

Mutual Submission

Ephesians 5:18b-21

Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Nightmare Marriage Counseling Session...

If we're honest I think we've all had that thought about in our relationships...

- When is it MY turn to be served?
- Why do I always have to give in?

Today's passage of scripture is for all of us!

Paul encourages us to "Be filled with the Spirit..." — **Kingdom Family is Spirit-filled family.**

- *Jesus has LOVED and SACRIFICED for us, we now live differently than we once lived.*
- **Our lives are lived IN RESPONSE to the love of God for us!**
 - We respond by loving one another, worshipping together, encouraging one another...
 - (last week) God's love for us in Jesus fills our heart with GRATITUDE...

And this gratitude overflows into our relationships as we SUBMIT to one another.

- This is not an optional personality trait that only "super-Christians" achieve...
- This is not only a requirement for people in ministry...

No, Mutual submission is a lifestyle that flows out of our gratitude for Jesus.

Chuck Smith: "Life exists on two planes, the vertical and the horizontal."

- God is at the heart of any **healthy** relationship.

I know that my selfishness can mess up my relationships—I know this!

- **I don't WANT to submit to others—ESPECIALLY when I'm right!**

Other's struggle with the opposite—they comply with others because they don't feel they have anything to offer.

- Insecurity and identity issues keep them from allowing others to be submitted to them.

On our own we would NEVER achieve true mutual submission...

Thankfully, in the midst of our pride and insecurity, Jesus meets each of us and:

- **Jesus gives us a new identity AND**
- **Jesus gives us the POWER and DESIRE to walk in this new identity.**

In Jesus we have an EMPOWERED NEW IDENTITY!

- This EMPOWERED IDENTITY is a response to the incredible relationship we now have with Jesus!
 - **Our relationship with Jesus FUELS our relationships with others.**

Mutual Submission is a response to the love of Jesus

1. **We respond in Faith**
2. **We respond in Humility**
3. **We Respond in Love**

1. We Respond in Faith

- **Faith is what enables us to know & trust God.**

True faith is not something we muster on our own—this is not a BLIND faith.

True faith has both an **AUTHOR** and an **OBJECT**.

Hebrews 12:2— Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the **author** and **perfecter** of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross

As we trust Jesus and walk in the faith He provides— mutual-submission is possible.

- mutual submission flows from a heart of FAITH, but we also respond in HUMILITY.

2. We respond in Humility

- Humility: *“a modest or low view of one’s own importance; freedom from arrogance.”*
- Paul defines Christian Humility:

Philippians 2:3-4— Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

If we are to trust God for right relationships, we must have a right view of ourself.

- And Paul says that this means we put the interest of others above our own interest...
- why would anyone want to do THAT?
 - Remember, right relationships are a response to Jesus.
 - This means we love others well because He loves us so well!

Paul points us to Jesus:

Philippians 2:5-8 In your relationships with one another, **have the same mindset as Jesus:** 6 Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

How should we think about humility? Paul says to **“Have the same mindset as Jesus...”**

- **He didn’t advance Himself with the advantages He had in His life.**
- Rather, Jesus lowered Himself and served those who did not have any advantages!
- Jesus took this preference for others all the way to His death—dying for others.

We hear a lot about PRIVILEGE in culture today.

- **Jesus was the MOST privileged person ever!**
- **HE IS GOD!!**

Jesus was not ashamed of being privileged: He didn’t “revoke” or “deny” it!

- NO—Jesus stewarded His tremendous privilege by walking in HUMILITY.
- The King of Kings...born with unimaginable privilege and advantage...
 - We are TREMENDOUSLY privileged KINGDOM KIDS!!
 - **And we now respond to this incredible gift by walking as Jesus walked...in humility.**

Jesus, the King of Kings, served sinful, broken, confused, angry, murderous men...

- **Jesus’ stewardship of His incredible privilege is God’s grace for us.**
 - We are now able to receive this incredible privilege of knowing and walking with God!

- We are now the most privileged people on earth!
- We have tremendous KINGDOM PRIVILEGE!

And we don't "revoke" our privilege!

- We don't "denounce" it...

NO, we STEWARD IT for the glory of God, as Jesus did—We steward privilege with HUMILITY.

- Our humility makes OTHERS the benefactor of our privilege in Jesus!
- Our humility moves us to steward our privilege to build OTHERS up.
- Our humility mirrors and reveals the kindness, love and joy of knowing Jesus.

What would relationships look like if we stewarded our Kingdom privilege with this humility?

