

Four Basics for Family Relationships

An internet survey last week revealed many differing ideas for what constitute the essential pillars or elements of strong family relationships. One source suggested mutual respect, time for fun, constant encouragement, and communicated love. These are all good. We need more of these things. But they don't go far enough. The pillars of a strong family are being spirit-filled or led; having overflowing joy; being thankful for everything; and being mutually submissive, Ephesians 5.18-21. What is most important in the family is love for God overruling love for self, where all are committed to pursuing the needs of others rather than themselves. What is key in understanding God's design for the family?

I. Four Basics for All Relationships

A. Be filled with the Spirit

1. Ephesians 5:18: *And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be **filled** by the Spirit.*
2. This principle holds up all the rest. The pathway to God is found in self-surrender.
3. Compare Colossians 3.16: - *let the word of Christ **dwelt** richly among you...*
 - a) Obedience to the word is being filled with the Spirit.
 - b) This is the starting point. Whatever we do in life: marriage; family; work, recreation; anything... Has to flow out of a life controlled by the Spirit.

B. Be Filled with Praise

1. Ephesians 5:19: *speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, **singing** and making music with your heart to the Lord,*
2. A spirit filled life leads to praise. This is from a heart filled with joy.

C. Be Filled with Thankfulness

1. Ephesians 5:20: *giving **thanks** always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
2. A spirit filled life leads to thankfulness. ...in any circumstance.

D. Live a Life of Submission

1. Ephesians 5:21: ***submitting** to one another in the fear of Christ.*
 - a) Submit - to rank under. It is a military term. To "place ourselves under each other."
2. John 13 - Jesus is the perfect example.
 - a) John 15:13: *No one has greater **love** than this: to lay down his life for his friends.*
 - b) John 13:35: *By this **everyone** will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*
3. Philippians 2.3-4: *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.*

II. Two Ways Satan Attacks These Principles

A. Self Centered Pride

1. God says: James 3.18: *the fruit of righteousness is **sown** in peace by those who cultivate peace.*

B. Human Philosophies

1. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: *We demolish **arguments** and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.*
2. "Arguments": doctrines of humanism; sexual freedom; homosexuality; easy divorce; earthly success
3. These are fortresses of human speculation. They all lead to absolute disaster.

C. As We Close...

1. Jesus is the perfect example. Luke 22:42: *not my will, but yours, be done.*
2. We are to follow through with this attitude: Romans 12:9-10: *Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in **honoring** one another.*
3. Will we submit to Christ? Will we fully surrender, putting our selfish interests to death?