

Wisdom To Build Our Families

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of mutual submission and respect between husbands and wives, starting from Ephesians 5:21. It highlights the need for husbands and wives to be subject to one another, understanding their interdependence like the relationship between the head and body. The sermon also discusses the significance of leaving parents and cleaving to one's spouse, illustrating how Jesus honored his mother while also prioritizing God's will. Practical advice is given on respectful communication, prayer for children, and setting godly examples in the family.

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Scripture: Ephesians 5:21, Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:33, Isaiah 8:18, Proverbs 22:6, Colossians 3:18, 1 Timothy 5:8, Matthew 19:5, James 3:17, Psalm 127:3

Topics: "Mutual Submission", "Family Dynamics"

Description

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Transcript

One verse in Ephesians chapter 5. So, first, just to make sure that you are all awake, I want to ask you a question. Those who are awake can answer me. Many of you have got many years of experience as married people, so you can answer.

Very simple question. In husband and wife, who should be subject to whom? Husband to the wife or wife to the husband? I don't know whether that's the correct translation. Yeah, so that's the question.

Who should be subject to whom? Wife should be subject to husband or husband should be subject to wife? Husband should be subject to wife or wife should be subject to husband? You people have heard me before, that's why you know the answer. So, this whole section on husbands and wives in Ephesians chapter 5. Tell me, where does it begin? Does it begin at verse 1 or does it begin at verse 2 or where does that whole section on husband and wife begin? You are all very clever people. It begins in verse 21, not 22.

That's very very important. Many people think it begins at verse 22. No, it begins in verse 21.

And if you understand that, you will really have a happy married life. What does it say in verse 21? Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Everybody.

So, husband must be subject to the wife and wife must be subject to the husband. That means both need each other. Closing the head says to the body, I don't need you.

What will happen? Have you ever seen a head floating around by itself anywhere? No. How much, if I feel scratchy somewhere in the head, the hand has to come and do it. And the food has to come inside the body and from the body nourishment has to come up to the head.

Even if the head means the brain. Even that brain which is controlling everything in the body needs the body to supply it oxygen and blood and everything. Do you know that this brain of ours is what controls every part of our body? Eyes, ears, so when it says head here, it's talking about the brain.

Not just this head. The brain, that's the real head. And that controls the eyes, ears, mouth, nose, fingers, legs, everything.

All the internal organs. But then the internal organs supply blood and oxygen and all to the brain. If the brain does not get that supply of oxygen even for three minutes, you can get damaged in your brain.

So what we learn from the picture of the body is interdependence, both need each other. That is the first lesson every husband and wife needs to learn. I need you and you need me.

And so we have to be subject to one another in our respective areas. God has given different responsibilities to the husband and wife. And we must respect the responsibility God has given to the wife and respect the responsibility God has given to the husband.

We all know that God has given the responsibility to the wife to have children. And God has given the responsibility to the man to be the leader in the house. That doesn't mean the wife cannot give any suggestions to the husband.

But it is still the man who takes the decision. So many conflicts can come in a home because the husband may be strong and says, I don't want your opinion, I'm going to do what I want. Or in some homes, the wife is the boss.

She says, you got to listen to me. The husband is a weak man. Both are wrong.

They need each other. Even though it's the husband who takes the final decision because he's the head. That is why the Bible says that as soon as a man gets married, he must separate from his parents.

See, it says that it's the first commandment in the Bible. Do you know that this is the very first commandment in the whole Bible? Genesis 2.24 A man shall leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, they shall become one flesh. Why? It says for this reason.

The reason is mentioned in the previous verse that the woman was taken out of one bone from the man. So, Adam says, this is part of me. She's not somebody separate.

She's part of me. Verse 23, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Because she was taken out from me.

And therefore, the man must separate from father and mother. Now, why is that written over there? It's not written for Adam because he didn't have a father and mother. So, why does it come there in Genesis 2 when Adam didn't even have a father and mother? And that is before sin came into the world.

So, that is a law that God established for marriage. So, even if there was no sin in the world in Genesis 3, still, if the generations multiplied without sin, a man would still have to separate from father and mother. So, like we said earlier, the biggest commandment is, Love your Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.

Love your Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. What is the first commandment in marriage? The first commandment is not to obey each other. That will come after your marriage.

As soon as you are married, before the two become one flesh. In most marriages, the two become one flesh the same night they get married. Same day.

But before that, it says here, the man must separate from his father and mother. Now in 99% of marriages in India, they become one flesh without separating from the father and mother. Then you will have problems.

See, instead of pouring petrol into your scooter, if you pour kerosene oil or vegetable oil or something, you will have problems with the engine. You say that is cheaper. Kerosene is much cheaper than petrol.

Only thing you will have to change your motorbike after 3-4 months. So, the manufacturer of the motorbike has said, You must put petrol, not kerosene oil. But then, people run their motorbikes for 30-40 years.

So, same way the creator of marriage has said, You want your marriage to run properly for many years? Then do what I say. Leave your father and mother. Now, leave your father and mother does not mean, don't care for them.

Any commandment in the Bible, if you don't understand, look at Jesus, you will get the answer. What did he do? When he went to the marriage in Kena, Before that, for 30 years, he had listened to his mother in everything. Even when he was 29 years old, Jesus, go and get some vegetables, Mary says.