- Imagine what marriage might look like...
- Imagine what room-mate relationships might be like...
- Imagine what our culture would look like!!
- **THIS is what Paul is saying God's KINGDOM FAMILY looks like.**
- ***We are a massive community of TOTALLY privileged people.***
- But this community is a FAMILY of people MUTUALLY-SUBMITTED to one another.
 - THESE privileged people consider each other as more important than themselves
 - THESE people don't live to win arguments but to SERVE others.
 - THESE people lay down their life so others can discover privilege in knowing God's love

This beautiful, mutually-submitted community is fruit of our FAITH and HUMILITY in Jesus!

3. We Respond in Love

Love is required for us to see others rightly.

- Just as Jesus authors and perfects our faith...
- And Jesus demonstrates and empowers true humility for us...

Jesus also changes how we see others.

- He first fills my heart with His love—fills us to OVERFLOWING!
- This love overwhelms me and overflows as love for others!

The Apostle John explains this love:

1 John 4:7-9 Dear friends, let us love one another, for **love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.** 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

John is saying that love is not commonly understood.

- With all that is written about love throughout all of history... poems, music, literature... VERY LITTLE of it actually has anything to do with REAL love!

Often love is associated with feelings—we FEEL love...

- We might justify the commitment of marriage with the feelings we call love:
 - We declare, "I love her" to try and express the strong emotion that we feel for that PERFECT woman whom we want to marry.
 - All sorts of commitments are made and money is spent in the name of this emotional love.
- However this emotional love is the same FEELING that enables us to justify divorce:
 - We might declare about that perviously- "perfect" woman, "I just don't love her anymore" to express our strong CHANGE in emotions.

- And all sorts of heartache, brokenness and loneliness has been created in the wake of this emotional love.

TRUE love is an action, not simply a passion...

- There is often a disconnect between our passions and our actions.

"One of the great tragedies of life is that men seldom bridge the gulf between practice and profession, between doing and saying." —Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*

But how... when a marriage is falling apart and things are totally hopelessly decaying—HOW?

- *HOW do I walk in love?*

"Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love them." —C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

- Jesus said to love one another as I have loved you!
- Paul says to walk in love.
- John says to love one another—that's a VERB!

Without responding to the love that Jesus has poured out on me, there is NO CHANCE of me walking in love with another person!

- Just as Jesus is the Author of our faith...
- And Jesus is source of humility in life...

Jesus is ALSO only the source of true love.

- There is no real love apart from the love of God for us that we can only know in Jesus.
- And this love fully satisfies our desire for acceptance and for "feeling" loved.

It can be easy for us to forget that God loves us so much that He FIRST sacrificed His SON for us...

Remember: God's love for you COMPELLED HIM TO ACTION!!

And also remember that God is good!

- He is SO GOOD, in fact, that He is HOLY (set apart, uniquely perfect).
- How does God show LOVE for lost, sinful people like ME?

God takes action. He sacrifices...

God's love for us in Jesus changes us—changes the way we see others.

- Jesus has given us the FAITH required to see, know and walk with God!
- Jesus has given us the HUMILITY required to serve ourselves.
- Jesus has given us the LOVE to sacrifice for others so they might know God's love.

Often Paul refers to athletes who work hard to master their sport.

- we work hard to achieve right relationships by submitting to others.
- We must **intentionally** submit to one another.

And Paul calls this submission "mutual"—In all healthy relationships there is a give and take.

- It can't be all giving, and it can't be all taking.
- There is TENSION—we must pay attention and exercise to hold a healthy tension.

Jesus holds a healthy tension with us—demonstrates the love of God by sacrificing His life for us

- **But we must RECEIVE this gift!!**

- We RECEIVE this love by faith.
- We then steward this love with humility.
- We then share this love by loving others.

And Paul says that all of this is done in a very specific way...

Ephesians 5:21 —And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

God's love for us is reflected in our love for God as we live lives submitted to God and one another.

- **We are Kingdom Kids, brought together by God living as God's Kingdom Family:**
 - We are filled with His Spirit...
 - We are filled with His love...
- As we live in submission to God, we start to live in submission to others...
- And others start to live in submission to us...
- **And the love of God becomes TANGIBLE and OBVIOUS!**
- As we submit to one another in response to Jesus's love, the ACTION of God's TRUE love is made obvious in the Church and in the world.

We cannot be right with others until we are right with God.

- Only the love of God can create a submitted heart.

Our relationships will be out of whack until our heart and our life is submitted to Jesus.

- RECEIVE the love of God.
- ENJOY Him.
- Let your heart be filled with gratitude.
- RESPOND to the Lord in worship.
- Allow your heart to be THANKFUL to the Lord...
- RESPOND to God.

****CONNECT WITH GOD Link****

—Closing Prayer—

—Gospel invitation—

Maybe today you don't know the love of God because you don't really KNOW Jesus

Let's allow the LOVE & PRESENCE of God fill our hearts to overflow in worship as we sing to God!