

ABOUT SUBMISSION

Sylvester Onyemalechi

Submission in marriage is a subject that has generated a lot of controversies and troubles in many quarters. It appears to me that many do not understand the biblical teaching on submission. Some have blown it out of proportion and made it look like God called for the woman to become a slave in her own matrimonial home. Because of the misconceptions, many women hate the word Submission. The very mention of it makes them angry and sets them up for a fight. This has created a lot of fights and rebellions in many marriages.

Many women laugh each time the subject of submission is mentioned. On enquiry, I discovered that the reason is because their husbands have not proven themselves worthy of submitting to. One asked, "How do you submit to a man who does not provide for his family?" Another asked, "How do you submit to a man who comes home daily fully drunk, only to beat up the wife without genuine reason?" "How do you submit to a man who is cheating on you by keeping mistresses outside while in jealousy watching you like a hawk will and placing restrictions on your movement?" These and many questions bug the minds of many women when the submission is mentioned.

At what time and under what condition should a wife submit to a husband? Is there a condition to be met by husbands if the wives must submit to them? These and many more questions will be answered in this article.

WHAT IS SUBMISSION

Eph 5:21-24

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 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. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

NIV

1. Submission is acceptance of another's power and authority and bringing oneself under it.
2. Submission is willingly yielding to the control or authority of another.
3. To submit is to put oneself under the control of another.
4. To submit is to surrender or give in to another's opinion and decision.
5. To submit is to abstain from resistance.
6. Submission is obedience that is rooted in love.
7. Submission is a sign of humility and deep respect for another.
8. To submit is to put forward your opinion for discussion and decision rather than insisting on your will or giving an order.
9. To submit is to rank under – to place the other person as higher than your person.
10. Submission is to put yourself in subjection to another.

An understanding of the meaning of submission will help each person to submit as expected by God. Take your time to look closely at the definitions stated above.

The scripture before asking wives to submit to their husbands called for both the man and the wife to submit to one another. In Eph 5:21 the Apostle Paul begins his exhortation to the discharge of relative duties. As a general foundation for these duties, he lays down the rule to submit one to another. There is a mutual submission that Christians owe one to another, condescending to bear one another's burdens: not advancing themselves above others, nor domineering over one another and giving laws to one another. This Paul has to first establish to make it very clear that the submission of the wife to the husband is not a slave and master relationship. Paul was an example of this truly Christian submission, for he became all things to all men. We must be of a yielding and of a submissive spirit, and ready to discharge our duties to all according to the will and plan of God for our lives. Our submission in love gives proves that we truly fear God. Where there is this mutual condescension and submission, the duties of all relations will be the better performed. Submit to one another in Christ with the understanding that our submission and receiving of it is not for enslavement or to prove superiority, but to serve one another in the spirit of love and Christ.

SUBMISSION IS FOR ORDER IN THE HOME

1 Cor 11:3

3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

NIV

Eph 5:22

23 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.

NIV

In every family, just like any other organization, someone must be in leadership; otherwise, there will be confusion and constant friction. And a home that is divided against itself will definitely collapse. There can never be two captains directing a ship at the same time. There is only one leader at a time. The husband has been made the head of his home and as a result, the wife is expected to humbly in love for order to submit to the husband. The husband as the head of his home will give account to God for the success or failure of his marriage. To be head is responsibility. It calls for more effort on the part of the man in making sure his marriage is successful. He has to bear more and endure more than the woman to make sure that peace reigns in his home and his marriage successful.

For his duty as the head of the house to be carried out well and successfully, the wife needs to submit willingly and lovingly to the husband. Contending with your husband's leadership will bring lots of hostility and quarrels. It is important that you as a wife submit to make the job of leadership and administration of your home smooth and stress free. Put yourself in your husband's situation, and see yourself as the head of your home and your husband as the wife, how will you feel each time you are opposed and challenged as the leader of your home? I know you will not like it at all. Yet you are doing the same thing to your husband right now. I have

seen women who charge at their junior ones, house helps and even children simply because they did not obey them or submit to their request of them. They get so angry that they curse and beat them up while they remain rebellious to their own husbands. They love and want people to submit to them at the office and places where they are in authority and frown terribly at insubordination. It is very hard to understand why someone who understands authority and submission and demands submission from all under her authority will find it difficult to submit to her husband who she claims to love and respect. Pride must be destroyed and the desire to be in charge put away if peace must reign in your home.

