

How the Gospel Changes Our Homes

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[0 : 00] Good morning, Watermark. The scripture reading today comes from Ephesians chapters 5 and 6. Starting in chapter 5, verse 21, we read, Submit to one another out of reference for Christ.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its saviour.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 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.

In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

[1 : 34] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor your father and mother. This is the first commandment with a promise, that it might go well with you, and that you may live long in the land. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ, not by the way of eye service, as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ.

Doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

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.

[2 : 55] This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Iris. Well, let's pray together as we come to this passage.

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, we, as we say each week, we come to encounter your grace. God, in a world that is so starved of grace, God, in a world that is dog-eat-dog, and everyone's fighting for their own rights and positions and privileges, God, we come to you this morning to receive what only you can give us, grace for our weary hearts.

And Father, as we look at this passage, this challenging passage, we pray that you will speak to us. We pray that you will make clear to us your heart. You'll both call us and flood our hearts with your goodness and your grace.

And so, Jesus, come and have your way, we pray. Spirit of God, come and help me to make clear this passage, but help us to see your word and to encounter you in your word.

We pray this in your wonderful name. Amen. Well, we're continuing our study in the book of Ephesians. And the book of Ephesians is really all about the church and God's cosmic plan for the church.

[4 : 12] And the first couple of chapters, especially chapters 1 to 3, kind of look at this idea from heaven's perspective. It's kind of like you sit it up in heaven, see it in heaven, and you look at God's plan for the church from the perspective of heaven.

And then the second half of the book looks at the same theme, the church and God's plan for the church, from a very earthly perspective. And it kind of talks about our relationships and forgiving

one another and be humble towards one another.

And it kind of looks at the church from this very earthly perspective. Well, today we come to this very famous and somewhat controversial passage of Scripture because it starts off with these sensational words, right?

Wives, submit to your husbands. I mean, is there anything more controversial than that? You may be here this morning and you're exploring Christianity or trying to make sense of the Bible and the Christian faith.

And just by hearing the first few words of our passage, you may start to be second-guessing your exploration already, thinking, what on earth have I done? The Christian church has enough problems of its making, as it is, right?

[5 : 28] We've got sex abuse scandals, financial abuse scandals, church leaders saying one thing and doing another thing, the hypocrisy and duplicity. The church has got enough problems of its own making.

And here in black and white, in the words of Scripture, we have these words that seem so out of date, so anachronistic, so from another world, oppressive and unjust.

And what are we meant to make of these words in Scripture? Well, let me offer a couple of ways that we can think about it. The first way we could think about it is to say, listen, clearly the Bible in general and the Apostle Paul specifically is chauvinistic, misogynistic, has a terrible view of women, and we should just completely disregard it.

I mean, nobody should even take this stuff seriously. Could be one way of thinking about it. We could be slightly more charitable and think, well, listen, Paul's obviously writing in a cultural context, a time in history.

We know that the Roman-Greco world, the Jewish world, had a pretty low view of women and slaves and children in general. Right? Every Jewish man would wake up in the morning and pray and say, God, I thank you, God of heaven, you've not made me a woman, a Gentile or a slave.

[6 : 46] So we know that that was the culture of the time. And so maybe what Paul is writing is true and applicable in some ways in his culture, but he's letting his culture influence his writings and his biases.

And so maybe if you want to be very charitable, it was kind of true for them, but it's certainly not true for us. In the words of Oprah Winfrey, it was his version of truth, not our truth.

Okay? One way. But I want to suggest another way to look at it. And it's actually the way that Christians have kind of read their Bible for the last 2,000 years.

And that is to say that somehow, in a mysterious way, behind the words of the Apostle Paul here, with his culture and his personality and his own context, somehow is the hand of the risen God, such that what we have before us is not merely the words of Paul, it is the words of Paul, but somehow, in a mysterious way, we have the words of God to us through the writings of this man called Paul.

And if we were to approach the Bible in that way, I think we would find two things. We would find that these words are probably deeply challenging, but also, in some strange way, good and beneficial.

