

# Two For One

## Ephesians 5:21-24

**Main focus of this series:** This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. It is the textbook for Christian living, affective church growth and unity. It is also a manual for harmony in the home and an affective lifestyle in our work place in the world. Ephesians draws many lines, it is clear and very defined. Why many Christians fail to live fully in the shadow of the cross is because they have never ventured into the truths documented in Paul's writings to the Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to sit (**Ephesians 1-3**), to walk (**Ephesians 4-6:9**) and to stand (**Ephesians 6:10-24**). The first half of Ephesians (chapters 1-3) tells us what a Christian is and the last three chapters define how to live that out in harmony with other believer's and separately from non-believer's.

**The importance of this message today:** The last few messages I have shared what it means to be "filled" with the Spirit of God and how that turns you into a true worshiper of God. It also causes you to entertain an atmosphere of the freedom to praise and worship God openly. Today we are going to talk about how being filled with the Spirit not only brings unity, nurturing and care to the local body of believers but how that impacts your relationships at home. According to the majority of scripture left in this letter Paul has written, Ephesians 5:18-6:9, the Spirit of God works in us in a couple of ways, open expression toward God and inward submission to one another.

**Kansas Couple:** There was a Kansas couple who farmed in southwestern Kansas. Bill and his wife Marie were celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary and had never had an argument. They were asked at their anniversary party about the secret of their success. Bill started to explain that one of their first days after they had got married, he and Marie were working the cattle on their horses when Marie's horse refused to move. Marie got off her horse and looked at it eye to eye and said, "Now that's one." She got back on the horse and it went a little farther and it stopped again. No matter what she did, the horse would not move. She got off the horse again and got right in his face and said, "That's two." She got back on again and it went a little farther and stopped again. She got off the horse, pulled out a pistol and shot the horse dead. Bill was shocked and said, "Marie, you can't do that." Marie look Bill in the eye and said, "That's one." And they never had an argument after that.

We all long for a lasting relationship. For some of us today it seems a bit illusive, it's something that we can't get our hands around. For millions of American families, there is no model for a *Christian* home. In fact, for many, there is no memory of one. This may be true of anyone who hears this message. The homes in America have the most profound influence on any child and transcendently on the community and country. Husband and wife, parents, we have to connect with the demand to take up the mantle of an "expert leader" and do the work of making sure that God establishes His purpose in us through the Christian home.

What we are going to discover is that great relationships are possible. And if you are a bit cynical thinking that this is just another message that talks about relationships because you don't think that anything will ever change in your life, marriage or family I want you to believe with me today that there is something worth hearing and investing in as I share this good Word with you today.

Here is a certain fact that you need to know today. Those who have a good marriage are not lucky. They are not the ones who won the marriage lottery, they did something right that contributed to their success. And those who don't have a good marriage continues to do something that contributes to that frustration and limits it. Horrible relationships are no accident, they are that way because of some bad actions and habits.

Jesus teaches us about so many things but the one thing that He teaches us is about relationships. I believe that God sent Jesus Christ to this earth to die for our sins was for the purpose of establishing healthy relationships with God and other people.

**Jesus talked about relationships because He knew it was a key to our success. The basic understanding of relationships are so important, that if you don't get this, everything else you learn about God will become incomplete.**

Of all the challenges of life, financial challenges, physical challenges, political challenges, nothing challenges our life like the challenges that comes with relationships. They have the greatest influence on emotional, irrational, distorted and unhealthy thoughts and actions more than anything else in our life. **If what I have just stated is an accurate assessment of our life, then relationships are the key to your personal success and your personal happiness. If your personal relationships are in an unhealthy condition, no matter how everything else is going in your life, life just doesn't go well.**

### **Jesus On Relationships**

In Matthew 5, Jesus was drawing huge crowds as he ministered. So he climbed up a hillside and a committed crowd followed Him. They went to a quiet place and He sat down to teach them and one of the statements He makes, (Beatitudes) He said in the Message, a paraphrased translation:

***"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate, (peacemakers), instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family."***  
**Matthew 5:9 (The Message)**

The KJV says that you will be called "**the children of God**":

1. **You discover who you really are.** There are so many people running away to find themselves and Jesus said that is a dead end search. There is more personal definition when there is greater interpersonal cooperation.
2. **You discover your place in God's family.** Because you are learning how to cooperate with others and interact, stop running when something goes wrong and work things out, God will reveal His purpose for your life!

## Cooperation Brings Blessing

Jesus knew that relationships are a key to our success and He was saying, that the key to discover who you really are and to find your place in God's family you need to activate cooperation and stop competition and fighting. **The culminating result for cooperating with others in this way is that you will be “BLESSED!”** Jesus knew our success was and is in response to our relationships with other people.

