

## **Preparation for Session 10 – The Role of Women in the Church**

Read Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:18, 19 and I Peter 3:1-7. Focus upon the relationship between husbands and wives in light of these passages. Consider the following questions:

1. Is the focus of Ephesians 5:21 – 33 husbands and wives or Christ and the church? If you believe the focus is Christ and the church, can we abstract lessons regarding husbands and wives? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. How would you define the meaning of the Greek word translated “subordinate” in Ephesians 5? Consider that there are other Greek words which more clearly indicate submission to an authority figure.
3. How would you define the meaning of the Greek word translated “head” in Ephesians 5? Keep in mind that there are other Greek words which more clearly indicate one who rules over another.
4. The Greek word translated love is *agapao*. What is the relevance of the word we translate “agape love” to this passage?
5. What is the evidence for male spiritual leadership in Ephesians 5? Consider how this passage relates to Paul’s other passages regarding the relationship between men and women (such as I Timothy 2).
6. Is there any significance to the fact that, in this passage, the wife is not commanded to love the husband? Are there any passages in the New Testament where the wife is commanded to love her husband?
7. If we were to accept the premise that the submission described in Ephesians 5 as “voluntary” submission, how does this impact your understanding of the passage? How does such an interpretation integrate with the role relationship of Christ and the church?

8. Is submission mutual in Ephesians 5? If so, then how does this mutual submission correlate with the mutual relations between Christ and the church?
9. In Colossians 3, how would you define the Greek word which is translated “fitting”? What impact does your definition have on your interpretation of the passage?
10. What does Paul mean in Colossians 3 by using the phrase “in the Lord”? He uses this phrase over 40 times in the New Testament.
11. Is Colossians 3 simply a truncated restatement of Paul’s injunctions in Ephesians 5? If so, why? If not, why not?
12. The instructions regarding husbands and wives in I Peter 3 is set in a series of instructions. How would you describe the context of these instructions? Does this context differ than the context of Ephesians 5? (When answering this question, consider to whom Peter is addressing this letter.)
13. Many of the wives in I Peter 3 probably had probably gone against the wishes of their husbands by becoming Christians (3:1). How does this influence your interpretation of I Peter 3?
14. Why do you believe that Sarah was selected as an ideal in I Peter 3?

15. How would you summarize Peter's instructions to wives in I Peter 3?

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