

## Theological Interpretation of Submission and Love in the Christianity of Christians: A Model for Family Security in the Context of Providence-Delta Baptist Conference

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### **Abstract**

*The paper examined love and submission within the framework of the Pauline corpus in Ephesians 5:22-33 with the aim of ensuring family security in marriage. It looked at certain ingredients that are otherwise needed for both effective and smooth marital relationships in the home. This did not underscore the fact that there could be challenges around the home.*

*Bearing in mind the patriarchal nature of the African society wherein submission is commanded and sometimes not earned. It adopted phenomenological and exegetical approaches. It discovered that having known Christ, the principal rules should be derived from the Bible to guide our homes under His leadership. Findings from the study reveal that certain rules are made subservient in the home such as Gender and sex roles, patriarchal tradition, and sex preference. The study recommends that submission and love are the two key ingredients that make blissful marriages. Other factors are additional blessings from God for the comfort of the family.*

**Keywords:** *Family, Submission, Home, theology, Relationship, Security, A Model*

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**Introduction** One of life's most beautiful experiences is that of "falling or being in love", it gives life such pleasant memories and makes the world a beautiful place to live in. It is considered a solid foundation for marital relationships for making marriage blissful (Uloho, 2010) and for building witnessing families (Ayokunle, 2012). The institution of the family forms an important, complex backdrop to society hence working to ensure its security requires concerted effort. The family (Greek: οἶκος / οἰκία, "house" or "household") is both the context for many activities of the early Church and diverse teachings of the New Testament (Ellison, 2019). It is the bedrock upon which all societies are built. As the foundational relationship, all other relationships in society stem from the father-mother relationship, and these other relationships thrive most if the marriage relationship is thriving. Good marriages are the bedrock

of strong societies, providing security services; they incubate the five basic institutions of society: family, church, school, marketplace, and government (Fagan, Dougherty, and McElvain, 2014). However, there are forms of insecurity, threats, and lots of marital problems today, and the rate of separation and divorce is on the increase daily. As these very serious crises are getting worse, so is society plunged into diverse forms of security challenges (Obie, 2019). Hence, one often wonders what is responsible for the high rate of marital crises bedeviling our world today. Most disturbing is the fact that many young adults are still rushing into marriage or at least wishing, praying, and planning to get into one someday. The use of the word “love” has become profound more than ever before (Oyibo, 2011).

The word “love” is so carelessly used today to the extent that its true meaning, especially from its biblical perspective has been lost. Whereas, the idea of love is basically self-giving, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as a demonstration of God’s love for man being the perfect example (Niebuhr, 1941), what is expressed as love today by many is the direct opposite, the basis of social insecurity and deception. In this perfect love of God, the concepts of submission and sacrifice are fully embodied. While this perfect love may be an impossible possibility for any human (Niebuhr, 1941), it is important to note that Christ makes human love for God and neighbor possible through his own demonstration of the greatness of God’s love for man and the impartation of God’s love in every man’s heart (Romans 5: 5). Thus, he is also the one who requires what he has made possible (Niebuhr, 1951). Knowing therefore that “perfect love” embodies both submission and sacrifice it should be the pursuit of couples and the message of preachers.

On the contrary, whether through sermons, wedding vows, or Christian literature, many couples have been conditioned to see different primary roles for husbands and wives. Some churches teach that the wife’s role is a one-way submission to her husband, encouraging patriarchalism void of love and or extreme gender roles; the basis of polemic societal conflict (Fernando, 2015). On the other hand, Kore (2012) asserts that the husband’s primary role is the demonstration of sacrificial love to his wife. Apostle Paul’s letters are often the basis for these teachings. While there are many interpretations to his words, some of which prescribe hierarchy in marriage and argue that it is of utmost importance, to many the meanings are vague. More so, the question that comes to mind is whether Paul is advocating hierarchy in marriage, or is he encouraging mutuality, apian way from conflict? (Fernando, 2015). Yet another question is how does Paul’s view on “submission” and “love” relate to Jesus’ teaching on “one flesh”? (Matthew 19: 3-8). These and other questions are the premises for this study.

