

Episode #1035 Ephesians 6 Part 1-Submission: Children and Slaves

I. In Ephesians 1-3, the Holy Spirit revealed to us all the glorious things that are true of us “in Christ.” Now, in Ephesians 4-6, we are told of the “worthy walk” that we should live in love and gratitude to God for the glorious position we have received.

II. In Ephesians 5:21-25, we saw that we are to submit to one another in the fear of Christ, yet there are still situations where submission is particularly appropriate. First is the wives are to submit to the husbands. Yet there is a response on the husband’s part: to love the wives. These things work best when they are present together. Next, we consider children and parents.

III. Submission – Wives to Husbands Conclusion.

A. Ephesians 5:31. Refers to Genesis 2:24. Adam and Eve were of the same flesh together in Adam, separated into two beings, and rejoined by marriage. A man is to separate himself (in his mind and heart) from his parents and instead be joined to his wife, and the two of them are to consider themselves as one flesh in unity. An important lesson from Genesis 2 for all married couples to learn.

B. Ephesians 5:32. Paul reveals a great secret to us.

1. Paul turns the tables on us unexpectedly. Since verse 25 we thought he has been talking about husbands and wives, and illustrating their relationship by Christ and His ekklesia. Here he reveals that he has really been talking about Christ at the ekklesia, and using husbands and wives as the illustration!
2. We need to understand this great ekklesia, for we will be a part of it. Indeed, we should consider ourselves in a similar relationship to Christ even now!

C. Ephesians 5:33. In spite of the greater truth of Christ and the ekklesia, the message regarding husbands and wives still applies. The husbands individually need to love their wives as they love themselves, even as Christ loves the ekklesia as He loves Himself since He has made them of Himself by pouring into them His character. The wife, moreover, needs to reverence her husband as the ekklesia is to reverence Christ.

D. Conclusion: These things work best if they are both true together. These things are very true and important. These are the commands that our families should be modeled after. This is truth for today regarding marriage. Let any follower of Christ ignore these commands to the believer of today at his peril, and at the peril of his marriage. This is the way God intends our marriages to be.

IV. Submission - Children to parents.

A. Ephesians 6:1. The next case when submission between believers is particularly appropriate: children to their parents. They need to obey (or hearken submissively to) them. It is simply the right thing to do for children to acknowledge the authority of their parents over them. Yet this is to be done in the Lord! They are not to listen to their parents if they tell them things contrary to the Lord.

B. Ephesians 6:2. They are to “honor your father and mother.”

1. This was part of the ten commandments! Exodus 20:12.
2. Not the “first commandment” of the ten. The word “first” might also mean most significant or chief. The ten commandments are divided into four regarding man’s relationship to God, and six regarding man’s relationship to each other. This is the first commandment regarding man-to-man, and it is also the first commandment with a specific promise attached for keeping it.

3. Ephesians 6:3. The promise is dispensationally altered. Originally it spoke of the “land,” which was true for Israel, but Paul is now writing to all nations equally (Ephesians 3:6), so now it is “a long time on the earth.”
 4. Does this mean one who honors his father and mother is guaranteed a long life free of accidents, murders, illness, ect? Not necessarily.
 - a. First of all, this is a precept, and precepts are generally true, not always specifically true in every instance.
 - b. Secondly, this may well be speaking of living long in the kingdom of God on this earth, not in this life. This does not guarantee life then, but this is one behavior that leads in that direction.
- C. Ephesians 6:4. The fathers have a response: not to provoke their children to anger.
1. There are many ways fathers can do this. One is to be absent from their lives!
 2. God's way is to be nurturing. This should be in discipline (training, not just punishment). Also be in admonition of the Lord (explaining to them what is right in a way to encourage them to do what is right). Children know very little, and need the wisdom of their parents in order to know how to live life. It is the father's responsibility to admonish them.
- V. Submission - Slaves to masters.
- A. Ephesians 6:5. The third way when submission between believers is particularly appropriate: slaves to masters.
1. He wants it clear he is talking about human masters, not our heavenly Master.
 2. We could compare this to employees and employers.
 3. Notice: this is not a statement condoning slavery, but speaking in a society where slavery exists, how should slaves act?
 4. They are to hearken submissively with fear and trembling. A respectful and submissive attitude, beyond just the actions! They are to submit with a single heart, not reluctantly or only sometimes.
 5. As unto Christ! This is a good attitude for us when we have to submit to those over us: think of it as if for Christ, and not for the human master.
 6. Ephesians 6:6. No eye-slavery, or only looking like a good slave when the master's eyes are on them, a man-pleasing slave. As slaves of Christ, His eyes are always on them. They are doing the will of God by doing so. They are to act from the soul, which means from the core of their beings, especially from their emotions. They should want to submit!
 7. Ephesians 6:7. They should have good will toward their masters, not always grumbling or wishing them ill. Ultimately, as slaves to the Lord, not to men.
 8. Ephesians 6:8. They might never get the thanks or recognition they deserve from their masters. Yet the ultimate reward will be from the Lord, not from men. He will reward all for their behavior, whether they be slave or free.
- B. Ephesians 6:9. The masters have a response: to treat them much the same way.
1. Imagine a master treating his slave like the slave treats him! This would eliminate much of the difference between them. Perhaps that is God's point.
 2. Masters are to refrain from threatening their believing slaves, knowing that they have their own Master in the heavens. The Lord is the true Master, and He will not prefer masters in judgment over slaves, but will judge all with impartiality. Masters should remember His judgment in how they treat slaves.

V. Conclusion: Submission is something that God wants us to be skilled at. First we must all submit to one another as believers. It is not our place to lord it over each other! Then, we must submit when God asks us to: wives to husbands, children to parents, slaves to masters. Not because we must, but out of love for Him. This is all an essential part of our worthy walk.