

Ephesians 5:22-33

An Exegetical Commentary

Interpretive Translation

(Be submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.) Wives to your husbands as to the Lord. Because the husband is head of the wife just as Christ head of the church, he himself the Savior of the body. But as the church submits to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in all things.

Husbands, love your wife just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, in order that she might be holy, cleansed and being cleansed by the washing of water in the word. In order that he might present to himself a glorious church - not having spot or wrinkle or any type of blemish, but instead holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands should each love his own wife as he loves his own body.

For the one who loves his wife loves himself. For no one has ever hated his own flesh, but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church. For we are members of his body.

For this a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife. And the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery - but I speak about Christ and about the church.

However, each one of you must love his own wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband.

Exegetical Central Idea

Paul expands on submission within marital relationships, by eluding the selfless relationship of husband to wife as Christ has with his church, indeed a present mystery since the church is part of his body.

An Exegetical Sentence Outline of Ephesians 5:22-33

- I. Having outlined the command to be filled with the spirit (5:18), Paul asserts the results of Spirit filled living, namely giving thanks for each other and submitting to one another (5:20-21). Paul expands on the aspects of mutual relational submissiveness by appealing to the bonds of holy marriage (5:22-24).
 - A. (5:22a) After describing submission to one another in the preceding verse, the readers are admonished as wives are commanded to be submissive to their husbands.
 1. (5:22b) The writer specifies the degree of submission required for a wife to her husband: one likened to a spiritual posture of submissiveness to the Lord.
 - B. (5:23a) The author identifies who has legitimate authority in marriage based on the issue of headship.
 1. (5:23b) The basis for headship rests on Christ, who is head of the church.
 2. (5:23c) The basis for headship rests on the work of Christ; i.e. his death, burial, and resurrection which formed the family of God, his body.
 - C. (5:24a) The writer asserts that since the church is the body of Christ, then it is subject to the head; Christ.
 1. (5:24b) Submission in marriage is achieved by the love example of Christ with respect to his body, thereby making the wife subject to the husband in all things.

- II. Further describing the Spirit empowered act of submission within marriage, Paul commands men with a model of how to submit themselves to their wives (5:25-28a).
 - A. (5:25a) The content of the command is for husbands to love their wives.
 - 1. (5:25b) The degree of the command is for each husband to love his own wife as Christ loves the church.
 - B. (5:26a) Christ's love is explained as a redeeming act, progressively and presently making the church holy.
 - 1. (5:26b) The effect of Christ's love was to cleanse her with water as a symbol of Spirit baptism and his word which is spoken into their lives.
 - 2. (5:26c) The method of Christ's cleansing is his ministry of his words to the church.
 - C. (5:27a) The result of Christ's sanctification by water and word is so that he may present to himself a pure and holy church.
 - 1. (5:27b) The goal of sanctification by water and the word is to purify the church for Christ.
 - D. (5:28a) The conclusive proof of Christ's satisfactory sanctification is a reminder for husbands to love their wives like they love their own bodies.

- III. The writer speaks to the personal aspects of loving one's wife to the degree that Christ has demonstrated love for the church (5:28b-30)
 - A. (5:28b) The declarative statement is a gnomic fact expressing a timeless truth that the man who loves his wife is loving himself.
 - 1. (5:29a) The writer emphasizes the timeless fact that no one ever hates his own body.
 - 2. (5:29b) The writer argues with an antithetical argument by stating that each man maintains his own body by doing what is necessary for its care.
 - 3. (5:29c) The writer concludes his logic by expressing the truth that Christ cares for the church by feeding it and taking care of it just like a man does for his own body.
 - B. (5:30) The writer reminds his audience the content of his message, namely, that those in the church are identified as the body of Christ and as such, each is a member of his body.

- IV. The writer expounds on the Old Testament record of marriage where a new identity is gained as two become one in the act of holy marriage (5:31-32).
 - A. (5:31a) Paul quotes from the Old Testament as a means of clarifying the extent of separation unto oneness in a husband and wife marriage.
 - 1. (5:31b) The degree of the separation is completed by perfect unity expressed as a man and a woman become one flesh in marriage.
 - B. (5:32a) The writer speaks to the difficulty of understanding the completeness of unity expressed in marriage
 - 1. (5:32b) The unity that the author speaks of is in reference to Christ and his body, the church

- V. Closing the section on marital submission, Paul concludes with a reminder urging love and respect in the husband - wife marital relationship. (5:33)
 - A. (5:33a) Directed to the men, the writer summarizes the content of the command by exhorting men to love his own wife to the degree that he loves himself.
 - B. (5:33b) Directed to the women, the writer summarizes the content of the command by exhorting the women to respect/honor her husband.

Commentary on Ephesians 5:22-33

Moving from unity in the Body of Christ (4:1-16), to imperative commands to build up unity (4:17-32), to an exposition on the imitation of unity (5:1-6:9), Paul records the ways the Ephesians are to model the message of the Gospel. Composed as a body, the church is to imitate Christ (5:1). Furthermore, the relationship of Christ in his church is the witness and activity of the Holy Spirit expressed in the will of God in his family relationships.

Just as God's commands extend from brother to brother and sister to sister in the household of God, so the expressed act of unity must also cover one's immediate family. It is in this manner that Paul seeks to address the households that comprise the local church. By doing so, Paul presents a picture of marriage, a picture of Christ, and a picture of the body. Each of these three pictures portray a God of the holy unifying consummation which displays the full effect of submission and honor to the glory of God.

I. The Marriage Relationship as a Model of Submission (5:22-24)

Having written in the previous verses on the filling of the Spirit, Paul begins to reveal the effects of the Spirit within the body of Christ. Based on the continual filling of the Spirit (πληροῦσθε), one is to be speaking (λαλοῦντες), singing and playing (ᾄδοντες, ψάλλοντες), thanking (εὐχαριστοῦντες), and submitting (ὑποτασσόμενοι), in the name of the Lord.