### Paul Understood The Key To Our Success

**Paul understood that good relationships are a key to our success.** Jesus' words must have had an influence on Paul's thoughts when he wrote to the believer's at Ephesus. But Paul uses a stronger word here than Jesus, Paul says,

**“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”**

**Ephesians 5:21**

Paul explains that there are three groups needing to submit, (1.) **husbands and wives (Eph 5:21-33)**, (2.) **parents and children (Eph 6:1-4)**, and (3.) **masters and servants (Eph 6:5-9)**. Each of these groups are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Paul is teaching us that if we are filled with the Spirit, will submit themselves to whatever authority God has placed over us. It is not possible without the Spirit's help to submit to someone and even a greater submission that we submit to each other.

### The Word Game

I'm not sure if you recall the statement that **he who owns the word owns the definition. This is true with submission.** It has become a dirty word, and when that word is mentioned it comes with it abusive and wrong connotation.

In his book, **The Disconnected Generation**, Josh McDowell describes how the definition of words in our language has changed in the last few years.

WORD	ADULT UNDERSTANDING	YOUTH CULTURE TODAY
<b>Tolerance</b>	Accepting others without agreeing with or sharing their beliefs or lifestyle choices.	Accepting that every individual's beliefs, values, lifestyles, and truth claims are equal.
<b>Respect</b>	Giving due consideration to others.	Wholeheartedly approving of others' beliefs or lifestyle choices.
<b>Acceptance</b>	Embracing people for who they are, not necessarily for what they say or do.	Endorsing and even praising others for their beliefs and lifestyle choices.
<b>Moral Judgments</b>	Certain things are morally right and wrong, as determined by God.	We have no right to judge another person's view or behavior.
<b>Personal Preference</b>	Preferences of color, food, clothing style, hobbies, etc.,	Preferences of sexual behaviors, value systems, and

	are personally determined.	beliefs are personally determined.
<b>Personal Rights</b>	Everyone has the right to be treated justly under the law.	Everyone has the right to do what they believe is best for them.
<b>Freedom</b>	Being free to do what you know you ought to do.	Being able to do anything you want to do.
<b>Truth</b>	An absolute standard of right and wrong.	Whatever is right for you.

(Josh McDowell, *The Disconnected Generation*, Word Publishing, Nashville, 2000, pg. 18)

But I believe another word could be placed in this list, it is the word “**submission.**” I believe submission used to be understood as:

- The personal preference of an individual setting themselves aside for respect of the person, position or role of the one being submitted to.

Today I believe the word submission is understood as:

- The yielding of ones rights determined by a stronger force.

**This concept of submission is very much a part of God's plan for our society and for those who know and entertain the presence of God in their life. It is imperative to understand submission in understanding and grasping the success of relationships today.**

### **Where Do I Start?**

**John Maxwell** recently wrote a book called, “*Twenty-five Ways To Win With People.*” He gives incredible insight on how to build great relationships. One of them is to **work on yourself.** God desires to heal us. All of us have **wounds, hurts, insecurities** that plague us from moving on to the better things of life. We are no different today than the Ephesians were in Paul's day, other than, they had not only a social acceptance of the sexual and emotional piracy and abuse but it had become legal and a religion. Paul was able, in the midst of all the unmentionable pain and perverted infrastructure, and squarely look at the Ephesians in the eyes and say, “submit to one another!?” They had come to one of the most horrific abuses and perversions of any social society and Paul was confident that their healing and resurrection socially was found in the ability to submit to one another. What is important here is to understand that if you take this scripture out of context without understanding all that Paul writes in his letter the Ephesians, namely, “to be worthy of the calling,” (Eph. 4:1), then you will never have an accurate means of translating or communicate properly the idea and term of “submission.” At a certain point in our relationship with God, He will interfere with the unhealthy areas of our life and attempt to restore our brokenness by moving us near an uncomfortable, even painful relationship that once caused us so much pain. That healing will release us, causing us to not be defined by that past more. God loves to come into our life and take down all the posters that represent my past and says, “It's time to move on.”

In a message like this, **it's easy to think of all the people who needs to hear this message** and who needs to read my notes or purchase the tape. I'll often see a lot of nudging going on, almost to the point that people are bruised before they leave the service. I can see faces distort, rolled eyes and people move a part from one another. The best person for you to work on today is not someone else, it is you. We have got to work on our part. The only person to hear this message today is you. Everyone needs to set a goal that where ever I am in relationships I am committed to working on me. I'm going to work more on me.

