

# What is Submission?

The front men for the institutional church like to talk about submission, but what they normally want to talk about is submission to the *elders* or leaders of the church, rather than the politically incorrect submission of a wife to her husband. They'll quote Hebrews 13:17:

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

They'll speak volumes about "placing yourself under" the authority of the leaders, and remind you often that they have authority to rule over you (citing 1 Tim. 5:17). Of course, they'll proclaim these things in all humility – it's the Bible that gives them authority over the laity, after all. Yet, this call for absolute submission of the flock is made on the basis of only a few verses, and in spite of verses like these:

But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. " { Matt 20:25-28 see also Mark 10:22}

And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' "But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves..." (Luke 22:25-27)

Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm. (2 Cor 1:24)

They call for the submission (in fact, often subjugation) of the flock with little warrant (the "obey" in Heb 13:17 carries the idea of allowing oneself to be persuaded, and the "submit" is literally to submit no longer), and ignore the references that tell them specifically NOT to exercise great authority or "lord it over", but rather to serve.

In general, they are not shy when crowing about their own mandate, and the laity's need to submit, but when the Bible makes a very clear and very strong case for the true and complete submission of one group of people to another, they equivocate, water down the rhetoric, or call up that oldest of standby explanations, useful for all manner of thing that they do not wish to follow: "it's cultural." When it solidifies their position, they're all for submission, but when it might make them seem out of touch, they say that the Bible's emphasis on submission is a product of the culture in which it was written. Thus, they can claim to firmly adhere to historical-grammatical interpretation of Scripture, yet ignore what the Word says. In fact, their interpretation is indeed based on culture – *today's*

culture! It is another example of the Church, so-called, bowing to worldly influence instead of influencing the world.

If you haven't already guessed, we're speaking of a wife's submission to her husband. This topic seems to make many church leaders nervous. They're usually quick to point out that the husband must not "lord it over the wife." Considering how well "church leaders" have followed Christ's admonition in Matthew 20, I find this reaction amusing. Often, the "pastor" or leader will be very quick to put conditions on the wife's submission, basically outlining numerous paths to righteous disobedience of her husband. For instance, "If he asks you to sin, you must refuse and obey God rather than man." This is a Scriptural mandate from another context and sounds good here, but then the "pious" woman can claim this exemption whenever she perceives sin, by her definition, and at her own discretion. Is this Biblical? In fact, it opens the door for her to rule over her husband by means of her own views and rationalizations.

What does it mean when the Bible tells a wife to be submissive to her husband? Is submission conditional? Is it limited to certain areas of her life? What is the prerogative and purpose of Biblical submission? These are questions we hope to shed some light on with the following pages.

### *Eph 5:22-33*

<sup>22</sup> Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

In verse 22, the verb "submit" (be subject) does not appear, but the immediate context of the statement within the letter concerns submission. Verse 21 says, "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." The idea of submission is carried over and expanded in the following verse; the one we're beginning with. The word for submission in this context is

very different from the word used in Hebrews 13:7, where the writer was talking about submitting to leaders. In Hebrews the word was:

NT:5226 hupeikoo; from Homer (900 B.C.?) down;  
to resist no longer, but to give way, yield (properly, of combatants);  
metaphorically, to yield to authority and admonition, to submit Heb 13:17. \*  
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Hebrews 13 is the only place you will find this word, and rather than speaking of general submission it speaks of giving honor and respect – deference - where it is due. It is used with the word translated “obey”:

NT:3982 peithoo

1. Active

- a. to persuade, i. e., to induce one by words to believe: Acts 19:26
- b. as in classical Greek from Homer (900 B.C.?) down, with an accusative of a person, to make friends of, win one's favor, gain one's good-will, Acts 12:20
- c. to persuade unto, i. e., move or induce one by persuasion to do something: Acts 13:43

2. Passive voice and middle voice

- a. to be persuaded, to suffer oneself to be persuaded; to be induced to believe: absolutely, Luke 16:31
- b. to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with: tini, one, Acts 5:36 f, 39 (40)

3. 2 perfect intransitive, to trust, have confidence, be confident: followed by an accusative with an infinitive, Rom 2:19 (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft)

The relationship between the Body of Christ and its leaders is one of discussion and persuasion. The image is of times when there are disagreements and a lack of proof on either side. In these cases, allow yourself to be persuaded by the arguments of the leader, rather than obstinately arguing on. Or when being Biblically admonished, allow yourself to be convinced by someone who is older and wiser in your mutual faith.