It is in this context that Paul moves on to specifically address what submission looks like in the familial relationship of husband and wife. The godly marriage is a model of Christian human relationship as lived out the way God intended. Here, the most basic yet most intimate relationship known to man is examined in light of the work of the Holy Spirit on the believing couple and the work of Christ in the world.

5:21b-22 *Be submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives to your own husbands (αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν)* In the previous verse to the Ephesians (5:21), Paul uses the verb ὑποτασσόμενοι as noted above. This verb is a present middle participle of result (Wallace, 659). The understanding of this verb and its context in verse 21 frame the meaning of verse 22. Wallace summarizes it well by saying that verse 21, "is a hinge statement that both summarizes the evidence of Spirit filled living and introduces a parenthesis to the argument of the epistle in Ephesians 5:22-6:9" (Wallace, 659).

Clearly, since there is no verb in the syntax of verse 22, the verb must be supplied from the previous verse, verse 21. Although some render the verb ὑποτασσόμενοι as an imperative, this is incorrect. Like the previous participles, the verb lacks the article to be seen as an imperative (Wallace, 651). Also, the rendering of an imperatival force of the verb reinforces an English interpretive force into the text, neglecting the Greek (Wallace, 651).

Another look at the grammar of the verse one can see the articular nominative in front of the subject noun 'wives' (αἱ γυναῖκες). Some translators take this to mean that

the woman is inferior to man because of the use of the articular nominative. However, in this instance, that is not an accurate depiction of what the text is inferring because the articular nominative is used in Ephesians 5:25 in reference to men (Wallace, 58). Similarly, the text is exclusive in emphasizing the specific nature of the referent. It is not to women in general, but a vocative of direct address is used to refer to wives (Best, 531). AE writes that wives are to submit to each one's own husband (**τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσι**). The importance of **ἰδίοις** cannot be understated since it is a masculine dative plural. As such in the context, it defines that marriage is between one man and one woman. The wife of one husband is not to submit to *men*, but to one man: her husband (Hoehner, 732).

Therefore, from the textual evidence, we see that Paul is speaking to the wives of the men in the Christian community at Ephesus. Moreover, Paul is writing to explain the relations of a Christian family under the banner of Christ. These relations are often termed household codes (O'Brien, 405). Household codes, or *hausfatal*, were addressed to the Christian community so that the impact and effect of their familial lifestyle in Christ would have an appropriate effect on their neighbors in their cities (O'Brien, 407).

as to the Lord. (ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ,)

Some renderings of this text infer that in this line the dative for 'Lord' is a vocative address calling men 'master' (Hoehner, 736). However, the dative of 'Lord' (**τῷ κυρίῳ**) is not a plural dative. Therefore, it makes no sense to reference the meaning as 'Husbands'. Hoehner also argues that in two other places in scripture, Eph 6:7 and Col 3:23, the adverbial phrase in question relates to Christ (Hoehner, 736).

Next, what is the force of the adverbial conjunction **ὡς** ? This is an important question to ask to ascertain the correct interpretation of the text. Does the particle have a causal (*..submit to your Husband because of the Lord*), comparative (*..submit to your husband to the same degree as to the Lord*), motivational (*..submit to your husband as to the Lord*), or exclusive force (*..submit to your husbands exclusively for the Lord*)? The best view is to see the particle as motivational, depicting a wife's subordinate relationship to her husband and to the Lord (Hoehner, 738). Therefore, the relationship of a husband and wife is not just strictly a horizontal, self-centric relationship. Now, the marriage relationship contains a key vertical component; Christ! (Best, 533)

5:23 Because the husband is head of the wife, (ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς) In the proper marriage relationship there is mutual submission but clear lines of direct authority (Hoehner, 732). The direct appeal of Paul explains the logic of the Causal Adverbial **ὅτι** clause. Translated 'because', the **ὅτι** introduces a dependent clause indicating the reason for ordered submission. Therefore, the case for submission is made in marital relationships because of the issue of headship.

ἔστιν is a 3rd person singular present active indicative verb with a gnomic present force. Paul is describing the general timeless truth that in a marriage relationship, a husband is head of his wife. Coming back to the issue of direct authority, we must get a proper understanding of the word **κεφαλὴ** or 'head' (See Word Study #1). Conclusively, it can be noted that Paul's usage of this word allows him to transition into the appropriate body metaphor of Christ and the church (Best, 534).

just as Christ (is) head of the church, (ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας,) The usage of 'Christ' here indicates that it is a subject nominative (Wallace, 40,45). Therefore, Christ is the subject of the verse. The emphasis is on Christ's headship. Questions arise as to what aspectually can be understood with Christ depicted as the 'head'. Is the pre-existent Christ the source of the pre-existent church? Has Christ always been the head of the church? Is he the head in that He will one day reign on the earth?

Notably, Paul brings in the word **ἐκκλησίας** as a direct object to the assumed verb **ἔστιν**. The expression of the church in this manner introduces the main idea (Best, 535). Paul begins to unravel the headship of Christ over his church couched in body metaphor. In doing this, Paul uncovers the design in the role of 'head' by looking at Christ, the perfect Savior. As such a savior, Christ was and is more than just a 'head' in metaphor (Best, 535), but also a redeemer, healer, king, shepherd, sacrifice, and many other things to his people of faith, the church.

he himself the Savior of the body. (αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος·) Adding clarity to the headship of Christ, Paul describes the action of Christ which gives him his direct status. Christ's position of head of the body is summarily derived from his willingness to be their Savior. With regard to this in the Greek text, one can note that **αὐτὸς** is in apposition to **ὁ Χριστὸς** which determines that it cannot refer back to the husband (Hoehner, 742). Conclusively, the text is saying that it is Christ himself that must be identified as the head because of his role and title as savior.

With respect to the Greek word **σωτὴρ** there has been study to determine the background of such a statement and use of the word in the phrase. There are no other places in scripture that describe and declare Jesus as the 'Savior of the Body' (Hoehner, 743). Taken as such, **σωτὴρ** has a canonical background in the LXX and it was a word that was commonly associated in the Roman period with reference to an emperor (Best, 536). By saving the body through his death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus is aptly labeled 'head' of the church.

