



The Love of Christ in Husband - Wife relationships based on Ephesians 5:22 – 33 - Implications for Christian Families


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Abstract

The Bible contains important teachings about the mysterious relationship between Christ and the Church, as explained in Ephesians 5:22-33. This article highlights the deep relationship between Christ and the Church and has important implications for Christian families in the Church, where teaching about the Christian family especially from Ephesians 5:22–33 is only given or preached at the time of the marriage blessing, and even that is not explained well. So it can be said that the description of Ephesians 5: 22-33 is just a routine without meaning. In Ephesians 5:22-33 the apostle Paul uses the analogy of marriage to explain the relationship between Christ and His church. He compared the relationship between a husband and wife to the relationship that exists between Christ and the church. Just as a husband is the head of his wife, Christ is the head of the church. It emphasizes the surrender of the church to the authority of Christ and the love and sacrifice Christ gave to His church. This passage emphasizes even more the sacrificial love that husbands must have for their wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her, husbands are also called to love their wives as Christ loves and cares for the Church. This underscores the importance of selflessness, grace and devotion in a Christian marriage by each of the spouses. Ephesians 5:22-33 moderates the patriarchal view of marriage, and it re-expresses the concepts of submission and leadership in a family. The wife should always submit to her husband's authority as she would to Jesus Christ. The husband needs to always exercise his authority with love and try to imitate Christ.

Keywords: Marriage, husband, wife, Christ, Church, Christian family, love



Introduction

Due to the unbiblical idea of marriage's essence and the bond between a husband and wife, it has undergone many abuses despite being a crucial institution for human civilization. This has caused a warped perception of the human being, particularly women (Ademiluka, 2021). It shows up in the husband and wife's relationship, how women are treated in marriage, how the wife is viewed by the husband's family, and how widows are handled. According to Ademiluka African Christians' knowledge of and behaviour in their marriages are still influenced by traditional and cultural perspectives on marriage and women's responsibilities in it. Due to male chauvinism and patriarchy, which are pervasive in many African societies, women in most marriages have a variety of statuses, from servant to property (Ademiluka, 2021). Such a view has led to cruel treatment, including beating someone without warning, adultery, rape, and ultimately divorce. Additionally, some husbands view their wives as assets that were acquired during marriage due to the dowry, often known as the bridal price. Some married men believe they have the right to treat their spouses anyway they choose because of this understanding (Obinwa, 2018).

The actual nature of marriage, as well as the proper relationship between a husband and wife, are presented in Ephesians 5:21–33. Recently, this passage has been the focus of much research on topics including family life, Christian discipleship (Okechukwu, 2018), the holiness and harmony of Christian marriage, the husband's position as the wife's head, and the responsibilities of both husband and wife in a Christian marriage (Lovše, 2009). It is a text that is frequently misinterpreted as supporting patriarchy, male dominance, and the enslavement of women (Lovše, 2009). The genuine significance of certain of its concepts, such as submission, headship, and mystery, among others, has also been the subject of much discussion. Contrary to other New Testament passages (Colossians 3:18–4:1, 1 Peter 3:1–7, 1 Timothy 2:8–15, Titus 2:1–10) that are restricted to discussing the proper connection between husband and wife, this passage goes farther to discuss the nature of marriage and how it is analogous to the relationship between Christ and the church. In light of this, the husband-wife connection is inspired by and modelled after the relationship between Christ and the Church. This essay examines the text of Ephesians 5:21–33 using the historical–critical method to glean its teaching on the nature of marriage and the proper relationship that ought to exist between a husband and his wife.

Method

In this study, the type of research method used was qualitative and had the aim of understanding the multiple and interactive dimensions of social experience. This type of qualitative research includes constructivism which assists one to discuss the nature of marriage and how it is analogous to the relationship between Christ and the church. The strength of constructivism research is that it focuses on the experiences of individual participants and on processes and experiences over a period of time. A limitation that it has is that it does not permit for conclusions that can be generalized to other populations. In light of this, the husband-wife connection is inspired by and modelled after the relationship between Christ and the Church. This study examines the text of Ephesians 5:21–33 using the historical–critical method to ascertain its teaching on the nature of marriage and the proper relationship that ought to exist between spouses.

Result and Discussion

Husband Is Head of Wife (verse 23)

Verse 23 reads like this: because the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. It is he who saves the body -ὅτι (so that) ἵνα (ina) ἀνὴρ (man) ἐστὶ (is the) κεφαλὴ (head) τῆς (of the) γυναικὸς (woman), καὶ (and) ὁ (he) Χριστὸς (Christ) is the κεφαλὴ (head) τῆς (of) ἐκκλησίας (the church), καὶ (and) αὐτὸς (he) ἐστὶ (is) σωτὴρ (saviour) τοῦ (of the) σώματος (body). The word ἀνὴρ (man) asserts that a husband is the head of his wife



(<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/meyer/ephesians/5.htm>) The κεφαλή (head) of the γυναῖκός (women). Because the relationship between the head and the body shows something important so that the word κεφαλή (*kephalē*)— the head in verse 23 above does not just appear with the word σώματος (*sōmatos*) – “body” in the same verse at Ephesians 5:23 but the image of the body continues in the Christological argument of Ephesians 5:26, 28-30, where the apostle Paul uses the word σώμα (“body”), σὰρξ (“meat”), and μέλος (“interdependent parts”).

