happened in the Fall & how it **impacts** marriage tonight & next week.
 - a. For now, note that while the Fall was a setback to God's plan for marriage,
 - b. It didn't ultimately **thwart** it. His plan remains the same.
 - c. Through the Gospel, a Wife & Husband can **return to the Garden** in their marriage to know what Adam & Eve had before they sinned.
 - d. That's the promise Redemption through Jesus brings.
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Our Authority Is the Word

1. God not only created us, He's given us **instructions** for how to live successfully in every area of life.
 2. Some of His **most detailed** instruction deals with marriage.
 3. There are several NT passages that describe the relationship between husband & wife.
 4. As we look to them, I expect push back, because God's Word doesn't jive with the secular mindset so firmly ensconced in our culture.
 5. I ask only that you listen prayerfully & carefully; asking if what follows is aligns with God's Word.
 - a. Secularists don't justify their position by appealing to the Bible.
 - b. They insist social evolution & progress require us to jettison **traditional** values & roles.
 - c. A journalist interviewed a Roman Catholic seminary student on the Church's refusal to ordain women as priests.
 - 1) The journalist thought he had the student in a corner.
 - 2) "What do you say to those who say the Church has failed to keep up with the times?"
 - 3) The student replied, "The Church isn't **supposed** to keep up with the times.
It's supposed to keep hold of the Truth."
 6. What we're about to look at isn't merely the ranting of a 1st Century Jewish rabbi.
 - a. This isn't a Patriarchal Manifesto from a male chauvinist.
 - b. This is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. **Instructions** of our Maker Who longs for us to find fulfillment in a healthy & happy marriage.
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The Role of the Wife

1. Our focus tonight is vs22-32, but the section **begins** at v18.

¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

2. The next verses launch in to Paul's instructions to husbands & wives.

But that all **flows** from what we find here.

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- a. We must be filled with & walking in the Spirit.
 - b. We need to maintain a heart of **gratitude** rather than resentment & bitterness.
 - c. And we must **put others first**, rather than demanding our way.
3. The instructions for husbands & wives begin at v18, not v22.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

1. Paul begins w/the wife because his instructions **flow** from what he just said in v21 –
 - a. So much so the word “submit” isn’t in the original text of v22. // Literally it says ...
 - b. “Submit to one another in the fear of God. Wives, to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”
 2. The principle of **mutual submission** is given **first**, then beginning at v22 all the way thru v9 **of ch6** Paul shows the **different shades & expressions** submission takes in ...
 - a. A marriage, a family, & the workplace.
 - b. Our submission to one another flows from our **respect for & obedience to** God.
 - c. A RIGHT relationship with God means **right relationships in all of life**.
 - d. John echoes this in 1 John 4 when he says if we love God, we’ll love people → & vice-versa.
 - e. The same is true of submission.
 - 1) If we’re submitted to God, we’ll submit to each other.
 - 2) If we aren’t submitted to others, we’re not really submitted to God.
 3. Paul then goes on to describe **how** our submission to one another finds **different expression** in our various roles & relationships.
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4. A wife's submission to her husband takes the **same form** she shows the Lord.
 5. **Because** → God’s **appointed** the husband as the head, as Jesus is our head.
 - a. Jesus exercise headship confidently because He **knows** He’s Lord,
 - b. But also **lovingly, gently, sacrificially, diligently**, ever with the **concern to bless** us.
 6. In the same manner a wife shows deference & submission to Jesus, she’s to defer & be submitted to her husband.
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7. It’s crucial we center a wife’s submission in the God-ordained authority of marriage.
 - a. The husband is the head, not because he appoints **himself** that role.
 - b. He’s the head because **HIS head, Jesus, makes** him so.
 - c. The husband’s authority is **derived & assigned**, not self-created.
 - d. And it only extends to his God-appointed task as being **responsible** for the relationship.
 - e. Paul says a wife’s submission to her husband is to be **as to the Lord**.
 - 1) If her husband tells her to do something illegal or sinful, she’s not obliged to comply.
 - 2) In Acts 5, Peter said we’re to obey God rather than man.
 8. No amount of social-tinkering can change the divine pattern for authority & submission in marriage.
 - a. A husband cannot abrogate his duty to be the head.
 - b. He can’t **relinquish** authority to his wife & she can’t **wrest** it from him.
 - c. The husband has only 2 options -
 - 1) Embrace his role & be a good leader -or- 2) Neglect it & fail.
 - d. In the same way, a wife can’t **assume** the mantle of leadership in her marriage.
 - e. She also has only 2 options –
 - 1) Submit to her husband's headship -or- 2) Rebel.
 9. Paul says a wife is to be in submission to her **own** husband; **not** men in general.
 - a. Scripture nowhere teaches the **superiority** of men & the **general subjugation** of women.
 - b. This is a **husband-wife** thing.
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In Everything