5:24 But as the church submits to Christ, (ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ,) Beginning this sentence with a logical contrastive conjunction (**ἀλλὰ**), the writer works to sequester submission in action to the head of all things; Christ. Though some see the conjunction as consecutive (Best, 538), it is best to take it as adversative on account of the introduction of a conclusive summary statement by the author which restates and reinforces the ideas expressed in verses 22 and 23 (Lincoln, 372).

ὑποτάσσεται is a third person singular present middle indicative. The force of the present middle allows one to interpret the action of submission as an experienced action of vested interest. This nuance could be viewed as permissive middle, but better rendered as causative middle. As such, it is in the church's best interest to submit to Christ because Christ is the only one who gave himself up for the church. Hoehner sees this an example of the subject acting as a free agent (Hoehner 745).

Does the church submit to Christ all the time? Is the church being submitted by Christ, or is the Church to submit itself to Christ? In answer to these questions, it seems as if the writer is wanting to picture the quintessential headship relationship. Christ is the head of the Church. As so, he is the one who is causing the church to submit to him out of an act he did to draw the church to himself. Therefore, the true

members of the church are the ones who have entered into his death, burial, and resurrection with him, by faith. The true church is in submission to Christ strictly because of his love, and the church's response to that love. However, to capture the present tense nature of the verb even more, one must see **ὑποτάσσεται** as a customary present rendering the effect of the church's submission to the present day. As the church subjects itself to Christ in an ongoing state, then God's power and authority can fill the church enhancing the church's effect in God's unfolding plan.

so also wives to their husbands in all things. (οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.) Concluding his statements to the wives, Paul sums up his logic with the addition of **ἐν παντί**. The inferential conclusion from the first half of the verse is restated with a non-conditional 'in everything'. Translation difficulties arise in addressing this in issues of interpretation and exegesis (Hoehner, 745.) Notably, the husband is not in the position nor expected to be the savior of the wife (Schnakenburgh, 247). However, the wife is expected to 'submit' in all things. Again, just as in verse 22, the verb **ὑποτάσσεται** used in the line before must be supplied by the reader.

Lincoln states the non-qualification of **ἐν παντί** by saying, "There is to be no limit to the submission expected of wives, just as there is no limit to the church's obedient service of Christ" (Lincoln, 373). Continuing, he adds that this admonition is viewed positively because in the writer's mind, there is nothing the husbands would ask the wives to do that is outside the will of God or displeasing to the Lord. Hoehner agrees with this and adds to it by demonstrating that the wives submission must not be out of compulsion, demand, or duty, but out love as to the Lord (5:22) (Hoehner, 747).

II. The Man's Ministry to His Wife: Loving like Christ (5:25-28a)

5:25 Husbands, love your wife (Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας,) Now writing to the husbands, Paul commands the group of men to 'love'. The verb **ἀγαπᾶτε** is a 2nd person plural present active imperative. Consequently, the force of the verb as a punctiliar present allows the instantaneousness of the command to be felt by the reader. Thus, husbands are to love their wives in process fashion, knowing that the wife may not always reciprocate (Hoehner, 747). In this instance, Hoehner renders the word **ἀγαπᾶω** as 'seeking the highest good for another person'.¹ This type of love is in essence 'Christian love' as opposed to romantic love (Best, 540). However, Lincoln sees this love as "demanded in terms of the most profound self-sacrifice [and is not] separate from , but takes place in and through, natural affection and sexual love" (Lincoln, 374).

Grammatically, **ἄνδρες** with the preceding generic article is used to introduce a class. Wallace summarizes that this identification places the husbands into an identifiable collective group to relate and specify the nature of the command (Wallace, 229). As discussed earlier in 5:22, the use of the article does not make 'husbands' an inferior possessive pronoun (Wallace, 58). Final grammatical analysis reveals the distributive use of **τὰς**. Each husband is admonished to love 'his own wife' (Wallace,

¹ Hoehner, Harold W. "Ephesians". In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, vol. 2. 2 vols. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1983. 641.

216). As to the nature of Paul's command, it is centered on the example of Christ, the supreme role model (Best, 539).

just as Christ loved the church (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) When looking at this part of the sentence, one can ask rather insightful questions to try to understand the object of Christ's love. Here, AE declares that Christ loved the church. Is this an exclusive statement? For John 3:16 records that God loved the world and thereby gave his son. Does Christ love just the church, or the world, or both? Is there mutual exclusion present within Paul's statement?

καθὼς is an adverbial conjunction of comparison (Hoehner, 748) that shows the manner in which Christ displayed love. **ὁ Χριστὸς** is the subject nominative indicated by the article as the one performing the action. **ἠγάπησεν** is third person singular aorist active indicative. It is an constative aorist extending from past to present, extending from the cross to present day, as the Holy Spirit is gathering the church to Jesus. What was the object of Christ's love? The church was the focus of Christ's love. Through Christ's cross event was in the past, the present day church is still experiencing the effects of Christ's love though grace by faith.

and gave himself for her, (καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,) Explaining the manner of Christ's love, AE continues his logical sequence with the connecting conjunction **καὶ**. The verb παραδίδωμι, from which Paul uses the third person aorist active indicative **παρέδωκεν**, is translated as 'to hand over, give over' (Hoehner, 749). Paul makes it clear by using this verb that the crucifixion is in mind as he is writing. In fact, Jesus was the one who indicated that he would lay his own life down for his sheep because only he had the power to lay down his life (John 10:11,15,17).

Therefore, the type of action of Christ implies a willing love, not contrived or forced, a genuine sacrificial love for husbands to seek after in their spousal relationship.

5:26 in order that she might be holy, cleansed (ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας) Paul writes here using the **ἵνα** plus the subjunctive use of ἀγιάζω to indicate a dependent clause of purpose/result. Christ gave himself over to death so that the church would be completely holy, separate unto him. Thus, the goal of Christ's ministry to the church is sanctification unto Christ.

