

The Church: Christ's Bride

Joe Slater

About half of us (the males) might initially be repulsed at the thought of being a bride! Nevertheless, God's word describes the church as the bride of Christ: "For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). As a beloved bride, we are to be pure and faithful, loving, and subject to our spiritual husband, Jesus.

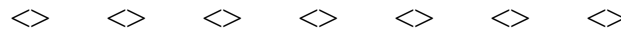
In the physical realm, adultery ruins innumerable marriages. But did you know we can ruin our relationship with Christ by committing spiritual adultery? Israel of old was also called the Lord's wife, but when she worshipped idols, God condemned her for adultery (see Jeremiah 3:6-9). Likewise, when Christians turn from following Jesus to pursue the pleasures of the world, we commit adultery against Jesus (James 4:4).

Scripture teaches wives to love their husbands. Older Christian women are to "admonish the young women to love their husbands . . ." (Titus 2:4). While this might seem too obvious to require attention, Paul knew that it wasn't that simple. Christians loving Jesus also appears to be a "given." Still, both Scripture and experience show that we need frequent and pointed reminders that we ought to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Remember that Biblical love is not merely emotional affection, but a solid commitment to seeking the best interests of the object of your love. Thus Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

This brings up the third aspect – subjection. "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:24). In this politically correct age, most simply cast aside the "archaic, old-fashioned, patriarchal"

notion that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. Even those who claim to believe the Bible often find a dozen reasons why this passage just can't mean what it says (and therefore they don't have to obey it). Unfortunately, the spiritual bride of Christ (the church) sometimes balks at the idea of subjection to her Husband, too. Legion are our excuses for doing as we please rather than doing as Jesus says.

We are blessed to have the most loving "husband" possible in Jesus the Christ. Let us be true to Him, loving Him with all of our hearts, and gladly submitting to His wise leadership.



Wanted: Ideal Bible Class Teacher

One who believes the truths of the Bible.

One who has convictions, not just impressions.

One who realizes the urgent need of the young folks in their fight for the culture and character, and will engage with them in the battle.

One who can smile under criticism, who can carry on when others fail, who can look beyond and wait . . .

One who is willing to give up the things of this life that would hinder their being in the classroom when the children are there – who will be on time every time so as to be a good example for the students.

For such service what shall be the reward? Hard work? Lack of appreciation? Hours of discouragement? Unmerited criticism? Yes, all of these and more. But the end is victory, and for every honest effort, the Master's commendation.

And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not (Galatians 6:9).

Gussied Up For God

I am thinking back on a time when one of our church members referred to my wife as being "gussied up." When that term was used, directed toward my wife, my immediate thought was, "She is gussied up for God." ("Gussied up" is an old expression meaning to dress, or adorn, or to decorate elaborately.)

Peter spoke of an inward adornment when he wrote, "And let not your adornment be merely external; braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands" (1 Peter 3:3-5).

The apostle Paul wrote, "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect" (Titus 2:1-10).

Getting spiritually "gussied up" is what Peter and Paul are talking about. To dress or decorate elaborately; to adorn or embellish - in the spiritual sense. Are you "gussied up" for God?

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