

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

God-Honouring Relationships

1. Why does Paul add the words “of which he is the Savior” in verse 23?
2. What does verse 24 say about the attitude with which wives should submit to their husbands?
3. In verse 26 Paul says that Christ makes the Church holy by “the washing with water through the word.” What does he mean by that? (cf. Romans 6:3-4)
4. In verse 28 Paul says that husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. Does he mean that husbands should love their wives in the same way as they love their own bodies, or that husbands should love their wives as being their own bodies?
5. In verses 25-27 Paul explains how Christ loves his Church, and then begins verse 28 by saying “*in the same way* husbands ought to love their wives...” Given that norm, what goal ought a husband to have with respect to his wife?
6. In 5:32:
 - a. How should we define the word “mystery”?
 - b. When Paul says that “this” is a profound mystery, what does he exactly mean by “this”?
7. Why does Paul add the phrase “in the Lord” in 6:1?
8. Paul says the fifth commandment is the “first commandment with a promise.”
 - a. Notice, however, how there is a promise also with the second commandment:

...You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:5,6

How do we explain this?

 - b. What implication does this have for our society?
9. Why are fathers singled out in verse 4? Why doesn't Paul say “parents” instead?

10. What are some ways in which a father can exasperate his children?
11. Given what Paul says in 6:1-4:
- What do you think of the modern phenomenon of early kindergarten, daycare, etc.?
 - What is the place of a teacher in the school?
12. In verses 5-9 Paul speaks to slaves. (cf. 1 Peter 2:18-25)
- Does Paul condone the ancient slavery system? If so, why? If not, why did he not tell the masters to free their slaves?
 - Is the abolition of slavery a good thing? If so, how do we reconcile this with what Paul says here and elsewhere about slaves being required to obey their masters?
13. What does Paul mean when he says that slaves should obey their earthly masters "with fear"?
14. One explainer suggests that when talking to the slaves (who in those days were not considered persons but rather "things" or "tools with souls"), Paul insists that ownership by Christ must overrule all other definitions of our personhood. (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:22) Would you agree with that? If so, what implications does this have for us who are not slaves?
15. How can we apply the slave/master relationship today, since we no longer have slaves and masters in Canada?
16. In verse 9 Paul warns masters that God is not a God of favoritism. Can you identify ways in which we, perhaps subconsciously, show partiality?
- In our interactions within the communion of saints?
- In our interactions with others?

For further discussion:

17. Note: the Latin translates the word "mystery" in 5:32 with *sacramentum* and thus the Roman Church uses this text to defend marriage as a "sacrament." How would you refute this argument?
18. In connection with 6:1-3 note how evil days are characterized by children being disobedient to parents. (Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2)

19. What do you think of the practice of children going to Sunday school instead of attending the worship service? How would Paul view that fairly common practice of today?
20. What do you think of the tendency to allow the children to call their parents or other adults by their first name? What about for sons-in-law and daughters-in-law? (6:1-4)

J VanWoudenberg