

SHOULD “SUBMIT” BE OMITTED FROM EPHESIANS 5:22?

Ephesians 5:22

- 1) Only P46 and B [Vaticanus] (corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts) omit upotasso (ὑποτάσσω).
Some Alexandrian manuscripts that do have it: Aleph [Sinaiticus], A [Alexandrinus], I, L, P, Psi, D*, D1, K, 69, 1424. (“The Vaticanus bears traces of careless transcription in every page.” <https://www.preservedword.com/content/the-unreliability-of-the-alexandrian-manuscripts/>)
- 2) Only 2 modernist Greek versions out of the 5 on BibleGateway omit it.
Tyndale: Αἱ γυναῖκες, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὑποτασσέσθωσαν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ
1550 Stephanus: αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν υποτασσεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ
1894 Scrivener: αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν υποτασσεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ
1881 Westcott-Hort: αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ
SBL: Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ

- 3) Only 3 English translations out of 62 on BibleGateway omit “submit,” 6 have it in italics, 53 include it.

Included 53: KJ21, AMPC, BRG, CSB, CEB, CJB, CEV, DRA, ERV, EHV, ESV, ESVUK, EXB, GNV, GW, GNT, HCSB, ICB, ISV, JUB, KJV, AKJV, TLB, MSG, MEV, MOUNCE, NOG, NABRE, NCB, NCV, PHILLIPS, NET, NIRV, NIV, NIVUK, NKJV, NLV, NLT, NMB, NRSVA, NRSVACE, NRSVCE, NRSVUE, NTE, OJB, RGT, RSV, RSVCE, VOICE, WEB, WE, WYC, YLT

In Italics 6: ASV, AMP, DARBY, NASB, NASB1995, LSB

Omitted 3: LEB, DLNT, TLV

- 4) Nobody omits it from verse 24 of the same passage.
Eph. 5:24, “Therefore as the church is subject [ὑποτάσσω, upotasso] to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”
- 5) The parallel passage in Colossians is undisputed.
Col. 3:18, “Wives, submit [ὑποτάσσω, upotasso] yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”
- 6) Titus 2:4-5 also commands wives to upotasso their husbands.
Titus 2:4-5, “Teach the young women to be ... obedient [ὑποτάσσω, upotasso] to their own husbands.”
- 7) The notes in Wilbur Pickering’s Family 35 GNT show that 99.7% of all manuscripts have upotasso and the only .3% omit it.
υποτασσεσθε f35 (86.2%) RP [Robinson/Pierpont], HF [Hodges/Farstad], OC [Orthodox Church], TR [Textus Receptus], CP [Complutensian Polyglot]
υποτασσεσθαι (3.5%)
υποτασσεσθωσαν & [Sinaiticus], A [Alexandrinus], I [Freerianus] (9.1%)
υποτασσεσθω (0.7%)
— P46 [Papyrus 46] and B [Vaticanus] (alone), NU [Nestle-Aland 26th]

one other variant (0.2%)

- 8) In the same passage, the husband is the head and the wife is his body. In nature, leadership and decision making comes from the head, not the body.
“Because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the head of the church ... [his] body,” Eph. 5:23.
- 9) Yes, in our role as Christians in general we are all to be “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God,” (Eph. 5:21); but anyone in the specific role of a wife should love and submit by submitting, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands,” (Eph. 5:22); and anyone in the specific role of a husband should love and submit by loving, “Husbands, love your wives,” (Eph. 5:25). Wives are never told to love (‘agape’) their husbands, and husbands are never told to submit to their wives; just as Christ is never said to “submit” to the church, or parents to children, or servants to masters - all those in authority in hierarchical structures that God has created in this world. This inequality is even in the Godhead from eternity past and to eternity future, so it’s not hierarchal structures that are bad but the misuse of them - leaders that don’t love, followers that rebel. “The head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is God,” 1 Cor. 11:3.

So why do many teachers on the internet now confidently talk as if there’s no doubt the word submit isn’t in Ephesians 5:22? Because men have suddenly become better Bible teachers? Or because we’ve had a women’s lib movement and our Bible teaching is changing right along with our secular culture instead of our secular culture being challenged by our Bible teaching? “Don’t be conformed to this world!” Rom. 12:2.

- 1) Adventist Today, Ron Hessel , April 4 2023

A friend told me, “Ephesians 5:22 in the original Greek doesn’t tell women they have to ‘submit.’ The word isn’t there.”... So I pulled my Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek Bible off the shelf (the edition that is the basis of most modern Bible translations) and looked it up. He was right. The word “submit” isn’t in that verse. You can look it up yourself. Google it. Or check it on the Greek versions on Biblegateway.com. ... You won’t see it there. I’m not making this up. Study it for yourself. So why [is] it translated that way? Perhaps because most of the translators throughout history have been men. I fear we make God cry.

- 2) The Equality Workbook: Freedom in Christ from the Oppression of Patriarchy. Ephesians 5:22: When Men Add Commands to the Bible, browsed 9/19/23.

<https://equalityworkbook.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/ephesians-522-when-men-add-commands-to-the-bible/>

Paul’s alleged command in Ephesians 5:22, “Wives submit to your husbands,” forms the foundation of the complementarian view that husbands must exercise authority over their wives in Christian marriage. This supposed command is often supplemented and reinforced by headings that have been added to the biblical text by translators. ... In the oldest available Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (Parchment 46 and Codex Vaticanus), Ephesians 5:22 does not say, “Wives submit to your husbands.” ... In Ephesians 5:24 Paul does not tell wives that they “ought to be” submissive to their husbands. Rather, he makes an observation regarding “the way things were” in ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures. Jesus reminds his followers that they have One Leader, and that is Christ alone. [Per Matthew 20:25-28] All of Jesus’ followers are “siblings” and “equals”.