

Role Call Part II

Colossians 3:18-21

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I. Wife Col. 3:18 cf.; Eph 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1

a. Wives

- i. Wives are addressed first (as in Eph. 5:22; in 1 Pet. 3:1 following slaves, but before husbands). It is important to note that it is wives and not women generally who are in view (as also in 1 Cor. 14:34). Women who were single, widowed, or divorced and of independent means could evidently function as heads of their own households, as in the case of Lydia (Acts 16:14–15), Phoebe, the first named “deacon” in Christian history and patron of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1–2), Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11), and presumably Nympha in Colossae itself (see on 4:15).

b. Subject

- i. Subject - to cause to be in a submissive relationship
 1. In the middle voice, it describes a voluntary submission which resembles that of Christian humility
 2. to arrange under 2 to subject, put in subjection. 3 to subject one's self, obey. 4 to submit to one's control. 5 to yield to one's admonition or advice.
 3. neither should its significance be exaggerated; “subjection” means “subordination,” not “subjugation”
 4. Naturally, some express concern about the wife having a seemingly inferior role. Such thinking is unbiblical and a misunderstanding of these passages. First, since Paul used the term of Jesus' attitude who is Lord of all (see 1 Cor 15:28), the term may be appropriately used of one with the highest office. Both wives and husbands must recognize that the term has nothing to do with personal worth and value. Second, Paul described a functional situation which reflects God's plan for families on this earth. He was not speaking ontologically, that is, regarding the essence of personhood. There is a functional subordination, but an essential equality. Differences of roles to accomplish specific functions do not call for the categories of superior and inferior. It is better to speak of “suited for” and “not suited for.” Such an economic division is found in God, where the Father, Son, and Spirit each have different operations (functional

subordination), but they are all equally divine (essential equality). Thus Christian relationships on earth are patterned after those in God, and both husbands and wives should endeavor to understand their roles in that light.

5. Submission is voluntarily assuming a particular role because it is right. Obedience is not directly commanded. Submission demands obedience as a pattern, but there are times in which obedience to a husband may become disobedience to God. By using the word “submit,” Paul separated the kind of obedience expected by the wife from that expected of others. The wife has a very different relationship to her husband than children to parents or slaves to masters.
6. 1 Peter 3:1 - Voluntary submission is in view here
 - a. In both cases he commends submission, but in neither instance does he endorse the patriarchal institution that enforces submission
 - ii. Won without a word 1 Peter 3:1
- c. Fitting to the Lord
 - i. Fitting - to reach a point of connection, w. focus on what is appropriate
 1. The unsuitable nature of an action is shown by the fact that those who perform it are ἄγιοι acting ἐν κυρίῳ. This unsuitability may concur with the judgment of the world (Col. 3:18)
 2. to be fitting, to be right
 3. The motivation for voluntary submission is that it is a proper Christian attitude. The phrase “as is fitting in the Lord” identifies these concerns. The word “fitting” has the idea of proper as a duty. By employing the statement, Paul made it clear that such submission is an outworking of the lordship of Christ. It is part of the Christian order.
 4. Submission is a matter of Christian commitment. It comes with salvation. Voluntarily taking a position of submission is a matter of a wife’s relationship to the Lord, not to her husband. It is “fitting in the Lord.”
 - ii. As to the Lord Eph 5:22
- d. Respect Ephesians 5:33
 - i. Respect - to have a profound measure of respect
 - ii. If in contrast to Prov. 24:21 a distinction is made between respect for the king and fear of God, in typical relationships of subordination, e.g., wives in 1 Pt. 3:2; Eph. 5:33, and slaves in 1 Pt. 2:18; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22, fear can denote the obedience demanded by the superior authority of masters or husbands as lords. This fear as a sign of entire dependence on the power of the stronger requires humility from the slave even to the point of suffering unjust treatment

- iii. The same applies to wives. Certainly these are to expect love from their husbands rather than anger (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33) and yet they are still to fear in subordination, for they owe this to their exemplary walk (1 Pt. 3:2) or to their husbands ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (Eph. 5:22, cf. 33). This traditional theme (→ 193, 14 ff.) of subordination is part of the general structure of the household tables, so that it can also be applied to the community in general: ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ, Eph. 5:21. Yet just because φόβος is due to Christ, the intention of these admonitions does not lie in principal devotion but in the demand for a pure and patient and gentle heart, Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5; 1 Pt. 3:2, 4.

II. Husband Col. 3:19; Eph. 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7

a. Love

- i. Love - to have a warm regard for and interest in another, *cherish, have affection for, attitude towards*
 - 1. He submits by leaving his own desires and taking her concerns as his own. While this dynamic helps define the husband's love, it should be noted that the text does not call the husband's responsibility "submission," nor does it state that Christ submitted to the church. The text calls it "love." In the dynamics of Christian relationships, a husband's loving, caring, sacrificial approach to his wife's well-being makes her responsibility of submission easier
 - 2. The command, therefore, appears to be a distinctively Christian element of the marriage relationship. It was common, of course, for husbands to love their wives sexually, but Paul advocated much more than that. In his description of the husband's love in Eph 5:22ff., he clearly stated that the husband was to love his wife sacrificially. Her inner beauty and self-fulfillment were to be his delight, and he would do whatever he could to promote her personal well-being and satisfaction. The model is Christ's love for the church.
 - 3. It seems clear, as some point out, that the husband submits to the wife by loving her and caring for her needs
- ii. As Christ Loved the Church Ephesians 5:25
 - 1. Gave Himself up
 - 2. Love their own body (Love her/Love himself) Eph 5:33
 - a. The discussion is briefer than that of Eph 5:22ff., where the major portion of the instructions for marriage are directed to the husband's care for his wife. There the command to love was developed more fully. Here Paul simply stated it.
- iii. Embittered
 - 1. to cause bitter feelings, *embitter, make bitter*

2. But the passive voice here presumably implies that the bitterness is experienced by the husbands. What is in view, therefore, is probably the feeling of the dominant partner who can legally enforce his will on his wife but who will not thereby win her love and respect and can thus feel cheated and embittered at not receiving what he regards as his due
3. Since Paul issued the command here, he probably meant that the marriage relationship could become an irritant to the one who does not love properly. The husband was to take care to see that bitterness did not develop.

b. Live 1 Peter 3:7

- i. Live - to live in close association with, *live with*
 1. to be intimate with in a sexual manner, *to have intercourse*
- ii. Understand way
 1. Understanding – *knowledgeably*
 - a. It is in keeping that this Christian knowledge is not a fixed possession but develops in the life of the Christian as lasting obedience and reflection
 - b. If the theoretical element determines the concept, the practical consequences are always implied. It is characteristic that the guiding factor is not interest in Christian learning but the edification of the community which is to be advanced by the *γνώσις* of the individual
 - c. Most English versions translate the verse so that husbands are exhorted to be considerate and kind in their relationship with their wives. Such a reading is not incorrect, but it shifts the focus slightly away from the meaning of the text. I understand the phrase “according to knowledge” (*kata gnōsin*), like “in fear” (literal translation) in 3:2 and “conscious of God” in 2:19, to refer to the relationship of husbands to God. Husbands, then, should live together with wives informed by the knowledge of God’s will, of what he demands them to do
 2. Weaker
 - a. female vulnerability and common Christian hope
 - b. to experiencing some incapacity or limitation, *weak*
 - i. of physical weakness.
 - ii. In the NT the words are hardly ever used of purely physical weakness, but frequently a. in the comprehensive sense of the whole man
 - iii. Nothing else in the New Testament suggests that women are intellectually inferior, nor is it clear that women are weaker emotionally, for in many ways the vulnerability of women in sharing their

emotions and feelings demonstrates that they are more courageous and stronger than men emotionally. Nor did Peter suggest that women are weaker morally or spiritually than men. Such a view would suggest that men are actually better Christians than women, which is not taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, nor is it evident in history. The most obvious meaning, therefore, is that women are weaker than men in terms of sheer strength. Peter used the word for “female” or “woman” (*gynaikeios*) rather than “wife.” He directed attention to what is uniquely feminine about women, pointing husbands to the knowledge that God would require them to have of the female sex.

iii. Honor

1. *Honor* - the respect that one enjoys, *honor* as a possession
 - a. the obligation of loving regard
 - b. is the respect which is to be shown to the wife, to which she has a claim as a creature of God. In R. 13:7 the apostle asks of Christians that they should concede to all men what they owe them
 - c. Men should honor women because they share the same destiny—an eternal inheritance in God’s kingdom

2. Fellow heir

iv. Prayers will not be hindered

1. God will refuse to answer

III. Children Col. 3:20-21; Eph. 6: 1,4

a. Obedience

- i. Obedience - to follow instructions, *obey, follow, be subject*
 1. Paul commanded children to “obey.” The word “obey” (*hypakouō*) is stronger than the word “submit,” used of wives earlier
- ii. In all things
 1. The text reinforces this by the use of the phrase “in everything.” Obedience was expected. In Eph 6:2–3 Paul stated that doing so was a fulfillment of the Ten Commandments and qualified the children for the reception of a promise
- iii. Well – Pleasing – acceptable
 1. The motivation occurs at the end of this verse: “for this pleases the Lord.” Two parts of this expression stress the Christian motivation. First, the word “pleases” almost always describes the relationship to the Lord. It conveys the thought of “well pleasing”

iv. For this right Eph 6:1-2

1. Right- to being in accordance with high standards of rectitude, *upright, just, fair*
2. Commandment
3. Live Long on earth

b. Fathers

i. Fathers

1. The term may easily encompass both father and mother, as it does here, but it also served to remind them that the fathers bore a primary responsibility for the children in the home. Paul meant that they should not embitter or irritate their children. The word “embitter” (*erethizō*) occurs only one other time in Scripture (in 2 Cor 9:2). This speaks of an irritation or even nagging. Parents embitter children by constantly picking at them, perhaps refusing to acknowledge their efforts. The fact that children might become discouraged suggests that the parents too easily reminded the children that they were not good enough. This activity had no place in the Christian home. If correction were needed, it should have been toward the behavior of the child, not the child’s personhood, and it should have been enforced quickly. Discipline was not to be prolonged so that nagging occurred.

ii. Not exasperate

1. A child frequently irritated by over-severity or injustice, to which, nevertheless, it must submit, acquires a spirit of sullen resignation, leading to despair

iii. Does not lose heart

1. In Colossians, Paul warned parents not to discourage their children.

Word Studies

Subject -

Fitting –

Love –

Embittered –

Live

Understanding

ἰδίους, prefixed in Rec. Text to ἀνδράσιν, has but slight support, and has probably come from Eph. 5:22.

ὥς ἀνῆκεν, imperfect, as often in Greek writers with similar verbs. Comp. Eph. 5:4, ἃ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν; Acts 22:22, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν. It is not implied here that the duty has not hitherto been rightly performed, but only that the obligation existed previously.

The use of the past tense in the English “ought” is not quite parallel, since the present “owe” cannot be used in this sense.

ἐν Κυρίῳ is to be joined with ἀνῆκεν, not with ὑποτάσσεσθε; see ver. 20, εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν Κυρίῳ, “for those who are in the Lord.”

19. οἱ ἄνδρες, κ.τ.λ. = Eph. 5:25.

μὴ πικραίνεσθε. “Become not embittered,” or rather, as this would seem to imply a lasting temper, “show no bitterness.” The word occurs frequently in classical writers. Plato has (*Legg.* 731 D), τὸν θυμὸν πραῦναι κ. μὴ ἀκραχολοῦντα, γυναικείως πικραίνον μενον, διατελεῖν; Pseudo-Dem. 1464, μηδενὶ μήτε πικραίνεσθαι μήτε μνησικακεῖν. The adjective πικρός is used by Euripides in a strikingly illustrative passage, *Helen.* 303, ὅταν πόσις πικρὸς ξυνῇ γυναικί ... θανεῖν κράτιστον. Plutarch observes that it shows weakness of mind when men πρὸς γυναῖκα διαπικραίνονται. Philo uses πικραίνεσθαι of just anger. *De Vita Moysis*, ii. pp. 135, 20, and 132, 34. The word would seem, then, to correspond more nearly with the colloquial “cross” than with “bitter.”

