

Love and Respect

Please re-read Ephesians chapters 1-3!!!!

Ephesians 5

Vs. 2 – “Walk in love, just as Christ loved you and gave Himself up for us...”

Vs. 21 – “...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Transformed people have transformed relationships

- When the ark of God (ark of the covenant) which symbolized the presence of the Lord was brought into the house of Obed-Edom for 3 months, God “blessed the family of Obed-Edom with all that he had” (1 Chronicles 13:6,13-14). If God’s presence is in your heart and in your home, He will bless all that you have and all that you do.
- If I want to transform my eating habits or my money spending habits, or anything about me, I need to change from the inside out. Otherwise there is no real change. The change in behavior only lasts temporarily if we don’t change how we think (our value system).
- Paul speaks in Ephesians 4 of putting the old man away, being renewed in the spirit of our mind and putting on the new man. A few observations about this.
 - This is not a “one-and-done” deal. You do not once forever put off that old man, so that you can confidently say to yourself, “I gave up that sin a long time ago.” It is a constant daily (hourly) battle. It is an ongoing transformation until we die. We may put off some things, and then later in life those things return to challenge us. Or maybe later in life we face new challenges as other parts of our character are refined into Christ’s image.
 - The “renewed in the spirit of your mind” part is connected to “learning Christ” that we see in verses 20-21. If we want to act like Jesus, then we need to think like Jesus.
 - The new man is “created according to God.” That means God is doing this work, and we need to give ourselves over to that working and let God do His transformation. You cannot effectively change yourself without the power of God working in the inner man (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Relationships focused on Christ

- Joseph, the son of Jacob, was able to resist a strong temptation to commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife because his mindset was, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (see Genesis 39).
- Peter was able to WALK ON WATER when his eyes were focused on Jesus, but the moment his eyes began to focus on the winds, the waves and the storm, then he began to sink (Matthew 14:25-33).
- As to the Lord
 - Go back over the first three chapters of Ephesians and see the emphasis on Christ and what He did for us, how He cares for us and blesses us, especially in contrast to how we were living before He saved us! That is the foundation for our thinking in our relationships.

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

- Now consider how many times Paul directs our attentions to Jesus as he speaks about our relationships with each other.
 - 4:12 – build up Christ's body
 - 4:13-15 – our goal is to grow up into Christ (individually and collectively)
 - 4:20 – learn Christ
 - 4:32 – forgive others just as God in Christ has forgiven you
 - 5:5 – Kingdom of Christ and of God.
 - 5:8 – You are now light in the Lord
 - 5:10 – Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
 - 5:14 – Christ will shine on you.
 - 5:17 – But understand what the will of the Lord is.
 - 5:19 – Sing...to the Lord.
 - 5:20 – Giving thanks...in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 5:21 – Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
 - 5:22 – Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.
 - 6:1 – Children obey your parents in the Lord
 - 6:4 – Fathers bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
 - 6:5-8 – Slaves obey your masters...as to Christ...as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart...as to the Lord...he will receive back from the Lord.
 - 6:9 – Masters...their Master and yours is in heaven...no partiality with Him.

Marriage (Ephesians 5:21-32)

- First of all, read this passage with a focus on Christ and the church.
 - What does Jesus do for the church? How does He think about the church? How does He value the church? What is His ultimate goal for the church?
 - How does the church follow Christ, and what is the church's attitude about it?
 - Paul quoted Genesis 2 to talk about how a man leaves a father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh. Paul used that passage about marriage to speak of Christ and the church, and then comes back to marriage. Jesus is one flesh with the bride, the church.
- Wives
 - Paul calls wives who follow Christ to:
 - Follow and submit to their husbands in everything
 - Respect their husbands
 - Why? Because your eyes are on Christ! Keep your eyes off the storm and focus on following Jesus, and you can walk on water in your relationship with your husbands.
 - When a wife talks down to her husband, and picks on him, bosses him around, makes fun of his ideas, and treats him like an idiot who couldn't tie his own shoes if it wasn't for her, then she does not respect her husband. She also does not respect Christ. She by doing this will discourage her husband from even trying to lead and he will not step up and lead because he knows she will not accept any of his ideas.
 - However, when a woman keeps her eyes on Jesus and remembers that she was created by God to be his helper, she begins to see her husband in a new light. She encourages her husband. She talks about the positive things about her husband. She looks for ways to encourage and honor him when he steps up to take leadership. This is not saying that she never speaks her mind or gives her input. But it certainly changes how she does it and how much she does it (see also 1 Peter 3:1-6).

