

ANGEL TREE SUNDAY

INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Ephesians chapter 5.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Ephesians 5,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find Ephesians 5 on page **978**.

INTRODUCTION: PIANO LESSONS

Anybody, like me take piano lessons as a kid?

Yeah, I took piano lessons from Mrs. Litton for six years, and I did alright.

The big problem for me was that I hated to practice.

- And very often I would wait all week...
- until the day of my piano lesson...
- and my head would pop off of my pillow that morning,
 - and I'd be like, "oh no..."
 - I gotta go see Mrs. Litton today"...
- and then I'd just cram whatever I had to practice.

It worked just about as well...

- as flossing your teeth
- for the first time in six-months
- on the day you go to the dentist.

Right? It was a disgusting and bloody mess!

TRANSITION

But in order to get good enough to play music on the piano...

- I had to submit to practicing...
- the way Mrs. Litton instructed.

And I say all that because in our text today

- we're going to see us three...
- very common relationships in our lives...
- And these three relationships are like the practice rooms...
 - to deepen us in our relationship with God.

So, this section actually started with the last verse we read last week.

Look at Ephesians 5:21:

EPHESIANS 5:21

[21] submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

EXPLAIN: SUBMITTED

So, this was where we stopped last week, and remember...

- this was the last of the four ways Paul lays out
- for Christians to position themselves
- where they might be filled with the Spirit.
 - We practice submitting to God...
 - by being **SLIDE SUBMITTED** to one another.

And we'll see three relationships...

where we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ:

- Wives and husbands...
- Children and parents...
- And servants and masters.

And these are the practice rooms...

- the training grounds...
- that God uses to deepen us.

TRANSITION

So, I'll give word for each party in these three relationships.

We have a lot of text to cover today.

So, let's get started in Ephesians 5:22 with marriage.

EPHESIANS 5:22-24

[22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

EXPLAIN: CONTROVERSIAL

Well, there it is! Not a controversial passage at all!

- Ladies, I'm sure this is your favorite verse in the Bible, right?
- This is your life verse?
 - Any ladies have this verse tattooed...
 - on their ankle or wrist or foot or something?
- No! Probably not.

Now, I imagine that there are some here...

- And you've already lawyered up in your mind...
 - and you have the boxing gloves on...
- because this is one of those passages
 - that had been misused
 - and abused historically.

But, I'm going to ask you to hold off on throwing punches.

- You can email me later if you disagree with what I say,
- but let me work through this first.

WORD: WIVES

And the word I'll give to the wives is this: **SLIDE WIVES: RESPECT**

I'm not gonna say submit, because each party is to mutually submit.

- But wives, the **WAY** you submit to your husbands...
- is by showing him **RESPECT**.

Now, let's notice a few things about these verses.

First, this comes **AFTER** Paul said: **submit to one another**.

- So, mutual submission is the umbrella,
- and wives submitting is one outworking.

Second, it says, **wives submit to your own husband**.

- This does not mean women submit to men.
 - No way!
- Biblically, men and women are equal!
 - We'll see that there are some different roles they play.
- But wives are **NOT INFERIOR** to their husbands.

And this superiority/inferiority piece is where a lot of abuse stems.

But it's bogus!

ILLUSTRATION: COP

It's like this: I know some police officers who have been members here.

- And as members of Fathom...
- they submit to me as their pastor.
 - Ok? I am a spiritual authority over them.

But as soon as we leave this place,

- and they put on that uniform and badge,
- and we get out in the community...
- they are the authority.
 - I submit to them as a legal authority.

So, the question is: who is superior to who?

- The answer is neither!

It's just...

- in the different roles we have,
- there are times when they submit to me,
- and other times when I submit to them.

So too, wives are not inferior to their husbands...

but they are to respect his God-given leadership in the home.

Third, it says to submit, **as to the Lord**.

- That does not mean *“in the place of the Lord.”*
- It means:
 - as you submit to your husband
 - you are actually submitting to God.
- Which also means:
 - if your husband was asking you to do something
 - that would make you disobey the Lord...
 - you don't do it.
- Or if his leadership ever
 - puts you or your family in physical harm's way...
 - you need to get out of there.
 - Get out,
 - come see us,
 - get some counseling. Ok?

Fourth, it says that **the husband IS the head of the wife**.

This means that this authority is positional. It's not circumstantial.

- **The husband IS the head.**
 - Now, you can be a bad head or a good head...
 - but the husband IS the head.