I want to encourage you. **Our church is committed to you for your success.** I'm asking you to give us a year of your life, get committed to a **Lifegroup**, invest an evening in one of our **Connection Banquets**, go through our **12 week Discipleship Matrix** classes and get into one of our **Equipping Classes** and if your life has not changed or grown I want to give you the freedom to decide if you want to go to another church. I'm convinced that over the next year, if you will make a commitment to what our church has to offer to help you reach your success you will look back after a year and say, "God has done great things in my life, I'm growing. I'm not where I want to be but thank God I am not where I used to be.

### **We Need The Holy Spirit's Help**

Here is a fact. All that I am going to teach on today and in the next few weeks cannot be done without the help of the Holy Spirit in your life. You cannot see the results in your life that you want to see without God's intervention.

*"...for it is God who works in you to **will and to act according to his good purpose.**"*

**Philippians 2:13**

God's working in us has two results:

- 1. It gives us the want to.**
- 2. It gives us the power to.**

By nature, we want to promote ourselves, but the Holy Spirit enables us to submit ourselves. **Selfishness, independence and personal agenda's** are the norm and highly acceptable in our society today. For people who live on the outside of Biblical truth and guidance by submitting our lives to God's Spiritual direction, submission to each other doesn't make any since. Our Biblical responses toward life in relationships and family are considered more old school and abusive today. It's a thing of the past. But the reality is that this being "filled" with the Spirit has a contrary affect on our life and is internally confrontational toward the way we used to live. It is a challenge to let the Spirit of God have complete control of our life and work in the dynamics of our relationships and family.

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

**Ephesians 5:22-24**

I'm sorry that I have to admit that this scripture is one of the most controversial and

hated scriptures in the entire Bible. Our society is absolutely appalled at what Paul wrote.

**“Submit yourselves to one another.”**

Here in Ephesians 5:21-23, Paul was giving guidelines to lead and or restore a marriage and the family unit in a society who only knew abuse and practiced it. According to verse 21, our responsible action in the Spirit-filled life is to live submitted to each other. The increase in so many break-ups in marriages and relationships is that we have learned as a society to live within the confines of safe but not submitted lives. As we have learned in that past messages, Ephesus was a place of pain, abuse socially, spiritually and sexually. The lines were so confused when it came to the definition of marriage and the family unit that Paul had to write very clearly to them what a Spirit-filled family and marriage looked like. Their society had not only accepted the misuse of their bodies in abusive relationships but it was legal and they had made it into a religion. The next few passages are constantly taken out of context because the full understanding of all the scriptures collectively must be understood. This teaching will affect every aspect of the family and how we act toward one another.

- **Submitting:** 5293 *hupotasso hoop-ot-as'-so* **Under-Orders:** A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a **voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden**".
- **Wives and husbands are to submit to each other not necessarily because the spouse is all worthy by earning all kinds of merit, but because submitting to each other is obeying God's Word and thus honoring God.**
- In verse 22 the verb, "submit" is not in the original Greek text. Verse 22 is connected to the preceding verse, verse 21 Paul had said,

*"and be **subject** to one another in the fear of Christ."*

It goes on in verse 22 to basically say,

*"Wives, to your own husbands."*

("be subject" is added by the translators) So it is picked up from verse 21. It is also reinforced in verse 24 when he tells them,

*"Just as the church submits to Christ, you also be subject to your husbands."*

- When I use the term "**submit**" I am saying the same thing as "**subject myself**."
- **Hupotasso** comes from two Greek words, the word **hupó**, which means "**under**," and **tasso**, which means "**to set in place**."

In other words, the word means to set something in place up under something else. In the context it is talking about submitting to the authority of another. So Paul is saying to the wives,

**"Be willing to place yourself in a position under your husband who is the authority of your family. Be in the position of being submissive."**

- **Wives**– Eph 5:21-24
- **Husbands**– Eph 5:25-32

- **Children**– Eph 6:1-3
- **Fathers** – Eph 6:4
- **Servants** – Eph 6:5-8
- **Employers** – Eph 6:9

Wayne Barber notes that here in the context of marriage hupotasso

"...does not mean that (the wife) is commanded to obey her husband as a child would obey his parents or a slave would obey his master. A lot of men treat their wives as if they are a door mat. They walk all over them as if they have no sense, as if they have no ability, as if they are inferiors. That is not what (hupotasso) means."