The head word in verse 23 above that is used is the word κεφαλή (*kephalē*) the form is Noun Nominative Feminine Singular (NNFS) in English: head. It means pointing to the head, as master of the husband in relations to the wife (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957). It should be noted that as a metaphor, the term “head” has many meanings. In other words, the word does not only refer to “authority,” but can also mean “to be first or excel in some way, including being the source of something.” The term “head” does imply a certain weight of authority, but this text is unique in that headship is Christ’s headship. Christ is the perfect example of a leader, demonstrating that the essence of leadership is to be a servant, not someone who orders or rules. Christ’s headship is definitely not a hierarchical role, and it should serve as a model for the husband’s headship. The husband becomes the head of the wife based on the patronage taken that Christ is the head of the church.

Accordingly, the husband as the head of the wife cannot be separated from the patron, so the function as head must reflect Christ who is the head. Because the word is clear κεφαλή (*kephalē*) addressed to the husband has the same nuance of meaning to Christ, this can be seen in the phrase κεφαλή (*kephalē*) τῆς (test) ἐκκλησίας (*ekklesias*), καὶ (*kai*) αὐτὸς (*autos*) ἐστὶ (*esti*) σωτὴρ (*sōtēr*) τοῦ (touch) σώματος (*sōmatos*) makes it clear that just as Christ is the head of the church, so the husband should be the head of the wife. The idea that the word wife is a member of the body in question is based on the understanding in which the apostle Paul uses the words head and body consistently to explain the relationship between Christ and the church. Between Christ as the head of the husband and verse 30 it says that we are all His body. Here the body is used figuratively with reference to the church, as in Ephesians 4:12 (Talbert, 2007). Based on that understanding, it is not wrong to say that a wife is a member of her husband’s body.

Marriage is a sacraments in which it is made clear that one cannot separate human reality and the important sacramental reality of life together with one’s spouse. Nicolaides (2015) tells us that in the Mystery of Marriage, God the Holy Spirit by His grace unites a man and woman, for the special purpose of ‘replenishing’ the Church of God according to His commandment (Genesis 9:1). Marriage was ratified by Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:5-6) and he gave permission supporting the spiritual and physical bond of marriage through His presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John, 2:1). The Apostle Paul also declared to us that marriage is a great mystery (Ephesians, 5:32).

Submissive Wives (verses 21-24)

In Ephesians 5:21-22, for example, the Greek word for “subject yourselves” occurs in verse 21 but is not stated in some of the oldest manuscripts of verse 22. (There is no verb or participle in verse 22 in these manuscripts.) However there is widespread consensus that submission continues in verse 22. In fact, verse 22, regarding the submission of wives to their husbands, depends on the meaning of the participle “submit” in the previous verse which is about submission to one another.

Although some of the oldest Greek manuscripts only have the word for “submit” in verse 21, nearly all English translations of Ephesians 5: 21-22 have the word “submit” in verse 21 and verse 22. Perhaps a scribe added a verb meaning to “submit” when copying Ephesians 5:22 to make the meaning of submission clear, and this amendment was copied by other scribes. The oldest papyrus we have that contains Ephesians 5:21-22 is Papyrus 46 (second-third century), and it lacks the verb or participle hypotassō in Ephesians 5:22, nor does the Codex Vaticanus (third century). Modern critical texts of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland and the Society of Biblical Literature’s Greek New Testament, also do not have the word “submit” in verse 22. Note however



that the Codex Sinaiticus includes the verb *hypotassesthōsan* (a form of *hypotassō*) in Ephesians 5:22, as does the Codex Alexandrinus (fourth century). Codex Claromantanus (sixth century) includes the verb *hypotassesthe*. The Stephanus text of 1550, the precursor to the Textus Receptus also contains a *hypotassesthe*, as does the Majority Text. Tyndale House's new Greek New Testament includes the *hypotassesthōsan*.)

The word subject in verse 21 applies to verse 22 "submit" τοῖς ἰδίοις (*tois idiois*). The word "submit" = ὑποταγή (*hupotage*) In the Greek Bible there is only one time, namely in Ephesians 5:21 "humble yourselves" (ὑποτασσομενοι= *hupotassomenoi*). Whereas in paragraph 22 used in this study it is as follows: O wives, submit to your husbands as to God, -Αἱ (*Hai*) γυναῖκες (*gunaikes*) τοῖς (*tois*) ἰδίοις (*idiois*) ἀνδράσιν (*andrasin*) ὡς (*hōs*) τῷ (*to*) Κυρίῳ (*Kyriō*) in English translation: wives to the Own husbands as to the Lord.

Although Ephesians 5:22 does not use the form ὑποτάσσω, grammatically the participle style in verse 21, together with its meaning of voluntary surrender in a reciprocal relationship, is also applied in verse 22. The word γυναῖκες (*gunaikes*) refers to the wife. The word ἀνδράσιν (*andrasin*) means husband. The τοῖς (*tois*) ἰδίοις (*idiois*) is still closely related to the meaning in paragraph 21 above, namely the word ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hupotassomenoi*) in the form of verb – present middle participle or Passive – nominative masculine plural which consists of the words *hupo* and *tassō* which means to obey. By analyzing two words τοῖς (*tois*) and ἰδίοις (*idiois*), hence the word τοῖς (*tois*) is the third person pronoun (its), plural, dative. The reflexive, dative pronoun expresses: to him. While it is said ἰδίοις (*idiois*) is the participle, present, medial is the action that occurs at the same time and the action of the main verb. Say ἰδίοις (*idiois*) is literally into perpetual submission to one's own.

