

II Cor. 9:1-15 | God Loves a Cheerful Giver

- 1) Discuss some of the biblical principles of giving.

- 2) What would you say is the most important principle in giving?

- 3) Is giving to God an opportunity or a duty?

- 4) Discuss the principal of the tithe (Deut. 14:22; Neh. 13:12).
 - a) Are Christians commanded to tithe?

 - b) Are there any implications to this?

 - c) What then is the NT example (Lk. 21:1-4; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; Rom. 12:8; II Cor. 8:2)?

- 5) Is it sinful not to give generously and joyfully to your local church?

- 6) What was God's example to us (II Cor. 8:9)?

- 7) How have you determined giving to the Lord in the past?

- 8) What steps can you take to be more obedient in this area?

Ephesians 5: 21-33 | A Word to the Wives

Monday (v. 21) – “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” What do you think of when you hear the word submission? The dictionary definition of submission is, “to yield to governance or authority” or “to yield oneself to the authority or will of another.” It carries the idea of surrender “to permit oneself to be subjected to something or to defer to or consent to abide by the opinion or authority of another.” Basically, in submission instead of seeking your own will you are willing to submit to the will of another “in the fear of God.” Why do people tend to struggle in the area of submission? What are some of the pitfalls to submission?

Tuesday (v. 21-22) – Submission is basically humbling yourself. As Christians we are all called to a general attitude of humility and submission. Verse 22 says that wives have a more specific calling to be submissive to their “own husbands.” What do you think that means? If you were to survey women at the local mall and ask them the question, “Should a wife be submissive to her husband?” What kind of response do you think you would get? Some people today go as far as to accuse the apostle Paul of hating or degrading women because of the teaching in Ephesians 5:22. The wife of one of my friends once commented, “The hackles on the back of my neck rise whenever I hear the word submission.” She, like many other women, had a wrong view of submitting to her husband. Her own father had not been a godly man and ruled as an overlord, so she had defaulted to the general teaching of the world (women’s liberation, etc.) that women need to throw off the bonds of “male chauvinists” and take charge. How would you counsel a Christian woman that struggles in the area of submitting to her husband?

Wednesday (1 Pet. 3:1-6) – We have another dynamic added to submission: Wives, be submissive “even if some do not obey the Word.” Wow! That’s not going to be easy! Notice the reasons Peter gives us: 1) it’s God’s will for you, but even more than that 2) God might use your obedience, humility and submissiveness to win your husband to Christ! Wow again! Peter tells us this area of life (as in all areas) is a heart issue and, notice this awesome truth, “which is very precious in the sight of God.” Wow x3! Your humble, submissive attitude is God’s will for you, will be used by God in the lives of others (even an unbelieving husband), and is precious in His sight.

Thursday (Gen. 3:16), *The “Why” of Submission* – Some claim that the call for wives to be submissive “to their own husband” is an ancient and antiquated idea; yet notice the “why” of submission from the Bible (the context is the fall of man into sin): “To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your

conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). In his letter to the young pastor Timothy, Paul ties husband and wife roles to the created order: “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim. 2:11-14). If husband and wife roles are rooted in the created order (ordained and given to us by God), can they become “out dated” or “antiquated”?

Friday (v. 21-24), *The Practice of Submission* – Notice the “how” of submission: “in the fear of God,” “as to the Lord,” “as the church is subject to Christ,” “in everything.” Colossians 3:18 adds, “as is fitting in the Lord.” Submission is a very important principal in marriage. As you study this passage it becomes evident that as you submit to your husband, you are in essence submitting to God and as you submit to God you will be submissive to your husband. There is an important issue we need to remember in all of this teaching: Women are not to be subservient or servile (in other words, men, your wives are not here to be your servant) nor are they *in any way* inferior to men. The real issue is that of God given *roles*. Roles only! God has placed certain people into leadership roles and we are to submit to those people (“just as the church is subject to Christ”—notice Christ’s role as head). We are to submit to those God-ordained leaders as to the Lord Himself.

Saturday (v. 33) – So many marriages today go bad (or are bad) because the husband refuses to biblically love his wife, and the wife refuses to respect her husband. It becomes an endless cycle of despair, anger, loneliness and alienation. That is the opposite of the “one flesh” design that God has in mind for your marriage. It is certainly not what God wants for you. Many marriages would benefit greatly if the man (the God-ordained leader) would express the hurt they feel when their wives fail to respect them (Prov. 12:4; 19:13; 21:9; 25:24). This week we are speaking to wives (and wives-to-be); if your marriage “could be better,” I have a short assignment for you: Read Ephesians 5:21-33 again. Now check for “if/then” clauses: “if your husband loves you—then respect him;” “if your husband is godly—then submit;” “if your husband is wise—then listen to him.” Obedience in this area is not conditional, is it? That means God is calling *you* to end the cycle.