This is not the case with the husband and wife! The word used in Ephesians 5:21, and carried forward to verse 22 is ὑποτασσόμενοι :

NT:5293 hupotassoo:  
to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection: Heb 2:5  
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In Greek this verse (Eph 5:22) does not have a verb. In translation the verb must be supplied from the participle of "to submit" in the preceding verse (21). This verb is used in military contexts of a subordinate's relationship to his superior in the army hierarchy. It is used of a wife's relation to her husband in Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1; of servants to masters in Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:12; of people to state authorities in Rom 13:1. It means "to be subject to, obey, be ruled by." (from the UBS Handbook Series. Copyright (c) 1961-1997, by United Bible Societies)

The term for the wife's submission brooks no discussion whatsoever. As the UBS handbook notes, it is a military term used for a soldier's submission to a superior officer. Can you imagine a soldier in war time saying, "Gee, Cap'n, I don't think it's a good idea to charge the enemy. It's sinful, and I don't feel like it right now."? I don't think so! It is also the term for the submission of a slave to his master. This is a **much stronger** term than the one used for submitting to leaders. Of course, the UBS Handbook goes on to say this concerning *hupotassoo*: "It carries the implication of subordination, **reflecting the standards of the time**, which no amount of special pleading can disguise. Phillips' "learn to adapt yourselves" is an unfortunate attempt to make the command more palatable in a different age." (Ibid. [Emphasis mine]) One can almost feel the influences of the world pressing in on and altering the Church with statements like that. The fact is that the requirement of submission by the wife to the husband has NOTHING to do with culture, and EVERYTHING to do with God's ordained order of things and Christ's relationship to the Church, as we shall see shortly.

As if the language of submission in this verse wasn't strong enough, Paul strengthens it exponentially by characterizing the submission with an analogy: wives submit to your husbands as the Church submits to Christ! How is the Church to submit to Christ? He is our Kurios (Lord) and Master (Jude 4). We are to be slaves to Christ (Eph. 6:6). We are to obey Him, follow His example, and He is the one with all rule and authority in our lives. He is the bridegroom (John 1:28-29) and the Church is the bride, and as the Church submits to Christ, a Christian bride is told to submit to her Christian bridegroom.

In case there was any doubt whatsoever, Paul explains that the reason for this submission is: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." (Eph 5:23)

Head NT:2776 κεφαλή kephalê; gen. kephalês, fem. noun. The head, top, that which is uppermost in relation to something.

(I) Particularly of man (Matt 6:17; 8:20; 27:30; Luke 7:38); as cut off (Matt 14:11; Mark 6:27); of animals (Rev 9:17,19; 12:3; Sept.: Gen 3:15; 40:19); as the principal part, but emphatically for the whole person (Acts 18:6, "Your blood be upon your own heads," meaning the guilt for your destruction rests upon yourselves; Rom 12:20 quoted from Prov 25:22; Sept.: 2 Sam 1:16; 1 Kings 2:33,37). Metaphorically of things, the head, top, summit, e.g., the head of the corner, meaning the chief stone of the corner, the cornerstone (Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7, all quoted from Ps 118:22), the same as *akrogoniaios* (204), belonging to the extreme corner, chief corner (Sept.: Gen 8:5; 11:4).

