

STUDY GUIDE # 6 – A Place To Belong

Ephesians 5:1-6:9

¹Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. ^{chapter 6:1}Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. ⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you

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would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he or she does, whether he or she is slave or free. ⁹And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

REFLECTIONS

During the time of the writing of this letter, household codes were common among Jewish and Greek communities. As Christianity spread, it aroused suspicion. This required Christians to have high standards for their behavior. So Paul outlined God's plan for Christian behavior in the home.

Verse 21 begins by calling Christians to "*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*" The rule for harmony in Christian relationships is mutual submission. Submission has to do with putting the rights and needs of others before our own, voluntarily subordinating our personal desires for the good of a loved one. It involves treating each other with high regard. It involves a willingness to learn from, serve, give to, or even be corrected by others.

Paul calls on both husbands and wives to submit. Husbands to especially submit to their wives by loving them and sacrificing whatever is necessary to meet their needs. Wives to especially submit to their husbands by respecting and honoring them.

Chapter 6 expands children's responsibility to obey parents by highlighting the commandment to "HONOR one's father and mother." Obeying and honoring are different. Children are to obey while under their parents care, but they must HONOR their parents for life.

Vs. 4 instructs parents to not exasperate their children. The word "exasperate" means to irritate or annoy, to make angry, to aggravate – to make the situation worse.

None of our families are the perfect family. Being the imperfect families that we are gives us the opportunity to practice unconditional love. It is in unconditionally loving each other, and submitting to each other out of that love, that we obey and please God - and find the joy of human relationships God intends for us.