### **Statement of Problem**

Apostle Paul espoused a model in his epistles to the church in Ephesus that should serve as a guarantee against any form of marital insecurity within the home. His love for the security of the family is not premised only on the Roman family structure but on the need for social security in

the family. However, the home today is greatly threatened by diverse forces such as the feminist movement, which perceives love and submission as women's oppression and dehumanizing; marriage is a burden hence they favor social contract and unfounded gender equality. The actions do not contravene the Pauline injunction but constitute insecurity of the home and society. The realization of the Kingdom mandate as Paul encouraged the church.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to theologically examine the issue of submission and love in Ephesians 5:22-33 as a family model of security within the context of Providence Delta Baptist Conference. It established the Pauline teaching not only as a model but encouraged couples to cultivate the two main virtues of societal harmony and family social security.

However, the question is, is the author a rabble-rouser for war, conflict, and confusion? Is he advocating for the subordination and domination of women or the mutual submission of couples to ensure security and peace in marriage? (Amadi-Nche and Esomu, 2021). The paper seeks to establish that the family structure in Africa did not see women as slaves rather many have attained their zenith through love and submission. Hence, feminist's assertions that women are caged only exist in the mind of agitators who are poised to cause anarchy in the homes and society.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the Africentric interpretation of the works of Prof. J. Enuwosa (2005), Austin O. Idamarhare (2007) and Osbert U. Isiorhovoja (2015). The trio posited that the family within the Black continent have maintained a paradigm that otherwise should be construed differently. They motioned that love- patriarchalism has enough accommodation, which encourages security, love, and mutual development within the home. Hence, feminists who thought that women are enslaved in Africa are far from the truth. The concept of love patriarchalism, therefore, promotes mutual understanding, development, and overall stability within African society.

### **Literature Review**

Providence-Delta Baptist Conference of the Nigerian Baptist Convention is the research environment for this study. According to Thikan (2022), it was inaugurated on 6th June 2014 to mark its creation alongside Ethiope-Delta Baptist Conference and Anioma-Delta Baptist Conference from the defunct Delta State Baptist Conference. Currently, it consists of over two hundred and fifty-two (252) churches, grouped into thirteen Baptist Associations of churches and spreads across eleven Local Government Areas of Delta State, namely: Warri- South, WarriSouth-West, Uvwie, Udu, Ughelli-North, Ughelli-South, Isoko-South, Patani, Bomadi, Burutu and a few churches in Okpe Local Government Area. Providence-Delta Baptist Conference has its permanent site at km 14, East-West Road, Uvwiamuge-Agbarho.

The area is known as Providence Arena. Providence Delta Baptist Conference (PDBC) is a member of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. She is currently being led by a very charismatic and energetic President, Rev'd. Dr. Nathan Doutimiwei D. Thikan, under whose leadership the young Conference made some achievements. As a Baptist Conference, Providence Delta Baptist Conference operates a congregational polity. It has an Executive Committee made up of representatives of all major organizations, departments, and standing committees of the conference. The Executive Committee is presided over by an appointed chairman rather than the Executive President. There are over two hundred pastors, male and female; of whom many are on full-time pastoral ministry. Of the over two hundred and fifty-two churches, the majority are organized or "mother churches", while the rest are unorganized / mission or "baby churches" (Thikan, 2022). The environment of Providence-Delta Baptist Conference is well suited for this study as views about marriage with particular emphasis on submission and love abound. It is even so as the dominant tribe within the Conference is the Urhobos, a people whose views on marriage weigh heavily on total submission (Isiorhovoja, 2022).

