

The MEASURE OF A CHRISTIAN

By Reverend Bill Banuchi

We've heard too many "Christians" claim to have a good relationship with God, while at the same time complaining about their relationship with their spouse, as if the two were unrelated. Unfortunately, that's the way many believers see it. Perhaps the fault lies with the pulpit. Apparently we haven't effectively taught the truth that **your relationship with God is evidenced by your relationship with your spouse.**

Let's look at just a couple of verses to see what I'm talking about.

Ephesians 5:21 says,

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

"Submission" is one of the despised words in modern Christianity, though it's clearly stated in the Bible. Why then, do we have a problem with it? It's because we have misused, and mis-applied the word to suit our male dominated culture. Most Christian woman understand that they are supposed to submit to their husbands, but ask your average Christian husband if he submits to his wife. You'll get that dear-in-the-headlights look. But what does the Word say? *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."* It's a mutual thing.

We are to submit to each other—check this out—*"out of reverence for Christ."* So your reverence for Christ, or how much you really love Jesus— how mature you are in your faith — is demonstrated by the way the wife submits to the husband and the husband submits to the wife!

What does that look like in a practical sense? It means the husband doesn't call the shots because he thinks he's the head of the house. It means he submits his ideas to his wife, and she submits her ideas to him and when they find mutual agreement then they move on it—not before!

Yes, if a decision has to be made quickly, the husband can take on that responsibility but it's never the best, and if he does make a decision without his wife's "Amen" he does it at his own risk. He doesn't have the cover and the safety of mutual agreement, because again, the Word tells us that

"by the testimony of two will everything be established." (Matthew 18:16).

Being the head of the household simply means being the head servant. We are to lead, not by dictate, but rather by example. We will reap what we sow, so if we want to reap more respect, we must sow respect. If we want our wives to be more considerate of our point of view we must first be considerate of theirs. If we truly want to be mature Christians we must humble ourselves and be considerate of one another's point of view, and be determined to keep communicating, dialoging and praying through until we come to mutual agreement.

Why is it that so many young people, even those brought up in church, are wandering away from the truth? Let's not blame it on the ungodly for simply living according to their ungodly nature. Our children are looking at us, and if they don't see mutual respect, honor and love that invalidates everything we're trying to teach them. They can't hear what we're saying for how we are living. This is the very core, central truth of the New Testament. Jesus taught in John 13:34-35 (GW)

"I'm giving you a new commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you. Everyone will know that you are my disciples because of your love for each other."

In Romans 12:10 Paul admonishes us to honor one another above ourselves. So you see, it's all about submission to each other out of reverence for Christ. We don't submit to each other because we're worthy of submission. We submit to each other as a reflection of our devotion to Christ as the image of Christ is formed in us. This is the measure of a marriage, the measure of a man, the measure of a woman, the measure of a Christian.