

One Not Two! Ephesians 5v22-33

“Three things are too wonderful/ mysterious for me; four I do not understand; the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman” (Proverbs 30v18-19). Here God

reveals more about the mystery of marriage relationship. It is a oneness which reflects the oneness of Christ and his church—the oneness of Christ and us, the members of his body.



1) A Loving Lead (v22-24)

God tells us in Scripture he made us in his image, able to know and love him, and that he made us male and female (Genesis 1v26-27)—equal in worth. We are all, if we’re trusting in Christ, coheirs with him. These verses are not about value, worth or status. Nor are they about general capability. In v22-23, the Apostle Paul is saying this is the way God has made things—the husband as the head, giving a loving lead (having the role given by God and the authority to do that) and the wife submitting to and respecting her husband. *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord”* (v22, ESV). This is about the way God intends the relationship to be shaped, and not something specific to Paul’s culture or day (see 1 Cor 11v3).

A question for married couples then is: *“Are we both committed to recognizing and living out together: the husband’s call to loving (sacrificial) leadership in our marriage and the wife’s call to submit to that leadership?”* Both men and women are called to submit as Christians in various settings. The exhortation to wives here is a call to be like Jesus. When we look at Jesus submitting to the Father in his earthly life and going to the cross for us, we see straightaway the value and worth of Godly submission.

2) A Serving Lord (v25-27)

Let’s take a breath and fix our eyes on Jesus! Verses 25-27 put out of the window any idea that God is tyrannical or harsh (and reveal tyrannical or overbearing male leadership as deeply ungodly). We’re called to be like the Lord who serves his people and gives himself to them sacrificially. Jesus’ authority and leadership meant a crown of thorns. He says to husbands (v25), *“Love your wives as I loved the church and gave myself up for her.”* That means the costly sacrifice and service of husbands.

You don’t have to save yourself. Jesus does it by the power of his sacrificial death and resurrection. You are already cleansed and set apart as his bride (v26). And his aim and guarantee is to make you holy and, on that wedding day, to present you to himself splendid, glorious and radiant (v27).

3) One Not Two! (28-33)

This sacrificial, loving lead (husbands) and loving submission to that lead (wives) is God’s pattern for this astonishing relationship in which two people become one (v31), not just physically but at a deep level (v28). Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, as part of themselves (v28-29). The oneness of husband and wife mirrors the real, spiritual oneness of Christ and his church (v32), his bride.

A question for us all (whether married or single) is: *“How does your relationship with Jesus make things different?”* You’re members of his body (v30), united and made one with him. You’re the bride of Christ, passionately and deeply loved. And he is everything you might need or want—the perfect provider, protector and husband of your life and soul (v29). He nourishes and cherishes you day-by-day.