

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Week 10 - Submission Out of Reverence for Christ

Icebreaker

? We all play different roles in our daily lives. How many “hats” did you wear this week? (example: friend, spouse, coworker, employee, son/daughter...)?

Ephesians 5:21-6:9 (NIV)

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

A note on verse 21: Ephesians 5:15-21 is actually all one sentence in the original Greek. Verse 21 connects the thoughts in that sentence to what follows in this passage.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

^{6:1} Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Section	Key Words
5:21-33	
6:1-4	
6:5-9	

Part I: Ephesians 5:21

? How does our culture view the word 'submit'? What do you normally think of when you hear this word?

? What are some ways that Jesus demonstrated submission? Why should we be so focused on Jesus when we submit to one another? (See Philippians 2:1-11 for help)

Part II: Ephesians 5:22-33

? What is your initial reaction to this section about husbands and wives? What thoughts come to mind?

? Are there limits to a wife's submission to a husband?

? Why is the husband commanded to love his wife, yet the wife is commanded to respect her husband?

Part III: Ephesians 6:1-4

? What responsibilities do parents and children have toward one another?

? What does it mean to obey your parents 'in the Lord'? What does it mean to honor your parents?

? How does this change as a child becomes an adult? Is it possible to honor your parents without obeying them? What if your parents aren't believers?

Part IV: Ephesians 6:5-9

? What is a modern-day American parallel to the servant/master relationship?

? How does God feel about slaves? (Hint: think Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt) Does this influence your view of these commands?

? What do servants and masters have in common v.9? How does this shape the biblical dynamic between a slave and master?

Part V: Summary

? What is the ultimate goal, mission, or purpose of the husband/wife, child/parent, and master/servant dynamic?

? How can Jesus serve as an example for you in your interpersonal relationships? (See v29, Mark 10:45, Phil 2:5-7)

For Discussion and Accountability

? Is there a particular role in which you often struggle to achieve Paul's ideal as listed in the passage?
How can you look to Christ for help to obey God in that role?