

# Family Series - Love and Respect

## Eph. 5 & 6

**INTRODUCTION:** I have been on or around **boats** my entire life. My first word was spoken on a boat. If you ever doubt the intelligence of your Pastor, let it be known that my first word was, "**Butterfly**". Yes, three syllables. But I digress...

But that word was spoken on a boat. I've captained ski boats, bass boat, jet ski's. People often ask what they should call me, "Pastor, Reverend, Brother?" I prefer, "**El Captain**"

You might imagine my excitement when the calling and providence of God led me to lead a church located on the coast of Florida. I recognized quickly that boating on the Atlantic Ocean took things to an entirely new level.

There is the distinct possibility that your electronics could malfunction. It's Florida so a storm could suddenly arise. Every boater gets a chill in his bones when we hear about one of our fellow mariners, "**lost at sea**".

Proper training and preparedness are absolutely essential. I've gone through many days of training and much of that training revolved around, "**what to do in a storm**".

There are very clear protocols that included the acronym, "STOP" - Stop, Think, Observe and Plan. In the midst of a storm the last thing your passengers need is for the Captain to Zone out or Freak out.

The Captain is responsible, he must decide if the storm will be ridden out or out run. He must ensure life jackets are readily accessible. He or She must be at their absolute best in the midst of a storm. Sometimes, he must make the decision to anchor down.

I've been through a few storms. I know what it feels like to not be certain you are going to make it to shore. To look over my shoulder and see my wife holding my daughter as she wept. It's a serious thing.

**But the worst storms I have experienced have not been at sea. They've been storms of life.** Some of which, I would not wish on my worst enemy.

But the most difficult of all storms are **FAMILY STORMS**. Those crisis moments when you are tempted to **grab at straws**, or **retreat into seclusion**. It is then that your leadership will be of tantamount importance.

*It may be a medical emergency, a rebellious child, the sudden loss of employment, it may be the unfaithfulness of a spouse, or an addiction that plays for keeps.*

How are we to survive out the storms of life? Well, I have found that there are a *few texts of scripture that serve as immovable norms and in the midst of life's storms*, it is to these texts we must anchor ourselves to if we are to survive.

**CONTEXT:** EPHESIANS 5 & 6 is one such text.

**Martin Luther** called this section the Christian Household - our household rules.

A Casual reading of this passage will find it remarkably similar to general wisdom you would discover anywhere else in Greco-Roman Philosophy. For example - **Aristotle** taught that there should be a basic chain of command in the household.

- Husbands should lead the wife and children
- Children should obey the parents
- Slaves should be submissive to Masters

Some have suggested that Paul's words here are so similar to the Greek Philosophers that he has been accused of simply piggy backing on their words, in places they are almost direct quotes.

What are we to make of this? Well first of all we see that Paul was not seeking to radically overturn cultural norms for the sake of revolution. When culture got it right, Paul was happy to affirm culture.

But we also recognize that the difference between Paul's Household Rule and that of Aristotle consisted of the use of a few particular words. Those few words transformed *human wisdom* into **DIVINE WISDOM**. And it is on those words that I want to give emphasis in this series.

The first words I want to give attention to are found in ***Ephesians 5 verses 25 and 33***.

### **Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, **love** your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

### **Ephesians 5:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she **respects** her husband.

In his best selling book, "**Love and Respect**" **Dr. Emerson Eggerichs** recognized that when speaking to HUSBANDS Paul commanded them to, "**Love** their wives" But when speaking to wives Paul commended them to, "**Respect** their husbands". He found that interesting.

Why did Paul not tell wives to LOVE their husbands or husbands to RESPECT their wives. He began to zoom out and cross reference the passage with the rest of scripture.

He looked to Colossians. Colossians has a similar construction to Ephesians. He looks to 1 Peter, he looked to the Gospels, he looked to the Old Testament. You know what he found out? No where in the Bible did it command WIVES to love their husbands, and nowhere in the Bible did it command husbands to RESPECT their wives.

What are we to make of this? Well having obtained his Phd in Child and Family Ecology Dr. Eggerichs knew that men and women are very different. These differences can be observed across cultures and across all time.

- Men, he observed, have the innate tendency to relate to others on a spectrum of **RESPECT and DISRESPECT.**
- Women, he observed, have the innate tendency to relate to others on a more relational spectrum that may be described as **LOVE and HATE.**

**ILLUSTRATION:** At one conference Dr. Eggerichs asked the group of over 500 people, when considering these two options... would you rather feel unloved or disrespected?

- He asked that all of those who would say, "I can tolerate feeling unloved as long as I am shown respect" to move to the right side of the room.
- He asked that all of those who would say, "I can tolerate a lack of respect as long as I know I am loved" to move to the left side of the room.

