

Loyalty And Submission (Part 1)

Loyalty to Christ is Dependent Upon Submission

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On the last Sabbath of December John Plunkett gave a very fine sermon on loyalty. About a week later I received an email from a woman not with the Church of the Great God, but one who subscribes to *The Berean*. She was distressed, not with us or with *the Berean*, but with herself. She wondered if she had a wrong understanding about certain areas of her life. *The Berean* article that motivated her touched ever so briefly on the subject of a woman's subjection to a man.

At the beginning of her letter it seemed apparent that she had no problem with the responsibility within marriage, but she had found that most men, according to her, seemed to assume that this subjection carries equally into every aspect of life. But as I read further I found that she indeed had some doubts about a wife's subjection to her husband within marriage as well. She gave no impression of being militant, but more puzzled about how much loyal subjection God expects of a woman who finds that she is married to a man who is stubborn, controlling, demanding, and foolish besides.

In John Plunkett's sermon, he showed that the word "loyalty" does not even appear in the King James Version, but that its principles are certainly taught in the Bible's pages, and that there are plenty of examples of it shown. Besides that, the word "faithful" comes very close in meaning to the term "loyalty."

One of the reasons the King James translators did not use the word may be because there is no word in the Hebrew or Greek languages that exactly fits the English word "loyal" or "loyalty." It is just not precise enough, so they just used the word "faithful."

According to Joseph T. Shipley's book, "The Origin of English Words," on page 209: "The journey of the word loyal into the English language begins within an ancient Indo-European root word that transliterates into *leg*, but this root means to set in order." Interestingly, the Greek word *logos*—which we heard a sermon on from Richard last week—translated "word" (and used of Jesus in the King James Version) has exactly the same root as the word "loyal." So does the word "lexicon," which is a literary device that sets words in alphabetical order.

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, it says: "The more immediate roots of loyal are in the Latin language from the word *legalis*, from which comes our word legal. From the Latin it was absorbed into the Old French as *leial*, and then the English-

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speaking people saw benefits to using it, so they added it to the English language as loyal."

You should be able to begin to see that the word's roots clearly show that "loyalty" has definite ties to meeting duties or obligations to persons or conditions to which one feels **legally** bound. Now finding that one is in subjection to, and following through in submission, is very important to becoming one, whether it is with God, or with one's spouse.

There is also no doubt that becoming one within marriage has always been difficult. I say this confidently because human nature has always been driving man ever since the day of Adam and Eve. Human nature has not changed. Human nature has always been self-centered and driven to compete or to control. This is because Satan has been alive the whole time, and ruling as god of this world, infusing both genders with the pride needful to, at the very least, defend one's position within a union, and hopefully rise above the spouse.

Over the past fifty years marriage has become exceedingly more difficult. I personally place much of the blame on the technological advances of rapid transportation and communication, and especially the visual media, such as movies and television. And right up there with the visual media are the universities. Virtually every one of them is a hotbed for any liberalization of what they consider to be "restrictive traditions."

An interesting illustration of this involves the Harvard University-based Harvard University Press. Harvard University is really a prestigious university. It is perhaps the most prestigious university in all of the United States. The Harvard University Press, a profit-making organization, is integrated with Harvard University. On their initiative they sought out University of Chicago sociologist and professor Linda J. Waite (who describes herself as a liberal Democrat) to write a book based on her studies into marriage. This lady looked like the ideal candidate to write a book that they could back.

However, when they received her manuscript (which she titled "The Case For Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially") and read what she had to say which strongly supported marriage, they very quickly decided not to publish it. Instead, she took her manuscript to Doubleday, and they did what the university would not do. This begins to tell you something about the mental attitude of the university toward marriage.

Here in the United States there are two national political/social organizations that have been at the forefront, and very successfully I might add, fighting against the very

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concept of marriage and homemaking. The one is the National Organization for Women, and the second is Planned Parenthood.

In one of her books, Betty Friedan, who is one of the feminist movement's most strident leaders, described a house as: "a woman's concentration camp, more comfortable to be sure, but a prison nonetheless."

