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Submission and Love in Ephesians 5:22-25 and Its Implication for Christian Home

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ABSTRACT

Even though submission is expected and demanded in various human relationships; however, between husband and wife, the term submission becomes technical and complex in definition and application. This is because in most cases it demands compromise of an individual's personality, integrity, and choice. On the other hand, Agape love which is sacrificial and unconditional, the same is a product of human relationships either vertical or horizontal, Hence, the objective of the paper is to re-examine love and submission between husband and wife, and the havoc it has generated for the Christian home where this is not biblically practiced. Methods adopted for the paper were historical which reconstructed the past both in the biblical times and in this contemporary Church; sociological to locate the concept of love and submission in the society and exegetical, which examines both the content and context to enhance better interpretation of the relevant text. Data were gathered through a primary source which is the Bible, and secondary source in which consultations were made through related published works and the internet. The paper found out that lack of love and submission between husband and wife has broken homes, which is a result of emanating factors in Nigeria such as information technology, materialism, and poverty and this, in turn, has generated havoc for the church and society in the contemporary times. The significant contribution this paper makes to knowledge is that Paul's teachings should be read as pointing the way to peaceful co-existence in the home which is the basis and foundation of any society. The paper concludes that for the sake of unity and harmony of the home, the wife's submission should not be circumstantial and conditional, neither the husband's love towards his wife. The woman is to subject to the headship of her husband, not as a slave but as one who is provided for, cared for, and secured by her husband.

Keywords: *Ephesians 5:22-25, Submission, Love, Christian Home, Implication, Challenge.*

Introduction

The two concepts; "submission" and "love" are very crucial and sine qua non for a tranquil Christian home. However, the same has been misconceived, misused and abused in our Christian homes and even in our society today. Husbands and wives now give personal and egocentric interpretations, applications and conditions for their submission and love for each other. Bitrus asserts that one may claim that their culture has no place for this concept, he says this is one of the areas where one listens to precept of the scripture and not the dictates of culture. Submission to one another should be controlled by one's reference for Christ; culture or no culture, one is commanded by the Lord to submit to one another, and this did not mean one should do away with one's God-given roles.¹ Considering Apostle Paul in Eph 5:22-25, the obligations: submission and love, are simultaneous and reciprocal responsibility of husband and wife in the

¹ D. Bitrus, *The Extended Family; An African Christian Perspective*, (Nairobi: Christian Learning Materials Centre, 2000), 24.

home which is also applicable to our contemporary homes. Holman substantiates that submission is taught in the context of various human relationships on one hand.² On the other hand, Stephen adds also that, it is important to understand types of love and to determine where one stands in a particular relationship.³ In the same vein, the home is the basis and foundation of any society, which determines how the society will be; morally, spiritually, physically, and socio-economically. It is the cradle of society. The strength of the home will determine the strength of the society. However, Christian home despite the biblical foundation and injunction faces certain challenges that are confronting the success, peace, and harmony of such a home today.

Chapell also observes rightly that, “Wives submit yourselves unto your husband... For the husband is the head of the wife... Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loves the church and gave himself for it.” the passage (Eph 5:22-25), though is familiar, it is also controversial. In the last half-century, different philosophies regarding gender, sex, and marriage have revolutionized the way many perceive marriage roles and responsibilities in our Culture. Consequence upon that how men and women should relate in marriage have been questioned and sometimes rejected. No husband or wife in modern society has spared the need to examine presuppositions about how God called us to live together in a marriage relationship.⁴ In human relationships, conflict seems to be inevitable but controllable and surmountable, which can be aided by submission and love by or from either of the party involved. So one bothers to ask: To what extent can submission and love enhance and promote peace and harmony in relationships, particularly between husband and wife? Does it even apply to relationships already in conflict? The objective of the paper, therefore, is to re-examine love and submission between husband and wife, and the havoc it has generated for the Christian home where this is not biblically practiced. To achieve the set goal, the researcher uses historical, sociological and exegetical methods

Conceptual clarification

One of the concepts that need clarification is submission which has been defined by different scholars. According to Merriam Webster, submission is the act of recognizing and allowing or giving higher authority or leadership to someone over oneself. It is an act of submitting to the authority or control of another.⁵ Beyond the foregoing, Borgatta and Montgomery say,

² C. Band, C. Drape, A. England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1538.

³ M. Stephen, *How to Enjoy your Marriage*, (Jos: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2009), 116.

⁴ B Chapell, *Ephesians; Reformed Expository Commentary*, (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2009), 270.

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/submission> accessed September 10, 2018.

submission is the act or process by which an individual or group is placed or treated as lower in rank, concerning another person or group that exercises greater authority, power, or influence.⁶ Tony Evan then opines that submission has to do with function, not being. It does not signify that a wife is inferior to her husband in terms of her worth before God, it does not mean she has been relegated to an inferior position of servitude that denies her gifts and abilities and leaves her unfulfilled either rather, submission is willingly, cheerfully, and respectfully coming under the umbrella of a husband's protective authority.⁷ On the other hand, the word love has been widely and variously defined which is probably due to its complex nature. Borgatta and Montgomery also observe that sociologists have agreed that love is one of the complex and elusive concepts to deal with from a scientist's point of view. Dictionary definitions are of limited use in categorizing the essential ingredients of love, except to connote its many variations as an attitude, an emotion, or a behavior. No one definition can capture all the elements such as romantic obsession, sexuality, care or even irrationality. Part of the difficulty is that individuals and cultures define love very differently, depending on particular relationships and circumstances. The concept of love has varied not only from one culture to another but from one historical era to another.⁸ Tenney adds that: love is an abstract quality and is therefore indefinable in precise terminology. It finds expression in both nouns and verbs, and so occurs throughout the Bible. He argues further, love is defined in the dictionary as "An emotion, sentiment, or feeling of pleasurable attraction towards, or delight in something, as a principle or a person, or a thing, which indicates a desire for the presence, possession, well-being or promotion of its object..." plus such terms as "strong feeling of affection, devoted attachment, great tenderness." Tenney concludes that these terms are more descriptive than definitive.⁹ Ramalingam gives a psychological explanation of love thus; it is a high degree of a positive emotional attitude, which singles out its object among others and places it at the center; It is a sentiment involving fondness for, or attachment to an object, the idea of which is emotionally colored whenever it arises in the mind, and capable of evoking anyone of the whole gamut of primary emotions, according to the situation in which the object is placed, or represented; often, used in the sense of sex-love or even lust. It is an intense form of inter-personal attraction characterized by affinitive need for the other. Norman asserts that Christian love (agapē) is

⁶ E.F Borgatta and R.J.V Montgomery, *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2nd ed. Vol 3 (New York: MacMillan, 2000), 347.