[8 : 11] And the reason I say that is because that shouldn't surprise us, because when you hear the words of God, who is so different from us, and so distinctive from us, we shouldn't be surprised that his words aren't challenging to us.

Because if you come to a God who is so different from us, and who has eternal perspective, and knows the beginning from the end, and sees things so differently from us, we shouldn't be surprised that his views confront and challenge our worldview.

You know, if you serve a God who only ever agrees with you, and whose worldview is exactly the same as yours, chances are we're serving a God of our own making, a God that we've made up in our own mind, because he just agrees with us.

But if we were to come to a God who is real and true, who is different and distinctive from us, we shouldn't be surprised that his words sometimes challenge our worldview and our thinking.

But at the same time, we should also expect that somehow, what he has to say is good, and that his words don't cramp our lives, but they actually expand our lives.

[9 : 18] They're not here to restrict us, they're here to liberate us. And the reason we should expect that is because Jesus didn't come just to start a new religion. Jesus came to give hope to the weary and the frustrated.

Jesus came to a world that is starved of grace, and starved of life, and starved of hope. And he said, I've come to give hope and life and grace to people that are starved of it. And so somehow, if these words really are from God, we should expect they should both challenge us, but also in some ways, liberate us. Okay. So with that introduction, let's think about this passage together.

And I hope you've got your Bible in front of you. If you've got a Bible, make sure you open up. We're going to be looking at a lot of the scriptures on your phone or on the bulletin. So how should we think about this passage today?

Well, clearly this passage is made up of three sets of relationships. In chapter 5, verse 21, or 22 to 33, Paul speaks to husbands and wives.

[10:21] In chapter 6, verse 1 to 4, he talks to parents and children. And in chapter 6, verse 5 to 9, he talks to employers and employees. So three sets of relationships.

But they're not just three sets of relationships. Anyone will notice straight away. They're three sets of relationships that have an inherent power imbalance. Right?

In each one of these relationships, there's one party that inherently, by the culture of the day and the way they're set up, has more power, more authority, is in a position of privilege, you could say. So there's an inherent power imbalance in these relationships. Now, you may think that the third pair is different from the first two. The first two are clearly in the home, husbands and wives, parents and children.

But the third pair is actually meant for the home as well. In the ancient world, in Roman times, much like actually many homes in Hong Kong today, homes, households, consisted of husbands and wives, parents and children.

[11:25] In fact, often three or four generations of parents and children. But also, servants, masters, traders, those that worked in the home, all of them would live within the household.

And so what we have here is three sets of relationships in the household and Paul's wanting to write to us to show us how the gospel of grace affects relationships when there's a power imbalance and particularly the relationships in the household.

Okay? So that's what's going on here. So Paul wants us to read these three sections together even though the first section is the most controversial and gets the most attention. Paul's designed them that they have a symbiotic relationship or there's a correlation with all three and he wants us to read them together.

And so how should we think about these relationships? And today we're going to see four things. Okay? So the first one is this. God's ordered design for these relationships.

God's ordered design. We live in a world which is both longing for good leadership and yet at the same time is so skeptical about it.

[12:38] If you think of every sphere of society, public and private, companies, in government, in homes, in churches, civil society, we long for good leadership.

Our kids have just gone to a new school in August this year. A school which apparently four or five, six years ago had a lot of strife, a lot of fighting, a lot of disunity, PTA, owners, staff, a lot of disunity in the school.

And a new headmaster came in four years ago and the school is a radically different place. It's a place of joy. It's a place that staff love to teach. There's such unity.

The benefits of good leadership. We all long for good leadership and yet we all seem to be skeptical about it because I think it's safe to say all of us have seen and experienced the opposite.

Bad leadership. Leadership that uses and abuses those that they are meant to be leading. Now as I said a few minutes ago, these passages are meant to be read together and obviously the first section gets the most attention because it's the most contentions.

