

## Serving Our Families

We have seen that “the Jesus mission” involves loving our neighbors in our city, our world, our workplace, loving well in our friendships, and now we see it involves serving our families. In all these various venues of the Jesus mission, there is an indispensable element we all must have in order to carry out the mission: an intimate knowledge of Jesus Himself and his cross-shaped method of living. As we look at our passage during this group we will see that serving our families is no exception to this call for God’s people to be about the Jesus mission in all of life:

### **Ephesians 5:22–6:4**

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband

<sup>6:1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Let’s observe two primary ideas in this text:

### **1. The Jesus Mission in serving families involves wives & husbands who trust God’s design**

Paul explicitly states that the way a husband and wife are apart of the Jesus mission in serving families is A) Wives submit to your husbands and B) Husbands love your wives. Paul’s imperative for wives to submit to their husbands is part of a litany of the New Testament that incorporates Colossians 3, I Peter 3, Titus 2, among others. Wives submitting to their husbands means for them to respect their authority and to order their life under his headship. When women express frustration over this design, questioning the goodness of God, then we are rebelling against God’s word and falling into the same trap as our first mother Eve while also experiencing the aspect of the curse articulated in Genesis 3:16. While it is the sin in the heart of the wife that leads to the rebellion against God’s design of submitting to her husband it is also the sinful abuse of the design by men who have made the word “authority” a dirty word for many of us. But, regardless, wives are called to submit in all things as the church submits to Christ.

The call for Husbands to love their wives means that husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the church. How did he love the church? Jesus died on the cross to take the curse away from his church. He absorbed the effects of the curse upon and within himself so that we may experience life everlasting. Christ lived as a servant and died as a slave so that the church could be edified, glorified, purified, and holy. Christ lived as a servant and died as a slave so that the church could be presented in splendor, without spot or wrinkle. Jesus absorbed the curse so the church could experience blessing. And Paul says this is how a husband should love his wife. This sort of love for a wife is how a husband serves his family. Paul reinforces this call for a husband to love his wife by using the imagery of a man protection, nourishing, and cherishing his own body saying that in the same way a husband is to love his wife and one tangible manifestation of this love should be the removal of the effects of the curse she experiences in her call to submission. Your wife should welcome your headship because of your love and service.

The authority Paul stands on for his bold proposal is found in Genesis 2 and God's design for the husband and wife and it is summarized in 5:33 where he writes, "each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

## **2. The Jesus Mission in serving families involves Children & Father's who trust God's design**

Paul explicitly states that the way a child and a father are a part of the Jesus Mission in serving families is through A) Children Obeying and B) Fathers raising. Paul's imperative for children to obey their parents is supported by the 10 commandments and is coupled with a reminder of the covenantal blessing of life. Obeying for the children is not a matter of outward conformity of obedience but rather a heart stance where respect, appreciation, dignity, and the worth of your parents and the positions of authority God has given to them.

Father's are called to participate in the Jesus mission through loving their families through raising their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This explicitly means that they are not to provoke their children to anger or use Scripture as a weapon but to model the love of Christ for His Church with their lives so that when they discipline them and instruct them the Father's have already become what they are calling their children to.

It is important to remember that we can only submit because Jesus submitted to the Father's will for Him. We can only truly loved because we were first loved by God who demonstrated His love through sending His son to die for us. We can only truly obey because Jesus was obedient to death, even death on a cross, and we can only raise in the discipline and instruction of the Lord because our Heavenly father discipline's us and instructs us with his word and His work. Being a part of the Jesus mission in serving our families is not self resolve, or trying harder, but being transformed by the word of God so we can live in the shape of God for the glory of God.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Why do we struggle to trust God's design for life, marriage, and family? What are competing designs we find ourselves being shaped by?
- 2) How do the metaphors that Paul uses of Christ's relationship to the church bolster his call for wives and husbands to trust God's design in submitting and loving?
- 3) Why is it difficult for husbands to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands?
- 4) What difference does honoring make in the children's obedience of their parents and how does that look in everyday life?
- 5) Why do Fathers provoke their children?

### Digging Deeper

- 1) Read through Philippians 2:1-5 and discuss how the realities Paul calls believers to speaks to serving our families.
- 2) Memorize Philippians 2:1-5 and talk with your family about how it should make a difference in your relationships.

### Suggested reading:

[Intimate Allies](#)

*by Longman & Allender*

[Love & Respect](#)

*Dr. Emerson Eggerichs*

[Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining and Bad Attitudes in Your Kids](#)

*Scott Turnsky &*

*Joanne Miller*