

The Family; God's Model of the Church Eph 5:21-6:4

INTRO: When the architect of this church drew the blueprints of the church he also built a model of what it would look like...that is why we have that model down front here. An architect not only draws the blueprints for the building he often has to draw blueprints for the scale model as well.

When the architect of the family [God] drew the blueprint for the family it was the scale model of His church; therefore the family is intended to be the model of the church.

A model is nothing more than a copy of or scale version of what it represents. In the case of the model of our church we have a scale model of the building we are in; in the case of the family it is a scale model of what the church should look like.

In our text today Paul lays down the principles that go into making that model – the family.

[Read Eph 5:21-6:4/Pray/dismiss Jr. church]

Ephesians is an interesting book – one of my favorites – it is a very practical book. Paul teaches about the believers position in Christ – chosen, sealed, saved, united with Christ and equal (1:3-3:21) – then, beginning in 4:1 he gives practical instructions on just how a believer should live. He starts by beseeching – that means demanding – that they “...**walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.**” Everything from this verse all the way through 6:9 is his teaching on what *walking worthy* means.

Some of the things he says *walking worthy* means is:

1. Walking in unity – Eph. 4:1-16
2. Walking in truth and holiness – Eph. 4:17-32
3. Walking in love, as light & as wise – Eph. 5:1-20

Then, in verse 21 of chap 5 it appears that he makes an abrupt change of direction, Paul begins to describe various family members are expected to conduct themselves – Eph. 5:22-6:9:

The responsibilities of wives – Eph. 5:22-24

The responsibilities of husbands – Eph. 5:25-33

The responsibilities of children – Eph. 6:1-3

The responsibilities of fathers – Eph. 6:4

The responsibilities of servants – Eph. 6:5-8

The responsibilities of masters – Eph. 6:9

But this isn't a change in direction simply because all of what he is teaching in Ephesians is based on what he says in Chapter 3, when he says that he, **a prisoner of Jesus Christ** has been given the responsibility of teaching the Gentile Christians the **revelation he [Jesus] made know unto me the mystery...which in other ages was not made know...** What was that mystery he is referring to? The Church! Listen to what he goes on to say, “...**I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God ...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: ¹⁰To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...**” (Eph 3:7-10).

In affect what he is telling them is that the desired affect of his teaching is to instruct the Church on how their lives should model to the world & culture around them, a world & culture that is dead

in their sins, what the church is to be and thereby shine the light of Christ into that dark world. In short Paul's teaching us that we, the church, and more specifically in our text today the family are the principles that go into the building of the church. That building, the church, that truly shines His light will then draw a lost world to the church and we, "**...mayest know how [we] oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**" (1 Tim 3:15).

For us to make the Church, this church, the pillar and ground of the truth and be the model of that church our families must model the things Paul teaches us

It is in the family unit we find all these principles ...if we are going to have a healthy church we must have healthy families; if we are going to have healthy families we must be part of a healthy church. So, if the principles found in Ephesians are found in our family then they will be found in our church.

What are the principles of the successful Christian family?

The first principle is found in the wife, she is to be

1. Principle 1 - Submissive To Only One Leader V 22.

- a. Paul spoke first to the *wives*, explaining that they were to *submit* voluntarily to their husbands *as to the Lord*.
 - i. The words "as to the Lord" mean "as is fitting to the Lord."
 - ii. This does not mean that the husband is "lord" over the wife.
 - iii. Our concept of submission must model that of Christ and the church:
 1. Christ loves the church so the church submits to him.

