

November 16, 2025

"Marriage, Family, and Work"

Ephesians 5–6

Pastor Gary Hamrick



God gives us instructions in the Bible for how to experience the most harmony and unity within a marriage, a family, and the workplace. But we must first understand submission to the Lord before we can "submit to one another in the fear of the Lord" (Ephesians 5:21). How we relate and respond to one another depends on our own walk with the Lord. As we read Ephesians 5–6, we will unpack Biblical truths and see how they apply to our marriages, families, and workplaces.

1. **Ephesians 5:20–21** – "... [20] *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [21] submitting to one another in the fear of God.*"
 - a. Verse 21 could end with a colon, because what follows is God expounding on what it looks like to relate to each other in a godly manner.
 - b. **Ephesians 5:22–6:9** speaks of how to encourage unity in marriages, families, and workplaces.
2. Biblical truths for relationships
 - a. Why we need commands regarding our relationships
 - i. Relating to one another in a godly manner does not come naturally.
 1. The natural man is selfish, proud, rebellious, judgmental, unforgiving, stubborn, calloused, disrespectful, critical, and vengeful—among other things.
 2. **DISCUSS**: How has the natural man come out in your communication with others? What is the antidote?
 - ii. We are not called to default to the natural man, but to discipline ourselves to live as the spiritual man under the lordship of Christ.
 - b. How we can accomplish these commands
 - i. We can only relate to each other well if we honor God first.
 1. **Ephesians 5:22** – "*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*"
 2. **Ephesians 5:25** – "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*"
 3. **Ephesians 6:1a** – "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*"
 4. **Ephesians 6:4** – "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*"
 5. **Ephesians 6:5** – "*Bondservants [employees], be obedient to those who are your masters [employers] ... as to Christ.*"

6. **Ephesians 6:9** – *“Masters [employers], do the same things to them [the employees], giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master [Christ] also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”*
7. **DISCUSS:** What does it mean to fear God? How does godly fear lead you to treat God’s other children and image-bearers well?
- ii. We can only adequately submit to each other when we first submit to God (verse 21).
 1. Your relationship with Jesus—not others’ relationship with God—determines how we treat others.
 2. The Lord calls us to show the same grace to others which we want to receive.
 3. **DISCUSS:** How has remembering you are also a recipient of God’s grace empowered you to show grace to others?

3. Biblical truths for marriage

a. Wives

- i. **Ephesians 5:22–24** – *“[22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [24] Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”*
 1. Wives are commanded to submit to their husbands.
- ii. The Greek word translated as “submit” is **hypotassō**.
 1. **Hypo** means “under.”
 2. **Tassō** means “to arrange in an orderly manner.”
 3. Submission is not about subservience or inferiority, but about the recognition there is a God-given structure.
 4. **DISCUSS:** How does loving God allow you to love others by yielding to them rather than needing things to go your way? How has the Lord helped you grow in this area of your life?

b. Husbands

- i. **Ephesians 5:25–33** – *“[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26] that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [27] that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. [28] So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. [30] For we are members of His body, of His*

flesh and of His bones. [31] 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' [32] This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. [33] Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

1. Husbands should love their wives with the love of God.
- ii. The love that Jesus shows us is:
 1. Unconditional
 - a. God does not love our sins, but He loves us without condition; a husband should love his wife unconditionally.
 2. Sacrificial
 - a. Jesus sacrificed His life for us, even giving His life for us.
 - b. A husband should sacrifice for his wife, and if necessary, be willing to give his life for her.
 3. Faithful
 - a. Just as God is faithful to us despite ourselves, a husband should be faithful to his wife.
 4. Invested
 - a. Christ left the glory of heaven to enter our world.
 - b. So, too, a husband ought to enter his wife's world by learning about what matters to her.
 - c. **1 Peter 3:7a** – "*Husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge.*" (KJV)
 - d. Husbands are not called to compare their wives, but to know them, specifically (as opposed to knowing women in general).
 5. **DISCUSS:** What is one way you can show the love of God to others today? How has God taught you what love means, and how you can better live out this principle?
- c. Husbands and wives (verse 33)
 - i. Husbands are called to lead with love and wives are called to submit with respect.
 1. While a husband-and-wife ought to discuss matters and pray over them, if they are at an impasse, the man must lead.
 2. Husbands cannot be domineering or passive.
 3. Husbands will be held accountable to God about how they lead, and they need their wives' prayers because they can fall into acting in the flesh, too.
 - ii. A wife's call to submission and a husband's call to lead is to be done with the recognition that we first serve the Lord, the head of all.

4. Biblical truths for family

- a. **Ephesians 6:1–4** – “[1] *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: [3] ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’ [4] And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*”
- b. Children
 - i. Children are called to obey their parents.
 - 1. “Obey” is different than the word “submit.”
 - 2. The word “obey” is from the Greek **hypakouō**, meaning “to listen under.”
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: What are some challenges you’ve faced in trying to obey your parents? How did growing closer to God help you overcome these challenges?
- c. Parents
 - i. Parents do not help their children when they fail to teach them to respect, obey, and honor them.
 - 1. Parents who fail to teach their children to respect them rob them of the blessing that comes with obedience.
 - 2. Children who never learn to honor their parents often never learn to honor authority.
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: How do you see the world go from one parenting extreme to another? How can we be grounded rather than moved by the ever-changing tide of public opinion?
 - ii. Fathers must infuse love and not just discipline.
 - 1. Discipline is the job of both parents, but fathers are to be the spiritual leaders of the home and bear primarily responsibility.
 - 2. Parents cannot choose the Lord for their children, but we are all called to do our best and entrust God with the rest.
 - 3. **DISCUSS (for parents)**: What does teaching children respect look like in practice? How do you ensure your discipline has the best chance of being well received by your children?

5. Biblical truths for the workplace

- a. **Ephesians 6:5–9** – “[5] *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; [6] not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, [7] with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, [8] knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord,*

whether he is a slave or free. [9] And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him."

b. Employees

- i. The modern equivalent of a bondservant is an employee.
 1. The word "bondservants" is translated from the Greek **duolos**, a term used to describe indentured servants.
 2. Bondservants entered service voluntarily and were often paid unless they were serving to pay off a debt.
- ii. Paul called himself a bondservant of Christ.
 1. **Romans 1:1a** – "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ."
 2. **Galatians 1:10b** – "If I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."
 3. Paul was calling himself one who willingly surrendered to the authority of Jesus Christ.
- iii. Christians employees are called to work well to please Christ.
 1. Christian employees are called to have a good work ethic, working obediently to be approved not by men but by God.
 2. **DISCUSS**: How do you represent Christ at work?

c. Employers

- i. Masters are the modern equivalent for employers or bosses.
- ii. Christian employers are called to lead well to please Christ.
 1. Christian employers are called to treat employees with respect, rather than "threatening" (mistreating) them.
 2. Employers are to remember that God treats all people fairly and graciously, and so must they.
 3. **DISCUSS**: How does remembering that the impartial God—who sees and knows all—is your Master change how you treat those under you (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)?

6. Honoring God

- a. Variations of phrases like "in the Lord" appear throughout **Ephesians 5–6**.
 - i. Our fear of God should infuse our every relationship.
- b. We are called to honor God over all, so if an employer, parent, or husband asks us to do something unbiblical, we do not need to obey or submit.
 - i. We need to have a strong Biblical basis for not complying.
 1. A Biblical basis requires a verse from the Lord, not a feeling you had while praying.
 2. **DISCUSS**: When have you had to honor God by not complying with man? How have you learned to do this in a loving way?

- c. Outside of these exceptions, we ought to remember to honor God and honor others.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)