αὐτὴν is a third person feminine accusative pronoun. By using it, the writer specifies the church again as comparison to the wife, in deference to the 2 parties that make up a marriage. As Hoehner notes, the verb ἀγιάζω is rarely used in extra-Biblical sources (Hoehner 751). 131 out of 168 times it is translated in the LXX as the Hebrew word *quadash* (Hoehner, 751).

καθαρίσας is the next word that denotes the importance of the sanctification. As an aorist active participle, it introduces the contemporaneous means by which the onetime and on-going act of Christ's cleansing is accomplished.

and being cleansed by the washing of water in the word. (τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,) The allusion to the Old Testament in this portion of scripture is difficult to deny. For example, in Ezek 16:1-14, God is described as a husband washing and marrying his people Israel (O'Brien, 420). God is a God who cleanses his people. In light of Christ, one must appropriately ask how does Christ accomplish his cleansing now and what does AE mean when he writes 'the washing of water in the word'? (See Problem Solving and Validation #1 regarding this issue). Some commentators such as

O'Brien and Best, see this act of sanctification as a one time past event (Best, 542; O'Brien, 421). In fact, O'Brien decries this passage as portraying a 'positional sanctification not [a] progressive sanctification' (O'Brien, 422). Next, what does the word **ῥήματι** mean and specifically relate in this context with the preposition **ἐν** (For conclusions to this question see Word Study #2). Ultimately, in this context, it can be determined that the preposition combined with 'word' indicates a message from God in which someone believes (Hoehner, 755).

5:27 In order that he might present to himself a glorious church - (ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἕνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,) The second of three **ἵνα** clauses, Paul presents the results of the sanctification by water and word - a self presented glorious church. Some questions to consider regarding the church naturally arise. Is it a heavenly church, an earthly church, or both? Universal or local? Future, or present? Is it a heavenly gathering around Christ as some propose? ²

The nature of the glorious church as expanded upon by O'Brien is yet future in the consummative purpose of God (O'Brien, 424). His rendering of 'glorious' is embedded writing the Old Testament view of 'eschatological radiance' to be realized on the final day (2 Cor 4:14; Rom 14:10; 1 Cor 8:8; Col 1:22, 28; 2 Cor 11:2). Lincoln takes the realization of moral perfection and does not infer the parousia event of Christ's coming for church presentation to Christ (Lincoln, 376).

παραστήσῃ is an aorist active subjunctive and generally has the meaning 'to place beside or put at someone's disposal' and also 'to present or represent' (Hoehner, 757-758). Indication of the verb can be compared with a modern picture of a father 'giving away' his bride (see Paul's allusion in 2 Cor 11:2).

Being both the subject and indirect object (Hoehner, 758), Christ is the acting agent in giving and receiving. He is presently in the act of preparing and will be in the act of receiving could possibly be an incorrect view. However, one can see from this passage, that the church is not yet glorious. This can be determined from the next line.

Upon thinking of the metaphor, as a man, in some ways it would be amazing to in prepare and present to oneself a perfect bride. Having a hand in the entire process allows Christ to be the author and designer of his supreme desire. As such, Christ is carefully working toward the day of self-presentation.

not having spot or wrinkle or any type of blemish, (μὴ ἔχουσιν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων,) The negation preceding the verb **ἔχουσιν** implies the rhetoric of comparison. Is it any wonder that Paul would strive to define what the perfect church will not look like before he chooses to describe it on its wedding day? Though a spot, wrinkle, or any sort of blemish may be a substantially small thing, they are contrary to the perfection of Christ. Overall it is noted that the beauty of the church is moral and spiritual and will be perfect (Best, 546).

Hoehner states that the word **σπίλον** in this context would refer to any blemish which cannot be removed by a bridal bath (Hoehner, 759). After such a statement, Hoehner positively asserts that the blood is the complete cleansing agent for sin. Despite this, could AE be referring to the residue of sin and the sin-nature? What does

² O'Brien, P.T. "Church" In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993. 126.

this mean for today? If a believer dies does that death hasten the presentation of Christ to his bride because there is less sin in the yet future bride of Christ? Though these questions have not been expounded upon, they provoke the mind to consider just what AE was referring to.

but instead holy and blameless. (ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾗ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος.) Hoehner concludes Paul's thought well when he adds that just as brides prepare themselves for their husbands on their wedding day, Christ prepares his own bride (the church) for himself.³ The preparation of Christ's church is in contrast with an un-perfectly prepared bride. Christ's bride, the church, is to be holy and blameless.

As the last of the subjunctive clauses in a conditional sentence, ἀλλ' is inserted to continue the thought in a contrastive manner. The contrast of Paul's idea is asserted in the first chapter of Ephesians verse 4. Hoehner elaborates some on this in his *Commentary on Ephesians* by comparing the individual nature of believer with the corporate identity of the church (Hoehner, 760-761).

5:28a In this same way, husbands should each love his own wife as he loves his own body. (οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καὶ] οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα.) Closing out the section of instructions for men's relationships to their wives, Paul writes the direct propositional statement of degree. Therefore, the man's body, as it is cared for and maintained by the man, becomes a reflective comparison for the extent a man must care for his wife. For example, just as a man takes care of his body by feeding it and clothing it, so he is to do these things for his wife. Just as a man affords himself certain rights and possessions, he should do so for his wife.

The effect of the love of one's body is both common and uncommon because each man cares for his body in different ways. In the same manner, some men will care for their wives in contrast to other men since there is diversity in what each man sees as necessity. To compare how one man loves his wife, to how another loves his wife would be a shame since it does not take into consideration individuality, identity, personality, material means, and relational oneness. Assuredly, the measure of a man's love becomes the exertion of his care towards his wife in natural physical and spiritual ways expressed.

ἀγαπᾶν - here used in expression of care is defined as 'affection, love, to cherish' (BDAG, 4). In what same way should husbands love their own wives? in the same way as Christ. Christ has not only died for his body, but has provided cleansing - both past, present, and future in order to prepare her for himself. One can see the complete admonishment to the man fulfilled in Christ as he loved his own body by making it perfect, just as he is perfect, so there can be oneness at final presentation.

III The Man's Ministry to His Wife: Caring Like Christ (5:28b-30)

³ Hoehner, "Ephesians". 641.