⁷ Tony Evan, *For Married Women Only: Three Principles for Honoring Your Husband* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 11.

⁸ E.F Borgatta and R.J.V Montgomery, *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2nd ed. Vol 3, 1697.

⁹ M.C Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol 3, H-L, Rev. ed.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 989.

unique.¹⁰ It is not a mere physical, emotional or erotic attraction but caring concern and caring action, an attitude of heart that transcends even antagonism and enmity and that works for the good of others. Christian love is a matter of the will and so is something we are commanded to express. In marriage, mutual love is the duty of both partners and its model is the love of God for man in Christ- “husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church” (Eph 5:22-23). According to him, love of this quality, is love that is patient and kind, love that does not count up shortcomings or wrongs (I Cor 13:4-7), is the cement of a good marriage. It creates and maintains a lasting bond between the partners and put those who receive under a constant obligation to be totally and collectively faithful to the partner who gives it.¹¹

Another key point is the Christian home which Bitrus defines as a household where the Lordship of Christ is recognized and accepted; the fear of the Lord is inculcated, the word of God is studied and is the standard of living; love and forgiveness are fundamental.¹² It is a family where mutual submission is practiced and an ‘open door’ policy is generally maintained. According to Dag Heward-Mills, a Christian home is not just a building: it is an atmosphere, a place you are always eager to be. A place to enjoy beautiful, peaceful, welcoming, and a place to tend and make beautiful. The most important element of the home, however, is not the building not how large or how beautiful it is, but the relationship existing between the people within. It is a place where people who love each other have agreed to live and raise a family they can equally love.¹³

Challenges in Contemporary Christian Home

Despite the biblical principles and injunctions for Christian homes, many challenges are confronting the home which always threatens the peace and the harmony of the home and these challenges seem immemorial, both conventional and contemporary. Also, with the innumerable books that have been written by both traditional and modern scholars, teachers, pastors, and theologians, the challenges persist and tend to be insurmountable. The reason according to Wilcox is that marriage is more than an emotional relationship; it is also an economic partnership and social safety net. Income, employment, debt, assets, and the division of household labor all shape the quality and stability of married life. In other words, earning, spending, saving, and sharing money are integral dimensions of contemporary married life.¹⁴ Some of these challenges

¹⁰ P. Ramalingam, *Dictionary of Psychology*, (India, New Delhi: Academic Publishers, 2006), 147.

¹¹ Norman Shields, *Christian Ethics*, (Jos: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2004), 147.

¹² Bitrus, *The Extended Family; An African Christian Perspective*, 217.

¹³ Dag Heward-Mills, *Model Marriage; A Marriage counseling Handbook* (Dag Heward-Mills on Smashwords, 2005), 26.

¹⁴ W. B. Wilcox, *The State of Our Unions Marriage in America: Money & Marriage*. National Marriage Project, University of Virginia, 2009.

that shall be considered in this section are finance, Late Conception and Barrenness, and leadership. First, finance:

Finance

Hornby defines finance as the money used to run a business, an activity or a project; the activity of managing money, especially by a government or commercial organization and the verb means to provide money for a project.¹⁵ Finance here has to do with money and all other responsibilities that have to do with money in the home. Voydanoff asserts that **financial** matters affect not only financial satisfaction, but also marital satisfaction and quality of life. With the potential to influence so many aspects of everyday life, continued research in understanding the processes involved in this fundamental area of family studies is vital. Financial issues are a common source of discord in personal, marital, and family relationships.¹⁶ Berry and Williams further add that satisfaction with one's financial status can enhance marital satisfaction, and more broadly, life satisfaction.¹⁷ Conversely, financial difficulties and dissatisfaction with one's financial status can lead to marital conflict and divorce.¹⁸ Also, couples who felt more in control of their lives felt more satisfied with their financial status.¹⁹ Hibbert and Beutler found that the quality of family life was perceived to be higher among families in which financial self-reliance was more highly valued. Families which were prudent in paying bills on time, living within the family's income, and avoiding unnecessary debt increased respect for the family, a sense of self-worth, and diminished financially driven family tensions. They also concluded that imprudent financial behavior led to greater family unkindness, decreased family communication, and diminished quality of life.²⁰ Wilcox and Dew's research indicates that husbands are significantly less happy

¹⁵ A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English 7th ed.*, (England: Oxford University Press), 550.

¹⁶ P. Voydanoff, Economic Distress, and Family Relations: A Review of the Eighties, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 1990, 1099-1115.

¹⁷ R. E. Berry, & F. L. Williams, Assessing the Relationship between Quality of Life and Marital and Income Satisfaction, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 49, 1987, 107- 116.

¹⁸ B. E. Poduska, & G. H. Allred, Family Finances: The Missing Link in MFT Training. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 18, 1990, 161-168.

¹⁹ J. L. Parrotta, & P. J. Johnson, The Impact of Financial Attitudes and Knowledge on Financial Management and Satisfaction of Recently Married Individuals. *Financial Counseling and Planning*, 9, 1998, 59-75.

²⁰ J. R. Hibbert, & I. F. Beutler, The Effects of Financial Behaviours on the Quality of Family Life: Evidence from Adolescent Perceptions. Paper Presented at the Proceedings of the Association for Financial Counselling and Planning Education, Symposium conducted at the 19th Annual Association for Financial Counselling and Planning Education Conference, Orlando, FL. 2001.

in their marriages and more likely to contemplate divorce when their wives take the lead in breadwinning. On average, men do not have difficulties with working wives, so long as their wives work about the same amount of time or less than they do.²¹ Perceptions of how well one's spouse handles money also play a role in shaping the quality and stability of family life. When individuals feel that their spouse does not handle money well, they report lower levels of marital happiness.²² In one study, Amato and Roger state that feeling that one's spouse spent money foolishly increased the likelihood of divorce for both men and women.²³ However, whatever may be the case, Chethik opines that couples should work hand in hand when it comes to money and finances.²⁴

Late Conception and Barrenness

Another dire challenge confronting the home is late conception and barrenness. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, like most Africans, children are the perpetrators of the parents' lineage, inherit property, give them security in their old age and assurance of social recognition, which allows them a befitting burial when they die. The issue is both immemorial as well as contemporary. While late conception is simply a short or long-time delay in a woman conception, barrenness is "the inability of either of the partners to procreate". More so, Tenney pointed out that biblically, to be a wife without motherhood (child) has always been regarded in the East not merely a matter of regret, but also a matter of reproach and humiliation. Hence Sarah's sad laughter of despair (Gen 18:12), Hannah's silent pleading (1Sam 1:10ff), and Rachel's passionate alternative for children or death (Gen. 30:1). Barrenness was a great family's misfortune. Significantly, mothers of the Hebrew race (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel) were by nature sterile and, therefore God's special intervention showed His favour to Israel. The wives of the patriarchs, to avoid the disgrace of barrenness gave their house maidens to their husbands, regarding such circumstances as their own (Gen 16:2; 30:3).²⁵ Having established this fact, the challenge is how then can the affected couples live together as companions and fulfil the procreative intention or purpose of God for the Christian home?

