

**A Worthy Walk in Family and Business Life****Lesson Scope:** [Ephesians 5:21-6:9](#)*References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise***Lesson Focus:**

Our lives are largely spent relating to our families and to those we work with. On every hand, we relate to people. Healthy marriages lay the foundation for successful parent-child relationships. The Way God has related to us sets the pattern for us to follow in relation to our fellow men. We learn about both the earthly marriage relationship and the relationship of Christ and the church in this passage. The relationship of employers and employees can mirror the relationship of our Master in heaven and His servants on earth. Humility, selflessness, and divine love are keys to reaching “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Godliness must characterize the Christian’s daily walk. The greatest tests come as he lives and works among those who know him best.

There is much sadness and confusion in the world today as a result of broken and improper relationships. Sadly, many professing Christians are no exception to this. Use this lesson to inspire yourself and others to aspire to excellence in their relationships

**Lesson Aim:**

To identify principles that regulate the believer’s home and business relationships.

**Theme Verse:**

[1 John 2:6](#). He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

**Lesson Text:****Husbands and Wives**

[Ephesians 5:21-33](#)<sup>(KJV)</sup> [Submitting](#) yourselves one to another in the fear of God. <sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head

of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. <sup>24</sup> Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. <sup>29</sup> For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: <sup>30</sup> For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. <sup>31</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

### **Parents and Children**

**Ephesians 6:1-4** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **Children**, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. <sup>2</sup> Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) <sup>3</sup> That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. <sup>4</sup> And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

### **Masters and Servants**

**Ephesians 6:5-9** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **Servants**, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; <sup>6</sup> Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; <sup>7</sup> With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: <sup>8</sup> Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. <sup>9</sup> And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

### **Questions for Study:**

#### **Husbands and Wives**

1. How is the church as the bride of Christ a pattern for wives? How is Christ a pattern for husbands?
2. List practical ways for a wife to be subject to her own husband.

3. List practical ways for a husband to express Christlike love for his wife.

### **Parents and Children**

4. Does God still promise blessing on obedient children?

5. How might fathers provoke their children to wrath?

6. How do adults honour their parents?

### **Masters and Servants**

7. What constitutes acceptable service by employees?

8. How can employers reduce to practice the truth in 6:9?

### **Analysing the Passage:**

“Submitting yourselves one to another” (5:21) is a broad command with the idea of voluntary subordination. Christians are called to defer to one another in the brotherhood (Philippians 2:3; Romans 12:10). Wives are to submit to their husbands “as unto the Lord,” indicating that obedience to this command is obedience to God, who gave it. Husbands are to love their wives “as Christ . . . loved the church, and gave himself for it.” This command is given without qualification and indicates sacrifice. Love is more than warm emotions; it is a choice of the Will. While God has appointed physical, functional, and positional differences, husbands and wives are equal in the body of Christ (5:30).

Nurture (6:4) means “training” and implies disciplinary correction.

Admonition (6:4) means “training by word.”

The phrases “as unto Christ” (6:5) and “knowing that your Master also is in heaven” (6:9) link our earthly relationships to our relationship with God.

### **Principles and Applications:**

#### **Husbands and Wives**

1. Harmonious relationships require attitudes of humility and godly fear (5:21). Selfishness and pride are vices of the carnal nature that God hates. If we allow these sins in our lives, we are unable to receive the help that we could in our relationships. Proverbs says, “Only by pride cometh contention.” Submission, on the other hand, yields peace and mutual support.

2. God calls wives to fill their role in submission to their husbands (5:22, 24). God has established an order of headship both in the church and in

marriage. God calls a wife to submit herself to her own husband. A wife submits by honouring her husband's wishes and supporting him in his decisions. After marriage, men's and women's potential depends on the success of their marriages. The wife's submission frees the couple from competing against each other and allows them to blend into a strong unit.

3. Christ's love and sacrifice for the church illustrates how the husband should relate to his wife (5:23, 25). Christ loved the church and humbled Himself and sacrificed His very life for her. Husbands are called to love their wives after this pattern. A husband who sacrifices himself for his wife will give up personal agendas, interests, dreams, and comfort for the good of his wife and family. This is a noteworthy challenge for men and can hardly be met without "the mind of Christ" dwelling in them.

