

How Do I teach 1 Tim 3:12 and Eph 5

(blue is the letter – red is my reply)

Help me out here Shirley.

My Bible in giving the qualification for a deacon in the church says that a deacon must be the husband of one wife. 1 Timothy 3:12

I honestly would like to know how a woman could be the HUSBAND of but one wife.

Are we to simply ignore that verse of the Bible or are we to change it?

I am a southern Baptist pastor and I would really like to know how I'm supposed to teach that passage to my church and especially to the women of my church.

While you are at it tell me how I'm to teach "wives submit to your husbands in Ephesians 5? Since you mention submission in this e-mail as well. I firmly believe the main teaching in that passage is go men in telling them to love their wives as Christ loved the church but it does say in vs. 22 for wives to submit to their husbands.

Thank you so much for this opportunity! This is how you teach 1 Timothy 3:12 to the men and women in your congregation. This is lengthy, but please read to the end.

1 Timothy 3:12 is talking about the custom of having more than one wife at a time. Muslims still today are allowed to have 4 wives at a time. Some Mormons do even here in our own country, and even though Utah had to give up the practice before it became a state, they haven't all given it up. Remember the FDLS who had many wives and children here in Texas, and still do even though our law prohibits it. Multiple wives was still a common practice among the Jews during Paul's time. And make no doubt about it, multiple wives at a time is a sexual sin. Again I ask you to look at the FDLS in Texas and see it for what it is.

Of course you also know that women could never have more than one husband at a time, so there was no need to restrict women in how many husbands they had. Women still can't have more than one husband even in those countries and cultures that allow multiple wives.

The following is what I wrote to my friend who asked me the same question about submitting, and it is also on my website.

The Bible tells women to submit to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV)
Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish; but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands are to love their wives as

their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

What a liberating statement Paul has just made to the congregation! I can imagine every woman rejoicing and looking at each other and going up to Paul and saying, “God bless you. Thank you so much for what you just said.”

But wait, you say. Paul told her to submit to her husband and you are calling that liberation? Absolutely!

A girl was married to a man of her father’s choosing, and his father was paid money or animals to take this girl into their family. They bargained over her like so much livestock. Once the deal was made and the girl was married, her husband had full authority over her. She had no say in financial matters, spiritual matters, how to raise “his” children, and if he decided to take another wife into his bed, she was moved out. He had the “God-given” right to beat her to make her obey or just because he wanted to. He could divorce her and leave her penniless and destitute and he could take the children away from her. She had absolutely no rights. Just as women in many parts of the world today have no rights.

But now Paul is saying something new and something that gave her hope in this new Christian faith. He told her husband to love her, to treat her as he would treat his own body, and to a woman that meant only one thing – for her husband not to beat her.

Paul goes on to say that he would liken a marriage of a man and woman to that of how Christ feels about the church. He loves the church body and will take good care of it. He can be trusted to act in the best interests of the church, just as a husband would act in the best interest of his family.

But wait a minute. We still have that troublesome word “submit.” So we will deal with it. But we must back up to do so. Go back one verse to where Paul is telling the congregation what their relationship must be to one another because of Christ. *Read Ephesians 5:21 “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”*

That word ‘submit’ is an extremely harsh word. It means to give in to authority, to obey, to surrender your will, to bow down to. Paul used that word in telling them how to behave toward each other. **Then he needed to clarify something because the way the scripture reads, the women were to submit to other men in the congregation.** Being a good Jew, he knew that would never do, so he said in Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Paul said that he wasn’t telling the women to submit to everyone. But he did tell the men that they had to

submit to everyone (verse 21) and he did not back down from that or clarify it. Read it for yourself.

Paul said that it was a great mystery (Ephesians 5:32) but that the best example he knew to give about Christ's love for the church, was to compare it to that of a husband's love for his wife. But in the thinking out of his example, he remembered that men don't always love their wives and that they beat them and sometimes mistreat them – so he threw in that about how a man should treat his wife.

Pastor, thank you so much for allowing me this opportunity. I really appreciate it.

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