1. In v24 Paul describes what he means by a wife's submission to her husband → *as to the Lord*.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

2. Because the wife is to submit to her husband *as to the Lord*, she's to submit "*in everything*."
 - a. That's more than mere **outward compliance**.
 - b. It's **deeper** than a tight-lipped surrender that inwardly grumbles about what a jerk he is.
 - c. The submission Paul refers to here is as much **a posture of the heart** as actions.
 3. Some limit their submission to "giving in" **outwardly** while **inwardly** they're defiant & resentful.
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4. Please hear this!
 5. When Paul wrote this, it was **universally accepted** wives submitted to their husbands.
 - a. Women were considered **property** in the Greco-Roman culture of the 1st Century.
 - b. Ephesus was governed by the Roman Law **paterfamilias**, which gave the husband absolute authority over his household, including his wife, children, & servants → **Absolutely** authority!
 - c. He could beat & even put them to death if he wished & the law would not interfere.
 - c. So why would Paul tell a wife to do something already a part of daily life?
 - d. While modernists take offense at Paul's audacity in calling a wife to submit –
 - e. The reaction of the Ephesian women was; "Well, duh!"
 - f. "Submit to your husband. Keep breathing. It's all the same."
 - g. It's precisely that obviousness that provoked them to realize what he's **REALLY** saying.
 5. A clue is in the **grammar**. → "Submit" is in the **middle voice**.
 - a. A wife is to "**position herself in submission**."
 - b. On the inside as well as outside. Her **attitude** & behavior.
 - c. Paul **means**, "Ladies, you've submitted in your **actions** because **you had no choice**. You have no power in society & **have** to comply. But **now** God gives you the **choice**, this **act of will** rather than a mere legal requirement. You can submit **from your heart, too**." - e. That's what he means by "**in everything**."
 - 1) In your actions, your heart,
 - 2) In your speech, your body language.
 6. Far from Paul being a misogynist aiming to **subjugate** women, he **gives them a power they'd never had before** -
 - a. The power to **choose for themselves**.
 - b. He made decision-makers of those who'd been forbidden to make real decisions before.
 7. Ladies, the submission God calls forth from you toward your husband isn't a weak & tepid **resignation**.
 - a. It's a **strong** determination to yield to him & his leadership.
 - b. Far from being **reluctant** & **melancholy**, it's **eager & joyous**.
 - c. Submission isn't passive, it's **active**.
 - 1) It isn't **surrender**, where he wins so you give in.
 - 2) It's a pledge of allegiance & loyalty because he's your God-ordained head.
 - d. Again, just like you do to Jesus!
That's not a regretted surrender. It's an **active** embrace of Him as Lord.
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8. A wife can demonstrate this by looking for ways to **affirm** her husband's headship.
 - a. Godly submission isn't **reactionary**; it doesn't **wait** for the husband to give direction before expressing itself.

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- b. A wife isn't a voice-controlled robot who sits in the corner until given a command.
 - c. The fact is, many women are **more** intelligent, gifted, & skilled than their husbands.
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9. What many miss in these passages on marriage is what this tell us about our mate.
- a. In the role of the husband we learn something insightful about the wife.
 - b. In instructions to wives we learn something profound about the husband.
10. Ladies, understand this: **YOUR HUSBAND NEEDS YOUR SUBMISSION!**
- a. God **made** him that way.
 - b. Because God appointed the husband to **be** the head, he **needs** his wife's support & encouragement.
11. Paul puts it this way in v33 where he sums up the roles in marriage -

Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

1. Paul **flavors** the wife's submission to her husband as **respect** because it brings out the **active** way she's to **help** him.
2. It brings us back to the pattern of submission she's to follow → **As to the Lord**.
3. One of the main ways we express our submission to Jesus is thru **praise**.
 - a. We **verbalize** our love.
 - b. We speak of His goodness, proclaim His praise.
4. Ladies: Your husband **needs** the same.
 - a. Not worship, God alone receives that.
 - b. But a man needs **verbal expressions** of respect & honor.
 - c. Truth be told: A man **thrives** on praise, specially that of his wife.
 - b. He can be out in the world all day, doing battle w/this & that, slaying dragons left & right.
 - c. He comes home bloodied, but feeling like a man because he's been doing manly battle.
 - d. But this big hunk of studliness is reduced to a whimpering mouse in 8 seconds if his wife meets him at the door with . . .
 - e. "Where have you been you louse? What have you done to your shirt, there's blood all over it? Is that you that stinks so bad? Why can't you stay clean? You're such a **loser**. I should have married Danny DeVito when I had the chance."
5. Men can take some pretty heavy hits from just about anyone except the wife.
 - a. She has a unique ability to either **affirm** or **deny** her husband's masculinity.
 - b. The 2 main ways she does this is thru her **speech** & their **physical intimacy**.
 - 1) Yrs ago the space shuttle *Discovery* was grounded right before take-off, by **woodpeckers**.
 - 2) They found the insulating foam on the shuttle's external fuel tank irresistible & pecked hundreds of holes in it.
 - 3) Without the foam ice forms on the tanks. Then when the shuttle takes off, the ice breaks off & can damage the nozzle.
 - 4) So the shuttle was grounded until the damage was repaired.
 - 5) Marriage is often damaged, not by **big** problems, but by a lot of little things.
 - 6) Petty criticisms & nagging can peck holes in a relationship & keep it from reaching the heights.
 - c. Proverbs repeatedly remarks on the disempowering nature of a **wife's nagging**.

21:9 - Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

21:19- Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.

19:13 - The contentions of a wife are a continual dripping.

1. Ma'am - do you want a **manly** man for a husband?
 - a. Not a macho-man. Machisimo is just what it sounds like: "male-cheesiness"

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- b. Do you want a man who **acts like** and **IS a man**?
 - 1) Who takes **responsibility** for his leadership seriously,
 - 2) Then tenderly & lovingly leads you to the **life together** God always intended for you as a woman.
 - c. Do you want a **godly** man; a guy who'll give you the attention & nurture you need & make you feel like a woman because he's being the man God intends him to be?
 - d. Then **submit** to him. Build him up. Let him know he's **the man**!
 - e. **Affirm** his headship. When he leads, follow; readily & joyously.
2. Let me prove my point.
 - a. As we'll see in v25 next week, husbands are to **love** their wives.
 - b. We never read a wife is **to love** her husband.
 - c. Of course she **is**. But the **point** is, a wife **shows her love** in a way a guy reads it **as love by submitting**.
 3. Ask any man, "Which would you rather **hear** from your wife, 'I love you,' or, 'Honey, I just wanted you to know I think you are a real man!'" 99 out of 100 guys will tell you the later.
 4. Guys dig praise; about any & everything.
 5. Here are some of the more preferred lines a wife can use.
 - a. Have I ever told you I think you're a great driver.
I always feel so safe when you're driving.
Did you ever think of a career as an Indy driver?
 - b. No one barbeques better than you.
You should write a cookbook or tryout for *Best Backyard Chef*.
 - c. You look really *hahwt* in that shirt & jeans!
 - d. Is your hair growing back?
It's so thick & full I just want to call you Fabio!
 - e. Here's the one to beat all: What are you doing tonight about, oh, say about 11:30?
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6. The world tells men they're only as valuable as their last accomplishment.
 - a. "What have you done for me lately" is the rule drilled into guys to assess their worth.
 - b. **So what** if you were top salesman last month? How are you doing **this** month?
 - c. It's great you told your husband he was a hunk in '95.
If that was the last time you affirmed him, his tank's dry!
 - d. When I go home after a Wed or Sun, what I want & need from my wife is for her to say, "Honey, I was blessed today. You brought it! God was glorified."
 - 1) A dozen people can come up and say, "That was good. Thanks for being faithful to the Word."
 - 2) But none of it matters if Lynn says, "That was a real yawner today. I had a nap."
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7. In interviews with men who had affairs the #1 reason they were attracted to the other woman was because she complemented & praised him.
 - a. By far, most men said the mistress wasn't as **physically** attractive as their spouse.
 - b. The mistress was appealing more because of what she **said** than how she looked.
 8. While men **act** confident & competent, they generally feel pretty insecure about their manhood.
 - a. That's why men like competition.
 - b. They don't have to win; they just have to **compete, to do battle**.
 - c. But there's **one** battle, even if they win, they lose → The battle at home.
 - d. God intends marriage to be a **safe haven**; a battle-free zone.
 - e. It's there, in the safety of the marriage bond a man's identity & security is most deeply nourished.
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What the Fall Did – Gen. 3

