

Ephesians: Lesson #39: Be Subject to One Another

Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children

For Sunday, Sept. 14th

Read Eph. 5:21 – 6:9 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Eph. 5:21 “Submitting to one another in the fear of God..”

This lesson is mainly about Christian families and how each member of that family should act.

Submit

- Do you understand what the word “submit” means? It can just mean “Obey”, but it also is the idea that we give up what we could do to let someone else be helped. What if you were having fun playing a video game and your friend was watching you and it looked like they really wanted to play, too. If you stopped and let them play, that would be submitting. You let them go ahead of you thinking about them instead of yourself.
- Sometimes we submit to others and let them go ahead, just because God says that it is the right thing to do.

The Church Submits to Christ

- We know that God made Jesus the head of the church. Jesus loves the church. He died for the church and His blood bought the church.
- The church must follow whatever Christ has taught us to do. It must always respect the fact that He is the Head over all things in the church.

Wives Are to Submit to Husbands

- God made husbands and wives. When He created Eve for Adam, he made the first married couple. God knows how people need to act for marriage to work. God says that wives need to submit to husbands.
- That isn't because husbands are much smarter than wives. It isn't because husbands are better than wives. But God made it to be this way.
- God is asking wives to work with their husbands and let them lead the home in everything. He wants a wife to think of her husband as head over the family like Christ is the head over the church.
- A wife should respect her husband. This means she should know that he has an important job to do, she must cooperate with him, and she must treat him as head over her.

Husbands Are to Love Their Wives

- Even though husbands have been put over the wife to lead the family, that doesn't mean a husband can selfishly do anything he wants.
- A husband, in a way, has to submit to the wife. That doesn't mean he obeys her, but it means that he has to put what she needs ahead of what he wants.

- Remember, Jesus is head over the church. But Jesus didn't come to earth and live like a king doing everything for Himself. He came and lived for others. As we said before, He gave up His life for the church. Everything He suffered on the cross was for our good, not His good. Jesus did this because He loved the church. His love was unselfish and was willing to make sacrifices. [Question them to see if they understand what you mean by that.]
- God tells husbands to love their wives the way Christ loved the church. A husband must sacrifice for his wife. He must be unselfish – not making marriage all about what he wants. He has to think about what his wife needs and love his wife like he loves himself.

Children Must Submit to Their Parents

- God expects children to obey their parents. He says that is the right thing to do.
- In the Old Testament in the 10 commandments, one of the commandments says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you." (Ex. 20:12) God had given that commandment so that His people would understand that children needed to follow what their parents said. And that if they did, young people wouldn't get into as much trouble that would ruin their lives.
- In the New Testament, God still wants children to obey what their parents tell them to do. They should not only obey their parents, but also show honor to them. They should treat them with respect and realize they are in charge.

What Fathers Owe Their Children

- Since God put fathers as head over the family, a father must remember that he has a responsibility to his children.
- We think about fathers needing to have a job so they can provide for their family, and that is true. But fathers also have a duty to teach their children about God and His Word.
- A Christian father must raise his child where they will grow up knowing all about the things of God.

Servants and Masters

- We no longer have servants and masters in our country, but for a long time in history there were masters and slaves.
- A Christian servant may have not liked being a servant, but he was told to work hard for his master. He was to do this because he was a Christian. He was to work like he was serving Christ.
- The servant was told not to work hard just when his master was watching, but work hard all the time even if his master wasn't there. [We should be the same way in our lives. If our parents tell us to do something, we shouldn't work just when they are watching, but we need to obey them even when they aren't there. If our teacher at school has to leave the room and tells us to keep working, we shouldn't start playing when she leaves.]
- As far as the law was concerned a master could beat his slaves and even kill them. But Christian masters were told not to ever threaten to do harm to their servants. Paul

reminded these Christians who were masters over servants, that they also had a Master in heaven, Jesus Christ. Their master would hold them accountable for how they treated their servant.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Christians Must Have a Spirit of Submission

5:21 Have an attitude of submission, with a willingness to submit, yielding to each other in a reverential fear and respect of Christ.

What Wives Must Yield to Husbands

22 For instance, wives must do so to their own husbands, like they would submit to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, like Christ is the head of the church and He Himself Savior of the body.

24 So just like the church subjects itself to Christ, wives must do the same to their own husbands in everything.

What Husbands Must Yield to Wives

25-26 Husbands, love your wives with a love that is unselfish and ready to make sacrifices for her. For that is just the way Christ loved the church and for it, He handed His own life over.

26 He gave up His life to set the church apart, having cleansed it – the washing, the water in God’s Word.

27 Christ did this to set the church before Himself in honor, highly thought of and praise-worthy. Christ does not want the church to have any stains or wrinkles or anything like that, but He wants it to be set apart and without anything that blemishes it that would cause it to be disgraceful.

28-30 Now husbands, that teaches you about the obligation you have to love your wives -- love them like you would your own bodies. Showing this kind of love for your wife is like loving yourself because no man ever hates his own body. Instead, you provide for whatever your body needs, taking care of it with a loving concern.

And we see that this was just the way Christ acts toward the church because we are members of His body, of His flesh and bones.

31 Now we remember what the Scripture said: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

32 This is a great mystery, but I am teaching you about marriage with a view toward Christ and the church.

33 So let every one of you husbands love your own wife as you love yourself. And the wife must reverently respect her husband.

What Children Must Yield to Their Parents

Eph. 6:1 Children, always obey your parents in the Lord because that is the righteous thing to do.

- 2 Show great respect for your father and mother, and realize how valuable they are. In the Ten Commandments that was the first commandment that contained a promise: “That, your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”
- 3 So do this , that things will be good for you and that you will live long on the earth.

What Fathers Must Yield to Their Children

4 And those fathers should not be the cause of their children becoming angry, but give them all they truly need to grow up and come to maturity – instructing them, guiding them and correcting them so that they will develop the right ways of living; helping them to get the ways of the Lord in their hearts.

What Slaves Must Yield to Their Masters

5 Servants, you have masters over you in physical sense. Be obedient to them with reverential fear and trembling, out of a sincere heart (not acting hypocritically) with the same spirit you would show in serving Christ.

6 Don't just work when he can see you and then be lazy when he is gone. Do what God wants you to do from your soul.

7 Do your work as a slave with a good attitude, like you were serving the Lord, not men.

8 And know that whatever things you do that are good, this is what will be received from the Lord, whether you are a slave or a master.

What Masters Must Yield to Their Slaves

9 And masters, you do the same for them (have a good attitude toward them and do good toward them). Give up being cruel to them or threatening to harm them. Know that you, too have a Master, and He is in heaven. Remember, He doesn't judge with favoritism thinking of you as more important than your servant. He expects all of us to act righteously and will judge us all by the same rules.