5:28b For the one who loves his wife loves himself. (ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ.) Enumerating the descriptive content of the command even further, Paul begins to describe his course of logic for the listener. The love of one's body is not a duty but delight. Accordingly, the love of one man for his wife implies love of oneself. For, by inference, one can deduce the argument of Paul; namely, the idea of reciprocity in relationship under the banner of God's view of oneness within holy marriage.

5:29 For no one has ever hated his own flesh, (Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν) Clearly, Paul is insinuating an argument ad absurdum by stating a rhetorical statement followed by the assessment of the truth. Speaking in a general way, Paul states that 'no one' (Οὐδεὶς) has ever hated his own flesh (body). This statement follows verse 28b in arguing for the statement, 'he who loves his wife loves himself'. The result of Christ's model in marital relationship is the opposite of hate. The verb ἐμίσησεν is a gnomic aorist indicative used only one time in the letter to the Ephesians (Hoehner, 766). It is gnomic because it expresses the idea of a truth or maxim that can be applied in all places, and times.

but feeds and cares for it, (ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν,)

The strong contrast can be picked up on by the force ἀλλὰ. Paul continues his logic by stating the natural proclivity of man - self-nourishment. In effect, a man cares and feeds his own body (though it is imperfect) just as he is to do for his wife even though she is imperfect.⁴ There is within the natural intrinsic ability of man not only a drive for self-nourishment but the means for it. Similarly, Paul is saying to the Christian men that they have the ability to love their wives like Christ loved the church because of the power of the Holy Spirit acting in them.

just as Christ does for the church. (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,)

Concluding in verse 29, Best takes the subordination conjunction as a comparative (Best, 550). Therefore, the force of his translation would render '...because Christ cared for the church'. It is a comparative conjunction but the translation above reflects a better nuance of the comparative. Taking the verbs forms from the previous line as active, how does Christ presently feed and care for the church? Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of yielded servants as mentioned in Ephesians 4:12 (Heb 13:21; 2 Tim 3:17; John 21:15,17).

5:30 For we are members of his body. (ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.)

In conclusionary fashion, Paul links his previous line with the present truth - oneness. The Ephesian believers were one with Christ just as all are one with Christ who are in him. The ὅτι clause is one of Cause. ἐσμὲν is a 'to be' verb in the present active indicative first person plural. It is 'we' who are presently part of the body of Christ. Why does Christ care and feed his body? Because we are his members. The word μέλη is used of living organisms (Hoehner, 768). Christ is the one who has enjoined the church to himself.

⁴ Hoehner, "Ephesians". 641.

IV Reflective Marriage: Oneness Like Christ and His Church (5:31-33)

5:31 For this a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife. (ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ,) Concise and clear, Paul gives Old Testament input on the aspects of marriage already stated - oneness. Already alluded too, Paul makes his logic clear with the appeal to Genesis 2:23. In marriage, there is a unity that goes beyond mere externals represented by two distinct people. In marriage, there must be a leaving and a cleaving. The forsaking of parents translates to the complete identification of a new identity in the unity expressed in two.

And the two shall become one flesh. (καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.) This quotation from Genesis 2:24 teaches the special bond of marriage that supersedes original familial bonds.⁵ Here there is evidence of the 'to be' construction complemented with an accusative in substitution of the predicate nominative (Wallace, 47). In marriage, two become one. The math may not be logical but is a reality. There is no loss of identity and autonomy, only that that is now expressed in a common bond of love which seeks to lavish itself on the other. In this way, two become one. It is not, as so many suppose, through the act of sex. For, in the context, sex is not in view. What is in view is the separation from a previous family and way of life to enjoin to another for a new family, identity, way of life, with devotion to please the other.

5:32 This is a great mystery (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν·) The present mystery of marriage between man and wife is difficult to understand. It is an unsolvable mystery, transcending mental thought and human logic. Overall, the mystery is incomplete, because it speaks to a greater mystery of Christ.

but I speak about Christ and about the church. (ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.) The mystery is now mentioned as Christ and the church in complete oneness. δὲ serves as a contrastive conjunction to shift the focus of mystery on to Christ. It is best, in this text, to see Paul as reflecting on his own thoughts on the previous verse from Genesis 2:24 (Hoehner, 780). O'Brien states that the best view of mystery is, "the marriage relationship of Christ loving a responsive church" (O'Brien, 434).

V Concluding Commands for the Marital Model (5:33)

5:33 However, each one of you must love his own wife as he loves himself (πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν,) Paul shifts from the mystery to the practical with the concluding summary restated to the men first followed by the women. ἀγαπάτω is a third person singular imperative directed at the readers. Reminding the men to love helps the readers by restating the degree of love which is both practical and attainable.

and the wife must respect her husband. (ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.) One can note the imperatival force and use of the ἵνα clause. This alludes

⁵ Radmacher, Earl D., Ronald B. Allen, and Wayne House, ed. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999. 1539.

back to the fact that the subjunctive is the main verb (Wallace, 477). Since the man was admonished to do something he is able to do, the woman is commanded to do something that she can do. In totality, the simple content of Paul's message provides his readers with Christ's instructions for submission within the marriage relationship.

Personal Applications from Ephesians 5:22-33

Several personal applications can be drawn from this text. First and foremost is the vivid example of Christ's love for his church. This visible, tangible sacrificial love demonstrates the way a husband ought to love his wife. Furthermore, a wife's act of submission is out of reverence for Christ. By submitting to a husband, a wife is submitting to Christ. Third, the issue of headship is settled as Paul illustrates that man is head of woman as Christ is head of the church. As I, a man, care for my wife as I care for my own body, I show love of myself by placing her priorities and needs above mine own.

In a corporate identity as the church, each of us have left everything we ever were and are now members (*that cannot be severed*) of Christ's incorruptible body. We are one flesh with the Lord of glory, Jesus. We are inseparable from him and he from us. Luther captured this well by stating, "The moment I separate Christ from myself I am done."

