

**SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY**

**SUBMISSION: AN ENGENDERED READING OF EPHESIANS 5:21-33**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF MASTER'S  
DEGREE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Daddy Mr. Albino Oteka, Mr. Edward Asare, brothers and sisters, and all women out there.

Special thanks to My Prof. Jostein Ådna.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

Marriage in the contemporary world is a social institution and a legal contract between two individuals to form a sexual, productive and reproductive union. This union is recognized by family, society, religious institutions and legal systems.<sup>1</sup> It defines the relationship of two individuals to themselves: to any children they might have, to their extended families, to shared property and assets and to society in general. Marriage is a ubiquitous feature of human kind and social organization characterized by parental responsibility for children and division of labor according to gender and age.<sup>2</sup> However, different societies have varying preferences of marriage the institution. For instance, in Asia and Africa polygamous and arranged marriages are dominant while monogamy is prevalent in the West and Europe. In the contemporary society bigamy and same sex marriages are becoming common.

In recent decades, the idea of marriage as a social institution and central legal contract has been challenged by the view that marriage should be seen as a personal lifestyle entered and exited freely.<sup>3</sup> This has had appalling impacts on the family; conflicts, high rates of divorce, single parenthood, disoriented children which undermines and underpins the breakdown of the institution. With the rise of the Feminist movement, women have rose up to challenge the traditional norms of marriage where they are required to submit to their husbands. This move by has led to the continuous power struggle between men and women with appalling consequences. For a deeper understanding of this problem this study will be dedicated to investigating the

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<sup>1</sup> William J .Doherty, Jason S .Carroll and Linda J. Waite, “*Supporting the Institution of Marriage: Ideological, Research and Ecological Perspectives*,” in *The Family in the New Millennium: world voices supporting the “Natural Clan”* (eds., A Scott Loveless and Thomas B.Holman; vol 2 of *Marriage and Human Dignity*, Praeger: Westport, 2007), 21.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Schwimmer, “*Marriage systems*,”n.p. (cited14<sup>th</sup>January2014). Online:  
<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/marriage/>

<sup>3</sup> Doherty, “*Supporting the Institution of Marriage*,” in *The Family in the New Millennium* (ed. loveless and Holman), 2:21.

concept of submission. Questions such as; is submission in marriage significant? Is submission in marriage a way street or is there mutual understanding? How do we distinguish the roles of men and women in the family will be addressed. In response to these and other related questions various positions ranging from the overt feminist through the liberal stance to the male chauvinist will be investigated. The focal point of this discussion will be the Biblical text Ephesians 5:21-33.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, an introduction, Chapter two, an introduction to the letter to Ephesians addressing issues like authorship, time, structure and addressee. Chapter three, an exegetical study of Ephesians 5:21-33. This chapter will engage the text in its original language to establish the correct translation and interpretation. Chapter four, will deal with hermeneutical reflections and application of the text in the contemporary situation. Finally, Chapter five will deal with conclusion, recommendations and outlook.

## **1.2 Definition of submission**

Hornsby defines submission as the action of presenting something formally for consideration or for a decision to be made, the acceptance of defeat or another's power.<sup>4</sup>

From Webster's dictionary submission is the act of submitting, yielding or surrendering, the state or quality of being submissive; acknowledgement of inferiority or dependence; humble or suppliant behavior; meekness, resignation, obedience.<sup>5</sup>

Submission root word in Greek *hypotasso* is primarily a military term, referring to rank under, to subject oneself, to obey.<sup>6</sup>

A detailed understanding and meaning of submission will be discussed in 3.3.1.

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<sup>4</sup>A. S. Hornsby and Jonathan Crowther, eds., *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5:1191.

<sup>5</sup> Jean L.Mckechine, ed., *Webster's New tenth Century Dictionary of English language* (Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1978), 2:1815.

<sup>6</sup> W.E.Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Virginia: Macdonald, 1979), 1109.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

In both secular and Christian settings, the text Ephesians 5:21-33 is not unfamiliar. The text is often used in arguments concerning roles of men and women in marriage with special reference to submission of wives. Submission in marriage has been a contentious issue for decades. The word has been stigmatized and often goes with such negative associations as enslavement, weakness and helplessness among others. As stated by John and Yvonne Wagner, the modern, secular, feminist-driven culture rails against the idea of wives submitting to their husbands in marriage.<sup>7</sup> From this perspective, this study will be dedicated to investigating the understanding and application of submission in marriage.

### **1.4 Meet Mrs. Brown**

Mrs. Brown is the CEO of Big Pharma, a huge Biopharmaceutical company in Atlanta, Georgia. Big Pharma was started by Mrs. Brown's late grandfather. Mrs. Brown has Master's degree in Finance. She is a Christian woman married to Mr. Brown with 2 children and a dog.

Mrs. Brown learned to golf from her late grandfather. She won every school tournament all the way through graduate school. She is a member of the local golf club where she is arguably the best golfer.

Mrs. Brown fully understands that for each establishment / institution in her life to work and succeed it must have clearly defined goals, fully mandated leadership and a totally committed members or employees.

Mrs. Brown also understand that she is not the smartest, prettiest, strongest, richest person at the Big Pharma where is the mandated head and leader. There are smarter and more talented individuals at the Research and Development department for instance, that holds PhDs without whose contributions and commitment to follow her leadership big Pharma would not have and enjoyed the success it has for generations.

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<sup>7</sup> John and Yvonne Wagner, *Home away from military men and women: "The Submission thing,"* n.p. (cited 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014). Online: <http://www.openbibleministries.com/09submission.php#.Ute0f9JdXZ->

At the local golf club where Mrs. Brown is the best golfer she sits back and contributes her talent, skills and ideas. She is committed to and the leadership of club because she understands that is the only way the goals and dreams of the club can be realized.

At home though, the story is quite different. She disregards the ultimate good of the family institution, disrespects Mr. Brown's leadership and the inevitable is upon the Browns; children are maladjusted, the once great loving relationship the Browns had when dating is lost and the marriage is at the blink of divorce.

- a) How can her situation be explained?
- b) Why couldn't a smart Christian woman that fully understands leadership and commitment to goals translate the same to keep her family alive?
- c) Could being better educated and smart woman living in big city culture have made her feel stepping back and respecting her husband's headship connotes weakness and inferiority?
- d) Can marriage be savaged by a proper understanding and application of the principles submission in marriage as expressed in Ephesians 5:21-33.

### **1.5 Justification of the study**

Marriage is permanent bond between man and woman and a centrally important institution for the well-being of adults, children, and society.<sup>8</sup> Since everybody can allude to the fact that a well grounded marriage is beneficial to the parties involved and the society at large. It's important that a good understanding of the fundamental issues that aid the success of this institution be promoted and taught to prenuptial couples.

With the soaring rate of divorce and the enormous impact on families as well as the society at large a lot is left to desire what the future holds for this institution and the morals that sustain and shape society. It is therefore vital that a study like this is carried out to provide relevant solutions to such problems and also aid in the struggle to save the marriages.

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<sup>8</sup> Doherty, "Supporting the Institution of Marriage," in *the Family in the New Millennium* (ed. Loveless and Holman), 2:25.



There are various studies that have been carried out on marriage in fields like communication, parenting and love, among others. However, little attention has been given to submission. Therefore it is important that a study be carried out on this issue so as to add to the available understanding and knowledge.

## **1.6 The Acholi of Uganda**

The Acholi is name given to the people in habiting the vast northern region of Uganda generally known as Acholi-land. They occupy the district of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader and Amuru. Acholi-land is home to about 1.6 million people with Acholi as the common language.<sup>9</sup>

Traditionally the Acholi society is a clan based system with the Rwot as the supreme leader.

Religiously the Acholi believe in a supreme being called Jok, to whom a shrine called Abila is built. All sacrifices, private and public were offered inside the Abila.<sup>10</sup> With the coming of the missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Acholi people embraced Christianity and abandoned their traditional beliefs.

Politically the Acholi were organized in chiefdoms each society under a hereditary ruler known as the Rwot who possessed judicial, executive and legislative powers.<sup>11</sup>

### **1.6.1 Marriage in Acholi**

According to Mbiti, in many African societies marriage is a focus of existence. It is the point where all members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those unborn. Therefore marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society and rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Failure to get married means one has rejected the society. Marriage and procreation are a unity, without procreation marriage is incomplete.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nkabala Helen .Nambalirwa, “*There is no Difference between Moses and Kony*” (PhD diss., School of Mission and Theology, 2012), 14.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Nzita and Mbaga Niwampa, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1993), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Richard and Mbaga, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> John S Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Botswana: Heinemann Publishers, 1969), 130.

The traditional concept of marriage in Acholi is associated with many customs which include: methods of choosing partners, engagements, weddings, relationship between the two couples and the relatives (in-laws), rules governing whom to marry and whom not to marry and inheritance.<sup>13</sup> The marriage is characterized by joyful celebrations, feasting and dancing and presentation of the bride price. Bride price is a token of appreciation to the parents of the girl from the parents of the boy. Bride price is very important aspect of the marriage without which the marriage is incomplete. According to Omara, paying a bride price is as important as signing the marriage bond, without which the celebration does not take place. It binds the man and the woman in the sight of their families thus a uniting element.<sup>14</sup>

Traditionally duties and roles in marriage are distributed according to gender and age. Men are responsible for provision and protection of the family while the women are concerned with the general welfare of the family. However with Modernization and westernization there has been a shift in gender roles. Women are taking up men's duties likewise the men. With the rise of Feminism and its ideologies of gender equality, many women have come up to challenge male domination and the concept of submission in marriage creating a dilemma between traditional and modern views on marriage thus undermining the stability of marriage.

According to Omara, concerning submission and authority in the marriage, the women/ wives are required to submit totally to the leadership of their husbands by the society. This subordination is not limited to her husband only but it extends to every man in the society. She is obligated and duty bound to submit and show respect to every man in society.<sup>15</sup>

## **1.7 Relevant literature**

A lot of information has been written by scholars in on issues concerning marriage in general. This section will identify and review the available scholarly work on submission in marriage.

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<sup>13</sup> Susan Aloyojok Nyeko Omara, "*New Testament Teaching on Marriage and its Relevance for Acholi Traditional Marriage*" (Master's Thesis., School of Mission and Theology, 2005), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Omara, "*New Testament Teaching on Marriage*," 128.

<sup>15</sup> Omara, "*New Testament Teaching on Marriage*," 150.

## **Misconception associated with submission**

There are many misconceptions about submission and submissive people.

Submission is an act of will; it is the result of a choice that a person makes. It cannot be imposed upon a person. It is a voluntary act of personal will. Unfortunately, today submission is associated with timidity, servility, subservience, docile, degrading and generally as a sign of weakness. On the contrary however, it has been postulated that submission is a voluntary action; a gift one chooses to give to another. It is a sign of strength not weakness and a greater degree of submission requires a greater degree of strength of personal character.<sup>16</sup>

## **Protection against injustices**

According to Perkins, insofar as the husband's authority is compared to that of Christ, in the phrase "in everything" does not require wives to accept ungodly like forms of subjection.<sup>17</sup> Apostle Paul's does not leave wives to unjust, dangerous, harmful and ungodly obedience but one that is convenient and necessary for any lawful marriage. No woman is expected to obey ungodly orders from their husbands. In a situation where a godly husband falls from the will of God, the wife in question may have to lead her family but in a way that does not overtly come into conflict with her husband's ego.<sup>18</sup>

From the ancient Bible times through the previous decades in most patriarchal societies where male domination is the order of the day women have been marginalized, abused and trampled upon to a point where they consider themselves as second citizens. Women of today are dissatisfied with the status quo and ready now than ever before to act.<sup>19</sup> With the current shift in societal norms as a result of modernization, westernization and education, many women have found themselves in to positions in governance and has rose up to fight injustices direct against women. This is not the case in matriarchal societies.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.reason4living.com/articles/totw0041.htm>. Cited on 5th/02/2014.

<sup>17</sup> Pheme, Perkins, *Ephesians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 127.

