

# Love and Respect

1. (Slide 4) Goal of this command is Love... 1 Tim 1:5
  - a. Paul is going to give instructions to husbands and wives about life in the household. The instructions have a goal... It is important to keep the goal in mind especially when dealing with practical instructions that are given to a culture that is very different than our own. Before we get there, let's review
2. Recap
  - a. Paul has been dealing with two primary themes throughout Ephesians. The discussion about marriage is not an entirely new topic, it is a further application of the same topic
  - b. (Slide 5) Individually –
    - i. New creation (workmanship) that is forgiven, holy and blameless, adopted into God's family, sealed with the Spirit and recreated in the image and likeness of God. A new Adam and a new Eve.
      1. Because of this truth we are to be imitators of God in thought and action. Because you are like God, you are supposed to think and act like God.
      2. Marriage is going to be a relationship where each person is called to reflect the image of God to the other and to be an imitator of God.
  - c. (Slide 6) Corporately
    - i. Also a new creation – joined to Jesus, reconciled to each other and to the Father, filled with the Holy Spirit, rooted and grounded in love, filled and overflowing with love.
      1. One Body with Christ as head, a temple with Christ as cornerstone, A Church, a new collective humanity reflecting God's image and character into the world.
      2. Because of this truth we are to engage in the thoughts and behaviors which promote the building up and maturity of the body. These are the same thoughts and behaviors that we use individually to imitate God.
        - a. We might summarize these behaviors as mutual love and mutual submission Or mutual love and mutual respect.
      3. Marriage is going to be a relationship where we get to reflect the image and character of God as a unit, as one body, as a mini temple or a mini Church, if you will. The Christian marriage is also a new creation, created to be like God. Together husband and wife are called to reflect God to the household, to the Church and into the culture around them.
3. (Slide 7) Additional Background Information – Household Code
  - a. Aristotle and others had written 'household codes'. These were addressed to the head of the household (usually the male) and were instructions about how he was to govern and keep order in his home. Never addressed to the other members, the theme was control, keeping order and using authority. No mention of love.
  - b. "Greco-Roman discussion is about how the master of the house should manage and exercise authority in his household—he is to rule his slaves like a despot, his children like a king, and his wife treating her as a rational being but one without inherent authority (Aristotle, *Politics* 1259a37, 1260a9).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Witherington, B., III. (2007). [\*The letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians : a socio-rhetorical commentary on the captivity Epistles\*](#) (p. 320). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

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- c. The very fact that in a household code Paul addresses the other members of the household (thus giving them dignity and value) would have raised eyebrows in their culture.
  - d. Churches frequently met in homes and the church was in many ways a collection of extended households. The instructions to the Household are therefore really just an address to a “small group” within the church. Therefore, everything we have covered in Ephesians is relevant instruction for marriage and household relationships.
4. (Slide 8) The Immediate Context
- a. Being filled with the Holy Spirit (5:18)
  - b. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21)
    - i. Submission is mutual in the church and also in the household.
    - ii. The motive is out of respect (fear) and honor of the Lord.
  - c. Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... (5:2)
    - i. This is the same instruction given to husbands.
    - ii. We are called to mutual loving.
5. Body of the message – 2 relationships explored – Husband and Wife and Christ and the Church.  
Let’s look at the second one first
- a. (Slide 9) Christ and the Church (:25-27, 31-32)
    - i. Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her – (5:2)
      - 1. Agape love – concern for what is best for the other.
      - 2. Sacrifice on the cross
    - ii. Goal
      - 1. Sanctify her – make her holy, set her apart to Himself
      - 2. (Slide 10) Having cleansed her – purification
        - a. Washing with water through the word
        - b. Bridal purification bath (Esther 2:12 – 12 months) – Make her as beautiful as she can possibly be for the wedding day. which would have been performed by the bride’s attendants. Here Christ is the one who does the washing
        - c. In the OT Israel is depicted as God’s bride (Ezek 16:1-14, Hosea)
        - d. How does Jesus wash us with water through the word?
          - i. Clean through the word (John 15:3)
          - ii. Clean through the cross (John 13)
          - iii. Clean through baptism (Rom 6:3-4)
    - 3. Why
      - a. Present her to himself
      - b. Splendor – Glorious, splendid, honored
      - c. Without spot or wrinkle, holy, blameless. All sin, stain, damage and signs of aging removed.
        - i. All because of His work
    - iii. The two shall become one flesh
      - 1. The hidden mystery now revealed
      - 2. Gen 2:24 – Also refers to Christ and the Church
        - a. One more picture to describe the wonder of what God has done for us through Christ and the eternal plan that He has for us.

