

God-Glorifying Leading and Following

November 12, 2023 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

Wives and Husbands

Children and Parents

Servants and Masters

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

^{6:1} Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Why do people often resist the idea that we're to submit to someone? How have your experiences shaped your response to submission?

Read and Discuss: Ephesians 5:22-33

1. In verse 22, Paul says to wives, "submit to your husbands, as to the Lord." What does it mean to "submit... as to the Lord" in our human relationships? How would you respond to someone who perceived this command was demeaning to women?
2. In verse 25, Paul says to husbands, "love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." What are some practical ways husbands can love their wives in this manner?
3. How can a Christian marriage following God's design serve as a symbol of the relationship between Christ and His Church (v. 32)? How can experiencing or observing a Christ-centered marriage help us to better understand the love of Christ for us?
4. What counsel would you give to a Christian wife whose husband is not showing her Christlike love? How would you advise a Christian husband whose wife is not respecting his leadership?

Read and Discuss: Ephesians 6:1-9

5. Why is it "right" that children obey their parents (v. 1)? Is it possible to obey your parents without honoring them? If so, how? Is it possible to honor your parents without obeying them? If so, how?
6. How is the goal of Christian parenting as stated in verse 4 different from the various goals of parenting we see in our culture? What are some practical ways fathers can obey this command?
7. Based on the commands in verses 5-8, what is implied about the way some bondservants may have been working for their masters? How could the principles that Paul outlines for how bondservants were to act be applied by employees today?
8. How should knowing they also have a heavenly Master (v. 9) make a difference in how Ephesian masters treated their slaves? What might employers today learn from what Paul commands here?

Pray: In all our relationships, ask God to help us walk in ways which honor Him and serve others.