Where there is no order anarchy will reign. Where there is no order the door is always opened to the devil to attack and destroy as rivalry grows strong. God made the man the head of his house, so allow him to play that role so that there will be order, peace and progress.

SUBMISSION IS THE PROOF OF LOVE

We have seen that submission is obedience to another. Jesus taught us that obedience is the proof of love.

John 14:15

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

NIV

John 14:21

21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

NIV

John 14:23-24

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

NIV

If you truly love your husband, submitting to him will not be difficult to you. Obedience is a manifestation of submission and it is motivated by love. Prove your love for your husband by surrendering to him, obeying him, caring for him, not resisting him, being in subjection to him and allow him to take charge and lead the family as instructed to him by God in his word. Challenging your husband almost all the time is not a sign of love at all. Resisting your husband's leadership in your home is not a sign of love. Willing submission is the proof of love.

SUBMISSION IS UNCONDITIONAL

Eph 5:24

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

NIV

Many think that their husbands does not deserve submission because of his lifestyle and the fact that they are financially supporting the family. Some will not submit because they do not believe in it, they believe in equal rights. Submission does not mean that you are no longer equal with your spouse; it makes the administration of the home easier.

- Submit unconditionally as the church submits to Christ in all things.
- Submit to him despite his weaknesses and shortcomings.
- Submit to him despite the fact that you are earning more money than him.
- Submit to him despite the fact that you are older than him.
- Submit to him despite the fact that you seem more spiritual and mature than he is.
- Submit to him in the Lord though he is an unbeliever.
- If presently, he is cheating on you, still submit to him because he is still your husband.
- Submit even when you don't get what you want from him when you want it.
- Submit even when unable to provide for the family as he ought to no matter his reason for the inability to provide.

A WORD FOR THE HUSBANDS

Husbands should love their wives as Jesus Christ loves the church and gave himself for her, and is still working on her to perfect her and present her to himself on the last day. This is the standard of love set for the husbands. The relationship between the Church and Jesus Christ is likened to the relationship between the husband and his wife. In the same way that Jesus loves the Church, the husband is to love his wife. Love your wife as you love yourself. Love yourself for if you do not love yourself you cannot love your wife. Your wife is your other half. Her life is your life also. If she is happy, you will be happy. If she is sad, it will affect you also.

Eph 5:25-33

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church- 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

NIV

- Love her no matter her short comings and weaknesses.
- Love her no matter her present level of submission.
- Love her though you get less than 100% return for your love.
- Love her unconditionally.
- Patiently and diligently continue working on her to perfect her and your relationship.
- Through much love make her to have no choice but to submit to you.

Through your unconditional and strong love provoke your wife to submit to you. It is difficult to submit to one who does not love you just as it is difficult to love the one who refuses to submit to you. It is the love of Jesus exemplified in his sacrificial death and resurrection that makes the Church to submit to him. Let your love move your wife to submit to you. Don't focus on her present low level of submission; rather, concentrate on loving and caring for your wife so she can be motivated to submit to you without reservation. If your dream is to have your wife submit to you, then love and care for her always.

CONCLUSION

Submission is a necessity for peace to be maintained in the home. Submission should not be seen as bondage but love in manifestation for the dream of a sweet and peaceful home to be attained. Be motivated by love when you submit. Submission is only difficult when it is done as a cold sense of duty – because it is commanded and demanded of you. Do not wait to be told to submit before you do. Let it come from your heart willingly in love, and then it will not be difficult or something to be resented. Every home where submission is practiced always experience peace and order. If you desire a peaceful and quarrel free marriage, practice submission and you will have vision fulfilled.

WORDS OF WISDOM

- 1. The search for a true and fitting partner starts with a discovery and understanding of your person.**
- 2. It takes a sincere analysis of yourself to discover who you really are.**
- 3. Successful marriage is a combination of love, forgiveness, patience, adjustments, change and hard work.**
- 4. Sincerity makes love to be pure and relationship to stand the test of time.**
- 5. Submission is the golden key to a peaceful and successful marriage.**
- 6. It takes understanding and discipline to have quarrel free relationship.**
- 7. Preferring your partner better than yourself is giving peace a chance.**
- 8. The fear of the Lord is the foundation for a happy and enduring home.**
- 9. “I love you” is easy to say and sweet in the ears, but takes a lot of tolerance and hard work to make it a reality.**
- 10. Everyone has the capacity to succeed in marriage, but it takes those who are willing to go by the principles of God's word to succeed.**