[13:50] But the point here is that leadership is part of God's good design for the world and specifically for the household. Now it's important to note that what scripture is not saying is that there's an inherent difference in value or dignity or worth of the different members of the household.

Clearly Paul is not saying that men are more valuable than women. Fathers are more valuable than children. Masters have an inherent worth that is greater than those that work in their home.

Throughout Ephesians and the New Testament Paul and Jesus made clear that that's not what he's saying. Remember how in chapter 2 we looked at Ephesians where there's this animosity between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Remember how if you're a Jewish family your son brings home a Gentile girlfriend and says mom and dad we're going to get married. You don't throw a wedding feast you throw a funeral. Right? Because in the culture of the first century your son was dead to you. That was the tension between Jews and Gentiles and what does Paul write in chapter 2? Jesus has made both Jews and Gentiles one breaking down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

[15 : 11] Or in Galatians chapter 3 Paul writes and says now in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile slave or free male or female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And think of how Jesus treats children in his day. In a time when everyone wanted to push children aside and have no social capital Jesus says bring the children to me.

Well think about how the fact that Jesus' ministry in many ways was built by women. Women were the first eyewitnesses to his resurrection. The first witnesses to the fact that Christ had risen from the dead.

The women were many of the ones that funded Jesus' ministry. And in the first century women flocked to Christ and to the gospel. The churches were full of women much like they are today. And so it's almost impossible to think that Paul and Jesus in the New Testament is somehow saying there's an inherent value or dignity or worth difference between these relationships.

[16 : 15] What God is saying here what Paul is saying is that he's established an ordered design that like the body that is different parts and different members and different roles. Part of his design involves the elements of leadership and followership.

And so look what he says here. Wives respect and follow your husband's leadership in the home. Children obey and respect your parents' authority. Employees respect and obey your employer's leadership and authority.

And all three of these relationships he says do this for this is the reason. Verse 23 he says in the first instance this is how God has arranged the home.

In the second instance 6 verse 1 he says simply this is right. And in 6 verse 8 he says do this knowing that whatever good anyone does he will receive back from the Lord.

And so Paul says here in the home God has established this design. He's created a design order and part of that design order there's an element of leadership.

[17 : 21] And he says for flourishing homes follow the maker's design. Okay. God's ordered design for the world. Now the problem is the problem is not the design the problem is the way that that design is worked out.

Right. And so I'm sure almost all of us here could say that the problem is that design seldom reflects our reality. How many of us could say that we grew up in homes where we experienced this servant hearted leadership.

Right. We're humble servant hearted leaders not domineering not angry and frustrated no harsh words spoken no moody husbands or grumpy fathers.

Right. Just humble servant hearted leaders. Anyone. Wonderful if you did. You see the problem is not God's design. It's the way that the design is worked out in reality.

And so generally what is our experience? Well our experience is something of the opposite. Our experience is those in positions of power, those in positions of leadership using their leadership for their own advantage to serve themselves.

[18 : 35] Don't raise your hand, okay, but just in your heart you can raise your hand. How many of us have heard words something like this from a father or a husband or a parent? Can't I get a little peace and quiet around this place?

Or after all that I do for you I think I deserve a little more respect in this house. Okay, don't smile or nudge your husbands or anything. You see generally speaking the problem is that our hearts are turned in on ourselves.

And so we are self-seeking. Augustine said the problem with humanity is that sin has caused our hearts to turn in on ourselves and so we become self-serving, self-seeking. And so the operating system of our heart has got a virus in it and that is out of order now.

And so what that means is that humanity as a result of fall and sin, humanity is a way of taking God's ordered desire and turning on its head so that now we want to serve ourselves rather than others.

We want to seek our own welfare rather than the welfare of others. We become self-serving rather than others-serving. And so the book of James, James writes and he says this, he says we are

lured and enticed by our own desires that grow and develop into sin and when sin grows and develops it leads into death and destruction.