<sup>18</sup> Gerald L. Bray, *Reformation Commentary* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2011), 384.

<sup>19</sup> Aruna Gnanadason, Musimbi kanyoro and Lucia Ann Mcspadden, eds ., *Women Violence and Non Violent Change* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 64.

## **Authoritative submission**

As stated by O'Brien, the idea of subordination to authority in general, as well as in the family, is out of favor in a world which prizes permissiveness and freedom. Christians are often affected by these attitudes. Subordination smacks of exploitation and oppression that are deeply resented. But authority is not synonymous with tyranny, and the submission to which the Apostle refers does not imply inferiority.<sup>20</sup> As much as submission to authority is associated with force, this should not be the case in marriage mainly because the two individuals are equals and have free will.

## **Equality**

Osiek and Balch quoted a man in despair as saying; "why I am unwilling to marry a wealthy wife, because she will dominate instead of being subject." The only way for men and women to be equal is for the woman to submit.<sup>21</sup> Osiek and Balch present a man who simply views a woman's status as a threat to marriage; as far as he is concerned equality in the family institution can only be achieved when women are kept at a less privilege status in society. It's this way of thinking that has led to the continuous oppression and exploitation of women, denying them the opportunity to live out life in full potential. However, this is also true for many women that would not marry poor or younger men because they associate submission with status. Therefore submitting to such men becomes a challenge.

## **Mutual submission**

According to ward, the apostle Paul introduces a new note on equality into a culture where relationships were strictly hierarchical; mutual submission or natural deference which becomes the biding principle within the family institution.<sup>22</sup> Christians are called upon to submit to one another in the fear Christ. Love and respect are to be the characteristic feature of the Christian community. This will further be discussed in 4.1.1.

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<sup>20</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 412.

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>22</sup> Rosie Ward, *Growing Women Leaders, Nurturing Women's Leadership in the Church* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40.

## **1.8 Methodology**

The research was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experiences, introspections, life story, interview, artifacts and cultural texts and production, along with observations, historical and interactional and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives.<sup>23</sup>

There are many kinds of Qualitative research for instance observations, Interviews, study of documents and literature. In this study however, interviews i.e. one on one and focus group discussions were carried out because of its nature and flexibility while dealing with people. Non-directive questions were used. These questions designed as triggers that stimulate the interviewee into talking about a topic in broad sense, are relatively open-ended, rather than having the interviewee provide a specific piece of information or at the extreme simply reply 'yes' or 'no'.

The research was carried out in Gulu District Northern Uganda. Persons between the ages of 18-80 were interviewed. These included Church leaders, professionals and non professionals, Married and unmarried. For a detailed analysis of the of the research finding see 4.3.

The source of material was both primary, secondary sources and field study. Primary sources include the Greek Bibles 26, 27 and 28<sup>th</sup> editions and English Bible translations, NIV, King James, Amplified Bibles, Lexica tools, Dictionaries and Encyclopedias. The secondary sources include different commentaries and text books written by scholars and lastly material from field work.

## **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Research ethics refer to a complete set of value standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and generate scientific activity these are to be followed before and during the research.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Norman k. Denzin, and Ynonna S. Lincoln., eds., *The sage handbook of Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc, 2011), 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> Nkabala Helen Nambalirwa, "*There is no difference between Moses and kony*,"37.

Before conducting the study permission was sort from the Norwegian Government's National Council of Higher Education through the School of Mission and Theology which was granted and the research commenced in July 2013 in Gulu-Uganda.

The research was free and fair putting into consideration the ability and willingness of the interviewees to participate.

### **1.9.1 Constraints encountered**

One of the challenges that stood out is the lack of interviewee co-operation. Some people did not want to be interviewed. All in all the research was a success.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

#### 2.1 Introduction

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the most influential documents in the Christian church. It embraces nearly every doctrine of Christianity which has shaped the thought and spirituality of Christians for a long time.<sup>25</sup> In this section, specific attention will be given to the authorship, time and dates of writing, the structure of the letter to Ephesians and an introduction to Ephesians 5:21-33. Emphasis will be placed on authorship due to the numerous works and debates by scholars concerning the subject.

##### 2.1.1 Time / Dates of writing

Ephesians was written between 60-90 AD probably before or after the fall of the Jerusalem temple. The place and timing of writing is debatable by scholars due to the challenge of authorship. Some scholars believe Apostle Paul wrote the letter while others claim it was a Pauline disciple. If the letter was written by Paul then it was written while he was in prison. There are three possible places of imprisonment from where it could have been written; Caesarea, Ephesus or Rome. Of the three Rome is the most likely because Paul suffered two imprisonments in Rome and that he had a great deal of freedom than would normally have been expected of a prisoner Acts 28:30 that could have enabled him to write.<sup>26</sup>

#### 2.2 Addressees / Recipients

There is no inherent evidence of the audience to which the letter to the Ephesians is addressed. Scholars believe it was written to believers who did not necessarily live in Ephesus but were either members of a group of Christian community probably in Asia Minor. It could have been written to Christians in general.<sup>27</sup> Grotius recalled Marcion who described Ephesians as the epistle to the Laodicea and believed that it had been sent to the community in Laodicea as well as that of

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<sup>25</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 20.

<sup>27</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 3.

Ephesus. Nowadays, not a single defender of authenticity of Ephesians would still subscribe to the idea that Ephesus was the only intended recipient of the letter.<sup>28</sup>

## **2.3 Authorship of Ephesians**

There is a lot of scholarly debate as to who wrote the letter to the Ephesians. There are two main scholarly positions. Some scholars agree that the apostle Paul himself is the author while others are of the view that Ephesians is “pseudonymous,” i.e. written in Paul’s name by a loyal disciple. The intention might have been to sum up Paul’s teaching and to apply it into new situations.<sup>29</sup> In the following paragraphs arguments for and against Pauline authorship will be discussed.

### **2.3.1 Arguments against Pauline authorship of Ephesians**

The first doubt of Pauline authorship was introduced in 1792 by the English Clergyman Evanson who felt that it was inconsistent for the writer of Ephesians to claim that he had heard of the faith (1:15-16) when according to Acts Paul had spent more than two years at Ephesus.<sup>30</sup> Since then the number of scholars who dispute Pauline authorship grew in number. Brown states that a fair estimate might be that at the present moment about 80 percent of critical scholarship holds that Paul did not write Ephesians.<sup>31</sup> However in 2002 a detailed study by Hoehner reveals that out of the 279 scholars with 390 works only 54 percent were against Pauline authorship (1971-1981) and 58 percent in favour of Pauline authorship (1971-2001) and (1981-2001).<sup>32</sup> This study only confirms that the acceptance of Pauline authorship has come a long way and is evident to date. The following are the reason for rejecting Pauline authorship.

### **The impersonal nature of the letter**

The manner in which the writer of Ephesians presents himself to the readers leaves a lot to be questioned. He writes as though he had never had contact with the Christians in Ephesus. The author claims to have just heard of the faith and love of his reader’s Ephesians 1:15 and in 3:2 he

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<sup>28</sup> A. Avon. Roon, *The authenticity of Ephesians* (Netherlands: Leiden, 1974), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Peters Williamson, <http://www.catholiccommentaryonsacredscripture.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/3/ephesians-authorship-online-postscript.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 20.

<sup>32</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 20.



wonders whether they have heard and know of God's special responsibility of extending Grace to the Gentiles given to him. Coupled with the lack of greetings all show a non personal acquaintance with the readers. These statements have left many scholars to wonder whether it was actually the apostle Paul that wrote the letter to Ephesians considering he spent quite some time with them. The apostle Paul arrived in Ephesus at the end of his missionary journey and remained there for about two and half years, Acts 19:1-20:1

Although this argument is put forward to reject Pauline authorship some scholars believe that if the letter was written by an imitator he would have included the greetings so to make the letter look like Paul himself wrote. Other scholars maintain that the apostle Paul doesn't give personal greetings in 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians yet the authenticity of these letters cannot be disputed.<sup>33</sup>

### **Language and style of writing**

The language and style of Ephesians compared to other Pauline writer calls for concern. The author uses unique phrases such as *as ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις* "in the heavenlies" rather than his normal "usage of the heavens" Christ is sometimes called the beloved one τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ. He uses unique vocabulary διαβόλω devil instead of Σατανᾶς Satan. However, scholars are convinced that the language and style of Ephesians is not sufficient to dispute Pauline authorship. Galatians uses more less the same number of words yet scholars could not dispute Pauline authorship.<sup>34</sup> The characteristic linguistic style of pleonastic accumulation and clustering of synonyms, connective genitives, lengthy sentences, repeated use of particular phrases, lack of conjunctions and particles gives no adequate criterion for another author but is conspicuous enough.<sup>35</sup>

### **Literary relationships**

Literary relationship characterized by similarities and parallelism in phrases between Ephesians and other Pauline literature is put forward to argue against Pauline authorship. Goodspeed suggests that there are more than 400 passages from eight letters of Paul (Romans.1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon) which are reflected in

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<sup>33</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 628.

<sup>35</sup> Rudolf Schnackberg, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 26.

Ephesians.<sup>36</sup> Although Ephesians has parallel phrases with the above mentioned letters there is greater literary relationship with Colossians for instance thanksgiving and intercession 1:3-14 and 1:15-23, head- body of Christ Col 2:19 and Eph4:15-16 and Household code Col 3:18-4:1 indicating that the writer could have depended on it in writing since it had been in circulation much earlier. Scholars also suggest that the closeness of these two epistles is similar to the relationship of the synoptic gospels or that of 2 Peter and Jude.<sup>37</sup> It's these similarities that have led to scholarly conclusions that the apostle Paul could have written Colossians and a disciple wrote Ephesians. However, Best is of the view that the author of Ephesians did not copy or use Colossians. Both epistles could have been written by Paul or by two members of the Pauline school.<sup>38</sup>

### **2.3.2 Arguments for Pauline authorship of Ephesians**

#### **External evidence**

External evidence refers to the testimonies from written manuscripts, traditions and the works of ancient scholars put forward in support of Pauline authorship of Ephesians.<sup>39</sup> The earliest known attributions of the letter to Paul came from Irenaeus and Marcion as testified by Tertullian.<sup>40</sup>

In the third century the letter was widely used by both the orthodox Christians and their heretical opponents and it was regularly attributed to Paul.

The use of Ephesians in early Christian writings points to the first-century Church's belief that it was written by the apostle named in it. Scholars such as 1 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp and 2 Clement make references to Ephesians in their literature. In both I Clement 59: 3 and 36:2, Ephesians 1:18; 4:18 "eyes of my heart and light and darkness", Ignatius of Antioch (AD 35–108) uses the phrase "new person" and equates that person with Christ on the idea of Christ as

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<sup>36</sup> Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago: University Press, 1937), 236.

<sup>37</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 31.

<sup>38</sup> Ernest Best, *who used whom? The relationship between Ephesians and Colossians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 40.

<sup>39</sup> Peters.williamson, <http://www.catholiccommentaryonsacredscripture.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/3/ephesians-authorship-online-postscript.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 14.

the second Adam. There is also similarity between Ignatius' Ephesians and the eulogy of Eph1:3-14, Polycarp (AD 65–135) 12:1 depends on Eph4.26.<sup>41</sup>

## **2.4 Structure and outline of Ephesians**

Just like other Pauline letters, Ephesians is divided into two main parts that is doctrine or theology found in chapter 1-3 and duties or ethics seen in chapters 4-6.

### **2.4.1 The calling of the church (1:1-3:21)**

The first part begins with a prologue, praise is given to God for all the spiritual blessings, followed by praise to the reader for their faith and love and petition for wisdom and revelation. A reminder to the Christians of their relationship to God before and after conversion, a new union of the Jewish and gentile Christians who are now considered as one new person. The apostle Paul consequently explains the mystery of the union between the Jew and Gentile believers in Christ and his ministry of sharing this mystery to the gentiles. He concludes by praying for the believers in Ephesians to be strengthened in love. Below is a summary of the first part.