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

- Husbands
 - What was Jesus' goal? How does He view the church?
 - His ultimate goal is to present the church to God in all her purity, holy and blameless. He loved the church; gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify and cleanse her; He nourishes and cherishes the church; it is His body and since no one hates his own flesh, Jesus cares deeply for His body, the church.
 - So then, if that is Jesus' goal, what should be a husband's ultimate goal in his marriage? His wife's salvation! Her relationship with Jesus and her spiritual growth should take priority over anything.
 - The husband is made by God to be the head of this home, the leader of this marriage, and his ultimate example of leadership and headship is Jesus Christ.
 - If a husband becomes controlling, a dictator, one who treats his wife like an idiot and makes fun of her, he treats her as his slave and that her ultimate purpose in life is to serve him and do what his will, then he does not love her and he does not love Christ (see also 1 Peter 3:7).
 - On the other hand, when a husband's eyes are fixed on Jesus and he understands the amazing grace and mercy that was poured out upon him through Jesus, and he sees his wife the way Jesus sees her, then his whole behavior will change. He honors her because He honors Christ. He is tender to her, because Christ is tender to her. He gives Himself up for because that's what Jesus did. He cares the most about her spiritual growth and her salvation because that's what Jesus values the most. He sees her as created in God's image because that's how Jesus created her.

Children and Parents (Ephesians 6:1-4)

- Children
 - Paul wrote here that, the first of the Ten Commandments that had a promise connected to it was to honor your parents.
 - What is the promise? That (1) it may be well with you, and (2) that you may live long on the earth. If you honor your parents and respect them God will bless you. You will also avoid a lot of pain and suffering in this life if you will simply do what your parents say.
 - "In the Lord." This means that your eyes are first and foremost on Jesus and that will transform how you see your parents. If they ask you do something that you just don't want to do, you do it with a humble attitude because your eyes are on Jesus. If they ask you to be disobedient to Christ, you don't do it, because your eyes are on Jesus.
- Fathers
 - God has called you specifically to lead this home to heaven.
 - Paul charges you not to provoke your children to anger. This is done by being too hard on them, by expecting too much, and by being impossible to please. Fathers can also be pretty rough with their joking sometimes, and can really hurt their kids feelings. Those words create lifetime scars. Remember Jesus, does He treat you that way?
 - To bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. You, as a father, are to be focused primarily on the salvation of their souls. Your job is to teach (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12). You do that on a daily basis, not always in a structured Bible study, but by taking opportunities throughout the day to direct their attention to Jesus and to His word (Deut. 6:4-7). When out in nature, talk about Jesus. When watching a movie or listening to the radio, talk about Jesus. When driving in a car, talk about Jesus. When doing a project together, talk about Jesus.

Slaves and Masters (Ephesians 6:5-9)

- Notice that the slave's attitude is to be all about Christ.
 - Not this: not by way of eye-service as men-pleasers, not to men.
 - But this: Be obedient, with fear and trembling (toward Jesus), in sincerity of your heart (as to Christ); as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; your real paycheck and bonus check is from the Lord.
- Take note also that Paul said, "whether slave or free" (6:8), which shows that this applies to any employee-employer relationship.
- You keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and it will transform how you see work and how you see your boss and how you see your role at work in general. Your job at work is to glorify Christ. You do that by how you work. You do that by how you respond to problems at work. You do that by how you treat your boss. You do that by how you handle any money or material things that are owned by your employer. You serve Jesus Christ, not men. If you understand that, it will show.
- Masters, Paul reminds all masters (and all employers) that there is one Master, and that is Jesus. Jesus does not see people as slaves and Masters, so there is no partiality with Him. In this life a CEO can afford a powerful attorney and might be able to get away with bad things, but he won't do that with Jesus. Christians who are in positions of leadership in business need to remember constantly that Jesus is the true Lord and Master. If Jesus showed grace, mercy and humility, then any person in leadership should follow that example. Paul urges masters to "give up threatening." Instead of bossing people around and threatening them with some form of punishment we begin to see people as all created in God's image, and we speak to them as reasonable human beings who have great value.
- This mindset would truly transform the workplace, wouldn't it?