Hence this paper is relevant to Providence-Delta Baptist Conference. The problem of this study is to theologially interpret the concept of submission and love as it is conceived and theologially expressed in Ephesians 5: 22-33 in relation to the idea of submission and love as conceived and expressed by married couples of Providence-Delta

Baptist Conference in particular, and believers in the 21st century in general. The problem here is that so much is said and taught about submission and love in contemporary times, using the context of Ephesians 5:22-33, yet marital crises among Christian married couples are on the increase! The question is, "Why?" More so, how theologially correct are the interpretations given to this lofty teaching of Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33? What is submission? What is love? What is the relevance of submission and love to married couples? How can believers correctly apply this teaching to achieve marital bliss? These and other questions are germane in this paper.

### **Submission**

According to the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003), there are several meanings to the word, "submission". However, the meaning that is close to the context of this study is that submission is the act of allowing someone or something to have power over you. More specifically, it is the act of accepting the power or authority of someone else, yielding to the leadership and control of that person. It is the condition of being submissive, humble, or compliant. In this sense, submission implies conformity, obedience, and subordination. However, submission trumps obedience, for while obedience is mere compliance to order, command, or instruction, submission comes from within. It is willful and out of love, faith, or respect for the person in power or authority (Deffinbaugh, 2004).

The biblical concept of submission simply means to willfully deploy oneself in service to God out of love and faith (Deffinbaugh, 2004). It is imperative to note that the Bible was not written in English. In the New Testament, the Greek word translated into submission is ὑποτάσσω, *hupotasso*. It means to place under, subject to; be put in subjection, submit self- unto

(Hebrew/Greek interlinear Bible, 2021). However, Buchi (2020) argues that *hupotasso* means to get under and lift, or to put in order. He asserted that it does not mean obedience. It defines the equalizing principle that sort of raises everyone else to one's own personal level of importance and worthiness. This is evident that the original biblical concept of submission does not condone subjugation or insinuate the literal idea that suggests a woman totally relinquish her will to her husband, positioning him as superior.

On the contrary, Wellman (2015) posits that biblical submission implies obedience and yielding to authority. It does not make a woman less than a man. Moreover, nowhere in the Bible is it taught that a woman must submit to anyone other than her own husband. In marriage the couples are co-equals and co-heirs in Christ, but as Jesus submitted to the Father though both are co-equally God in all aspects, so the wife ought to submit to her own husband. More so, the Bible teaches mutual submission out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21), to esteem others better than oneself (Philippians 2: 3), to obey those in authority (Hebrews 13: 17), and clearly, in the context of marriage God puts the man in authority, not as a domineering head, but as a loving servant-teacher (Kore, 2012).

The United Nations (1948) legalized and sanctioned certain moral principles which culture all over the world are required to abide by. These moral principles include the right to equality, nationality, freedom of conscience, thought, expression, association, movement, religion, and others. These have given modern women a high impetus for the struggle for emancipation from male dominance in all social institutions of society. In fact, modern women insist on the equality of the sexes, asserting that human rights are women's rights as well (Akintunde, 2001). However, Ephesians 5:22-33 highlights the importance of the value of submission in marital relationships. It also reveals that the weight of submission rests on the woman -based on the patriarchal context in which marriage was conducted in the biblical world (Udoisang, 2016). Patriarchy lies at the center of all discussions and debates over the submission of wives to husbands. This is so because from the Jewish to the Greco-Roman eras, patriarchal ideas affected and influenced all aspects and instruments of social relations the world over. Patriarchy refers to a society or group in which men have power over women. In patriarchal societies, husbands have authority over their wives. Public institutions are also structured around male power; the men hold all the key and most positions of power whether as chief, president, or other forms of leadership positions (Anderson and Howard, 2004). It is against this backdrop that Paul wrote. Nevertheless, Just (2012) believes that New Testament texts do not give absolute power to men, instead it require a high level of responsibility and mutual respect for all members of Christian families.

