

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 8



From Church to Home:

As the Apostle moves on deeper into the practical sections of his letter, we see him move ‘out of church’ and ‘into our homes’. If God’s message is to impact His people, it must impact every aspect of their lives. This mirrors the desires of the Lord in the OT, when on giving the Law to Moses in Deuteronomy 5, He would then command the people to, ‘...impress them on your children, talk about them when you sit at home..’ (Deut 6:7).

God’s ‘new society’ is indeed to demonstrate a different ‘way’ with ‘new standards’ as they gather together to worship. They are to be hallmarked by unity and purity, submitting to one another as a holy people. However, these new standards must develop into ‘new relationships’ both in and out of church.

Chapter 5:22-6:4

Wives & Husbands:

Paul starts this section by dealing with ‘wives and husbands’. The ‘call sign’ for each is that the wife is to ‘submit’ whilst the husband ‘loves’. This submission is not something unique to wives, as in the previous verse, Paul reveals to us that submission is a ‘church-wide’ mandate (5:21). This submission is also defined as one that is ‘to the Lord’, as the wife recognises ‘Christ’ in her husbands behaviour and leadership. Who would not want to submit to a Christ like love? The commands for husbands to love is not a casual one, it is emphasised and repeated three times (25,28 &33). Paul gives the husband two models by which to gauge the required standard – Christ’s love for the church (25) and man’s natural ‘love’ for his own body (28). Such love is sacrificial, desiring the growth and maturity of its object of passion.

Paul’s appeal to such an ‘order’ of things is not cultural, but biblical; revealing the husband wife relationship to be both *creationist* and *redemptive* in its nature. Firstly, Paul states that ‘the husband is the head of the wife’ (2). Whilst not elaborating here, the Apostle does so in his other writings (1 Cor 11:3-12, 1 Tim 2:11-13) stating this to be the created order of things in God’s wisdom. Secondly, the Apostle appeals to the biblical doctrine of redemption as a picture of the husbands care and nurture of his wife; imitating Christ’s sacrificial love for the Church, as its Saviour (23).

In the Apostle's 'breakdown' of the 'passion of Christ' (25-27) – he demonstrates the extent of such a love as modelled in Christ, one that:

- 'As Christ loved the Church' (25) – Christ loved us from eternity, He eternally determined to save us out of His amazing love;
- '..and gave Himself up for her..' (25) – The cross shows the incredible depth of 'such love';
- '..Cleansing her..' (26) – Christ's 'love act' achieved our cleansing from sin, our forgiveness;
- '..to make her holy..' (26) – Christ's love is ongoing, desiring our sanctification and purity;
- '..and to present her to Himself..' (27) – our total perfection in Him, without blemish, is His loving goal

Such a passionate, loving desire is to be reflected in the love of a husband for his wife – desiring her ultimate maturity in Christ. Just as he looks after his own body – he must care for her (28).

This incredible comparison of earthly marriage and the Divine relationship between Christ and His church is found throughout scripture, as God defines His covenant relationship with His people as that of a 'marriage' (Ezek 23, Hosea 1-3, Jer 2:1-3 as examples). As husband and wife submit and love each other here on earth, they are to be a reflection of the ultimate marriage bond between a Holy God and His people.

Children & Parents:

Whilst wives are called to 'submit', and husbands to 'love' – children are called to 'obey' (6:1). Paul qualifies this with 'in the Lord', as even a young child of God's primary allegiance, is to Christ. The Apostle appeals to three reasons for again, such an 'order' of things to be expressed in obedience:

- It is natural and right – the natural law – 6:1
- It is God's revealed law – 6:2
- It is 'in the Lord' - 6:1

This said, the parental responsibility is also 'of the Lord' (4) – instead of negatively 'exasperating' our children, parents are to positively 'bring them up in the (practical) training and (scriptural) instruction of the Lord (4).

Further Study:

The Marriage Covenant: Isaiah 54:5-8, Hosea 1-3, Jerem. 2:1-3, Ezek 23, Rev 19:7-10, Rev 21:1-4

Husbands & Wives: Col 3:18-19, 1Cor11:3-12, 1Tim2:11-13

Parents & Children: Col 3:20-21, Levit 19:3, Deut 5-6, Exod 20, Romans 1:30

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word" Psalm 119:18