Appendices for Ephesians 5:22-33

Textual Criticism Problems

TC Problem #1 on Ephesians 5:22

The TC problem in view is on the textual note found in the apparatus that reveals the verbal implication thrust from the previous verse 21. Although the verb is omitted in the NA27 reading, the variants include two forms of the verb **ὑποτάσσεσθωσαν** and also in some cases **ὑποτάσσεσθε**. This problem will be viewed from both external and internal evidence perspectives, and a final evaluation of the text will be made based on the certainty of the original reading with a confidence assessment.

External Criticism and Evaluation

First, in understanding the evidence, one must compare the differences of the earliest manuscripts for each reading. On the first variant side, the readings begin with 'Aleph' (IV), A (V), I (V), ψ (IX/X), 0278 (IX), 6 (XIII), 33 (IX), 1739 (X), and 1881 (XIV). These are all 1st order witnesses. Aleph and 1709 are primary Alexandrian witnesses that are relevant for the Pauline Epistles. The secondary witnesses are Alexandrian as well and complement the primary witnesses. These are: P025 (VI), 81 (1044), 104 (1087), 365 (XII), 1175 (X), 1241 (XII), 1505 (XII), and 2464 (IX). The final witnesses cannot be classified into a text type. Therefore, they are grouped in the 'others' category. These are Latin Vulgate readings and variants of Harklensis.

The second variant has external evidence from the following primary sources: D (V), F (IX), G (IX). Other validation comes from Syriac versions of espitlic genre.

On the side for the NA27 reading, there is primary witness support that rests in a few sources. These witnesses are P46 (200), B (IV) - (which is one of the most valuable of the Greek manuscripts also called Codex Vaticanus), Cl (215), and Hier Mss (420). Clement of Alexandria and Jerome were both church fathers who contributed to the work of the church. These readings, from the Alexandrian text type, are usually shorter readings overall.

Distribution of Witnesses

Distribution within the first variant is relatively concentrated within the Alexandrian text type. However, the earliest dating for support of the variant only goes back to the 4th century. The majority of the witnesses reside from the 5th – 15th centuries.

The second variant witnesses suggest sources with greater geographical furtherance. Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantium text type are represented in the Mss evidence with Byzantine being the latest and known for conflated readings.

The NA27 reading has the shortest amount of witnesses but they are generally within the Alexandrian text type and the earliest dated manuscripts.

External Evidence Conclusion

In conclusion, the external evidence is in support of the first variant reading. However, the witnesses are earlier for the NA27 reading. Finally, the NA27 reading again is from sources evidenced by strong primary witnesses, the NA27 reading offers the earliest agreement and stronger secondary support witnesses with the Patristic Fathers. Overall, from the external evidence examined, the preferred reading the NA27 reading with a confidence level of B+ NA27 reading:

Wives, to your husbands as unto the Lord

Variant Reading 1:

Wife, submit yourself to your husband as unto the Lord

Variant Reading 2:

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as unto the Lord

Intrinsic Evidence

From an authorial standpoint, the NA27 is the reading that gives rise to the other variant readings. The author, Paul, is most likely to have written the passage without supplying the verb. This shortened style allows the reader to pick up on the implied verbal nuance, sometimes subtly used in Paul's writing style. Copyists most likely added the verb to smooth out a difficult reading of the verse.

Conclusion

The preferred reading with the omission of the verb is original because it is shorter and gives rise to the variants. Although it does not affect the meaning of the passage, both variants make for a smoother translation and longer reading. Clarification can be allocated to the reader from the preceding context in verse 21 to infer that Paul is talking about submission. The final grade for the originality of the NA27 passage is an A-.

TC Problem #2 on Ephesians 5:30

Here, the TC problem in view adds the addition of the translated phrase, 'of his body and of his bones'. The textual apparatus cites this reading as: ἐκ τῆς σαρκός αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ This addition is a revised rendering of text found in Gen 2:23.

External Criticism and Evaluation

The problem in view suggests the reading 'of his body and of his bones' be added. This is attested by the manuscripts Aleph (IV), D (V), F (IX), G (IV), K (IX), ψ (IX/X), 0278 (IX), 0285 (V!), 1739mg, Gothic M, Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta, and Ireneous (II).

The NA27 reading is supported by P46 (200, Aleph (IV), A (V), B (IV), 048 (V), 6 (XIII), 33 (IX), 81 (1044), 1739 (X), 1881 (XIV), 2464 (IX) Independent Vulgate readings (250), Coptic, Methodious of Olympus, and Jerome (420).

Geographical Distribution and External Evidence Conclusion

On the side of internal evidence, the variant is dispersed in the West, and in Alexandria. F and G are both first order manuscripts from the IX century and western text types. Though F and G are first order witnesses, they still have a late date from the 9th century. Overall The variant reading can be assessed a confidence level of D,

The NA27 reading has P46 as a first order papyri witness from around the date 200 A.D. and is an Alexandrian text type. It has early and late witness as well ranging from 200 to 1400 A.D.

Variant Reading:

For we are members of his body and of his bones

NA27 Reading:

For we are members of his body

Intrinsic Evidence

The variant reading appears to be a conflated reading with in support of an LXX nuance of Genesis 2:23. Though the form has changed from the exact LXX text, the idea adds complexity and

possible mystery to the metaphor that Paul is trying to introduce. Within the scope of common sense, one understands that a body is comprised many things including 'bones'. Perhaps the scribal addition was meant to amplify the humanity of Christ in the face of Gnostic heresy. However, it is a bit superfluous to add the word 'bones'. Overall, The shorter reading is the harder reading and gives rise to the variant. It is the preferred reading.

Conclusion

The preferred reading is the NA27 reading based on intrinsic and extrinsic solidarity. The final assessment of the originality of the NA27 passage is an A.