A lot of times a woman will come from a conference or Bible study or something and say...

- *“Well, my husband is not a spiritual leader.”*
- *“What does that mean for how I follow him?”*

But this verse doesn't say,

- *"Submit when he is sufficiently a spiritual leader in your eyes."*

Ladies, listen:

- If your husband is NOT a spiritual leader,
- you RESPECTING him in this way...
- can help call him up into this kind of leadership!

EXPLAIN: DON'T REJECT

Now, ladies, let me encourage you:

- Don't reject this just because you have seen this warped.
- Don't take an abuse of this idea...
 - or some archaic caricature of this idea...
- as the reason why it no longer applies.

Matt Chandler says:

"A husband sacrificially loving his wife, and a wife submitted to her godly husband creates a relationship that the world would never look at and say, 'How disgusting and archaic.'"

To every husband in here,

- you are called by God to be the head of your family.

And wives,

- you are called by God to submit to that.

And that doesn't mean husbands make all the big decisions,

- or that he's the boss.
- It just means that AS he tries to lead...
 - you do your best to help him
 - and support him
 - and follow him
 - and encourage him
 - and be the partner that he needs.
 - You RESPECT him.

TRANSITION

Now, on to the husbands.

- If you had just read those first verses,
 - you might be feeling pretty full of yourself.
- But Paul won't allow that.

Verse 25:

EPHESIANS 5:25-33

[25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and

cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

WORD: HUSBANDS

Now, there is a lot there, but for simplicity’s sake...

Husbands, here’s your word for today. **SLIDE HUSBANDS: SERVE**

You submit to your wife by serving her.

Let’s just look at a few things.

First, it says, **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church.**

- Christ loved his people even when they didn’t love him.
 - **While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**
 - It was when we were at our worst that God loved us.
- So, husbands, that’s how you love your wives.

That means men you don’t get to quote Ephesians 5 at your wife.

- *“Submit!*
- *Submit to me!”*
 - This will not go well for you! No!
- **It’s hers to obey, not yours to demand.**

And if she's not doing it,

- you do all you can
- to try to be the kind of leader
- it would be a joy to submit to.

You play your role...you SERVE her...and trust God with hers.

Second, it says that like Christ, you are to wash your wife with the word.

Now, that's strange language to our ears,

- but what that means is that you should SERVE your wife...
- by taking the lead spiritually in your home.

Now, that doesn't mean you know more bible or theology than she does.

- Frankly, you might not.
- But you can still SERVE as the spiritual leader in your home.

Here's a couple of ways:

- You can SERVE by applying the sermons from church!
 - Listen, you just jot down one or two things...
 - I say on a Sunday that strike you,
 - and then bring them up on Wednesday night at dinner...
 - just see how that goes!
 - I promise you, before you even know it, you're leading!
- Another way to wash her with the word is to pray for her.
 - And you don't need to be some prayer ninja.
 - You just ask her, *"Hey honey, what can I pray for you?"*

- And then, after she tells you,
- you just grab her hand and pray for that thing.
- Right then!
- *“Dear God, Maryse is stressed about her friend right now.*
 - *Help her with that. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*
- Boom! You just led spiritually!

Third thing, verse 28 says that husbands should **love like they love their own bodies.**

Now, this is a strange thing, but I thought about it and it makes sense.

Have you ever noticed that guys just seem to love their bodies...

No matter what they look like?

- I mean, I catch myself in the mirror...
 - and no matter how gray
 - or wrinkled
 - or flabby
 - or hairy I’m getting...
- I see myself, and it’s kinda like, “Alright! Still got it!”
- It’s kinda weird.

But what this means, men,

- **is that you are to SERVE your wife**
- **like you would SERVE yourself.**

Listen, before you get married,

- you are an expert in meeting your needs.
 - You love yourself!
 - You eat what you want...
 - and listen to what you want...
 - and watch what you want...
 - and do what you want.
- But once you get married, all that should change.

Being the head in your marriage doesn't mean you get your way!

- It means that in decisions,
 - I give her needs and preferences
 - more weight than my own.

Guys, if I am serving Maryse like Christ served the church,

- that means that in 90% of places where we disagree,
- we are going to end up doing what she wants,
- because most decisions are not spiritual leadership decisions,
 - they are preferences,
- and mine should always be second to hers.