²¹ W. B. Wilcox, & J. Dew, No One Best Way: Work-Family Strategies, the Gender Division of Parenting, and the Contemporary Marriages of Mothers and Fathers. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Sociology, University of Virginia, 2008.

²² S. Britt, J. E. Grable, S. Briana, N. Goff, & M. White, The Influence of Perceived Spending Behaviours on Relationship Satisfaction. *Financial Counselling and Planning* 19, 2008, 31-43.

²³ P. R. Amato, & S. J. Rogers, A Longitudinal Study of Marital Problems and Subsequent Divorce, *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59, 1997, 612-624.

²⁴ N. Chethik, *Voicemail: What Husbands Think About Their Marriages, Their Wives, Sex, Housework, and Commitment*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006),161.

²⁵ Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 479.

Leadership

Another dire challenge confronting the Christian home today is leadership. The issue of leadership in the home was not as serious in the onset as it is today. The act of leadership here starts first between the husband and wife before considering other members of the family that also make up the home. This issue of leadership becomes a serious and threatening challenge to the home by the contemporary revolution and movement for gender equality. A home is not designed to function with two heads, just as a human body is not meant to have two heads. Emerson corroborates thus; in today's feminist-dominated culture, the question of "who is the boss" can be a source of humor and conflict. Many men have been cowed by the feminist argument that men and women are equal and husbands don't have any more authority than their wives do.²⁶ This, in turn, makes wives see submission to their husbands as a way of arbitrating, infringing and contravening on their fundamental human rights. More so, influence, affluence, intellect, integrity, and background often make it difficult and impossible for some wives to be submissive to their husbands. The wife must submit all these to her husband's authority and leadership for peace to reign in the home.

Exegetical study of Eph 5:22-25

Passage in Greek

22. Ai) gunai=ke\$ toi=\$ i)di/oi\$ a)ndra/sin w(\$ tw= kuri/w|, 23 o%ti a)nh/r e)stin kefalh\ th=\$ gunaiko\\$ w(\$ kai\ o(Xristo\\$ kefalh\ th=\$ e)kklhsi/a\$ au)to\\$ swth\r tou= sw/mato\$. 24. a)lla\ w(\$ h(e)kklhsi/a u(pota/ssetai tw= Xristw=|, ou%tw\$ kai\ ai(gunai=ke\$ toi=\$ a)ndra/sin e)n panti/. 25. Oi(a&ndre\$, a)gapa=te ta\\$ gunai=ka\$, kaqw\\$ kai\ o(Xristo\\$ h)ga/phsen th\n e)kklhsi/an kai\ e(auto\n pare/dwken u(pe\r au)th=\$,²⁷

The Passage in English

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (KJV)

²⁶ E. Emerson, *Love, and Respect* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 216.

²⁷ B. M. Newman, *The Ubs Greek New Testament*, (Germany: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, 2007), 462.

Key words**Submit** – ὑποτάσσω

It is present, middle, participle noun, masculine, singular.²⁸ The noun submission is voluntary, ὑποτάσσω - *hypotassō*, denotes, to subordinate; reflexive to obey; be under obedience, put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to under), submit self-unto. From “*hupo*” and “*tasso*”, to place in order. To place under, to subordinate, and to make subjected. In the active voice, to make others subject, to subordinate, to force others to be subject. In the passive voice, it means, to be brought under the control of someone else. In the middle voice, to submit oneself, to be subject, to be obedient. Passive voice imperatives have a similar force, to allow oneself to be in subjection, to be obedient. Until God forces the subjection of all, the passive voice in other moods can also signify voluntary submission.²⁹ It is an act of submitting to the authority or control of another. It is the action of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person. In Paul’s day, women, children and slaves were to submit to the head of the family; slaves were to submit to the head of the family; slaves would submit until they are freed, male children until they grew up and women their whole lives. Paul emphasized the equality of all believers in Christ (Gal 3:28), but he did not suggest overthrowing Roman society to achieve it. Instead, he counseled all believers to submit to one authority by choice – wives to husbands and also husbands to wives; slaves to masters and also masters to slaves; children to parents and also parents to children. This kind of mutual submission preserves order and harmony in the family, while it increases love and respect among family members.³⁰ Hale and Thorson added that Paul does not say that the husband is better than the wife; he only says that God has given the husband greater authority in the family.³¹

According to Harper, unrelated marital male and female by creation are equal, but in the family setting the husband must assume certain divinely ordained prerogatives and the wife must gladly accept this relationship. It is not that wives are inferior to their husbands, either naturally or spiritually. But Paul recognizes a divinely ordained hierarchy in the order of creation, and in this order, the wife has a place next after the husband. Wives must be willing to surrender to their husband in order that the husband may exercise the affection which is his

²⁸ N. E. Han, “Submit” *A Parsing Guide to the New Testament*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971), 362.

²⁹ S. Zodhiates, “Submit” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible; Key Insights to God’s Word New American Standard Bible*, (South-Korean, Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1960), 2301.

³⁰ J. C. Galving, *Life Application Study Bible 2nd ed*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 2008.