What do you think happened? 99% of those on the right were men. 99% of those on the left were women.

In other words, **women natively relate in terms of love and men natively relate in terms of respect.**

Well, Paul knew that 2000 years before Dr. Eggerichs.

So Paul commanded that HUSBANDS go the extra mile to ensure that they intentionally communicate LOVE to their wives in a way that can receive it. And wives, should go the extra mile to ensure they intentionally communicate RESPECT to their husbands in a way they can receive it.

This has been one of those foundational principles that has helped our family to survive the storms of life for over 20 years.

*Let me show you three ways this concept can be super helpful, especially in a storm.*

## **1. Recognize the Problem**

The first step to honoring this principle is to develop the ability to recognize when it has been violated.

- a. **Tears** - Generally speaking, when a woman feels unloved she will let you know that through these little pools of liquid forming in the corner of her eyes... those things are called tears. Tears are God's way to saying to men, *"Hey dummy, this woman feels unloved"*.

Now ladies, how many of you know that **feeling unloved does not always equate to being unloved**? Feelings can be very misleading... Sometimes when you feel unloved, you should evaluate the situation a but... it may mean that you are lacking sleep.

Sleep is a gift! The Bible says in **Psalm 127:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup>...he gives to his beloved sleep.

But, if we go an extended period of time without sleep, our emotions go haywire.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Have you ever been to **student camp**? Those kids don't sleep for 3 or 4 nights.. then on the last night the best camp speaker is brought in and what happens? Every kid in the place responds to the invitation. I talked to a kid one time who felt lost and wanted to be saved, he also wanted to get baptized again, AND become a missionary. On the way home, I said, "Before you pack your bags for Africa, sleep on it a few days".

So ladies, don't always trust your emotions. But MEN, it is generally true that if a lady starts to cry she at least FEELS unloved.

*Well how do you think a man shows that he feels disrespected?*

- b. **Volume** - When a man feels insulted or that his role in the family is not being honored and respected, he will have a tendency to get louder.

Sometimes this turns into unrighteous anger. Brothers remember, the words of James - **James 1:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Anger is not always helpful and it can be incredibly damaging.

Nevertheless, it is a sign that he **FEELS disrespected**. Does FEELING disrespected always equate to actually being disrespected? NO! Remember, feelings can be misleading.

But it is helpful to know when his volume goes up, when doors are closed a bit too hard, **when he eats his food as if he has a personal vendetta against the meatloaf....** He may be signally that he feels disrespected.

- Here is what I want you to do. I want for you to develop a **little alarm** in your mind... men when you see tears... that alarm should go off saying, “**SHE FEELS UNLOVED**”.
- Ladies, when his volume goes up that alarm should sound saying, “**HE FEELS DISRESPECTED**”.

What do we tend to do when we see tears or hear volume? We double down of course. Because, apparently she did not understand the logic of my argument, so if I get louder perhaps she will get it!

**ILLUSTRATION:** Have you ever see the guy who was trying to communicate with someone who speaks a language that he doesn't speak, but he assumes if he speaks English LOUDER maybe they will get it? That's what we do in marriage.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Imagine this scenario...Husband and Wife are heading to church but the kids weren't ready on time so everyone is running late. Wife notices husband slammed the door when they left. Wife notices the husband is GRIPPING the steering wheel rather tightly. Wife begins to feel that he is blaming all of this on her, and a tear comes up in the corner of her eye. Husband notices - so he asks an interrogative question rather loudly, “What are you crying about???”. Wife says through tears, “It's always my fault, it wouldn't hurt if you would help out a little on Sunday mornings”. Husband doubles down, even more loudly, “Listen, I get up a 5AM every day of my life to provide a nice home for this family and the one day I want to get some sleep you expect me to get up and help a 4 year old get dressed?”

Well you know how it ends... They either turn around and skip church, or they wipe the tears away, put on a fake smile, and when someone says, “Good morning how are you guys?? They smile and say, “**Blessed and a Highly Favored**”.

What if one of them heard the alarm, recognized the signals and said, “OH! She feels unloved... **what if he just reached over took her by the hand and said, “Love you babe”**”. What would happen - **well she'd probably cry more, but it would be different tears**. Possibly they could attack the problem rather than the person and figure out a way to improve the situation.

Most don't, and they end up in the office of a counselor or a lawyer.

*Recognize the Problem....*

## **2. Relate Properly**

**GOLDEN RULE** - The tendency most of us have is to live by the golden rule, “do unto other as you'd have them do unto you”. So if we learn this principle and recognize the ALARM, we try to communicate love or respect in the way we would want to receive it.

