

SUBMIT ONE TO ANOTHER (Ephesians 5:18-21)

1. The definition of submit.

- a. The word translated submit is a compound word.
 - i. The first word is a word that means “under”.
 - ii. The second word means “to arrange in order”.
- b. Thayer tells us that this word means “to submit to one’s control, to yield to one’s admonition or advice”.
- c. Practically speaking, it means we choose to live our lives under the circumstances, relationships and roles in which we find ourselves in God’s kingdom and life.
- d. Several different words are translated from this word.
 - i. Subject, subjection, obedience, and submit and forms of all these words are found where this word is used.
 - ii. Notice that three of them have the prefix sub.
 - iii. This means “to be under”.
- e. There are numerous relationships in the New Testament where one party is in subjection to another.
 - i. Jesus was subject unto His parents (Luke 2:51).
 - ii. The demons were subject to the disciples (Luke 10:17).
 - iii. We are to be subject to the government (Romans 13:1).
 - iv. All things are put under Christ (1 Corinthians 15:27).
 - v. One day, Christ will be subject to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28).
 - vi. Wives are to submit to their husbands (Colossians 3:18).
 - vii. Servants are to obey their masters (Titus 2:9).
 - viii. We are to submit to God (James 4:7).
 - ix. The younger are to submit to the older (1 Peter 5:5).
 - x. We are all to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5).
- f. This is an act of will.
- g. We choose to place ourselves in subjection in each of these relationships.
- h. What is even more interesting is that those who are in authority are to place themselves in subjection.
 - i. Hopefully we all realize that the next section in Ephesians 5 talks about the husband and wife relationship and how it is modeled by the relationship of Christ to His church.
 - ii. Yes, wives are to submit themselves to their husbands but the husband is to be sacrificial in his love for his wife.
 - iii. The next section tells children to obey their parents with the idea of submission in mind, in fact, those that are qualified to be elders have their children in subjection, which is from a word closely akin to ours (1 Timothy 3:4).
 - iv. But parents, especially fathers, are not to provoke their children to wrath.
 - v. Servants are to be obedient to their masters in the next section.
 - vi. However, Christians with servants were to treat their servants with respect knowing that the Lord is watching from heaven.
- i. All parties, this way are submitting to one another.
 - i. A husband could lord it over his wife, but won’t because he wants what

- is best for her.
- ii. A parent can cause a child much anguish but doesn't because he wants what is best for the child.
- iii. A master could treat a servant terribly but won't because he wants what is best for the servant.
- j. This is really a system of checks and balances isn't it?
- k. Now, Hebrews 13:17 says we are to obey our elders and submit to them.
 - i. The word submit there is a different word.
 - ii. We are going to study that passage more in depth in just a couple of Sunday nights so we won't get into it now, especially since it has a different meaning and it is the only place in the New Testament where that particular Greek word is used.
- l. This phrase means to place ourselves under one another.

2. The difficulty of submitting.

- a. As we mentioned, submitting, as this word is defined, is an act of will.
 - i. We choose to do this.
 - ii. We have strength of our own and can do what we want to do.
- b. Our society is one that is concerned with its rights.
 - i. There are gay rights, black rights, transgender rights, women's rights and all kinds of rights.
 - ii. If you believe your rights have been violated, you have been taught to scream out about your rights.
 - iii. It is happening all over our nation.
 - iv. There is even children's rights being stressed, all except for the innocent ones within their mother's womb.
- c. If you feel you have been discriminated against you can find a lawyer to talk to and potentially win a lot of money in a lawsuit.
- d. As with all things in society, some of this has bled over into the church.
- e. We want to get our way.
- f. Philip Crosby described human nature in his book *The Art of Getting Your Own Sweet Way*: "People are not complex," he writes. "They really just want to achieve their personal definition of peace and quiet and to have their own sweet way."
- g. We get this from our society.
- h. However, there is nothing remotely akin to this thinking taught anywhere in the New Testament.
 - i. In fact, in the church, the exact opposite is true.
 - ii. Instead of seeking our rights and preferences, the New Testament teaches us to submit one to another.
- i. It is a way of thinking that must be achieved by all of us (Philippians 2:3-4).
- j. Instead of sticking up for our rights, we will submit to one another.
- k. This does not mean be a doormat.
 - i. Our Lord wasn't a doormat but He was submissive.
 - ii. Paul was submissive, but when his governmental rights were being taken away, he stood up for himself and claimed the rights given by the Roman government.
- l. It is difficult to be submissive because it goes against our culture but it must be done in order to keep peace in the Lord's church.

3. The depiction of submitting.

- a. There is no better depiction of submission than that of Jesus.
 - i. We mentioned Philippians 2:3-4.
 - ii. Philippians 2:5-9 portray the submission of our Lord to God.
 - iii. John 13:3ff show that Jesus depicted submission by washing the disciples feet.
- b. Paul would submit his will to that of others in order to win them to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).
- c. Why did he do that (1 Corinthians 9:23)?
 - i. Paul did not want to hurt his ability to spread the gospel.
 - ii. This is more important than anything else.
- d. If we are constantly demanding our way, we are hindering the spread of the gospel.
- e. Rather, we must be like our Lord, and submit first to God, and then to one another (James 4:7).

4. The desire to submit.

- a. Why should I do this?
- b. Remember, our problem with submitting to one another is that it means I don't get my way.
- c. What's in it for me if I'm submissive?
- d. We know we've been commanded to do this, but we've been commanded to do a lot of things that we don't always do right?
- e. Hopefully, each of us has a desire to please our Lord and submission shows that desire to others.
 - i. Look at our verse again (Ephesians 5:21).
 - ii. It is out of reverence or fear of our Lord.
 - iii. We revere Christ, hold Him in awe, so we show that by submitting to one another.
- f. One of the paradoxes of Christianity is that the way up is down.
 - i. If we want to be elevated in the kingdom, we serve others.
 - ii. The same is true with the idea of submission.
- g. Not only is the desire to submit in order to show reverence for Jesus but to also be free.
 - i. Real freedom is the ability to not bear the weight of a burden any longer.
 - ii. This is what freedom from sin is isn't it?
 - iii. The same is true for problems that arise.
 - iv. We can just let it go and go on with life.
- h. Please know and understand that I am not talking about matters of sin and doctrinal integrity, but about matters of opinion.
- i. If there is no sin, then we can just let it go and let our brother or sister keep doing what it is they are doing or let him or her get whatever it is.
- j. Ultimately, we do this because we want their to be peace in the congregation.
- k. We desire to submit because we want to show reverence for our Lord, we want to be free from the weight of ill will, and we want peace to reign in the congregation.

