

Studies in Ephesians – The Divine Pattern for Marriage and Family

Ephesians 5:22-6:4

Introduction:

1. Our studies in Ephesians have taken us from Ephesians 1:1 through Ephesians 5:21.
2. Beginning in Ephesians 5:22 and continuing through Eph. 6:4, the apostle Paul set forth the divine pattern for Marriage and for the family in general.
3. Before reading the text, it is well to note that Paul has already said much regarding the Christian's "walk" or manner of life. Ephesians 2:10; 4:1,17; 5:2,15.
 - a. Properly understood, our "walk" or manner of life encompasses every relationship which we sustain in this life, and this is especially true with regards to marriage and family!
4. Read the text.

Discussion:

I. Observations about the Subject Matter.

- A. The modern home is under attack!
 1. Throughout the land, marriages are falling apart, and countless families are "dysfunctional."
 2. There are many contributing factors: fornication, adultery, immorality, abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism, the women's liberation movement, and rebellion in general.
- B. The Home was Under Attack when Paul wrote Ephesians.
 1. Many Jews had a distorted view of women. It has been said that when a Jewish male got up in the morning, he would pray, "God, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. Amen."
 2. The Greeks were no better; if anything they were worse.
 - a. Demosthenes, an Athenian orator and statesman, said, "we have courtesans for the sake of pleasure, we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation, and we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and being faithful guardians of our household affairs."
 - b. According to historians, Athenian society was plagued by homosexuality, lesbianism, and pedophilia.
 3. The Romans were perhaps even worse!
 - a. Divorce was the norm, not the exception.
 - b. Jerome, an ancient writer, told of one Roman woman who married her 23rd husband, and she was his 21st wife!
- C. It was into this kind of a Society that Paul, by inspiration, set forth the Divine Pattern for Marriage and the Family.
 1. These instructions were needed then.
 2. These instructions are needed now.

II. The Duties of the Wife to Her Husband.

- A. Submission, Eph. 5:22.
 1. Do so "as unto the Lord," v. 22.
 2. Be subject "in everything," v. 24.
 - a. "Everything" which is inherently right; any time a person is encouraged to do something wrong (even by governing authorities), he must "obey God rather than man," Acts 5:29.
 3. Submission does not imply inferiority. Before God, both the husband and wife are equal, Gal. 3:28; submission relates to function and order. Cf. I Cor. 11:3. Jesus, in nature, is equal with God, Phil. 2:6, but as it relates to headship God is the "head" of Christ. It is not a matter of essence, but of functionality.
- B. Submission patterned after that of the church to Christ, Eph. 5:24.
- C. The wife is to "Reverence her husband," Eph. 5:33.

III. The Duties of the Husband to the Wife.

- A. He must love his wife as Christ loved the church, Eph. 5:24.
 1. Christ's love for the church was evidenced by the fact that He "gave Himself for it," Eph. 5:25.
 2. This means that the husband should be willing to give his life for the sake of his wife.
- B. He must love his wife as "his own" body, Eph. 5:28.
 1. One does not hate his own flesh, but he nourishes and cherishes it, Eph. 5:29; by the same token one should nourish and cherish his wife.
- C. He must love his wife "even as himself," Eph. 5:33.

1. One cannot possess this kind of love, and at the same time be selfish and think only of himself!
2. Most wives, if they really believe their husbands love them to the extent herein demanded, will not have a great problem submitting to their husbands.

IV. Duties of Parents and Children to One Another.

A. Children must:

1. Obey their parents in the Lord, Eph. 6:1.
 - a. They must do it *“for this is right.”*
2. Honor their parents, Eph. 6:2.
 - a. *“Which is the first commandment with promise,”* Eph.6:2; cf. Exodus 20:12.
 - b. *“That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth,”* Eph. 6:2.
3. **Note:** When children, early in life, learn to obey and honor their parents, they will also be much more inclined to obey and honor God!

B. Parents must:

1. Not provoke their children to wrath, Eph. 6:4.
 - a. Discipline is a must, Prov. 22:15, but discipline without love has negative consequences!
2. Bring their children up in:
 - a. *“The nurture (training, NKJV).*
 - b. *And Admonition of the Lord,”* Eph. 6:4.
3. Observe:
 - a. When there is discipline without love, children are provoked to wrath; it results in child abuse.
 - (1) Many a godly parent has spanked his children, while sincerely saying “this hurts me more than it does you.” Discipline must be dispensed with love, not revenge!
 - b. When there is love without discipline, the parents reflect an attitude of permissiveness, and the children learn very early how far they can go, and they will push it to the max! This was a problem with Eli, I Samuel 3:13.
 - c. Children, whose parents honor their God-given duties to each other, and to their own offspring, are much more likely to *“remember their Creator”* in the days of their youth, Eccl. 12:1.

V. Lessons to be Learned:

A. Marriage is not to be lightly entered into!

1. It involves a life-long commitment, Matt. 19:6, 9.
2. A young lady, before marriage, should ponder whether or not this is the kind of person to whom I can submit for the rest of my life. A young man, before marriage, should ponder whether or not this is the kind of person to whom I can devote such self-sacrificial love for the rest of my life.
3. Each party contemplating marriage should ask himself or herself, “If I marry this person, will it make it easier (or more difficult) for me to go to heaven?”

B. Christians should plan on marrying Christians!

1. There have been many successful marriages involving the union of a Christian and a non-Christian, but statistically speaking, it generally results in the Christian become weaker instead of stronger.

C. Marriage, as God designed it, is a sacred union!

1. God is the originator and designer of the marriage relationship, Gen. 2:18, 21-24; Matt. 19:6.
2. It symbolizes the relationship between Christ and the church, Eph. 5:23-24,31-32.

D. Parenthood brings:

1. Wonderful blessings, Psalm 127:3.
2. Profound responsibilities, Eph. 6:4; Matt. 5:16.

Conclusion:

1. God has provided us with a divine plan for marriage and the family. When this plan is followed the parties in the family, and society itself, are blessed. When it is ignored, it results in miseries and agonies beyond comprehension.
2. Dr. A. Herbert Grey said: “Marriages fail because people fail, and people fail because they live without God.” cf. Prov. 12:7.

--Bobby Witherington, March 8, 2015