

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Authority in the Home: Who is in charge?**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - May 12, 2013**

This week and for the next several weeks our subject is going to be the idea of authority in the home. I think it could be argued that the single most disastrous setting where conflict over authority impacts our world it is in our homes with families. I think this is important because I think that the world and its value systems are in conflict with a Biblical or Christian world view and since a godly family is the first line of defense for a godly society, Satan knows that when the godly family falls, the witness of God fails. The definition of family, the core values of family, the expectations and dreams of family are all under assault by a lying culture.

Illustration: Family Planning and Big Families: The assault on life: Ourys 8, Merritts 6, Tettamore 7, Scotts 4, Gagers 8 (children)

Rather than focus on what is going wrong, let me spend a minute on how God is hoping that the Lordship of His Son is having fruit in your lives:

- Love
- Peace
- Truth
- Safety
- Significance

I almost entitled this sermon "The Lordship of Christ in the home" because these things that we long for in our families are the fruit of the Lordship of Christ in its life. It is not a bad title. In fact I will be using those words a lot over the next few weeks. Today we will just be getting our toes in the water but over the next several weeks I have words for every member of our nuclear family unit, Husbands and Fathers, Wives and Mothers and of course the kids. God has something to say about authority to each of these groups.

Lordship over the home and family. . . it is an interesting ideal. We long for it and struggle with it at the same time. We have a great example of our longing just today. Our baby dedication is one of those overt offerings to the Lord that demonstrate how important the Lordship of God is in our families. Don't our hearts long for the McCormic family and all such families that are striving to see Christ honored in their home and their children? We love these moments here at 4Cs.

There is a Bible verse that helps to put this longing into perspective.

**Romans 14:9**

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Don't get too mixed up by this Lord of the dead part. I believe that is speaking to those who are spiritually dead, those who have yet to experience the rebirth of their souls that is available to all humanity through Jesus Christ. Christ longs to be their saving Lord as well.

But let's keep our eyes on the true focus on this passage; what is amazing about this verse is that it reminds us that you are not the only one who wants Jesus to be Lord of your life and family. Jesus desires so much to be Lord in your life that he died for that purpose. It is plain then that in every part of your life Jesus wants to be Lord. There is no time or place or activity in your daily routine where Jesus does not want to be your Owner, your Provider, and your Master. And your joy will be increasingly complete in the minute by minute matters of your daily life as you increasingly surrender these places of your heart and life to him. That is, until you say, "Anything you say, Jesus, at work. Anything you say, Jesus, at school. Anything you say, Jesus, at church. Jesus, I will do anything, anything you say at home."

Everybody wants a happy home. And most people want a purposeful home—a home with a mission and destiny beyond the mere satisfaction of our own daily desires. We want homes where each person flowers rather than fades. Homes with the aroma of respect rather than the odor of continual belittling. Homes with laughter instead of bitterness, eye to eye conversations instead of sporadic comments, peace instead of conflict, a sense of common mission instead of festering introversion.

The importance of family life in society and church can scarcely be exaggerated. O how crucial in the development of a child's personhood is the life of his family. And not only little children—but also the lives of husbands and wives are made more or less fruitful by their experience at home. We want a happy home and a family with a purpose and a mission. And my message today is that the lordship of Jesus Christ is the only lasting foundation of such a home. Trusting Christ as Savior, surrendering to him as Lord, and orienting all of your family relations on him, transforms the home into a little heaven on earth. And even if some member of your family is not a believer, there is more grace and power for your love under the lordship of Jesus than anywhere else. He is precious as the foundation of the family.

What I want to do this morning from our text in Ephesians 5 is make one main point and illustrate it briefly in the relationship of husband and wife. The main point is this: *Christian family life is a work of God's Spirit in the lives of those who do everything for Christ's sake.*

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Let's go ahead and look at our study passage that will be important to us over the next several weeks. This passage is pretty famous in Christian circles and in it we can see the importance of the family and for its Godly design. These are not the only passages that give us confidence in God's thoughts and hopes for family (see also Colossians 3:18–4:1; 1 Peter 2:18–3:7; Titus 2:4–10).

Let's take a look:

***Ephesians 5:21-33 to 6:4***

<sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

As I said, this passage is a fairly familiar text. It deals with wives and husbands, children and fathers, and as you read on it speaks of slaves and masters. In a typical household of that time, those were the three dominant relationships that needed to be regulated. Paul was answering the question: what difference does it make in a family when its members become Christians? The very existence of such a text in the New Testament shows that God is not indifferent about the ordinary give and take of home-life. If Christ is your Lord, he is Lord of all your daily life.

