

Refuge City Church
Marriage & Family With Purpose — September 19, 2021
Part I: “Unity and Love” (Ephesians 4-5)

Introduction

- For the next 4 weeks, we are talking Marriage & Family!
- A biblical look at the purpose of these ‘institutions’ as God sees them, and our roles within.
- Let’s take a quick look at what some had to say about marriage & family.
 - “I love being married. It’s so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life.” [Rita Rudner]
 - “Insanity is hereditary: You can get it from your children.” [Unknown]
 - “Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who wants to live in an institution?” [Groucho Marx]
 - “Always be nice to your children because they are the ones who will choose your rest home.” [Phyllis Diller]

“Unity and Love” [Ephesians 4:1 – 5:21]

- As with all of scripture, there is beauty in the context of God’s Word.
- There is some context we need to establish prior to diving in to the topic.
- If these issues are not discussed, considered, and most importantly *practiced*, marriages and the family structure will continue to fall apart.
 - It all starts with our relationship with the Lord and how we view the world around us.
 - Ephesians as a base of operations: when we put the scriptures on marriage/family in context with the surrounding chapters, it may bring new light on the issues we face within these amazing, God-created institutions.
- **SPECIAL NOTE:** For those divorced, separated, widowed, dating or single... you are not forgotten or overlooked in this series.
 - Everyone’s story is different. Yet everyone, no matter their marital status will benefit from the study of God’s Word.

Walk in UNITY [Ephesians 4]

Verses 1-3: 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- Short & Sweet: we are to live this way in all respects to *any* relationship we have.
 - If there was ever a portion of scripture that aligns with biblical marriage/family outside specific marriage verses, this is it!
 - How do you achieve unity? Through practicing humility, gentleness, patience, & love.

- **Galatians 5:22-26**, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”
- Humility is the response to one’s self-evaluation in light of who God is. Gentleness is humility expressed to the world around us. We need to evaluate the importance of both, in their proper order.
 - Do you want unity in your marriage & family? It starts within each individual.
 - Humility is not weakness. It’s the strength of humility that leads to unity.
- Patience: “A spirit that can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness, and fools without complaint.” [William Barclay]
- We are to *preserve...make every effort...with eagerness* to maintain unity!
 - The moment there is a semblance of anything that will wedge itself, or counteract the unity of the Spirit in your relationships, attack it, and do whatever necessary to protect and defend it.
 - **Remember:** We as Christians are to be on the spiritual offensive. The gates of hell have no influence over you in Jesus’ name!

Verses 4-7: 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** **But grace** was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- There is only ONE singular focus in all things. The triune God we exist to serve, and through whom we love others.
- **Verse 7: Grace** = unmerited favor; given what you don’t deserve it; divine enablement.
 - Everyone has been given a tremendous amount of grace through Jesus.
 - Some may have more than others, but that doesn’t negate or diminish what’s been given to you to give/show towards those around you.
 - All have the ability, in Christ, to show grace. Yet it’s something we need to actively pursue.
 - Give it at all times, because according to God, it will never run out; His grace abounds all the more! [2 Corinthians 9:8]
 - Having a difficult time showing grace? Humble yourself, and then do it some more.
 - You may be trying to give something away based on your own self. It doesn’t work that way, because it doesn’t come from you. Rather God working through you.
 - Think about this: Your selfishness/pride will hinder others from receiving God’s blessing of grace.

Verse 15: “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”

- There’s talking at one another. Then there’s proper communication when times get tough.
- We are to cloak all language in love with one another.

Verse 17: “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.”

- We are to ‘walk’/live our lives differently from the rest of the world. If we are truly ‘born again’, we are to approach everything we do in this world from a spiritual/ God-centered way of thinking.
 - We are to be transformed, not conformed. Our minds are to be renewed [Romans 12:2]
 - **QUESTION:** What means/method/practice are you participating in daily to continue to renew your mind in the things of God?
 - We are to be set apart [Psalm 4:3]
 - We are to set our minds on heavenly things [Colossians 3:1-2]
 - We are in this world, but not of it [1 John 4:17; John 8:23]
 - We are to put off our old self [Ephesians 4:22]
- We are to walk in holiness! [1 John 2:6; Mark 10:45]

Verses 26-27: “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”

- Do not forget that anger is an emotion we are allowed to have.
 - However, when that anger causes us to sin, then it becomes a sin in itself.
- What’s fueling your anger? [not your spouse/children; we do not wrestle against flesh and blood] What may be unresolved in your life? What sin lies deep within that is controlling your emotion.
 - If we are striving to be ‘self-controlled’, then anger should not be an overwhelming issue in our marriages and families.