- a) Prologue (1:1-2)
- b) Praise for god's planned spiritual blessings (1:3-14)
- c) Prayer for wisdom and revelation (1:15-23)
- d) New position individually (2:1-10)
- e) New position corporately (2:11-22)
- f) Parenthetical expansion of the mystery (3:1-13)
- g) Prayer for strengthened love (3:14-21)

### **2.4.2 The conduct of the church 4:1-6:24**

The second part, the application is subdivided into six portions showing how the believers ought to behave. They are to walk in unity, holiness not as gentiles, in love by imitating God and abstaining from all evil practices, in the light by not becoming like evil doers and their works, in wisdom controlled by the Holy Spirit in their domestic and public life. Finally he encourages them in the lord. Below is a summary of part two.

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<sup>41</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 15-16.

- a) walk in unity (4:1-16)
- b) walk in holiness (4:17-18)
- c) walk in love (5:1-6)
- d) walk in the light (5:7-14)
- e) walk in wisdom (5:15-21)
- f) household code (5:22-6:9)
- g) standing in warfare (6:10-20)
- h) conclusion (6:21-24)

## **2.5 Household codes in the New Testament**

In the New Testament there are passages written with instructions for particular groups of people within Christian society and families that teaches how they should treat each other. Since the instructions in the texts are similar to legal or moral "codes" of conduct, these texts are often called "household codes". (Col3:18-4:1, Titus 2:1-10, I peter 2:18-3:7 and Ephesians 5:21-6:9).<sup>42</sup>

Scholars believe these household codes have their origins in the works ancient philosophers like Aristotle, the stoic duty codes and the ethical teachings in the Hellenistic Judaism. Dibelius in his commentary on Colossians suggested that the household code was a lightly Christianized version of the stoic code. New Testament phrases such as it is proper Col 3:18 or it is pleasing to God Col 3:20, Eph 5:10) were key phrases in stoic literature. Karl Weidinger claims that the stoic sense of duty was an adaptation of the unwritten Greek laws regarding ones duties to the gods, country, parents, relatives and friends. On the other hand, Lohmeyer suggested that the origin of the household codes was not Hellenistic but a pre-Christian Jewish code. He argues that the lord in the household codes is a reference to God (not Christ) of the Jewish origin.<sup>43</sup>

However, some scholars are of the view that the household codes are unique to the Christian traditions although they draw understanding from the Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds. The

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<sup>42</sup>Peters.williamson.<http://www.catholiccommentaryonsacredscripture.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/ephesians-authorship-online-postscript.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 205.

purpose of the household codes is to promote internal cohesion within the community and to combat social unrest in the society thus enhancing unity

This study will specifically focus on Ephesians 5:21-33 in which instructions on how the Christians, husbands and wives relate to each other is given. The author draws understanding from Col 3:18-4:1 in which individual contact regarding the family is stipulated.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 5:21-33

#### 3.1 Delimitation and structure of Ephesians 5:21-33

Ephesians 5:21-33 is part of a broad household code in Eph 5:21-6:9. It is similar to the one found in Col 3:18-4:1. The text is addressed to six groups in three pairs: wives/husbands, children/parents and slaves/masters. The pairs are both given instructions and duties on how to behave towards each other and are answerable to the Lord. A detailed summary of both texts will be listed in the table below showing their similarities.

Household code in Ephesians 5:21-33 and Col 3: 18-4:1

#### Ephesians 5:21-33

#### Col 3:18-4:1

<b>To all Christians:</b> submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (5:21)	(3:1-17) lists of vices and virtues
<b>To wives:</b> submit to your husbands, as you are to the Lord, etc. (5:22-24)	Submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (3:18)
<b>To husbands:</b> love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church, etc (5:25)	Love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. (3:19)
<b>To children:</b> obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right, etc. (6:1-3)	Obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the lord. (3:20)
<b>To fathers:</b> do not provoke you children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (6:4)	Do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. (3:21)
<b>To slaves:</b> obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ (6:5-8)	Obey earthly masters in all things, in sincerity of heart, fearing the God (3:22-25)
<b>To masters:</b> give up threatening your slaves, knowing that your own master is in heaven (6:9)	Give your slaves what is just and fair, knowing you have a Master in heaven (4:1)

### 3.1.1 The structure of Ephesians 5:21-33

In this section an outline of the structure of Ephesians 5:21-33 will be listed and will be adopted in throughout the chapter. This will help in the understanding and development of the concept of submission.

#### 1. Heading

5:21 ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ. Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

#### 2. Main part: exhortation in the family (v.22-33).

##### 2.1 Exhortation to the wives

- *Exhortation*

22 Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν “ὑποτάσσεσθε” ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ. Wives, be subject to your husbands.

- *Comparison*

As you are to the Lord.

- *Further point*

καὶ αὐτός ἐστι σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος. The body of which he is Saviour.

- *Reason for the exhortation*

23 Ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστι κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς. For the husband is head of the wife

- *Comparison within the given reason*

ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, Just as Christ is the head of the Church

- *Motivation*

24a ἀλλ’ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ. Just as the church is subject to Christ.

- *Exhortative conclusion*

24b οὕτω καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί. Wives’ submission in everything.

## 2.2 Exhortation to the husbands

- **Exhortation**

25a οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας. Love wives

- **Comparison**

25b καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς. Christ's love for the church

- **The aim**

26 ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι. 27 ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ ἔνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ρυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος. 26 in order to make her holy by cleansing with water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind- yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

- **Exhortative conclusion**

28 οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ. 28 In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies.

- **Further motivation**

29a οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλ' ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν. 29a He who loves his wife loves himself

29b καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. 29b For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it.

- **Comparison**

30 ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. 30 Just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.

- **Proof from scripture**

31 ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh."



- *Relating the scripture to the Christological level*

32 τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ το μέγα ἐστίν. ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν 32. This is a great mystery and I am applying it to Christ and the church.

- *Summarizing Conclusion*

33 πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

33. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

### **3.2 Translation of Ephesians 5:21-33**

21. Submitting your selves to one another in (reverence) fear of christ.22. Wives (submit) to your own husbands as to the lord. 23. Because the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church. He is the saviour of the body.24. Just as the church subjects to Christ so also should the wives to their husbands in everything.25.husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave up himself for her.26.In order that he might sanctify her, cleansing (her) by the water washing of the word.27.In order that he himself might present the church to himself as glorious, not having wrinkle or spot but in order that she might be holy and blameless.28. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself.29. For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, as also Christ the church.30.Since we are members of his body .31. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh.32. This mystery is great; I am speaking of Christ and the church.33. Each of you however should love his own wife as himself and that the wife respects her husband.

### 3.3 Exegesis of Ephesians 5:21-33

#### 3.3.1 Heading : Submitting to one another (v. 21)

Eph 5:21 ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ. Translation: “Submitting to one another in fear of Christ.” The verse is not the beginning of a new section but a fitting conclusion to the context of wisdom beginning in verse 5:15 and more particularly the section that deals with being filled by the Holy Spirit 5:18.<sup>44</sup> The verb ὑποτασσόμενοι is dependent on “be filled”. This is confirmed by the participial clauses denoting the results of being filled by the Holy Spirit that is to say, speaking to one another, singing songs and Psalms. In v.18-21 Christians are instructed to be filled with the Holy Spirit instead of being drunk with wine. The filled spirit life is characterized by singing songs, Psalms, giving thanks and submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

This verse introduces a new topic of submission that is further developed throughout the household code in 5:22-6:9, particularly in 5:22-33. Ὑποτασσόμενοι can be rendered in middle or passive voice, derived from ὑποτάσσω which means to be subject, subordinate. The word means submitting or subjecting yourselves and to be subject in the middle and passive voice respectively. In the passive voice, the verb implies that the person has no control of his/her action while in the middle voice an idea of co-operation is expressed where the subject acts as a free agent. In this context therefore, the verb should be understood in the middle voice since the person is acting willing under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>45</sup> The middle voice (Col.3:18) emphasizes the voluntary character of the submission. Paul’s admonition to wives is an appeal to free and responsible persons which can only be heeded voluntarily, never by the elimination or breaking of the human will, much less by means of servile submissiveness.<sup>46</sup>

The verb (ὑποτασσόμενοι) is followed by the reciprocal dative pronoun ἀλλήλοις one another indicating that the result of believers filled by the Holy Spirit is submission to one another. They submit to another in humility out of reverence to the Holy Spirit unlike the non believers who tend to take great pride in individualism, independence and self centeredness.

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<sup>44</sup>Hoehner, Ephesians, 71.

<sup>45</sup> Peter T O’Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999), 339.

<sup>46</sup> O’Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, 412.

Paul employs the middle voice to express a voluntary submission or subordination which means to act in a loving, considerate and self giving manner towards one another.<sup>47</sup> This act of voluntary yielding to the needs of others is an example of the self sacrificing love which should characterizes the Christian community. Eph 5:1-2. Paul's intention was that everyone will be obedient, not despising one another nor think of themselves as better off.

Therefore ἀλλήλοις connotes oneness and a sense of equality ruling out hierarchical differences.<sup>48</sup> This only suggests that there should be a horizontal line of interaction between every believer regardless of status, function, gender and rank, serving one another in love (see Gal 5:13).

Paul continues to show that submission to one another is to be done in the fear of Christ (ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ). This is the ground and motivation for submission.<sup>49</sup> Although use of the word φόβος in this text might suggest fear or terror, it is best to see φόβος as indicating awe or reverence which involves a measure of fear since it applied to Christ who has adopted us as sons and daughter.<sup>50</sup> Although Christians should submit to one another out of reverence to Christ it is possible to find that some are not. Submission is in stack antagonism to human nature which has a natural propensity towards the desire to be superior and important than others.<sup>51</sup> Paul therefore addresses this by showing that submission should be done out of reverence to Christ since he alone can tame the rebellious and prideful attitude of mankind.

Finally, in this verse submission is a reciprocal action that all Christians are called to however elsewhere in the Pauline literature the use of submission is always used to show some kind of authority in which there is a higher authority and subordinates. It is more hierarchal. (see Acts 5:29, 27:21, Titus 3:1, Rom13:1,). The idea of submission will be further developed in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>47</sup> O'Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, 400.

<sup>48</sup> G. Belizikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker), 154 cited by O'Brien 401.

<sup>49</sup> William J Larkin, *Ephesians: A hand book on the Greek Text*, (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2009), 131.

<sup>50</sup> Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 518.

<sup>51</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on Ephesians, in Reformation Commentary on Scripture, Galatians, Ephesians* (USA: Intervarsity Press, 2011), 382.

## **ὑποτάσσω**

This section will explore the meaning of *hypotasso* drawing understanding from the Greek world, Septuagint, the New Testament and the Early Church.

In the Greek world, *hypotasso* in the active voice means “to place under”, to affix under in a writing, to arrange under a rubric, to subordinate. For example, God set the monarchy under the priesthood. While the middle voice means to subject oneself out of fear, to be subservient, of a servile disposition, to acknowledge as Lord.<sup>52</sup>

In the Septuagint, the verb in the active voice connotes “to place under, subordinate, to subject”. For example God makes creatures subject to men (see Psalms 8:6). The middle voice (with passive aorist) implies “to subject oneself, to acquiesce in, to acknowledge someone’s dominion or power.” For example Yahweh and his people, to humble oneself before him (see 2 Maccabees 9:12).<sup>53</sup>

In the New Testament the word is restricted to Luke, the Pauline corpus, Hebrews, James 4:7 and 1 Peter. For a material understanding of the verb in the New Testament, its considerable range of meaning should be noted especially in the middle voice. Originally it is a hierarchical term which stresses the relation to superiors. But one note is that the subordination expressed may be either compulsory or voluntary. In the former case the main idea may be that of either power or conquest on one side or lack of freedom on the other. In the New Testament the verb does not immediately carry with it the thought of obedience. To obey or to have to obey, with no emphasis, is a sign of subjection or subordination. The latter is decisive as regards the context of the word, *hypotasso*.<sup>54</sup>

In the active voice the verb in Romans 8:20 “became subject. The statement corresponds to that in Romans 5:12. All the other active statements are Christological. They stand in express relation to Psalms 8:6. The Christological interpretation of the verse is based on Psalms 110:1, as may be seen in 1 Corinthians 15:25, 27. “For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.” In the middle voice, which is used with the passive aorist occurs once in the sense of compulsion and means to have to submit, Luke 10:17.

