Choose to Submit

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 20, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

1) The Voices In Our Heads

- A) Each of us have different "voices" fighting for our attention. Certainly, the voice of culture is very loud in most of our minds. Since our culture changes at rapid speed, far more quickly than any generation prior, we often form our cultural views through the media we choose to digest.
- B) For those having a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is another voice which speaks to our souls. We learn the Spirit's voice through reading the Scriptures and responding in prayer. The Spirit is provided a "voice" through the Bible and as we engage life with genuine dependency on God through prayer. As we grow in maturity and depth in relationship with Christ, we are able to hear the voice of the Spirit through other Christians, significant life circumstances, and eventually even everyday events.
- C) There is another important voice in your head. Your voice. This is the voice of reason (or insanity) and response (or addiction). It is the voice which filters other voices and responds. From your own soul this voice speaks your life into responses which lead to actions and behaviors reflecting your being.
- D) Is it any wonder the Apostle Paul already implored the Ephesians to grow into the "fullness" of their new identity in Christ (Ephesians 3:16-21)? To turn away from sinful instincts (2:1-3)? To reject old-self thinking (4:17-19)? To be renewed "in the spirit of your minds" as a brand new creation of God (4:23-24)?
- E) If Christ's people will not live sold-out for the purposes of the Gospel (redemption) in their own lives, how will those outside the church ever know the power of Christ? The culture in which we live screams answers to life's hardest questions, but those answers only lead to slavery and death. The church is in the world to seek and save the lost by living spiritually submitted lives to each other in Christ. This is spiritual victory!
- F) As those freed by the blood of Christ, our lives of mutual submission to one another serve as a counterculture rescue mission for a world which cannot YET hear the Spirit's voice. When we live convinced that God's ways are best for us AND for our culture, and that our lives in Christ's Church are the hope for ourselves and our culture, we will live out God's design, no matter the cost. **Listen. To. Christ's. Voice.**

2) Submitting Wives (1/4) & Sacrificial Husbands (3/4)

- A) Wives are to submit to their husbands as a proper reflection/honoring of the hierarchal headship structure of Christ as the head of the Church (5:22-23). Because of sin (cf. Genesis 3:16), this decision is not natural for a wife. The text makes clear that wives must make a conscious and responsive choice to be submissive (5:22).
- B) Paul calls everyone in the Church to submit (subordinate, order under, obey) to one another out of respect/reverence for Christ (5:21), revealing the mysteries of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit in/through the Church (5:22-33). Just as Christ submits to God (1 Corinthians 15:28) and still maintains completely equal value and importance, so the wife who submits is still of equal value and significance in marriage (Galatians 3:28).
- C) Without submission to Christ in everything, the church would never fulfill her Gospel purposes (3:7-13, 1:7-10). In similar fashion, without submission to your husband in everything, your marriage will never be able to fulfill its Gospel purposes (5:24). Submission is not based on the worthiness of the husband, even if he is not faithful to following Christ (note, 1 Peter 2:24-3:6). Submission to Christ and to your husband are inseparably related; remarkably one cannot exist without the other. Wives, your submission is active worship of God.
- D) Disrespect from a wife through disgusted looks, harsh words, mistrusting accusations, and dismissive comments disrespects husbands. A husband diminished by his own wife is devalued, emasculated, and feels like an embarrassing failure. These men are often needled and shamed, becoming hostile and mean, or the absolute worst kind of man, disengaged and passive. Wives, do not depreciate your husbands and Jesus.
- E) Women dignify themselves, Christ, and their husbands when they choose to submit, just as Christ dignifies the Father through His life and work (2:18-22). Willing submission champions Christ in a radical counterculture manner, actively refusing rulership, control, or domination in marriage. Submission graciously employs actions, words, and patient attitudes which empower and enable a husband to lead. Wives, submit to your own husbands in everything, as to the Lord (5:22-24, 33).

Growth Group Guide Week 3: Ephesians 5:22-33

Bible Study

If you were given an opportunity to share about what's wrong with the world, what would be the first thing that comes to your mind to talk about?

Read through Ephesians 5:22-33

- 1. Marriage is a voluntary commitment. What do Christian women commit to when they get married? (5:22)
- 2. In what ways should women submit to their husbands? (5:24)
- 3. What results happen in a marriage if a wife fails to submit to her own husband? (5:24, 31-32)

Read through 1 Peter 2:18-3:6

- 1. Wives are to be subject to their husbands like what? (3:1, 2:18)
- 2. What is the basis for submitting to unjust, foolish, or unkind leaders? (2:20-21)
- 3. What is precious in God's sight? (3:4)
- 4. What fashion statements are compared in 3:3 with those in 3:4-5?

Discussion

- 1. The ruthless Vikings turned to Jesus because they took on Christian slave wives who treated them better than their Viking wives. 1 Peter 3:1 suggests this might happen. What can this look like in our culture?
- 2. We are sinners, so we will ultimately fail at submission. Where do we get the power to obey this teaching?

3. G.K. Chesterton (19th-20th Century British writer & theologian) was asked by a newspaper to write on what was wrong with the world. His simple reply was "I am." How does submitting to Christ communicate what we really think about our sin? Do we really think the world would be better with Jesus as King, or do we trust in something else?

4. Submitting to any authority (husband, church leader, boss, government) is really trusting Christ. Is He trustworthy, independent of the authority figures in your life? How do you know Jesus is trustworthy? How can you measure if you trust Him?