Starting from the analysis of these two words, this verse 22 can be translated as follows: "Wives continually submit to yourselves (your husbands) as to God." In Greek the word submit -ὑποτάσσεσθε (*hupotassesthe*) comes from the basic word ὑποτάσσω which means to cause to be in a submissive relationship (William, 1957), and it has the form of present middle imperative second person plural (Bacher & Wesley, 2008). Using the present imperative reinforces this notion that it is an order or request to do something continuously, or do it repeatedly (Wenham, 1987). In this form it means that the wife is being ordered to submit continuously, repeatedly to her husband.

In the New Testament, generally the meaning of *hupotasso* is to be subject to, subordinate, and submit (Hoehner, 2002). The word *hupotasso* is only used 2 times in the New Testament in relation to a wife submitting to her husband which is generally used in Hellenistic Judaism is *hupakouw* which means to obey, submit and accept (Hoehner, 2002). But there is a difference between *hupotasso* and *hupakouw*, where *hupotasso* always talks about the level of authority, like master and servant. But the word *hupotasso* in this text is not talking about the quality of this inferiority, but submission which has a reciprocal relationship. Emphasized in words, ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hupotassomenoi*) appears in the present tense expressing a continuous condition characterized by ongoing reciprocal experiences.

Shades of word meaning ὑποτάσσω (*submit*), that the wife must submit to her husband in the same way, in which the wife submits to Christ. This submission is no indication of inferiority but that the wife can place the husband at the head of the house and respond accordingly without usurping the husband's authority (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983). Thus, submitting in this case means the wife has awareness that the husband is the head of the household, and respecting the husband as the head who has authority in marriage, just as Christ is the head of His Church. The word "submit" in Greek is ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hupotassomenoi*) in the form of verb participle (imperative sense) present passive nominative masculine 2nd person plural from the root word ὑποτάσσω (*hupotasso*). When viewed from the meaning of the word ὑποτάσσω (*hupotasso*) has the meaning of "putting yourself under something". In the truest sense of the word, ὑποτάσσω (*hupotasso*) is a military term meaning that a division of an army must be organized in a military manner under the command of a leader. In this state of subordination they now submit to the orders of their commander. So, it talks about the



subduing of one individual under another. The word ὑποτάσσω (hupotasso) is also used to describe the arrangement of military equipment on the battlefield in order to conduct effective warfare. In this context it includes an attitude of obedience (such as the church's submission and obedience to Christ), but the main idea that is emphasized is the attitude of the heart and mind, not external actions.

When viewed from the form of the verb ὑποτάσσω (hupotasso) it is not a direct command, but a present middle or passive participle. Therefore, this verse has two meanings, namely when the middle participle emphasizes the wife's voluntary participation in surrendering herself in marriage on an ongoing basis for the benefits resulting from a partner who trusts, loves, and is full of peace. However, if this passive participle indicates the need for the wife to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in her heart (cf. Ephesians 5:18) it affects both the husband and the children, as well as the 'slaves' of the family.

Marriage must be in the created image of the divine love of God which is everlasting, indivisible, unique and without end and is a shared partnership (Nicolaidis, 2015) and Holy Scripture teaches us that man is a being who cannot live by himself : "Then the Lord said: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner" (Genesis 2:18). But the wife is subject to the man. According to Abeneno (2002), the word subject should be understood as follows. This attitude of submission (upotage) that Paul demands from wives towards their husbands, we find in various forms and variations in the New Testament. In Titus 2:9 (and 1 Peter 2:18) servants must submit to their masters in all things and concerning young people, Peter advises them to submit themselves to parents and to one another 1 Peter 5:5. the same advice is given by Paul to church members in Romans 13:1-7, against the country in Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13 and to children against their parents in Ephesians 6:1 (Abeneno, 2002). The Apostle Paul emphasized to the Ephesus congregation of wives who had a background of disbelief, that they should to leave their old habits that make them want to dominate their husbands in all aspects of life. The truth conveyed by the apostle Paul was that wives are to submit (obey and submit) to their husbands as to Christ, continuously. This was because the wives in the Ephesus congregation now had faith in Christ and because the husband is the head of the wife. Paul took the example that the husband's position is the same as Christ's position in His church, namely as the head.

Sanford (1991) argues that wives ought to submit and this means that the wife has the duty given by God to help and submit to her husband, and her obligations to her husband include love (Titus 2:4), respect (1 Peter 3:1-2), assistance and chastity (Titus 2:5), and cultivating a gentle and serene spirit while being a good mother and household manager. The submission of a wife to her husband is seen by God as part of her obedience to Jesus, "as to God". God has ordained the family as the basic unit of a society. Every family must have a leader. Therefore God has handed over to the husband the responsibility of being the head of the wife and family, and his leadership must be exercised in love, tenderness and consideration for his wife and family (Sanford, 1991).