[19 : 57] And we see that, right? Death and destruction of relationships, death and destruction of peace in the home, death and destruction of joy, of hope, grace, of dignity, of security, of flourishing, of radiance.

God has designed that humanity, we serve one another, we love one another, we use our positions and the gifts that God has given for the welfare of one another, but rather we are takers rather than givers.

And we tend to use and abuse one another. And so just look at our passage here. Look at how he says, maybe start at the bottom, 6 verse 9, let's see how sin works its way out.

6 verse 9, what is the temptation that employers have towards those in their employment?

Threatening, demanding, intimidating. Historians tell us that in the Roman-Greican world, masters would use three strategies to get what they wanted from their employees.

They would threaten them to beat them, they would threaten them with sexual abuse, or thirdly, they would threaten to sell one member of the family to another family on the other side of the Roman Empire to split up the families.

[21 : 16] So I'm a master, you're my servant, you're not doing what I want, I'll threaten you, I'll sexually abuse you, I'll sell your children to slavery. What does Paul say? That's not the way that the gospel operates.

Look at 6 verse 4, how does sin operate in families with parents and fathers, getting angry, provoking children to anger? And how does it affect marriage spouses looking after themselves, seeking their own interests, thinking about what is good for them.

And so rather than God's ordered design, what we have is humanity's disordered world. Friends, is there anybody here that has not seen and experienced the brokenness and the depravity of sin in our lives and in our homes and our marriages and our families and our parents and our relationships?

relationships? And so the question is this, how should members of the household relate to one another? On the one hand, we have God's design, God's order, but we also see how sin has corrupted this order so that it's twisted on its head.

And so is there a way for us to somehow come back to God's ordered design that will get the intended results that God planned? Is there a way for us to go back to God's design without resorting to using and abusing each other, domineering, provoking and intimidating?

[22 : 36] Well, the answer that Ephesians gives us is this, seek God's design with gospel saturated humility. Embrace God's good order with gospel saturated humility.

Let's see how that plays out. You see, Paul's not saying, well, we know that people have just used their positions of leadership, their own advantage. Let's just scrap the system and start again.

Right? That's not going to work. Let's just come up with something altogether new. He doesn't say that. But he also doesn't say, well, sorry ladies, sorry children, sorry servants, that's just the way it is, just suck it up.

Paul says, friends, you see this, the Bible neither advocates for old-fashioned traditionalism and patriarchy, nor neither does it argue for liberal egalitarianism.

The Bible says there's a third way, which is gospel-shaped humility that seeks the interest of the other person rather than myself. And what Paul says here is he shows the only way, the only way that you can follow God's design without using and abusing people in our lives and our homes, the only way to accomplish God's intention is if the gospel of grace and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the majesty of the gospel is deeply at work in our hearts and in our homes.

[24 : 04] Paul says that if you take your eyes off of Christ and the gospel, or worse still, if you pay lip service to Christ and the gospel, but it's not deeply shaping our hearts and our lives, what will happen is we'll take a scripture like this and we'll weaponize it against those in our homes.

And friends, if we forget Christ and the gospel, a passage of scripture like this can become a weapon to use against those to prop yourself up.

But when the gospel pierces our hearts, this scripture is meant to be a sword that will pierce our own hearts and bring us to our knees to say, oh God, I need your mercy to be such a husband, such a father, such a leader in my home.

Does that make any sense? Okay. So let's see how Paul does this. In this passage, Paul addresses both parties in the relationship.

And the first thing he does is he calls for volunteered followership. Look at the way that Paul speaks to the parties in the relationship that you could say have no power, no social capital.

[25 : 15] Look at how he speaks to wives, children, and employees. And he calls them to follow or to respect the other member of the relationship. But he asks them to do so not coercively, but voluntarily.

Doing so out of submission to Christ. Look at what he says in 5 verse 22. It says, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. Look at 6 verse 1.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Look at 6 verse 5. Bond servants, obey your earthly masters as you would Christ, 6 verse 6, as bond servants of Jesus Christ, verse 7, as to the Lord and not to men.