(II) Metaphorically of persons, i.e., the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate, e.g., the husband in relation to his wife (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23) insofar as they are one body (Matt 19:6; Mark 10:8), and one body can have only one head to direct it; of Christ in relation to His Church which is His body, and its members are His members (cf. 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10,19); of God in relation to Christ (1 Cor 11:3). In Col 2:10 & Eph 1:22, God the Father is designated as the head of Christ. Generally, of a leader or ruler (Sept.: Judg 11:11).

Deriv.: *apokephalizō* (607), to decapitate, behead; *kephalis* (2777), a knob, roll, volume; *perikephalaia* (4030), helmet.

Syn.: hēgemôn (2232), a leader.

Ant.: poús (4228), foot; hupopódion (5286), footstool, something under the feet.

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Because Christ is the head, and the very savior of the Church, wives are to be submissive to their husbands **in the same way** as the Church is to Christ. Paul then re-emphasizes his point: 24-“But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in **everything**.” Note that the “ought to be” is not found in the original, so that if you take Paul’s emphasis into account it is more likely to be a case of “must be”!

**everything** NT:3956 pas, pasa, pan,

### **all, every**

#### I. adjectivally,

1. with anarthrous nouns (without the definite article)
  - a. **any, every one**
  - b. **any and every, of every kind** Matt 4:23
  - c. **the whole** Matt 2:3 2. with nouns which have the article, all the, the whole Matt 8:32

#### II. without a substantive

1. masculine and feminine every one, any one: Mark 9:49 2. Neuter pan, everything (anything) whatsoever
  - a. in the singular: pan to followed by a participle 1 Cor 10:25,27 b. Plural, **all things**
  - b. used of a certain definite totality or sum of things, the context showing what things are meant: Mark 4:34
  - c. accusative panta (adverbially), wholly, altogether, in all ways, in all things, in all respects: Acts 20:35 panta, in an absolute sense, all things that exist, all created things: John 1:3
  - d. with the article
    - i. in an absolute sense, all things collectively, the totality of created things, the universe of things: Rom 11:36
    - ii. in a relative sense: Mark 4:11
  - e. panta ta followed by a participle Matt 18:31
  - f. and ta panta with pronouns: ta ema panta, John 17:10
  - g. panta hosa: Matt 7:12
  - h. panta with prepositions it forms adverbial phrases: pro pantoon, before or above all things

#### III. with negatives

1. ou pas, not everyone
2. 2. pas ou (where ou belongs to the verb), no one, none,

EVERYTHING literally means ALL THINGS! When there is a conflict of opinion, she is to align herself with her husband, end of story. She is not to scheme or try to find a way out, but she is to submit. It is the opposite of the world's view, and certain to get the loving husband's attention in a huge way!

The passage then goes on to describe the husband's responsibility to his wife, but note that there is no linkage between the two; the husband's duty is in no way dependant upon the wife's actions, and the wife's submission is required *regardless* of whether the husband is doing his part or not. We'll see that more clearly in 1 Peter, but it is implicit here.

The key to this passage is verse 30, "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." The relationship that God ordains for married Christians has ***nothing*** to do with culture, but rests on the picture it presents of Christ and His Church. Any tampering or softening of this ordained relationship is a turning away from Scripture and God's will, and turning to traditions of men or an accommodation of current culture (such as the women's movement, political correctness, etc.).

### *Col 3:18-25*

<sup>18</sup> Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. <sup>20</sup> Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. <sup>22</sup> Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. <sup>25</sup> For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