20. τὰ τέκνα, κ.τ.λ. See Eph. 6:1. Disobedience to parents is mentioned as a vice of the heathen, Rom. 1:30, κατὰ πάντα. There would be no propriety in suggesting the possibility in a Christian family of a conflict between duty to parents and duty to God.

εὐάρεστον There is no need to supply τῷ Θεῷ the adjective is taken absolutely, like προσφιλεῖ in Phil. 4:8, and is sufficiently defined by ἐν Κυρίῳ. In Rom. 12:2 εὐάρεστου seems also to be absolute, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρ. καὶ τέλειον¹

21. μὴ ἐρεθίζετε. “Do not irritate.” The verb means to “excite, provoke,” not necessarily to anger, or in a bad sense; and in 2 Cor. 9:2 it is used in a good sense.

There is another reading, παροργίζετε, very strongly supported, being read in κ ACD*GKL *al.* Euthal. (Tisch². cod.), Theodoret (cod.), Theoph.

ἐρεθίζετε is read in B D^{bo}K, most MSS³., Syr. (both, but Harc⁴I marg. has the other reading), Clem., Chrys.

παροργίζετε occurs in the parallel Eph. 4:4 (with no variety), and to this is obviously due its introduction here.

ἵνα μὴ ἄθυμῶσιν. “That they may not lose heart.” “*Fractus animus pestis juventutis*,” Bengel. A child frequently irritated by over-severity or injustice, to which, nevertheless, it must submit, acquires a spirit of sullen resignation, leading to despair.

¹ Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1909), 293.

²Tisch. Tischendorf.

³MSS. manuscripts

⁴HarcI The Harclean Syriac.

Commentary Studies

Wives (3:18)

3:18 Starting with the most basic of domestic relationships, Paul addressed the wives' behavior. The wives were to submit to their husbands. The command occurs consistently in the New Testament guidelines so that there is a uniform attitude on the matter. The term means "to subject or subordinate."⁶⁵⁷ The verb form occurs thirty-eight times in the New Testament, twenty-three times in the Pauline literature, but only one time in Colossians. There appears to be a difference in the specific nuance of the term according to the voice in which it occurs (active or middle voice).⁶⁶⁸ When it occurs in the active voice, the power to subject belongs to God himself. This is evidenced in 1 Cor 15:24–28 (Christ subjecting all things); Phil 3:21; Rom 8:20; Eph 1:21–22. In the middle voice, it describes a voluntary submission which resembles that of Christian humility. It may describe Christ's submission to God (1 Cor 15:58), church members to one another (Eph 5:21, a parallel context to this one), believers submitting in the exercise of their prophetic gifts (1 Cor 14:32), or the proper order for wives (Eph 5:22ff.; Col 3:18). This latter use appeals to free agents to take a place of submission voluntarily. The term does not suggest slavery or servitude, and certainly never calls for the husband to make his wife submit. If he could, her heart would not be in it. Besides, Paul addressed wives here, not husbands. In this context, the word differs radically from the word which describes the role of children and slaves who are to obey (*hypakouō*).

In comparing this command with Eph 5:22ff., a more holistic picture emerges of the relationship Paul advocated. It has been suggested based on Eph 5:21–22 that there is a mutual submission of husband and wife. While that idea contains an important relational principle of mutual consideration, the text speaks against that. Ephesians 5:21 introduces domestic relationships by the participial form of the verb "submit." It is an evidence of the filling of the Spirit. As the text develops, however, only three of the six receive the command to submit: wives, children, and slaves. It seems clear, as some point out, that the husband submits to the wife by loving her and caring for her needs; but, it should be noted, Paul did not directly call that submission. Admittedly, Ephesians needs clarification, and that occurs in Colossians. In Col 3:18 Paul directly called upon the wives to submit, and the text does not use the word in relation to the husband at all.⁶⁷⁹

⁵⁶⁷ BAGD, 847–48. The middle means to subject oneself.

⁶⁶⁸ This distinction is recognized in BAGD, 847–48, where it is called active and passive, but most explicitly in M. Barth, *Ephesians, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4–6*, AB (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 709–15.

⁷⁶⁹ The point is that consistently in Scripture the wife is to submit to the husband. The only passage which could be interpreted to suggest "mutual submission" is Eph 5:21ff., which many have allowed to become the standard for interpreting all others. The others, however, do not support that interpretation. Each passage must be studied in harmony

A second matter to note is that in each passage the wife's submission is different from the others. Children and slaves are told to obey; the wife is not. Submission is voluntarily assuming a particular role because it is right. Obedience is not directly commanded. Submission demands obedience as a pattern, but there are times in which obedience to a husband may become disobedience to God.⁷⁸⁰ By using the word "submit," Paul separated the kind of obedience expected by the wife from that expected of others. The wife has a very different relationship to her husband than children to parents or slaves to masters.

The motivation for voluntary submission is that it is a proper Christian attitude. The phrase "as is fitting in the Lord" identifies these concerns. The word "fitting" has the idea of proper as a duty.⁷⁹¹ By employing the statement, Paul made it clear that such submission is an outworking of the lordship of Christ. It is part of the Christian order.

As before, this phrase clarifies a common misunderstanding in Eph 5:22. The phrase "as to the Lord" sometimes bears the interpretation that the wife's relationship to her husband is to be patterned after her relationship to the Lord. Thus a husband may claim that the wife must obey him totally in the same way that she does the Lord. Conversely, some wives have claimed that the phrase means that they submit to their husbands only when their husbands act like the Lord. In times when the husband fails, it is not necessary for the wife to submit. Both of these interpretations miss Paul's point. Submission is a matter of Christian commitment. It comes with salvation. Voluntarily taking a position of submission is a matter of a wife's relationship to the Lord, not to her husband. It is "fitting in the Lord."

Naturally, some express concern about the wife having a seemingly inferior role. Such thinking is unbiblical and a misunderstanding of these passages. First, since Paul used the term of Jesus' attitude who is Lord of all (see 1 Cor 15:28), the term may be appropriately used of one with the highest office. Both wives and husbands must recognize that the term has nothing to do with personal worth and value. Second, Paul described a functional situation which reflects God's plan for families on this earth.⁷¹⁰² He was not speaking ontologically, that is, regarding the essence of personhood. There is a functional subordination, but an essential equality. Differences of roles to accomplish specific functions do not call for the categories of superior and inferior. It is better to speak of "suited for" and "not suited for." Such an economic division is found in God, where the Father, Son, and Spirit each have different operations

for a complete understanding of the others and for a complete understanding of proper Christian interpersonal relationships.

⁸⁷⁰ E.g., such cases involve immorality, cruelty, and improper conduct. The guideline then is to obey God rather than a husband. Even then, however, the commitment must be to submission to God's plan as a pattern of life and the best order for society.

⁹⁷¹ The Greek is ἀνῆκεν. *BAGD*, 66.

¹⁰⁷² The term "functional" refers to the administration of affairs and the organization of tasks for proper operation.

(functional subordination), but they are all equally divine (essential equality).⁷¹¹³ Thus Christian relationships on earth are patterned after those in God, and both husbands and wives should endeavor to understand their roles in that light.⁷¹²⁴

Husbands (3:19)

The counterpart of the wife's responsibility is that of the husband's. In direct, simple, and clear terms, Paul expressed the duties of a Christian husband. The discussion is briefer than that of Eph 5:22ff., where the major portion of the instructions for marriage are directed to the husband's care for his wife. There the command to love was developed more fully. Here Paul simply stated it. He did add to the words found there, however, when he said that husbands were not to be bitter toward their wives. This verse naturally falls into two divisions: Husbands, love your wives; and do not be bitter toward them.

3:19 The simple, positive command is to love. The term *agapē*, used here, never occurred in secular household tables.⁷¹³⁵ The command, therefore, appears to be a distinctively Christian element of the marriage relationship. It was common, of course, for husbands to love their wives sexually, but Paul advocated much more than that. In his description of the husband's love in Eph 5:22ff., he clearly stated that the husband was to love his wife sacrificially. Her inner beauty and self-fulfillment were to be his delight, and he would do whatever he could to promote her personal well-being and satisfaction. The model is Christ's love for the church.

Some have suggested that the husband's love for the wife is his submission to her.⁷¹⁴⁶ He submits by leaving his own desires and taking her concerns as his own. While this dynamic helps define the husband's love, it should be noted that the text does not call the husband's responsibility "submission," nor does it state that Christ submitted to the church. The text calls

¹¹⁷³ Scripture generally assigns different roles to the three persons of the Godhead. The Father plans, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies. Each, however, is fully God.

¹²⁷⁴ Lohse understands the passage to mean that Christian wives were to adapt to the prevailing social order of the day. He implied that the term "submit" was frequently used of marriage relationships outside the New Testament (157). O'Brien, however, disputes this assumption, claiming that there are only two instances of the word used for wife/husband relationships apart from Scripture (*Colossians*, *Philemon*, 221). Paul called the Christians to a standard and pattern of behavior which was not necessarily well accepted even for that day.

¹³⁷⁵ O'Brien states, "They do not occur in any extrabiblical Hellenistic rules for the household" (223).

¹⁴⁷⁶ They base this on the assumption that Ephesians calls for a mutual submission. This is difficult to derive from the text (see note 69).

it “love.” In the dynamics of Christian relationships, a husband’s loving, caring, sacrificial approach to his wife’s well-being makes her responsibility of submission easier.⁷¹⁵⁷

Paul followed the positive command to love with a negative one, “Do not be harsh with them.” This term does not occur in other ethical lists.⁷¹⁶⁸ The word is followed by the preposition “toward” (*pros*) which also is unusual.⁷¹⁷⁹

Since Paul issued the command here, he probably meant that the marriage relationship could become an irritant to the one who does not love properly. The husband was to take care to see that bitterness did not develop.

CHILDREN AND PARENTS (3:20–21)

Moving from the innermost family circle, Paul addressed the parent-child relationship. As before, his cryptic comments express only the heart of what he provided in more extended fashion in Eph. 6:1–4.

Children (3:20)

3:20 Again Paul spoke to the one who was to submit first. Because he addressed children, he must have expected children to be present when the text was read aloud in the congregation. The church meeting included people of all stations in life. Race, age, and economic standing paled in significance when people were in Christ.

Paul commanded children to “obey.” The word “obey” (*hypakouō*) is stronger than the word “submit,” used of wives earlier.⁸¹⁸⁰ The text reinforces this by the use of the phrase “in everything.” Obedience was expected. In Eph 6:2–3 Paul stated that doing so was a fulfillment of the Ten Commandments and qualified the children for the reception of a promise.⁸¹⁹¹

From the two lists, Paul apparently was addressing young children here. Two factors inform this interpretation. First, the use of the term “children” rather than “young men” (or equivalent) shows Paul was addressing younger children.⁸²⁰² Second, in Eph 6:4 fathers were told to “bring

¹⁵⁷⁷ In light of this discussion, the husband’s love or lack of it does not relieve the woman of her responsibility toward him. Nor does the wife’s lack of submission relieve the husband of his responsibility toward her.

¹⁶⁷⁸ The term is *πικραίνω*. It does occur elsewhere in the New Testament, but not in these contexts (e.g., Eph 4:31 and the noun in Heb 12:14).

¹⁷⁷⁹ “Toward,” *πρός*, means in the relationship, but several commentators have suggested it does not mean “with her” but “because of her,” i.e., because of the marriage.

¹⁸⁸⁰ This may be surmised from the definition of the two terms *ὑποτάσσω* and *ὑπακούω*, and from the use of the active voice here rather than the middle of *ὑποτάσσω*.

¹⁹⁸¹ There he quoted Exod 20:12 and Deut 15:16.

²⁰⁸² This would have been strengthened if Paul had used the term *τεκνία* instead of *τέκνα*, as John did in 1 John 2:12, although there it appears to be a nuance of the word

them up.” The training process involved teaching children how to obey, and those who heard these words would respond properly. Nothing in the text suggests a specific age, however. The term “children” primarily describes children in relation to their parents, so the assumption is that they were at home and under the parents’ supervision.⁸²¹³

The motivation occurs at the end of this verse: “for this pleases the Lord.” Two parts of this expression stress the Christian motivation. First, the word “pleases” almost always describes the relationship to the Lord. It conveys the thought of “well pleasing.”⁸²²⁴ Second, the phrase “in the Lord” occurs. This means “since you are in the Lord.” It calls the child to remember the state of grace and the responsibilities that grow from it.⁸²³⁵ Thus the children have a responsibility in the Christian family order. To be pleasing to the Lord as Christians, they should obey their parents.