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<sup>52</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, vol 111 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 40.

<sup>53</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, 41.

The apostle Paul uses the verb in formulation of theological statements. By nature the striving of the flesh resist submission to God's demand (see Romans 8:7). On the other hand pious Judaism by clinging to the observance of the Torah as a way of salvation resists the saving work of God in Christ (see Romans 10:3). In both cases submission is refused because renunciation of one's own (sinful or pious) will is demand.

Luke 2:51 stresses that the growing Jesus subordinated himself to his parents. Within his special mission the earthly Jesus adapts himself to the earthly orders as the right relation of sons or daughters to parents. Likewise the subjection of the wife to husband (Col.3:18; Eph.5:22-24; 1Peter 3:1) according to the biblical understanding is the issue of keeping a divinely instituted order.<sup>55</sup> This is also seen in the exhortation to submission to the authority (see Rom.13:1-7). Here self subjection is based on the task of the authority which it discharges even if it's a pagan government the ability to recognize good and punish evil since in its judicial activity the government is God's instrument, an instrument of wrath. It is essential to subject oneself to it on the basis of binding the conscience to God's will.<sup>56</sup>

The submission of slaves to their masters is demanded (see 1 Peter 2:18; Titus 2:9) not because slavery is ordained by God. However it was a social reality at the time in which Christians had no powers to abolish. The direction in 1 Peter 5:5a is based on a given order in which elders preside over the young even though the point is proper conduct within the community. This admonition is supplemented by the demand for mutual *hypotasso*. This corresponds to the imperative in Ephesians 5:21. Submit to one another in the fear of Christ and a broader command in 1 Peter 2:13 submit to every ordinance of man.

The use of *hypotasso* in the New Testament exhortation suggests that the general rule demands readiness to renounce one's own will for the sake of others. This word which belonged originally to the sphere of worldly order is now filled with new content as a term of new aspect even though the legal position remains unchanged. Submission finds new meaning in the Christian community as it is done in the reverence for Christ.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, 43.

<sup>56</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, voll111 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 43.

<sup>57</sup>Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, 45.

In the early church among the post apostolic fathers the verb plays a greater role. The bishop is to subject oneself to God. Elsewhere the reference is to subjection to the bishop and presbyters. God gave dominion to those who govern the state, so Christians acknowledge the honour given to them and submit to them and are not in opposition to God's will. There is also a general demand that each subject to their neighbours. Among the apologists the word means to subject oneself.<sup>58</sup>

Finally for a good understanding of the meaning and application of the submission one should be conscious of the context in which the word is used.

### **3.4 Main part exhortation within the household (v.22-31)**

#### **3.4.1 Exhortation to the wives 5:22-24**

Here the Paul instructs wives to submit to their husbands because they are the head as Christ is the head of church. Therefore as the church submits to Christ so should the wife to her husband. The wife's first duty is to be obedient to her husband<sup>59</sup>.

V.22 Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν “ὑποτάσσεσθε” ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ.<sup>60</sup> Translation “wives (submit) to your husband's as to the lord”

γυναῖκες (vocative) from γυνή refer to woman. Αἱ γυναῖκες can be used in reference to women in general however in this context it's limited to wives (married women) due to the presence of ἰδίοις giving a personal connotation to γυναῖκες in reference to ἀνδράσιν husbands, not men.<sup>61</sup>

Originally the verb “ὑποτάσσεσθε” submit in its plural middle or passive imperative is missing in some manuscripts. Although it is missing in some manuscripts, it is included in the majority of manuscripts from the earliest times either as second person plural present middle or passive imperative (ὑποτάσσεσθε) or as a third person plural present hortatory subjunctive (ὑποτασσεσθῶσαν).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, if the original text omitted the verb, one can easily see why the scribes would have inserted ὑποτάσσεσθε for the sake of clarity since the preceding and the

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<sup>58</sup>Friedrich, *Theological dictionary of the Bible*, vol111 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 46.

<sup>59</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 730.

<sup>60</sup>William J .Larkin, *Ephesians: A hand book on the Greek Text*, 131. Vocative, dative, comparative, dative.

<sup>61</sup> Henry George. Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek-English lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 818.

<sup>62</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 731

succeeding contexts use the second person plural present imperative. It would be identical to the parallel passage of Col.3:18. In addition, if there were no main verb then the participle in the previous verse is appropriated with an imperative force, though the participle would not agree with αἱ γυναῖκες in gender.<sup>63</sup>

The verb in question is the present middle or passive of ὑποτάσσω meaning “to be subject, subordinate” which is oftend rendered as submit yourselves and subject yourselves or be in subjection or be subject. In the passive the verb could convey the idea that a person submits because he or she is forced to submit for example under a dictator while the middle connotes that the subject volitionally exercises the action of submission, an act of a free agent.<sup>64</sup>

According to Hoehner, the middle seems in to be in harmony with the context for three main reasons. First, there is no indication that the church’s submission to Christ is forced. Second, the duty of the husband is phrased in the active imperative in which the subject takes action to love his wife. Third, in the previous context (5:18-21), four out of the five particles are dependent on the imperative “to be filled by the Holy Spirit” are active and the fifth participle is seen as the middle where the subject is responsible for the action. Therefore, submission here is better taken not as a passive but as a middle, with the wife acting as a free agent before God.<sup>65</sup>

The dative person τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν indicates that the persons addressed are worthy of respect.<sup>66</sup> In this case the husband is to be shown respect by the wife since he is worthy of it.

ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ as to the lord is motivation for the wife’s submission. This implies that Christ is the focus of a submissive wife.<sup>67</sup> The general admonition of the v.21 to be submissive in the fear of Christ finds concrete expression for the married wife as she is subordinate to her husband so in that very action she is submitting to the Lord. By submitting to her husband the wife is serving Christ. For whatever one does he /she should do it wholeheartedly as unto the Lord and not unto men. (Col.3:23).

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<sup>63</sup>Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 731.

<sup>64</sup>Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 731.

<sup>65</sup>Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 732.

<sup>66</sup>BAGD 848 BDAG 1042.

<sup>67</sup>Some scholars are of the view that Κύριος (Lord) is used in reference husband opposed to Christ. However in this context the plural τοῖς Κύριοις to their Lords is absent which would have implied husbands as seen elsewhere in the scriptures. 1 Peter 3:6. Sarah and Abraham, Aquinas among others referred to their husbands as lord.

### **Reason for exhortation**

V.23“Οτι άνήρ έστι κεφαλή τής γυναικός, ώς και ό Χριστός κεφαλή τής έκκλησίας, αυτός σωτήρ τοῦ σώματος. Translation: because the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church, he himself is the saviour of the body.

“Οτι introduces a casual clause giving the reason for the wife’s submission. She is to submit to her husband because he is the head as Christ also is the head of the church. Κεφαλή referring to head has been used in two earlier verses in Ephesians in reference to Christ 1:22 and 4:15. In 1:22 Christ is portrayed as supreme over all things. He is head over all principalities, powers and the whole universe thus headship implies authority, rule and source.<sup>68</sup>In this context the headship of the husband is likened to that of Christ in which he is ruler and has authority over creation. However Christ’s rule over people is expressed in his care and nourishment as well as in his headship in order to fulfill divine purposes.<sup>69</sup> Col.1:18; 2:20 he exercises his power and authority on behalf of the church. Therefore the husband ought to imitate Christ in his position as head. He is to use it for the benefit of his wife and the family unit.

αὐτός έστι σωτήρ τοῦ σώματος. This clause refers to Christ alone αυτός “he himself”. He himself is the saviour of the body which is the church. This term σωτήρ can be used in relation to Christ as the saviour and protector of the church.<sup>70</sup> The term saviour is also used elsewhere in the New Testament in reference to Christ (See Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31 2 Tim.1:10). In Eph.4:15-16, we see a description Christ as the saviour of the body. By referring to Christ as the saviour of the body the apostle Paul wanted to reinforce the authority of Christ over the church as one who rescued her from eternal separation from God. (See Eph.2:1-10).<sup>71</sup> As Christ’s relation to the body is presented the husband and the wife are called to the same.

According to Wolfgang Musculus the reason a wife is to submit to her husband is that he is prominent and superior in dignity, authority, strength, powers of wisdom and created in the

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<sup>68</sup> Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 535.

<sup>69</sup> Peter T O’Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, (USA: Eerdmans 1999), 413.

<sup>70</sup> O’Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, 415.

<sup>71</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 743.



image and likeness of God.<sup>72</sup> Wolfgang appears to be biased in his interpretation of submission in this context. He implies that the woman is inferior in all respects, the reason for which she should submit to her husband. On the contrary both male and female are created in the image and likeness of God and all equal Gen.1:27; Gal.3:28; Col.3:11; Rom.10:12. Finally, Headship here does not imply dominance rather it expresses the idea of service and benevolent leadership.

### **Motivation**

V.24a ἀλλ' ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ. The church's submission to Christ here acts as a model for the wife's submission to her husband. She is to emulate the church as she submits to Christ. As mentioned earlier, the instruction given to the wife in verse 22 is emphasized here however with an addition concept "in everything". She is now called upon to submit to her husband in everything. This will be further elaborated in the following paragraphs.

V.24b οὕτω καὶ αἰγυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί. So also should the wives be to their husbands in everything.

The apostle Paul instructs wives to submit to their husbands in everything. The addition of "in everything" resembles the admonition to the children in Col.3:20. It is difficult to determine what he meant by everything. One thing is certain that he would not have asked her to submit in anything that does not please God. Acts 5:29 "we should obey God more than men."<sup>73</sup> In v.21, Christians are called upon to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. This includes both the wife and husband. Man is therefore put in a corresponding relationship as someone who is to act in analogy to the church's relationship to Christ. Therefore as the church (wife and husband) submits to Christ in everything so the wife should submit to husband in everything.

### **3.4.2 Exhortation to the husbands 5:25-31**

V.25a οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας. Translation: Husbands love your wives.

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<sup>72</sup>Wolfgang Musculus, *Commentary on Ephesians, in Reformation Commentary on Scripture, Galatians, Ephesians* (USA: Intersity press, 2011), 386.

<sup>73</sup>Rivera, *Wives, Be Subject To Your Husbands*, 242.

Ἀγαπᾶτε the present imperative shows an ongoing process in regards to the husband's love for the wife. It is unconditional love, love that seeks the highest good in a person. In other words husbands should love their wives even when they seem undeserving and unloving. As mentioned earlier a wife's submission is not dependent on her husband's love likewise the husband's love is not dependent on the wife's submission. The love to which the husband is called upon is one from a pure heart, it is unconditional, loves when not loved back, gives without getting, and that ever looks for what is best in others. The love required of the husband is described explicitly in v.25b in the kind of love that Christ showed the church. He gave up himself for her in return for nothing. Hence, the love of the husband to the wife is given an Christological definition here and its typical characteristic is to give oneself up for the other.

### **Comparison and aim v.25b-27**

καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς.<sup>26</sup> ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι.<sup>27</sup> ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὴν ἑαυτῷ ἑνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ρυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος .

καθὼς is a comparative particle showing that the husband's love is compared to that of Christ. Christ becomes the perfect illustration of love. Believers are to be imitators of God and walk in love just as Christ. He loved to the point of giving up his life. John 10:11, "a good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." According to Westcott, the analogy between the husband and Christ relates to love not headship, implying that the husband is supposed to focus on loving rather than enforcing headship over the wife. In 1Cor.13:1ff love is compared to all things and is shown as the greatest of all. Christ loved the church not because it was perfectly lovable but in order to make it such. (See 1Cor 15:3; Acts 20:28).<sup>74</sup> "God showed his love for us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (see Romans 5: 8). "He loved me and gave up himself for me." (see Gal.2:20). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son."(see John 3:16). This can only mean that when the wife is in the wrong her husband should be able to gently correct and love even in her weakness. The idea that the Apostle Paul's analogy between Christ and the husband only relates to love according to Westcott is only half the truth since in v.23 Paul uses an analogy between Christ and the husband in relation to headship. Both headship and love are an important

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<sup>74</sup> Westcott 84.

part of the analogy. The two function together. Therefore this can only imply that husband's are supposed to equally focus on headship as much as loving.

