

God's Plan for the Home

Ephesians 5:22–6:4

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, ^[b]of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “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 speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. 6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

In our last study of this epistle we looked at God’s command for Christians life live the Spirit filled life, as seen in Ephesians 5:18, “And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.”

This week we are going to look at how God has made plans for His children to have successful marriages and a happy home life.

George Burns said, “I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury.”

Rodney Dangerfield had this to say about marriage, “My wife and I were happy for twenty years. Then we met.”

Henny Youngman gave us this insight on marriage, “The secret of a happy marriage remains a secret.”

I read recently about a golden anniversary party that was thrown for an elderly couple. The husband was very moved by the occasion and wanted to tell his wife what he thought of her. She was very hard of hearing, however, and often misunderstood what he said. With many family members and friends gathered around, he toasted her and said, “My dear wife, after 50 years I’ve found you tried and true!” Everyone clapped for them, but his wife was a little irritated and asked, “What did you say?” So he repeated it again: “AFTER 50 YEARS, I’VE FOUND YOU TRIED AND TRUE!” The wife was now visibly upset and shouted back, “Well, let me tell you something after 50 years I’m tired of you, too!”

Sadly, in our culture today, marriages are under attack. According to James Dobson, 5 out of 10 marriages end in conflict and divorce. And, of the five couples that remain together, only 1 out of 10 will achieve intimacy and oneness in their partnership.

Marriage is a complex relationship, perhaps the most intricate on the face of the earth. Unfortunately, many of us don’t realize this when we say, “I do.” We may think that the dynamics of a good marriage just happen, or depend on some mysterious blend of having the “right” people together. **When marriages crumble, we often hear people say that they just must have been “wrong” for each other.** More often than not, being right or wrong for someone depends not on some mysterious compatibility quotient, but on how willing and able we are to help meet our spouse’s needs. In other words, spouses need to learn how to serve one another.

It is obvious from Paul’s writings that problems in marriage did not just start with our generation, but are as old that the scriptures. Therefore, as Paul sought to teach his fellow Christians about the need for Christian living, it was imperative that he

discusses the home, for the home problem is the greatest problem in our civilization.

I am convinced that our national life will never rise any higher than our nation's home life. I am convinced that our church life will never become any more spiritual than those that are living spiritual lives at home.

With all of that in mind, I want us to let God's Word teach us the basic plan for happiness in our homes. So where do we start?

I guess the best place to start is to settle the question – "What is a Christian home?" The answer to that question is actually a two-fold answer.

First of all, a Christian home has Christian parents. We have been given this promise in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Fortunate and blessed is a home where the mother and the father are both Christians. There are many homes where only the mother is trying to serve God, or where only the father is trying to serve God. This is not in the truest sense a Christian home only half of a Christian home.

Second, a Christian home has a vital connection with the church. We have been told in I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

I have seen people that say they are Christians, but they were indifferent to the work of the church, and did not have a vital connection with the "body" of Christ. These kinds of people have little or no influence over their children when it comes to understanding where the church fits into the purpose of holy God. Many of these people desperately want their children to be "saved," but

they often see the church as nothing much more than some spiritual “side dish” that is based on nothing more than some denominational tradition. And, more often than not, these people are not just indifferent to the church; they are also negative when it comes to their involvement in the total life of the church. And tonight, I can take the church rolls and show you young men and women that are not in church today, simply because of their parent’s indifference to God’s Word and to God’s purpose for the church.

Therefore, the answer to the question, “What is a Christian home” is simply this - A Christian home has Christian parents that are faithful to the service of God.

It seems that the next logical question would be, “What is involved in making up a Christian home?” To make a Christian home there must be at least 5 ingredients:

First, there must be biblical authority. Look at Paul’s advice in verses 22-24, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” This passage of scripture has been so abused it is no wonder that people, even Christians, try to avoid it.

Submission is a bad word in our society. In fact, we make heroes of people who won’t submit to anyone’s authority. The motto for our age it outplay, outwit, outlast, but not “submit.” Its is not too surprising that God’s values look upside down from the world’s perspective.

In its truest sense, submission simply means, “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.” In other words, submission between husbands and wives simply means instead of looking out for ourselves, we are to be looking out for our mate, and they are to look out for us.

As one studies the Word, it becomes very clear that Christian submission flows out of strength, not weakness.

Jesus is our example in this, as seen in John 13:3-5,

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”

Paul gives us this insight on Jesus’ submission in Philippians 2:6-7, “(Jesus) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” We too come from a place of strength, as seen in Ephesians 1:3, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” We respond to that strength, not by taking up any highhanded authority, but by submitting to each other.

The modern world has boasted of its wisdom in forsaking the old standards of marriage and the home. But the modern marriage formula has failed, for in the United States, there are about three million divorces a year, leaving over 100,000 children living with in a single parent circumstance.

Please do not misunderstand what I am saying right here – I am not saying that all divorces are caused by the fact that the husband is not the spiritual leader of the household, but I am saying that all divorces are caused because someone failed to live up to God’s standard for marriage.

Second, there must be unity. Jesus has given us this observation in Mark 3:25, “And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” One of the very first “cracks” in the “foundation” of the home is that of “division.” The question is asked in Amos 3:3, “Can two walk together, except they agree?” The obvious answer is “No.”

There needs to be a certain harmony in the lives of the mother and the father of the family unit. There need to be a unity in relation to *finances*, *discipline*, *church attendance*, and *direction*. And let me tell you that Jesus Christ is the vital link that can bring about this kind of unity.

Third, there must be love. This seems so elementary that I am almost ashamed to make this point, but it is a biblical standard, as seen in verses 25 & 28, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...So ought me to love their wives as their own body, He that loves his wife loves himself.”

When Paul says, “Husbands, love your wives,” he is not just talking about a warm, affectionate feeling, but he is telling us to act in loving ways. He put it this way in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” **Real love needs to be an expressed love.** The kind of love where the entire family can see a standard that is far, far different from what they see in the world. Husbands and wives are to be *patient*, *kind*, *forgiving*: *not envious*, or *boastful*, or *proud*, or *rude*, or *self-seeking*, or *easily angered*. That kind of love will cause you to always *protect your mate*, always *trust*, always *hope*, and always *persevere*.

Listen, **all of us have our issues, and certainly, none of us are perfect in our relationships**, but the Bible reminds us, “love covers the multitude of sins.”

But this love is not just for the adults of the household. We have this word in Psalm 127, “Children are an heritage of the Lord.” Love is one of the simplest, yet one of the most difficult things to find in most homes today. Too many parents are too content to buy their children off than to offer then a very real and genuine oldfashioned love!

Four, there must be discipline. Ephesians 6:1 simply says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." We are told in Proverbs 19:18, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." **Children that are taught to obey and respect their parents in the home are more likely to obey authority outside the home.** Through my years of ministry, I have found that it is far easier to win an obedient child to Christ, than one that has never known the right discipline.

Five, there must be a sense of security. He says this in verse 4, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." And in Ephesians 4:32, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." **Today, our families are faced with many trials and disappointments, and in light of all that is going on around us, our children and mates should be have the assurance they are loved and cared for.** When there is a right sense of security, problems can be brought home instead of being carried to the neighbor, or to a boyfriend, or to a girlfriend, or to someone "who will just listen." **Security** is just another word for **trust**.

So tonight, I challenge each of us to take a long look at the spiritual side of our home life. Does your family know that Christ is the Lord at your house? It was Jesus that said, "He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Every parent should stand before their family and make this proclamation, as did Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."