Parents (3:21)

3:21 In the Lord, parents have a mutual responsibility to children. There is a command and a practical reason. Parents are told not to embitter their children. Paul used the term “fathers” in addressing the parents. The term may easily encompass both father and mother, as it does here, but it also served to remind them that the fathers bore a primary responsibility for the children in the home. Paul meant that they should not embitter or irritate their children. The word “embitter” (*erethizō*) occurs only one other time in Scripture (in 2 Cor 9:2). This speaks of an irritation or even nagging. Parents embitter children by constantly picking at them, perhaps refusing to acknowledge their efforts. The fact that children might become discouraged suggests that the parents too easily reminded the children that they were not good enough. This activity had no place in the Christian home. If correction were needed, it should have been toward the behavior of the child, not the child’s personhood, and it should have been enforced quickly. Discipline was not to be prolonged so that nagging occurred.

The reason for the command was to avoid discouragement. Constant nagging produces a situation where children are discouraged either because they cannot please those they love or because they feel they are of no worth to anybody.

In this case, Ephesians and Colossians complement each other by presenting two sides of the issue. In Ephesians, Paul exhorted the parents to raise the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This suggests a positive, Christian environment in which children will appreciate the Christian commitment of the parents. In time, children should believe in the Lord and mature in the Christian life and world view. In Colossians, Paul warned parents not to discourage their children. Especially in the child-rearing process, fathers were to embody

which is endearing rather than pointing to age. Paul used that term only once, Gal 4:19, when he addressed his spiritual offspring. John used the term “young men” (νεανίσκος), but it never occurs in the Pauline literature.

²¹⁸³ BAGD states that the term is literally a “child in relation to father and mother” (808).

²²⁸⁴ Noted by the εὖ prefix to the word. One location of this is Rom 12:1–2.

²³⁸⁵ See N. Turner, *Syntax, A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), 263.

Christian principles and remember the equality of all persons in Christ. In God's sight, children and parents have equal worth, and parents were to treat their children with respect as persons.²⁴

3:18 αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὡς ἀνήκεν ἐν κυρίῳ. Wives are addressed first (as in Eph. 5:22; in 1 Pet. 3:1 following slaves, but before husbands). It is important to note that it is wives and not women generally who are in view (as also in 1 Cor. 14:34). Women who were single, widowed, or divorced and of independent means could evidently function as heads of their own households, as in the case of Lydia (Acts 16:14–15), Phoebe, the first named “deacon” in Christian history and patron of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1–2), Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11), and presumably Nympha in Colossae itself (see on 4:15). The concern here is primarily for the household unit (Aletti, *Épître aux Colossiens* 251), with the implication that for Christians, too, its good ordering was fundamental to well-ordered human and social relationships. That wives are addressed first is presumably also a recognition that their relationship to their husbands was the linchpin of a stable and effective household.

The call for wives to be subject (ὑποτάσσομαι, “subject oneself, be subordinate to”) is unequivocal, not even lightened by the prefixed call “Be subject to one another,” or the addition

²⁴ Richard R. Melick, [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#), vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 311–315.

“as the church is subject to Christ” (as in Eph. 5:21, 24).¹²⁵⁶ The exhortation should not be weakened in translation in deference to modern sensibilities (cf. again 1 Cor. 14:34; so rightly Martin, *Colossians and Philemon* 119). But neither should its significance be exaggerated; “subjection” means “subordination,” not “subjugation” (Schrage, *Ethics* 253; so also Aletti, *Épître aux Colossiens* 251–52). The teaching simply reflects the legal state of affairs, under Roman law at least, whereby the *paterfamilias* had absolute power over the other members of the family (*OC²⁶D* s.v. “patria potestas”). And while there were variations in Greek and Jewish law, the basic fact held true throughout the Mediterranean world that the household was essentially a patriarchal institution, with other members of the household subject to the authority of its male head (Verner 27–81). The exhortation here, therefore, simply conforms to current mores; the term itself is used by Plutarch, *Conjugalia praecepta* 33 (= *Moralia* 142E) and pseudo-Callisthenes 1.22.4 (in Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* 157 n. 18; *RA²⁷C* 4.696; *NDIE²⁸C* 1.36; see also Müller 292–98; Schrage, *Ethics* 254). In contemporary legal terms the submission called for was of a piece with that called for in Rom. 13:1, 5 (cf. Tit. 2:5 with 3:1).¹²⁹⁷ Those who, on the one hand, wish to criticize Paul and the first Christians for such conformity at this point should recall that it is only in the last hundred years of European civilization that the perception of the status of wives (and women) and their expected roles has been radically changed. Those who, on the other hand, wish to draw normative patterns of conduct from Scripture cannot ignore the degree to which the instruction simply reflects current social patterns, an unavoidably conformist rather than transformist ethic (cf. Conzelmann 153).

The one distinctively Christian feature is the additional words “as is fitting in the Lord” (Moule, *Colossians and Philemon* 128; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians* 162, 164). Ἀνήκει (“it is fitting”) reflects the typical Stoic idea that one’s best policy, indeed one’s duty, was

²⁵¹⁶ G. Delling, *TDNT* 8.45 reads Col. 3:18 as though the Eph. 5:21 and 24 qualifications were in mind there. 1 Cor. 16:6 shows that the word could be used of voluntary submission, but it is not clear that a distinctive Christian note is sounded here in the word itself (as O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* 220–22, and those cited by him seem to want; contrast Kamlah, “Υποτάσσεσθαι” 241–42—a Jewish root); that surely comes with the ἐν κυρίῳ (Merk 215). The term itself (ὑποτάσσομαι) became the major theme of later codes (Crouch 34 and n. 94).

²⁶ *OCD* N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, ed., *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970)

²⁷ *RAC Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*

²⁸ *NDIEC New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, ed. G. H. R. Horsley, et al. (Macquarie University, 1981–)

²⁹¹⁷ In theological terms cf. the subjection of Christ to God (1 Cor. 15:28); with which in turn cf. 1 Cor. 11:3 and again Eph. 5:23–24.

to live in harmony with the natural order of things (H. Schlier, *TDN*³⁰ 1.360 and 3.437–40), a sentiment shared by Hellenistic Judaism and the early Gentile mission (*Aristeas* 227; pseudo-Phocylides 80; Rom. 1:28; Eph. 5:4; Phm. 8; 1 *Clement* 1:3)³¹⁸—in this case, once again reflecting a patriarchal view of human society. But “in the Lord” implies a different perspective (*pace* Müller 310–16). It reflects both the claim that Christ is the fullest expression of the creative wisdom within the cosmos (1:15–20; 2:3) and the thematic statement that life should be lived in accordance with the traditions received regarding Jesus as Christ and Lord (2:6–7)—allusions lost in translations like “that is your Christian duty” (NE³²B/RE³³B; cf. GN³⁴B).

The full phrase can function in two ways, either as an affirmation that husband headship of the household is “fitting” also within the community of those who own Jesus as Lord (Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians* 163–64) or as a qualification that only that degree of subjection to the husband which is “fitting in the Lord” is to be countenanced. That the latter is not merely a modern reading of the exhortation can be deduced from the counsel provided by Paul earlier in 1 Cor. 7:15 and from the fact that it was Christian pressure which took the power away from fathers to expose unwanted infants some three centuries later (in 374; earlier Jewish and Christian protest in pseudo-Phocylides 185; Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 3.110; *Barnabas* 19:5). So now for a continuing Christian moral code we may say that “as is fitting in the Lord” is the fixed point while the limits of acceptable conduct within society are contingent on public sentiment of region and epoch (cf. Schweizer, *Colossians* 222).

3:19 οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς. The corresponding responsibility of the husband is to love his wife. The ideal of a husband being tenderly solicitous for his wife was not distinctively Christian (classic expression in Musonius, *Orationes* 13A),³⁵⁹ though how far reality matched the ideal in either case we are not in a position now to say. But again a distinctive Christian note comes through in the use of the verb ἀγαπάω, which, as elsewhere in the Paulines (Rom. 8:37; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:4; 5:2, 25), gains its characteristic emphasis from Christ’s self-giving on the cross (see on 1:4 and 3:14).²³⁶⁰ Thus

³⁰TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

³¹⁸ See further Crouch 37–73, 98–99.

³²NEB New English Bible

³³REB Revised English Bible

³⁴GNB Good News Bible

³⁵¹⁹ In C. E. Lutz, “Musonius Rufus: ‘The Roman Socrates,’ ” *Yale Classical Studies* 10 (1947) 3–147, here 88–89.

³⁶²⁰ O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* 223, rightly refutes the claim of Crouch 111–13 (also Schulz 568–69; Wolter 199) that what is in view here is “the normal, human love of a husband for his wife”; see also Schrage, “Haustafeln” 12–15; Gnlika, *Kolosserbrief*

ἀγαπάω plays the role in 3:19 of “in the Lord” in 3:18 and 20 and is itself sufficient to refer the reader back to the traditions of Jesus as the Christ and Lord (2:6–7). This is one of the points in the parallel treatment of Ephesians at which the author “takes off” into a lyrical account of the love of Christ for his church (Eph. 5:25–33). The allusion to Christ as the model of love in action, it is true, did not alter the subordinate role attributed to the wife in 3:18, however much it might have conditioned that role and prevented abuse of the power of the *paterfamilias*. But it does remain significant that the talk here is not of authority and rights but of obligations and responsibilities (Schrage, “Haustafeln” 15). “It is humility and kindness, not superiority of status ... which ought to dictate the conduct of the baptized” (Aletti, *Épître aux Colossiens* 253).

The verb πικραίνω (only here in the Paulines) is a vivid one. It comes from πικρός, which, from an original meaning of “pointed, sharp,” gained the particular sense of “sharp, bitter” to the taste (W. Michaelis, *TDN*³⁷ 6.122; cf. Ruth 1:13, 20; Eph. 4:31; Heb. 12:15; Jas. 3:11); in *Hermas*, *Mandates* 10.2.3 it is the effect of ill-temper (ὀξύχολία). To be πικρός, “bitter, harsh,” is a characteristic regularly attributed to a tyrannical overlordship (Wolter 199, citing Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 106, 120; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.210; 2.277; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 7.3; Diogenes Laertius 4.46). Here, thus, we find the term used of the husband, rather than, as some might think more suitable, of the wife to describe her state under a harsh overlordship (as in 2 Kgs. 14:26). Most translate “Do not be harsh with them” (RS³⁸V, NE³⁹B/RE⁴⁰B, NI⁴¹V, GN⁴²B). But the passive voice here presumably implies that the bitterness is experienced by the husbands. What is in view, therefore, is probably the feeling of the dominant partner who can legally enforce his will on his wife but who will not thereby win her love and respect and can thus feel cheated and embittered at not receiving what he regards as his due (cf. Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira* 8 = *Moralia* 457A, cited in Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* 158 n. 30). This is the likely outcome for anyone who stands on his rights alone and who knows and exercises little of the love called for in the first half of the verse.

3:20 τὰ τέκνα, ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν κατὰ πάντα, τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ. The legal status of children under Roman law was still more disadvantaged. Technically speaking, they were the property of the father; so, for example, the formalities for adoption

218. For the different language of other household rules see Schweizer, *Colossians* 222 n. 42.

³⁷TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

³⁸RSV Revised Standard Version

³⁹NEB New English Bible

⁴⁰REB Revised English Bible

⁴¹NIV New International Bible

⁴²GNB Good News Bible

were essentially the same as for the conveyance of property (*OC*⁴³ *D* s.v. “*patria potestas*”).²⁴⁴¹ The child under age in fact was no better off than a slave (a point Paul had been able to put to good effect in Gal. 4:1–7); note how closely parallel are the instructions of 3:20 and 3:22 (cf. the advice of Sir. 30:1 and 42:5). This situation is presumably reflected in 3:21, where the responsibility for the child is thought of as exclusively the father’s. For although the mother was the main influence over her children till they were seven (cf. pseudo-Phocylides 208), the father was primarily responsible thereafter for the boys at least. In view of all this it is worth noting that children who were presumably still minors (cf. Eph. 6:4) are directly addressed; evidently they are thought of as both present in the Christian meeting where the letter would be read out and as responsible agents despite their youth (Schweizer, *Colossians* 223; Gnllka, *Kolossierbrief* 220). Responsibility in Christian relationships is not to be determined by legal standing.