### **Love**

Love is basically sacrificial self-giving. It is directed towards all neighbours. It is the nature of the divine, therefore it is transcendent and difficult to be perfectly attained. It is the pinnacle of ethics, the light by which all morality is judged (Niebuhr, 1941). Oyibo (2011) elaborates that Niebuhr's description of love is that which is of God, demonstrated by Christ.

This kind of love is pure and perfect. However, since man is finite and sinful, being mostly selfish, it is difficult to express perfect love in human relationships. Love can be seen for what it is from

what it contributes to the common life of the human community. Love is gratitude, reverence, rejoicing in others, and loyalty (fidelity, faithfulness) which are relevant to personal relations between persons in the human community (Gustafson, 1979).

This view is also shared by Niebuhr (1951) who sees love as one of the outstanding virtues of Jesus Christ. To him, the love of Christ is demonstrated by his ultimate devotion to God. The love of Jesus for people was an expression of his ultimate devotion to God. Therefore, love for one's neighbour cannot be separated from the primary love of God: love for God must lead to complete devotion to him and devotion to God must lead to love for others. Love is a phenomenon that plays a central role in all interpersonal relationships and in life generally. It is that "many-splendored thing" that makes the world go round (Chapman, 1995). It is the virtue that Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian faith desires to be the distinguishing characteristic of his followers (John 13:35). According to Chapman (1995), psychologists conclude that the need to feel loved is a primary human emotional need. For love, men will climb mountains, cross seas, traverse desert sands, and endure untold hardships. Without it, mountains become unclimbable, seas uncrossable, deserts unbearable, and hardships a plight to life. Chapman (1995) went on to assert that at the heart of humanity's existence is the desire to be intimate and to be loved by another, and marriage is

designed to meet that need for intimacy and love. This existential human need is satisfied in a marriage of perfect love which is sacrificial. But, because of the difficulty of relating perfect love to social relations, Niebuhr (1941) developed the concept of "mutual love" as the best that can take place in human history. He describes mutual love as love in which the concern of one person for the interests of another prompts and elicits reciprocal affection.

Nonetheless, it is not based on calculations concerning degrees of actual reciprocity. Mutual love develops in relationships where such reciprocity does exist or where it can be expected to exist but goes far beyond any bargaining attitude. It desires faithfulness and sacrifice for those who are loved without self-centered calculations. Thus, there is an element of agape in mutual love (Kegley and Bretall, 1961).

In a bid to clarify some of the confusion about what love is, Oyibo (2011) elaborates that there are different terms used for love, each of which reveals a dimension of what love is. It is these various dimensions that have led to the concept of different types of love. They are:

***Philia:*** The type of love that exists among friends. It is shared love that depends strongly on "give and take" (Maston, 1981). Long, Jr. (1969) describes it as a conditional type of love that depends on what the other partner does. It starts with the self and with others based on justice or equality. The underlying ethical principle of philia is "covenant love," in which one expresses it if the other partner fulfills his part of the covenant.

***Storge:*** This term describes family love. It basically means "family affection". It refers to the love of parents for their children and children for their parents (Barclay, 1975). It is expressed only among family members. Even within the family, it is sometimes conditional.

It is different from Christian love which seeks to reach all men, despite family relationships (Oyibo, 2011).

**Eros:** It is a self-seeking love, one that desires to satisfy self. It is based on what one can get from the object of affection. Nygren (1983) expounds that eros is an appetite, a yearning desire, which is aroused by the attractive qualities of its object of affection. It is acquisitive desire and longing, the will to get and possess depending on wants and needs. Eros is egocentric love, a form of selfassertion that can be directed towards God to satisfy one's spiritual hunger by the possession and enjoyment of divine perfection.

**Agape:** Agape is the New Testament word for Christian love. It is sacrificial love. It is spontaneous and unmotivated, uncalculating, unlimited, and unconditional (Nygren, 1983).

Oyibo (2011) elaborates that agape love is the love of God and it is fully expressed in God's gift of Jesus Christ who offered himself on the cross for our sins. It is the love which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians a combination of the various expressions of love discussed above but in the context of God who is love.