The opinion above suggests then that a submissive wife actually gets a task from God to do in which there is love, respect, help, chastity and gentleness and calm, that is the wife that a husband dreams of having. In the Contemporary Bible Commentary it says that the word submit remembers the use of the same verb in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and perhaps indicates that this verse too should be seen as discussing the place of women in church membership. The position as head is owned by Christ as well as the man as husband (the Greek word *strange* is used, not the general word for humans, *anthropos*, but this usage cannot be changed because the quote in verse 31 uses the word *anthropos*). Christ is also the savior of the church and this gives understanding that it is Christ who then takes care of the church (Newall, 2021). In the words "O wife, submit continually to your husband as to God" the subject continuously is not limited by time. The wife does not only submit to her husband for one or two years, but as long as she is his wife. In this regard, the limitation of a wife's submission to her husband is as stated in Romans 7:2-3 that a wife is bound by law to her husband as long as her husband lives, and if her husband dies she is free from this law and she can become someone else's wife.



Then turn to verse 24 which is written as follows: Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so is the wife to her husband in everything. -ἡ (hē) ἐκκλησία (ekklesia) ὑποτάσσεται (hypotassetai) τῷ (to) Χριστῷ (Christō), οὕτως (houtō) καὶ (kai) αἱ (Hai) γυναῖκες (gunaikes) τοῖς (tois) ἰδίοις (idiois) ἀνδράσιν (andrasin) ἐν (en) παντί (panti). By paying attention to verse 24 above it is written that the wife's submission to her husband is a submission that becomes part of her submission to Christ. The Apostle Paul very clearly wrote this using adverbs οὕτως (houtōs) which means: Thus, so, in this manner. Or (referring to what precedes or follows). Then οὕτως (houtōs) continues the discussion in the previous phrase that explained about ἐκκλησία (ekklesia) ὑποτάσσεται (hypotassetai) Χριστῷ (Christō)– the church submits to Christ. It means that a wife's submission to her husband is a submission like one to God. So, the principle of wife's submission here is submission as to God. The wife's submission to her husband as a subordinate is the also the way she serves God (Lincoln, 1990). So at the same time, when a wife is submitting to her husband, at that moment the wife is also submitting to Christ by observing scripture.

The Apostle Paul is not discussing submission in the authoritarian realm, between superiors and subordinates, between those who are superior and those who are not. However, the apostle is talking about a submission which is already a decree of God that the wife should be submissive to her husband. Submissiveness means harmony, cooperation and greater influence (Harianto et al., 2023). The reference to the word submission comes from the Greek word, hupatasso which means "willing to place oneself under the authority of others" (Evans, 2018). The word hupatasso also means to submit (William, op.cit., 1957). This submission was shown by Christ on the cross, by letting Himself be under the authority of the Father. The example of submission demonstrated by Christ is the foundation upon which the wife must follow the patron by voluntarily being prepared to place herself under the authority of her husband and simultaneously under the authority of God. When a wife earnestly follows the pattern of Christ's submission to the Father, it will open the door for God to work on her behalf in her husband's life (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957). A wife's submission to God can win over a husband who is disobedient to the Word without words but through the wife's behavior that the husband sees. When a wife is willing to give up by surrendering herself first to submit to Christ, then she will be able to submit properly to her husband (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957). Thus God is pleased with the wife who voluntarily lives in submission to her husband according to God's original plan.

The word "submit" uses the word "ὑποτάσσω", submit (Ing) which means being obedient. In Luke 7:8, this word is used in a military manner of listening totally to one who is higher in rank and has authority over another. In Romans 13:1 it is used to show the way God establishes government, so the use of this word clearly states that God has set the order of authority in an orderly manner in society, and in this arrangement "wives" must be "subordinate or obedient, submissive" to their "husband" as the authority holder. Even though in essences wives and husbands are equal in Gods eyes, wives are asked to submit to their husbands because that is a rule in God's word. This is an attitude that should be carried out by wives in a Christian family, just as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:23-24).

Why should a wife submit to her husband? The first reason is because Adam was created first, then Eve. Eve was created as Adam's helper (Genesis 2:18). Eve was created from Adam's rib (Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8). The second reason is so that there is order. The truth is that all humans are equal before God (Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 3:28), but in order to have order, someone must rule as head. Therefore God ordained the husband as the head of the family. The Greek word translated 'humble yourselves' (supposedly 'submit') in Ephesians 5:21 is (hypotassomenoi). The middle part of the word comes from the word taxis which means 'order'. Thus that submission must exist, so that there is indeed order.

Is a submissive wife's nature vital according to Arndt & Gingrich (1957)? 1) Not absolutely, only as long as the husband does not conflict with God's Word. The words 'as unto the Lord' (Ephesians 5:22), 'as the church is subject to Christ' (Ephesians 5:24), 'in everything' (Ephesians 5:24) seem to



absolute the submission of a wife to her husband. The words 'like to God' (Ephesians 5:22) and 'like to Christ' (Ephesians 5:24). This mean that a wife's submission to her husband is part of her submission to God. The words 'in all things' (Ephesians 5:24) mean in all aspects/fields of life.

The word submission does not only apply to husbands who have repented and live righteously before God, but also applies to husbands who have not repented. To win unconverted husbands to Christ. 1 Peter 3:1-2 gives instructions: in the same way, "O you wives, be in subjection to your husbands, so that if any of them are disobedient to the Word, they also without a word are won over by the conduct of their wives, if they see how pure and godly they are live their wives". Then the thing to remember is that the submission of a wife is not like that of a slave to a master. The verb to submit in Ephesians 5:22 is actually taken from verse 21, whereas in verse 21 it is used for fellow Christians in the sense of humbling themselves. The wife's submission to her husband is unique in the context of marriage, but this submission is in principle the same as the attitude that must be shown to fellow Christians.