Paul presents the purpose of Christ's love by the ἵνα clause. V.26-27b Christ loved the church that he might sanctify her and present to himself as a radiant, holy and blameless church. τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος with the washing of the water. This might refer to baptism, better still a redemptive act of Christ rather than the ritual of baptism (see Titus 3:5).

### **Exhortative conclusion**

V.28 οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτόν ἀγαπᾷ. Translation: so husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself.

Paul is influenced by Leviticus 19:18: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." According to Sampley, the husband should be able to love his wife as he loves himself. Since loving himself comes naturally without thinking, he should be able to translate this same kind of love towards his wife. This implies that loving his wife ceases to be a duty but is something that is consistent with his nature. This introduces an element of unconditional love.<sup>75</sup> It is a brotherly kind of love which extends to the community of fellow believers. It goes beyond duty, so shows unfeigned love from a pure heart that extends an unconditional hand of friendship, loves when not loved back, gives without getting, and that ever looks for what is best in others.<sup>76</sup> This love is made more explicit in Rom.13:8-10 (owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law... love does no harm to a neighbor).

### **Ἀγάπη (*agape*), ἀγαπάω (*agapao*), ἀγαπητός (*agapetos*)**

This section will attempt to look at a broad meaning of love. The above three words occur nearly in all writings of the New Testament and a total of 320 times. *Agape* occurs 116 times, *Agapao* 143 times and *Agapitos* 61. The meaning of the three words can be rendered by translations as love, to love and beloved respectively.

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<sup>75</sup> Sampley, *And the two Shall Become One Flesh*, 32-34.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3744-brotherly-love>

The words of *agapao* refer exclusively to the love of persons for persons. However things can also be named love as objects of love. The word either used as a verb or noun in the synoptic. The apostle Paul tends to imply mutual love such love for a brother, neighbor, enemy and of the love of husbands for their wives. In mark 12:30, (also in Paul, James and 1 John) God is the object of loving/love, as Jesus Christ above all in John. (Otherwise only in Eph.6:24; 1 Peter1:18; 1 John 5:1). Besides John and 1 John, Paul in particular speaks of the love of God.

Apart from Mark 10:21 and Luke 7:5, the verb and the noun (see Matt.24:12, Luke 11:42) occur in the synoptic only in the words of Jesus. The command to love the enemy and the double command to love of God and neighbor occupy a special rank.

When the apostle Paul speaks of love, the starting point is the love of God (see Romans 5:8; 8:37; 9:13; 2Cor.9:7; 13:11; 1Cor.13; 1Thess 1:4) which he has shown in Christ. God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (see Rom.5:5). God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Although Paul frequently speaks of love without any qualifications it can easily be understood as a moral conduct among Christians. However he prioritizes love over all other virtues. (See 1Cor.13:13). Love is not works but a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (See Gal.5:22).

In Ephesians the word occurs 10 times (5 times in the phrase *en agape*) and the verb. Of the 10 times occurrence, 5 refer to the love of a man for his wife. With love as the constant point of reference the train of thought begins with the love of God, who has pardoned us. (See Eph.1:6).

Pauline tradition is reflected in Ephesians 2:4ff, God had out of the great love with which he loved us made the sinner alive together with Christ. The love of Christ surpasses all knowledge 3:19, it shows itself as love for the church in his self surrender as an offering and sacrifice to God. (5:2). The parenthesis begins with the exhortation to love which enables mutual bearing and builds the body of Christ (4:2,16) and the letter closes with the petition for the love with faith from God and Christ (6:23).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*, vol 1,(Grand Rapids, Eerdmans,1990),11.

Finally the love to which the apostle Paul refers is (agape) is the love that is of God and translates to brotherly love.

### **Motivation**

V.29a οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλ' ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτὴν.

Translation: For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it.

Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies in the same way as Christ loves his body the church. Since no one hates his own flesh this becomes a perfect illustration of how this love should be conducted. He nurtures, brings up (ἐκτρέφει), cherishes and takes good care of it regardless of her imperfections.

The term σάρκα (flesh) is used instead of σώμα (body) as elsewhere (See v.23, 28, 30). He uses these terms interchangeably. It is possible that is used in preparation for the quotation from Gen 2:24 in verse 31<sup>78</sup>.

### **Further Motivation**

V.29b καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν: Translation: as also Christ loves the church.

The husband's love is compared Christ's love for the church. Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of the church in order to redeem it (1:7-12), sanctified (5:25-26) and empowered her (3:19).

Despite all her faults and unfaithfulness, Christ constantly pardons and takes care of the church, his body. Husbands are called upon to do likewise.

### **Comparison**

V.30 ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. Translation: because we are members of his body.

ὅτι (conjunction) introduces the reason why Christ takes care of the church. He does so because we are members of his body. He showed this by his sacrificial death v.25. 1Cor 12 "we are all members of the body of Christ by the baptism of the spirit with different gifts and abilities." Eph

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<sup>78</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 766.

4:25; Knit together by ligaments and joints. Although the body is used here metaphorically to refer to the church, it is not used as an analogy of the wife's role of submission as earlier.<sup>79</sup>

### **Proof from scripture**

V.31 ἀντὶ τοῦ του κατα λείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. Translation: For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

The man shall leave his mother and father and be united to his wife. The verb καταλείψει is the future indicative of καταλείπω which means to leave behind, forsake, abandon. (see Matt.4:13 Gen.2:24, Isaiah 54:6 and Luke 5:28). It is also used in reference to leaving a city.

Paul continues to illustrate the husband's love as he quotes Gen.2:24 to show that in marriage man and woman are one flesh therefore loving his wife a husband is in a way showing love to him.

Προσκολληθήσεται future indicative passive of προσκολλᾶω. The verb κολλᾶω means to glue, cement, as welding of two metals. It illustrates that husbands and wives are supposed to be knitted together in every aspect of life, thought, interest and physical intimacy. 1Cor.6:16 if anyone has intercourse with a prostitute he is one body with her. However in this context this is more than just sexual intercourse.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν and the two shall be one flesh. According to Hoehner, there are some scholars who allegorize this to mean that Christ left the father in heaven to cleave to his wife the Christ. However this is improbable for two reasons. First, in this verse, both in the present context and in the context of Gen.2:24, is speaking of the union between husband and wife and not Christ and the church. Second, in the text the subject is the responsibility of the husbands. Christ and the church are only for the purpose of illustration<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup>Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 769.

<sup>80</sup>Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 772.

<sup>81</sup>Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 774.

### 3.5 Relation of the scripture to Christological level v.32-33

V32. τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ το μέγα ἐστίν. ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.  
Translation: This mystery is great; I am speaking of Christ and the church

μυστήριον from μύω meaning to close or to shut. In Ephesians the term mystery occurs six times. Eph.1:9 speaks of making known the mystery of God's will according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ in that all things in heaven and earth will be headed up in Christ made known to all believers. In other parts of the bible we see the word mystery used in reference to the partial hardening of Israel until the fullness of gentiles has come in Rom.11:25. There are three possible interpretations of the word mystery in this context.

Firstly, it is related to the human marriage mentioned in Gen.2:24. According to the Vulgate μυστήριον is translated as Sacramentum. The interpretation of the word conveys marriage as a sacrament of grace. Therefore the marriage of a Christian man and woman is the re-enactment of the marriage of Christ and the church. However this interpretation is unacceptable because Genesis does not give proof of "Christian" marriage as opposed to a secular marriage. Secular or religious marriage is the joining of two into one flesh. Furthermore, it's based on third century Gnostic sources and there is no clear evidence that the understanding was evident in early Christian community.<sup>82</sup>

Secondly, some scholars think the mystery reflects a deeper meaning of human marriage in Gen. 2:24. This cannot be the case because the text already makes mention of the Christians as the body of Christ and Gen.2:24 is just an illustration of that spirit union.<sup>83</sup>

Μέγα (Great) indicates how great this mystery is and the difficulty in comprehending it. It may also imply the magnitude, importance of the mystery.

Thirdly, Paul explains this mystery ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. But I speak of Christ and the church. ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω but I speak introduces a new line of thinking. By stating this Paul puts an end to the previous discussion on the union between the husband and the wife.

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<sup>82</sup> Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 124-25.

<sup>83</sup> Lincoln, *The use of the Old Testament in Ephesians*, 41; Cf. Sampley, "And the Two Shall Become One Flesh," 95-96.

He clearly states that the mystery in question is that of the union between Christ and the church not the physical union of the husband and the wife. He quotes Gen.2:24 in support of the union and an illustration of the nature of the union between the husband and wife.

### **3.5.1 Summarizing conclusion**

V.33 πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

**Translation:** Nevertheless also you, each one of you, should so love his own wife as himself, and the wife should fear her husband.

Paul uses πλὴν adverb to indicate that he is making a conclusion to his discussion. This verse is a summary of what had been stated in v.25-29. He uses the singular verb for the persons involved to indicate the individual responsibility to each other. The husband is to love his own wife as Christ loved the church and the wife is to fear her husband. The fear that is used here should be looked at in the similar manner as the previously discussed in v.21. She is supposed to revere her husband.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Christians are called upon to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. This applies to those in marriage too. However Paul outlines individual responsibilities for persons in marriage. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church and wives are to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ. Each should look out for the interest of the other and adhere to the leading of the Holy Spirit for a successful, stable and harmonious marriage.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### HERMENEUTICAL REFLECTIONS AND APPLICATIONS

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this section, a broader understanding of submission will be explored, drawing ideas and conclusions from hermeneutical reflections and other New Testament texts such as Titus 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:4; Romans 12:10, Acts 16:13-15; 1 Peter 2:13-3:1-7.

##### 4.1.1 Mutual submission

Eph.5:21 makes mention of the need for Christians to submit to one another out of the fear for Christ. The underlining principle here is mutual submission governed by Spirit filled life. According to O'Brien, the exhortation to mutual submission signifies a voluntary subordination which means to act in yielding to the needs of others which is an example of sacrificial love that characterizes the Christian community.<sup>84</sup> In order for harmony to exist within the Christian community each one is called to a place of mutual submission. This is contrary to the general understanding of submission in which there is a superior and a subject. The idea of submission in general, calls for a distinction between the subject and the subjected to. O'Brien quotes Gilbert Bilekian as recognizing the natural meaning of submission which requires one to make him/herself subordinate to the higher authority.<sup>85</sup> However, mutual submission requires that all believers regardless of gender, status, function and rank are to serve one another in love. Eventually, all become subordinate to one another and there remains no justification for distinction between the subject and the subjected to. This cuts across all areas of life of which the family unit is a part.

According to Lincoln cited by O'Brien, mutual submission exists within a hierarchy of roles within households. There is a general sense that husbands are to have a submissive attitude towards wives, putting her interests before his and similarly parents to their children.<sup>86</sup> Yet this does not eliminate the more specific roles in the relationships in which the apostle Paul instructs the wives to be submissive to their husbands, children to their parents and slaves to masters.

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<sup>84</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 213.

<sup>85</sup> O'Brien, *The letter to Ephesians*, 214.

<sup>86</sup> O'Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, 214.

