

The Epistle to the Ephesians

“United by a Moment”

A New Way of Relating

Eph. 5:21 – 6:9

One of the noticeable differences of God’s people is to have an attitude of submission to authority that God has placed over us (Eph. 5:21), namely the church submitting to Jesus (Eph. 5:24), wives submitting to husbands (Eph. 5:22-33), children submitting to parents (Eph. 6:1-4), and slaves submitting to masters (Eph. 6:5-9). This teaching about authority and respect for authority can seem strange to our modern ears, which indicates they may be filled with more worldliness than wisdom.

Since Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth, then discipleship (true Christianity) is measured not simply by what I believe, but by how I live my life in relation to the rule of Jesus. There is a big difference between “confessional Christianity” and “functional Christianity”. Confessional – confesses they are Christ believers and Jesus is Lord etc. but functionally they do not live out a life of their confession (martyrdom) – they live with something other than Jesus at the center.

In other words, the gospel should impact every area of my life. If Jesus is the reigning Lord of heaven and earth, then discipleship (true Christianity) is measured not simply by what I believe, but by how I live my life in relation to the rule of Jesus in my marriage. (and in my relationship with my parents, and in my workplace etc)

Jesus at the Center of my Marriage (5:22-33)

The Bible describes marriage with Jesus at the center -- he is the reference point for everything (Ephesians 5:22-32) – because marriage is designed to display the gospel.

If marriage is designed to display the gospel, then placing anything else at the center of a marriage is the equivalent of placing something else at the center of the gospel -- it loses its meaning.

We easily confess we have a gospel-centered marriage and Jesus is the center, but what is your life declaring functionally?

Reorienting:

If your marriage is centered on anything other than Jesus, it has lost its meaning and must be reoriented to Jesus. This happens through faith and repentance.

Headship implies the husband is the tie-breaker – but he must do so by choosing that which best serves his wife and brings her closer to Jesus and His priorities. Head does not mean he gets to boss her around. Jesus has a bride – and the husband has a bride and he is to treat his bride like Jesus treats His bride! A husband must take it upon himself to suffer – to do what is necessary to make the relationship flourish. The head is supposed to lay his life down – die if necessary.

Your marriage is a proclamation of the gospel. Be on mission – husband, love your wife to make her lovely, and wife, respect your husband into respectability!

Jesus at the Center of my Parent – Child Relationship (6:1-4)

The most fundamental task of a mother and father is to show God to the children.

Parents, disciple your children.

- Discipleship is not a curriculum.
- Discipleship is not done in a classroom.
- Discipleship is not something you make an appointment for.

Christian parenting is simply discipleship. You are teaching your children how to relate to Jesus – especially through their observation of you.

What kind of disciples are you developing – North American Dream focused or Kingdom Dream?

North American Dream

- Individualism
- Security
- Consumerism

Kingdom Dream

- Gospel-Community
- Gospel-Risk
- Gospel-Giving

• Anger Arises Against Authority

In verse 4 of chapter 6, Paul warns against provoking anger because anger is the most common emotion of the sinful heart when it confronts authority. Dad embodies authority. Apart from Christ, the child embodies self-will. And when the two meet, anger flares. A two-year-old throws a tantrum and a teenager slams the door—or worse. So Paul tells us there is going to be plenty of anger with the best of parenting, so make every effort, without compromising your authority or truth or holiness, to avoid provoking anger. Consciously be there for the child with authority and truth and holiness in ways that try to minimize the response of anger.

• Replacing Anger with Joy

When Paul says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,” don’t just “*put off*” doing things that provoke anger; “*put on*” those things that remove anger—overcome anger. Start doing things that awaken in the heart of a child other wonderful emotions so that they are not devoured by anger. The main task in all this is that you overcome your own anger and replace it with tenderhearted joy. Joy that spills over onto your children. In other words, being the kind of father God calls us to be means being the kind of Christian and the kind of husband God calls us to be.

Jesus at the Center of my Work (6:5-9)

We don’t have slavery here – and so you might think we can just skip this section – because none of us here is a slave and none of us here is a slave master. But we must look at how this truth impacts us where we live. There is a definite connection that can be made with employee and employer. (People in authority and people under authority).

If you are a Christian, who do you ultimately work for? Jesus. If you are a boss – you also have a boss – Jesus. Motivate in humility by example like Jesus.

Is Jesus servant or master? YES. He is the King of all kings and Lord of all lords who came and washed His disciple’s feet. Who left all the glories of heaven – to be on earth in poverty with no place to lay His head and suffered and died a horrible death. He took responsibility for our sin. He provides us with both the example and the transforming power of change through the gospel.