**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 56**

**Ephesians 5:22-33**

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Wives: Is it difficult for me to submit to my husband? Why? How can I submit to him more? Husbands: Is it difficult for me to love my wife? Why? How can I love her more? Singles: Is there any brother/sister I find difficult to submit/love? Why?
2. How do you feel about submitting to someone who is not as spiritual or as smart as you are? How do you feel about loving someone who doesn’t respect you?
3. Why are wives supposed to submit to husbands? How are husbands supposed to love their wives?
4. How is submission different from loving? What is more difficult? Why?
5. How different would my family of origin have been if my parents were better in fulfilling these expectations? What would have been the impact on me if my parents loved and submitted to each other in this way?

***Insight:***

Wives are commanded to submit to their husbands as they do to Jesus. How submissive is she supposed to be to Jesus? In what areas? Wives are to submit to their husbands in *everything*. This is hard teaching for almost every wife. The main reason for the difficulty is the fact that most husbands are nowhere near being Christ-like. In fact, some wives feel that they are better than their husbands so why should they submit? Considering that the wife knows all the faults of husband it is almost expected that she would have the hardest time to submit to him. Why is being expected to submit to him then?

The submission of wives to their husbands is due to the role of the husband as the head. The wife submits not because the husband is a better Christian but because of the role he is supposed to play. Wives are therefore supposed to treat their husbands better than what they deserve. The wife, by being submissive to her husband will be able to help him be the best version of himself. By being submissive, she shows her respect for her husband which inspires him to be a better man.

Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. The husband must be willing to set aside his own interest and sacrifice himself to help his wife become more holy. The goal is for the husband to be just like Jesus to his wife. Isn’t this also submission? This is also hard teaching for the husband because who could possibly live up to the standard of Jesus? Also some husbands may feel that their wives do not deserve such treatment from them. But again the command is not based on whether the wife deserves it or not but whether or not the husband should be like Jesus. By loving her, the husband helps his wife be the best version of her. He is responsible for helping her be holy.

The command for wives to submit and for husbands to love requires the same thing: sacrificing personal interest for the sake of the other person. Both are called to a selflessness inspired by Christ. They are equally hard and equally fulfilling.

For those not yet married but want to be married, you should count the cost if you could live up to God’s expectation for marriage. Deciding whether or not to get married should not be primarily about whether you are financially ready, or because of your age, or because of your feelings for the other person. The question is whether or not you are ready to live up to God’s standards for a married couple. Would you be able to treat your future spouse in the way described by Paul? One way you can determine this is by looking at your current relationships with the opposite sex. For sisters, is there a brother you cannot imagine yourself submitting to? For brothers, is there a sister you cannot imagine loving? If you want to get married you need to start practicing being submissive and being loving before you tie the knot.

The relationship between Jesus and the church is that of a godly marriage. The church must submit to Jesus in everything. We must surrender everything to him. We must also allow Jesus to cleanse us with the Word. Sometimes “cleansing” is painful. Sometimes cleaning means pruning or cutting off (Jn 15:1-3). We must allow Jesus to do that and remember that it is how he expresses his love. Jesus’ role is not to pamper the church or to give Christians a comfortable life. Jesus promises to feed and care for the church but his goal is to make it radiant “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” Are we cooperating with Jesus on this or resisting him?

Let us love and submit as God expects so we can be a radiant church.