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## b. Wives & Husbands

### c. (Slide 11) Wives

- i. The fact that he addresses her as a rational being who can think and respond for herself, is already shocking in that culture.
- ii. Submit
  1. Meaning of the word
    - a. Hypotasso – to place under, to arrange, subject oneself, to submit voluntarily, to defer.
  2. Borrowed from vs 21 – ties the wife’s submission to our mutual submission to one another. In this case, husbands are not being told that submission does not apply to them, but the wife’s submission is being spotlighted.
  3. Not obedience, not to other husbands and men
  4. Husbands don’t make wives submit
- iii. Unto the Lord - motive
  1. Could mean submit yourself to your husband as you would to Jesus (Eph 6:5 – as you would to the Lord) or
  2. Submit yourself to your husband to honor the Lord (see vs. 21 & Col. 3:18 as is fitting in the Lord)
- iv. Head
  1. The word can mean source (headwaters of a river) or authority
    - a. Some amount of authority seems to be the meaning here.
    - b. The imagery itself however does not indicate how this headship is to be exercised. Barth is probably right that v. 25 suggests that it means that the husband is to “go ahead” or take the lead or initiative in active loving and self-sacrificial service as Christ has done in relationship to the church. “Head” then means head servant, and refers to a sort of servant leadership (cf. Luke 22:25ff.).<sup>2</sup>
    - c. So the emphasis is not on “being the boss” it is on servant leadership.
- v. In Everything
  1. Sets forth a general principle. Does not include times when the husband is abusive or advocating sin. (Williamson, pg. 161)
- vi. Respect her husband
  1. Literally “fear” – indicates an honor and reverential respect.
  2. According to Craig Keener respect is the only practical instruction given in this passage as to what “submission” means.
- vii. Sarah Sumner by way of Peter S. Williamson: “Sarah Sumner, an evangelical theologian, explains the relationship of husband and wife in light of the New Testament statements...about the relationship between God the Father and Jesus. God puts all things under Christ (Eph. 1:22, Heb 2:8) and then Christ places himself in subjection to the Father (1 Cor. 15:27-28). But the Father also exalts Christ to the right hand of God so that ultimately Christ shares one throne with the Father (Rev. 5:12-13; 22:1-3). “The Father delights to share his seat of power with the

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<sup>2</sup> Witherington, B., III. (2007). *The letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: a socio-rhetorical commentary on the captivity Epistles* (p. 328). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

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Son.... There is trust within the Trinity not competition. Therefore, Christ is not unwilling to be subject to God (1 Cor. 11:3). Nor is God unwilling to share his seat of power with him.... The Father exalts the Son to the highest place (Phil 2:9-10) 'so that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father' (John 5:23)." Christ, in turn, exalts his bride, the Church, giving her a share in his ministry and in his reign (Eph. 2:6, 2 Tim 2:12; Rev. 22:5). Sumner sees God's headship of Christ as the key to understanding how the husband and wife can be equals even though the husband is designated the head. "It's the husband's responsibility to exalt his wife as God exalts Christ and Christ exalts the Church. It's up to the husband to ensure that his wife is honored no less than he."<sup>3</sup>

viii. Summary – the wife is called on to submit or defer to the husband, primarily through giving him respect. Her submission is not one sided but is a manifestation of mutual submission in the Church and in marriage. There is headship, but headship is given as a means to love, honor and care not to rule and dominate.