### **Exegetical Analysis of Submission and Love (Hupotasso and Agape)**

**Agape:** The Greek word use here is (Agape) which means love, benevolence, this love is always with the object of (eis), which means; into, to come out of yourself into another, to give up yourself to another. That is sacrifice, to sacrifice what belong to you for another unconditionally

This love (Agape) derived its root from (Agapao) which means to love as in (LUK 7:47), to wish other well as in (Matt 5:44). It's also means to take pleasure in doing what is right as in (HEB 1:9). This love takes pleasure in serving others unconditionally, hence Agape denotes the love of reasons and not as phileo which denote the love of feelings.

Therefore, when **Paul** said husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church, he was directly saying the husband should give up himself to the wife, sacrifice yourself for her. This is the understanding of these writers that it takes sacrifice for both man and woman to live successfully with each other as husband and wife.

**Hupotasso:** The Greek word (Hupotasso) means submission in the second aorist passive. Is from the root of (**Hupetagen**). Which means to place under, to subject as in (1Cor15:27). It means to surrender oneself, to subject oneself, to be obedient. Hupotasso has the same root with (Hupotage)), which also means subjection, submission as in (**2 Cor 9:13**)

Hupotasso is an imperative word, a military term meaning to arrange (troop division) in a military fashion under the command of a leader. In non-military use it was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden. Hupotasso therefore means to subject, put in subjection, to arrange under, to subject one self, to subordinate, to submit to one's control.

Hence the apostle Paul was directly telling the woman to put themselves under their husband, to allow their husband have control over them, to subject themselves to their husband as the church subject herself to Christ.

### **Theological Interpretation of Submission and Love in Ephesians 5: 22-33**

Paul's teaching, like that of Jesus, must be understood against his background. Paul ministered in the Greco-Roman world of the first century, a world in which there were very many complex issues about marriage relationships, sexual immorality was widespread, and divorce was easy and common (Shields, 2004). In Ephesians 5:21-33, Paul gave the third most important exposition on marriage as found in the New Testament. Here, Paul works out the moral principles that would help the specific relationship of wives and husbands. After admonishing all Christians, including husbands and wives to submit to one another in the fear of God, or out of reverence for God (vs. 21), he turns his attention to wives thereafter to husbands (Cornes, 1993). For Paul the issue of one flesh concerns submission (Enuwosa, 2022). On the concept of "total submission", Kore (2012) expounds that submission is the chief role of a wife to a husband. Christian wives need to understand the teachings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament requiring wives to submit to their husbands, as well as to love them (Gen. 3: 16; Eph. 5: 22-24, 33; Titus 2: 4-5; 1Peter 3: 1-6; Col. 3: 18).

The injunction to "submit in everything as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5: 22-24, paraphrased) is parallel to Colossians 3:18, which says, "wives, submit to your husband's as it is fitting in the Lord". This means wives are required to let their husbands take the leadership role freely and willingly in the family. The acceptance of the husband's leadership is rooted in her obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. No wife can truly submit except out of reverence for Christ. Cornes (1993) puts it this way, wives, reproduce your submission to Christ in your submission to your husbands. One flesh can become real in the home according to Paul if couples practice submission to one another in love (Enuwosa, 2022).

Kore (2012) gives this guide for the success of one flesh in the home, he argues that submission is:

- i. Doing the will of God
- ii. A heart-willingness, out of real convictions because of one's relationship, to obey the Lord
- iii. For the interest of the one being genuinely loved
- iv. Discernment on the part of the wife to please both her husband and savior always
- v. Objective and subjective from the wife's reverence toward her husband
- vi. Self-esteem on the part of the wife to her husband
- vii. A living, practical witness for Christ's sake.