³¹ T. Hale and S. Thorson, *Applied New Testament Commentary*, (Colorado: David (c) Cook, 2007), 747.

responsibility.³² According to Christenson, submission in scripture means to “yield in humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power or authority” which is necessary “for the protection of women and harmony of the home” He also sees submission as a means of protection for wives who are vulnerable physically, emotionally and spiritually.³³

Love – αγαπαω

It is second person, plural, present, active imperative.³⁴ Αγαπη -agapē, noun from αγαπαω - agapaō, to love. Love, affectionate regard, goodwill, benevolence, specifically “the love of God” or “of Christ” subject or active means the love which God or Christ exercises towards Christians. The love that is derived from God (Rom 5:5, Eph. 2:4, 2 Thess 3:5).³⁵ Αγαπαω- agapaō, to love. It differs from φιλεω-*phileō*; to love indicating feelings, warm affection, and the kind of love expressed by a kiss. Αγαπαω which means to love, to regard with strong affection. As referring to superiors and including the idea of duty, respect, veneration, it means to love and serve with fidelity. The present active participle used substantively of those loving the, meaning faithful disciples or followers of the Lord (Eph 6:24). To love, that is to regard with favour, goodwill benevolence. In other passages the effects of benevolence are expressed as to wish well to or do good to. To love one’s neighbor, or one’s enemies. The future imperative, *agapēseis*, αγαπησεις, especially in regard to one’s enemies, should not necessarily be taken to mean doing that which will please them, but choosing to show them favor and goodwill spoken of things; to love, i.e. to delight in. The expression “not to love” means to neglect, disregard condemn.³⁶ According to Arthur, the usual verb for αγαπη is αγαπαω; less common is φιλεω. The adjective is αγαπητος. Originally, αγαπη seems to have meant "satisfaction", "sympathy" or "a hospitable spirit"; it denotes passionless love, *agapē*.³⁷

There is no Pauline letter in which the term love (αγαπη) does not figure prominently. Most commonly Paul uses αγαπαω, *agapaō*- terminology; referring to love based on high regard or appreciation, for both divine and human love. Αγαπη (*agapē*) - love is used by Paul seventy-five times, αγαπαω (*agapaō*) - "to show love", thirty-four times and αγαπητος (*agapētos*) - "one who is loved" twenty-seven times. At the heart of Paul's understanding of the gospel lies the saving love of God (αγαπη-agape) in Christ. The supreme expression of this undeserved love is Christ's death on the cross as a sacrifice for sins (Rom 5:8, Eph 2:4-5, 2 Thess 2:16, Gal 2:20).

³² A.F Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary Vol IX*, (Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 240.

³³ L. Chrestensen, *The Christian Family*, (Grand Rapids: Bethany Fellowship, 1970), 450.

³⁴ Han, “Love” *A Parsing Guide to the New Testament*, 362.

³⁵ 5 Zodhiates, “Love” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 2078.

³⁶ 5 Zodhiates, “Love” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 2078.

³⁷ B.G Arthur, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible; An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1962), 169.

Besides, the expression "love of God" and "love of Christ" are notoriously ambiguous. It is only the individual context that determines the meaning, and sometimes it is simply not possible to be sure which Paul intends; e.g. Rom 5:5, 2 Cor 5:14, 2 Thess 3:5. And God's love is shown both in the cross and in the specific calling and choosing of believers. For Paul, loving others is the single most important characteristic of the Christian faith. Everything one does is to be an expression of love (1 Cor. 16:14).³⁸ Besides *ἀγαπή* and *ερός*, in Greek there are two more common words for "love", with different connotations. Altogether, the four common words for love in Greek are; *phileō*, *stergō*, *eraō* and *agapaō*. Their concise meaning is giving thus;

1. **Φιλεω - *phileō***: is the most general word for love or regard with affection. *Phileō* mainly denotes the attraction of people to one another who are close together both inside and outside the family. It includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of.³⁹ *Phileō* is a love that responds to kindness, appreciation or love. It involves giving and all as well as receiving; but when it is greatly stained, it can collapse in a crisis. *Phileō* is a higher love than *eros* because it is our happiness rather than my happiness. This love is called out of one's heart by quantities in another.⁴⁰ A wide variety of *φιλεω* (*phileo*) terminology is employed by Paul though not frequently. Such as; *aphilargyros* - "no lover of money", *philagathos* - "lover of goodness", *Philadelphia* - brotherly or familiar affection, love, *philandros* - "lover of one's husband etc."⁴¹

1. **στεργω – *stergō***: It means to love, feel attraction, especially of the mutual love of parents and children. It can also be used of the love of a people for their ruler the love of tutelary god for the people even of dogs for master. It is less common for the love of husband and wife, and does not occur at all in the New Testament. Apart from the compound "*astorgos*" (Rom 1:31; 2 Tim 3:3) and *Philostorgos* (Rom 12:10).⁴²

2.

3. **ερωσ-*erōs***: denotes the love between man and woman which embraces longing, craving and desire. *Ερσαω – eraō* is the verb while *ερός* is the noun.⁴³ This love is erotic love. *Eros* is a love

³⁸ G.F Hawthorne and R.P Martin, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993),

³⁹ C. Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press Ltd, 1971), 538.

⁴⁰ Four Greek Words for "Love" <https://www.mcleanbible.org> accessed September 20th, 2018

⁴¹ Zodhiates, "Love" *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 2078.

⁴² Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 539.

⁴³ Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 539.

of passion, an overmastering passion that seizes and absorbs itself into the mind. It is a love that is an emotional involvement based on body chemistry. The basic idea of this love is self – satisfaction. Though, Eros is directed towards another. It actually has self in mind. For example, “I love you because you make me happy” the foundation of this type of love is some characteristics in other person which pleases you. If the characteristics would cease to exist, the reason for the love would be gone, the result being “I don’t love you anymore”. Eros looks for what it can receive. If it fails to get what it wants or expects, bitterness or resentment could develop.⁴⁴

4. **Αγαπαω** – *agapaō* is the verb and **αγαπη** – *agapē* is the noun: unlike *eraō*, it is not the man’s own longing for possession or worth that is meant, but a generous move by one for the sake of the other.⁴⁵ *Agape* or *agapaō* is called out of one’s heart by the preciousness of the object loved. It is a love of esteem, of evaluation. It has the idea of prizing. It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language. Agape is not kindled by the merit or worth of its object, but it originates in its own God-given nature. God is love. Agape delights in giving. This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable and unworthy. It is unconditional love. Agape desires only the good of the one loved. It is a consuming passion for the well-being of others.⁴⁶

The word love is a present imperative *αγαπητη* (*agapētē*) and means “continue to love” or “go on loving”. The love which brought husbands and wife together in marriage must be nurtured and expressed as the years of marriage pass. Throughout the marital years, husband should love their wives as they did on the day, they took them as brides.⁴⁷ The duty of husbands is to love their wives. For without this they would abuse their superiority and headship, and wherever this prevails as it ought to do, it will infer the other duties of the relation it being a special and peculiar affection that is required on wife behalf. The love of Christ to the church is proposed as an example of this, which love of his is a sincere, a pure, an ardent and constant affection, and that notwithstanding, the imperfections and failure that she is guilty of. The greatness of his love to church appeared in his giving himself unto the death for it. As the church’s subjection to Christ is proposed as an example to wives, so the love of Christ to his church is proposed as a pattern to husbands and while such examples are offered to both and so much is required of each, neither has reason to complain of the divine injunctions.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Four Greek Words for “Love” <https://www.mcleanbible.org> accessed September 20th, 2018.