Obedience²⁴⁵² is called for in respect of both parents; those now primarily under their father’s discipline should continue to respect their mother also. This is not an exclusively Jewish feature, since honoring parents was widely recognized as a virtue (e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.26.1–4; Plato, *Republic* 4.425b; Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.1.80; 4.25.53 [in A. J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 91–93];²⁴⁶³ Epictetus 2.10.7; 3.7.26; see further Lincoln, *Ephesians* 401; Wolter 201). But it was given particular prominence within Jewish tradition, as enshrined in the fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) and repeatedly emphasized in Jewish writings of the period (e.g., Sir. 3:1–16; 7:27–28; Tob. 4:3–4; *Aristeas* 228; *Jubilees* 7:20; Philo, *De posteritate Caini* 181; *De ebrietate* 17). A stubborn and disobedient son, indeed, was liable to death by stoning (Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18–21; Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 2.232; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.206). Κατὰ πάντα (“in everything”) also reflects the customary respect in the ancient world for the wisdom of age. The assumption is that parents, acting as parents, will deal wisely and kindly with their children (cf. Matt. 7:9–11/Luke 11:11–13). This is the expected norm of good family and social relationships (so also Mark 7:10 par.; 10:19 pars.; cf. Rom. 1:30

⁴³*OCD* N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, ed., *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970)

⁴⁴²¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus sums the position up thus: “The law-giver of the Romans gave virtually full power to the father over his son, ... whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains, and keep him at work in the fields, or to put him to death ...” (*Roman Antiquities* 2.26.4; similarly Dio Chrysostom 15.20).

⁴⁵²² “In the Pauline homologoumena it [ὕπακούειν] is used exclusively of obedience to Jesus Christ and to the gospel. Its use here in conjunction with the orders of creation is a sign of the relatively later phase of Christian thought” (Pokorný 181 n. 26).

⁴⁶²³ *Ioanis Stobaei Anthologium*, ed. C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense: vol. 3 = Hense vol. 1, vol. 4 = Hense vol. 2.

and 2 Tim. 3:2). The counsel here, of course, does not envisage situations where the norm is breached by the parents or where a higher loyalty might need to be invoked (as in Luke 14:26).

The reason given is “for this is pleasing in the Lord.” Εὐάρεστος, “acceptable, pleasing,” will mean pleasing to God, as in the only two LXX uses of the word (Wis. 4:10; 9:10) and in the other Pauline uses (Rom. 12:1–2; 14:18; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 4:18; only Tit. 2:9 otherwise; cf. Eph. 5:10—εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ). Here a more conventional value (Gnilka, *Kolosserbrief* 220 refers to Epictetus 1.12.8 and 2.23.29) has been Christianized even before the next phrase is added. “In the Lord,” as in 3:18, roots the justification thus claimed in the tradition which formed the basis of Christian identity and conduct (translations like “the Christian way” in NE⁴⁷B/RE⁴⁸B and “your Christian duty” in GN⁴⁹B again obscure the point). Here the tradition is that indicated in the preceding paragraph (the parallel passage Eph. 6:1–2 goes on to quote Exod. 20:12/Deut. 5:16 LXX explicitly); the thought is close to that of Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 40: “If you honor parents ... you will be pleasing (εὐαρεστήσεις) before God.” In other words, we no doubt have here (despite Merk 216–17) a conscious taking over of the particularly Jewish emphasis on honoring of parents. That the Lord is Christ here simply confirms that the traditions of Christ as Lord (2:6–7) will have included such Jesus tradition as Mark 7:10 and 10:19.⁵⁰⁴ In the face of the challenge from the Colossian Jews it was no doubt important for the Christians to be able both to affirm their heritage of Jewish parenesis and to affirm it as “well-pleasing (to God) in the Lord (Jesus Christ).” Here, in other words, we can recognize a double apologetic slant in the parenesis: assurance to influential outsiders that the Christian message was not subversive and to Colossian Jews that the new movement was still faithful to Jewish praxis and ideals.⁵¹

3:21 οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἄθυμῶσιν. Indicative of his central role in the household, the head of the household is now addressed a second time, this time in his role as father (see also 4:1).⁵²⁵ Corresponding to his responsibility to love his wife, the father

⁴⁷NEB New English Bible

⁴⁸REB Revised English Bible

⁴⁹GNB Good News Bible

⁵⁰²⁴ Schweizer, *Colossians* 215, asks whether the order (husbands and wives first) may reflect the influence of Mark 10:1–9 par., and Pokorný 182 wonders whether the tradition of Mark 10:13–16 par. may lie behind 3:21; see also Ernst, *Philipper, Philemon, Kolosser, Epheser* 233–34; but see also Gnilka, *Kolosserbrief* 210.

⁵¹ James D. G. Dunn, [*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 246–251.

⁵²²⁵ Πατέρες could, however, mean “parents” (BAGD s.v. πατήρ 1a; cf. Heb. 11:23; so also JB/NJB, GNB; Schweizer, *Colossians* 223), but the narrower focus reflects the

has a responsibility not to “provoke” (ἐρεθίζω, usually in a bad sense [BAG⁵³D], though the only other New Testament usage, 2 Cor. 9:2, is positive), that is, “irritate” (NJ⁵⁴B/GN⁵⁵B) or “embitter” (NI⁵⁶V; “exasperate” in NE⁵⁷B/RE⁵⁸B; “drive to resentment” in J⁵⁹B) his children (see also Lohmeyer 157 n. 2). Here again the emphasis is not uniquely Christian (see, e.g., Menander, in Stobaeus, *Anthologia* 4.26.11–19; Plutarch, *De liberis educandis* 12, 14, 16 [= *Moralia* 8F-9A, 10D-E, 12C]; pseudo-Phocylides 150, 207 in Schweizer, *Colossians* 224 n. 51). It is striking, however, that the stress once again is not on the father’s discipline or authority but on his duties (Schrage, *Ethics* 255) and that the only responsibility mentioned is this negative one, rather than that of bringing up and training the children (contrast Eph. 6:4 and *Didache* 4:9). If this is not merely coincidental, and reflects something of the situation in Colossae, it suggests that the primary concern was to avoid aggravation in the situation of stress addressed. That is to say, we may envisage a situation where younger members of the Christian families were in a vulnerable position. Either they felt attracted to the alternatives offered by the Colossian Jews (since their parents were converts to such a characteristically Jewish body, worshipers of the one God in the name of Messiah Jesus, and may previously have been proselytes or God-fearers, the worship of the synagogue would seem to be closely related), and a too strong fatherly reaction could have driven them away. Or they were embarrassed, as Gentiles and among their fellow Gentiles, at belonging to such an ethnic sect as Christian Judaism. It would take fatherly tact and not just a laying down of the law to hold the different generations of the Christian family together.

patria potestas of the father (Gnilka, *Kolosserbrief* 220); cf., e.g., Mishnah *Kiddushin* 1:7.

⁵³BAGD W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979)

⁵⁴NJB New Jerusalem Bible

⁵⁵GNB Good News Bible

⁵⁶NIV New International Bible

⁵⁷NEB New English Bible

⁵⁸REB Revised English Bible

⁵⁹JB Jerusalem Bible

This line of reflection is encouraged by the reason given: “in case they lose heart” (RE⁶⁰B; so also NJ⁶¹B, NRS⁶²V), that is, lose their θυμός, their strong feeling and courage (LS⁶³J), become timid (references in Lohmeyer 157 n. 3), “go about their task in a listless, moody, sullen frame of mind” (Lightfoot 225). To belong to such a strange sect, a religion without a cult center, without priest and sacrifice, must have exposed the younger members of the Christian families of Colossae to some abuse from their fellows in the marketplace. Without strong parental encouragement they could easily become “discouraged” (RS⁶⁴V). The psychological sensitivity displayed here is remarkably modern (see also Caird 209).⁶⁵

3:18. **Wives** are to **submit to** their **husbands as** their heads. This command was not limited to Paul’s day, as is obvious from two reasons he gave elsewhere: (1) the order of Creation (man was created first, then woman; 1 Tim. 2:13); (2) the order within the Godhead (Christ submits to the Father; 1 Cor. 11:3). Submission or subordination does not mean inferiority; it simply means

⁶⁰REB Revised English Bible

⁶¹NJB New Jerusalem Bible

⁶²NRSV New Revised Standard Version

⁶³LSJ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. H. S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940; with supplement, 1968)

⁶⁴RSV Revised Standard Version

⁶⁵ James D. G. Dunn, [*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 251–252.

that the husband, not the wife, is head of the home. If he may be thought of as the “president,” she is the “vice-president.”

Of course there are moral limits to this submission; it is only **as is fitting in the Lord**. Just as obedience to government is commanded (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13) but only insofar as government takes its place under God (Ex. 1; Dan. 3; 6), even so a wife’s submission to her husband is only “in the Lord.” That is, she is not obligated to follow her husband’s leadership if it conflicts with specific scriptural commands.

3:19. **Husbands** are responsible to **love** their **wives** (as Christ loved the church; Eph. 5:28–29). So they are to exercise loving leadership, not dictatorial dominion. Perhaps husbands need this reminder to be tender and loving as much or more than wives need the reminder not to usurp authority over their husbands. Assuming absolute authority will only embitter one’s wife, not endear her. The words **be harsh** translate *pikrainesthe*, which is more literally, “make bitter.” (A different word is used in Col. 3:21; see comments there.) Wives, like tender and sensitive flowers (cf. 1 Peter 3:7), may wilt under authoritarian dominance but blossom with tender loving care. So in a maturing marriage the husband exercises compassionate care and his wife responds in willing submission to this loving leadership.

3:20. **Children** are to **obey** their **parents in everything**. Disobedience to parents is designated in the Old Testament as rebellion against God and was severely punished (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9). Jesus set an example for children by obeying Joseph and His mother Mary (Luke 2:51). Obedience to parents **pleases the Lord**. This does not suggest that obeying one’s parents merits salvation for a child. Rather, obedience reflects God’s design for order in the home. As Paul wrote elsewhere, “It is right” (*dikaion*, “just” or “proper”) for children to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1).

3:21. **Fathers** (and mothers; cf. Prov. 1:8; 6:20) should not presume on this obedience and **embitter** (*erethizete*, “provoke or irritate”) their **children** by continual agitation and unreasonable demands. Paul wrote, “Fathers, do not exasperate (*parorgizete*) your children” (Eph. 6:4). This will only make them **become discouraged**. Praise for well-doing rather than constant criticism will, along with loving discipline (cf. Heb. 12:7), help rear children in “the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Norman L. Geisler, [“Colossians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 683.

EPHESIANS 5:22-33 EXEGETICAL PAPER

A Paper
Presented to
Dr. Ben Simpson
Dallas Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Course
NT104

by
Pierre Everson Cannings
May 2012

Interpretive Translation

22 Wives, (*submit*) to your own husbands, as they are to Lord. 23 For the husband is the authority of the wife, as Christ also is the authority of the church, Christ *is* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is submit to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in every aspect. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the gospel, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or blemish; but that she would be set apart and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband. ⁶⁷

Exegetical Central Idea

The marriage of the church and Christ is the comparative model for a husband and wife. A wife has been called to submit and respect her husband as he fulfills his God given role as head of the home. The husband has been called to love his wife as his own body by cherishing and nurturing her.