To the leaders of these groups, especially the National Organization for Women, marriage is slavery. Very many women, though not members of this organization, have bought into their social concepts that are based on the leaders own narrow personal experiences that they have nurtured, fortified, and fomented within the universities that they attended. Many of these ladies who are leaders of the National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood have the initials "PhD" after their names.

But the woman on the street does not even know where these concepts are coming from, but they see them displayed in glorious colors in movies, in television entertainment, and in racy novels about so-called liberated adventuresses, in slick magazines bought at the checkout counter, and in the business world as well.

So successful has been the National Organization for Women, that at least legally, the entering into a covenant contract by two being married has, because of irresponsibility, all but disappeared from the American scene. With "no fault" divorce, either the man or the woman has the power to break the marriage agreement at any time, for any reason. Why? Because at the heart of the matter is that today, legally, culturally, spiritually, and psychologically, they never really had a binding agreement in the first place. American divorce has become only slightly more difficult than the infamous Islamic "I divorce thee. I divorce thee. I divorce thee."

Ronald Reagan's son once told a reporter during an interview that his father ranked his signing of the California "no fault" divorce law in 1969, as one of his most regretted political acts because of the cultural devastation it opened the door to.

In Isaiah 3, Isaiah is reporting the social condition, the leadership condition that existed in that generation prior to Judah falling to Nebuchadnezzar's armies.

Isaiah 3:1-4 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, does take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, [Remember, God is going to take them away] the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the

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counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

God does not literally mean children, but children in terms of wisdom, children in terms of understanding—people who are foolish and not guided by the law of God, or a relationship that comes with God.

Isaiah 3:5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.

Isaiah 3:8-9 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The show of their countenance does witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

Isaiah 3:12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.

I wanted to read this with a preface to what I am about to say about the backdrop, the foundation, for the present situation we find ourselves living through here in the United States of America. I want you to understand that what God says here in Isaiah 3 is not gender specific. It is written in the masculine gender because most institutional leaders are masculine, but female leadership and wisdom has degenerated every bit as much as has the male's. We are all going down the tubes together.

I spoke a bit earlier about the Harvard University Press, that they did not publish Linda Waite's book. When they were asked why they turned it down, the spokesmen's reply was they turned it down because they did not like its tone (whatever that is). However, they *did* like the tone of feminist Catherine McKinnon's book.

Catherine McKinnon is a professor of law at both the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago. One reviewer of her book stated that in her book she expressed "whole-hog hatred of men." Now guess who is going to read what was in her book. Are men going to read that? Not very many. Women will. What kind of an effect do you think that is going to have on these women's thinking?

McKinnon states in her book: "What in the liberal view looks like love and romance looks a lot like hatred and torture to the feminist." She went on to say: "Feminism stresses the indistinguishability of prostitution, marriage, and sexual harassment." In other words, she is saying that marriage *is* prostitution, that marriage *is* sexual harassment; and thus the "marriage equals rape and slavery" theme dominates the outlook of the leadership of the National Organization for Women, and also Planned Parenthood, but the Planned Parenthood with somewhat lesser extent.

I want you to listen to some quotes from feminist leaders. You are going to recognize most of these names.

Gloria Steinem is quoted in *The Saturday Review of Education*, March 1973: "Here are the aims of feminism. We have to abolish and reform the institution of marriage. . . By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God. . . We must understand what we are attempting is a revolution, a public relations movement."

Vivian Gornick, a feminist author who is a tenured professor at the University of Arizona is quoted in *The Daily Illini*, which is associated with the University of Illinois, April 25, 1981: "Being a housewife is an illegitimate profession. The choice to serve and be protected and plan towards being a family-maker is a choice that should not be. The heart of radical feminism is to change that."

Robin Morgan, a feminist author who became editor of *Ms. Magazine* stated: "We can't destroy the inequities between men and women until we destroy marriage."

