

Small Group Guide: Submitting to One Another in Christ

Based on Ephesians 6:1-9

Opening Prayer & Ice Breaker

Ice Breaker: Share a time when someone in authority over you (parent, boss, teacher) demonstrated servant leadership. How did that impact you?

Key Scripture References

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"

Philippians 2:3 "With humility consider one another as more important than yourselves"

Ephesians 6:19 Instructions for children, parents, employees, and employers

Core Takeaways

1. Christian relationships are built on mutual submission not power struggles between oppressor and oppressed
2. These verses prepare us to be soldiers in spiritual warfare learning to give and receive commands with humility
3. Jesus is our ultimate example He submitted to the Father and valued us above Himself
4. All believers are equal before God regardless of earthly position or status

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Context Check: Why does Paul address relationships (parent/child, employer/employee) before discussing spiritual warfare and the armor of God? What's the connection?
2. Cultural Translation: The sermon suggested viewing "slave/master" relationships through the lens of "employer/employee." Is this a fair comparison? What are the strengths and limitations of this analogy?
3. The Two Key Verses: Read Ephesians 5:21 and Philippians 2:3 together. How do these verses challenge our natural tendencies? What does it look like practically to "consider others as more important than yourselves"?

Application for Employees/Workers

4. Workplace Reality: Review the six characteristics of a Christcentered employee from the sermon:

- Obey
- Be respectful
- Serve sincerely
- Try to please even when no one's watching
- Work with enthusiasm
- Work like you're working for the Lord Himself

Which of these is easiest for you? Which is most challenging? Why?

5. Bad Boss Question: Paul instructs servants to submit "no matter whether the one in charge is a good leader or a bad leader." How do we balance this biblical instruction with standing against truly unethical or abusive workplace situations?

6. Monday Morning: What would change about your work week if you genuinely approached every task as "working for the Lord Himself"?

Application for Employers/Leaders

7. Leadership Style: Paul tells employers to treat employees with respect and honor, and not to motivate with threats. How does this countercultural leadership style reflect the gospel?

8. No Favorites: The sermon emphasized that God "has no favorites" whether you're Elon Musk or an entrylevel employee. How should this truth shape how Christian managers and leaders treat their teams?

Application for Parents

9. Parenting Tensions: Parents are told to train children without making them angry or exasperating them. How do we maintain authority while also treating children as valuable? Share practical examples.

10. Adult Children: The sermon acknowledged that adult children make their own choices about following God. For those with adult children, how does this truth bring freedom or challenge? How can you continue to influence without controlling?

11. Grandparent Role: If you're a grandparent, how does your role differ from when you were a parent? How can you "do more than cookies" in pointing grandchildren to the Lord?

Application for Children/Young Adults

12. Obedience with Purpose: For younger group members or those with children present: Why does God ask children to obey and honor parents? How does this prepare you for life as an adult and as a follower of Christ?

Going Deeper

13. Power Dynamics: The sermon rejected the cultural narrative of "oppressor vs. oppressed" and the idea of "taking power back." How is the biblical model of mutual submission different from the world's approach to power? Why is this distinction important?
14. Fruit of the Spirit Connection: The sermon connected parenting to the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, selfcontrol). How do these qualities apply to ALL the relationships discussed not just parenting?
15. Jesus as Example: Reflect on Jesus's ultimate example of submission and considering others more important than Himself. Read Philippians 2:58 together. How does Jesus's example both inspire and challenge you in your current relationships?

Personal Reflection Questions

In which relationship am I struggling most to submit or consider the other person as more important than myself?

What specific step can I take this week to demonstrate servanthearted leadership or followership?

Where do I need to ask forgiveness for failing to honor someone in authority over me or under my care?

Practical Application Challenge

Choose ONE relationship area to focus on this week:

If you're an employee/worker:

Identify one task you typically grumble about or rush through. This week, do it "as unto the Lord" with excellence and a good attitude.

If you're an employer/leader:

Take time to genuinely honor one person on your team. Tell them specifically what you value about their contribution.

If you're a parent:

Have a conversation with your child (any age) about one way you can better demonstrate that you value them, even while maintaining appropriate authority.

If you're an adult child:

Reach out to honor your parent(s) in a specific way a call, note, or act of service that shows respect.

For everyone:

Memorize one of the two key verses (Ephesians 5:21 or Philippians 2:3) and pray it daily.

Communion Reflection

The sermon ended with communion, emphasizing that Jesus GAVE His body nobody took it. He submitted to the Father and valued us above Himself.

Discussion: How does regularly taking communion help us remember and practice mutual submission in our daily relationships?

Closing Prayer Points

Pray for grace to see others the way Jesus sees them

Ask God to reveal areas where pride prevents us from submitting or serving

Pray for specific challenging relationships in the group

Thank God for Jesus's ultimate example of submission and sacrifice

Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to produce His fruit in our relationships

For Next Week

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 in preparation for the discussion on the armor of God. Consider: How have the relationship principles we discussed this week prepared you to understand spiritual warfare?

Additional Resources

For parents: "The Discipline of Grace" by Jerry Bridges

For workplace application: "Every Good Endeavor" by Tim Keller

On servant leadership: Philippians 2:1-11, Mark 10:42-45

On submission: 1 Peter 2:13-25