Exegetical Sentence Outline

I. Husbands and wives are to have distinct roles that correlate with Christ's relationship to the church 22-24

A. A wife needs to submit to the husband v.22-24

a. A wife needs to submit to her husband as to the Lord v. 22

b. A wife needs to submit in everything v.24

B. A wife needs submit because the husband is the head of the wife v. 23-24

a. The husband is the head of his wife as Christ is to the church v.23

II. Husbands love your wife like yourself by sanctify her so that she will be presented holy and blameless. V.25-31

A. Husbands should love their wives v.25a

a. A husband needs to love like Christ loved the church.v.25a

B. Husbands need to model themselves after Jesus Christ love for the church v.26-37

a. Jesus died to sanctify the church through washing her in the word. v.26

⁶⁷ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Eph 5:22–33).
LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

1. Jesus died for the result of cleansing.
 - a. Jesus cleansed the church by the means of the gospel. v.26
 - b. Jesus Christ died with the purpose of presenting the church to Himself.v.27
 1. Christ sanctified the church so that it would be without stain or wrinkle v.27
 2. Christ sanctified the church so that it would be holy and blameless v.27
- C. So, husbands ought to love the wives as their own body v.28-32
 - a. Husbands should love your wife as he loves himself v.28
 - b. Husbands take care of your wife just as Christ cares for the church v.29
 1. A Husband has to nourish and cherish his wife as he does his own flesh.
 2. A husband should imitate Christ in His care for the church v.29
 - c. Jesus cared because we are members of His body v.29
 - d. A husband's love is the reason why a husband leaves and cleaves to his wife. V. 30
 1. A husband leaves his father and mother to join to his wife to become one flesh. v. 30
 2. The one flesh of husband and wife are an example of the mystery of Christ and the church. V. 32
- III. In review remember the roles as husband and wife v.33
 - A. Husband loves your wife as he loves himself v.33
 - B. Wives respect your husband v.33

Commentary

Verse by Verse Commentary on Ephesians 5:22-33

I. Paul applies distinct roles for husband and wife to the Christian marriage. 22-24

Introduction:

Verse 22-24 Paul begins his application of the imitation of God to the marriage. He establishes the roles of a husband and wife and starts the comparative analogy of Christ and church.

Overview: Paul highlights the submission of a wife and headship of a husband.

A. Verse 22-24 A wife and husband needs to understand and apply their roles in marriage.

Verse 22. The first directive mentioned in Paul's application is for a wife to submit to her husband as to the Lord. However, for clarification purposes this verse does

not include the word υποτασσεσθε. In reference to the appendix, scribes added υποτασσεσθε to supplement the missing verb. Although the verb is missing the insertion is not as controversial due to the previous reference to submission in previous verse. Even in the event that the verse does not add the insertion grammatically the participle from the previous verse would apply. The inserted verb has been studied in length due to the importance of the υποτασσεσθε to the rest of the text. Please see the appendix to find the reason for the definition of υποτασσω. In application of the definition a woman is supposed to submit to her husband as to the Lord. The phrasing of ως τῷ κυρίῳ has drawn much scholarly criticism. There are plenty of options ranging from the husband being the lord to his wife based on 1 Peter 3:6. This view has errors that need to be examined. First the subject κυρίῳ would need to be plural if it is referencing husbands. Secondly, it would not be outlandish for κυρίῳ to refer to Christ because in the following verses Christ is continuously referenced in His leadership of the church. Also in support of this view Ephesians 6:7 and Colossians 3:23 refer to slaves submitting to their master as unto the work of the Lord. The slaves were to work wholeheartedly towards God while submitting to their masters. With both scriptures supporting Christ as the referent and not humans it is very reasonable to conclude that a wife is to submit to her husband as to Jesus Christ. Although the object is identified the adverbial conjunction still needs clarification. With the support of the Ephesians 5:24 the ως is an accentuation for act of the subordination. This verse reveals first role of the two mentioned in the following verses.

Verse 23. Verse 23 gives the reason for the wife to submit while also distinguishing the man as the head of the wife. The verse continues by beginning the analogy of comparison between Christ relationship with the church to relationship between husband and the wife. The beginning of this verse has been taken into deep consideration due to the importance of understanding οτι ανηρ εστιν κεφαλη. The validation of the meaning is important because it distinguishes the role of the husband. The appendix discusses in detail the meaning of κεφαλη. The debate arose whether the husband was the source or authority of the wife. After further consideration it is conclusive that the husband as the head has the role of authority. The immediate context as well Biblical context as a whole supports the view that the wife submits because of the husband's God given authority. The second portion of the analogy is just as important. There were scholars who debated whether Jesus or the husband was the savior of the body. The discovery of the true meaning either gives the husband a new role or reinforces Jesus as the savior of the church. The appendix will uncover the support in detail but in brevity the savior is referring to Christ. This view reaffirms Christ's role in the salvation of the church therefore making Him the head of the body. Both of these analogies are important to roles of both husband and wife and also clarify the analogy Paul is using as a comparative.

Verse 24. After Paul provides the reasoning for submission in verse 23, he expands upon the thought here in this verse. He continues the analogy by stating "as the church submits to Christ, so also wife should submit in everything". The comparison between church and marriage is in reference to submission. The church submits to the authority and position of Jesus. They are subject to him as head of the church.

Υποτασσεται is the present middle or passive indicative but middle fits the context with the dictation of volitional subjection. Christ does not make anyone submit but the church under their will submits to the authority of God (Lincoln 372, Hoehner 745). With the “οὗτος καὶ” conjunction there is direct comparative correlation to the previous statement. Wives should also model the example of the church by voluntarily submitting herself to her husband. For further understand of Υποτασσεται please refer to the appendix for υποτασσεσθε in verse 22. However, there has to be discussion over the author’s intention of using ἐν παντί “in everything”. There are other Biblical references for children obeying their parents Col 3:20 and slave to their masters Col 3:22 (Hoehner 745). These references allow some scholars to believe that the wife should submit in all aspects except for anything contradictory to God. A wife is responsible to submit to God as to the Lord in every aspect of the marriage. There is no limit to her submission but she is supposed to be fully committed to her husband as head.

Summary: Paul begins the discussion of a Christian marriage by telling the wife to submit to her husband. She has to voluntarily subject herself to head of the home the same way the church subjects itself to Christ the Savior.

II. Paul gives a direct command for the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church. v. 25-32

Introduction: This section is elongated due to the continuance of the theme of a husband’s love for his wife. There is no change in Paul’s direction as well as syntactical clause that separates Paul’s thought in these verses. Commonly there is a break at verse 28 but there are others who believe Paul is continuing his thought. Paul uses the same adverbial conjunction οὕτως in verse 24 to bring the sentences together. The same conjunction occurs to bring verse 27 and 28 together rather than create a new thought.

Overview: Throughout this entire section Paul highlights the husband’s responsibility to love his wife. He also uses Christ relationship with the church as comparative model for husbands to follow.

A. Husbands love your wife with the same sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. v.25a

V.25a Paul begins with a command for a husband to love his wife. This love is without merit and is in the same regard as the wife’s subjection. This is the same love that occurs throughout the Bible but highlighted in a popular example of loving your neighbor in Lev 19:18, Matthew 5:43, and Matthew 19:19. Love is not based on emotion but a willful choice to act out love as seen in 1 Cor 13. For further discussion please review the appendix’s word study of ἀγαπή.

V. 25b. The husband is commanded to love his wife just as Christ loved the church. The same love that is unconditional and unmerited. Jew and Gentile did not deserve the love he gave for the church. The significance of this love is Paul desires his readers to display

Christ-like love to their wives. There is substandard for humans but the exact same verb is used for both Jesus and husbands. For further discussion the word study for *αγαπη* can be found in the appendix.

Paul then gives an example of love. Christ's love produced a sacrificial action on the cross. He handed himself over (*παρεδωκεν*) to his death for the sake of the church. Christ laid down his life because of his undying love and the husband is held to the same standard for his wife. He should willingly lay down his life for his wife and sacrifice his own emotions for sake of hers. These statements of husband's responsibility to love are outside the norm for a Greco-Roman household. This is an unconventional and new command that deserved attention in the churches. Paul obviously is addressing a need of the church of Ephesus.

B. The example of Christ's love 26-27

Paul shifts his attention to the illustration of Christ's love and purpose of His sacrifice. Christ died so that he would sanctify the church by the means of cleansing with the water of the word. In this verse three items have to be addressed in length. First, the definition of the word sanctify in the beginning of the verse has to be reviewed. There are three possible meaning of *αγιαση*. It is possible that Paul is either referring to Jesus setting the church apart, Jesus purifying the church from sin or a combination of both. Due to the context of verse 26 the latter is preferred. *Καθαρισας* is connected to the main verb *αγιαση*. This gives the clarification to how the church was sanctified. Through the cleansing with the washing of the word the church is sanctified. As discussed later the "word" is the gospel, therefore sanctification is the redeeming of sin through Jesus Christ giving himself up for church. The church 's redemption makes her set apart for God's use, therefore both arguments are correct in application to *αγιαση*. The immediate context lays the framework for the understanding of *αγιαση*. Paul continues with the sanctifying metaphor by using the phrase "washing of the water by the word". The first theory that occurs commonly is baptism. Due to the verbiage of washing and water it is understandable why this view is considered. The problem that arises is that baptism does not cleanse a person from sin or sanctify them. Another view that arises is baptism in the Spirit. Scriptural support such as Ezek 36:25-27, 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Titus 3:5 refer to a spiritual cleansing through the work of the Spirit. However, nowhere in the context is there a reference to the Spirit. The last view, which is accepted here, is the cleansing by the word that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The definition of *ρηματι*, is spoken word, therefore this would equate to the gospel that sanctify the new believer. This phrase has been commonly used, Eph 6:17, John 6:68 and Acts 10:37 all refer to the gospel. Therefore "washing with the word" is the gospel of the love of Christ through His sacrificial death. It was not water baptism but the gospel is what sanctifies the church and brought both Jew and Gentile into body.

v.27 After relaying the work of sacrificial love that sanctified and cleansed the body, Paul now talks about the reason for the sanctification of the church. Jesus gave himself up for the church for the purpose of presenting her to Himself glorious. Through sanctification the body would be without stain, wrinkle, blemish. She would be holy and

blameless before Him. Paul's metaphor is descriptive and needs further study in order to fully understand the depth of Christ's sanctification. First Christ wanted to present "παράστησιν" the church to Himself. Παράστησιν is setting the bride for the presentation to bridegroom. However Christ does not want the bride to be ordinary but glorious. According to Col 1:22 the sanctification process should prepare the church to be glorious. 2 Corinthians 11 also uses the same image of presenting bride as pure virgin before the Lord. The continual imagery allows the reader to understand the description of glory. The church is to be without a spot or wrinkle. She will not be tainted by sin but through the sanctification of Christ she will be unblemished. 2 Peter 2:13 is the only other NT scripture that uses οπιλος, and Peter uses it to describe the stained false prophets in Christian community. In the immediate context Christ wants no sin on his bride and that is why He gave himself up for her to remove her sin. Paul uses another descriptive word that does not appear in the Bible. ρυτις has the same effect as οπιλος, because both describe Jesus' desire for an unblemished church. This sentiment is confirmed by the strong adversative conjunction αλλα that introduces a clause of the expected presentation of the church. (Arnold 390). She will not be wrinkled and blemish but holy and blameless. This descriptive metaphor illustrates the reason for the sanctification of the church. Paul imaginatively reveals the results of sanctification with the depiction of glorious, holy and blameless church that will be presented to Christ.

C. A husband has to love his wife as his own body v.28-32

v.28. (The choice to place verse 28-32 as a whole in this point is argued in the introduction of this section). Verse 28 begins a new illustrative way of describing the love a husband should have for his wife. At this point Paul encourages the husbands to love their wives as their own bodies. Love has been discussed in verse 25 and in the appendix but the following phrase "as your own bodies" needs more explanation. Husbands are to love their wives as their own body. There have been two conclusions that arise on this statement. First, it could mean that he honors her more than himself and secondly it could be a reference to a Jewish tradition, which also highlights the same principle. The teaching states, "Concerning a man who loves his wife as himself, who honors her more than himself". Both options are reiterating the same concept and are both valid. A husband who loves his wife more than he loves himself will give her more honor.

Verse 29. Verse 29a highlights the explanation of the previous verses statement. Paul continues his thought with the clarification that nobody "hates his own flesh". Scholars agree that the εμισινσεν is a gnomic aorist that expresses a general or proven truth. This tense confirms Paul's voice in this statement. He is stating this as accepted truth by using the words for "no one". No one hates his own flesh but nurtures and takes care of it. Αλλα marks the contrast in the statement. This part of the verse is a distinct contrast between of previous portion. Paul uses hate and then nurture in contrast against each other. The warmth of εκτρεφει and θαλπει can be discovered in their accepted connotations. Εκτρεφει is used in rearing and nursing children and Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 6:4 to talk to fathers about rearing their children. Θαλπει is broader and means to comfort, cherish and warmth. Paul clearly wants the husband to love his

wife by growing and cherishing her. Paul gives two words to describe the love that a husband should have for his wife and both are nurturing in nature.