Structural Layout of Greek Clauses

- 5:22 αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν
ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ,
- 5:23 ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς
ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ
[σώματος·]
- 5:24 ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ,
οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.
- 5:25 Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας,
καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν
[παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,]
- 5:26 ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ
καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,
- 5:27 ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἕνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,
μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων,
ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾗ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος.
- 5:28 οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καὶ]
οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα.
ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ.
- 5:29 Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν
ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν,
καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,
- 5:30 ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.
- 5:31 ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ
[προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ,]
καὶ ἕσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.
- 5:32 τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν·
ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.
- 5:33 πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἕνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως
ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν,
ἢ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

Synchronic Word Studies

Word Study # 2 - ὑποτάσσεται

This word study allows one to understand the meaning of the word ὑποτάσσεται in the contextual authorship of Paul's letter. With this discovery, then the activity of the church depicted in verse 24 (and the activity of the wife), can be clearly deciphered in translational emphasis.

Classical Period

1. To place, arrange, or assign (Plb. 3. 36. 7) (LSJ 1897)
2. Submit or subject (Phld. Rh. 2. 204 s)
3. To put after (Plu. 2. 737f)

Summary for Classical Usage:

ὑποτάσσεται is a term that is used in three operative ways with the main thrust of the meaning being to subjugate or submit.

KOINE

1. Submit (P Leid. W XIII. 34)
2. to append/attach a document (P Oxy J. 34 verse IV. 7), (Moulton & Milligan, 660)

Summary for Koine Usage:

The term is dually used with the primary meaning rendered as submit or with the secondary meaning being to place under - as in attaching a document.

LXX

1. Subdue, Submit, to put under
(III Kings 10:15; 1 Ch 22:18, 29:24; II Ch 9:14; Es 3:13, 8:12; Ps 8:6, 18:47, 37:7, 59:8, 61:1, 108:9, 143:2; Wi 8:14, 18:22; Hg 2:19, Da 7:27, 11:37; Da Th. 6:13, 11:39; II Mac 4:12, 8:9,22, 9:12, 13:23; III Mac 1:7, 2:13)

Summary for LXX usage:

The LXX usage of the word seems to be related to something that is created exclusively by human hands with no divine qualities. This creation/craft of human hands could be a idol, or a temple, or a creative image. The term is always used negatively

New Testament

1. Subject, subjection, submission
(1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:24; Col 3:18; Ti 2:5; Heb 2:5; 12:9; 1 Pet 3:1; 1 Pet 3:5)

Categories of Meaning:

1. Submission, to be subject to, to be in submission to

Summary for NT usage:

The NT usage for the term is in reference to human relationships, things, and ordered relationships between God ordained from eternity past. Therefore, in the present context of Eph 5:24, the church submits to Christ out of the ordered relational intentions of God. As a result, the wife must submit to her husband in like manner.

BDAG:

My definition matches BDAG although they have more categories for the verse as a whole: Overall, they classify Eph 5:24 in the category of Subjected, submission.

Kittel (TDNT)

The entry matches my own work

Word Study # 1 - κεφαλή

This problem attempts to understand the nature of the word in question in reference to the text in Ephesians 5:23. What, in this verse of text, does 'Head' mean? Is the man the literal head of the wife? To what is the author referring?

Classical Period

1. Physical head of a man or beast (Hom. v. infr., Th. 525 1yr)
2. Noblest part (Od. 1. 343, Pi. O. 7. 67)
3. Life (Od. 2.237)
4. Head dress or crown (Ar. Th. 258, Pl. Ti. 69b) (LSJ)

Summary for Classical Usage:

The term is used in a fashion to indicate the literal head of a man or animal, the noblest part of something, abstractly of life, and a crown or head dress.

Koine

1. Literal Head (PSI v. 455.12, P Lond 47 . 8) (M & M, 342)
2. Furthest part (P. Flor I. 50. 83)
3. Whole (Vett. Val. 74. 7, 292. 11.18)

Summary for Koine Usage:

In this instance, the term seems to have taken on three distinct meanings as the literal head, the furthest part or extremity, or denoting the whole.

LXX

1. Literal head is used 289 times (Gen 3:15, Ju 5:26, II Kings 1:2,10, Jer. 2:37, Ez 23:5, Job 2:7,12....)
2. Soul or life (1 Ch 10:10, 23: 3, 24)
3. Horn of a bull metaphorical to strength (Lam 2:17)
4. Referring to a person, whole of 1 person (Ex 16:16, 39:2, Nu 1:2, 18,20,22,26,28,30,32,34,36)

Summary of LXX:

Though there are many more scriptures to consider, the above selections focus on the meaning of 'Literal head', 'complete person', soul, source of life, and strength.

New Testament

The word appears in 75 places in the NT. The following express the range of meanings:

1. Head
(Mt 5:36, 6:17, 8:20, 10:30, 14:8,11, 26:7, 27:29, 27:30,37,39; Mk 6:24,25,27,28, 14:3, 15:9,29; Luke 7:46, 9:58, 12:7, 21:18,28; John 13:9, 19:2,30, 20:12; Acts 18:6, 18:18, 21:34, 27:37; Rom 12:20, 1 Cor 11:3,4, 5, ,7,10, 1 Cor 12:21; Ep 1:22, 4:15, 5:23,; Col 1:18, 2:10, 2:19,; Rev 1:14, 4:4, 9:7, 17, 19, 10:1, 12:1,3, 13:1,3, 14:14, 17:3, 7, 9 18:19, 19:12).
2. Top, most important
(Mt 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, 1 Pet 2:7)

Summary for New Testament Usage:

The main definition and use for κεφαλή is 'head' in reference to a physical head. Because Paul uses the metaphor of the body is pervasive through his writings, one must look at the imagery insinuated. As a result, Christ is the head of the church since the church is his body. So, Paul uses a head in the literal sense in a metaphor to express a word picture for his audience.

BDAG:

My definition is slightly different from BDAG. They place κεφαλή outside the scope of metaphor here and nuance the term as rank.