This for Paul is one flesh. Submission for Paul in Kore's view does not imply:

- i. Doing things against the revealed will of God
- ii. Blind submission
- iii. Out of mere compulsion
- iv. For the husband to insist or demand that his wife must do it
- v. Inferiority intellectually or physically
- vi. Slavery of one's wife
- vii. Losing one's individuality



viii. Over-lordship by husband

In the same vein, Paul's view of a husband's responsibility to the wife is encapsulated in "sacrificial love". This is a kind of love that makes the man the "completer" of his wife, rather than a king and the wife his subject (Kore, 2012). A man's primary responsibility in the family is to care for and generally oversee the welfare of his family. It is a great burden placed on the man to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and he is not exempted from this responsibility even if his wife is not submissive or is unsaved (Oyedepo, 2005). The kind of love required is one that is demonstrated with compassion, kindness, humility, patience, generosity, courtesy, goodtemperedness, sincerity, and righteousness (Odogboro, 2010). It is the divine type of love, "Agape", which implies powerful infinity, devotion, and desire for its subject, with genuine concern for the interests and needs of the one being loved. It suggests a volitional act of the mind and appreciation for his beloved (Kore, 2012).

To "love as Christ also loved the church" is to live for the sake of his wife, always keeping her best interest at heart. He is to be his wife's servant-leader and the family's biggest servant (Mark, 1999). Going further, Mark (1999) identifies the following about the love of Christ for his people, which husband's ought to have for their wives:

- i. It is an unconditional or free love (Rom. 5: 8)
- ii. It is a volitional love. He chose to love us (Deut. 7: 7; Eph. 1: 6-7)
- iii. It is an intense love (John 13: Eph. 5: 2, 25)
- iv. It is an unending love (John 13: 1; Jer. 31: 3; Rom. 8: 39)
- v. It is an unselfish love (Phil. 2: 6 - 8)
- vi. It is a purposeful love. He works for our improvement, our development, our happiness, and our welfare (Eph. 5: 26-27}. It is a sacrificial love. He loved us and gave himself - died for us (1 Peter 3: 18; Rom. 5: 6-11; 1Peter 2: 24).
- vii. It is manifesting love. Christ manifests His love in words and deeds (John 10:1-14; 14: 13; 13: 34, 35; 15: 9-10; Rom. 8: 32; Phil. 4: 13, 19; Heb. 4: 14- 16).

Like Jesus, Paul was conceptually a liberator of all men but in practice, he is viewed as being discriminatory and limitation to please the Roman political and ethical male leaders (Schotroff, 1992). Rather than being discriminatory or wanting to please the Roman political and ethical male leaders, Udoisang (2016) posits that the freedom and independence enjoyed by upper-class Christian women caused problems in the churches when many of them became active in Christianity. Hence Paul gave the church orders and ethical injunctions that called for the observance of traditional roles for women, such as women's submission to men. The conversion of the upper-class Roman women (Acts 17: 4, 12 also brought problems. This is because in GrecoRoman native cults women had prominent roles. Some of them had titles and some led at festivals as priestesses. This religious orientation could have been responsible for the assumption of leadership roles in the churches. There was a need for a check, especially when their husbands were humiliated in the church. Such humiliation drew public ridicule in Christian communities due to the women's excesses and insubordination at home (Udoisang, 2016).

Moreover, during marriage, the right of ownership of the woman was transferred to the husband by the girl's father. Paul's injunction for the wife to submit to her own husband was to acknowledge the wife being subordinate to her husband in office but not in nature (Havilland, 1996). On the other hand, the man is required to love his wife sacrificially as Christ loves the church and gave himself for her. So, both the injunction to "submit in everything as unto the Lord and love your wife as Christ loves the church and gave himself for her", are meant to help build healthy marriages and successful families; neither of them is meant to engender discrimination, limitation nor slavery as some have interpreted them (Kore, 2012). Thus, submission of wives should not be emphasized beyond its biblical context which acknowledges reverence for Christ, and love, required of husbands should be none other but "as Christ loves the church and gave himself for her" (Ephesians 5: 22-33). In fact, one should not be elaborately buttressed without the balance of the other. The coming of Christ is not the dismantling of the originally created order of loving headship and willing submission but a recovery of it from the ravages of sin. This is exactly what Ephesians 5:22- 33 is about: the redemption of women's submission to their husbands modeled after God's intention for the church to submit to Christ, and the redemption of the loving headship of husbands modeled after Christ's sacrificial love for the church (Piper, 1989).