Verse 29b compares the love of a husband to the love that Christ has for his body. Earlier in the verse Paul tells the husband to love his wife like his own body. Paul uses the analogy to compare Jesus' love for the church. Paul wants the husband to love his wife the same way Christ loves the church. In the scope of Ephesians Jesus loved the church so much that he redeemed it 1:7-12, sealed it 1:13-14, and empowered it 1:19-23. He gave the church everything for nourishment and growth according 4:7-17. The husband in the same way should do everything for the wife to feel nurtured and cherished.

Verse 30. The *οτι* clause is causal and joins 29b to 30 with the reasoning for why Christ nurtures the church. Christians are member of his body because he died to redeem his church. Paul already uses this terminology in Ephesians 1:2-23 and 5:23. Believers are brought into the body for God's use. According to 1 Corinthians 12 He equips each of them with spiritual gifts but they are all equally a part of the body fitted together for His service.

Verse 31. This verse is a quote from Genesis 2:24. Paul is stating that man and wife are actually one flesh. This is not the first time this verse has been used in the NT both Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7-8 use this referent. However, Paul does change personal pronouns as well as the tense of *αυτι*, but this does not change the meaning whatsoever. This quote supports the claim of Paul desiring a husband to love his wife as his own body. According to this referent they are one body and the wife is a part of her husband, therefore the husband is obligated to love his wife as his own flesh. Since they are one flesh and no one hates his own flesh but nurtures it the husband is compelled to cherish his wife. The husband and wife should leave his father and mother. They are to "leave behind", "leave remaining", "forsake" or "abandon". Ruth 1:16, Isaiah 54:6 and Jeremiah 9:2 are all referents with the support of this connotation. The husband are commanded to do two things, one is to leave and the other is to cleave. Cleave means to join together tightly. This may include sexual intercourse where the two become one flesh. 1 Corinthians 16:16 talks about sex with a prostitute making them one flesh. This leads to the last aspect where the husband and wife become one flesh. They are to leave behind their parents and to join together tightly to become one flesh. This quote reinforces Paul's early teaching about nurturing and cherishing your own flesh. The husband and wife are one flesh therefore the husband should love her because they are one body.

Verse 32. This verse highlights the mystery of Christ in reference to the church. This is not the first time where he discusses the mystery of Christ. Paul refers to the same mystery in 1:9. There are three views that arise. First the mystery is referring to the human marriage. The second view is the human marriage in Genesis 2:24 as typological of the union between Christ and Church. Thirdly, it is the specifically the union between Christ and the church. The first view struggles to find support because of the roots in the Gnostic sources. The second view lacks Biblical support because this would be only distinctive to Ephesians and not the rest of the NT. The third view not only has the

support of Ephesians but the rest of the Biblical text. As noted this mystery was discussed in 1:9, 3:3, 4:9 and 6:2. In the context of Ephesians Jesus revealed the mystery through the death and resurrection. In the same section of this discussion Paul has been referencing Christ direct relation with the church. He has talked about Christ being the head and sacrificing his life for church so they could be sanctified. Chapter 2 also highlights the work of God and the blood that brought Jew and Gentile together. This is the mystery Paul is addressing. Paul closes this verse by pointing to whom the mystery was addressed.

III. Paul concludes his application with a review of the roles of husband and wife. V.33

Introduction: Paul ends chapter five by summarizing his thoughts and recapping the responsibilities of husband and wife. V.33

A. A reminder for husbands to love your wife v.33

Verse 33. Paul concludes the chapter by reminding the husband to love his wife. This encompasses the husband's role in nurturing and cherishing his wife as his own body.

B. A reminder for wives to respect your husbands. v.33

Verse 33. Paul then turns his attention to the wife and reminds her to fear her husband. Paul uses a different word in φοβέω in reference to her husband. This has caused some discussion because the connotation is either fear or respect. In verse 21 Paul told his audience to submit to one another in the fear of Christ. This was notated as fear. There has been acceptance that fear does not mean "to be scared" but to be in a state of "awe". If verse 21 and 33 are using the same connotation then the wife should stand in awe of her husband. The aspect of awe has troubled some scholars who would rather use the term respect instead fear. They reference 1 John 4:18 where it states that there is no fear in love because love cast out fear. In opposition of this support other scholars believe that the fear 1 John 4:18 is referring to is terror not general fear or awe. However, respect fits the context of the scripture because the same tone wives are asked to submit voluntarily is the same tone they have asked to voluntarily respect their husbands. A wife needs to respect her husband's role as head and submit herself under his God given position.

Summary: 25-33

A husband is commanded to love his wife like his own body. He is reminded of Christ's love for the church in which He sacrificed Himself for. Therefore, the husband needs to cherish and nurture his wife as one flesh. Marriage is a great example of the mystery of Christ. He gave His blood to make the church one body and the same should occur for the husband. He should love his wife more than himself and give her the honor she deserves.

Application.

A marriage should resemble the union between Christ and the church. The wife should submit and respect her husband as head in the marriage the same as the church submits to Christ as the head. The husband should love his wife by cherishing and nurturing her as his own flesh, the same as Christ loved the church and sacrificed for the church's sanctification.

Appendices

Text Critical Problem #1

Ephesians 2:22

Introduction:

There is a multiplicity of options for the reader to choose according to the reading of Ephesians 5:22. The original reading of the text is without the insertion of the verb "submit" and it is only implied. The second reading inserts the verb from verse 21 in the third person imperative. The third reading has the same insertion but in the second person imperative. The argument is not whether the verb is needed but whether the original text stated or implied "submit". This argument is important because it verifies whether there is scribal insertion or the original writing of Paul.

Reading #1 Text

Date:

This text critical problem begins with the dating of the first reading. There is not a lot of quantity with the original text but there is quality in the two manuscripts given in support of reading One. This reading has the support of P46, which is the oldest primary Alexandrian reading, dating in 200 A.D. Following this early date is the original reading of β , which is dated in the 4th century A.D. These two readings are old and antique but only two to support this reading. The question that will have to be addressed is whether these two antique readings are enough to defend the original proposed reading.

Geographical:

This area of geographical support is also lacking quantity due to lack of multiple manuscripts. Both of the manuscripts are positioned in the Alexandrian texttype, which limits the belief of widespread acceptance. This is an obvious disadvantage for reading One and the limitation of one major witness limits the geographic evidential support.

Genealogical:

The genealogical support for reading One is also lacking. The Alexandrian witness is the only texttype that represents the shorter reading. This reading is passed on

from 200 A.D. to the 4th century in the Alexandrian witnesses but there is no combinations of texttypes to review which limits further discussion.

Reading #2 Ephesians 5:22- υποτασσεσθωσαν- he/she submit

Date:

The issue that arises in reading Two is the quantity of witnesses but the lack of early dating for the insertion. The earliest manuscripts of A and I are noted with the insertion and are both dated in the 5th century. There is gap before the next major witnesses of Ψ, 33 and 2464 occur in the 9th century. Two more manuscripts in 1175 and 104 are present in the eleventh century. Closely following the 11th is 365, 1241 in the 12th century. Lastly, manuscript 6 is dated in the 13th century. As noted previously there is a quantity of support for the 3rd person insertion. The issue that has to be addressed is whether the dates are earlier enough to support the author's original writing.

Geographical:

The geographical evidence is very similar to reading One. Again, the Alexandrian text is present but with the addition of other major witnesses. Reading Two also struggles with the widespread acceptance of the insertion of submit. However, there is a larger quantity in the Alexandrian and other major texttypes. There are also no solid combinations that would accredit this reading. Although there are more manuscripts the lack of witness combinations and widespread acceptance also dampers the geographical support for the first insertion.

Genealogical:

The lack of widespread acceptance is not the issue in the genealogical viewpoint. In the Alexandrian texttype there is a evidence of uncial and minuscule acceptance. There is also the same evidence in the other major manuscripts with both uncial and minuscule representation. Although, the genealogical evidence is relatively supportive for acceptance the lack of papyri and early dating brings some doubt to absolute conclusive results.

Reading #3 Ephesians 5:22- υποτασσεσθε- you submit

Date:

The dating for the third reading has three supportive manuscripts. The earliest manuscript is D, which is dated in the 6th century. Both F and G are dated in the 9th century. These three manuscripts are the only evidence that support the insertion of the second person imperative of submit. The issue with this reading is that there is not only a lack of quantity but also antiquity. The lack of early dating removes the complete conclusiveness of dating as evidential support.

Geographical:

The third reading also lacks geographical support. The only major witness present is the Western uncials. Both of the manuscripts are positioned in the Western texttype, which limits the belief of widespread acceptance. This is an obvious disadvantage for reading Three and the limitation of one major witness limits the geographic evidential support.

Genealogical:

This reading lacks the most genealogical support out of all three options. There is no continuance in the Western texttype but only uncials. The lack of papyri and minuscule allows a strong conclusion that this form of the insertion was neither passed down nor continued to later dated minuscule. The issues mentioned make genealogical support for reading Three inconclusive.

Internal Evidence:

Reading #1

αιγυναικεστοις
ιδιοςανδρασιν

Reading #2

αιγυναικεστοις
ιδιοςανδρασιν
υποτασσεσθωσαν

Reading #3

αιγυναικεστοις
ιδιοςανδρασιν
υποτασσεσθε

There is no objection amongst scholars that verse 22 is begging for a verb. It is not out of ordinary that a scribe could have added the verb for clarification purposes. It is not hard to imagine a scribe beginning in verse 22 and adding the verb due to sentence fragment in the verse. According to the NET appendix it is not unusual for Paul to use cryptic type writing with the verb implied and that would equate to the shorter and harder reading. (Appendix VI). It seems more likely that a scribe inserted the verb than removed or forgot. The internal evidence correctly points to the harder and shorter reading, which was later inserted with a verb.

Conclusion:

After further consideration each reading has weaknesses and strengths. Reading One's strength is the antiquity of the manuscripts as well as the shorter and harder reading that fits the Paul's writing style. Reading Two has quantity that supports the readings as well as at least two witnesses supporting the third person verb insertion. However, reading Two lacks antiquity as well as internal evidence that prove the original reading has the verb in place. To prove the insertion is the original reading it would be more viable to have an antique reading older than P46. The lack of an antique reading

slightly diminishes the possibility of reading Two being the original. Lastly, reading Three struggles with antiquity, geographical, and genealogical support. Reading Three's lack of evidence limits the possibilities of this being the correct translation. With all three in mind reading One has the antiquity necessary to support the shorter and harder reading. The P46 reading as well as the reputation of the Alexandrian scribes gives the credence of support for verse 22 lacking the verb. This argument is the perfect of example of quality over quantity.

Text Critical Problem #2

Ephesians 5:30

Introduction:

A phrase that has to be put into question for this textual critical problem is whether quality is better than quantity. In Ephesians 5:30 there is an addition at the end of the text that reads "of his body and of his bones" which would add to the reading -- of "for we are members of his body". The insertion helps the reader understand the shortened reading of Genesis 2:23 in verse 31. This insertion would change the meaning of the text and is necessary for this textual problem to be criticized further.

Reading #1 Text

Date:

What reading #1 lacks in quantity it makes up for in the antiquity of the readings. The earlier manuscript is preferred, so the dating of the manuscripts and witnesses will begin at the earliest and continue progressively. This reading has the support of P46, which is the oldest primary Alexandrian reading, dating in 200 A.D. Following this early date is the original reading of χ and β , which are both dated in the 4th century A.D. The A uncial is dated in the 5th century with minuscule 33 and 2464 following in the 9th century. After 33, 1739 is dated in the 10th century with 6 right behind that in the 13th century. 2464 is dated in the 14th century, with 81 dated the furthest in 1044.