A wife must submit to her husband this is God's commandment, and Christian women must make their husband the head of the household. Tim LaHaye argues that "a Christian wife must submit to her husband, but many refusals by Christian wives to accept their submissive attitude assume they will be ruled - ordered by her husband" (La Haye, 2002). It is stated again "subject does not mean that a woman cannot give her opinion by stating the truth and the fact is that the more submissive a wife is the more her husband leads" (La Haye, 2002).

The word ὑποτάσσω means submit, which means 'wives must submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to Christ'. But this submission does not mean inferiority, but rather that the wife can recognize that the husband is the head of the house and respond accordingly without usurping his authority (Walvoord & Zuck, 2002). Thus, submitting in this case means the wife's awareness that the husband is the head of the household, and respecting the husband as the head who has authority in marriage, just as Christ is the head.

The second important part is the principle and basis of the wife's submission to her husband. Paul clearly says that the wife must submit to her husband as to God. So the principle of wife's submission here is submission as to God. The wife's submission to her husband as a subordinate is the way she serves God (Andrian et al., 2021). Thus, when the wife is submitting to her husband, she is submitting to Christ as well. Submission in this case is not talking about the dominance of a gender, but submission means surrendering the process of decision making, problem solving, guiding aspects of a problem. Submissiveness means harmony, cooperation and stronger influence (O'Brien,1999).

Submission comes from the Greek word hupatatasso which means "to be willing to place oneself under the authority of another" (Evans, 2018). This is what Christ showed on the cross, by willing to place Himself under the Father's authority, even though he is equal and co -eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Nicolaidis, 2015). This submission is the commandment to the wife, that is, the wife must voluntarily place herself under the authority of her husband and also under the authority of God. When a wife truly learns how to submit and do it biblically as before the Lord, it opens the door for God to work in her behalf in her husband's life (Evans, 2018). A wife's submission to God can win over a husband who is disobedient to the Word without words but through the wife's behavior that the husband sees and is role modelled for him. When a wife is willing to submit herself first to submit to God, then she will be able to submit properly to her husband (Evans, 2018). Thus, God gave wives and husbands the gift to live in harmony according to God's original plan. When everything goes according to God's plan, then happiness and peace in marriage will be part of husband and wife's life.



Husband Love your Wife (25, 28-29, 33)

Verse 25 reads thus: Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it - Οἱ (*hoo*) ἄνδρες (*andres*) ἀγαπᾶτε (*agapate*) τὰς (*tas*) γυναῖκας (*gunaikas*) ἑαυτῶν (*heauton*), καθὼς (*kathos*) καὶ (*kai*) ὁ (*ho*) Χριστὸς (*Christos*) ἠγάπησε (*ēgapēse*) τὴν (*tēn*) ἐκκλησίαν (*ekklēsian*) καὶ (*kai*) ἑαυτὸν (*hearton*) παρέδωκεν (*paredōken*) ὑπὲρ (*hyper*) αὐτῆς (*autēs*). English translation: Husbands, love the wives, just as also Christ loved the church and Himself gave up for her.

The word love used in verse 25 above is ἀγαπᾶτε (*agapate*) in the form of aoris, active, imperative. The imperative form shows the time of action, but with the use of the aoris imperative tense, this states that an action has not been started or carried out. Thus, said ἀγαπᾶτε (*agapate*) this literally means, “that love has not yet been initiated or exercised.” Thus, from the use of the aoris imperative verse 25 can be translated as follows: husbands begin to love your wives continuously. As Christ has loved the church and has given Himself for it. The Apostle Paul deliberately explained this because remembering the cultural background of Ephesus, where wives were dominant or controlled their husbands at that time, husbands actually loved their wives in love (*eros*) because *eros* (lust love) is what united them until they become husband and wife. Therefore, the love that husbands have not shown their wives is *agape* love (divine love), the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, what he expected husbands to do was to love their wives as in ἀγαπᾶτε (*agapate*). Christ's love here is a love that is an unconditional love and a love that is self-sacrificing. Realizing that husbands in the Ephesus congregation also come from pagan backgrounds and they have come and been saved in faith in Christ, the apostle Paul asked husbands to imitate Jesus Christ, the head of the church itself, who gave himself for the church by dying on the cross, to sanctify and bathe the church before God.

Verse 28 argues in the same way that husbands must love their wives as their own bodies: He who loves his wife loves himself - οὕτως (*houtōs*) ὀφείλουσιν (*opheilousin*) οἱ (*hoi*) ἄνδρες (*andres*) ἀγαπᾶν (*agapan*) τὰς (*tas*) ἑαυτῶν (*heauton*) γυναῖκας (*gunaikas*) ὡς (*hōs*) τὰ (*ta*) ἑαυτῶν (*heauton*) σώματα (*sōmata*). ὁ (*ho*) ἀγαπῶν (*agapon*) τὴν (*tēn*) ἑαυτοῦ (*heautou*) γυναῖκα (*use*) ἑαυτὸν (*heauton*) ἀγαπᾷ (*agapa*). ὁ (*ho*) ἀγαπῶν (*agapon*) τὴν (*tēn*) ἑαυτοῦ (*heautou*) γυναῖκα (*gunaika*) ἑαυτὸν (*hearton*) ἀγαπᾷ (*agapa*): Thus he who loves his wife loves himself. A head and body relationship means that the wife is part of the husband. Therefore, for one to love one's wife in this way is to love himself (Wenham, 1977).

