

Easy As 1-2-3



Ephesians 5:18-33 ¹

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

Select where you would like to begin and enjoy!

[1-Overall Understanding \(below\)](#)

[2- Detailed Study Notes](#)

[3-Listen and Learn](#)

Overall Understanding

Many find the following verse difficult. That is because marriage can be a sensitive issue, especially “Christian marriage.” There is no lack of marriage manuals and seminars available, and many have attended them, often with one spouse dragging the other along. Helpful insights can be gathered, but often Christian marriage is disappointing.

One reason is that marriage itself is difficult, Christian or not. Merging the lives of two people into “one” is a tremendous challenge. Two people with distinct backgrounds and opinions living together under one roof can be painful. Add to that the possibility that one or more of the spouses is immature or unkind, and misery will follow; then, often divorce seems the only solution.

We need to take a look at marriage through the eyes of grace and not law. Hopefully, this lesson will clear up any confusion and give comfort and return our joy.

¹ © C. D. Hildebrand

Ephesians 5:18-33²

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

We discussed this verse in the last lesson, but put it here to connect it to the next section. Verses 19 and 20 are part of what being filled with the Spirit looks like. It is how we speak to each other. When we live a joyful life in gratitude for the good that God has done, marriage relationships are easier.

²¹submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Submitting here is voluntarily putting oneself in the proper order. We are to see others' needs as more important than our own. We aren't in competition with each other. This includes husbands and wives submitting to each other.

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

The word "submit" in verse 22 is not in the original Greek, which reads, "Wives to your own husbands as unto the Lord." We accept that we all submit ourselves unto the Lord. In marriage, the proper order is that of a woman voluntarily submitting herself to her husband. This can be seen as one's role.

Submission is also a form of protection. The wife submits to her "own" husband, not the pastor, not any other person. This frees her from external control within the church. Perhaps she is being pressured to take on a certain ministry, but her husband is not in favor, and neither is she. This is God's way of setting her free from being dominated by others.

Notice, it does not say here, "Husbands subjugate your wives." Submission is voluntary, just as we voluntarily submit to Christ.

² Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything.

Submitting oneself brings peace. Who's in charge here? Christ! We all submit to Christ, including the husband. He submits to Christ and thus submits to being the head of his family. Using the term "He is the Savior of the body" implies it is the husband's responsibility to care for the wife.

In the same way, women voluntarily submit to their own husbands. Notice that again, it is emphasized that she submits to her "own" husband.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Why doesn't Paul say, "Wives, love your husband"? He doesn't need to because we are to love one another as Christ loved us, so obviously, a woman is to love her husband.

So, then why say to the husband to love his wife? Think about it. Is this passage focused on wives submitting to their husbands or on husband loving their wives?

This passage is primarily written to husbands. Paul is telling them how to be the head of the wife:

1. Love your wife as Christ loved the church.
2. Give yourself to your wife.

²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

By loving your wife as Christ loved the church, men are ministering to their wives spiritually. Do you want a wonderful wife? Invest in her. Honor her for who Jesus has made her. Give to her, just as Christ gives to the church with much love and care.

If we do not understand how deeply we are loved by God, it will be difficult to love each other.

²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

To love one's wife is to love oneself, just as Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church.

Again, if we think the Lord is harsh toward his people, it will be difficult to love one's wife as Christ loved the church.

³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

This is a shocking statement if one thinks this passage is about women submitting to their husbands. Then wouldn't this read that a woman shall leave her mother and father and cleave to her husband?

Isn't leaving one's parents and joining oneself to one's wife submission? Is it not love to be more loyal to one's wife than one's own parents?

It is such a beautiful image, that of a man leaving his father and mother whom he cherishes and choosing to cherish now his wife, and of the wife voluntarily submitting her life to her husband.

³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

All this time, Paul was speaking about Christ and the church. He has created a beautiful image of the love between a loving couple submitted to each other and to God, the man caring for his wife, and the woman voluntarily giving herself to her husband. This is how Jesus loves us. How gloriously beautiful.

³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

Even though this illustration was about the church, Paul summarizes: Men, love your wife as yourself. Wives, respect your husband.

If this is a review, why did Paul say "respect" here instead of

repeating “submit”? The most logical conclusion is that submission = respect.

Coming Up in Chapter 6:1-12

In the next lesson, we see more setting in order in the body of Christ, and Paul discusses our authority over evil forces.