### **Theological Use of Submission and Love in the Context of Marriage in Providence Delta Baptist Conference.**

Marriages today according to Shakespeare, are "like a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing". There are so many activities and noise, but the essential ingredients of submission and love are absent in most marriages. As such many homes are like giants without a soul (Apoki, 2010). In the context of Providence Delta Baptist Conference, this researcher by means of participant's observation as a member, pastor, and itinerant preacher within the Providence Delta Baptist Conference has observed that the correct theological interpretation of submission and love in Ephesians 5:22-33 exists among a handful of pastors and their congregations. In the same vein, the application of submission and love as theologically interpreted in this paper is scarce. More so the result of interviews carried out shows the exact same thing and more. The spiritual, social, and moral conditions of many married couples and families in Providence Delta Baptist Conference today are paradoxical to the enormous efforts of her president and pastors who preach on marriage and family life every other day. The *sitz en leben* reveals the following:

- i. There is more nominal Christianity rather than true spirituality, a situation that is inimical to the efficiency of the gospel, whether it be on true biblical practice of submission and love or on any other subject of the gospel (Eyabevwen, 2022).
- ii. The correct theological understanding of submission of women as well as that of love is not widely spread in Providence Delta Baptist Conference. Consequently, married couples

who practice submission and love as advanced in Ephesians 5:22-23 are few (Akpovbovo, 2022).

- iii. There is an endemic problem of African customs and traditions of the people in this area, especially those of the Urhobos which emphasizes submission to the point of marginalizing and enslaving women, with very little mention of how men ought to love their wives (Itefue, 2022). Many Christian married couples hold unto the traditional customs and practices of their people rather than the teachings of the scripture. Often, Urhobo men assert themselves before their wives with emphasis, “I am an Urhobo man; I am the head of the family. You have to submit to me!” (Ogadie, 2022 and Ataro, 2022).
- iv. The search for daily bread and the pursuit of financial breakthrough and prosperity has left many men unconcerned or simply careless about showing affection to their wives as they ought to. Mrs. Ugbede in an interview (2022) observed that for many husbands today it is all about making provision for the family. They have no time for emotional stuff like attention, appreciation, adoration, and other things that they ought to do to cherish their wives as commanded in Ephesians 5:25-33. On the flip side, many women today are career and businesswomen rather than “full-time” housewives. For many of these women, their careers or businesses dictate a lot about their daily lives which is often detrimental to the kind of submission commanded in Ephesians 5:22-24 (Menimor, 2022).
- v. Many high-class Christian women who are both educated and in positions of leadership are stubborn and resistant to the biblical injunction of submission (Esedafe, 2022). This has led to a lot of infighting and perennial crises among many married couples. The financial and positional empowerment of some women makes them rude to their husbands (Omohwo, 2022).
- vi. The fear of being taken for granted makes many Christian men not show love to their spouses as they should and could do (Abayovwe, 2022). Regrettably, also, the fear of the unknown tomorrow is also responsible for the lack of total submission, especially around money by many Christian women (Apochi, 2022)
- vii. It The prevalence of lawlessness and ungodliness by children from Christian homes, cases of marital violence, separation, and divorces appear to be at an all-time high. This clearly reveals both the lack or scarcity of the understanding and application of the biblical concept of submission and love as contained in Ephesians 5:22-33

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to elicit information from the sample from which he/she is a member through a

questionnaire and personal observation. The exegetical approach helps in establishing the originality of the text under consideration while the hermeneutical and sociological approaches are used in interpreting and applying the results. The information gathered is qualitatively treated. The study adhered to ethical considerations as all cited sources were represented and collated in references. The study took the researchers about two months where they gathered literature in developing and finalizing the write-up of the paper.