⁴⁵ Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 539.

⁴⁶ Four Greek Words for “Love” <https://www.mcleanbible.org> accessed September 20th, 2018.

⁴⁷ Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary Vol IX*, 241.

⁴⁸ M. Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 1855.

According to Hale and Thorson, Paul talks about the husband's duty to his wife, to love her, how must the husband love his wife? He must love her as Christ loved the church. The husband must "give himself up" for his wife in the same way that Christ gave himself up for the church.⁴⁹ Dickson opines thus, godly head is controlled by the Love of the husband for the wife. A loveless head turns into a tyrannical dictator who feels free to lash out with physical and mental abuse. Love, however, protects the wife and the continuity of the family. Jesus so loved the church that he gave himself for the sake of the church (Eph 1:5; 2:4; Rom 5:8). He ransomed Himself for the redemption of the church (Matt 20:28). In such a manner, husbands should function in reference to their wives. He adds that the marriage relationship is not a relationship wherein husbands think only of themselves.⁵⁰ It is a relationship wherein husbands learn to unselfishly consider another person with respect, honor and love. It is a relationship wherein men learn to focus on others more than themselves. According to Galving, Paul devotes twice as many words to telling husbands to love their wives as to telling wives to submit to their husbands. How should a man love the wife? He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her; make her wellbeing of primary importance, and care for her as he cares for his own body. He adds that, no wife needs to fear submitting to a man who treats her in this way.⁵¹

Head – κεφαλη

It is nominative singular, feminine noun.⁵² Noun meaning the head, particularly of a man or woman, of animals; as the principal part, but emphatically for the whole person. Figuratively of persons, that is, the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate.⁵³ Headship in this context clearly is an expression of authority. According to Harper, headship denotes primarily controlling authority and the right to obedience. Not only is the husband "the head of the wife", "he is also analogously the saviour of the body". By strict interpretation, the last phrase applies in the context primarily to Christ who is the deliverer and defender of the church which is his body. Surely the husband cannot be the saviour of his wife in redemptive terms, but he can be her protector and provider. Harper added that any sacrifice and self – giving that create a sense of well – being and security will normally evoke free and loving submission from his

⁴⁹ Hale and Thorson, *Applied New Testament Commentary*, 748.

⁵⁰ R. E. Dickson, *Teacher's Bible*, (Grand Rapids: African International Mission, 2011), 1555.

⁵¹ Galving, *Life Application Study Bible 2nd ed*, 2009.

⁵² Abarim Publications' "Head" free online interlinear (Greek/English) New Testament, translated word by word and with Greek grammar parsing codes <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Interlinear-New-estament/Ephesians/Ephesians-5-parsed.html#.XFmcLqAo8eI> accessed February 5, 2019.

⁵³ Zodhiates, *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 2203.

wife.⁵⁴ Galving adds that, according to the Bible the man is the spiritual head of the family, and his wife should acknowledge his leadership, but real spiritual leadership involves loving service (a form of dying). Just as Christ served his disciple, even to the point of washing their feet, so the husband is to serve the wife. He further said a wise and Christ – honoring husband will not take advantage of his leadership role, and a wise and Christ – honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband’s leadership.⁵⁵

The metaphor “head” is used in reference to the relationship between the husband and wife as it is used in reference to the headship of Jesus to the church. Headship refers to that which is the center of reference, and thus, the controlling factor of the relationship. The husband is to maintain the center of reference for the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the wife and family. When husbands fail in this area, the family is crippled with a man who has not accepted the responsibility that is assigned to him by God. When the head is dysfunctional so is the family. Headship therefore is maintained by servant hood leadership in the family, not by the dictatorial demands of an unloving tyrant. Headship leadership of the family is to be after the nature of Jesus’ Headship of the church (Eph 1:22; 1 Cor 11:3) Jesus loved his body and gave himself for it. In like manner, husbands should give themselves to their wives. Jesus sacrificed himself for the church, and thus a loving husband sacrifice himself for his wife.⁵⁶ The term head is used as a metonymy for the entire person, especially where matters of military census or taxation were concerned. The head was also a synecdoche for the individual upon whom judgment, curses or misfortune could devolve, as seen in Rom 12:20. On occasion, κεφαλη- *kephalē* was a synonym for life itself.⁵⁷

Husband – ανηρ

It is noun, nominative, masculine plural. Ανηρ means a male person of full age and stature as opposed to a child or female.⁵⁸ It means a man (properly as an individual male); fellow husband, man. A man that is an adult male person. Males are distinguished from females. Spoken of man in various relations and circumstances where the context determines the proper meaning. In a direct address ανξρες – *anxres* means men! In this sense, it also expresses respect and deference, and so implies a man of importance.⁵⁹ By definition a husband is someone whose identity is

⁵⁴ Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary Vol IX*, 241.

⁵⁵ Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary Vol IX*, 241.

⁵⁶ Dickson, *Dickinson Teacher’s Bible*, 1555.

⁵⁷ Hawthorne and Martin, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 375-376.

⁵⁸ Perschbacher “Husband” *An Analytical Greek Lexicon*; (New York: Harper and brothers 1990), 27.