Paul's not saying, he doesn't write to him, he says, listen, men, I want you to get your women, children, and servants in order, right? That's not what he does. We're going to see in a minute what Paul does say to the men, but what he does say is he doesn't give them any room to control or manipulate those in his home.

What Paul does is he does something that is culturally, extravagantly out of order, completely culturally inappropriate. He writes to the ladies and the children and the servants in the church, and he asks them to, of their own self-will, to volunteer their followership to the leaders in their home.

[26 : 48] Culturally, it is completely inappropriate to write to another man's wife, another man's children, or another man's servants. Peter O'Brien says this was shockingly outrageous. And yet, he writes them and he doesn't instruct them or tell them what to do.

Paul's not sending a communique from head office. He's not throwing the rule book at them. He's appealing to their own self-will to volunteer their followership to their husbands, fathers, and masters.

Look at 6 verse 5 with me. The bond servants, the employees of the household, were the people with the least social capital in the church.

They had almost no social capital. If there's one group of people he could have instructed and told them what to do, this is probably the one he could have got away with. And look at how he writes there, how he appeals to their hearts.

He says, obey your earthly masters with a sincere heart as you would Christ, not by way of eye service as people please, as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men.

[27 : 59] Paul's not issuing a directive or a command here. He's calling these people to volunteer their followership. In a way, Paul's actually asking them to follow Christ and out of their followership of Christ to let that overflow in their relationships in the home.

I remember when I was 23 years old, I think Claire and I were either engaged and married or had just got married. It was my first job out of university, my first year of working, and I was working for somebody in our church.

We were both deacons in the church. I knew him pretty well. We were kind of friends. And he was my boss. And, you know, that meant there were certain liberties and things I could get away with. And I remember one morning I was having my daily devotions before work, and I read this passage in 1 Timothy chapter 6, and it almost says the same thing. It says, if you're working for a believing boss, don't work less hard, work doubly hard.

And I was so challenged and convicted. I went to work that day, and I went to my boss, Jerome, and I said, hey, Jerome, I've got a confession. I was reading my Bible this morning, and I felt God speak to me, and I haven't been working for you as hard as I should have been.

[29 : 18] And I want to say I'm sorry, and I want to change that, and I want to put that right. I want to be the very best employee that you have in this company. But do you see what happened there? It was God speaking to me, calling to me to himself, and out of my love for Christ, that actually changed the way that I wanted to relate to my boss.

It wasn't that Paul said, listen, you're a Christian now, get your act together. It was God saying, work for me. When you go into the office today, do your work as if you're working for me. What did that look like? It meant that I wanted to work for my boss doubly hard and twice as hard. And that's what Paul is saying here. He's saying, submit to Christ, that your worship and your

adoration of Jesus play itself out in the relationships that you have to your husbands, your parents, and your masters.

Okay? Volunteer and fellowship. Well, let's look at what Paul says to the leaders, those that have social capital. Paul says that they, too, are not to demand their rights, but to take up their roles and responsibilities in light of the gospel.

And so Paul calls those that are both socially and legally who hold all the cards, who have all the positions of power and authority. Paul asks them to do what with their power and authority?

[30 : 36] To lay it down in service to those that they're called to lead. Let's focus on husbands and wives because it's the longest section in our passage here.

So look at verses 25 to 33 with me. It's a tricky passage to understand because Paul kind of talks about husbands and wives, and then he talks about Christ and the church, and sometimes he swaps in between mid sentence.

You're kind of not sure. Is he talking about husbands and wives or is he talking about Christ and the church? But that's, of course, the point. The point is husbands are meant to love as Christ loves the church.

And so look at what he says here. Husbands, love your wives. Okay, that's pretty good. Nothing controversial there. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Well, how did Christ love the church? What did that look like in practical terms? Friends, at Watermark, we talk about the cross and the gospel a lot here.

[31 : 43] And so it's easy to become very familiar and blasé about Calvary. How did Christ love the church? Well, he allowed himself to be nailed to a Roman cross.

