

**November 10, 2019**

## **WALK AS A FAMILY**

**Ephesians 5:22-6:9**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The family is God's weapon to advance His kingdom and His glory (Genesis 1:28). It is a reflection of the gospel lived out in society demonstrating the designs of love, humility, submission, order, care, unity and holiness. As Christians, we must see family as the counter-culture design of God to be a picture of what the kingdom of heaven looks like on earth when it comes to bear on families. Paul's words are challenging and yet gloriously encouraging.

### **WIVES (Ephesians 5:22-24)**

A most controversial teaching of Paul is that of submission. It is controversial to us but in Paul's day it was clearly understood in ways that were edifying rather than demeaning, as it is often seen today. Submission simply means to line up under. Not in the loss of person or dignity, but in the posture of serving those who are given the responsibility of leadership. That submission is not to be viewed negatively one need only to know that there is submission within the relationship of the Godhead - the Trinity (John 5:19, John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 11:3). Submission, therefore, is relationally structured on the basis of biblical order. Paul said that the husband, positionally, is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:22). Therefore, a wife is to submit to her husband, not because he is always worthy of it (see 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:1) but because he occupies the divinely given position as the head of the wife. The absence of worthiness on the husband's part does not justify the lack of obedience on the wife's part since her acts of submission are to be understood, primarily, *as to the Lord* (Ephesians 5:22). In other words, submission is not only God's idea, but it is an act of worship to Him when wives honor their husbands in this way. This submission is to take place *in every way* (Ephesians 5:24) meaning in every matter. It must be remembered that the gospel is free but its demands are not easy and they are counter-culture. Thus, because a teaching is rejected by the masses does not mean it is wrong. In fact, it may well mean that it is right!

### **HUSBANDS (Ephesians 5:25-33)**

The submission of the wife to the husband is to be made easier by the husband who understand and acts accordingly to his role and responsibilities. The husband is to demonstrate an undying as well as an unconditional love for his bride (Ephesians 5:25). This means that husbands are to treat their wives in the same way Christ treated His Bride – the church: He washed her in the Word and sacrificed His life for her. He did this, not when the Bride became worthy and beautiful but while she was yet in sin and rebellion (Romans 5:8). So too, must a husband deal with the frailties and sins of his wife. What is amazingly difficult, far more than the submission of the wife to the husband, is the need for the husband to make his bride holy! The husband is called to so wield and the Word of God upon his wife so as to wash her with it and to work to present her as beautiful in holiness before the Lord (Ephesians 5:26-27). The wife's sanctification or growth in godliness, therefore, is the singular responsibility of the husband – her true pastor- and no other man! Husbands should not push this responsibility on another person, be it pastor, small group leader, etc. He is the called head of the wife and he is the one to whom the Lord will look as it relates to the holiness of his wife. I know that submission is hard for a woman, but I cannot help but to feel that the husband's role is highly challenging. Now, submission conveys the idea of a woman responding to her husband's leadership by lining up under him and following him. Note the

word: response. When a husband is leading and loving his wife in the ways described above I am certain that she would *willingly* and *gladly* follow such a man.

**CHILDREN** (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Children are to be taught the Word of God, specifically, the command about obeying their father and mother. Not because parents are tyrants demanding rank obedience but because a child's act of worship to God is first displayed in obedience to father and mother (Ephesians 6:1). Paul's words here are calls to a fruitful and fulfilling life (Ephesians 6:3). Obedient children would walk in the favor of the Lord and have lives that reflected such favor in a longevity of life that was spiritually prosperous. In our day, the idea of *honor* is all but lost. Honor within family, in Paul's day, was respect given to the name one carried. Honor of parents did not only take place in direct dealing with them but in the ways a child lived and behaved in every sphere of life, lest the family name be smeared. At 48 years of age I am still very conscious of honoring my parents with my behavior since I know that my failures dishonor the name I have been given.

**PARENTS** (Ephesians 6:4)

Honor to parents is hard to give when parents display actions that seem not to warrant it. It has been written that the road to juvenile delinquency leads back to the home. While it may not always be true, it is factual that negative behavior seen in children is often a reflection of the home environment from whence they come. Children are productions of parents. Now, it is true that children must honor their parents despite the behavior of parents, but it is equally true that parents cannot rightly expect honor where they have behaved in contempt. Paul reminds us, referring to the father as the head, to not *stir up anger in your children*. In other words, father must see their role as nurturing faith and love for God by being good examples of what they seek from their children. We should not run rough-shod over our children or treat them as lesser human beings. Instead, fathers must create an environment where children are honored as image bearers of the Lord and precious gifts to be nurtured in the Word such that they become extensions of the kingdom of God as they grow.