TRANSITION

I could go on, but there are two other practice rooms where God works on this, too; marriage is just one of them. So,

- WIVES: RESPECT
- and HUSBANDS: SERVE

Paul's next example...Chapter 6 verse 1:

EPHESIANS 6:1-3

[1] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), [3] “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

EXPLAIN: CHILDREN

Alright, the second practice facility where God is filling and deepening us is in the child/parent relationship.

And, this one is kinda tricky, because it says **children**.

And we are all children. Right?

So, the question is: when does one stop being a...**children**?

- We are one of the very few cultures in the history of the world
 - that doesn't have a clear demarcation
 - of when one becomes an adult.

So, in our culture, it depends on who you ask...

- If you ask Tylenol, it's 12.
- If you ask the DMV, it's 16.
- If you ask the military, it's 18.
- If you ask Coors, it's 21.
- If you ask Delta, it's 2.
 - At 2-years-old you pay for your own seat!

For today,

- let's just say if your parents still pay your bills
 - (insurance, cell phone, utilities, rent)...ok?
- You're still a **children**.

WORD: CHILDREN

So, to all the children in here...here's your word:

SLIDE CHILDREN: HONOR

It says to **obey your parents IN THE LORD.**

- That means that when we are children,
 - our parents represent the authority of God to us.
- In a way, they stand in for God for a time.
 - We first learn to obey and submit to God,
 - By first obeying and submitting to our parents.

That means, for those of you living at home...children...youth...listen:

- how you submit to the authority of your parents...
- IS how you submit to God.

LET THAT SIT THERE for just a moment.

- The child to parent relationship is a practice field
- that teaches children to submit to God.

So, to the younger people in here...I know this is tough to believe at times,

- but no one knows you better
- or loves you more than your parents do.
 - And sometimes it's tough to believe that.

ILLUSTRATION: DAD

I don't know if this is hard to believe or not,

- but I was a bit of a rebel child.

And my dad once sarcastically said to me,

- "Chris, one day I hope you have a son...just like you."

And at 15 I was like,

- *“You’re dang right...”*
- *I hope so, too...*
- *he’ll be awesome!”*

But I can remember how my dad looked to me at that point.

My dad rode a motorcycle. But don’t think “cool” motorcycle, ok?

- It was a Honda Gold Wing...
 - **SLIDE** Here’s a picture.
- So, it’s no chopper, ok?
 - Those storage cases are to motorcycles...
 - What cell-phone holsters are to belts...

And my dad would ride it looking like this:

- he’d wear a full-face helmet,
- a ratty old t-Shirt,
- really, really, really short shorts...
 - like, there was a whole lot of man thigh going on.
- Calf high white socks,
- and white New Balance sneakers
 - with green grass stains on them...
 - from mowing the lawn.
- Oh, and he’d wear tan-leather gardening gloves on his hands.

As he rode a motorcycle!

And I’m going:

- *“I don’t know if I can take advice*
- *from a guy who would choose to dress like that!”*

Meanwhile I had dreadlocks with bleached-blonde ends
and pants sagging down to my thighs!

And I will NOT be sharing those photos!

HONOR SLIDE

- But the command says for children to OBEY their parents...
- it doesn't say you'll UNDERSTAND your parents.

Listen, kids:

- you probs won't GET your parents...
 - just like they don't GET you...
- but you are still called to obey them.

EXPLAIN: ADULT CHILDREN

Now, a question that I get a lot is:

What about when you are older—do you still have to obey your parents?

Well, that's why I used the word: HONOR.

- As a child, you HONOR your parents by obeying them.
- As you get older, you HONOR them in different ways.

This is where it helps to understand that parents are a stand-in for God.

- They are like the training wheels to obeying God.
- The point is obeying God.
 - Cause by the time you leave the house,
 - you are supposed to have shifted the authority
 - from your parents...to God.

Which means, when you are older,

- the way you HONOR your parents...
 - is by being the man or woman...
 - that God designed you to become...
 - and obeying HIM.

By obeying God, you are honoring the institution of parenting.

TRANSITION

And then in verse 4 we see the parents' side of this thing.

EPHESIANS 6:4

[4] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

WORD: PARENTS

So, my word for parents is **SLIDE PARENTS: TRAIN**

It says:

- “Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”
- and that means that what you are primarily focused on
 - is character development.

“Bring them up” literally means “train them”

You are training their hearts toward God.

Listen:

- You are not ONLY concerned
 - about controlling their behavior with RULES.
- You are MORE concerned
 - about training their character with RELATIONSHIP.