Even though the word love in verse 28 above is ἀγαπᾶν (*agapan*) in the form of verb – present indicative active – 3rd person singular, while the word ἀγαπῶν (*agapon*) verb – present participle active – nominative masculine singular, both have the same shades of meaning meaning that there is someone who is loving in the context of verse 28 and what is meant is a husband who loves his wife. What kind of love did the apostle Paul mean? Described by 2 phrases, ie ἑαυτῶν (*heauton*) and σώματα (*sōmata*). The explanation of the first phrase, τὰ (*ta*) ἑαυτῶν (*heauton*) pronoun – genitive masculine 3rd person plural and the use of masculine in this word refers to men, in this case, according to the context in paragraph 28, it refers to the husband. As for the explanation of the second phrase which is σώματα (*sōmata*) bodies, the form of this word is noun – accusative neuter plural in this discussion of paragraph 28, where the word σώματα (*sōmata*) refers to the body itself, what is meant according to the context of the discussion is the body rather than the husband. What is contained in verse 28a: Then the husband must love his wife as his own body. Here “body” (*sōma*) is not a figure of speech but refers to the fleshly body of the husband. The reference to the flesh (*sarx*) in verse 29 makes this clear (Talbert, 2007) since Christian husbands ought to love their wives as they love themselves and because they are willing to give their lives for their spouses (Sanford, 1991).

Verse 29 reads as follows: For no one ever hated his own body, but feeds it and cares for it, just as Christ does the church, -- οὐδεὶς γὰρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλ' ἐκτέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Κύριος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (*oudeis gar pote tēn heautou sarka emisēsen, all' ektrephei kai thalpei autēn, kathōs kai ho Kurios tēn ekklēsian*). In English, No one for at any time the flesh of



himself hated, but he nourishes and cherishes it, just as also [does] – Christ the church. For no one has ever hated his own flesh. The word γάρ (gar) gives reasons for the previous statements, but looks at the thought, not the form of the statement. His thoughts are the oneness of husband and wife, the position of the wife as part of the husband; and the relation is this—“she must love him even as Christ loved the church, because the wife, being the body in which the husband is the head, so that in loving her she loves herself; and this is the reason why a husband should love her, because to hate his wife is to hate his own flesh, which is against nature and something that has never been seen.” (<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/ephesians/5-29.htm>). The phrase “None” or οὐδεὶς (oudeis) which is taken from the word ou = absolute negation + de = marker of additive relationship + heis = one) can be interpreted “absolutely no one hates his own body (flesh)”. Because no one has ever hated σάρκα (sarka) or their own flesh or body. So no person of sound mind would hate himself, no matter how flawed, or how imperfect a wife might be.

What does it mean for a husband “who loves his wife loves himself? Genesis 2:24 expresses the assumption: since husband and wife are one flesh, loving your wife means loving yourself (Talbert, 2007). The Apostle Paul deliberately used the terms above, because he knew that by using the phrase *ἑαυτῶν σώματα* (*Heauton somata*) it was like loving his own body. By loving his wife as Christ loved the church, a husband relinquished some of the status and privileges that first century men had. By loving and caring for his wife as his own body, he treated her more as an equal which was not typical in first-century marriages. Paul continues on the theme of unity by quoting Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31). Notice that the apostle Paul never uses a word meaning “to rule” or “to have authority” in his words to husbands.

Something interesting here is that even though God commanded the wife to submit to her husband as the head, He did not command husbands to rule over wives, instead God commanded husbands to love their wives. To close the discussion on loving back, the apostle Paul confirms in verse 33: After all, it applies to each of you: love your wife as yourself and the wife should respect her husband. -πλὴν (*plēn*) καὶ (*kai*) ὑμεῖς (*humeis*) οἱ (*hoo*) καθ’ (*kath’*) ἓνα (*hena*) ἕκαστος (*hekastos*) τὴν (*tēn*) ἑαυτοῦ (*heautou*) γυναῖκα (*gunaika*) οὕτως (*houtōs*) ἀγαπάτω (*agapatō*) ὡς (*hōs*) ἑαυτόν (*heaton*), ἢ (*hē*) δὲ (*de*) γυνὴ (*gunē*) ἵνα (*hina*) φοβῆται (*phobetai*) τὸν (*ton*) ἄνδρα (*andra*). The word love used is ἀγαπάτω (*agapatō*) – *must love* in the form of verb imperative present active third person singular (Friberg, 1981) which means: to love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem. By using the active imperative verb, it emphasizes that loving is done continuously and repeatedly (Wenhan, 1987) by the person who received the order, which in the context of verse 33, is the husband.