We'll only deal with this section briefly because the terminology is the same, but there are a couple things to point out. The word for submission is the same as in Ephesians. The context is our responsibilities as Christians in every part of life. These are non-negotiable items in the Christian's life, and required of all. Notice the advice to slaves in verse 22; they are to serve "not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord." Paul then immediately expands the context to "whatever you do", showing that this whole teaching is for all Christians. Whatever role the Lord has put us in, we're supposed to perform our service with a good attitude, as if we're doing it for Him and not men (which we are!). Verse 24 says it is from the Lord that we will receive reward for our service, whether as a slave, a father, a child or a wife! It is Christ whom we serve! Now, notice verse 25. If you had any illusion that these

things, including a wife's submission to her husband, might be optional, think again. Not doing these things is wrong, and anyone who doesn't want to follow God's way will suffer the consequences of disobedience: "For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." We'll receive rewards from the Lord for fulfilling our roles well, but we can also expect the natural consequences of our disobedience to find us out. The world can rationalize. People can argue, and claim a role is demeaning, or that they are objectified – whatever – but don't doubt for a minute that their disobedience to God's way will be without consequence. However you rationalize and fool yourself, you are not an exception to this rule.

We'll now look at our main passage, and break it down verse by verse:

### *1 Peter 3:1-6*

<sup>1</sup>In the same way, you wives, be **submissive** to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

"In the same way..." In the same way as what? That ought to be the first question one has when approaching this passage. In fact, the answer to that question goes a long way to interpreting the passage for you:

Q-How should a wife be submissive to the husband?

A-In the same way that Christ was submissive to the Father, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" 1 Peter 2:21-23.

**submissive** NT:5293

hupotassoo:

1 aorist hupetaxa;passive, perfect hupotetagmai;2 aorist hupetageen;2 future hupotageesomai; present middle voice hupotassomai;**to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection**:tini ti or tina, 1 Cor 15:27 c.; Heb 2:5; Phil 3:21; passive, Rom 8:20 (see dia B. II. 1 b.): 1 Cor 15:27 b. and following; 1 Peter 3:22;tina or ti hupo tous podas tinos, 1 Cor 15:27 a.; Eph 1:22;hupokatoos toon podoon tinos, Heb 2:8; middle voice to subject oneself, to obey; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice: absolutely, Rom 13:5; 1 Cor 14:34 (compare Buttman, sec. 151, 30);tina, Luke 2:51; 10:17,20; Rom 8:7; 13:1; 1 Cor 14:32; 16:16; Eph 5:21 f (but in Eph 5:22, Griesbach, Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort's text omit it;Tregelles' marginal reading brackets hupotassesthe); Eph 5:24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5,9; 3:1; 1 Peter 2:18; 3:1,5; 5:5;

2 aorist passive with a middle voice force, to obey (the English Revised Version's (1881) subject oneself, Buttman, 52 (46)), Rom 10:3;imperative obey, be subject: James 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13; 5:5;2 future passive Heb 12:9.

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Our Lord was utterly submissive to the Father. Peter notes that He committed no sin, never lied or stretched the truth. He was submissive even though it caused

Him to be reviled, yet He didn't change His mind about His submission, and do things purely for Himself, He suffered *because* of His submission, but He never wavered. Instead of thinking of Himself, our Lord Jesus completely entrusted Himself to the Father, and submitted to the Father's will. That's what Peter talks about just before he says, "In the same way, wives be submissive to our own husbands..." ***In the same way***; be submissive.

Is the wife to end the submission if it causes her discomfort? No. Is the wife to end the submission if it makes her the butt of jokes among her friends? No. Is the wife to end the submission if she thinks she's made a mistake by marrying the guy? No. Is the wife to end the submission when the husband is disobedient to the Word? No. That's not what the text says, so if the husband is generally obedient, how much more does this apply? It certainly goes contrary to example, the world system, and the flesh, does it not?

<sup>2</sup> as they observe your **chaste** and **respectful** behavior.