And hear me:

- trying to control behavior with rules is hard...
 - but training in character is WAY harder...
 - and it takes a lot more time.

It takes relationship with your kids.

Cause listen: **rules without relationship always leads to rebellion.**

And I've got 10 years of Youth Ministry experience to back that up.

So, you gotta take the time to develop a relationship with your kids.

ILLUSTRATION: BUSY

And let me tell you...just honestly.

- I think most parents are just too busy...
 - to train their kids **in the instruction of the Lord.**
- Cause you've got your kids signed up for too much stuff.

Maryse and I keep having to check ourselves on this one.

- Cause we've got church
- and school
- and soccer
- and dance
- and swimming

- and skiing
 - and she wants to do gymnastics
 - and play with friends.

And before we know it, it's like...uh oh!

- And if we're not careful we'll find ourselves with too much to do,
- and not enough time to TRAIN her in what's really important.

TRANSITION

And people will push back by saying, *"But sports build character."*

And I'm calling bull on that.

You ever look at an NFL team and think, *"what Godly men of character!"*

Not very often! Right?

- Sports don't build character...
- parents build character.

Now,

- some GOOD parents
- leverage SOME activities
- to HELP develop character in their kids...

But listen, this is the goal. **Character training for your children.**

So, Marriage...family...and third: work.

Let's look at verse 5:

EPHESIANS 6:5

[5] Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

EXPLAIN: SLAVES

Now, some translations say, “slaves,”

- but a much better translation is what ours reads:
 - bondservants.
- Most translations don’t use slave
- because Paul is in no way condoning
- what we in the Western world think of when we say, “slavery.”

Paul makes it very clear in other places the wickedness of slavery!

But here, he is referring to a practice like indentured servanthood,

- which was typically a voluntary contract
- that didn’t last for a lifetime
- and was not based on race.

So, read these instructions as “employees to employers.”

Employees, obey your employers...

EPHESIANS 6:6-8

[6] not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, [7] rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, [8] knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

WORD: EMPLOYEES

Ok, to those in here who are employees. You work for someone?

Well, here’s your word: **SLIDE EMPLOYEES: WORK**

Alright? That may sound silly...

- but WORK.
- WORK hard.
 - Don't slack off.
- WORK when no one is watching.
- WORK not for the praise of your boss.
 - But WORK as unto the Lord.

Submitting to your boss IS HOW you show submission to Christ.

- And that's not supposed to be dependent...
 - on how nice your boss is...
 - or even if he or she always rewards you fairly,
- because ultimately, Paul says,
- you are not working for him or her,
- but for God.

I know some of you are in jobs where your boss is a jerk; or, "She's unfair."

- And listen, they might be!
 - And God will repay them one day.
- But I'd just coach you...
- that you don't know what is on their plate.

Listen, I was the best Lead Pastor I knew...when I was a Youth Pastor.

I just knew it all!

- And then I planted this church...
 - and got the snot kicked out of me...
 - and now I'm like,
- *"I need to apologize to some of my old bosses for my attitude."*

But God is who you actually work for.

- In every assignment,
- God's the real boss behind your earthly boss.
- So, do your WORK for him.

TRANSITION

And to the bosses, the employers. Verse 9:

EPHESIANS 6:9

[9] Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

WORD: EMPLOYERS

The word for employers is this: **SLIDE EMPLOYERS: HUMBLE**

- For you who have power over others,
- Paul says, lead with humility
- the way Jesus humbly came to live and to lead.

Bosses...

- You lift up and empower.
 - You never manipulate and control.
- You leverage your leadership the way Jesus did.
- He humbly gives away his power to serve others.

So, wherever you are the leader...

- whether you lead in the company or in the carpool...

- if you look around...
- and you're the most powerful person in the room.

I'd ask you this:

- do the people who work for you
- have a better understand of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ,
- by the way you shepherd them?

Regardless of what they believe.

- Do the people who you humbly lead
- have a better picture of the Jesus you claim to follow
- because of your leadership?

CONCLUSION

So, where are you **SLIDE W/PADS SUBMITTED**

- These are the practice rooms...
- the training grounds to GO DEEPER with God.
 - God deepens us...
 - and fills us with his Spirit...
 - more and more and more...
 - as we mutually submit to one another...
 - out of reverence for Christ.

So church, this one is insanely practical.

In what relationships do you need to ratchet up your submission?

- In your marriage?
- In your family?
- In your work?

Submitting to one another is the practice we need as we submit to God.

So, where are you submitted?

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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