

Refuge City Church — October 15, 2023
“Walking Hand in Hand” (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Introduction

- As we continue our journey through Ephesians, and how we are to ‘walk’ in unity, holiness, love, light, and wisdom, Paul now provides a few practical examples of how to live that out in real life. [marriage, family, & the workplace]
- **TODAY:** We look at the institution of marriage and its vital importance as a testimony to the work of the Spirit in us.
 - Consider the series we did a couple years ago, “Marriage & Family with Purpose”
- Context, Context, Context...
 - **Ephesians 4:1-3**, “...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called—*humility, gentleness, patience, love*—eager to maintain the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of *peace*.”
 - Do you want *unity* in your marriage? It starts within each individual. [finger pointing = division]
 - **Ephesians 4:7**, “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
 - Give it at all times, because according to God, it will never run out!
 - **Ephesians 5:2**, “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us...”
 - What is the opposite of humility = pride.
 - What is the opposite of love = indifference
 - What is the opposite of self-sacrifice & self-control = self-indulgence

“The Wife’s Hand” [Verses 21-24]

“submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

- As we trust and submit to Jesus, we no longer submit to sin.
 - **Philippians 2:3-4**, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
 - We submit/partner/support one another out of reverence for the Lord. Not for our own prideful arrogance, or self-deprecation because we view our position in life as lowly.

Verse 22: Wives, submit to your own husbands, *as to the Lord*.

1. Submit to the Lord.

- Jesus is your example
- If you’re not submitting to the Lord, you won’t submit to your husband.
- **1 Peter 2:21**, “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps...”

2. Biblical submission produces *respectful* behavior

- Are you glorifying the Lord in what you do?

- How do you speak about your husband to others?
- **1 Peter 3:1-2**, “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”
- 3. **Biblical submission produces Godly character**
 - Godliness seeks to draw attention to the Lord, not yourself.
 - **Matthew 5:16**, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
- 4. **Biblical submission involves doing what is right, unto the Lord.**
 - The moment there is coercion to participate in anything contrary to God’s will [**1 Thessalonians 4:3**, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”], our ultimate submission to Christ calls us to obey God rather than man.
 - **1 Corinthians 11:11-12**, “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.”
- I like how one pastor stated the wife’s role of submission in the context of our mutual mission:
 - Both are called to die to self – submission is the way the wife does it.
 - Both are called to sacrifice – submission is the way the wife does it.
 - Both are called to see their marriage as a model of Jesus’ relationship with the church – submission is how the wife honors that model.
 - Both are called to honor the order of creation – submission is the way the wife fulfills her place in that order.
- **Genesis 2:18**, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
 - Unity, love, submission, and missional purpose...that’s a beautiful picture!

“The Husband’s Hand” [Verses 25-30]

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”

- This is ‘agape’ love. It goes beyond feelings or emotions.
 - If we only love based on our feelings, it would be a *very* conditional love, merely dependent on when I feel like it, or because something nice was done for me.
- **The kind of love we are to express is the same love God shows towards us.**
 - **Romans 5:8**, “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - Jesus showed us that love by **servicing** and **sacrificing** His life.
 - Husbands, if Christ is our example, how are you showing love to your wife?
 - **QUESTION:** How did Jesus love the Church?

- **QUOTE:** “The world continually tells the man to be macho, to defend himself, assert himself, bring attention to himself, and live for himself. But God tells the Christian man to give himself up for others, especially for his wife, just as Christ gave Himself up for the church.” [John MacArthur]

Verses 26-27: “that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word...”

- He did it all to **sanctify** the church. To cleanse it. To purify it.
 - **Titus 3:5**, “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,”
- If you have submitted to the Lordship of Christ, then it is your duty to maintain a house dedicated to God and His Word.
 - This is all about the pursuit of holiness.
 - Husbands, do care about your pursuit of Jesus?
 - Do you care about your wife’s pursuit of Jesus?
 - Do you promote God’s Word in your house?
- You are a **servant-leader**.
 - Leadership involves recognition that God has placed the husband in a position of responsibility. He is accountable to God for his wife and children.
 - The relationship you have with your wife will be a direct reflection of your relationship with Jesus Christ.
- **The Leadership Cycle** [paraphrased from the book, *Lead like Jesus*]
 1. **Personal Leadership**
 - **Matthew 4:19**, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
 - Jesus has called you. Follow, watch, listen, & learn.
 2. **One-on-One Leadership**
 - Jesus will give you opportunities to lead... Keep your eyes on Him.
 - **Matthew 14:28-30**, “And Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’”
 - There will be times of failure. Where are you going to go/who are you going to look to for correction and salvation?
 3. **Marriage/Family Leadership** [Lead like Jesus]
 - **John 13:15**, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”
 - As Jesus sent His disciples out to establish the church and present the gospel to the rest of the world, so we are to go, love, serve, and sacrifice.
 - Jesus has given us all the tools we need to be successful. *Use them!*
 4. **Community Leadership** [Discipleship]
 - As Paul said to the church, “**Imitate me as I imitate Christ**”, we are to be the example of Jesus for those God gives to us.

- The result is that others would discover their call by Jesus to follow Him, and the cycle starts over.
- Husbands are to lead their wives, in mutual submission to Christ's authority, towards a continual process of mutual sanctification.
 - *Purpose:* Your leadership in the home, for your wife and children, is not for you. It's for God's glory!

Verses 28-30: "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body."

- We have a natural inclination to take care of ourselves.
- We protect ourselves from danger, distress, pain, etc... So we should love our wives in the same manner.
 - As God formed woman out of man, He then brought them together in marriage unity.
 - We are to think of our wives as members of our own body.
 - That's how Jesus thinks of His church.
- Earlier, I asked you to think about how Jesus loved the church. What did He do for it?
 - Nourished, protected, cherished, served, and sacrificed Himself for it.

Conclusion

Verses 31-33: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [Genesis 2:23,24] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- For both the husband and the wife, we declared that Jesus is our example. So *when* the 'wind & waves' of uncertainty, fear, doubt, anger, pride, and division enter the picture within your marriage and family, adhere the practices of Jesus.
 1. **Solitude & Prayer**
 - **Mark 1:35**, "...{Jesus} went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."
 2. **Scripture**
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."
 - Whenever Jesus was tempted or tested, He went right back to the Scriptures as His answer to life's challenges and questions.
 3. **Abide**
 - **John 15:9**, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."
- *The mystery:* Biblical marriage is one that points others to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for the church to bring unity, sanctification, glory to God.
 - So walk hand in hand, in the love of Christ, and let that draw others to an understanding of who Jesus is.