In addition Padgett suggests that mutual submission involves taking up the role of a servant to meet the needs of others. It is not permanent and does not imply a hierarchy; rather it is flexible, dynamic and based on self-giving love. For those in leadership, this mutual submission can be called servant leadership. This is where those in power use their mandate to empower others, especially the weak. Throughout the history of the church, however, those in power have regularly abused and misused their mandate to oppress, repress and depress the suppressed. As a remedy to the abuse and misuse of power, Padgett proposes that the love that is expressed in mutual submission should be guided by justice and by the wisdom of God.<sup>87</sup>

The concept of mutual submission can be further elaborated in the words of the apostle Paul in Galatians. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (see Galatians 3:28). This verse places emphasis on unity and oneness of all humans in Christ. The fundamental principle expressed here transcends all hierarchy, ethnic, social and economic boundaries. According to Alexander, this famous text from Galatians is one of the boldest statements in the New Testament, offering a radical deconstruction of the basic divisions that structures ancient society, the division of race, class and gender. Being baptized into Christ, Paul implies entering into a new world where these divisions have no meaning, in Christ Jesus all are one.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, as emphasized by Thurston, the equality and unity of men and women in the church, their oneness in Christ Jesus is especially important in the light of the larger issue in Galatians. If the church were to insist on circumcision as a requirement for full church membership then women would be automatically excluded from full status in the community. The apostle Paul rejects an initiatory rite that systematically favours one group (males) and excludes another (women). This is particularly striking in a world in which male superiority over females was a given.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Alan G. Padgett, *As the church submits to Christ: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 151.

<sup>88</sup> Loveday Alexander, *women as leaders in the newtestament*, 14.

<sup>89</sup> Bonnie Thurston, *women in the New Testament: questions and commentary*, (New York: The crossroad publishing company, 1998), 37.

In conclusion, mutual submission should be the guiding principle of relations within the Christian community where the all differences in color, gender, social status etc are not of any significance.

#### **4.2 Submission to Authority**

There are many scriptural references to submitting to the governing authority. Titus 3:1 states “to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.” Hebrews 13:17: obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief. For that is profitable for you. Romans 13:1-7: let every soul be subject unto the higher power. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

According to Wolff, God instituted and placed people in positions of authority not limited to governments and politics but also leaders in workplaces, schools, families etc.<sup>90</sup> Submission to authority is often motivated by fear and the desire to avoid harsh consequences. (see Romans 13:3). The apostle Paul points that it is only those who do well that receive praise from the authority and those that do evil are punished. It is possible that most people will submit to the authority because of this. However this should not be the motivating factor of submission but the desire to please God.

According to Ford, modern men and women do not want to obey anyone, neither man nor God. Everyone wants to control their own destiny and determine the parameters of life. No one wants to be a servant, and slavery is considered the worst of evils and an unmitigated horror. This is why military service is particularly burdensome for many modern people. It irritates men and women to surrender their autonomy to the will of an officer, a unit or an institution. This same problem exists in the household. Children defy, ignore and usurp parental authority, and wives struggle against their husbands. Many, if not most, modern women insist upon their equality with or independence from their husbands and sometimes even the most timid wives feel compelled to

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<sup>90</sup>Karen Wolff, *the Ultimate Definition of Respect Submitting to and Respecting Authority*.<http://christianity.about.com/od/topicaldevotions/qt/respectauthorit.htm>

assert their autonomy. Husbands on the other hand live not to glorify their wives but to please themselves. However, Christians are called upon to life of willing servitude and humility.<sup>91</sup>

According to O'Brien, the idea of subordination to authority in general, as well as in the family, is out of favor in a world which prizes freedom and non-judgmental attitude. Christians are often affected by these attitudes. Subordination connotes exploitation and oppression that are deeply resented. But authority is not synonymous with tyranny, and the submission to which the apostle refers does not imply inferiority.<sup>92</sup> In the family unit therefore husbands must understand that they are supposed to be benevolent leaders but not tyrant bosses. Wives and children must consciously submit and give the husband the mandate he needs to lead not because they are inferior but because the family unit must function, progress and succeed.

#### **4.3 Case study: The Acholi people interviewee response**

As part of the study the following people were interviewed; church leaders, professionals, married and unmarried couples, and young people.<sup>93</sup> They were interviewed about submission in marriage. In the next paragraphs the responses from this interview will be stated.

##### **Definition of submission**

In response to what the definition of submission is, about 85% of the respondents said that submission is showing respect, giving oneself to one another.

One respondent stated that submission calls for responsibility, it is taking care of one another's needs, treating one another as equals, respecting one another and above all putting Christ in the centre of all that you do. It is being accommodative of one another.

Taken together it is clear that most of the respondents understood submission as used in the text Ephesians 5:21-33. "*Hypotasso*" as used in the text to mean yielding to one another.

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<sup>91</sup> Jeffrey E. Ford, *love, Marriage and Sex in the Christian Tradition from Antiquity to Today*, International Scholars Publications (San Francisco: Bethesda, 1999), 122.

<sup>92</sup>Peter T. O'Brien, *The letter to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 412.

<sup>93</sup> For a summary of the questions asked during the interview check the appendix.

### **Characteristics of a submissive wife**

During the research, the respondents were asked to describe and outline the characteristics of a submissive wife. Their responses were many and varied: A submissive wife is one that is understanding, is forgiving, compassionate, caring, responsible, hardworking, humble, one that regards her husband's ideas and opinions, is teachable etc. This reveals a rather subjective conception of who a submissive wife should be and is best expressed in one's established paradigm, values and character as a person.

### **Characteristics of a loving husband**

The respondents were also asked to describe a loving husband. The majority of them described a loving husband as a provider and protector of his family.

### **Family roles**

Respondents enumerated the following as family roles: Husbands should support, provide, protect and care for the family. They should also serve to unite the family. Wives, on the other hand, should nurture, offer moral support and build character and self esteem in children. However, there was a general understanding among the respondents that the roles within the family should be distributed according to the abilities and competencies of family members.

### **Christ as the head of the church**

Describing the role of Christ as head of the church, respondents said: Christ is loving, forgiving, caring and a provider. According to the above responses the interviewees likened Christ's headship to the things he does for the church.

### **Challenges in reading and applying the text**

Church leaders were specifically asked what the challenges for applying the text are. Some of the challenges they described could be categorized as cultural, educational, age and social status of their audiences. This is seen particularly in trying to make the text as relevant as possible to the people while breaking through all these barriers. These are fully developed under section **4.3.6**

#### 4.3.1 A Discussion of submission in marriage in Acholi society in relation to societies

As stated earlier in chapter one, the Acholi society is dominantly patriarchal with the man as the head of the family. He plays the pivotal role of the provider and is seen as the authority figure. He commands and demands respect from his family; wife, children and house helps. The idea of total submission historically and culturally has been in play. This is where wives, children and house helps have no or little say and obey the husband to the latter. With advent of modernization, internet and better educated women there is a conflict to maintain and enforce the status quo of total submission.<sup>94</sup>

In order to understand as well as possible the role of submission in the longevity and success of marriages among the Acholi people, a detailed discussion and comparison of submission in Acholi and other societies will be looked at in the next paragraphs.

In Rome the power of the Pater familias<sup>95</sup> remained legally in force until Emperor Diocletian (285-305). The power of the father exceeded that of a woman's husband unless the father decided to transfer the power to the husband. This gave the woman some privileges as she would decide to go back to her father's house when she liked. However in the Manus marriages where the woman was under her husband's authority she was obliged to worship her husband's gods and his ancestors became hers. This means that she had to be subjected to her own husband in all matters.<sup>96</sup>

As it was in ancient Rome, the Acholi society holds similar opinion as regards to the place of a woman in the family. After the bride price is paid to the parents of the girl she automatically becomes part of the man's family. These series of events was the only credible validation that a woman was married reminiscent of the ancient Roman Manus system. In this she takes pride and gets society's respect and honor.

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<sup>94</sup> Veronica Tichenor, *Maintaining Men's Dominance: Negotiating Identity and Power when She Earns More*, journal *Sex Roles*, vol.53, no.3/4, August 2005, 192.

<sup>95</sup> Pater familias refers to the head of a Roman family. The paterfamilias was the oldest living male in a household; he had complete control of all family members until he died. Once the paterfamilias died the next oldest male would then have control.

<sup>96</sup> David L. Balch, *Let the wives submit: The domestic code in 1 Peter*, monograph series, volume 26, (Chico: scholars press, 1981), 139-149.

Hierocles, a student of Musonius wrote that a husband should rule over the wife and that the house is incomplete without a wife.<sup>97</sup> Ford supports this view by stating that a man may rule his wife and children but he himself must submit to his employer and to the state. A woman must submit to her own husband but she is called to govern her own children, servants or employees.<sup>98</sup> Hierocles and Ford's ideas undermine the concept of leadership and mutual submission in which both spouses are called. Rulership connotes superiority and inferiority.

Contrary to the biblical concept of submission in Ephesians 5, which encourages women to submit to their husbands willingly out of reverence for Christ and not because she is inferior, most married women in the Acholi society submit to their husband out of fear and with the mindset that her husband paid for her hand in marriage.

According to Griffith and Harvey, the meaning of submission has changed significantly over time. Research by sociologists, historians and ethnographers has clearly shown that the language of female submission in the recent U.S history and elsewhere in the world has often been intertwined with the language of egalitarianism and, more important, that many women and men who claim to believe in submission do not actually practice that belief with the literalness that outsiders might suppose<sup>99</sup>. It is safe then to say that in the contemporary religious circles total submission is far more symbolic than real. However, vaguely defined submission carries with it immense symbolic power. It is a symbol of what some have called a "kinder, gentler patriarchy" but also an ordered harmonious home; a home in which spouses do not argue bitterly with one another, in which husbands make a good living for their families and care lovingly for their families and in which women's lives are made safe and stable.

This time course evolution of submission described by Griffith and Harvey is also observed in the Acholi people, especially among the better educated and socially affluent class. When asked to describe how family roles are distributed the responses from the better educated men and women clang towards cooperation in implementing these roles. That is to say both men and women take up similar tasks implying no rigid roles or duties for husband and wife akin to

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<sup>97</sup>David L. Balch, *Let the wives submit: The domestic code in 1 peter*, 144.

<sup>98</sup>Jeffrey E. Ford, *love, Marriage and Sex in the Christian Tradition from Antiquity to Today*, 129.

<sup>99</sup>Marie Griffith and Paul Harvey, *The SBC resolution: wifely submission*, Christian Century, July1-8, 1988, 637.

Marie's description of a kinder and gentler patriarchy. This understanding is not limited to only the distribution of family roles but also in the decision making process.

#### **4.3.2 Violence against women in the name of submission**

Some married respondents that have suffered abuse and mistreatment from their husbands cited demand of culture and society on women for total submission, especially in cases where fat bride prices were paid, as the reason for continuing to stay in their abusive marriages. Like the Acholi, other women around the world undergo similar injustices over which they have little or no control all in the name of submission. A detailed study by Isabel Phiri carried out in Phoenix, Durban, on domestic violence in (Pentecostal) Indian Christian homes revealed that about eighty-four percent of the twenty-five women who were interviewed admitted to having experienced domestic violence. They were all wives of leaders in the church. Her study concluded that it was biblical beliefs, such as those on submission that made these women stay in abusive relationships.<sup>100</sup> Mary McClintock Fulkerson observes that one of the important oppressive outcomes of the discourse on submission is the willingness of women to stay in battering situations. Women's willingness is often linked to the kind of ecclesiastically supported languages of submission.<sup>101</sup> Such as women should not to challenge men and that they are the healers of wounded marriages.

Another study by Griffith and Harvey showed that women have been consistently vigorous advocates of the doctrine of total submission. In Evangelical groups like women's Aglow Fellowship countless members of the group described being married to men who are selfish, irresponsible, domineering or simply non-Christian who for whatever reasons do not inspire their wives to gracious submission. However, these women are still in these marriages and have kept telling each other to submit because they have believed that female deference, properly applied, can help turn boorish husbands into tender, responsible, reliable, church going husbands, men

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<sup>100</sup> Isabel A .Phir, Domestic Violence in Christian Homes: *A Durban Case study*, "Journal of constructive theology" 6, no.2 (2000), 85-110.

<sup>101</sup> Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 296.



who will transform their wives' submission from a burden to a reward.<sup>102</sup> This does not speak for the majority of women because some have opted to move out of such relationships and marriages.