If I notice a tear, I am pretty tuned into hearing the alarm and thinking... oh she feels unloved. BUT, my tendency is to think to myself, "If I felt unloved what would I want" and that answer is simple... **a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.**

So let's imagine we are heading to church, I notice a tear in Julie's eye... and I pull over to a gas station and buy her a snack. Doesn't work. Why? Because I didn't RELATE PROPERLY.

**Dave Kerpen**, author of the book **The Art of People**, suggests that we understand the GOLDEN RULE differently. You see how I want to be treated is, "*I want a person to be considerate of my particular needs and to meet those needs effectively*".

Our text even conveys that - **Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and ***gave himself up*** for her,

Christ didn't love in a way that HE NEEDED, but rather in a way WE NEEDED and it cost Him everything.

If you are fortunate enough to recognize that your wife feels unloved, you must begin to learn **what would make her, in this moment, distinctly FEEL that I love her?**

**1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Likewise, husbands, live with ***your wives*** in an understanding way...

Every woman is different, when you got married you embarked on a wonderful adventure of exploration and discovery. It is your job to understand her better.

In our context, understand what would make your wife feel loved.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When asked how they most prefer to be loved most American women answer - ***quality time together***. Do you know what that means? You can spend thousands of dollar buying her gifts, you can say all the right things, but if you don't take her out and spend time just focused on her... she will not FEEL loved. If that's her language.

**LADIES** you must learn what would make your husband FEEL RESPECTED.

***Men are adversarial by nature.*** We tend to put people in one of two boxes - ALLY or ENEMY.

If you are in the midst of a fight, and you sense that he feels disrespected recognize that without even thinking about it, he will tend to put you in the ENEMY box, and go to war.

He will view a discussion as the closing arguments of a court case, he will start producing evidence, he will bring up things that happened years ago.

Why, because he sees you as an enemy that must be conquered.

Sometimes, it helps, to just hit pause and say, *“Listen, I really appreciate the fact that you are seeking to lead our family well and that these things are important to you... I have some things I’d like you to consider, but understand that I recognize that you are the leader and I’m glad you are the leader”*

For the man, suddenly he hears, OH she’s not the enemy... the enemy is over there!!! She’s my ally and fights start to turn into constructive conversations.

*Recognize the Problem....Relate Properly...*

### **3. Reproduce the Principle**

Here is what you will recognize. This principle is not only true for Husbands and Wives, but it is true of brothers and sisters.

When you can demonstrated that you have started to embody this principle, look for opportunities to teach it to your kids.

We have all seen our kids crying or heard them yelling. Their signals are the same as ours. Can you imagine how helpful it would be to their future marriages if you can teach them how to show love and respect in the home?

If these principles aren’t learned then little issues eventually become big ones.

It’s not only true of husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, these principles are true of the work force. The people you work with operate intuitively from a LOVE/RESPECT perspective.

That is the nature of God’s word - some of you have been married for 50 years yet this text will speak powerful truth into your life. Not because you have a bad marriage - you may find that it teaches you how to relate better to your grandchildren.

#### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

Let me encourage you to not miss a single week of this series. Wednesday Night - January 18 we are going to have a very special gathering.

- **Men** - We will meet at 6PM in the GYM to talk about - “What Every Wife Wishes Her Husband Knew”
- **Ladies** - You will be here in the Auditorium with my wife Julie to talk about - What Every Husband Wishes His Wife Knew”

Childcare is provided and there is student ministry for the teens. Get here early at 5PM and we will have a meal ready for you. Are you willing to come out on a Wednesday night to improve your marriage?

**In 1998 Garth Brooks sang these words,** “I'd go hungry, I'd go black and blue I'd go crawling down the avenue No, there's nothing that I wouldn't do, To make you feel my love”. Two years later he filed for divorce. It's easy to say you care, but showing it requires making a priority, giving up your time, your treasure. But isn't that how Christ loved us? He gave his all so that you would know, and feel, his love.

Sometimes women will say, “well respect is EARNED”. I understand that. However, as a Christian we are called to see by faith what we haven't seen with physical eyes yet.

### **1 Peter 3:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, **calling him lord**. And you are her children, if you do good...

Can you imagine calling your husband, “Lord”? The actual Hebrew was Adonai, it was a word for God. When used for a Human it was the highest form of respect.

You say, “well why did she do that?” Go read Gen. 18... it was when God told Abraham that his 90 year old wife was going to become pregnant and have a baby. She laughed and said,

### **Genesis 18:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and **my lord is old**, shall I have pleasure?”

You may be thinking... well that's good for Sarah, but I'm not calling any man Lord... especially my husband.

Listen Abraham had already messed up majorly, several times in his journey. But Sarah called him Lord. Well Pastor, good for Sarah, but it will never happen with me.

All I'm saying is, if you don't develop Sarah's heart, do not expect to walk in Sarah's miracles.