

A STUDY ON EPHESIANS

Week 4

Ephesians 5:21-6:24

**Being the true Church
through the members of the Church**

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Ephesians 5:21-33, Husband and wife in marriage

Ephesians 5:21-24

- v. 21 - Out of respect for Christ nobody should think they are better or more important than others in the Body of Christ. Each should be ready to serve the other.
 - vv. 22-24 - Paul addresses the wives first, and encourages them to accept the leadership of the men as they would accept the Lord leading them. However it is extremely important not to misinterpret the nature of the husband's leadership: This is NOT a "boss" mentality, a top-down type of ruling of a household. This leadership requires from the husband to lead his wife as Christ is leading the Church! And how is Christ doing that? By serving! Christ led through a servant-leadership model—He saved the Church out the claws of sin! This servant-leadership style exercised by a husband is what a wife is called upon to accept.
 - ❖ How does this call on mutual respect, in combination with a servant-leadership model, influences your view on husbands leading their wives?
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Ephesians 5:25-33

- v. 25 - Husbands should hear that they need to love their wives, be loyal and faithful to them, and fulfill their responsibilities as Christ would do for the Church. And husbands should remember—Christ even gave His life for the Church when it was needed!
- vv. 26-27 - Christ gave His everything so that the Church would only belong to God, and with nothing in the Church out of line with what God wants. Christ did this through baptism and the Word. In this way one day the Church will be with Christ in indescribable glory. That day there will be nothing wrong with the Church, and nobody would be able to point a finger at the Church either. That day the Church will only belong to God, and only be there for God.
- vv. 28-29 - Husbands should love their wives as they love themselves. A husband who loves his wife, actually loves himself as well, because they are truly one in marriage. Paul shares

that he has yet to hear about someone hating himself with a passion... Of course not! People would rather want to look with great care after themselves.

- vv. 30-31 - This is what Jesus does with the Church, because the Church is like His own Body. Remember Genesis 2:24 says that a man will leave his parents to live with his wife, and the two will become like one.
 - vv. 32-33 - This type of union between husband and wife is something that we can't always completely wrap our minds around, but it does teaches us something about the strong bond between Christ and His Church. This should also be true for marriages: Every husband should love his wife as he loves himself, and every wife should respect her husband.
- ❖ What struck you with this comparison of the relationship between Jesus and the Church, and then husbands and wives.

Ephesians 6:1-9, Take special care of your relationships

Ephesians 6:1-3

- vv. 1-3 - Children should listen to their parents, as this is what God expects from them. God tells kids through Deuteronomy 5:16 to respect their fathers and mothers, and this is also the first law where God promises something—so that things will go well with you, and so that you will have a long and great life.
- ❖ How is your relationship with your parents? Do you experience God's blessing over your life as you reflect on your relationship with your parents?

Ephesians 6:4

- v. 4 - Dads should not treat their children in a manner that they don't want to listen to them anymore and rebel against them. Children should rather be raised as the Lord expects from us.

Teach them what to do, and help them to stay on the right path, even if you need to be strict from time to time. Stability in a household is so important, especially in our world that can so easily become confusing. Children are surely a gift from God's Hand, so we should raise them well. Children should be taught that life is built on respect and obedience to our Lord. There are right and wrong in this world—sometimes a "yes" is appropriate, but hearing "no" is just as important. Parents need to be able to say *both* at the applicable moments. Parents have the right to have opinions and rules, based upon their experience, wisdom and following the Lord. They should also have clear, reasonable boundaries, that they should stand on. Parents have to remember that kids ultimately belong to God, and should be raised to the honor and glory of their Heavenly Father. Parents therefore never say one thing and do another—they are living sermons to their children. They are open and accessible, and make time for their children—always. Parents and children should respect each other and love one another. Parents, treasure these *gifts* from God.

- ❖ How are things between you and your children, parents? Are there some things that you have identified from Ephesians that could help you in getting the kids raised to the Father's glory?

Ephesians 6:5-8

- v. 5 - If one listens with an open heart to verses 5-8 taking into consideration that this was shared to a world that had thousands of people in slavery, and then apply the advice to situations where we work for a boss, a manager, or someone "above" us, then the wisdom from this passage can have great value. Therefore, take it to heart that the Word of God

encourages us to listen to our bosses. We should respect people in leadership and treat them honorably. Do what we do in honesty and sincerely as if we're doing it for the Lord.