Mintz proposed six circumstances under which a wife should not submit to her husband. First, if obedience to husband violates biblical principles, the wife should not submit. It should be noted that there are some things or behaviors that might not be listed in the Bible which yet somehow are not beneficial for the family or relationship. Second, if obedience to him compromises her relationship with Christ, she should rather obey Christ. The wife's first allegiance is to Christ, then to her husband. Although the husband's leadership is responsible for the spiritual growth of his family, the wife is responsible to nurture her own spiritual life. Third, if obedience to her husband would violate her conscience, she should not.<sup>103</sup> Sometimes a husband will order his wife to do something that she cannot identify as patently unbiblical and yet the behavior is internally objectionable to her. Fourth, when submitting to her husband compromises the care, nurture and protection of her children, she should not give in. God calls adults to prioritize protecting and caring for the vulnerable, particularly children (see Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 22:3). Caring for the vulnerable is considered as the purest form of religion. Fifth, when obedience to him will facilitate her husband's sin, the wife should not submit. Not only are wives to avoid obeying a husband's command to sin but they should also avoid following any commands that facilitate a husband's sin. The holiness of God requires that we do not enable others to sin with greater ease. An example of this concept can be seen in the story of Abigail and Nabal (see 1 Samuel 25:2-13). Sixth, a wife must not submit to physical, sexual and emotional abuse.<sup>104</sup> While several writers have recently acknowledged that biblical submission does not entail submitting to abuse, there is still great confusion on how the church in general and wives in particular should respond to abuse. It is tragically ironic that Paul's submission command to

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<sup>102</sup>Marie Griffith and Paul Harvey, The SBC resolution: wifely submission, *Christian Century*, July 1-8, 1988, 637.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Lloyd Jones, *life in the spirit, home and work: An exposition of Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973) 126.

<sup>104</sup>For a detailed study on the topic see, Steven R Tracy, Domestic Violence and Redemptive Suffering in First Peter. *CfJ* (2006) 279-296.

wives in Eph5:24 have often been used against wives to condone harsh and abusive behavior by husbands.<sup>105</sup>

#### **4.3.3 Gender roles and submission in marriage**

From the research 90% of the respondents listed provision for the family as the most profound role of the husband. As seen elsewhere in Asian and some European societies, provision, protection and security in the family were seen as traditionally the husband's role while the woman attended to household duties. This carried with it some form of authority on the part of the man. According to Jessie in the past decades to ensure that the family is well taken care of he had to earn money. Earning money meant that the men also earned the right to control it. They doled out funds to other family members and typically maintained a portion for their own use. This kind of control often extended to other areas of the family life as well, men claimed authority to make household decisions both large and small. They also enjoyed ample leisure time as well as freedom from domestic responsibilities. In these fundamental ways, a man's income guaranteed him greater power and privileges within marriage.<sup>106</sup>

However as stated by Mintz, the equation of money with power has led millions of women to pursue education and employment as the key to empowerment and more egalitarian relationships with men. Thus, women needed to access independent wages so as to increase their power vis-a-vis their husbands. Indeed this led to the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Popular writers and scholars urged women to pursue higher education to enter the world of paid work on the same footing as men so that women could both improve their sense of personal competence, autonomy and power.<sup>107</sup> This has inadvertently made some men take on greater share of domestic work load.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Steven R. Tray, what does submit in everything really mean? "The nature and scope of Marital Submission." *Trinj* 29 NS, (2008) 310.

<sup>106</sup> Bernard Jessie, "The good provider role: Its rise and fall. *American sociologist*", Jan 1981, vol. 36,1-12.

<sup>107</sup> Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic revolutions: A Social history of American family life* (New York: Free Press, 1988)

<sup>108</sup> Barnett R and Baruch.G, *Correlares of father's participation in the family work*. In P.Bronstein and C.cowans (eds), *Fatherhood today: men's changing role in the family* (New York: Wiley, 1988) 66-78.

The underprivileged position of women in the past decades made it easy for them to submit to their husbands. However, with achievements in higher education and increasing financial position and the subsequent shift in gender roles coupled with power struggles, submission to husbands is becoming more difficult. This has caused more conflicts and power struggle with the attended rise in divorce. On the contrary, some scholars (Berk, 1985, Sayer and Robinson, 2000, Fox and Murray, 2000) believe that women's employment has not significantly altered the balance of power in marriages, as men continue to exercise greater control.<sup>109</sup>

Osiek and Balch in their book *Families in the New Testament* quoted a man in despair as saying; "why I am unwilling to marry a wealthy wife, because she will dominate instead of being subject". The only way for men and women to be equal is for the woman to submit.<sup>110</sup> Osiek and Balch present a man who simply presents a woman's social status as a threat to marriage; as far as he is concerned, equality in the family institution can only be achieved when women are kept at a less privileged status in society. It is this way of thinking that has led to the continuous oppression and exploitation of women, denying them the opportunity to live out life in full potential. However, this is also true for many women that would not marry poor or younger men because they associate submission with status.

#### **4.3.4 Benevolent- servant leadership**

Garyl yukl defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.<sup>111</sup> Peter Northouse defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.<sup>112</sup> These two definitions of leadership suggest a couple of things that should be noted, leadership is a process, involves influencing others, happens within a group, involves goal attainment and these goals are shared by the leaders and the followers. The very act of defining leadership as a process suggests

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<sup>109</sup> Veronica Tichenor, *Maintaining Men's Dominance: Negotiating Identity and Power when She Earns More*, journal *Sex Roles*, vol.53, no.3/4, August 2005, 192.

<sup>110</sup> Carolyn Osiek and David L Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>111</sup> Garyl Yukl, *Leadership in organizations*, (New Jersey: Pearson-prentice Hall, 2006), 8.

<sup>112</sup> Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and practice*, (California: sage, 2007), 15.

that leadership is not a characteristic or a trait with which only a few people are endowed with at birth.<sup>113</sup> It is a transactional event that occurs between leaders and followers. This means that leadership is not restricted to only one individual.

Servant leadership, this concept of servant leadership can be traced back to the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 20 and Mark 10. The concept of servant leadership can be summed up into six, love (*agapao*), humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. These will be looked at in detail in the following paragraphs.

The model of servant leadership begins with love implying that the leader does the right thing for the right reasons and the right time. The leader increases his or her humility and altruism towards the followers. This increase in humility and altruism results into a vision for the followers. Trust increases empowerment to the followers and lastly greater levels of service. According to Patterson, humility is often looked at as low self regard however humility ought to be regarded as keeping a balanced view of ones abilities and the recognition that most of what one accomplishes as a leader is done by the followers rather than the leader.<sup>114</sup>

Altruism on the other hand is the ability to help others selflessly just for the sake of helping even though there is no personal gain. Vision in this case is the ability of the leader to see the unknowable. This includes identifying the unique individual gifts of the followers. This eventually will help in decision making and also shape a plan for the future. According to Bennet, a servant leader is one that is has the ability to create an environment of trust that is safe for a deep and meaningful dialogue. While empowerment involves entrusting others with power. This includes effective listening, making people feel very significant, valuing love and equality.<sup>115</sup> Leadership involves giving people the chance to move in new directions by preserving their roots, respecting their value and preserving their dignity.

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<sup>113</sup> Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, [http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/15104\\_Rowe\\_Chapter\\_01.pdf](http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/15104_Rowe_Chapter_01.pdf). Cited on 8/may/2014.

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.oocities.org/es/ricardo.ponte/GERENCIA/Infografia3.pdf>. Cited on 8/may/2014.

<sup>115</sup> Bennet John L, Trainers as Leaders of Learning: Training and Development,55 [http://www.lawton-assoc.com/images/pdf/trainers\\_as\\_leaders\\_of\\_learning.pdf](http://www.lawton-assoc.com/images/pdf/trainers_as_leaders_of_learning.pdf)

Finally service is the core of leadership and should be the primary function of servant leadership not based on one's interests but rather on behalf of others. Servant leadership is an action oriented state of mind that compels leaders to provide followers with tools they need to accomplish their tasks. While serving the needs of others, the servant leader sets an environment that will facilitate others serving.<sup>116</sup>

#### **4.3.5 Women in active ministry**

In this section the contribution and role of women in the apostolic ministry will be outlined. However before looking at the role of women, a brief summary of the status of women in ancient civilizations will be addressed.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, in India, subjection was a cardinal principle. Women were held day and night by their protectors in a state of dependence says the manu. The rule of inheritance was by descent traced through male excluding women. In the Hindu scriptures a good wife is described whose mind, speech and body are kept in subjection, acquires high renown in this world and in the next and the same abode with her husband.<sup>117</sup>

In Ancient Rome, women were completely dependent on the male. They could not exercise any civil or public office, could not be a witness, tutor and surety. In Athens, women were not better off than in either India and Rome. The women in Athens were often minors and subject to male, that is say to their fathers, brothers and any male in their kinship. At the time of marriage, her consent was not sought, she was obliged to submit to the wishes of her parents and receive from then her husband and her lord.

According to Keener, the status women was not constant through all periods of antiquity, women provided both skilled and unskilled labour in mycenaean Greece, but their status had declined significantly by the time of Plato and Aristotle at least in Athens. Although women seclusion there had been exaggerated, it seems that their opinion and even presence was not valued in

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.oocities.org/es/ricardo.ponte/GERENCIA/Infografia3.pdf>. cited on 8<sup>th</sup>/may/2014.

<sup>117</sup> Jamal Badawi, "The status of women in Islam," n.p. (Cited 8 May 2014). Online: [http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/status\\_of\\_women\\_in\\_islam.php](http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/status_of_women_in_islam.php)

discussions on moral matters. The position of women seems to have improved in centuries before the spread of christianity. However even by the day's of the apostle Paul, many men felt that women were morally weaker than men. Among those who expressed such views were prominent philosophers and moralists. Earlier philosophers were credited with their prayer of gratitude that they were not born women.<sup>118</sup>

According to Keener, Jewish sources spoke both positively and negatively about women. They were to be honoured but their moral character was often mistrusted and often stronger than what is found in the Philosophers. Since these Jewish text were written by men and for men, women are often viewed only in terms of their relationship to men, often as objects of sexual temptation in ethical admonitions and wives and daughters in wisdom and law. An earlier Jewish teacher whose work was undoubtedly known to Paul advised men not to sit among women, because evil comes from them like a moth emerging from clothes, that a man's evil was better than a woman's good.<sup>119</sup> It should be noted that Jewish women outside Palestine and possibly within Palestine as well, took part publicly in life of their communities. In Palestine women were not confined to the home and could work in local shops and the husband was required to allow his wife relative freedom of movement. Furthermore the husband was always to respect his wife.<sup>120</sup>

The following are the contributions of women in Pauline ministry.

Women extended benefaction to individual leaders like Paul and Ignatius, and they opened their houses for Christian gatherings. The evidence of women's hosting house churches is clearly present in the New Testament: Mary mother of John Mark in Jerusalem (see Acts 12:12), Nympha (Col. 4:15), Lydia (Acts 16:14-15, 40), and Priscilla and Aquilla (see Romans 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19).<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, Priscilla and Phoebe had leadership roles in their community. They were involved as leaders in the local Christian communities. Priscilla was a leader of a house church (She is

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<sup>118</sup> Craig s. Keener, *Paul, women and wives: Marriage and women's ministry in the letters of Paul* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 160.

<sup>119</sup> Craig s. Keener, *Paul, women and wives*, 161.

<sup>120</sup> Craig s. Keener, *Paul, women and wives*, 163.