Look at the word "obey" in Ephesians 6:1:

*"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."*

Guess what word the word "obey" is? **Hupakouo**. In other words, **you are an inferior to a superior and God says you must obey your parents. You have no option, and it is only by God's grace they ever give you a reason why they tell you to do what they tell you to do. Hupakouo is never used with a husband and wife. The wife has the power to yield the power to her husband. It is not a cowering down but a yielding up.**

**Important Question: Does The Word of God ask us to submit or obey Him?**

The word *Hupotasso*, that is used for wives submitting to husbands, is the word that talks about **two people who are absolutely equal in God's eyes**. There is not one level of inferiority of one to the other. **But the wife makes a choice to place herself as an equal underneath another equal, her husband, in order that there can be order and function in the family. The whole purpose of it is so that it meets the design that God has already ordered.**

The verb "submit" is **present tense and middle voice**. This is not something you do one time so you can get something back. **Present tense means this is constant: every day be being under submission to your husband at all times.**

Submission is nothing about their husbands ability. Many wives are a whole lot more gifted, full of personality, even more full of character and ability than the man. But God says, "Wives, I don't care how much better you are than him, nor do I care how many spiritual gifts you have. I am asking you as wives, submit to your husbands." "But God, my husband is mean and fails so much, surely you don't want me submitting to that do you?" God said, "That's right. You submit to your husband."

**John Piper Quote: From Sermon on Lionhearted**

**"When sin entered the world, it ruined the harmony of marriage not because it brought headship and submission into existence, but because it twisted man's humble, loving headship into hostile domination in some men and lazy indifference in others. And it twisted woman's intelligent, willing, happy, creative, articulate submission into manipulative obsequiousness or groveling in some women and brazen insubordination**

in others.”

### Twisted Role Reversals

<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Domination by force</b>	<b>Selfish demands</b>
<b>Brutality</b>	<b>Bossiness</b>
<b>Totalitarianism</b>	<b>Anger and bitterness</b>
<b>Dictatorship</b>	<b>Blaming and Shaming</b>
<b>Rudeness</b>	<b>Pushiness</b>
<b>Disrespect</b>	<b>Nagging</b>
<b>Laziness</b>	<b>Feeling Cheated</b>
<b>Carelessness</b>	<b>Manipulation</b>

According to Barna Research, the accounts of divorce, spousal and child abuse, infidelity, and substance abuse are almost indistinguishable between church-attending and non-church-attending people. It is clear that our lives are excellent at responding to what they have experienced and experience very little change beyond that.

Many people have given up on the idea of family and marriage. But it is possible and it can thrive in our city and society. But again, **we need the Spirit of God's help, without it we are just selfish people trying to look spiritual.**

#### **Why Would A Woman Submit To Her Husband?**

**First: Submission Is Ultimately A Response To God.** What would make a woman who is equal, probably more gifted, more educated and more sensitive than her husband, put herself under submission to him?

*"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, **as to the Lord.**"*

**Because she is doing it as unto the Lord.** Is this saying, "I am supposed to treat my husband as I treat the Lord?" No, he is not saying that. A lot of husbands want to be treated that way, but that is not what he is saying. Paul is saying, "**You do this as an act of love to the Lord.**" Remember, we really don't have sin issues, we have love issues with God.

Jesus said in John 14:21,

*"If you love Me, you will obey Me."*

**Second: Submission Is A Work Of The Holy Spirit.** What could empower a wife to do this? **Because the Holy Spirit is able to empower you to be obedient to the Word of The Lord.** If God is going to make your family a functional family, you will do your best to obey what He says. **It's not because you love your husband that much, but it is because you love Jesus that much.** That is the key. As I love the Lord Jesus, I am willing to do whatever it is he tells me to do. A wife's love for Christ

motivates her to obey. **So, she looks in God's Word and asks to be empowered by God's Spirit to strengthen your life of willful submission, NOT RESENTFUL MARTYDOM!** Too many wives are "suffering for Jesus" when there is not an abuse problem, there is a submission problem. A wife's submission problem is not a husband's problem, it is a wife problem. Never is the man required to win the approval or worthiness of submission of his wife, she is to freely lay it down. If an act of submission were earned, then it would not be submission at all, it would be a fair and even trade.

**Third: Submission Is A Model Of The Bride Of Christ.** God has honored women to do what He has asked the church to do. The model of the church is the model of the wife, the bride of Christ.

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

**Ephesians 5:22-24**

So the meaning of submission is not an inferior to a superior. It is of two equals, one choosing to do what God says to do and the other either refusing to do it or expecting equal exchange. You are going to have to make up your own mind the lifestyle of submission. You are doing it as unto the Lord. You are doing it because God has empowered you to do it through His Holy Spirit. And you submit because it is the model Jesus gave us. This submission of the wife allows God to bring blessing and order to a home otherwise ran through many struggles and division.

#### **Conclusion:**

**David wrote,**

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."*

Psalm 127:1