

Study Guide - 9 February, 2020

Series: Redeeming Relationship

Text: Ephesians 5:1-2, 5:21-6:9



This guide will help you facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. You should spend at least half your time discussing questions that are application focused. Look at the Big Idea and What your CG Must Take Away sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused.

Introduction and Series Overview

The aim of the Redeeming Relationship series is to help us understand the various roles we play relationally, and how each of these is to be done under God empowered by the gospel. This gives us a proper framework for both redeeming broken relationships and relating to others, and how to generally relate to church members in a way that builds them up. It also helps us understand our own hearts and each other in relationships so that we can be compassionate and clear with them, as well as specific relationships that people find themselves in family, marriage, kids, work, etc.

Relationships before God

The idea of this sermon is to look at the whole household code in Ephesians and see that every one of us is in a web of relationships where we are all submitting to one another. We want to see the unique roles God has given to us underneath him, and embrace those with faith. (Use Powlison's chapter "Godly roles and relationships")

Big idea

To live out the specific roles in our relationships under the headship of Christ. We are to submit to God and to one another, and we are to be imitators of God by walking in love with one another.

What your CG must take away from this study

For your CG members to submit to God, and to submit one another out of reverence for Christ.

Which of your relationships do you find most difficult?

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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.

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.

Ephesians 6:1-9

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

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

Q1. How does this passage describe the ways God relates to us? Consider each of the three categories of relationships this passage describes.

Q2a. In what sense are we called to relate to God, from this passage?

Q2b. Across these 3 relationships, what is the common theme of how we are to relate to God?

Q3. If we understand that God relates to us in these ways, as Father, Husband and Master, how will it affect the way we view and treat other people?

Q4a. This passage describes relationships in which there is a headship role and a subordinate role. How is the Bible's description different from our human understanding of these terms?

Q4b. What are common ways the principles God sets for relationships are twisted in the world we live in?

Q5. We are all in relationships in which we submit to one another and where we lead one another. In what relationships do you have a "headship" role and in which do you have a "subordinate" role?

Consider your relationships.

Q6. How do you fail to live up to the standard God has set as Husband, Father and Master?

Q7a. Why do we find it difficult to submit to each other in different circumstances?

Q7b. In what ways are we selective about who we submit to, and when?

Paul's instructions are not very popular in this day and age, because authority has negative connotations today, and Paul's words make husbands and wives sound unequal. But consider what Paul means by the words love and submission in this passage, and the examples he gives.

Q8. What does Paul mean by “Love your wife” and “Submit to your husbands”? How should this principle be applied in today’s day and age?

Husbands and Wives

Q9a. Husbands, how does knowing you are a wife to Jesus help you to lay aside your preferences to serve your wife?

Q9b. Wives, how does knowing Christ’s love and understanding marriage as a picture of our marriage to him change the way you relate to your husband?

Employers and Employees

Q10a. How does knowing God as your master change the way you relate to colleagues who are below you at work?

Q10b. How does knowing that you are working with God as your master help you to obey your boss from your heart, and not with eye-service only?

Parents and Children

Q11a. What is the instruction Paul gives for parents in this passage?

Q11b. Parents, how does understanding God’s love as your Father affect the way you respond to your children?

Q11c. How should you “obey your parents” as an adult child?

Q11d. How does seeing your parents as the authority God has put under your life help you to honour your parents?

Apply Practically

Break into smaller groups and pray for each other, especially for the relationships you find difficult in your life. Pray that you will see yourselves under God’s authority, and submit to God in all of your relationships.