But what is not as familiar about this text is the context in which Paul puts it. Look back to **verse 15: *'Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most 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.***" And then come a series of phrases which tell us the effect of being filled with the Spirit of God: "*addressing* one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* and *making melody* to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything *giving thanks* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." And then most of the English versions do something that makes it very hard to see Paul's true intention - they put a period or semicolon at the end of verse 20 and translate verse 21, "*Be subject to one another* out of reverence for Christ." But in the original, "Be subject" is not a new sentence or a main verb. It is another participle like "addressing," "singing," "making melody," and "giving thanks." ***In other words, verse 21 belongs with verses 19–20 as an explanation of what it means to be filled with the Spirit in verse 18.***

Literally, then, the passage says: ***'Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, being subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.'*** The purpose of verses 19–21 is to spell out what happens when you are filled with the Holy Spirit. In verse 19 your heart overflows in song to each other and to the Lord. Verse 20 says that thankfulness is at the center of those heart songs. And verse 21 says that when you are filled with the Spirit, you will submit to one another.

Now comes the crucial connection with family life. Verses 22ff. are clearly an extension and application of the principle in verse 21. We know this mainly from the grammar of the text. The command in verse 22, "Wives be subject to your husbands," has no verb in the original. It simply says, "Wives to your own husbands." Which means it is a continuation of verse 21. The flow of thought then from verse 18 to 22 would be: ***'Be filled with the Spirit. . . submitting to each other out of reverence for Christ, wives to your own husbands as to the Lord.'***

So now it should be evident where I got my main point: ***Christian family life is a work of God's Spirit.*** And this submission in verse 21 is a description of how people act when they are filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 18). Therefore, all of Christian family life is a work of God's Spirit.

#### ***A word to husbands: Lead through Sacrificing***

And now I want to look briefly at two of Paul's applications of this truth in our text: first a word to husbands, then to wives, then a closing challenge to us all to be filled with the Spirit, yielded to the lordship of Christ for the sake of our families. The word to husbands is this: Be filled with the Spirit! Yield to the lordship of Christ! And then recognize this: your God-appointed headship in the family is to be exercised in love on the pattern of Christ's love for the church.

But what the apostle stresses here in Ephesians 5:25–33 is that husbands should be filled with the Holy Spirit, eager to exalt Jesus Christ, and therefore ready to conform their leadership to Christ's. Christ fulfilled his headship or leadership over the disciples through ***sacrificial service***. He led through sacrifice. Jesus did not cease to be the leader of the disciples when he stooped to wash their feet (John 13:13–15). And when he hung on the cross, the weakest of the weak for the sake of his bride, the church, he was no less her head. Woe to the husband who thinks that his maleness requires of him a domineering, demanding attitude toward his wife. This is not the mark of a Christ-like head but a childish bully. I'm tired of this passage serving as fuel for passive aggressive or even worse abusive husbands, intimidating and coercing their families and calling it Christian.

Where a man belongs is on his knees beside his wife, leading in prayer. Where a man belongs is at the bedside of his children, leading in devotion and prayer. Where a man belongs is in the driver's seat, leading his family to the house of God. Where a man belongs is up early and alone with God, seeking vision and direction for the family. Men, I challenge you in the name of Jesus Christ our King, be where you belong! Lead by sacrificing.

### ***A word to wives: Yield as unto Christ***

And now a brief word to wives. In its context Ephesians 5:22 means: if you are filled with the Spirit and yielded to the lordship of Christ, then you will be subject to your husbands *as to the Lord*. That little phrase "as to the Lord" has two implications. One is that a woman's first and ultimate allegiance is to the Lord Jesus and that other allegiances are subordinate to and derivative from this one. The other implication is that, therefore, the subordinate allegiances are limited by the authority of Christ revealed in their husband. This means that the form which a wife's submission takes will vary according to the quality of her husband's leadership.

If the husband is a godly man who has a biblical vision for the family and leads out in the things of the Spirit, a godly woman will rejoice in this leadership and support him in it. She will no more be squelched by this leadership than disciples are squelched by the leadership of Jesus. If in Christ she begins to see that his vision for Christ has become distorted or his direction is unbiblical, she must not sit in dumb silence but query him in a spirit of meekness and in doing so scripture says "she may often save his foot from stumbling." For husband-headship does not mean infallibility or hostility to correction. Nor does the wife's involvement in shaping the direction of the family involve insubordination.

But if a Christian woman is married to a man who provides no vision, gives no moral direction, takes no lead in the things of the Spirit, the form of her submission will be different. Under the lordship of Christ she will not join her husband in sin, even if he wants her to. And where she can, she will give a spiritual vision and moral direction to her children. But even in this she need not communicate a cocky spirit of insubordination. Even when she must, for Christ's sake, do what her husband does not approve of, she can try to explain in a tranquil and gentle spirit that it is not because she wants to go against him but because she is bound to Christ. Remember it will do no good to preach at him. At the root of his being he is dreadfully guilty that he is not assuming the moral leadership of his house. You must give him room and in quietness win him by your powerful and sacrificial love.

### ***This one thing: Reclaim authority over your family***

In conclusion, there is a God-ordained pattern of headship and submission, of leadership and joyful support of that leadership, within the family. It has been conceived by God and revealed to us that we might discover happiness at home and a meaningful mission for our family. It is the work of the Spirit of God in the lives of those who do everything for Christ's sake. Therefore, the question for you who want a happy home and a meaningful mission and destiny for your family is: Are you filled with the Spirit of God and yielded to the lordship of Christ over your family? God longs for you to have the authority of Christ in your family.