Germaine Greer, author, scholar, and lecturer at the University of Warwick, England is quoted in *The Female Eunuch*, in 1971: "If women are to effect significant amelioration of the condition, it seems obvious that they must refuse to marry. . . The plight of mothers is more desperate than that of other women, and the more numerous the children the more hopeless the situation seems to be. . . Most women would shrink at the notion of leaving husband and children, but this is precisely the case in which brutally clear thinking must be undertaken."

These people are sick!

Andrea Dworkin, radical feminist author of several books, is quoted from the 1983 publication of one of her books in which she says: "Like prostitution, marriage is the institution that is extremely oppressive and dangerous to women."

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Jill Johnston, feminist author and journalist, quoted from her 1973 book *Lesbian Nation*: "Until all women are lesbians there will be no true political revolution."

Claudia Card, professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1996 said: "The legal rights of access that marriage partners have to each other's person, property and life, makes it all but impossible for a spouse to defend herself (or himself) or to be protected against torture, rape, battery, stalking, mayhem, or murder by the other spouse. . . Legal marriage thus enlists state's support conditions conducive to murder and mayhem."

Through these quotes what we hear is bold-faced rage against men. Even though God is not directly mentioned, it is rage against Him too, because marriage is the institution He created in order that there be stability within mankind.

I want you to turn to Ezekiel 18:4 because I want us to clearly understand something that is the subject of this whole chapter.

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it shall die.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

What you can get from this whole chapter when everything is put together is that God is saying we cannot blame our sins on others. Each and every person is held responsible by God personally and individually. These feminists cannot blame their fathers, or whoever it was they feel mistreated them, because there comes a time when a person matures and he is held responsible by God to get over it. Is that plain and clear?

I do not know what evil things happened to these women, and I am very sorry that it did. It probably happened in their most formative years. I think that undoubtedly there was sexual abuse within it, and perhaps spousal abuse as well, but regardless, they have managed to turn their anger against what one man did to them into a raging condemnation against all men. They apparently believe that all men are nothing more than predatory beasts, and that marriage is the social institution that enables men to legally get away with their violent behavior; thus these women are energetically determined to save women from slavery and the oppression of family life.

Brethren, they have succeeded in spades.

If they were a business venture coming on the scene in the early sixties, this would have been an outfit to invest in, because they have succeeded in being a major, major influence, pushing America into the cultural destruction of liberalism. As far as their aims are concerned, they produce a tremendous increase, where, as we would say in business, a profit. They have been the prime social movers for shacking up rather than marrying. It is they who are the prime movers pushing for no-fault divorce. They were the prime movers who successfully promoted "abortion on demand" and the murder of over 47 million unborn American children. They are the prime movers of the homosexual agenda and the acceptance of same-sex "marriage."

Are these things coming to pass? Are they now a reality in the United States? They either came up with and/or strongly promoted the social liberalization products at just the right time that very large portions of Americans have bought into, lock, stock, and barrel, because they too have been set up by other forces to readily accept these radical concepts.

Not everybody has bought into them, especially to the same degree, but enough to change the cultural face of America. There are a number of religious, social, and psychological forces that motivated public acceptance, but none of them is larger than the lethal-to-morality combination of weak religious belief, united with ignorance of what is moral and what is not. These two together have worked to produce a general irresponsibility in the American public, and a very weak commitment to the relatively high moral standard of the 1950s. We got through the 1950s, and everything went downhill in a hurry.

Those of you who read social commentaries will know that the Baby Boomers especially look back at the 1950s and snicker. Everybody then was so square, so inhibited. That is what they destroyed. Those of us who lived through the fifties were set up. This has been going on for at least 150 or 200 years, pulling us down in just about every direction. So with this combination of weak religious beliefs united with ignorance of what is moral and right and the visual impact of movies and television, there is no way that morality could go except down.

Here is a question that is important to this sermon. How can one be loyal and committed to uphold what one is either ignorant of, or even vaguely knows? The theme being drummed into us from every angle in the world for two generations now is that there are no moral and spiritual absolutes. Ironically, this very claim is absolutely a lie, because there **are** absolutes, but people are choosing to not believe them. They know they are

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there, but they are deliberately choosing not to believe them because they do not want to be restricted to what they believe to be restrictive.