2. Our view of submission can't be tainted by some worldly view of submission.
 3. Christian marriage involves mutual submission – subordinating our personal desires for the good of the one we love and submitting ourselves to Christ as Lord.
 4. The wife's submission to her husband is one way that she can demonstrate her submission to Christ.
 5. She does this voluntarily out of love for her husband and for Christ.
- b. Submission in the church should flow from submission in the home.
 - i. The home, the foundation for relationships and personal growth, must be an example of peaceful submission.
 - ii. In a marriage relationship, both husband and wife are called to submit.
 - a. "*The best thing a woman can do for her husband is to make it easy for him to do the will of God.*"—Elisabeth Elliot Gren
 - c. The idea of **Submit** here is built upon the teaching in Vv. 18-21 where all Christians are commanded to be filled with the Spirit and submit one to another.
 - d. The idea – as Christians we are to "**be subject to one another in the fear of Christ [God]**"
 - e. It is important to note that the wife is not commanded to **obey** (*hupakouo*) her husband, as the children later are.

The next few principles are found in the role of the husband – Principle 1 - Submissive First he is to be...

2. Principle 2 - Spiritual Leader V 23-24

- a. Paul explains that **the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church**.

- b. In other words, the husband is the spiritual head of the family, and his wife should acknowledge his leadership.
 - i. “Head” means leader, ruler, or authority – in 1 Corinthians 11:3 God is described as the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman.
 - 1. Real spiritual leadership involves service and sacrifice – Christ as *head of the church* is also its *Savior which involves sacrifice and service*
 - 2. Christ gave his life for the church.
 - 3. So, **as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**
 - ii. A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his leadership role, and a wise and Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband’s leadership.
 - c. ILL: “A man of quality is never threatened by a woman of equality.”—Jill Briscoe
- Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leader**
3. **Principle 3 –Loving Leadership** Vv. 25a, 28-30
- a. **A Loving Leader is a Submissive Leader**
 - i. Paul also tells the husbands that they are to *love* their wives.
 - ii. Why did Paul tell wives to “submit” and husbands to “love”?
 - 1. Maybe Christian women with their new found freed in Christ, found submission difficult; maybe Christian men, comfortable with the Roman custom of giving unlimited power to the head of the family, were not used to treating their wives with sacrificial respect and love.

- 2. As we have seen both husbands and wives should submit to each other (v. 21) just as both should love each other.
- b. **A Loving Leader is a Concerned Leader**
 - i. Jump down to verse 28, it says there **So ought men** that means that men should so love their wives that there exists between the husband and the wife the same union as between Christ and the church described in verse 27
 - ii. Verse 27 is speaking about spiritual growth
 - iii. It is safe to say then, that a husband should so love their wives that they are as concerned for his wife’s spiritual growth and closeness to the Lord as Christ is for the church.
 - c. **A Loving Leader is a Caring Leader**
 - i. When a man loves his wife, he *loves himself*, she is part of him.
 - ii. Verse 29 give a clear definition of this Love
 - 1. The fact that **no one ever hates his own body** refers not to self-centeredness but to self-**Appl/ill** avoiding an auto accident
 - 2. As a man **nourishes and tenderly cares for** his own body, he will also do the same for his wife, who is one with him.
 - iii. Why? Again Paul draws on of the example given by Christ, who nourishes and cares for his body, *the church*.
 - 1. As Christ nourishes and cares for believers, so husbands must imitate Christ in their loving concern and care for their wives.
 - 2. Christ provides the basis for the husband’s loving attention to his wife’s needs.

3. For the husband and every believer, receives loving attention from Christ ***because we are members of his body.***
4. He cherishes and nourishes us as living parts of his body.
5. The union of husband and wife reflects the union of the body of Christ;

Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership

4. **Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership** Vv. 25b, 28
 - a. Some Christians have thought that Paul was negative about marriage because of his counsel in 1 Corinthians 7:32-38.
 - i. But these verses show a high view of marriage.
 - ii. Marriage is not a practical necessity or a cure for lust but a picture of the relationship between Christ and his church!
 - iii. Husbands are called to love their wives ***just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.***
 - b. That Christ “gave himself” indicates a sacrificial, substitutionary surrendering of himself to death.
 - i. Christ sacrificed himself for the church because of his love for it.
 - ii. Husbands, then, should be ready to make whatever sacrifices are necessary for their wives.
 - iii. How should a man love his wife?
 1. He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her.
 2. He should make her well-being of primary importance.
 3. He should care for her as he cares for his own body.