- vv. 6-7 - Don't only work hard when the boss is around! Work hard and be faithful because we belong to Christ and want to do what God expects from us. Remember: We don't actually work for people, but for the Lord. Let this truth be seen in all that we do!
- v. 8 - God will reward each person for the good they do—it truly doesn't matter whether we are viewed by the world as important or not.

❖ How is this helping you to be a better employee—someone who can also honor God through your work?

Ephesians 6:9

- v. 9 - To people in leadership, for example a boss or a manager, it is important to remember that people in your care should be treated as if they are serving God (not you!). They should not be threatened all the time with something bad. Remember: We are all serving the same Lord, and He shows no favoritism—He treats all the same.
- ❖ Being in a leadership position carries a lot of responsibility. We can use this to really showcase the Lord whom we serve. How are you doing in leadership positions that you serve in? Did you find something in this passage that can help you to improve in such a role?

Ephesians 6:10-20, Stay close to the Lord in your fight against evil

Ephesians 6:10-12

- v. 10 - Paul continues to call upon believers to stand strong against evil. He emphasizes that we can only do so if we stay close to the Lord. He is the only One who is strong enough to also make us strong.
 - v. 11 - Paul uses the example of a soldier serving in a war. He says we need to put on the clothes that God is giving us to fight, so that the devil can't beat us so easily with all his evil schemes. We need to know: There is truly an ongoing war for our souls—so let us fight well!
 - v. 12 - This war is not a war like you'd find against people. It is a spiritual war against an unseen, evil enemy of the devil. However we don't need to be scared. With the right armor of God we can withstand the devil and be victorious.
- ❖ Do you sometimes experience spiritual attacks on your faith? Can you describe some of these? Take heart though that you can have victory in the Lord. If you feel anxious or fearful about these attacks on your life and your walk with the Lord, then take a moment to take this to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to clothe you with His armor.
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Ephesians 6:13-17

- vv. 13-17 - The clothes that we should be wearing to beat the devil are these:
 - v. 14a - The truth should be like a belt around our waists.
 - v. 14b - The knowledge that God had forgiven us should be like a steel plate around our chests.
 - v. 15 - Telling people about the peace that comes with Jesus should be like shoes on our feet.
 - v. 16 - Our faith, this intimate relationship that we have with the Lord, should be something that we wear like shields. Use this to fight off the flaming attacks of the devil.
 - v. 17a - As saved children of God we are not in the claws of sin anymore—it is like putting on iron helmets to protect our heads and faces.

- v. 17b - Finally our swords are the Message of God, given to us by the Holy Spirit so that we can fight to win!

❖ Which of these pieces of “clothing” do you sometimes forget to put on? How can they help you to do better against the spiritual attacks of the devil?

Ephesians 6:18-20

- v. 18 - This spiritual battle cannot be won without faithful prayer! We should always talk with the Father and let Him know what we need. The Holy Spirit is ready to help us pray! Don't be caught off guard. Pray always, no matter what happens. Also, don't forget to pray for one another—we are not alone in this spiritual battle!
- vv. 19-20 - Pray also for our spiritual leaders so that they can have the right words when they share about the Lord. Pray that they will speak boldly, without fear, even when people don't understand the truth yet and just want to retaliate. Paul is a great example: Even while being in prison for his faith, he still continued to be a great ambassador for the Lord.

- ❖ How would you describe your prayer life? Could it somehow improve?
- ❖ How are you doing when your faith is being challenged...or when you are in situations where you think it *might* be challenged?

Ephesians 6:21-24, Greetings & Blessings

Ephesians 6:21-23

- vv. 21-23 - Paul understands that the Church should know how things are with their leaders, of course especially when they are suffering...and even in prison! This is why he sent a faithful servant in the Lord, Tychicus, to them to do exactly this. Paul wants the believers to be encouraged, and not worried.

- ❖ Do you care about your spiritual leaders, and do you really know how they are? If not, how can you change that?
- ❖ If you are a spiritual leader, do you remember that you too are not alone but part of a Body, and do you share how you are doing with those you are leading? If not, how can you change that?

Ephesians 6:24

- v. 24 - Paul ends this Letter like so many others with a blessing from God. He is asking that God will give peace to the Church, and all the love and faith that they may need. He is praying that all who love our Lord forever and always, will be blessed with God's unlimited goodness.

- ❖ Who would you like to pray a blessing over today? Why don't you use Paul's blessing as an example and do that now?