## d. (Slide 12) Husbands

i. Love wives as Christ loved the church and Gave Himself up for her

1. This is borrowed from Eph. 5:2. We are all called to mutual love for one another, including the wife being called on to love the husband. Here we are spotlighting the husband's love.
2. Love and submission will also apply to children and slaves... Doesn't need to be repeated because it has already been covered.
3. Sacrificial servant hearted love – see John 13. Laying down your life.
  - a. Thinking about what is best for the other and laying down His life.

ii. To enhance her splendor and her glory (vss. 25-27)

1. The practical details of what Christ has done for the church are unique to Christ's work. However, the result of that work – that the bride thrives, is free, is clean, finds healing and wholeness and comes into the fulness of all that she was called to be. This is to be the kind of result that a husband's sacrificial love should bring about in his wife's life. To quote Sarah Sumner again, "It's the husband's responsibility to exalt his wife as God exalts Christ and Christ exalts the Church. It's up to the husband to ensure that his wife is honored no less than he."

iii. As if she was your own body – you are one

1. Nourishes (provide food for) and Cherishes (warm, tenderly care for)
2. Just as Christ cares for His body the husband should take care of His body.
3. You have been joined together as one flesh, therefore the way you treat your wife is the way you are treating yourself.
4. Imagine the head of a body only feeding the head, or washing the head or seeking the comfort of the head, or providing clothing for the head.
  - a. A head that only thinks about the head is foolish.
  - b. Therefore, he who loves his wife loves himself.

iv. How does a husband relate to a wife that brings out the best in who she is, allows her full potential to be expressed, removes fear, anxiety, shame and a lack of dignity so that her full glory and honor can be seen?

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<sup>3</sup> Sumner, Sarah. (2003) *Men and Women in the Church* (P. 176). Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity

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- v. This all sounds very noble, but in our modern culture it sounds very patronizing as if a wife needs her husbands help in order to shine... let's come back to this in a minute.
- e. (Slide 13) The closing word on mutual submission and love in marriage
  - i. Wives respect your husbands – Reverential respect and honor
  - ii. Husbands love your wives as you love yourself – Make sure that they receive the same care, value, honor, dignity, love, provision that you do. Use your headship to elevate her to share it with you.

## 6. Conclusion

- a. How do we embrace this text without feeling patronized or devalued?
  - i. Paul's goal was to elevate the value of women against their cultural backdrop by addressing her as a thinking person and by adjusting the husband's leadership role from that of dominant lord to that of a servant leader.
  - ii. Paul wants the husband-wife relationship to be a life-giving relationship filled with mutual love, respect and service so that both members of the marriage will thrive. To get there, he is asking both persons to lay down their rights and embrace responsibilities and behaviors that will be life-giving for the other.
  - iii. Paul wants the marriage relationship to be an accurate picture and image of Christ for the sake of the kids and other household members and for the sake of the surrounding culture. The marriage relationship should be attractive to others.
  - iv. Paul believes that there is such a thing as functional headship within a marriage that is rooted in the functional headship that God the Father has in relation to Christ. But that all members are equally valuable. The specific outworking of this headship needs to be a matter for the wife and husband to pray over and dialogue about.
  - v. Paul believes that whatever role one has, its purpose is mutual care, support and service. Our roles are to be used to elevate others, not dominate them.
  - vi. Paul appeals to our desire to honor the Lord in all things as the basis for accepting and applying scriptural principles that make us uncomfortable.
  - vii. If you struggle with the details and with the words used, then focus on the big picture. A healthy marriage characterized by love and respect where both partners serve, love and honor one another. Where each person is seeking to reflect Jesus to the other and where you are growing together, building one another up in love so that Jesus will be shown to your kids and household, to the Church and to the culture around you.
- b. (Slide 14) Question for reflection
  - i. How healthy is your marriage?
  - ii. If you are struggling, is it possible that one of the reasons is that one or both of you is focusing more on your rights than your responsibilities?
  - iii. If you are struggling in your marriage, and dialogue isn't working, for whatever reason. Then please come and speak with Tom or someone in our church leadership. We are not all counselors, but we can pray for you and we can connect you with people who are. Your marriage, and what God wants to do in and through you, are too important. This is one of the ways we love one another and build one another up.