

LIVING GOD'S WAY IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What does it mean to submit?
- What things affect the dynamics of a relationship?

Our lives are filled with relationships. We have acquaintances, business contacts, coworkers, friends, and of course, our loved ones. Human life is lived in constant relation to other people. Consequently, believing in Jesus should impact how we live and behave in our relationships too. In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul details what godly, faithful living looks like in three of the primary relationships of the early Christian culture. And each relationship, according to Paul, involves submission. Historical misinterpretation and misuse of this passage might cause us to be defensive when we think about submitting to each other, but studying Paul's teaching can help us better understand what he actually meant and what it really looks like when we mutually seek to live as God intended in all types of relationships in our lives.

Listen: [*Living God's Way in Our Relationships*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Each of the sections of Paul's teaching in the passage discussed today: husbands and wives ([Ephesians 5:21-33](#)), parents and children ([Ephesians 6:1-4](#)), and masters and slaves ([Ephesians 6:5-9](#)), have been misused in culture and even in the church at times. Can you give an example from history or from your own experience of how one of these teachings was misused? How do you think the misuse happens? Why is the misuse contrary to what it means to be Christ-like? How is it in conflict with the Christ-like mutual submission Paul describes?
- Hosts Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee discern from Paul's teaching that being Christ-like is at the heart of our submission to each other. They talk about the "dance of deferment" and observe that "In a good marriage, the husband and the wife are so busy laying down their lives for one another, and deferring to one another, and submitting to one another...that nobody has time to wonder who is the boss." Think about the many places you witness examples of marriage in your life. Which examples have demonstrated this type of marriage best? What do you think has gone wrong or what do you think is broken in the examples that do not demonstrate this type of marriage?
- Why do you think Paul addressed the parent/child relationship? Why is it Christ-like for parents to not exasperate their children and for children to honor their parents?
- Why is it important and helpful to realize that the master/slave relationship Paul gives instructions for in Ephesians 5-9 is not the same as chattel slavery? Master/slave relationships are not as common in most cultures today. What types of relationships—for example: employer/employee, business/customer, etc—exist in our culture to which this teaching might helpfully apply?

Related Passages

- **Exodus 20:12**
- **Romans 12:1-2**
- **Colossians 3:12-25**
- **1 Peter 2:4-3:9**

Conclusion

Make a list of the types of relationships you participate in on a regular basis. Reflect on this list and consider Scott's closing remarks:

“Paul is saying: Whatever your role is in life, do it as though you were serving Jesus; and I think for all of us who are employees or whatever we do in life, we do it unto the Lord, and I think that is the main thing Paul has been saying all along.”

What does it mean for you to apply Paul's teachings in [5:21-6:9](#) to your various relationships? Do some relationships lend themselves to this type of living easily? Are there ones that you find more difficult? Close your time of reflection in prayer, praying specifically for each of your relationships and telling God about your discoveries, realizations, frustrations, and learnings.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/living-gods-way-in-our-relationships>

Printed on July 3, 2024