- iv. No wife needs to fear submitting to a man who treats her in this way.

Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership

5. **Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership** V 26-27
 - a. Paul explains that Christ gave himself up for the church ***in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word.***
 - b. The phrase “*sanctify*” means to *set apart*
 - i. In the marriage ceremony, the husband is set apart to belong to the wife, and the wife is set apart to belong to the husband
 - ii. Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin
 - c. Today, Christ is cleansing His church through the ministry of His Word
 - i. The love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her (and him) so that both are becoming more like Christ (Rom 8:29)
 - ii. Even their physical relationship should be so controlled by God that it becomes a means of spiritual enrichment as well as personal enjoyment
 - d. The husband is not to “use” his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is to show the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying
 - e. The marriage experience is one of constant growth when Christ is the Lord of the home. Love always enlarges and enriches, while selfishness does just the opposite.
 - f. The church today is not perfect; it has spots and wrinkles.
 - i. Spots are caused by defilement on the outside,
 - ii. Wrinkles are caused by decay on the inside.

- iii. The church becomes defiled by the world, it needs constant cleansing, and the Word of God is the cleansing agent.
- iv. James said *Keep yourselves "...unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27).
- g. There should be no wrinkles in the church, because wrinkles are evidence of old age and internal decay
 - i. As the church is nourished by the Word, these wrinkles ought to disappear
 - ii. Like a beautiful bride, the church ought to be clean and youthful, which is possible through the Spirit of God using the Word of God – **First in the family unit then in the church**

Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership, Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership

6. **Principle 6 – There is Unity** Vv. 31-33

- a. The creation story tells of God's plan for husband and wife to be one; Jesus also referred to this plan (Matthew 19:4-6).
 - i. The union of husband and wife merges two persons in such a way that little can affect one without also affecting the other.
 - ii. Oneness in marriage does not mean one person's losing his or her personality in the personality of the other. I
 - iii. nstead, it means that each person cares for the other as though caring for himself or herself, learning to anticipate the other's needs, helping the other person reach his or her potential.
- b. Our marriages should picture Christ's in which Christ leaves his Father to seek his own love, the church.
 - i. In a natural marriage, the husband and wife complement one another.

- ii. So Christ and the church must function together; Christ is the Head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife.
 - iii. Christ and his church are unbreakably joined
 - c. The union of husband and wife, although sometimes imperfect, provides the best picture to describe the union of Christ with his church.
 - d. Paul closes the teaching on marriage with **every one of you should love his wife as himself.**
 - e. This is the core of Christian marriage.
 - f. Each wife, in turn, **reverence her husband.**
 - g. How many marriages could be made healthy and strong if both husband and wife would fulfill these simple yet profound instructions? Where husband and wife love and respect each other, they have both a healthy marriage and a healthy family life in which to bring up children. The relationships of children and parents are covered in the next chapter.
- Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership, Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership, Principle 6 – There is Unity**
7. **Principle 7 – Obedience** V. 6:1
- a. Continuing the theme of Christian submission, Paul turned next to children.
 - i. He assumed that children would be in the congregation of believers as this letter was read.
 - ii. His command to them is simple: **Obey your parents in the Lord.**
 - b. This is not an absolute command; when a parent tells a child to do something unbiblical, immoral, or unethical, the law of God supersedes the will of the parent.
 - i. But aside from those extremes, children are to obey their mothers and fathers.

- ii. This is the way God intends it.
- iii. It's easy to see the immediate practical benefits of this for both children and parents because parents usually really do know best.
- c. The parent-child relationship is the arena in which the child is to learn to submit to and respect his elders and those in authority over him—including God.
 - i. Do you require your children to obey you?
 - ii. Do you help other parents by setting a good example for them in this area?
 - iii. Don't be misled or dissuaded by the media or our permissive culture.
 - iv. Let the Bible be the voice of wisdom that cuts through the noise of our society.
 - v. If you love your children, teach them the value and blessings of obedience.

Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership, Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership, Principle 6 – There is Unity, Principle 7 – Obedience

8. Principle 8 – Honor V. 2

- a. Paul instructed children not only to obey their parents but to honor them as well.
 - i. It is entirely possible to obey without honor—who hasn't seen a child do what he or she is told, but with clenched fists and teeth and an *"I'm only doing this because you're making me"* attitude?
 - ii. To honor is to go beyond obedience.
 - iii. It is to show respect and esteem for someone and to treat him or her with dignity.
 - iv. Children do not always agree with their parents (and that holds true for children of all ages), but they can always treat them with respect.

- v. It is incumbent upon parents to teach this to their children and to make it easier for them to do so by acting in respectable, honorable ways.
- b. The promise should not be the main motive for honoring parents; rather, the main motive should be to do God's will, and the promise that accompanies the command indicates this.
 - i. As children obey the command to honor their parents, they show an attitude of love and respect that they carry over into their relationship with God.
 - ii. Such an attitude provides a community that helps provide for and protect the aged.
- c. Jesus made this an unconditional demand (Mk 7:10-13).
 - i. Some societies honor & respect their elders.
 - ii. Paul instructed the church to be a community that cares for older people – it begins in the family and bleeds over to the church in total.
 - iii. This will be especially important as people in North America age -- By the year 2021, one in six people will be over sixty-five years of age.

Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership, Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership, Principle 6 – There is Unity, Principle 7 – Obedience, Principle 8 – Honor

9. Principle 9 – The Parents, especially the Fathers are not Overbearing V. 4

- a. As he did with his instructions to husbands and wives, Paul balances his advice to children by addressing their parents, especially fathers.
- b. Fathers (and mothers) are to teach their children to honor and obey but they are to do so in a way that doesn't "provoke [their] children to anger."

- i. We are not to be unreasonable or cruel or abusive parent when teaching.
 - ii. We should never use Biblical instruction as a form of punishment.
 - iii. Paul warns parents not to do that to their own children.
 - iv. Teach them obedience and respect, yes, but do it in such a way as not to drive them to rage or despair.
 - v. Martin Luther, whose own father was very strict, once wrote: *“Spare the rod and spoil the child—that is true. But beside the rod keep an apple to give him when he has done well.”*
 - vi. Check yourself: Do you try to encourage and praise at least as often as you scold or correct?
- c. Parents shouldn't provoke their children, and neither should they neglect their responsibility to teach, guide, correct, and discipline them.
- i. Parents still have a job to do for their children—**to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**
 - ii. To *bring them up* is to love and care for them
 - iii. The word admonition means “Discipline” and includes punishment for wrongdoing combined with persistent love (see Proverbs 13:24; 22:6, 15; 23:14), all as part of the *instruction* of a child.
 - iv. We must explain appropriate behavior to our children, correct them as they disobey, and encourage them when they obey.
 - v. Both discipline and instruction are focused in “the
- d. William Hendrickson put it this way: *“The heart of Christian nurture is to bring the heart of the child to the heart of his Savior.”*

- e. Do you read the Bible to your children? Do you tell them the great stories of the heroic men and women of the faith who've gone before? Do you pray for and with them daily? Do you take them to worship and Christian education classes, and let them see how important your involvement in the church is to you? Can they see the difference Christ makes in your life?

Conclusion: The principles found in a Christian home are the very principles that are to be found in the Church; **Principle 1 – Submissive, Principle 2 - Spiritual Leadership, Principle 3 – He is a Loving Leadership, Principle 4 –Self-Sacrificing Leadership, Principle 5 – Sanctifying Leadership, Principle 6 – There is Unity, Principle 7 – Obedience, Principle 8 – Honor & Principle 9 – The Parents, especially the Fathers are not.**