<sup>121</sup> Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. Macdonald with Janet H. Tulloch, *A woman's place: House churches in earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 214.

also depicted as engaging in evangelizing. (see Acts 18:24-26). According to Osiek and Macdonald, the women mentioned in Paul's letters understood themselves and were understood by others as fostering the spread of the gospel mainly because they were named as partners. For instance Priscilla and Aquilla are said to have taught Apollos in Ephesus, a learned Jew who had great Knowledge of Scriptures.<sup>122</sup>

Phoebe meaning bright or radiant is another example of a woman that actively helped in the apostolic ministry. She belonged to the *diakonia*, prostatis ministry (see Romans 12:7; 16) translated as helper. In general the term describes an official guardian, champion or legal representative. In Hellenistic communities the word also described a patron. In some cases a woman would be honoured with the title as a mistress or matron in return for outstanding charitable service.<sup>123</sup> The apostle Paul entrusted Phoebe with his letter. She is seen as a front-runner and ace in the hole for his Spanish mission. The apostle Paul relied on her wealthy and influential position to pave way in Rome and stimulate their desire to finance his Spanish mission. The apostle Paul also relied on phoebe's network of clients and at the same time introduced her to his network as away to reciprocate her patronage to him. She sees their relationship as an agreement of equals with vastly different spheres of interest, this equality on some levels creating a different kind of patron-client relationship in which there is some kind of mutuality.<sup>124</sup>

The above examples of women involvement in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul supports the argument that women should be allowed and given opportunity to take up leadership role in different aspects of life especially in church ministry. Although this is true, according to Thurston, the apostle has often been viewed by the feminists as the best unsympathetic to women and more probably actively misogynistic. George Bernard Shaw has been views the apostle Paul "the external enemy of woman" In 1Timothy 2:12 "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she is to keep silent." According to Balch, the restriction on women's leadership is linked with the traditional discourse of male headship in marriage (see 1 Cor.11:3-

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<sup>122</sup> Osiek and Macdonald, *A woman's place*, 226.

<sup>123</sup> Lesly F. Massey, *Women and the New Testament: An analysis of scripture in the light of New Testament Culture* (London: McFarland and company, 1960), 51.

<sup>124</sup> Osiek and Macdonald, *A woman's place*, 216.

12, 1 Tim.2:11-15). These passages offer a distinctive Christian twist on the traditional stoic household codes reinforcing hierarchy and enjoining the obedience of slaves, children and women within the household.<sup>125</sup>

Following the above, it is possible to conclude that the apostle Paul was influenced by these cultures (the Greek, Roman and Jewish) at the time of writing about the position of women. Despite these influences, just like Jesus, the apostle Paul recognized and appreciated the role of women in the Christian community.

#### **4.3.7 The concept of love in marriage**

Kokab and Ajmal suggest that love is a universal phenomenon. Everyone in life experiences love but their attitudes and experiences of love differ radically. It is a strong positive emotion of affection and attachment.<sup>126</sup> There are many different kinds of love these include, *Eros*, *Philia*, *Lundus*, *Agape* and *Pragma*.

*Eros* refers to physical passionate love. It represented the idea of sexual passion and desire. In the Greek, *Eros* is named after the Greek goddess of fertility. The Greeks didn't always think of it as something positive as it is today. However *Eros* was viewed as a dangerous, fiery, and irrational form of love that could take hold of you and possess you an attitude shared by many later spiritual thinkers, such as the Christian writer C.S. Lewis.<sup>127</sup>

*Philia* (friendship). This refers to affectionate regard or friendship in both Ancient and Modern Greek. This type of love has an aspect of give and take. It is a dispassionate virtuous love, a concept developed by Aristotle. It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and

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<sup>125</sup> David L. Balch, *let the wives submit: the domestic code in 1 peter* (Michigan: scholar press, 1981), 58.

<sup>126</sup> Saniya Kokab and M. Asir Ajmal , Perception of Love in Young Adults, "Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology" 2012, Vol. 9, No. 2, 43-48

<sup>127</sup>Roman Krznaric, "Yes." Cited on (5/May/2014). Online : n.p. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/the-ancient-greeks-6-words-for-love-and-why-knowing-them-can-change-your-life>



requires virtue, equality and familiarity. In ancient texts, *philos* denoted a general type of love between family members, friends, lovers and a desire or enjoyment of an activity.<sup>128</sup>

*Ludus* (playful love) referred to the affection between children or young lovers.

*Agape*. This often refers to a general affection or deeper sense of "true unconditional love" rather than the attraction suggested by "*Eros*." This love is selfless. It gives and expects nothing in return. It is the highest form of Christian love (see 3.4.2.2).

*Pragma*. This portrays a deep understanding that has developed between long-married couples. It involves making compromises, showing patience and tolerance to help the relationship work over time.

Following the above kinds of love, the idea of love in marriage should be founded on the biblical understanding. In the Bible there are many scriptural references in which all Christians are called to love one another. (see John 15:12; 13:14, 34-35). Furthermore, God is Love (see 1 John 4:8) and because men and women are made in the likeness of God, they are created to give and to receive love.<sup>129</sup> What is love then? Some think love is passion, sex, gifts etc. But love is more than just these things. Most people equate love to sexual desires.

Love in marriage should first of all be understood as a Christian obligation. Both the husband and wife are commanded to love each other in obedience to Christ. However as seen earlier in Ephesians 5, the command to love is given specifically to the husbands while wives are commanded to submit to their husbands. Elsewhere in bible (see Titus 2:3-5) women are told to love and to be subject to their husbands. In I Peter 3:1-6, the apostle Peter portrays Sarah as the model for believing wives in respect to love and submission (see Genesis 20:13). Therefore it is important to note that although husbands and wives are given individual exhortation, the concept of Love and submission are not independent of each other i.e. they co-exist.

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<sup>128</sup> Henry George Liddel and Robert Scott, "A Greek-English Lexicon," n.p. (Cited 3 March/2014). Online: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3Dfili%2Fa>

<sup>129</sup> Ford, *Marriage and Sex in the Christian Tradition from Antiquity to Today*, 14.

#### **4.3.6 Challenges in the understanding and applying of submission**

For a number of diverse reasons there have been some challenges in understanding and applying some biblical tenets and teachings, and submission as expressed in Ephesians 5 is no exception. This section will explore as exhaustively as possible the challenges that beset understanding and applying submission in marriage.

From both literature and responses from research subjects in the Acholi land of Uganda, these challenges are mainly ecclesiastical/interpretational, cultural norms and perceptions, social status and generational differences.

The typical local Acholi churches have leaders that are theologically very poorly endowed. Most have had no formal theological education, at all. Therefore, proper interpretation and teaching of the text is lacking. Church members are therefore misinformed, misunderstand and misapply submission.

In the few churches that have well theological trained preachers that deliver a sound interpretation of the text, cultural expectations undermine its application. In the predominantly patriarchic society of the Acholi submitting to one's husband is non-negotiable. However, with modernization and more women getting good education the status quo has suffered. Culturally most educated women have both a self inspired need and a cultural expectation to break free from what is now considered unfashionable total submission.

One challenge to understanding and applying submission worthy of special attention relates not only to the woman, but to the husband, as well. This is the perception that submission by a woman is a husband's right and privilege.<sup>130</sup> Loving and competent leadership by the husband has also been perceived as a woman's right and privilege. The sad results are that in the marital home husbands and wives are at each other's throat focusing and demanding their rights. On the contrary, however, submission by wives and competent leadership by husbands are expressed more in terms of responsibilities and obedience to Christ and not rights (see Eph 5:21-33). If husbands and wives will therefore focus on obeying Christ and working hard to assume their responsibilities of loving leadership and submission, there will be harmony in marriages.

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<sup>130</sup> Verbal conversations with Ed Asare on 8<sup>th</sup>.July.2013, upstream oil and gas, Stavanger Norway.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the previous chapters, submission in marriage as expressed in Ephesians 5 has been looked at from different perspectives including hermeneutics, cultural, historical and ecclesiastical. Using the Acholi land society as a case study, the possible correlation between proper understanding and application of submission and success and longevity of marriage was explored.

The following conclusions can be drawn:

The bible is full of scriptures that exhort Christians to be submissive to one another, be humble and not to think of themselves too highly as they ought (Eph 4:2; 5:21). Submission expressed by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:22 therefore specifically relates to marriage as an institution. As with most institutions such as companies, countries etc marriage needs a head and a leader, the husband, to whom the wife submits not because she is inferior but because the marital institution must function and succeed just as employees do for the ultimate benefit of the companies that employees them.

Over the years submission has been misunderstood and misapplied. As in most societies, the modern day Acholi society looks at submission with stigma especially among the better educated and more affluent women. This has adversely affected marriage. The results has been skyrocketing of divorce numbers with it attendant ill effects on children and society.

Besides modernization, other challenges beset the understanding and application of submission marriage, for instance cultural norms, wrong interpretation of the scripture and ecclesiastical miss presentation. Of particular importance is the fact that both husbands and wives read their household codes expressed in Ephesians 5 as their rights and privileges and not as

responsibilities and obedience to Christ. It is common to hear husbands complain that try as they do to get their wives to submit it yields no fruit. The scripture exhorts wives to submit to husbands in obedience to Christ. The scripture does not ask husbands to make sure wives submit. In the same vein, the scripture exhorts husband to be the loving leaders of their families.

Therefore if husbands and wives will focus on obeying Christ and working hard to assume their responsibilities of loving leadership and submission, there will be harmony in marriages. This thesis therefore substantiates the hypothesis that the proper understanding and application of submission in the institution of marriage will lead to a more functional and successful marriages that last longer.

It is however, worth noting that different individuals from different cultures might read in and interpret this differently. Notwithstanding, it is clear both from scriptures and common sense that headship/leadership and committed followers are necessary and indispensable ingredients for the success of any institution or establishment, and marriage is no exception.

Granted, success in marriage is a rather complex and multi-faceted concept but the study clearly proves that a proper understanding and application of the principles headship/leadership and committed followers do positively impact marriages as far as longevity and success are concerned.

### **Recommendations and outlook**

The study focused on the Acholi of Uganda as a model for connecting the understanding and application of submission as expressed in Ephesians 5:21-33 to the success and longevity of marriage. Doing a much wider study on submission across different cultures and races would give a more original and representative dimension to these questions. Online questionnaire could be employed to target much wider respondents and quantitative statistical inferences, like analysis of variance, used to analyze the results.

Another area that would be of significance is establishing the difference between headship and leadership, no matter how intricate. In Ephesians 5, headship (*kephale*) is an exclusive role of the husband. If it is possible to clearly define and establish leadership as significantly different as

headship, could it be surmised that a wife can for instance be the leader and runner of a family even though the husband is the institutional head?

Having looked at submission as taught in Ephesians 5:21-33, comparative study of scholarly work on this topic would also be of interest. This will involve extensively review and analysis of scholarly material from antiquity to the present day.

It will be interesting to extrapolate the findings of this study to anticipate the possible dynamics of headship/leadership and submission/committed following in marriages in the next century, for instance. Answers to questions like, will marriages become a contract, the term of which might be decided on upon by couples? Will technology affect the household codes? It should be of prime importance to explore the future of marriage with special reference to the interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33 much as it is to explore climatic change dynamics, commerce, the environment, energy sources and supply of the future etc. For instance, it is estimated that about 73% of the present day adult's social life is spent online.<sup>131</sup> This is a trend on the increase. Dating sites are here to stay. More and more people are meeting online and a greater number of these are getting married. It would be great to have a comparative study of the current marriage trends and the traditional.

Another dimension to the outlook of this study could be the possibility of predicting success and longevity of marriages before they are contracted. Could the personalities of prospective couples be studied and fed into a mathematical model that has an on-the-dot ability to tell whether or not they would be a perfect or near perfect match? The works of Dr. John Gottman, a leading marriage and family psychologist, and colleagues would lend a lot to this.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.gottman.com/research/research-faqs/>

## **APPENDIX**

Read aloud the text Ephesians 5:21-33; take a few minutes to think through, give responses.

### **Focus Group Discussion/individual interview guides / married.**

1. How would you define submission in your own words?
2. How would you describe a submissive wife?
3. How would you describe a loving husband?
4. How are the different family roles distributed with the family?
5. How is Christ portrayed as the head of the Church?
6. How do Christians take part in the family of God?

### **Church leaders:**

1. How would you define submission?
2. How have you used this text in the teaching on the family institution?
3. Describe a submissive wife?
4. How would you describe a loving husband?
5. How is the relationship between the church and Christ portrayed in the reading of this text?
6. Identify challenges you faced in the reading of this text?

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