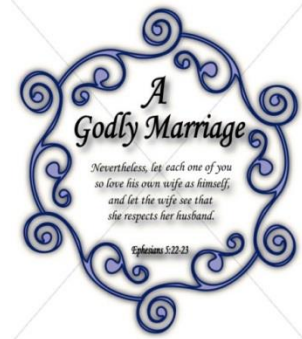


November 24, 2019

"...so that you may know him better..."

"You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."



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

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...in this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies...each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Ephesians 4:20-5:33

In his 'Sermon on the Mount' our Lord establishes several principles for those who would follow him. One of them is, ***"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you...first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*** (Matthew 7:1-5) We might call this the 'plank principle'.

I believe the 'plank principle' is clear. Before I take it on myself to tell anyone else how they ought to be living I need to clean up my own life. If I am unwilling to do this then I am nothing more than a hypocrite. So, when I read any commandment in Scripture I need to make sure I am living in obedience to that commandment before I ever suggest that someone else isn't.

I am convinced that Paul's message to married couples in our context for today, has been grossly misused because we have constantly failed to apply Jesus' 'plank principle'. Beginning with the premise that we, as believers, are putting off our old self-serving ways and taking on the new self, created to be like God, the Apostle gives married couples two fundamental commandments that will always guarantee a blessed marriage.

First, he commands that all of us, without exception learn how to be submissive. Again, because we have put off the old self we can no longer insist on our own way in any relationship. Then, the Apostle tells wives to ***"Submit to your husband as to the Lord..."*** And, in the same context he commands husbands to ***"...love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."***

If we apply our Lord's 'plank principle' from the sermon on the mount to this passage we would, I think, understand that it is solely up to wives to obey God's commandment to them, and it is solely up to husbands to obey God's commandment to them. As a husband it is not my job to remind Gloria to submit to me. If I have not fulfilled God's commandment to give myself up for her, to the same degree that Jesus gave up himself for the church, then to remind Gloria to be submissive is to be a total hypocrite.

When I am being the perfectly submissive disciple, when I am giving up my own way even to the point of laying down my life for Gloria, then I might be able to remind her to be submissive. Of

course, when I am living as a completely selfless husband, I will not likely need to remind her to be submissive.

Sadly, for centuries men have used this passage to devalue their wives and elevate their own stature to 'lord of the manor'. In no way is that what Paul is teaching here. I am only the 'lord' of my household when I am living a total selfless life. When I am living as a selfless servant in my home with my wife, then I am 'lord' like Jesus is Lord. I would challenge any husband to live as a selfless servant with his wife if he expects her to submit to him.

So, in Paul's lesson for married couples wives are absolutely responsible for being submissive and husbands are absolutely responsible for selflessly loving just as Christ loves selflessly. When we live the life of those who have put off the old self and put on the new, every relationship will be blessed and every relationship will glorify God.



Submit to God
1Peter 2:21