There are indeed moral and spiritual absolutes, and in our calling our loyalty to these absolutes in the face of this ever-strengthening attack against them is what is on the line for us. Do not ever allow yourself to think that your perception of the purity of God's absolutes has not been affected. It has, and it has not been affected for the good.

There are two major qualities or virtues that loyalty is dependent upon. Each of these qualities has other factors impacting—that is, influencing and supporting—them, but I believe that these two are of equal importance to producing the highest level of loyalty. The first one is: **knowledge of righteousness**. We have to have it. This knowledge of righteousness requires a process of growth that begins when God calls us, thus beginning to remove our blindness to the mystery of God. In one sense it can be established by Psalm 119:172, and I want you to turn there. I do not know who the author of this psalm is, but he was an insightful individual.

Psalm 119:172 My tongue shall speak of Your word: for all Your commandments are righteousness.

Righteousness is **right doing**. Righteousness is what we are to be loyal to. Turn now to John 14:15 and we will look at the second of the two qualities.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 15:13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The second of these two virtues is: **devotion to duty**. I chose the term "devotion" rather than "commitment," because devotion carries with it a much-needed emotional element. Our loyal devotion is not merely to a cold set of standards that is contained in the commandments, but to two magnificent Beings who have been loyal to us beyond words: the Father and the Son.

I want to pick up on a principle that Paul used when writing to the Roman congregation to prod their thinking, because they thought that they were right, and they were puffed up about the subject on which he was writing. But if they were right, Paul would never have had to clarify what many of them misunderstood about God's plan and purpose.

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He did this in Romans 9 through 11.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits.

That is really as far as I need to go, because then he starts talking about the subject of chapters 9 through 11.

In our lifetime we are moving toward the time when we are especially called upon to examine ourselves and to repent. We are coming upon the time of the Days of Unleavened Bread and Passover. Repentance means that we are to change our thinking, and then our actions.

In a marginal reference my Bible changes the word "conceits" to "opinions." I think this makes Paul's point as to why he wrote these three chapters, that there were any number of opinions about this subject in these three chapters floating around in the congregation, and they were producing arguments, offense, and factions within the group.

My concern is not for the subject that Paul addressed in these three chapters, but rather the principle of loyalty, and what each of us must be loyal to God to, and to our spouse. We cannot separate them, as we are going to see as we continue here.

We would like to separate loyalty to God from loyalty to our spouse because we can accept the fact that God is perfect, and we can be subject to a perfect being. But now we know very well that our spouse is not a perfect being, and it becomes very difficult to subject ourselves to an imperfect being, and we supply ourselves with all kinds of justifications and ramifications for not following through with what God says to do. We shall see.

Much of my sermon so far has revolved around the vast change in American attitudes toward marriage, so I am going to continue to use that as a backdrop, because the instruction given in the Bible regarding subjection shows how we must conduct ourselves in order to be loyal. Now one absolutely cannot be loyal without placing himself or herself in subjection to righteousness with devoted affection.

I am going to warn you right now that what we are going to see is not easy to do. Loyalty demands a great deal of faith, humility, and self-control. I do not know how many times I heard Herbert Armstrong say that the whole issue in the Bible involves

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government. Loyalty is involved in government. It cannot be avoided.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

The word "submit" can be translated either "submit" or "subject." If you will look in *Strong's Concordance* you will find that the same Greek word is translated both ways in the King James Version.

This particular verse is aimed at women, but unfortunately many men (and I might go so far as to say *very* many men) never stop to consider that they are to be subject to their wives, and *both* are to be subject to Christ.

Now subjection may not be equal in all the same areas of married life, but brethren, we will never be loyal until we learn to be subject. Please understand that. We will never be loyal until we learn to be subject.

According to my *American Heritage College Dictionary*, the word "subject" means "being under the power or authority of another, or others." *Webster's* adds a little bit to this: "Owing obedience or allegiance to the power or dominion of another." We are going to see that loyalty absolutely depends on being in subjection.