**chaste** NT:53 hagnos, hagnee, hagnon (hazomai, see hagnos);

1. **exciting reverence**, venerable, sacred:

2. pure

a. pure from carnality, chaste, modest: Titus 2:5;

b. pure from every fault, immaculate: 2 Cor 7:11; Phil 4:8; 1 Tim 5:22; 1 Peter 3:2; 1 John 3:3 (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft)

**respectful** NT:5401 fobos, fobou, ho

1. fear, dread, terror

2. **reverence, respect** (for authority, rank, dignity): Rom 13:7

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Towards whom are the wives to be *reverent* (for this translation of the word hagnos fits the context better than "chaste" – you'll see why in a moment) and respectful? Their **HUSBANDS!** The verse is clearly telling us that this reverence and respect are the things that will impress the husband. The husband sees that the wife is reverent and respectful; not scheming and rebelling like the worldly women are! Unlike the worldly women, she is not completely hung up with herself. Unlike the worldly women, she does not have to get her own way, but defers to her husband! This woman is different! Her behavior stands out, and by her good example there is the possibility that she might just win her unbelieving and disobedient husband to the Lord. An argumentative, self-centered woman wouldn't have a chance. See verse 5 & 6!!

<sup>3</sup> Your *adornment* must not be merely external -- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;

**The word "Adornment" does not appear in the Greek!!** In fact, there are several seemingly crucial words that are imposed upon the text by the translators here and in verse 4. These words, at the very least, show the prejudice

of the translators, and in turn prejudice the reader. Should this be called a paraphrase instead? Your appearance, or how you present yourself to your husband, is what's being spoken of here. Your husband must not merely perceive you as your hair, jewelry or dress, but as his submissive and reverent wife. What is it that will most impress him?

<sup>4</sup> but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup> For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; <sup>6</sup> just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him **lord**, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

Here Sarah is given as the second example for the woman (**Christ** was the first!) How was Sarah obedient? First of all, she called Abraham "Kurios" which means Lord or Master.

**lord** NT:2962

kurios, kuriou, ho

**he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding; master, lord**

a. used universally, of the possessor and disposer of a thing, the owner Matt 20:8

b. kurios is a title of honor, expressive of respect and **reverence**, with which servants **salute their master**, Matt 13:27; 25:20,22; Luke 13:8; 14:22, etc.; this title is given:

a. to God, the ruler of the universe Matt 1:22

b. to the Messiah; and that:

c. to the Messiah regarded universally: Luke 1:43

d. to Jesus as the Messiah, Acts 10:36

. of Christ

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This should make it quite plain what verse 2 is all about. The concept is not politically correct. It runs contrary to popular culture. It is not taught this way in most churches, and it is an admittedly difficult thing for a woman to do (because of the Genesis curse that their desire will be for their husbands, and because the culture has been pounding the image of the independent, strong woman into their heads since infancy), but this submission is what Scripture teaches.

How was Sarah obedient to her Kurios? Reading the account makes it necessary for those who cannot stomach true submission to scramble in order to come up with exceptions to the total submission they find in Sarah's actions. It forces today's commentators into equivocations and other means of watering down the doctrine. They end up teaching women a brand of passive resistance, entirely contrary to Sarah's example. Yet, they never deal with the facts! When active resistance is hidden, and replaced, in their advice, by passive resistance or inaction, **it is still resistance, and it is still not submission.**

How was Sarah (and earlier, when she was known as Sarai) obedient? Look at just two stunning examples:

Gen 12:10-20:

<sup>10</sup> Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. <sup>11</sup> And it came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; <sup>12</sup> and it will come about when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. <sup>13</sup> Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you." <sup>14</sup> And it came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup> And Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup> Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. <sup>17</sup> But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup> Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? <sup>19</sup> "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." <sup>20</sup> And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

Gen 20:1-7

20:1 Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." 4 Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, wilt Thou slay a nation, even though blameless? 5 "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

This is her obedience to her Lord! She is the example! Couldn't God have chosen some other woman as the example? Of course He could have, but he didn't – He chose Sarah.

Sarah could have told Abraham that she couldn't do what he wanted her to do. She could have pointed out that while she was his half-sister, she was also his wife, and she would not be party to his intended deception. She could have refused because Abraham was asking her to sin, which God made clear to Abimelech (Gen. 20:6). She could have done any or all of these things and been applauded in virtually every "church" in America today, but she didn't, and instead is God's example of wifely submission.

