



INTRODUCTION

In this GOD WITH US series we have discussed the power of understanding that God is with us in all times, in all circumstances, in all weaknesses and strengths, in all moments of temptation and victory, and in all our failures and successes.

Paul is now trying to help us to live out, in our daily experience the profoundly powerful growth and change journey, that God intends for each of us...

1. The Imitation of God

Read and discuss Ephesians 5;1-4:

KEYPOINT

It is often said that “Imitation is the highest form of Praise...”

Paul exhorts the whole church to pursue the Imitation of the Heart and Character of God. And this is never more important than in the context of Marriage and Family...

2. Be Subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

This verse sets the scene for the (often controversial) whole passage which follows ...

And what follows must be understood in the light of this Unconditional instruction- about being subject to one another by our own choices...

In other words, we are Egalitarian in value and position before God and as such, we can subject ourselves to each other out of reverence for Jesus Christ, irrespective of our gender.

Read and discuss: Ephesians 5:22-33 NASB

KEYPOINT

Note that the two roles and expectations are different here....

In this passage, God asks both men and women to do what will generally require the most faith and commitment for each of them. For men the cost of Love is higher than it is to provide respect, whereas, for many women Love comes more easily than Respect. Thus the command Paul gives requires unequivocal commitment and yield the greatest rewards.

DISCUSSION POINT

Read and discuss the meaning of the following verse:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 NASB

3. SUBMISSION OR SUBJECTION- ISNT SUBJUGATION

Now let's define from a Biblical viewpoint what Subjection means:

- A. Subjection comes from the subject not the oversight. It resides in the hands of the person willingly choosing to submit themselves rather than an involuntary response.
- B. Subjugation implies being overrun and overruled and this is imposed by an oversight of some nature. The will is in the hands of the conqueror not the conquered...
- C. Subjection is a response of Trust based on Love.
- D. Subjugation is a response of Surrender based on Fear

CONCLUSION

Paul is determined to see each believer recognise their own value in serving alongside others in the Body of Christ. In an era where the family unit has been decimated and distorted, it's a wonderful opportunity to build marriages and families on sound Biblical guidelines of Love and Respect and the Imitation of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER POINT

Take a moment to pray for marriages and families both within and outside the Church.