



## [Ephesians 5:22-29](#)

(22) Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. (25) Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

*King James Version*

A chief purpose of marriage and family is to teach proper, godly government. It provides a conducive environment to learn both how to submit to authority and how to oversee others in love. Even in the "marriage chapter," Ephesians 5, Paul makes frequent use of governmental terms to describe the ideal marriage relationship.

*Submit* is a governmental term, as the governed person surrenders, gives in, or yields to the one who is in authority, and the apostle later uses *subject* in the same way. Paul employs the word *head* to denote one who has authority over an institution, just as the head directs the body. In God's scheme, the husband has authority over his wife and family in a similar way to Christ's authority over His Bride, the church. Again, we see the physical/spiritual parallel.

Perhaps the most significant governmental term in the whole passage is *love*. To many, love and government seem like odd companions, for most governments do not practice love but sheer, unfeeling power. But God's government is different. Love—outgoing concern for everyone and everything—is the very basis of His government and way of life. Paul illustrates this by pointing out that [Jesus Christ](#) governs His church in love, giving us examples of how His love is manifested to us: by sacrificing, sanctifying, cleansing, glorifying, nourishing, and cherishing it. The apostle turns these into instructions to the person in authority—the head, the husband—on how he must work to produce a happy, successful marriage.

Throughout this passage, he emphasizes the fact that the marriage union has a greater purpose, and a major one is to teach and practice proper governance. He stresses the authority and the loving care of Christ, the Head, as well as the submission and eventual glory of the church. In the husband's role, authority is finely balanced by loving care, and in the wife's role, her present submission is compensated by her ultimate glorification.

Many people think of government negatively, but good government offsets its use of power with an appropriate amount of love, combined with humility, and the promise of reward or blessing. These elements do not always take place at the same time, but this mix of virtues will eventually produce some form of glory, that is, a wonderful, magnificent result. In the case of marriage, it should produce enduring, harmonious, loving mates; happy, productive children; and sterling, righteous character in all parties involved.

These days, authority is disrespected and maligned, and Paul—actually, the whole Bible—teaches that this should not be. [God](#) is the ultimate authority, and He gives it to governments, institutions, and men as He sees fit ([Romans 13:1-7](#); see [Daniel 4:17](#)). Those so endowed are responsible for wielding their power justly and fairly, balancing it with [kindness](#) and concern. In the church, especially, we should have a better and more proper understanding of how government should work. Sometimes authority is not always used properly even in the church—yet in some of these cases, we make such a judgment because our perspective is skewed by various factors. A patient person will often find that it produces good fruit in the end.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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