### **Findings**

The findings from the study established that submission and love could be seen as security marriages. According to Ephesians 5:22-33, there are two sides of the same coin representing the connotation of submission and love. The goal of security in this regard is to ensure there is mutual edification where married couples are within the bounds of marriage, ensuring harmony and order to the glory of God. Submission and love being seen as security measures in marriage could help to foster peace and progress amongst those whom God has joined as one flesh. Through mutual submission and showing of love, the bond of unity is strengthened. Many contemporary philosophies, concepts, and interpretations given to submission especially love in the context of Ephesians 5:22-33 are overstretched and theologically incorrect. Paul's view on the subject is to promote mutuality and order not hierarchy or duopoly in the marital relationship. Married couples, pastors, and church leaders of Providence Delta Baptist Conference, and others in general need to do more to stem the rising tide of marital crises, separation, divorce, and disintegration of families by using the theological interpretation for submission and love provided in this paper. The belief is that only a correct and committed practice of submission and love in marriage will guarantee not only the prevention but also the resolution of most marital crises. When this happens, the case of disintegration of families and the larger society will be greatly eradicated. Therefore, in the words of Paul, the apostle: wives, submit to your own husbands in everything as unto the Lord", "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her".

### **Conclusion**

The study established that submission and love are two key security ingredients that could help to build blissful marriages. Submission and love have a great effect in remolding marriage hence it is tagged as a security measure. They (submission and love) are the soul of every marital relationship. Submission and love, as the exegesis of security in this paper, go beyond role descriptions for wives and husbands. They do not represent principles of gender discrimination or hierarchy but are Christian virtues required of both wives and husbands in reverence to God and for the mutual benefit of the couple. This is true as God is the liberator of all men, therefore his characteristics of love, liberation, order, et.al. must be at the center of all theological interpretations and applications for social relationships and living generally (Bultmann, 1952). Only the true practice of love and submission will manifest the realities of husband and wife being one flesh. It is important to note that this study is not exhaustive, it has been limited to the exegesis of submission and love alone, and particularly within the context of

Ephesians 5:22-33. It was also limited to the environment of the Providence Delta Baptist Conference. However, the findings so far have raised the need for further studies on:

1. Other related texts that deal with the subject of submission and love in the context of marriage, such as 1 Peter 3.
2. How to break the cultural barriers to the true practice of submission and love.
3. Biblical perspective on gender equality and role-play in marriage.

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### Interviews

NO	NAMES	AGE	OCCUPATION	DATE	LOCATION	SEX
1.	ISIORHOVOJA, O.	50	TEACHER	7/02/22	EMEVOR	M
2.	EYABEVWEN, K.	31	CLERGY	28/04/22	LAGOS	M
3.	AKPOVBOVBO V.	48	TEACHER	2/05/22	EMEDE	F
4.	ITEFUE, G.	58	BUSINESS	20/03/22	UGHELLI	F
5.	ATARO, E.	40	BUSINESS	24/03/22	EFFURUN	M
6.	MENIMOR., B.	46	CLERGY	5/06/22	EFEURUN	M
7.	APOCHI M.E.	62	BUSINESS	5/06/22	UGHELLI	F
8.	ABAYOVWE, K.	40	CLERGY	3/06/22	WARRI	M
9.	OMOHWO, A.	48	TEACHER	4/05/22	WARRI	M
10.	OGADIE, C.L.	45	CLERGY	5/06/22	UGHELLI	M
11.	UGBEDE, P.O.	39	FARMING / CLERGY WIFE	7/06/22	UGHELLI	F
12.	. ESEDAFE, S.D.	62	RTD CIVIL SERVANT	2/06/22	UGHELLI	M