4. The marriage union forms an exclusive, permanent relationship (5:28-31). Marriage is a union of one man and one woman that is dissolved only by death. This union is so close that God describes it as being "one flesh." A husband who loves his wife and pays attention to her welfare as much as he would his own physical body is contributing to his own happiness.

5. The union of husband and wife typifies the relationship of Christ and the church (5:32). God calls His people to pattern their marriages after the relationship of Christ and the church—husbands sacrificing themselves and loving their wives, and wives submitting and reverencing their husbands. Christ and the church help us understand marriage; marriages built on these principles help us understand Christ and the church.

### **Parents and Children**

6. God commands children to obey and honour their parents (6:1-3). Children need to be taught obedience by their parents at a very young age for their own welfare. As children grow older, obedience to their parents helps them understand their responsibility to God. Honour means "to prize." Regardless of age, children need to appreciate their parents.

7. Fathers must "bring [their children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (6:4). God gives fathers the responsibility to teach their growing children the ways of the Lord by word and example. Consistency and self-control are essential qualities to carry out this calling.

### **Masters and Servants**

8. God-fearing servants serve their masters with obedience and goodwill, "as unto the Lord" (6:5-8). Christian employees live out their faith

in the workplace. Obedience, honesty, dependability, and goodwill are characteristics of the Christian worker. Faithfulness in the workplace helps us to be faithful in our spiritual lives as well. Verse 8 of chapter 6 promises the faithful worker a reward from God Himself.

9. Christian masters relate to those under them in light of their own position under Christ (6:9). Employers or masters relate to those under them in light of the fact that they have a master in heaven. Force and threats are contrary to God's law of love. Workplace administrators should emulate God's fairness and impartiality.

### **Important Teachings:**

1. Harmonious relationships require attitudes of humility and godly fear (5:21).
2. God calls wives to fill their role in submission to their husbands (5:22, 24).
3. Christ's love and sacrifice for the church illustrates how the husband should relate to his wife (5:23, 25).
4. The marriage union forms an exclusive, permanent relationship (5:28-31).
5. The union of husband-and-wife typifies the relationship of Christ and the church (5:32).
6. God commands children to obey and honour their parents (6:1-3).
7. Fathers must "bring [their children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (6:4).
8. God-fearing servants serve their masters with obedience and good-will as unto the Lord (6:5-8).
9. Christian masters relate to those under them in light of their own position under Christ (6:9).

### **Answers to Questions:**

1. How is the church as the bride of Christ a pattern for wives? How is Christ a pattern for husbands?

The church is subject to Christ. The church is exclusive of all others in her devotion to Christ. Christ gave Himself for the church in the ultimate sacrifice.

2. List practical ways for a wife to be subject to her own husband.

Be sensitive to his wishes. Consult him about plans. Do not berate him when his plans do not work out.

3. List practical ways for a husband to express Christlike love for his wife.

Give up your own comfort or convenience for her benefit. Be attentive to her needs and desires.

4. Does God still promise blessing on obedient children?

Yes. Paul, by inspiration, repeated this Old Testament command and promise. So, these Scriptures clearly still apply today.

5. How might fathers provoke their children to wrath?

By being inconsistent or not having their spirits under control. By failing to both teach and discipline.

6. How do adults honour their parents?

Those who have been brought up in the way of truth honour their parents by not forsaking it. Adults honour their parents by asking their advice, caring for them in their old age, appreciating them, and showing their appreciation by word and action.

7. What constitutes acceptable service by employees?

Obedying and cooperating with respect “as unto the Lord.” Giving a good day’s work with diligence and carefulness.

8. How can employers reduce to practice the truth in 6:9?

Treat employees with dignity and respect. Do not ask employees to do things you would not be willing to do. Compensate them fairly.

### **Summarizing the Lesson:**

God intends for us to live out our faith in the practical round of everyday life. Can our families and workplace associates see the work of Christ in our lives? Let us thank God that He gives us the pattern for a holy, happy life and gives us the power to live it.

### **Research Guide:**

1. Read the following Scriptures related to marriage: Genesis 2:18, Ecclesiastes 9:9, Matthew 19:6, Matthew 22:30, 1 Corinthians 7:3, and Colossians 3:18-19.

2. Research master—servant relationships in the Roman Empire in Paul’s day. A good commentary on Philemon would be a good starting point.