A Husband Caring for his Wife (Verse 29)

Verse 29 reads as follows: For no one ever hated his own body, but feeds it and cares for it, just as Christ does the church,--οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλ’ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Κύριος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (oudeis gar pote tēn heautou sarka emisēsen, all' ektrephei kai thalpei autēn, kathōs kai ho Kurios tēn ekklēsian). There are two interesting words used by the apostle Paul in verse 29, these two interesting words are two verbs that are commonly known in the world of caring for children and they give the meaning that there is serious maintenance required such as giving protection, care, nurturing, and real and practical appreciation from the husband to his wife. The explanation for the two words is; First, the Greek word for upbringing is used ἐκτρέφει (*ektrephei*) in the form of verb indicative present active third person singular is something that is being done, which in this case means the form of loving your wife by nourishing and nurturing her. Thayer's interprets the word nourishes as to nurture until maturity, to nurture, nurture, raise (<https://www.studydrive.org/lexicons/eng/greek/1625.html>) with the use of kata "because" it is a word that shows the reason for the explanation of the previous paragraph (ay. 28). The word “cause” or γάρ (gar) is a strategic term of explanation that is best contemplated. In this case “to” introduces the



apostle Paul's direct explanation for why husbands should have no difficulty loving their wives, when they love themselves. Verse 29 is thus an explanation of why a husband should love his wife as his own body.

The contrasting words for the word hate are nurturing and caring. This is the duty of a husband not to hate but to care for and love his wife. The word "parenting" is taken from the word ἐκτρέφει (ektrephei) from ἐκτρέφω (ektrepheo) which means providing food. The word "nurture" also has the metaphorical meaning of "feeding to maturity", where the word nurture is used to raise children both physically and spiritually (Ephesians 6:4). The KJV and NAS refer to the word "nursing" as the word "nourish". Thus, a husband must take care of his wife both physically and spiritually. The indicative present active form shows that a husband must maintain and feed his wife continuously. Care both physically and spiritually must be done seriously every day.

And secondly, the Greek word care is used, θάλπει (*thalpei*) in the form of an indicative present active third person singular verb which is translated in English as cherish, nurse, foster (Moulton, 1990) which means: appreciate, cherish, entertain, care for (Bible Discovery). The word "care" is taken from the word θάλπει (thalpei) – verb indicative present active 3rd person singular of the word θάλπω (thalpō) which means caring, caring (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957) with the implication of noticing or appreciating. θάλπω (thalpō) originally meant to warm, brood, or keep warm (as with body heat), to soften by heat. The idea is to reward with tender love and care. This word also has a metaphorical meaning in the Septuagint (LXX) which is to describe a bird sitting in its nest, "to warm". The Septuagint (LXX) use of the word θάλπω (thalpō) indicates that husbands should provide their wives with 'nests', which represents a place of safety, a place of warmth, and a place of food. Thus, a husband must be able to 'warm and care' for his wife well. In addition, a husband must earnestly care for and cherish his wife constantly.

A Wife respects the head/husband (verse 33)

Verse 33 applies here- love your wife as yourself and a wife should respect her husband. -πλὴν (plēn) καὶ (kai) ὑμεῖς (humeis) οἱ (hoi) καθ' (kath') ἓνα (hena) ἕκαστος (hekastos) τὴν (tēn) ἑαυτοῦ (heautou) γυναῖκα (gunaika) οὕτως (houtōs) ἀγαπάτω (agapatō) ὡς (ōs) ἑαυτόν (heaton), ἢ (hē) δὲ (de) γυνή (gunē) ἵνα (hina) φοβῆται (phobetai) τὸν (ton) ἄνδρα (andra). Nevertheless, each one of you must also love his own wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Translation English Standard Version 2016 (ESV) However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her). Phrase *γυνή ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα* (*gunē hina phobētai ton andra*). The word used is the word φοβῆται (*phobetai*) from the word phobos can mean: First, in importance is reverence and respect for God and second, respect for the husband (Newman Jr, 1994).

The word φοβῆται (*phobetai*), means fear, in the sense of respect, spontaneous concern, obedience; And there is a frequent application of the verb to fear the Lord (Luke 1:50; Luke 18:2; Luke 18:4; Acts 10:2; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:35, etc.). According to the apostle Paul in verse 33, a wife should have respect, and respect her husband as her head. The Apostle Paul gave the relevance of the teaching about the relationship between husband and wife which is rightly described also by the relationship between Christ and the church. By using words κατὰ (say) interpreted as 'according to' is the same as, from the base word καθ' (kath'), where the meaning of this word is the word 'accusing' or 'similarity' with the subject of the sentence. The subject of the sentence itself speaks of the perfect relationship Christ has with the church.

The phrase in verse 33b "Love your wife as yourself and a wife shall honor her husband in Greek says γυναῖκα (gunaika) οὕτως (houtōs) ἀγαπάτω (agapatō) ὡς (hōs) ἑαυτόν (heaton), ἢ (hē) δὲ (de) γυνή (gynē) ἵνα (hina) φοβῆται (phobetai) τὸν (ton) ἄνδρα (andra).



In this phrase the apostle Paul changed the ancient Graeco-Roman cultural concept of wife, that husbands and wives actually have a relationship of mutual dependence and influence. Because every living thing is of course interdependent and mutually influence one another. The relationship is reciprocal and occurs every day. If one of them is missing or has a problem, it will affect the other as well.