⁵⁹ Zodhiates, “Husband” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 2099.

relational to a wife. The role of the husband is defined in the creation story. Husband and wife thus share the same human identity before God. They are also “one flesh” (Gen 2:24), denoting sexual union (2 Cor 6:16) and intimacy. Here then is a major part of what it means to be a husband. It means to be incomplete in oneself and to require union with a wife to find solace for what would otherwise be an unquenchable longing for a mate. (Gen 2:18; 13). Companionship – two forming one is thus a major aspect of being a husband.⁶⁰

Wife – γυναίκα

It is an article, noun, nominative, feminine, singular⁶¹ Γυναίκα means an adult female person, and it also means wife” Paul uses the word here in the general sense which he states that “women should remain silent in the church. The word women/wife appears 215 times in the New Testaments.⁶² In the Biblical images, women do not have the same social rights and advantages as men.⁶³ The primary legitimating story of the lesser role for women is traceable to the account of Adam and Eve, most especially of the “fall”. Women have been pictured as people who are easily deceived and therefore needs to be overseen by men lest they lead others astray. However, in God’s economy women are treated with respect because women are the receiver of the seed and the nurturer of the child, the woman is cherished especially for her purity and her fecundity. Also, the patriarch’s selection of a bride and her fidelity to her husband are keys to her value. The greatest curse she can know is barren womb. Realistically, her sons were to provide for her old age; because women in biblical times were subordinate to men in power and economically dependent on them.⁶⁴

Church – εκκλησία

It is an article, noun, dative, feminine, singular.⁶⁵ Εκκλησία means a body or organization of religious believer, congregation. The word church appeared 114 times in the New Testament.⁶⁶ According to Teeny and Silva. It is also known as assembly, congregation,

⁶⁰ L. Ryken, J.C. Wilhoit, and T. Longman III, “Husband” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove Illinois: University Press 1998), 412-413.

⁶¹ Perschbacher, “Wife” *An Analytical Greek Lexicon*, 83.

⁶² J.R. Kohlenberger 111, H. Edward, J.A. Goodrick and Swanson “Wife” *The Greek Concordance to the New Testament* 136-138.

⁶³ Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman III “Wife” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* 959-960

⁶⁴ Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman III “Wife” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 961.

⁶⁵ Perschbacher, “Church” *An Analytical Greek Lexicon*, 189.

⁶⁶ Kohlenberger 111, Edward, Goodrick and Swanson “Church” *The Greek Concordance to the New Testament* 241-42.

gathering. Israel was God’s Church, God’s Assembly and God’s Congregation in the wilderness. Εκκλησία means “to call out; summon forth. In its simplest meaning, *ekklēsia* may be taken to denote the “assembly” or “congregation” of those who are the recipients of God’s heavenly grace. It is not clear whether the early Christians used the term because they regarded themselves as “called out” from the world 1Pet 2:19 in the saying of Jesus, the actual word εκκλησία occurs only twice. The first occasion was when Peter uttered his great confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:18) and the other instance was in the context of instructions that the Lord gave his disciples concerning their duty toward an offending brother (Matt 18:17). In the apostolic writings, the use of the word becomes more common. Sometimes, it is used to denote scattered groups of Christians over a wide area, such as “the churches of Galatia” (Gal 1:12) on other occasions, it is used with reference to the body of Christians dwelling in the same immediate locality such as “the church at Antioch” (Acts 13:1). A small company of Christians meeting together in a house for worship and edification also is referred to as a church (Rom 16:15; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15). He further adds that in no case is the word used regarding a building in which worship is conducted. It is significant that the word synagogue too was used originally to denote not a building but an assembly of people gathered together for a specific purpose.⁶⁷

Traditional Values Associated with African Marriages

It is worthy of note that Christianity considers that marriage is connecting two people, but in African culture, it is viewed differently. In the same vein, the submission of wife and love of husband is also emphasized upon though in another way entirely. Hendrix in a discussion of African marriage systems opines that marriages as we know it, are multifaceted and its definitions reflect this in their diversity. Several normative behavior patterns are counted among its traits in most societies, while ceremonies or transactions commonly mark its inception.

In most societies, there is an expectation of relative permanence, co-residence, a division of labor, sharing of resources, a sexual relationship, procreation and cooperation in childbearing and training.⁶⁸ Marriage is an affiance, an agreement or contract between two families or groups of kin’s because our African societies see marriage not only as a relationship between two individuals people but also as a structural link between groups.⁶⁹ However, Megasa adds that “the communities involved share their very existence in that reality and they become one people, one thing, as African themselves would put it that through their marriage, their families and clans are also united so that what is done to one of their members is done to all. By this gesture

⁶⁷ M. C. Teeny and M. Silva. “Church” *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2009) 879-880.

⁶⁸ L. Hendrix (1996). ‘Marriage’ in *Encyclopaedia of Cultural Anthropology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1996), Vol. 3, 173.

⁶⁹ Hendrix ‘Marriage’ in *Encyclopaedia of Cultural Anthropology*, 173.

marriage also means that the partners' responsibilities are not limited to them alone but have a much wider application. Their identity and identification are equally extended.⁷⁰

When we talk about African values we refer to interest, pleasure, likes, preference, duties, morals, obligations, desires, wants, needs, aversions and attractions and many other modalities of selective orientation.⁷¹ These reveal the essentials of marriage in all cultures, namely a lifelong union of husband and wife for mutual support and progeny to continue the ancestral line and to promote the welfare of the tribe or clan.⁷² The truth is marriage in the African sense conferred status and dignity, Ayisi asserts that it conferred certain rights on the wife and corresponding duties on the husband and vice versa. The various rights that a man acquires after he has performed all the necessary customs (presentations) are divided into two classes. They are first, the rights of a woman as a mother. This means that the man has to feed and protect the wife and children.⁷³ These rights although they seemed obvious are supposed to be taken seriously for failure to perform this sacred function could lead to a loss of the marriage and leads eventually to family breakup and shame.

This responsibility becomes grave in the sense that there are no complete breakups in our African marriages. As an institution divorce is widespread in Africa though it appears to have been less common among some patrilineal groups that incorporate wives into the husband lineage. Indeed, from what we have underscored, we could safely conclude there is within the African marital systems the adequate properties of value to justify a proper marriage that will not only be fruitful but long-lasting. But there is more to marriage apart from its rights and duties, fidelity and sexuality carries with it a whole gamut of responsibilities and expectations. The above Traditional Values that associated with African Marriages, therefore, explain in detail both the submission of wives and husbands' love in typical African Marriages.

Implication for the Christian Home

This section focuses on both the positive and negative implications simultaneously of submission and love on the husband and wife, as stated by Paul in Eph 5:22-25. These include social, marital, economic, political and theological implications for the contemporary Christian home.

Social Implication

⁷⁰ L. Magesa, *African Religion: Moral Tradition of abundant Life*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1998), 110.

⁷¹ M. R. Williams, 'The Concept of Value' in *International Encyclopaedia of The Social Sciences*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1968), Vol. 16 & 17,283.

