

## Out of I-ness, Into We-ness—part 3, the Wife

Ephesians 5:21-33

November 2, 2025

### **DAY 1: Major gender roles in marriage**

1. As you read through our passage, underline the major gender roles for both husband and wife.

*Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

<sup>22</sup> *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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.*

<sup>24</sup> *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

<sup>25</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—<sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.*

<sup>31</sup> *“For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

2. What are the two main relational role for the husband?

3. What are the two main relational roles for the wife?

4. There is a surprise right at the beginning. You might expect the passage to say that the main role for both husband and wife is to love the other, but that’s not what we have here.

5. The main roles for the husband: headship and love.

6. The main roles for the wife: submission and respect.

7. Why do you think there are different gender roles for husband and for wives?

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## Day 2: The invitational love of Christ on display

*Matthew 11:28 **Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.***

*<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. ”*

1. Last week we looked at how a certain type of godly headship, sacrificial love, and tender love from a husband are prime tools for building a marriage.

2. Godly headship and godly love from a husband are meant to:

a. Reveal the **sacrificial love that Jesus** has for a wife that:

- Provide a kind of leadership that allows a wife to internally relax (peace) in her husband's leadership, love and care.
- Open her heart and free her heart rather than close her heart to her husband and attempt to control him.

b. Change the *husband's* heart, mind, and behavior from proud and self-centered to humble and other-centered!

c. Turn his heart to Jesus as the central and primary filler of his heart for love and satisfaction.

3. The wife's two major relational roles in marriage are submission and respect. Similarly, a wife's roles are meant to:

a. Reveal the **invitational love of Jesus to a husband** that:

- Provides a kind of relationship that allows him to internally be refreshed (peace), knowing that what he is trying to do for his wife, family, and others matters.
- Encourages him to both lead and love his wife and family,

b. Change the wife's heart, mind, and behavior from proud and self-centered to humble and other-centered.

c. Turn her heart to Jesus as the central and primary filler of her heart for love and satisfaction.

4. The marriage relational roles are meant to do three things:

- Build a marriage that over time has both strength and beauty to it. This is a “process.”
- Overcome our natural gendered pride and self-centeredness. To expose our entitled spirit, our expectations, our pride that says “I can do this. My partner may not be very good at this but look at how hard I'm trying.”
- To turn our hearts and expectations to Jesus Christ as our primary and central source for what our hearts most long

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

### DAY 3: A wife's inner beauty

#### An illustration of submission

*1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, wives, **be subject to your own husbands**, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives— <sup>2</sup> when they see your **respectful** and **pure conduct**. <sup>3</sup> Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing— <sup>4</sup> but let your adorning be **the hidden person of the heart** with the **imperishable beauty** of a **gentle** and **quiet spirit**, which in God's sight is very precious.*

*<sup>5</sup> For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, <sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

1. Notice that the two main roles of the wife in Ephesians 5:21-33 are reiterated in 1 Peter 3— submission and respectfulness.
2. What additional characteristics, actions, and attitudes does this passage teach wives to do?
3. What are some of the hoped for effects of those actions and attitudes?
4. Submission is communicated more by attitude than action. Peter mentions two “spirits” (attitudes in the heart).
  - a. “Gentle spirit” - “*praus*” (Gk.) is used to describe a once-wild horse that had been tamed, and came to mean, “strength under control.”
  - b. “Quiet spirit” - Peter is not talking about a quiet *person*. A quiet spirit means “calm in a crisis.” He is talking about something in her heart that is “quiet.” She is not trusting people or her husband for her inner security.
5. What does that look like? A woman with a gentle and quiet spirit:
  - Relies on her inner strength to determine her actions, not her emotions that are triggered by how others treat her.
  - Knows her husband has no power to destroy her beautiful soul, her feminine center.
  - Does not live in fear of her husband. Fear no longer requires her to protect her soul.
  - Is free to honor a higher good, to respect her husband as a fellow image-bearer, and to invite him by her gentle attitude to be the man he was created to be.
6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 4: What gets in the way of inner beauty? What torpedoes a wife?**

1. The greatest enemy of marriage is not my spouse. The greatest enemy of every marriage is (1) our pride, ego, and arrogance, and (2) our natural self-centeredness. Worse, we are naturally blind to both of these enemies in ourselves.

2. On the wife's side of marriage pride and self-centeredness are lived out in three main ways in marriage:

### **Foolishness and folly**

*Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down. <sup>3</sup> A fool's mouth lashes out with pride, but the lips of the wise protect them.*

3. The writer of Proverbs makes three contrasts in these verses:

- a. Two different types of women: the wise woman and the foolish woman,
- b. Two different kinds of things that come out of their mouths,
- c. Two different effects of their style of relating.

4. What strikes you from these verses in Prov.14?

### **Contentious**

*Proverbs 21:9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.*

5. The Hebrew word translated "quarrelsome" means strife or contentious. It is a word that means a stubborn argumentative way of relating. This is often expressed by husbands as, "Even when we agree it still feels like she's arguing with me."

### **Vexing**

*Proverbs 21:19 Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife.*

6. The Hebrew word translated "nagging" means to be vexing, especially angry vexing. Vexing means "it's never enough."

7. The idea of the word is felt by husbands as, "No matter what I do or try to do or want to do, it is never good enough for her. In her eyes there is always something wrong with what I did, how I did it, or my motivation (assumed to be selfish). And she regularly lets me know how I could have done something better or how I failed.

8. Pride, self-centeredness, foolishness, contentiousness, and vexing are all enemies of building a healthy marriage, and God wants to expose these for the sake of brokenness, repentance, and transformation. God is intent on saving us from ourselves, and saving others from us!

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 5: Greta Grateful or Nancy Nag?

*Prov. 18:2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.*

1. As we looked at when we talked about husbands needing to try to understand a wife's inner world—her thoughts, emotions, intentions, etc., a wife needs to try to understand her husband.
2. After Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke to both Adam and Eve about the fallen world they created. Here's what God said to Adam, and to all of us sons of Adam.

*Genesis 3:17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

3. On the surface this looks bad for farmers and gardeners, but at the time, Adam was the only man alive. The principles God alludes to affects every man no matter his profession, and more than his profession.
4. God is using the metaphor of farming to drive home, in picture form, the challenging and difficult world in which we find ourselves.
5. Farming, and even gardening involves exasperating difficulties that try our patience. Crops and gardens are regularly smitten with weeds, disease, and pests. Weeds choke the plants of fertile nutrients and water, disease kills plants, and pests eat plants. While there are remedies for each of these three ills, the ills are never-ending, continuing to raise their obnoxious heads no matter how hard the farmer or gardener works.
6. No matter how able or skilled, he will always need to address problems that are only temporarily solved, only to have to be addressed over and over again. The effect on a man is to **discourage** him **from even trying** anymore.

In short, a man's world involves frustration, failure, and a sense of futility.

- 7, This does not just happen to a man in his work. It happens to a man relationally in his marriage, with his children, relatives, people at work, etc.
8. This is where a wife has tremendous opportunity to build her marriage. She has the opportunity to be his nearest and dearest cheerleader. She can highlight what he does well, even when it's not "perfect." She can highlight his noble intention even when we are always a mixed bag of intentions.
9. Or she can be the mouthpiece of Satan, as Satan is known as "the accuser," the one who always reminds us of our falling short and failures. When Satan struck everything that Job had including his ten children, his land holdings, herds, and even his health, the one thing Satan did not take out was "Mrs. Job."

*Prov. 19:13 ... a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.*

A man's deepest pain is related to failure.

10. What strikes you from today's devotional?