

Sermon Notes and Discussion Questions: Under God: One Family Under God

God established the family as a representation of His relationship with His followers; He is our Father and we are His children (1 John 3:2). Whether or not we are married or have children, God's design for the family teaches us about how we are to relate to one another. Many of these relationships are in trouble because they fail to follow biblical commands that guide them. In Ephesians 5, Paul gives specific wisdom for marriage and family.

1. Wisdom for Godly Wives

How would you define submission? Why does the word tend to stir up controversy?

How is Jesus' work on the cross an example of submission for us?

Mentioning the word submission usually generates negative reactions. One way to understand it is as yielding to the interests and needs of another person over your own. Paul charged that submission expressed devotion to God. It also demonstrated that the church took seriously the example of submission set by Jesus, who selflessly gave Himself on the cross for our best interest.

How does the church submit to Christ? Wives, how might this help you submit to your husbands?

2. Learn true Love

Why do you think God created man and woman to understand and experience love in such different ways?

What does the love husbands are called to model look like?

Husbands, what is the best example that comes to mind of a time when you have loved your wife like Christ loves the church?

How might a wife respond to a husband who loves her like Jesus? How does this type of love benefit her spiritually?

How does a relationship centered on sacrificial love and submission reflect the gospel?

How can you and your spouse keep these ideas as a common part of your marriage?

3. Wisdom for Godly Husbands

Though Ephesians 5 is often quoted to remind women of their struggle of submission, it is the husband who actually receives the greater challenge from God. She must submit.

He must love with the love of Jesus. It is clear though that each action serves the other.

The wife, in submitting, encourages her husband to Christ-likeness and the husband, in loving like Jesus, makes it easier for the wife to submit.

What happens in a marriage that lacks love and respect? What about other relationships?

How can living out God's marriage ideals be difficult? In what ways can it be rewarding?

What value does a passage like this have for you if you aren't married?

Paul summarized the relationship between the husband and wife by calling them to love and respect each other. Mutual love and respect offers the best chance for a successful home. Paul then transitioned to the relationship between children and parents.

4. Love your Children

TALK

Take Time

Accept & Affirm

Listen, Learn & Love

Keep Christ First

5. Wisdom for Godly Children

What do you think might result from a society in which people generally honor and obey their parents?

How can children of all ages and family situations give their parents the respect God commands?

What are the most important ways that Christian parenting is different from secular parenting?

What if your parents aren't Christians? How might you still show them respect?

No Christian ever gets beyond the responsibility to show respect for his or her parents by honoring them as long as they live. If children are to honor their parents, then parents have a reciprocal responsibility to be submissive to their needs in ways that will lead them to maturity. Growing up in a Christian home is to be a positive, encouraging experience for both parents and children.

APPLICATION

Why do you think so much of the Bible is devoted to teaching about marriage and family relationships? What should we learn from this fact?

What elements do you believe are vital to a good, godly marriage? Which of these needs the most attention in your marriage? What is something you can do to focus on it?

What happens in relationships that lack love and respect?

What is something you can do this week to show love and respect to someone in your family?