⁷² A. J. Moler, (1982). *Love, Marriage and The Family: Yesterday and Today*, (New York: Alba House, 1982), 3

⁷³ O. Ayisi, *An Introduction to the Study of African Culture*, (Nairobi: East African Publishers, 1997), 8-9

This has to do with society, Hornby defines society as people in general, living together in communities.⁷⁴ That is the relationship among Christians and people of other faith. Therefore, the social implication in this context is the consequences of the submission and love between husband and wife in the home, among Christians, and non-Christians in the society. These consequences can be constructively and objectively considered under the three main human horizontal relationships which cut across human life. These are husband-wife, parent-child, and master-slave relationships. Dickson aptly notes that the wife is to submit to her husband to preserve the God-ordained environment which children can have as an example of how to submit to spiritual leadership. He adds that the wife's submission is to equip children to grow up with an attitude of submission; that will produce an environment in which children can be nurtured to be Godly, responsible, and patriotic citizens of the society.⁷⁵ Besides what Dickson said, the character of parents are naturally transferred to the children and the behavior and attribute that most children demonstrate in the society are directly or indirectly learned in their homes, from either the father or the mother. The Christian home should serve as a model and a strong foundation for the society in submission and love. There is an urgent need for a peaceful and harmonious home for a stable society.

According to Gbile Akanni, fifty percent of the troubles on the face of the earth (society) today are linked with troubles in the home. Several men that have pioneered evil in the land are results of broken homes. Area boys, hooligans, prostitutes and drug addicts of our time mostly have the history of reacting against a family break-up.⁷⁶ Huffman further notes aptly, that society is the total of home products. Of course, auxiliaries are functioning in society, but these can accomplish little other than that which is determined by the home.⁷⁷ That is, all social ill and health in the society are traceable to the home; hub of the society. And without the home, all other institutions are oblivious and fictional. Consequentially, the Christian home should be a model and pathfinder in achieving societal goals. The wife should submit to the husband, and the husband should show love to the wife. When the wife is convinced that her husband loves her as Christ loves the church, she will submit to the husband's headship and authority. In the same way, when the wife is submissive to her husband, the husband will be intuitively compelled to demonstrate love to his wife. When this is in practice, the home will be tranquil and habitable to everyone. Besides the foregoing, the church should be a reflection of the home and the home should be a reflection of the church. The strongest foundation that will give stability, direction, and purpose in our lives is a Christian Home (I Cor. 3:11-13). The home supposes to be the

⁷⁴ Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 1399.

⁷⁵ Dickson, *Teacher's Bible*, 1555.

⁷⁶ G. Akanni, *No More Two; God's Principles for Marriage 2nd ed.*, (Gboko: Peace House Publications, 2006), 12.

⁷⁷ J.A Huffman, *Building the Home Christian*, (Grand Rapids: 1935), 67-68.

fountain-head of society. No nation can rise higher than the average home. Hence the need for a strong and formidable home, and urgently and consequently a stable society. Also, for orderliness and to promote peace in the society, Christians are to submit to one another in love without threat or contempt. Servants are to submit to their masters and citizens are enjoined to be submissive to the government in love, also the children are to submit to their parents wholeheartedly in love (Eph 5:21, Eph 6:1-6, Rom 13).

Marital Implication

This focuses on the possible effect or result of an action or a decision of submission and love for peaceful co-existence between the husband and the wife. Paul admonishes the wife to be submissive to her husband and husband to love his wife. It must be noted that in husband and wife relationship, superiority complex and gender equality postulate and agitate by feminist is inimical to peaceful and progressive co-existence of husband and wife, instead, let there be gender complementary rather than gender equality as it has been agitated by feminists, especially in our contemporary society. In the words of R.F Alayo, what brings joy in marriage is the wife's submission to her husband.⁷⁸ Harper also notes that wives must be willing to surrender to their husbands so that the husband may exercise the authority which is his responsibility. He observes further that many modern marriages have been unwilling to recognize this fact as it relates to the husband's labor, location of the home and discipline of children. The submission of the wife is done as "unto the Lord", that is as part of her duty to the Lord. He concludes that Paul speaks here in terms of Christian families where this kind of submission should be both feasible and possible.⁷⁹

Economic Implication

The economic implication has to do with the way money is being made and spent in the Christian homes concerning the submission of the wife and the husband's love. In working or doing business by the couple, the wife is expected to submit her fund or finances to the husband, because the wife's submission to her husband is expected in everything (Eph 5:24). In submitting the wife's fund or income to the husband, the husband should reciprocate by spending the money frugally on the wife and other members of the family in love. That is, also with the husband's fund or income to ensure the healthiness and well-being of the home. However, in situations whereby the wife earns more than the husband on monthly basis, or the husband is unable to secure a job, the wife may be in dilemma of whether to submit her fund or income to the husband. Again, the question of breadwinner may turn out to be a challenging and threatening issue in the home. For most married women, this is the most challenging problem in their marriage. However, whatever may be the case, the wife is to compliment the husband's effort for financial stability in their home. Even when the wife is richer than her husband, as a Christian she is

⁷⁸ Pastor R.F Alayo, A Wedding Sermon at C.A.C Pleasure D.C.C Headquarters, Lagos.

⁷⁹ Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 240.

expected to submit her purse to the marriage. Paul says “wives submit to your husbands in everything” (Eph 5:24). The wife’s submission should not be circumstantial and conditional, neither the husband’s love towards his wife. Since the model for the husband’s love for his wife is “as Christ loves the church and gave up himself for the church”; that’s involving death. In another place in the Bible, it says Christ loves believers and died for them even when they were still in sin (Rom 5:8). Therefore, the husband’s relationship and the treatment of the wife should be out of Christ’s like love. No matter the situation the husband and the wife are to complement each other through submission and love to and for each other.

Political Implication

This has to do with decision making between husband and wife in the affairs of their home and that of the public. Hornby explains this when he defines politics as the activities involved in getting and using power in public life and being able to influence decisions.⁸⁰ It worth noting that the total product of man is dependent on the decision, either personally or inter-personally. Hence in making decisions that will directly or indirectly affect the affairs of the home and that of the public, the wife should unanimously agree with the decision of the husband as the head of the family, for the mutual benefit of all the parties involved. This does not in any way necessarily make the wife look irrational. The wife can best and easily do this from the understanding and conviction of the husband’s sacrificial love toward her. It is inevitably paramount, that human beings will always be divergent in their opinions, ideologies, and convictions. This is because human beings are rationally made. In other words, man is naturally made with the ability to think and reason. However, when a conflict of opinions and ideologies ensues between husband and wife, the two should endeavor to convince each other as rational beings. But when conviction is to no avail, the wife should humbly subscribe to the husband’s willingly as the head of the home, for the sake of peace and unity in the home and the society at large.

