

Research shows men primarily use the left side of their brain for thinking. It makes them very good at problem solving, why us men are masters at fixing things, very talented for tasks. Women use both sides of their brain, perhaps this makes women smarter than men. Women's brains are more aware of feeling, better at emotional side of relationships. Don't believe the lie men and women are equal. They're different, distinct as God created them; celebrating these distinctions is celebrating the work of our Creator. Marriage is creator by God. God prepared the man to protect the home physically; the woman to protect the home emotionally, nurturing.

Only it doesn't always work that way. The very first marriage broke down because of selfishness. The man failed at his job, the woman too. All marriages -to be model, built upon the relationship of Christ to His Church.

St. Paul declares, **wives submit to your husbands**. The world, the media, so many take issue with those words. **will you submit**. They get it wrong. They don't understand **submit** means: gift of opportunity, duty, the desire to love and honor, show reverence and respect. Scripture even states, Jesus submitted to Mary and Joseph and would anyone dare suggest our Lord is in any way inferior. Paul does more than annoy the feminists; shows that Holy Marriage is a reflection of, the chief metaphor for, our relationship with God. After a whole list of how you are to live in Ephesian Ch. 5, that not just married folks, but all you should be sitting there uncomfortable for how you've lived, he says, **This mystery is profound, it refers to Christ and the Church**.

The Christ in perfect, sacrificial love gave Himself up for the Church, to make her holy. Cleansed her with baptismal water through the Word, presented her to Himself, without stain, holy, blameless. Thus the Church submits to Him who died for her -without fear. She knows He loves her, will never abuse, neglect, or harm her, that she need not take care of herself, but trusts in Him to take of her. This is what husbands and wives ought to be for one other: as Christ and the Church.

Marriage of God to His people, starts in Genesis, see it throughout Scripture, Jesus even speaks of marriage motifs, a wedding feast there in revelation, and even here today. But long before this marriage we have today, before the Incarnation of Christ, and there was Hosea, the unhappily married prophet; unhappy because he loves his wife; she doesn't love him. She sells herself to other men. It gets worse. For this sad state is commanded by God. Hosea is told to marry the prostitute Gomer; told to love her. God commands it. Hosea does it. He marries and loves her and he weeps over her ongoing betrayal. His life is full of disappointed longing.

His children, walking disasters, strangely named to reflect her unfaithfulness. The first child, named after a valley, once fertile land, now ravaged by war, desolate. Second child, name mean "no mercy, no pity" messaging the withdrawal of God's compassion. God hadn't changed, but Israel had. Third child, name means "not my people." The most devastating name yet. The Lord rejecting the

people of Israel in their sinful state. Israel had played the harlot, abandoned God, now the Lord was compelled to disown his people. He will not wink, nod at sin.

The most poignant scene is when Hosea must go down to the slave market; with great embarrassment, amid a jeering crowd, and buy back his wife, mother of his children, she was enslaved to a man because her earnings as a prostitute were squandered. The price of a slave is 30 pieces of silver. But this is not false disciple handing over Christ with 30 pieces of silver from the Temple treasury. He does not have that much. So he scrapes together as much as he can, but it isn't enough. He must throw in food from the family kitchen to make up the difference. Humiliating isn't a strong enough word. Nonetheless, Hosea does it. Because he still loves his unworthy, unfaithful wife, and, like God, resolved to take her back once again.

Yes, I am talking of Christ and the Church. Hosea and Gomer lived, and cheated, and cried, were lost and found, and loved. So ought husband and wife love one another. Not as Hosea and Gomer, but as Hosea to Gomer; Hosea for Gomer; Hosea with Gomer. We are called to a love that is willing to be humiliated, to suffer ourselves, a love that does not use, but which serves, like Hosea, Christ.

You and I are just like.. Gomer. Repent of your repeated unfaithfulness, for your self-serving love, wandering from your bridegroom, not heeding His words, for your longing for other things to satisfy your desires and needs.

He continually seeks you out in love for His beloved. In greatest embarrassment, amid a jeering crowd, He's humiliated. Humiliated is not strong enough word; His torture, crucifixion, death. He pays everything, to buy back His undeserving, unfaithful you. His passion is worth it to Him because each of you are worth it to Him. And it doesn't end there, for each day your perfect bridegroom cleanses you, cares, protects you.

Christian marriage must be built upon, live constantly in, the forgiveness of sins. If not, it will cease to be a true marriage. There is no other way we can live together with any joy, health apart from forgiveness in Christ. Paul talks about Christian living, marriage and ends up talking about Christ and His Sacrifice. Here is hope, not just for spouses but for the unmarried, divorced, widowed, abused, forgotten. Here is hope for Gomers, for failures, cheats and sinners.

By His grace, Christ and His Sacrifice are modeled in Holy Marriage. The radiant, blameless, forgiven Church loves, submits to Christ. What else is there? Nothing. If you're to have a holy marriage, a marriage not only made by God, but belongs to God, then there is nothing else.

There is only one thing that heals, encourages, strengthens, forgives: Christ and His sacrifice for the Church. Like Hosea loving, buying back Gomer, Jesus paying with His blood. He is faithful. He makes marriage, marriage. Come to the Wedding feast, the Sacrament. Where our faith is fed, where this marriage grows strong and hearts grow brave. Your bridegroom makes your own marriages, your own lives, new again in His love and forgiveness and does all things for the good of His beloved.