

Relationships - God's Way

There's a way the world handles relationships — and then, there's God's way. And as believers in Jesus — as people who, upon placing our faith in Him, have been adopted into the family of God — we're called to follow *His* wisdom when it comes to relationships.

CHRISTIANS SHOW THAT JESUS IS IMPORTANT BY CHOOSING GOD'S WAY IN RELATIONSHIPS.

That's what Paul teaches in *Ephesians 5:21*:

“Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” In other words, the way Christians treat each other reflects how important Jesus is to them.

Can the people closest to you tell, by the way you treat them, that Jesus is important to you?

Beginning in verse 22, Paul shows us that God has a particular structure for relationships. When Christians choose to follow that design — God's way — they show that Jesus truly matters to them. So the question is: *What is God's way to handle relationships?* Paul gives us **three examples** of relationships and teaches us God's way for each one.

Relationship #1 – Marriage: In marriage, God designed the husband to be the head and the wife to honor his position. (*Ephesians 5:22–33*)

Ephesians 5:22–33 is in the Bible because God wants to spare us unnecessary pain. These verses aren't meant to restrict joy; they're actually the pathway to it.

Jesus is the Head of the church. He's our Savior because He gave Himself for us. He took the pain so that we wouldn't have to. He suffered so that we might live. That's why He's the Head—and we, His body, gladly follow His lead because we trust His love. That same pattern applies in marriage. God designed the husband to be the head and the wife to willingly place herself under his leadership—following his lead because she trusts his love.

WIVES: “How can I be a wife my husband loves to lead?”

Respect him. Honor the position God has given him by willingly following his lead.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

HUSBANDS: “How can I be a husband my wife loves to follow?”

Love her with the same kind of love Jesus has for His bride, the church.

He died for her. He set her apart for Himself. He cleanses her with His Word. He works to make her shine. He nourishes her so she can grow into all that God wants her to be. He cherishes her like a priceless treasure. There’s nothing she could do to make Him stop loving her. He holds on to her and never gives up on her. He knows that caring for her is the same as caring for Himself, because they are one. To hurt her would be to hurt Himself. He loves her as His own body.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 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. 28 In the same way husbands should love

their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Relationship #2 – The Home: In the home, God designed parents to train and children to obey. (Ephesians 6:1–4)

CHILDREN: “How can I be a child my parents love to raise?”

Listen, obey, and honor them.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise), ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.’”

FATHERS: “How can I be a father my children love to learn from?”

Be gentle as you train them in the things of God.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Relationship #3 – The Workplace: In the workplace, God designed employees to be faithful and employers to be fair. (Ephesians 6:5–9)

EMPLOYEES: “How can I be a worker my boss loves to manage?”

Treat your boss with the same respect, sincerity, and effort you would show if your boss were Jesus Himself.

“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.”

EMPLOYERS: “How can I be an employer my employees love to work for?”

Treat your employees the same way God wants them to treat you.

“Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”