There is nothing clearer than the example of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were instructed by God as to their responsibility; therefore, there was no ignorance of righteousness. They had been taught. They were then tested, in the course of life, and they **chose** to be subject to Satan rather than to God. Because they were not subject to God, the result was disloyalty, and ultimately death. It is as clear as anything. Disloyalty equals death. Loyalty equals life. I cannot make this issue any plainer than God has made it here in Genesis 3.

The words "being in subjection" seem to fill the minds of many with horror. I think in regard to marriage it is its most unpopular aspect, because people think of subjection leading to grief, and that they will become puppets manipulated into pure misery. I am certain that such people do not understand how it is approached in the Bible at all, and even if they do understand a measure of it, they do not really believe it, and fearfully shy away from it.

Let me give you an overview of how frequently and in how many differing circumstances this term is used or implied. We need to understand that God, as Creator, has

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established a line of authority in order to remove confusion, and in order to create order in virtually every circumstance.

Romans 1:19-20 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them [or to them]; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Who is "*they*" in that last phrase—"so that *they* are without excuse"? "They" is anybody anywhere on earth who is witness to the creation. I am not talking about Christian people here. It is **everybody**. "They are without excuse!" God's eternal power, His authority, is clearly seen; therefore God holds everyone, whether Christian or not, accountable for recognizing His authority simply by seeing His power in creation. All of mankind is thus condemned before God if they are not subject to Him. This first verse then establishes the fact that everybody is to be subject to God.

John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

Here is a clear statement that Jesus willingly subjected Himself to His Father.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke unto them [the disciples] saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

All authority that we are to be subject to is His delegated authority that He received from the Father. The Father is the Head, but He has delegated the authority to the Son.

Ephesians 1:20-23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all.

This confirms Matthew 28:18, and at the same time specifically places Jesus over the

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church. Now we are getting closer to us.

Romans 13:1-2 is written specifically to Christians, but it actually applies to everybody on earth. I want us to apply this to ourselves.

Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Here is a way that we can look at this. The Father delegated authority to the Son, and now the Son, with the permission of the Father, has in turn delegated authority to civil governments, and He has very clearly told us that we are to be subject to them. A resistance to submitting to them is the same as resisting God Himself. We of course understand that we are not to obey them if they tell us to break a commandment.

Ephesians 5:19-21 gives general instructions to the church.

Ephesians 5:19-21 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting [or subjecting] yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

What we have here is a general rule for establishing and maintaining peace and order within the congregation. We are to be subject to one another. It is not gender-specific. It is instruction to men as well as to women.

I Peter 2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [the hardheads].

Here we see that subjection plays a part in the way one makes his living, so there is an order right from God to be subject to our employers.

Ephesians 6:4 And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

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Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents [be subject to your parents] in the Lord; for this is right.

We will get to the qualification maybe later on, but these verses put together give the father authority over the discipline and instruction of the children.

I Corinthians 7:3-5 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [or affection]: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife has not power [or authority] over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud you not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Brethren, that is clear. The husband and the wife are subject to each other, specifically in this case in terms of sexual intercourse; love-making. Let us look at another one in I Corinthians 11:2-3.

I Corinthians 11:2-3 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Here we have a direct line of authority stated so clearly, that if one says he believes the Bible, there can be no denying what it establishes. The thought here, combined with the other verses we just went through, is that biblically all authority flows from the Father through the Son onto mankind; and then is distributed more specifically through the other verses.

Specifically there are times when the responsibility of who is subject to whom shifts from one gender to the other.

What we just looked at is that God has wonderfully designed an easily-understood system of leadership and subjection to balance and support each other in order to make very productive working units within government, institutions like churches and schools, companies that manufacture or provide services, and marriage too.

However, there are two major questions. Question 1: Do we believe what God says? If we do not, we will not do what He says, no matter what. We will simply do what we have always done. Another way of putting it is that we will do what is most attractive to us at the time, and nothing changes.

