

GOD'S WISDOM FOR FAMILIES

Int.

1. Aim: To show that God's way for our families is the wise way to live
2. Text Ephesians 5:22-6:9
3. Paul begins to describe how various family members are to conduct themselves
 - a. The responsibilities of wives - Eph. 5:22-24
 - b. The responsibilities of husbands - Eph. 5:25-33
 - c. The responsibilities of children - Eph. 6:1-3
 - d. The responsibilities of fathers - Eph. 6:4
 - e. The responsibilities of servants - Eph. 6:5-8
 - f. The responsibilities of masters - Eph. 6:9
4. Paul mentioned earlier...
 - a. How the church is to "make known the manifold wisdom of God" - Eph.3:10 various
 - b. How we are to walk in "wisdom" - Eph. 5:15-17
 - c. It is through family relationships that we can often do this more successfully than in any other way!
 - d. The same principles that underlie the gospel message
 - i. submission, love, sacrifice, obedience, honesty, fairness . . .
 - ii. are to be displayed in our family relationships
 - e. By example, then, we can demonstrate in our families what is truly good and right, and prepare others to be receptive to the gospel message!
5. How can this be? Well, it is through our families that we interact so much with the society in which we live...

- a. Through marriage we immediately come into contact with another family (our "in-laws")
 - b. Through children we develop relationships with those in their schools, their neighborhood, etc.
6. Thus it is through our families we have great potential to demonstrate the wisdom of God...
7. Consider, then, how those who "walk worthy" conduct themselves in regards to...

Discussion

I. MARITAL RESPONSIBILITIES Eph. 5:22-33

A. THE DUTY OF WIVES... V. 22-24

1. They are to submit to their husbands in everything...
 - a. Just as they are to submit to the Lord ("as to the Lord")
 - b. Just as the church is subject to Christ
2. The reason: the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church
 - a. Any time you have organization that is functional, you must have some chain of authority
 - b. In the family, it is God's Will that the husband be the head of the wife, and that parents be over their children
3. The wife submits to her husband because she is submissive to the Lord
 - a. This does not mean that the woman is inferior to man !
 - b. Her body is of no less value than that of her husband's.
 - c. Both man and woman are created in the image of God.

- d. But in regard to authority, the husband is over the wife, but that does not mean she is of less value.
4. Here is an opportunity for wives to demonstrate the wisdom and value of an important principle in God's will: that of submission!
- a. Jesus taught by both word and example of the importance of submission -
 - (1) John 13:12-17 - washed feet of disciples
 - (2) Mark 10:42-45 - greatest is servant
 - b. Indeed we all are to submit in one way or another -
 - (1) James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - (2) Eph. 5:21 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
 - c. Through their submission, wives prove that God's will is best in such matters!

B. THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS... V. 25-30

- 1. They are to love their wives...
 - a. Just as Christ loved the church, i.e., with a sacrificial love designed to bless and benefit their wives
 - b. Just as they love their own bodies, i.e., with a love that nourishes and cherishes their wives
- 2. Just as the wives have the opportunity to demonstrate God's wisdom concerning submission, so husbands are given the opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love...
 - a. As the head"over His church, Jesus rules as a "benevolent monarch"
 - b. Some think such a concept as "benevolent monarch" is impossible - as per the saying, "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely"

- c. But when a husband exercises his authority as head of the family with the kind of love Jesus displays while ruling over His church, they demonstrate not only the possibility, but the wisdom of a benevolent monarchy!
 - d. Indeed, the "marriage" between a man and a woman can reflect the relationship that exists between Christ and the church (31-32). But this can happen only if...
 - (1) A husband exercises his authority with love (33a)
 - (2) A wife submits to her husband with respect (33b).
- C. Just as there are "marital responsibilities", so there are...

II. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES Eph. 6:1-9

A. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN... V. 1-3

1. Children are to obey their parents in a way that honors them
2. There are certainly temporal benefits for such obedience "that it may be well with you..."
3. But there are also spiritual repercussions - Col 3:20 "for this is well pleasing to the Lord"
4. And by their example, children can show the value of obedience to the commands of God
 - a. A child who walks in the wisdom of his parents learns submission.
 - b. This will bring happiness in his life.

B. THE DUTY OF FATHERS... V. 4

1. Fathers are charged both negatively and positively..
 - a. DON'T provoke children to wrath (i.e., discipline without love)
 - b. DO bring them up in the "nurture and admonition" of the Lord (i.e., discipline tempered with love)
2. In the world, people usually fall into two extremes of child- raising:
 - a. Discipline without love (child abuse)
 - b. Love without discipline (permissiveness)
3. But when fathers properly administer both love and discipline, by example they show how God raises His own children in the family of God - Heb. 12:5-11

C. THE DUTY OF SERVANTS... V. 5-8

1. In the First Century A.D., servants were an intricate part of many households, which may explain Paul including instructions to them and masters in this and parallel passages - Col. 3:22-4:1
2. Christians who were servants were expected to exemplify the proper kind of obedience required of all Christians..
 - a. Obedience with fear and trembling - Ph 2:10
 - b. Obedience in sincerity of heart, as to Christ Himself
 - c. Obedience with good will, as to the Lord
 - d. Obedience with an understanding that the Lord is an impartial Judge
3. In this way even slaves could demonstrate by example what true obedience was according to the Will of God

D. THE DUTY OF MASTERS... V. 9

1. Those Christians who had slaves (like Philemon) were charged to treat their servants in very special ways:
 - a. "do the same things to them", i.e., their treatment of slaves should be governed by the same sort of principles given to the servants...
 - (1) "with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ"
 - (2) "not with eye service...but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"
 - (3) "with good will...as to the Lord, and not to men"
 - (4) "knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord..."
 - b. In particular, Christian slave-owners were to give up threatening and to remember that God shows no respect of persons
2. By their example, masters could demonstrate the proper exercise of authority, and reveal much about how our Master in heaven rules over us in the kingdom of God!

CONCLUSION

1. How we conduct ourselves in our marriage and family relationships can greatly effect our efforts to make known "the manifold wisdom of God"...
 - a. Marriages and families that are "dysfunctional" serve only to belie the claims we make about the gospel and its power to transform lives
 - b. Whereas marriages and families based upon the teachings of God's Word can speak volumes as to the value of principles inherent in the gospel; such principles as:

- i. Submitting to God and others in authority
 - ii. Exercising authority with sacrificial love
 - iii. Obeying those placed over us by God
 - iv. Developing others through training and admonition, not intimidation
 - v. Rendering service that is sincere, not hypocritical
 - vi. Exercising authority with justice and fairness
2. So as we endeavor to “walk worthy of the calling” that we have in Christ, let's not overlook those areas where it is most imperative to have a “worthy walk”: in our marriages and families!
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