In verse 33b above the word love used is ἀγαπάω (*agapatō*) in verb form which means: to love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem. It is an order to the husband to love continuously because he is the head and the measure of love is love to himself. Likewise, the apostle Paul demands that his wife φοβῆται (*phobetai*) which means she must have reverence, respect, and honour the man (Arndt & Gingrich, 2001). The Apostle Paul gives a place to husband and wife to depend on each other and need each other, where the husband loves his wife as himself and the wife respects her husband. This happens as a kind of law of reciprocity, interdependence and mutual need that the apostle Paul emphasized to the Ephesians. By quoting Genesis 2:24 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, so that the two become one flesh" as the basis for teaching about the law of interdependence and need, husband and wife have become one unit –προσκολληθήσεται (*proskollēthēsetai*) who need and influence each other.

In Ephesians 5:22-33, husbands and wives are selected and given instructions regarding certain attitudes and behaviours. But this does not mean that wives are exempt from loving and caring for their husbands, or that husbands are exempt from submitting to and respecting their wives, especially because Ephesians 5:22-33 begins with a call for all people to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21), and chapter 5 opens with a call for all people to love sacrificially as Christ loved (Ephesians 5:1–2). We can compare the nearly identical language used in Ephesians 5:2 and Ephesians 5:25: "... walking in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us..." (Ephesians 5:2). "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her..." (Ephesians 5:25). Instructions to submit to each other and sacrifice deeply are in Ephesians 5:1-2 and 21, and are given to all men and women. Submission is not only for wives, sacrificial love is not only for husbands. Genuine, mutual love and fidelity were absent from many marriages in the first-century Graeco-Roman world and it is in this context that Paul wrote Ephesians 5:22-33 and urges unity in Christian marriage, with the union of Jesus and the Church as the model to emulate. Biblical submission allows a wife to follow her husband's lead. Ephesians 5:23 shows us that a man does have a huge responsibility for leadership in the home. However, he must be a true Christian leader if his wife is to submit to him and not in any tyrannical manner and of course every woman and man are responsible first to God. If a wife cares about her marriage and family, and her relationship with Jesus Christ, she should not submit mindlessly to all decisions her husband may make.

Conclusion

In this section we explain the conclusions of the research results. It is hoped that readers will get an overview of the research conducted based on an explanation of this mystery, the relationship between husband and wife. Firstly we agree that:

The creator of the Mystery of Marriage is God. It was not instituted by Christ, but He gave to it a very specific significance and meaning. Jesus teaches of the uniqueness of Marriage as the most perfect natural expression of God's love (agape) for mankind. Christ also teaches that if spouses are to love each other as God intends, their marriage is to be indestructible, unique and eternal. It is especially, to be Divine. Jesus has given this teaching as well as the power to fulfil it in the Mystery of Christian Marriage in the Church. (Nicolaidēs, 2015:14)



From a series of explanations about the meaning of this mystery, the relationship between Christ and the church shows that the great meaning of this mystery is depicted as the relationship between husband and wife which is also actually representative of Christ's relationship with the church. Verse 23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church" makes this clear. The word head in verse 23 used is the word κεφαλῆ (kephalē) as a metaphor, the term "head" has many meanings. In other words, the word does not only refer to "authority," but can also mean "to be first or excel in some way, including being the source of something." The term "head" does imply a certain weight of authority, but this text is unique in that headship is Christ's headship. Christ is the perfect example of a leader, and shows that the essence of leadership is to be a servant, not someone who commands or manages. Christ's headship is definitely not a hierarchical role, and it should serve as a model for the husband's headship over his spouse.

Headship in the home is comprehending that husbands are the ones accountable to God for the family. In Genesis 3 and the sin that takes place in the Garden of Eden, God calls Adam first. So husbands are responsible for the well-being of the family, and especially spiritually. Also, the husband becomes the head of the wife based on the patronage taken that Christ is the head of the church. So the husband as the head of the wife cannot be separated from the patron, so that the function as the head must reflect Christ who is the head. Because the husband is ordained by God to be the head. So, a real husband does two things; namely a). Husband loves his wife as he loves himself. By loving himself, of course, it is impossible to hurt himself. The basis of loving his wife is Christ who has set an example of loving selflessly. That basis is actually imitated by the husband as the head. b). Besides loving his wife, the husband also nurtures and cares for his wife, both physically and spiritually, providing protection and a sense of security. In nurturing and caring for his wife, the husband plays a role in educating, teaching, and setting an example. Nurturing and caring for his wife must be consistently on the basis of love. When a wife follows the pattern of Christ's submission to the Father, it opens the door for God to work on her behalf in her husband's life (Arndt & Gingrich, 1957). The relationship between husband and wife in a Christian family is based on Ephesians 5:22-33. Verses 22-24 state that the wife must submit to her husband as to God. This shows the existence of a hierarchy in a Christian marriage where the husband has a responsible leadership role. However, this does not mean that the wife has no rights or authority in marriage. Submissive in this context refers to mutual respect, trust and work together to achieve good goals in the family.

On the other hand, verses 25-33 make it clear that husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the church. The love in question is the love that is full of love, sacrifice, and caring. Husbands must be prepared to sacrifice themselves for the good of their wife and family. In addition, the husband must also treat his wife with respect and appreciate her value and contribution in marriage. It is important to also note that the husband-wife relationship in a Christian marriage must also be based on other principles found in the Bible, such as love, fidelity, forgiveness, and mutual respect (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4 :32). In the Old and New Testaments, the Bible uses the marriage relationship to picture the relationship between God and His people. Paul shows us that Christian marriage is an earthly perspective of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:32): "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." We should also keep in mind that God created man as male and female to reflect His divine image (Genesis 1:27).

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