Besides, while participating in the political decision or arrangement of the society or the nation, it is necessarily expedient that the husband and the wife are united in their political opinions and choices for the sake of their home. And this has to do with such opinion as touching decision on choice and preference of political party, as well as political party candidate. However, as earlier affirmed in this paper, the husband and wife have become one in marriage. The oneness needs also to be demonstrated in their decision makings, participation in one’s country politics inclusive. There shouldn’t be a disparity in this respect. A typical example of the consequential effect of the difference in opinion of couples in politics was aired on Radio morning news of Sobi-FM Ilorin, early this year, 2019 before the just concluded 2019 general election in Nigeria. When it was reported on the Radio (Sobi-FM Ilorin) news broadcast that, a couple had decided to part way (divorce) because of the difference in their opinion and support for the candidacy of either Buhari of APC, or Atiku of PDP. To prevent and avert such occurrence like this, it is expedient that the husband and wife are united in their opinion and

⁸⁰ Harper, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 240.

decision on matters of this nature. The wife should always be ready to submit her ideology to accommodate and substantiate that of the husband as the head of the family.

Besides, the wife's submission to her husband is in everything (Eph 5:24), decisions not exempted. The headship of the husband is for nothing other than leadership which decision is inseparable from. Hence the need for the wife to submit. In any enterprise leadership is required—someone has to be in charge; Leadership of the home is the husband's responsibility as ordained by God. God created man with the ability and responsibility to provide for and protect the home; his body carries the seed of life, so he's responsible for the children that are born—to guide them, nurture them, and direct them. In the same vein, it is also observed that the breaking down of many families today is due in large part, to the failure of men to assume their God-given responsibilities. And much more than if in an attempt to avoid male domination we swing to the other extreme and strip husbands of their authority, we will be disregarding God's plan for marriage and the family, and ultimately causing social disaster.⁸¹

Also, contrary to the preconceived notions about wives' submission to their husbands, Poston aptly asserts that a submissive wife is not relegated to idly sitting while her husband makes all the family decisions. In a healthy marriage, husband and wife work as a team. When a decision cannot be jointly agreed upon, the leader; husband makes it, knowing he is responsible and foremost unto God for that decision. In these circumstances or a decision that the husband must make alone, a submissive wife is not overstepping her boundaries by offering counsel. She must learn to do it in a way that shows respect for the husband's God-given position as head of the family. A submissive woman also offers abundant encouragement, understanding that making decisions is a heavy responsibility on a man's shoulders.⁸² However, some women are not satisfied with this. They want to be in charge. But realistically, marriage cannot work this way. Unity requires a relational structure. We see this pattern in other relationships, and submission is never a sign of value. Submission takes humility, therefore, the wife's submission and agreement with the husband's is very important in the decision makings of the home as ordained by God, for a peaceful society.

Theological Implication

The paradigm given for both the wife's submission and the husband's love has a theological implication and relevance. The paradigm for the wife's submission is given as "as unto the Lord" (Eph 5:22), "for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church..." (v 23). "Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their husbands..." (v 24). On the other hand, for the husbands, the model of their love is "as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it" (v 25). Besides, in Eph 5:22-25, Paul makes several statements about the relationship between husbands and wives, and he presents the relationship between

⁸¹ Focus on the Family; Submission of Wives to Husbands

⁸² S. Poston, What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? <https://carm.org/what-does-it-mean-wife-submit-to-her-husband> accessed on March 27th, 2019.

Jesus and the Church as a model for example. Some think Jesus' authority is given here as an example for husbands to follow. Rather, unity is the example, and Paul uses a head-body metaphor to illustrate this. Metaphorically, Jesus is the "head" united to the Church, which is his "body". Unity was made possible and is maintained because Jesus loves the Church and gave himself up for her. The Church sustains this union by being cooperative and faithful to Jesus. In marriage, the husband (the metaphorical "head") and the wife (the metaphorical "body") are united. To foster this unity, Paul urges husbands to love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). He further urges husbands to "love their wives as they love their bodies," and adds that "He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the Church". The essence of this is for unity as also seen in Gen.2:24, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh". In Eph 5:22-33, husbands and wives are singled out and given instructions concerning certain attitudes and behaviors. But this does not mean wives are exempted from being loving and nurturing towards their husbands, or husbands are exempted from being submissive and respectful towards their wives, especially as Eph 5:22-33 is prefaced by a call for all to be mutually submissive (Eph 5:21), and chapter 5 opens with a call for all to love sacrificially as Christ loves (Eph 5:1-2).

Besides the foregoing, God who originated marriage is not a cosmic male chauvinist, who is punishing women and rewarding men by commanding these respective roles in marriage! Rather, they reflect His wise and loving care for us as we obey. A wife's submission to her husband is not a cross that she glumly must bear. It is rather the path of joy. Just as submission to God is the way to true and lasting joy, so a wife's submission to her husband as to the Lord is the way to true and lasting joy. Furthermore, we need to understand that Christian marriage is to be a powerful witness or example to a selfish world where everyone is fighting for his or her rights. The husband should tenderly and selflessly love his wife as Christ loved the church; wife joyfully submitting to and respecting her husband, always seeking his good; and children obeying their parents and the parents lovingly and patiently training their children in the ways of the Lord.

Conclusion

What we have done is to emphasize the Christian home when it is guided and guarded by its manual, which is the Bible would be different and distinguished from other kinds of homes. And that, human aberration and abuse of submission and love in relationship, is the brain behind the conflict in various human relationships today. On the other hand, the emphasis was also on the need for a recovery of our traditional values in marriages, especially marriage alliances in our societies. It is quite true as we have seen that there are problems with the institutions in both Christian and traditional marriages. However, there are still possibilities open to us from these reflections. The traditional values that are associated with marriages attract a lot of attention, for indeed they are meant to protect and preserve the institution, also the reason behind Paul's advocating for submission from the wife and sacrificial love from the husband centered on

protection and preservation of the same home for a peaceful coexistence in the home and for stability in the society. There is a need, therefore, to educate and inculcate a sense of duty to intending couples while also producing a healthy and conducive society for all. Indeed, our culture and society have a lot for us to learn from and continues to teach us, it is never too late we can regain and restore the institution of marriage. There are, truly, relevant and useful values in African spirituality to enrich marriage today even when we remain as Christian adherents.