Geographical:

Reading 1 struggles with geographical evidence. There is not much to discuss because there is only one notable family that holds this reading. The Alexandrian text-type has the shorter reading. The only positive for the geographical evidence is that the Alexandrian texts were "prepared by the skillful editors, trained in the scholarly traditions of Alexandria."⁶⁸ This brings some credible support that may allow the lack of geographical evidence to be slightly overlooked. However, the evidence for the shorter Alexandrian reading revealed that it was not widespread and accepted among the other text-types.

Genealogical:

Although there is more genealogical evidence than geographical for reading one there still is a lack of a quantity of support. There are only two major witnesses

⁶⁸ Metzger 62

represented in this reading and only one is supported by the three text-types. In each of the Alexandrian text-types there is significant evidence for the support of scribal acceptance. The combination of the Alexandrian's scribal acceptance with their reputation of being skilled and scholarly editors allows this genealogical evidence to have some significance. In addition to the Alexandrian texts there are only two other supporting minuscules but they bear no genealogical support.

Reading #2 Ephesians 5:30- *ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ* – of his body and of his bones

Date:

What reading One lacks in quantity reading, Two delivers in numerous amounts of manuscripts. That is not the only difference between the readings but the age of the manuscripts also vary drastically. The starting point for the readings begins with §2 , which is dated in the 4th century. The second earliest reading is the Western manuscript D that is dated in the 6th century. The next earliest date is the ninth century, which accounts for the following manuscripts K, F, G, 0150, Ψ, and 33. Closely following the 9th century is 326 that is dated in the 10th century. The rest of the writings vary in later datings with 424, 104 and 1175 in the 11th century. One century later the manuscripts of 1241 and 365 originated. The dating of the second reading is much later with the earliest reading in the 4th century. These late date does cast some doubt in the originality of the reading. It is preferred amongst scholars to have an earlier manuscript and this reading lack early dated evidence. Even though reading One lacks quantity there seems to more early dated material.

Geographical:

The geographical evidence for reading Two significantly supports this reading's acceptance. All major witnesses are present, which allows the assumption that there was some type of regional acceptance. However, the combinations are very important to the acceptance of this reading. The combination of the Alexandrian and the Western proves to be a strong argument for the solidity of reading One.⁶⁹ Each texttype is represented, therefore giving different combinations for support, but the strongest is the Alexandrian and Western. Furthermore, each texttype has both a majuscule and minuscule readings that agree. Reading Two finds its strongest support in this geographical category. The widespread acceptance as well as the combination of Western and Alexandrian provides significant support for the insertion. The only drawback for this reading is the lack early dated geographical acceptance.

Genealogical:

The genealogical support for reading Two is also significant. In each of the major witnesses there is both uncial and minuscule manuscripts. Each texttype is available and has the genealogical agreement throughout each of the witnesses. There is multiple texts in both the uncials and minuscule that agree to the insertion in Ephesians 5:30. The texttypes agreement within the witnesses has to considered strong evidence for the

⁶⁹ Holmes 60

support for the insertion. The only drawback from this insertion is the lack of older papyri manuscripts in each of the major witnesses.

Internal Evidence:

Reading #1
οτιμεληεσμεντου
σωματος**αυτου**

Reading #2
οτιμεληεσμεντου
σωματοςαυτου
εκτηςσαρκος
αυτουκαιεκ
τωνοστεων**αυτου**

Although there are always possibilities for scribal error these two readings only allow one mistake. The reading above highlights **αυτου** to provide the mistake that could have occurred. There is a slight possibility that the scribe could have passed over the inserted phrase due to the repetition of **αυτου**. The only problem with this solution is the older Alexandrian manuscripts that support the shorter reading. It is also plausible for the scribes to add the insertion in order to clarify the OT reference of Genesis 2:23a. Although the older reading does not completely dismiss the scribal error or addition there has to be serious consideration for the antiquity of the initial manuscripts.

Conclusion:

After the collection of the data the same question proposed in the introduction arises. The question of whether quantity will outweigh the quality is proposed against both of the readings. Reading Two has the support of both the geographical and genealogical evidence.. The acceptance of reading among the geographical areas is important in noting the scribal agreement for the insertion. Also the major witnesses acceptance passed from the uncial to the minuscule is vital to the support of the insertion. However reading One has the support of antiquity as well as internal evidence for the shorter reading. The major support for this reading is the older dating. Papyri P46 truly helps the case for the shorter reading. The closer the reading is to the original decreases the likelihood of scribal error. The antiquity of the reading is also supported by Alexandrian scribes which had a strong reputation of detailed and accurate work. Lastly, in addition to antiquity the shorter reading seems most likely since the insertion lacks strong internal evidence. The dating of the first reading, the reputation of the Alexandrian scribes and the historical shorter reading lead to the conclusion of reading One. However, the conclusive factor is the dating of original reading.

Structural Layout of Greek Clauses

See Separate Attachment

Synchronic Word Studies

A Synchronic Study of Υποτασσω

In the midst of writing there are words that carry more significance than others. There are some words that are transcendent through time and carry instruction that change people's lives. The same occurs when Paul is writing about marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33. Paul gives instruction that changes marriages forever and defied common knowledge of the roles of husband and wife. One of the usages that change the immediate text is Paul's use of υποτασσω. Paul tells the wife that she needs to submit to her husband because he is head of her. Although a wife's submission is not new territory to Paul's current audience it is still a significant reminder of the reason for submission as well as the roles.

In order to be thorough through the Biblical text, this study will probe the LXX. There are only two uses that correspond with υποτασσω in the connotation of God to man. Psalm 61:2 and verse 6 both use the verb in a manner of subordinating oneself to, yield, be subject to, and obey. Both Psalm 61:2 and verse 6 states that the author's soul is subjected to God. He is submitting his soul before the Lord because God is his salvation. These are the only texts that use υποτασσω and it is used in reference to God and submission to His saving work. Another connotation is humans being subject to man. In Psalm 8:6 God makes creation subject to man and in Psalm 143:2 God makes people subject to David. These two references capture the second connotation of human to human subjection. There are only two connotations in the LXX for υποτασσω but all are references use the same definition.

The Koine Greek also will provide some support for an understanding υποτασσω. The Moulton Milligan will provide a few resources to investigate the meaning of υποτασσωt through time. In comparison to the LXX, MM finds some correlation in two connotations. P Leid written ii/iii A.D. is the first evidence that correlates well with the LXX category of a humans submission to God. However, there is unique reference that happens to be common in papyri but not in the Biblical text. The definition of "to append to a document" is not found in the Bible but occurs during the P Ryl II in 167 A.D.

The NT has more references for discovery and will provide more insight on the connotations of υποτασσω. In the NT there are three categories of usage that capture the meaning. The first and most common connotation is to cause to be in submissive relationship, to subject or to subordinate. (BDAG). Inside of this category there are three tenses. The first is the active tense, which carries the understanding of to cause, be in a submissive relationship. 1 Corinthians is a good example of Christ putting everything in subjection and all things are under His feet. Philippians 3:21, Hebrews 2:5, 8 and Ephesians 1:22 also shares the same sentiment of 1 Corinthians. They are all highlighting Christ power to place all things under his feet.

There is a passive voice that reflects someone or something becoming subject. Romans 8:20 and 1 Corinthians 15:28a are both good examples of creation becoming subject to God and ready for the return of the savior.

There is a middle voice that means to submit or subordinate oneself. There are four references that refer to the wife's submission to her husband. In Ephesians 5:22, Col 3:18, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1 all refer to the wife's submission or subjecting herself. There is one reference in Luke 2:51 that uses the voice to talk about children's submission to their parents. In another application of the connotation υποτασσω is used in Titus 2:9 and 1 Peter 2:18 to describe the relationship between slave and master. In continuance of the same voice the voluntary submission also fits people subjecting themselves to powers that be. Romans 13:1-13 is a good example of a people subjecting themselves to the powers at hand. The most crucial contextual evidence for the present text is the voluntary submission of love. Each reference is an example of love causing someone to voluntarily subject himself or herself to another person. In 1 Corinthians 16:16, Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 5:5b are all illustrations of this connotation. All of these references especially the last one mentioned are direct representation of υποτασσω use in Ephesians 5:21, 24. The middle voice represents the wife's voluntary act of subjection due to her fear of God. Although the wife is created equal she submits in everything because of her obedience to the Lord.

After a thorough discussion, υποτασσω throughout history has consistently been derived from the definition of subjection or submission. From the OT to the NT there has been consistent usage of the term. Only one Koine usage departs from the common usage. Therefore, since the usage is not in question the category and voice have to be determined. The contexts of the Biblical references help determine that husband and wife are a separate category. The submission to another human on the basis of love and relationship is a separate category. This understanding is not controversial but whether submission is mandatory or voluntary has caused dialogue. The categorical evidence provides insight in the voice of υποτασσω. The only category that has involuntary submission is between God and creation. Nowhere in the text is the passive voice in relation to human interaction, but there is plenty of support in the middle voice between humans. It is safe to say humans have to voluntarily subject to one another and the same applies to marriage. According to the immediate text it is evident that Paul desires for the wife to submit voluntarily because he encourages her with the statement "as to the Lord". She is not submitting to her husband because she has to but because she fears the Lord and the position God placed her husband in. Therefore, a wife should voluntarily submit herself to her husband out of respect for his position as the head and fear of the Lord.

Synchronic Word Study Αγαπη

A man's responsibility is critical towards the wellbeing of his family. According to Paul in Ephesians 5:25 the man's priority is for him to love his wife. To today's audience this may seem as common knowledge but there is depth to Paul's command. Αγαπη's substantial usage makes it difficult to address in brevity but this study will examine a category of the word. In order to be thorough this discussion will address αγαπη's meaning concerning human interaction or Christ love for the church. Uncovering αγαπη's depth and applying it to Ephesians 5:24 will provide clarity on Paul's intention for the responsibility of husbands. This revelation can change the current perception of love and offer a pure love for husbands to display.

In order to be thorough there has to be a discussion of extra-biblical texts such as classical Greek. LSJ should supply the evidential support for the usages in the classical period. According to Aquila and Symmachus and Theodotion there is a variation of meanings but charity grew more common over time.

The development of *ἀγάπη* in the LXX takes on a different meaning. In the 14 times love is mentioned it is in reference sexual love. Jeremiah 2:2 is a good example of figurative referent to betrothals. Love seemed to very restricted and it is hard to find solid usage for LXX evidence.

Also Moulton Milligan can provide depth in the Koine period, but as discovered *ἀγάπη* is a Biblical term. (Moulton Milligan 2). Sadly, for this study the Koine period does not add to the Biblical understanding. There are three supposable usages but all have read otherwise after further study. All three references have been negated and are no longer considered beneficial to the understanding of the Biblical usage.

With little help from other sources this study will have to rely heavily upon the NT writings for connotations and usages. “The words of *ἀγαπάω* group refer almost exclusively in the NT to the love of persons to persons” (EDNT 9). BDAG also distinguishes that *ἀγάπη* is “very seldom in general Greek of sexual attraction”. This clarification differentiates NT from the LXX definition. There is no agreed connection of the LXX and NT connotation. There are a total of 320 occurrences of the form of *ἀγάπη* in the NT, so this study will categorize the uses into three person-to-person love relationships. The first of which is the command to love your neighbor. Matthew 22:39 and Luke 10:27 are popular references that illustrates the basic commandment of loving your neighbor. Jesus put this command in high importance often citing love your God with love your neighbor as the two great commandments. In order to understand the statement completely there has to be brief description of whom Jesus wants everyone to love. Jesus himself answered this question in Luke 10:29-37 by illustrating the neighbor through the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the end of the story Jesus highlights that a neighbor is not based on class, piety, or race but anyone in need of mercy. This parable highlights the openness and lack of limitation love has in God’s eyes. Cultural lines do not separate love but it is open to everyone a person encounters. BDAG defines neighbor as the one who is near or close by, neighbor, fellow human being. This same love is involved in the church. Ephesians 4:2 tells the church of Ephesus to walk in love showing tolerance for one another. Hebrews 10:24 and Galatians 5:13 reveal that love should display good deeds and service to one another. These scriptures about brotherly love reveal God’s intention of unconditional love for everyone you encounter. Matthew 5:43-48 transitions love into another category that was touched on in the parable of Good Samaritan. Jesus broke the mold and not only commanded the love of a neighbor but now the love for an enemy. Luke 6:27, 35 and Matthew 5:44 highlight the unconditional love expected from God’s people. Loving your enemy requires love without reciprocation as well as mutuality. Another category that needs further understanding is the imperative of love that is used in the direct context of Ephesians 5:25-33. Paul’s writing in the immediate text is another category of love involved in a husband and wife relationship. He tells the husband to love your wife just as Christ loved the church. Jesus gave himself up for the church and this same sacrificial love has to be displayed to a wife. In order to

be thorough there has to be a brief discussion of the Biblical support for the love of God has for humans. The epitome of Christianity and display of God's love can be found in John 3:16. In 1 John 4:9-10 and Romans 5:8 God's love for his people caused Him to send His son for salvation of mankind. Scripture continues to address God's continual love. Romans 8:34-39 speaks that because of God's love nothing can separate Him from His people. Each aspect of God's love reveals sacrifice and unconditional love for His people. God has called mankind to love one another, your enemy and your family because He loved us first.

