

SHOULD HUSBANDS ALSO SUBMIT TO THEIR WIVES?

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 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" (Ephesians 5:22-23).

This is a follow up on our previous studies; 'Misconception - To love is a sole duty of husbands.' In that studies we learnt that love in marriage is mutual and must be expressed by both husbands and wives. It is not a singular duty of husbands to love, wives also ought to love their husbands as the Bible teaches. One may therefore ask; 'should husbands also submit to their wives?'

From the texts above, the marriage relationship between a man and a woman is compared to the relationship between Christ and the church, with Christ as the husband and the church as His wife. Scripture therefore relates the submission of wives to the way the church submits to Christ. The wife should submit to her husband because "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church."

Now should the church (wife) submit to Christ (husband)? Of course yes! Scripture says "as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Eph 5:24). Should Christ (husband) also submit to the church (wife)? Obviously no, for He is the head of the church.

If we argue that husbands should submit to their wives, then we would also have to be arguing that Christ (husband) should submit to the church (wife). Is anyone willing to make that argument? Certainly no. Then let us not argue that husbands should submit to their wives. For "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph 5:23).

An ideal marriage involves three persons, Christ, a man and a woman. Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3). The submission order therefore goes from the woman to the man, and from the man to Christ. Not the other way round.

However, this does not mean husbands should use their authority over their wives in a dictatorial manner to treat them as inferior. That will be an abuse of authority. Although the man is the head of the woman in marriage, in Christ there is neither male nor female, for we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Scripture therefore describes how husbands also ought to treat their wives. For instance, 1Peter 3:7 says; "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."

Colossians 3:19 also says; "husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." Wives therefore ought to love and submit to their husbands as to the Lord, and husbands also ought to love, be considerate, and treat their wives with respect.