You know, the Roman cross was the ultimate act of brutality the world has ever known. Within a few short years, the Romans outlawed crucifixion because it was too inhumane to subject any human being to it.

At the time of Jesus, it was reserved for soldiers that had committed mutiny, slaves or foreigners. No Roman citizen would be subject to crucifixion. And it wasn't only hanging on the cross, it was the beatings and the floggings that went before it.

Josephus, a historian from the first century, said that those that were crucified were subject to such flogging and beating that their rib cages were exposed. Sometimes people's stomachs were ripped open so that the entrails would fall out before they even got to the cross.

Jesus Christ loved the church by allowing himself to be subject to the most brutal form of punishment humanity has ever known.

[33 : 07] And on the cross, that's from a human perspective and from a divine perspective, Jesus Christ took upon himself the full wrath of God for the punishment of the sins of those who would entrust themselves to him.

Jesus Christ literally loved us to death. And as the words of Sally Lloyd-Jones says, it wasn't the nails that held him to the cross.

It was his love for you and for I. And Paul writes to us and he says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

See what he's saying? And so in addition to his profound love for us, why did he do it? Well, our text tells us.

Look at verse 26 with me. Jesus went to the cross to take a broken, bruised humanity, his bride, and what would he do with her?

[34 : 12] That he might sanctify her. That means purify her. Make her beautiful and acceptable to God. That he might cleanse her with washing of water and the word.

That means that he might flood her with the gospel that will so change her that she will become changed. Verse 27. That he might present the church, his bride, to himself in splendor or radiance without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

So here's Paul's argument. Jesus takes a church, which is you and I, with all our sinfulness and our wickedness and our depravity and our self-centeredness, and he does something on the cross so that one day when we are in eternity, we will be glorious and beautiful and radiant and sinless and perfect forever.

He takes what is once less than perfect, and because of his love for us, he perfects us and presents us as glorious and radiant and beautiful.

Jesus Christ, the king of the universe, uses his position and his authority for the one that he loves. In order to see her become the perfect picture of what she's designed to be, but how sin had ruined her.

[35 : 35] And now Paul says, husbands, that is what you are called to do for your wives and your children and your families.

To lay down your life, to take any price, to bear any cost, to bear any suffering, to do what it takes, that your family will be the absolute picture, will be all that they can be by my grace.

And so what does that mean? It means that as husbands we say, I will give up my rights to serve my wife and my children, my family.

I will help them to become the very best, most Christ-like, most radiant, most secure, most appreciated, most loved women and children that will one day stand before God radiant and holy and blessed because of the way that I have loved them.

You see what Paul is saying? It's a radical commitment. And friends, here is the challenge the passage asks us.

[36 : 48] Yes, husbands and wives, you're called to be the head of your family. But it's the head of a family that walks the way of the cross, with our wives better off because of the way that we've loved them.

Our children more, better off because of the way that we've loved them. Our wives more secure, more radiant, more joyful, more deeply flooded with the gospel because of our love for them.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for them. I'm not too sure what to do.

Amen. I've got a couple of practical things to say, but maybe before we get there, can I just pray for us? Amen. Friends, this is not me.

I've tried to do so much repenting this week because this is not me and this is not my household.

Father God, we come before you this morning, God, because when we see the picture that you call us to, God, we fall on our knees and say, God, have mercy on broken sinners like us.

[38 : 12] God, we need you. And Lord, I need you and the men and the women and the children and the people of the church. We need you, God. We need you to help us to love and serve like this.

God, we confess we don't have what it takes. Oh, God, come and have your way. Jesus, I pray, humble us, God.

Give us gospel-centered, Christ-centered humility that will change us and cause us, God, to love and serve one another like this.

Not demanding on our rights, not putting our interests first, but thinking how to serve and love those of our families and those around us. God, I want to ask, won't you help us, the men of this church, and start with me to become more like you, Jesus.