1. As we move into the home-stretch, I want to jump to Gen 3 & see what happened to the relationship between the **first** husband & wife in the Fall.

¹ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

2. **Who** did satan, in the form of the serpent, approach? → Eve
3. **Who** was head of & responsible for the relationship between Adam & Eve? → Adam
4. So, why did the devil go after Eve?
 - a. He went to her because he wanted to mess up God’s order of authority –
 - b. Just as **he’d** already sought to usurp **God’s** authority in his rebellion.
5. Satan’s appeal was for Eve to define her existence **independently**, first from God, then from His plan for her & Adam.
 - a. When she ate of the forbidden fruit, she not only disobeyed God,
 - b. She dishonored her covenant head in Adam.
6. Tragically, Adam was **there** but neglected his duty **as** covenant head and failed to take responsibility, either before Eve ate, or after. Look →

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” ¹⁰ So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹ And He said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” ¹² Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ And the LORD God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

→ ¹⁶ To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return.”

1. Though Eve ate first, God confronts Adam, because as the covenant-head he bore **responsibility**.
2. The result of the Fall for the man is that his mandate for dominion **isn’t** revoked, it’s just made excruciatingly difficult.

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- a. Though he works, the ground from which he came will eventually **win**.
 - b. He'll return to the dust in death.
3. The result of the Fall for the woman is 2-fold;
 - a. Intense pain will accompany child-birth.
 - b. Her desire will be for her husband, but he'll rule over her.
 - 1) We discover what that means by the next time the word "desire" is used.
 - 2) Gen 4:7: God warned Cain sin desired to **master** him.
 - 3) Eve's usurpation of Adam's role as head became **entrenched** in the Fall.
 - 4) Ever since, there's been a tendency for women to distrust their husbands & seek to master them.
 - 5) But the husband's duty to be the covenant head still stands. God didn't revoke it because of the Fall.
 4. Because a Christian wife has been reconciled to God & is indwelt by the Spirit, she can successfully resist her tendency to take control & **instead** submit to her husband **as to the Lord**.
 - a. When she does, the **security** she needs is found by trusting in God to take care of her.
 - b. An interesting thing happens to a man whose wife respects & honors him → He'll work hard to **become** the man she **treats him as & tells him he is**.
 - c. The submitted wife makes herself **vulnerable**.
 - d. The husband then does anything to **protect** her, even from himself.

CONCLUSION // The Power Is Yours

1. So, far from submission being powerlessness, it's an effective way to strengthening your marriage.
2. As the husband is built up, the result is greater blessing for the wife.

To Men

1. Want to end with a word to the husbands.
2. Show me where it says, "Husbands, **remind** your wives to submit to you." You can't; it doesn't!
3. This is God's instruction to the wife. You get yours next week!
4. Till then, meditate on what all this means **for you!**
 - a. God has appointed **you** as the head of your marriage.
 - b. You're the **leader**. How & where are you leading?
 - c. You're the **initiator**, so the spiritual & relational temperature of your home is set by you.
 - d. Think about what your wife's submission to you means for her → **Vulnerability!**
 - 1) Ultimately, you're going to give account for the trust she placed in you by her submission.
 - 2) Your decisions directly affect her; for that you will answer to God as the covenant-head.
5. And understand her submission to you doesn't mean she will **ever** consent to something illegal or immoral.
 - a. There are authorities higher than you! The Police & the Church Elders.
 - b. If you're physically abusive she should call the police.
 - c. If you're immoral & demand she join you in something wicked, she should call the church.
6. Her submission **to you** flows from her **prior** submission God.
7. If there's ever a conflict between them, Jesus is going to win her loyalty.
Don't pit her between you and God, unless you **like** losing.