Conclusion:

In the NT alone it is undoubtedly true that God has called His people to love. The question this study addressed is who and how do we display this love. To begin, the love that God had for his creation compelled Him to send His Son to die on the cross for the sins of mankind. Jesus died because of love and His love continues because he will not allow anything to separate Him from His people. This same love is requested of all Christians. Jesus makes it clear that Christians are supposed to unequivocally without prejudice love your fellow human. This unbiased love causes service and good deeds that benefit fellow humans. He also established that Christians are supposed to love unconditionally. He told Christians to love your enemy without reciprocation despite their hatred. This love changes a marriage and the way a husband loves his wife. His love has to be unconditional without expectation of reciprocation. He has to love his wife unconditionally despite persecutions, sin, or tribulation. His love must show good deeds and service. His love must reveal nurturing and cherishment. Lastly, a husband must sacrifice his life for his wife because he must love her more than his own body. This brief study of love changes the landscape of marriage especially the role of a husband.

Problem Solving and Validation

Validation of the View of the Savior in Ephesians 5:23

Introduction:

Biblical metaphors can be complicated to interpret in scripture. Metaphors become even more complex when there are syntactical issues surrounding it. Ephesians 5:23 includes two metaphors as well as syntactical issues that need to be addressed. The second metaphor in verse 23 Paul wrote, "He himself is the savior of the body". Scholars have discussed this clause in length trying to determine who is the subject of the "he" is referring to. The determination of the subject is significant because it determines the role of either man or Christ. This determination can change the roles of a husband and the landscape of the rest of the passage. Therefore, this metaphor has to be validated in order to understand if Paul meant the husband should be savior to the wife or if Christ is the Savior to church.

Syntactical evidence is vitally important to the determination of the subject. There are two clauses that are present in verse 23 but the question is whether *αυτος* is referring

to *χριστος* in the same clause or *ανηρ* in the preceding clause. The type of clause will also help the identification of the subject. With the understanding of the correct clause there can be clarification of the role of a husband in relation to his wife.

View of Husband:

This view has to be considered because of the previous clause that refers to the husband as the head of the wife. Some scholars believe that the husband referent as savior is the man's responsibility for saving the wife. The only scriptural support used in the same connotation is 1 Corinthians 7:16. In 1 Corinthians a believing husband saves his unbelieving wife, which would in turn make him her savior. (Hoehner 742, Lincoln 370).

Another possibility is that the term savior is more general. The reference to a man as savior is uncommon but some scholars have argued that this carries the connotation of protector or provider (Arnold 382). In this definition the husband is responsible for his wife's protection, provision and welfare. This connotation would fit the emperor in its Hellenistic usage. This connotation would also fit the previous clause reference to "head". In Ephesians 4:15,16 Christ reference as head is in connotation of a provider and welfare of the body. This view hypothesizes that Paul is using this same connotation in reference to husband and wife. Scholars also add that later in chapter five, verses 28-30 use the same parallel as wife as the body of the husband. Therefore, according to the supporters of this view, it is not farfetched for Paul to use the same parallel in verse 23. There is a possibility that Paul intended a husband to be a protector and it has to be heavily considered an option.

Despite the contextual support there are some problems that arise for this view. Hoehner list six areas of concern and he is not alone in his opposition against the view of Savior referring to the husband. The first issue that arises is that *αυτος* is in opposition to *ο χριστος* due to its presence and position. The positioning of *αυτος* must refer to what precedes it and that is *χριστος* and not *ανηρ* in the preceding clause. According to this appositional clause there is no way that Savior is referring to man but only to Christ. The second issue that arises is that nowhere throughout the Bible does it refer to wives as the husband's body. Even in the immediate context of 28-30 Paul is referring to loving the wife as his own body, but never is the wife the husband's body. Lincoln also supports this defense by stating that analogy references Christ as the head of the body but never intended for it to describe the husband. Lincoln also sites the same syntactical evidence that the husband is not in view (Lincoln 370). The third argument is the lack of relevance 1 Corinthians 7:16 has to Eph 5:23. 1 Corinthians is referring to a believing husband saving his unbelieving wife but in the immediate context there is no mention of evangelism. Also the same scripture mentions the wife being able to evangelize and save her home, therefore according to 1 Corinthians 7:16 the role is not distinct to husbands (Lincoln 370 Hoehner 742). Fourthly, in the 23 times that the word savior is used it is always in reference to Jesus and never to human beings. Fifth, if this were a referent to the husband as savior there would be an issue distinguishing the role. There is no way to know what Paul's intention for the husband and since it can't be saving the only option is protection. If the only option is protection then the question remains what is the husband supposed to protect her from. Lastly, some have equated this reference to the apocalyptic story of Tobias saving his cousin Sarah by marrying her. This reference is out of context and doesn't fit inside of the immediate context. Although the reading of the text caused a

conflict, the view of the husband as the savior has some complications that may hinder it from being the correct understanding.

View of Christ:

In the midst of discounting the view of the husband as the savior it adds depth to the argument that Christ is in mind when Paul writes verse 23. To reverse the arguments that discount the view of the husband, this view fits the syntactical evidence as well as the Biblical context of Christ and His role with the body. As noted previously Christ is mentioned as the Savior 23 times and each time it is referring to Jesus. In addition, Christ fits the immediate context of Ephesians. “Although nowhere else in the NT is Christ called the “savior of the body,” it fits with this epistle namely Christ’s redemption of individual sinners resulting in reconciliation to God and also to each other with the body of believers” (Hoehner 743). Throughout the entire book of Ephesians Paul highlights Christ redemptive work through the cross that brought Jew and Gentile together to form one body in the church. The mystery of God that is referred to 5:32 is expounded upon in chapter 3. There is a direct correlation to Christ redemptive work in chapter 2 and 3 and the application that is in marriage in chapter 5. Christ is the head of the body and saved the body through his work on the cross. Clinton Arnold summarizes this argument by stating, “Jesus is the one who defeated the power of sin and forces of evil on the cross so that He could form the body (see 2:1-8, 13-16). The husbands fulfill no analogous role for his wife” (Arnold 382). Also in the same scripture Christ is already mentioned as the head of the church. This only confirms the previous clause that Jesus is the savior of the body.

Conclusion:

It is unquestionable that the conflict of the identification of *αὐτός* is vital towards defining the role of the husband or reaffirming the role of Christ and body. The weaknesses of the first diminish the possibility that the husband is the savior to the wife. The lack of scriptural support for the role of a protector as well as the syntactical evidence does not support the view of a husband. However, the view of Christ as Savior fits the overall Biblical text, immediate scriptures, theme of Ephesians, as well as the syntactical evidence. Due to collection of evidence the view of Christ is conclusive as the correct interpretation as the Savior. This validation realigns the roles of the husband as head but not as a savior. It also follows the structure of Christ being Savior and closely correlated to marriage.

Introduction:

Metaphors are never easy to understand they are often left up to the context and trying to understand the author’s original intentions. Paul’s writing in Ephesians 5:23 has the same intrigue when he writes that the husband “is the head of the wife”. This metaphoric reference has caused scholarly debate over the intention of Paul’s usage. The initial diagnosis was that “head” represented the authority (ruler) or leadership of the husband, but that was challenged with another view, which defined head as source. This is critical due to the fact that this analogy of authority or simply a source dictates the remainder of the analogy and roles for the remaining scripture.

Despite the significance of the passage there is not syntactical conclusions that dictate the meaning. The meaning is solely dependent on the author's original intent on the use of the metaphor. As noted only two proposals have caused further discussion but since they are significantly different there has to be validation to reveal the most supported meaning. The meaning of source is totally different and removes the authoritative aspect of head away from the definition. The second and older traditional definition head as authority (ruler) has been accepted until late but supplies a totally different role in the marriage. These significant differences require further discussion and support.

View of Authority:

Although this view has been challenged it was accepted until the 1970s and 1980s. The connotation of head symbolizes authority and leadership but there has to be origination. Since this is a metaphoric use the origination has to be uncovered through the main word of head. The usage of head will dictate the meaning of the rest of the metaphor. Although the LXX does not have any similar metaphors there are references to "head" in Judges 11:11, and 2 Samuel 22:44. (Theilman 376). All of these references refer to a leader or position of power. Although the connotation is not the same there still is some support due to the overall meaning of the Hebrew word for head. Outside of the LXX there are NT references with a similar connotation. In Colossians 1:18 Christ is referenced as the head of the body, which means the church. In Colossians 2:10 Christ again is referenced as the head and ruler over all rulers. Both of these NT references support the definition for some type of authority either over the cosmos or the church (Lincoln 368). In the same book of Ephesians Paul uses this reference to describe Christ as the head of the church. In Eph 4:15-16 and 1:22 Jesus is fitted to the church as the head to the body. Paul has implemented this connotation of authority previously, which supports the view of "head" being defined as rule or authority. The previous connotations help the reader understand his intention in his reference to the husband being the head of the wife. The author's previous usages are evidence alone that there is some continuity in Paul's meaning.

The discomfort arises when readers begin to directly correlate the authority of Christ to the church to the husband and the wife. If this connotation is adopted there is differences in authority and connection. For instance, the church without Christ is lost and incomplete whereas the wife without the husband is complete through creation (Hoehner 740). The authority is collaborative with the wife agreeing to the position of leadership and submitting the positional authority God has given the man. Despite the slight authoritarian difference the head is defined through the text as authority. Despite the lack of metaphoric references the use of the single word "head" throughout the text proves the rule or authority connotation.

View of Source:

Although this view did not gain momentum until recent years it still deserves attention as an opposing view. The same scripture that commentators use in Ephesians 4:15-16 has been used to support the connotation of source. In this verse Paul states that

Christ is the source from which all things grow (Hoehner 739). “A few interpreters, aware of the ambiguity of the term, have argued that there are no connotations of authority in Paul’s use of it in 5:23. Κεφαλη implies that the husband is the resource for the fulfillment of the wife just as in 4:15-16 Christ, as the head of the church-body, equips and encourages the church’s growth” (Theilman 377). Some scholars have argued that God created woman from man therefore Adam was the source for Eve. To continue this particular argument they state that in Eph 1:22 there is a Christ head reference after an Adamic allusion. Also, in the immediate text Paul later mentions Gen 2:24 as a reference, which could strengthen the argument for source as an option.

However, every argument has weaknesses and this particular one has failed to continue momentum for several reasons. First, there are no Biblical references of head being used as source in any connotation. Secondly, this view has failed to recognize in the midst of the immediate text Christ and the husband are clearly put in authoritative descriptions. The following verse in Eph 5:24 states that the woman should subject herself to her husband in everything. In the scope of the entire metaphor Christ is clearly authoritative, where in the following verse Paul states that the church submits to Christ. Thirdly, although Eph 4:15-15 may strengthen this particular argument there are a plethora of scriptures that support Christ as the head in an authoritative manner. Although this view presents an alternative to the authoritative view it lacks compounding evidence that should sway the original view.

Conclusion:

After careful review there is significant evidence that supports the original and longstanding view of authority as the connotation for “head”. Although the second view finds support in Eph 4:15-16 it lacks in many other areas such as contextual and Biblical support. Therefore, despite the objection to husband’s authority especially in comparison with Christ there is significant Biblical and contextual substantiation to maintain the view of authority.