Verse 29: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but *only* such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” [edify/encourage]

- In the most intimate of relationships, the person that knows you best is the one that can cause you the most harm... again, we consider the spirit of self-control.
- **James 3:6, 10,** “And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell... From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”

Verses 31-32: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

- **QUOTE:** “Wrath’ or rage flows from bitterness, and refers to outbursts of uncontrolled passionate frustration. ‘Anger’ is inappropriate noisy assertiveness

and abuse. ‘Clamor’...describes shouting. ‘Slander’ refers to words that hurt another person. ‘Malice’ is bad feelings toward another person or people, and is the source of the other five vices.” [Rene Lopez]

- Oh that God would cause us to forget!
 - What did it cost God to forgive us? The life of His Son.
 - What does it cost us to forgive others? Nothing.

Walk in Love [Ephesians 5:1-20]

Verse 1-2: **1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- As role models for our children, we should take to heart what Paul says to the Corinthian church, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.”
 - Whether you know it or not, your children [whatever stage of life they are in] are watching.
 - We have the opportunity to be the example of Jesus to our kids, who in turn can grow in the way and truth of who Jesus is and His Word.
 - **3 John 1:4**, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”
- Walk in love!
 - With Jesus as our example in all things. He loved us to the point of death. So we should love others.
 - Offer our lives as a living sacrifice [Romans 12:1]
 - **1 John 3:16**, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”
 - This kind of life is pleasing to the Lord.

Verses 3-4: “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”

- What is the opposite of humility = pride.
- What is the opposite of love = hate/indifference
- What is the opposite of self-sacrifice & self-control = self-indulgence
 - Everything about these terms and the forms they take [sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking] can damage and destroy any semblance of unity and love within a marriage & family.
- The intimate relationship between a husband and wife should be one of thankful praise for what God created for a healthy marriage.
 - Nothing should be allowed in or discussed that would bring sin, guilt, and shame to a marriage and family.
 - Should conversation need to be had regarding the sinful, damaging effects surrounding those things, so be it. Yet, in regards to open acceptance and practice, absolutely not.

Verse 8: “for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” **[in comparison to 4:17; don’t walk in sin. Walk in holiness]**

- Walking in the light simply means that we are solely focused on following Jesus and living in His presence.
 - **John 8:12**, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
 - **Matthew 5:14, 16**, “You are the light of the world... 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.”
- Consider it a command, not to be taken lightly.

Verses 15-20: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

- **Wisdom:** a much needed character trait to walk in this world.
 - It’s very clear that this world is full of sin and evil. How are we to navigate through it all?
 - How do we protect our heart and mind against the very things the enemy throws at us on a daily basis?
 - Constantly seek to fill yourself more and more with the Holy Spirit. The more you fill yourself with the things of God, the more you are able to discern right from wrong in the wisdom from God.
 - Getting drunk only inhibits your thoughts and actions. It makes you completely vulnerable to attack, sin, guilt, and shame. You lose your capacity to think and see clearly. In that, the world will more than likely take advantage of you.
 - Filling yourself with the Holy Spirit counteracts all this and fills you with wisdom, righteousness, and discernment. You gain more capacity to think and see clearly. In that, you can take full advantage of all that God wants for your life. To live completely in His will. That’s the goal.
 - When we seek to live in God’s will, it provides us a joy-filled, thankful heart.

Conclusion

- Key words leading up to Paul’s instruction to those in the covenant of marriage:
 - Unity. Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Grace. Holiness. Self-Control. Love. Thankfulness. Wisdom. Joy.
 - What are we to fight against?
 1. Take the opposite words to those we just listed.
 2. Division. Pride. Bitterness. Wrath. Anger. Clamor. Slander. Impurity. Hatred. Indifference. Self-indulgence.