To be more sacrificial, more loving, more selfless, and more servant-hearted, I pray. Help us, oh God, that our homes and our families will look a little bit more like heaven because your gospel is changing our hearts.

[39 : 22] God, come and do it, I pray. In your gracious name, amen. Okay, let me, sorry if this is a little bit all over the place.

Let me, let me give us a couple of practical things, okay? What can we practically do? Let me give us five practical things. First thing is this. For the men in Watermark, set the temperature, the spiritual temperature of your home.

Take the initiative to set the spiritual temperature of your home. Men, can I ask you, who's setting the pattern of faith and confidence and trust in Christ? Who's setting the pattern for devotions and loving God's Word?

Men, how are our children going to learn to read God's Word? Who's showing them how to read God's Word and have a devotion in the morning? Men, it's not all up to us. Our wives are incredible and our children will learn so much from our wives.

But can we take the lead to set the initiative? Men, who's modeling repentance and confession? Are we the first to say sorry or are we going to wait for our wives to say sorry?

[40 : 29] Let's model confession and repentance in the gospel, okay? Secondly, men, can I urge us to pray for our wives and to pray with our wives?

Now, Claire's going to smile at this because I'm really bad at this. Men, our wives long for their husbands to pray with them. Most of them anyway.

And yet, as husbands, we find it so hard, right? I know it's hard to open yourself up and to take the initiative. Most wives wish their husbands would pray with them.

But they also don't want to beg their husbands to do it, right? And so they might ask a few times and then they'll just give up. Men, can we take the initiative to pray with our wives and to pray for our wives?

To maybe before you go to sleep say, hey, let's pray for our day tomorrow. Or let's, can I pray for you before you go to bed? And if you don't know what to pray for your wives, here's a couple of things to pray for, okay?

[41 : 26] I've got 11 quick things. Men, pray that God will be her deepest treasure. Men, let's pray that God will give our wives faith and trust. Let's pray that God will give our wives wisdom and strength for their calling.

That God will help her to love the church. That God will give her great friends who will point her to Jesus. Pray that God will help our wives hear his voice.

Pray that God will give her strength for her calling at her job. Pray that she will know and treasure the gospel more and more. Pray that she will be deeply secure in the love of Christ.

Pray that God will multiply our wives' influence and blessing. Pray that she will abide in Christ and be full of the Spirit. Okay, that's a good start. You can find some more in addition to that, okay?

So let's pray for our wives and pray with our wives. Here's the third thing practically to do. Men, flee and fight sexual temptation with everything you've got, okay?

[42 : 24] Sorry if I'm standing in the way here. Friends, it's easy to make excuses, right? It was just a look. It was just a thought. It didn't hurt anybody.

Nobody will know. Friends, small compromises lead to big compromises. And big compromises destroy families and they destroy our wives' confidence and joy and security.

Men, let's fight sexual temptation. And let's get brothers around us that will know us and that we can be open to, that can be real with, that can ask us difficult questions.

Because there is no greater way to destroy our wives and our children than to give in to temptation like this. And so let's fight it. Marshall Siegel said this, The best way for a man to protect his home around him is for him to guard his heart within him.

So let's do that. Here's a fourth thing. For the single men in the church, right? Don't wait until you're a husband or a father to try and become this kind of man.

[43 : 28] If you're a single guy, start to get the gospel deep in your heart. Ask God to change you today. Ask God to make you selfless and others seeking. Ask God to so reorientate your heart that you can use whatever social capital you have to serve the interests of those around you.

Friends, one day God will hopefully call you to be a husband and a dad. And so start today to become the man that can love your families like this. And for the single ladies in our church, pray that God will give you a husband like this.

Pray that God will give you a husband that will love you like Christ loved the church. Ladies, can I say, can you see why the Bible would strongly encourage us to marry somebody who knows Christ and is letting the gospel shape them?

Because it's really hard to be married to someone who wants to love like Jesus when they don't know Jesus. And wants the gospel to be the standard for how they're going to love their families when they don't know the gospel.

