



THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

A GFC DISTINCTIVE



THE FAMILY HAS A HIGH PRIORITY IN THE LIFE OF
OUR CHURCH. WHILE IT IS UNDER ATTACK IN
MANY CIRCLES TODAY, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS
THE BACKBONE OF SOCIETY AND THAT IT IS NEAR
TO THE HEART OF GOD. THEREFORE, GOD HAS A
LOT TO SAY ABOUT IT. HERE ARE A FEW PASSAGES
IN THE BIBLE THAT SHOW US WHAT A GODLY
FAMILY LOOKS LIKE.

EPHESIANS 5:22-23

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Since parents are given the task of raising children, the Bible starts with them and their relationship to each other. Before explaining what a godly family looks like, Paul tells us what a godly marriage looks like because everything depends upon that.

In Ephesians 5, Paul begins with wives and he tells them what their roles are by saying that they are “to be subject” to their own husbands. The phrase “to be subject” is one word in Greek: hupotasso. It is a compound word from hupo (under) and tasso (to put). It means to put yourself under someone and willingly follow their lead.

The passage says that this is to be done “to your own husbands,” meaning that a wife is only required to do this with her spouse. She is not required to do this with every man that she comes across. It also says that this is something for the wife to do; it is not something that is to be forced upon her. In other words, a man should not browbeat his wife into submission. A wife should choose to do this out of her own free will “as to the Lord.”

EPHESIANS 5:25-26

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

Not only does the Bible provide clear instruction for wives but it provides clear instruction for husbands as well. Just as a woman has a clearly defined role in the home, a man does too because no one is left out in a godly family. Everyone does his or her part.

To highlight this, there are only three verses in Ephesians 5 that talk about wives (verses 22-24). However, there are nine verses that talk about husbands (verses 25-33). They are mentioned three times as often to show that the man plays a key role in the home and his main task is to love his wife.

Over and over again in this passage, Paul tells husbands to love their wives. He says not only to love them but to love them “just as Christ also loved the church” which is the highest standard of love imaginable. It is the highest level of affection that someone can give. This act includes several aspects such as sanctifying her or leading her in the ways of godliness. It also involves “cleansing her by the washing of water with the Word” which is a reference to Bible study. A husband is responsible to help his wife study the Word of God and apply it to her life but all of this is to be done out of a heart of love.

EPHESIANS 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

EPHESIANS 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

All of this leads to the final component in a godly home and that is the children. After talking about husbands and wives, Paul now looks at their obligations to the children. It has been said that kids do not grow up as much as they are raised and it is no different here because Paul gives parents two duties regarding their children in Ephesians 6:4.

The first is “Do not provoke your children to anger.” The word for “provoke” here means to exasperate someone or wear them out by constant discouragement. This could refer to a lot of things but the main idea is that there should not be a tone of negativity in the home. It should be a pleasant place to live. The second command is to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” which is the positive side of that. While parents should not discourage their children, they should also try to encourage them as much as possible. They should do all they can to help them obey and follow the Lord.

In light of that, Ephesians 6:1 says that children should “obey [their] parents in the Lord, for this is right.” In other words, a child should obey his parents for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do. It is the way God ordained things to be. As he grows older, a child can exert more independence, but initially, he should follow the guidance of his parents in all things because it pleases the Lord.

CONCLUSION

God loves the family. He has since the beginning. It has a special place in His heart because He Himself is a Father. He knows what it is like to have children, which is why the Bible has so much to say about it.

This is also why we take it so seriously here at Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. We believe that God has called us to develop strong families. We believe it is our job to help people see what Scripture says in this area so that they can please God in the home. In the words of one author, “You can raise children in godly ways today [but] the only safe guide is the Bible.”^[1] We could not agree more.

If you have any questions about the family or anything else in this pamphlet, we would love to hear from you.

[1] Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, Penn.: Shepherd Press, 1995) xvii.



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