

Aug 11 Sermon Passage Study Guide

Ephesians 5:21–33

From looking at the new standards which God expects of his church, Paul moves on now to consider some of the other relationships in which God's people are involved.

1 Read 5:21

- a In what ways does other New Testament teaching qualify this command to 'be subject'?
- b What does the Bible teach about the source of authority? How should this affect your attitude to those in authority over you?
- c What does the Bible teach about how authority is to be exercised? How should this affect the way you treat those over whom you have authority?

2 Read 5:22–24

- a Why does Paul's argument for the husband's headship within marriage have 'permanent and universal validity'?
- b 'In order to understand the nature of the husband's headship in the new society which God had inaugurated, we need to look at Jesus Christ.' How does this help?
- c If submission is not to be an unthinking obedience to a husband's rule. What then *is* it to be?

3 Read 5:25–33

- a Paul writes that husbands are to love their wives 'as Christ loved the church' (5:25). How does what he says about the relationship between Christ and the church apply to husbands and wives?
- b He goes on to assert that husbands are to love their wives 'as their own bodies' (5:28). Why does he add this?

4 You might like to spend some time thinking and praying about your own marriage (or plans for marriage).

The giving of oneself to anybody is a recognition of the worth of the other self. For if I give myself up, it can only be because I value the other person so highly that I want to sacrifice myself for his or her self, in order that he may develop his selfhood, or she hers, more fully. Now to lose oneself that the other may find his or her self—that is the essence of the gospel of Christ. It is also the essence of the marriage relationship, for as the husband loves his wife and the wife submits to her husband, each is seeking to enable the other to become more fully himself and herself, within the harmonious complementarity of the sexes.¹

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 236). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.