Question 2: Are we ignorant of the principles of godly leadership and subjection? It is this ignorance that we are attempting to remove through growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, because He gave us truth and a perfect example to follow. A perfect example? Yes. We just read from Jesus' own lips in John 8:29 that He **always** did what the Father told Him, and remember, Jesus does not lie. He was in **perfect** subjection all the way to death! He never turned aside in any circumstance.

Jesus never gave Himself a rational explanation. He never gave Himself a justification. "Well, not this time, God." He was loyal to the death, and loyal in every situation that we might consider big or small. He had the knowledge of what was right, and He loved His Father and was devoted to Him. He believed what His Father said under every circumstance was the right thing to do.

What this all adds up to brethren, is that we are pretty much without excuse for not being loyal. We have weaknesses, and God takes those things into consideration, but we should be growing. What I want us to begin to understand is that despite Jesus being in perfect *subjection*, He was such a fearless *leader* that His immediate followers and many, many people after them, willingly, lovingly gave their lives in *subjection* to Him.

This leads us to a major conclusion: A truth that needs to be burned into our mode of operations wherever we are functioning is that **godly leadership and subjection utilize exactly the same attributes of character**. They cannot be separated because the only difference is the focus when they are in one position or the other. This means, in practical fact, that regardless of whether one is a man or a woman who is in godly subjection like Christ was, he or she is already a leader. When they are put into a position of more direct leadership, they will use the same knowledge and the same attributes of character, and be a good leader in that position even as they did when they were in subjection.

Out of these sermons, and there will probably be one more, I want us to understand this. The attributes that are needed for subjection are exactly the same as those that are needed for leadership. Do you understand why God wants us to be in perfect subjection to Him? It is because it is going to make us a leader. When we are given the opportunity to lead, those qualities will already be there because we were in subjection. God is

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producing leaders through subjection. That is so simple to understand, but we shy away from subjection, thinking that it is going to make a wimp out of us, thinking that it is going to make us a slave, when actually it is going to set us free in the end.

These attributes of character have nothing to do with either gender or age. It does not matter whether one is male or female, twenty-one or ninety-one, because these attributes of character are the same as those shared by all Christians in general. That is another important thing. The same attributes that make a mature Christian also make one a better husband or wife.

Let me make this very plain. What God requires, indeed commands, to the man and to the woman in a marriage is in reality nothing more than the basic principles of Christianity. The only difference is that in a number of places He specifically applies those principles to a specific setting: marriage.

Romans 6:15-18 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid [Certainly not]. Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants [or slaves] of righteousness.

This series of verses is addressed to all Christians. Again, it does not matter whether one is male or female, black or white, young or old. For all Christians, every thought and act should begin with devotion to God and His righteousness. Remember, that in all of life Jesus said that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

In this section Paul is making sure fellow Christians understand that though they are no longer under the law, they are most assuredly not free to sin. Not for a moment is Paul granting a concession that is permissible for a Christian to disloyally commit sin here and there, or occasionally, and Paul's point is curt and decisive. It is required of all Christians, that once free from the wages of sin and our bondage to Satan, we are to become slaves, completely, totally subject to righteousness. He is saying that no man is free to sin; that is, be disloyal, to be his own boss, and he is absolutely not independent, because in either case man has a master. The master is either God, or sin.

I Corinthians 7:22-23 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's

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servant. You are bought with a price; be not you the servants of men.

I Corinthians 3:23 And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

I want you to feed this all back into Romans 6:15-18. A slave is one who is subject to a master. We are not slaves in the ordinary sense, because there is a spiritual component to our slavery that does not exist in the human sense. We are slaves to One—Christ—who loves us with every fiber of His being, and who has already proved His loyalty to us by going to death for those who are His slaves. In return, our slavery to Him, our Master, demands an undivided allegiance. This is what Romans 6 is about.

Our loyalty to our Master is being tested, and it is our responsibility to show our subjection to our Owner by obeying Him. We are to obey Him in our relations with government, with institutions, on the job, and in the family.

Now God willing, we will continue this theme the next time. We have laid a foundation that I hope will provide a good base, a springboard, for understanding subjection a great deal better maybe than we ever have before.