

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 7/18/16

Letter To The Ephesians

Christian Relationships

Scripture Portions: Ephesians 5: 22-33 and 6: 1-19

²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ² Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; ³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. ⁴ And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. ⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; ⁶ Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; ⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: ⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. ⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all

perseverance and supplication for all saints; ¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

The importance of this subject is seen by the fact that the Holy Spirit has devoted such a large proportion of this letter to the relationships which should exist between Christian husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants.

- **There is nothing more beautiful on earth than a Christian home.** In this portion of scripture we have an inspired picture of what God intends a Christian home to be, and of what it is possible for it to be with His enabling.
- **The Christian life must be lived effectively first and foremost in the home.** We are to carry our Christian experience into every relationship of life - personal, social, business, professional, recreational, etc., but first it must operate in the domestic sphere - look up and compare Mark 5: 19 and Luke 8: 39. Our lives must tell and our lips must tell first in the home - look up also 1 Timothy 5: 4 and Titus 2: 5.
- **The hardest place to live a really consistent life is in the home.** This is because it is here that we most easily cast off restraint, and unless we have learned God's way of victory and God's plan for harmonious living, there is bound to be discord and friction.
- **The greatest testimony we can offer to the world is a happy, harmonious and peaceful Christian home.** In the home Christianity is seen in action - look up 2 Kings 4: 8-10.
- **God has made provision for every one of His children to live a consistent Christian life in the home.** That provision is the infilling of the Holy Spirit - Ephesians 5: 18. God's ideal for a home is only possible of attainment by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

How, then, should believers behave in the exacting relationships of domestic life? The answer is in verse 21. In other words, the secret of a happy and a harmonious home is mutual submission; not proud resistance, not striving to stand up for one's "rights", but a loving consideration of the other person, a mutual respect and loyalty, a Christ-like spirit. Consider in detail the relationships mentioned.

1. WIVES, submit to your husbands (5: 22-24 and 33).

These are not man's ideas, they are God's instructions. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands "as to the Lord...in everything." The Lord is the Head of the Body, the Church, and thus He cares for the Church, provides for it and protects it. The husband is to do this for his wife, and thus the wife is to submit herself to him as her head. "It is not a question of the superiority of the husband and the inferiority of the wife, but of the respective positions God, in His sovereign wisdom, has assigned to each." From Creation this has been God's order - see Genesis 2: 21-23 - and if the order is reversed there will always be trouble.

2. HUSBANDS, love your wives (5: 25-33).

The husband is to love his wife "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" - that is, with a love that is unselfish and sacrificial. How often there is lack of thoughtful consideration and of understanding on the part of the husband, and how frequently this causes unhappiness in the home! A husband's love for his wife must operate in every phase of the matrimonial, domestic and social life, which includes the more intimate relationships as well as those that are observed by others.

3. CHILDREN, obey your parents (6: 1-3).

These verses give us God's order for a Christian home, and it is the only kind of home that He recognises. What a need there is today for children to give heed to verse 2! - look up 2 Timothy 3: 1-3, and notice that disobedience to parents is one of the signs of the apostasy of "the last days". In our Lord Jesus Christ we have the perfect example of obedience - look up Luke 2: 51.

4. PARENTS, bring your children up for the Lord (6: 4).

Notice that this verse begins with a note of warning: "Do not exasperate your children" - look up Deuteronomy 6: 6-9. What a sacred ministry is entrusted to those who have children to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" - compare Proverbs 22: 6.

5. SERVANTS, be obedient to your masters (6: 5-6).

In Ephesus there were slaves in most households, and that is why the Holy Spirit has included this master-servant relationship here. What a high standard is expected from servants! We are to work for our earthly master just as if he were our heavenly Master (verses 5 and 7). This means that we shall not watch the clock, we shall not be late, lazy or disloyal - and God will surely reward us (verse 8).

6. MASTERS, consider the welfare of your servants (6: 9).

This means that employers are to give the same consideration as they expect and to which they are entitled from their employees. Here is food for thought for all employers!

These are God's rules for happy, holy and harmonious human relationships, and they are only possible as we live in obedience to Ephesians 5: 18 - that is, as wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters seek to live their lives under the control of and in obedience to the Holy Spirit.