And so wives, I've got, ladies, I've got two daughters. I pray for my husband. I pray for my children. I'm so glad that that released some attention in the room.

[44 : 45] I've been praying, Claire and I have been praying for our daughters' husbands since before they were born. When they're in Claire's womb, we were praying, God, you know, won't you give them great men? And so single ladies, I know it's hard.

And I know that if you choose to only marry a Christian man, it is going to be hard. And I know you're making a sacrifice. And I want to say that God is going to honor your sacrifice.

And God will look after you. And our heart is for you. And I know it's hard. And we love you. And we're praying for you. And we're going to do everything we can to set you up with some great guys. Okay, let me bring this to a close.

The final thing is this, an alternative community. I'm going to wrap this up quickly. Chapter 5, verse 22 can sound so offensive, right? Wives, submit to your own husbands.

Oh my goodness, who is this guy that, who does he think that he is? The basis for verse 22 is actually found in verse 21. And the Greek grammar makes it very clear.

[45 : 52] That 22 is actually a follow-on from the train of thought in verse 21. What does verse 21 say? Submit one to another out of reverence for Christ. Now that, of course, Paul is not undermining everything he's saying.

He's not saying, okay, just, you know, there's no such thing as leadership. He obviously has written for that. Nobody logically thinks that, you know, parents submit to their children.

So the flow of thought is clear. But in other words, what Paul is saying is that submission is not a weakness virtue. It's not a female virtue. It's not a children virtue.

Submission is a Christian virtue. Because it's the way of Christ. And it's the way of the cross. And so it's the way of Christian households. Of husbands and wives.

Parents and children. Employers and employees. As Christian households become an alternative community that lives in a different way from the world. That shows the world a different way to live.

[46 : 50] Which serves and surrenders to one another. And submission to Christ. Friends, the Bible begins and ends with two marriages. The first marriage in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

We see the effects of sin. Of selfishness. And the utter destruction that it brings on the world. But thankfully that's not the only marriage we see in the Bible.

The Bible ends with another marriage. It's the marriage of Christ to his bride, the church. And Jesus Christ, the true and better Adam. The perfect Adam and the perfect husband.

Is coming back again. To get for himself a bride. Those that are in Christ. And he will love us perfectly for all eternity. And he will make us perfect.

And he will flood our hearts with his grace. And he says that for those of us that are in Christ now.

We get a small measure of that grace. That we can experience his love. Whether you're a husband or wife.

[47 : 47] A parent. A child. An employer. An employee. No matter who you are. If you are in Christ. You can experience his love. In a way that will change you. And cause you. To love and serve others.

Like Christ has loved. And served us. And so friends. If you're in Christ today. Jesus Christ. Set your hope on him. He is your hope. He is your help.

He is your security. He is the one to look to. And to hold on to. Let his love today. Melt our hearts.

Pierce our pride. Bring us to our knees. And help us to love others.

Like he has loved us. Let's pray together. Father. Father. We. Don't know what to say. God.

Your scriptures. As we said. Are so challenging. And yet. They are good. They show us. A different kind of way. God.

[48 : 44] I pray. Won't you call us. God. To this. Model. Of love. And relationships. God. May the. The households. And the homes. Of watermark.

Reflect heaven. Of. Unparalleled. And. Out of this world. Humility. Service. Sacrifice. And love. Lord Jesus.

I pray. Give us courage. To. To become the men and women. That you call us to be. God. For those of us. That are men. God. Help us. To lead. So graciously.

So gently. Not abdicating. The roles. You call us to. But not using it. To our own advantages. God.

May we. Lay down. Our lives. As Christ did for us.

God. I pray. Come and help us. And father. If there is anything. That I have said today. Which is not of your will. Which is not of your scripture. Which goes against your heart. Lord. I pray. Let it fall in deaf ears.

[49 : 41] Let it not take root in our hearts. God. We want your way. And your will. We pray this. And your good. In your gracious name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.