Kittel (TDNT)

Remarking on the usage of the word, TDNT reinforces my research of the literal understanding of 'head'

Problem Solving and Validation

Problem Solving and Validation #1 - Eph. 5:26

Classify the Problem:

The problem in view is the passage in Ephesians 5:26 where the translation yields 'washing of water with the word' or τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι. What exactly is Paul referring to? In light of the textual problem, one must determine the category of the problem to adequately address what Paul is referring to within the appropriate contextual framework of the passage. There are 2 classifications for this problem: (1) Syntactical - in relation to how the genitive τοῦ ὕδατος is used as well as the preposition ἐν ῥήματι. (2) Lexical/Referential – in relation to the meanings of the terms, history, and Paul's writing. Overall, the validation of meaning will serve to gain a correct understanding of the precise meaning of Paul's usage of the phrase and therefore correct translation in Ephesians 5:26

Views:

1. Believer's Baptism accompanying salvation (Best, 543).
2. The reception of the Gospel (O'Brien, 423).
3. Metaphorical Imagery from 1st century Bridal Bath tradition (Hoehner, 753).
4. Reception of words spoken from God that result in cleansing.
5. Christ's death

Positive Arguments Relating to the Believer's Baptism:

1. The believing body at Ephesus was already sanctified and cleansed (Eph 1:7,18)
2. Water was used in baptism
3. Confession in words often preceded baptism (Acts 2)
4. Not a continual process (Best, 542).

Negative Arguments Relating to the Believer's Baptism:

1. No reference to the Holy Spirit (Best, 543).
2. Nowhere is the church completely baptized corporately in NT (O'Brien, 422).
3. Patristic language and theology superimposed (Hoehner, 753).
4. No Baptismal language in Titus 3:5 (Hoehner, 753).

Positive Arguments Relating to the Reception of the Gospel:

1. The Gospel is indeed cleansing, making one blemish free (Ep 1:4)
2. The Gospel was the message of Paul, which he preached to all (O'Brien, 423).

Negative Arguments Relating to the Reception of the Gospel:

1. The reception of the Gospel sanctifies, allowing one to be identified in the body of Christ
2. Reception of the Gospel implies the understanding of Christ death, burial and resurrection on one's behalf.

Positive Arguments Relating to the Bridal Bath:

1. The illusion is to OT marriage Ceremony (O'Brien, 423).
2. 1 Cor 6:11 mentions washing (Hoehner, 753).
3. Metaphor communicates redemption (Hoehner, 753).
4. Context suggests that a husband and wife marriage relationship is in view

Negative Arguments Relating to the Bridal Bath:

1. Would the audience of the Letter to the Ephesians understand the OT and Jewish NT bridal imagery that Paul was trying to re-create in their minds?
2. Metaphor is inconclusive as to a one time 'bath' or continual 'bathing' required.

Positive Arguments Relating to Words from God resulting in cleansing:

1. The words from God are what sustains a believer (1 Pet 1:25, Ep 6:17, Rom 10:8,17; 2 Cor 13:1)
2. The effect of God's word is cleansing as in 1 Cor 6:11 (O'Brien, 422).

Negative Arguments Relating to Words from God resulting in cleansing:

1. Many instances where the word ' ῥήματι,' is anarthrous (Hoehner, 756).
2. Is it clear that Paul is talking about progressive sanctification or positional sanctification (Hoehner, 757)
3. Aorist verb and participle mean that we are already sanctified and cleansed (Best, 542).

Positive Arguments Relating to Christ's death:

1. The context of the verse suggests that this is a referent of metonymy.

Negative Arguments Relating to Christ's death:

1. The cross did not use water and words.
2. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit.

Summarization:

Regarding the above arguments, there is some basic similarity between some of the proposed solutions. View number one, believer's baptism, cannot be validated because of the influence of patristic liturgy in developing Christianity. Therefore, Paul is not talking about confession and baptism. View number 2 seems to limit the scope of the activity of the past. The reception of the Gospel does not seem to identify the believer with continual cleansing of God's words (John 15:3, 17:17). Next, the third view taken as a metaphorical portrayal of a Bridal bath seems to be possible especially with the inclusion of verse 27. However, one must ask if the audience would really be familiar with such intricate Jewish customs. The last argument, relating to Christ's death cannot be completely validated because Christ's death did not involve water for washing and 'accompanying words'. The fourth view is the best view with the phrase intended to mean the ongoing sanctification work of God as his word is realized in the believer's life.

Problem Solving and Validation #2 - Ephesians 5:27

Classify the Problem:

The phrase of uncertainty is found in Ephesians 5:27 where the Greek reads, "ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἄμωμον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσιν στίβον ἢ ρυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος." Translated, this means 'In order that he might present to himself a glorious church - not having spot or wrinkle or any type of blemish, but instead holy and blameless.' The question that begs to be answered - Is the present state of the church a spotless bride or is it yet future? The problem can be classified Lexically/Referentially in terms of Pauline authorship of Ephesians with respect to his other letters.

Views:

1. The church is presently a bride without spot (Lincoln, 377; Schlier, 258).
2. The church will be in the future a bride without spot (O'Brien, 424; Best, 545; Hoehner, 761).

Positive Arguments Relating to the Present Perfect Bride:

1. This view looks at a realized eschatology (Hoehner, 761).
2. This view emphasizes positional sanctification
3. This view agrees with Eph 1:4, that every believer was chosen to be holy and blameless as well as 2:6, and 3:18

Negative Arguments:

1. Can the body of Christ in the world be seen as perfect in the present reality?
2. If it is present, when did Jesus present the bride to himself (Best, 545)?

Positive Arguments Relating to the Future Perfect Bride:

1. The church is not yet seen as perfect on the earth
2. Paul views this as the Parousia, an eschatological radiance (O'Brien, 424).
3. Whenever NT bridal language is used, it always depicts the future not the present (Matt. 22:1-10, 15:1-13; Rev. 19:7-10; 21:9) (Hoehner, 761).
4. Presently church is body of Christ, future to be bride of Christ (Hoehner, 761).

Negative Arguments:

1. This view aspectually negates positional sanctification.

Summarization:

In Summary, the following views reflect the best course of action for the treatment of the verse. The first view implies the mutual exclusivity of eschatological finality. The present implications of this interpretation obviously imply a positional sanctification, rather than present perfection. Therefore, this view does not seem likely from the context of the verse. The second view indicates that the present reality on incompleteness in perfection is in opposition to the church's present state. This view seems to be the correct view in the interpretation because the church is yet to be married to Christ.