Sarah was not a doormat. She had her own thoughts, and her own mind. To fulfill her husband's need for an heir she sent her maid in to him, but when Hagar belittled her she grew angry and told Abraham (Gen 16). Sarah laughed at God's proclamation that she would bear Abraham's heir! This was a strong, opinionated woman, but ***she submitted to her husband*** even when what he asked was demeaning and plainly wrong!

She could have used passive resistance, which is often hinted at as the solution to being submissive and retaining your integrity. She could have agreed to do as her husband asked, but then avoided the situation or claimed to have forgotten what she promised to do for him. The text makes it clear that she did exactly as Abraham asked her to do, and she ended up in both Pharaoh's and Abimelech's harems! When a wife replies to a request with, "I can't" instead of "I won't," but she never tries, or she gives less than a full effort, it is still not submission. If she submits once but refuses to submit again, it is still not submission. When the response to a request is, "I do this and that and the other," when asked why she will not do something that her husband wants her to do, it is not submission. "This, that, and the other" should be done and are to be appreciated by the husband, but the wife's duty doesn't stop there if her examples are Christ and Sarah. If there are a thousand reasons she can come up with for not doing something her husband asks her to do, but she never has a desire to fulfill the request, it is **not** submission. A wife can certainly come up with a thousand reasons to want her own way, but there is only one reason that should suffice for submitting to her husband: God desires it to be that way.

A pastor, even the most popular and charismatic television preacher, would be run out of his pulpit if he taught submission this way. You will never hear it taught this way in today's world, never. No woman wants it to be this way, and no man would, either, if roles were reversed. It doesn't change the facts! Read the context and look at the examples; Scripture is unequivocal about what submission is, and God didn't make any mistakes in choosing examples of it! Look at Sarah's submission! Look at what she did and was willing to do, and look at the one time she tried to get her own way, and how that all turned out (and she was doing even that for her husband). Christian women are often very quick to tell you that the world has perverted the husband and wife relationship, and sexual relations in particular, but when you listen closely you find that what they really mean is that the **men** are perverted. The things men want, and even the way men think are the things that the "pious" woman would change if she could. There are certainly perversions aplenty on the man's side, but the women are just as guilty and just as deceived, and what's worse is that they can be self-righteous and appear pious and upstanding by entrenching themselves in their erroneous positions, and in opposition to the clear mandate to submit to their husbands. Their disobedience is suddenly not a matter of their preferences or opinions, but now carries the weight of (twisted) Scripture. What's more, it puts the wife in a superior position to their inferior husbands, and that is truly a perversion of the Word.

Taken as a whole, with passages examined in context, and comparing Scripture to Scripture, the prevalent view of marital relations, submission, and a wife's behavior in marriage is sorely lacking. It thwarts the husband's desires and position, and puts wives under a great deal of pressure trying to live up to the world's view of marriage, please their husbands, check their husband's requests against Scripture or their own standards, and decide whether to obey or not. This cannot be and **is not** what God intended marriage to be. Scripture teaches plainly that the husband is to be the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23.) Any thinking that puts the wife in a position to edit or veto the husband's will is wrong thinking.

But the husband isn't living a Godly life, isn't making Godly requests, isn't perfect, isn't what the wife expected; so what! God tells the wife of the **unbeliever** to submit! He's not doing his part! That's a problem, for him, but not for the wife. His obligation to fulfill his role of loving his wife sacrificially is not in any way dependant upon the wife being submissive, and her obligation to be submissive is in no way dependant upon the husband loving her sacrificially! Ideally, both will be obedient to the Lord, but if one fails, the other is not released from obedience (to God!) This is true in all aspects of the relationship, large and small. "But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in **everything**." (Eph 5:23-25) Submission is not just meant for things the wife agrees with the husband on. It is a matter of subjecting to the husband in EVERYTHING! What does EVERYTHING include?