Whatever important work he is doing, he will drop it and go and buy the vegetables. Whatever important work he is doing, he will drop it and go and buy the vegetables. He goes far and comes back.

Oh, I forgot to tell you, go and get some salt. No complaint. Again, he goes far and goes to the shop.

This is how he obeyed his mother for 30 years. Then he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and baptized. Then his ministry began.

That is like a man getting married. Like you got married. Like you got married.

For him spiritually, that was the beginning of his ministry. For him spiritually, that was the beginning of his ministry. Now what does he do? He leaves his mother.

Joseph was probably dead, but he leaves his mother. He moved away from Nazareth. We read in Matthew 4. Verse 13.

He left Nazareth and came and settled in Capernaum. He left Nazareth and came and settled in Capernaum. Just after his baptism and temptation.

He left his home. He didn't stay with his mother. And then when he went to Cana.

To the wedding. There was no wine there. And his mother came to him and told him in John 2. Verse 3, they have no wine.

Why did she go and tell him that? He had never done a miracle till then. Because she had seen in 30 years. How he could do so many things.

Like he finds some place where he could get some wine or something. Even in the middle of the night. Not by a miracle.

But he finds some place to solve the problem. She had seen that for 30 years. I know Jesus can find some place where they can get wine even at this time.

And what does he say? Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come. He doesn't say it there. But his mother must have got a terrific shock.

Because she had never heard him speak like that for 30 years. You think it was easy for Jesus to say that? We just read that he said it. But it was not easy.

He knew what a shame his mother had borne for all these years. When people accused her of being an immoral woman to get a baby without a husband. He valued her so much.

But when it came to the will of his father. He would say I have nothing to do with you. You are not going to tell me from now on what I have to do.

That is the attitude every husband should have to his parents when they get married. And that's what a wife should have to her parents too. Because now you have to decide things together with your husband and your wife.

That's the lesson we learn from Jesus. And if it's difficult when your parents tell you, no you must do this. And if it's difficult for you to say that, remember it was difficult for Jesus also to say that.

So it wasn't easy for him. And it won't be easy for you. But he did it.

He said it. And you have to take that attitude to your parents even if you don't say it with the same words. You can say it very lovingly.

I appreciate what you say but we want to take our own decision. Or you can be more wise. We don't want to offend our parents.

I'll tell you how I did it with my father-in-law. After I got married, my wife's father would give me so much advice. This, this, this, this, this.

I would not open my mouth. I would listen, listen, listen, listen, listen. And I'll go and I won't even do one thing that he said.

I never argued with him. Then next time he will again give me advice, advice. I will listen with your mouth shut.

I'll go and do nothing what he says. Then he learned. It's useless talking to him.

But we were at peace. So you must be wise. Not get into a fight and say who do you think you are? I know how to do things nicely.

We must be peaceful. But you must not let your father or father-in-law or anybody run your life. Today I'm a father-in-law and a father to married people.

To my married sons and to their wives. I don't tell them how to run their life. I want them to run their own life.

That is one big secret of a happy married life. And when it says be subject to one another. You know when God made Eve.

In Genesis 2. God said after making Adam. See when God made man he could have made two lumps of clay and breathed on both of them and said here you are Adam and Eve. And he could have breathed on both of them and said here you are husband and wife.

But they would not have known their connection. So he had to take something from Adam and make Eve. So this is a part of you he wanted to tell Adam.

And secondly he wanted to tell Eve. Remember I made Adam first before I made you. Because I wanted him to be your head.

So you must remember that. God said about Adam. Chapter 2 verse 18.

I will make him a helper suitable for him. He didn't make Eve first and say I will make a helper suitable for her. This has got nothing to do with sin.

This is before sin came. This is God's original plan. First plan.

God did not make the man to be a helper to the wife but a wife to be a helper to the man. That is why correctly the woman takes the name of the man when she gets married to him. And goes to where the man is working and the man is living.

That is the correct way. But that doesn't mean the man is a dictator. Somebody has said like this.

God did not take a bone from Adam's head to make the woman rule over the man. Neither did he take a bone from the feet so that Adam can rule over her. But he took it from the side.

Can you tell me which side he took it from? The rib. Both sides we have got ribs. It is not written here.

But I have a theory. I have a theory. I think it is from the left side.

Why? Why? Because the heart is here. And God wanted Adam to keep Eve near his heart. Very beautiful picture.

I think when you go to heaven and you ask the Lord, Lord, which side did you take Adam and Eve from? And he will tell you, it is what brother Zack said only. It is correct. Even if I am wrong, it is not important.

But keep your wife near your heart. Always. Next to God, she must be there.

Next mistake a lot of Indian parents do. Husband and wife. They love their children more than they love each other.

Once the child comes, that is it. They know it is always the child. They don't care for the wife.

And they watch the children. Both father and mother like that. They take care of the children.

The child is important. They feed the child. And 25-30 years the children are all grown up.

Got married. And the old couple are just bored with each other now. They don't love each other.

Now what shall they do? Go and spend 3 months with one child. Then go and spend 3 months with another child. And then when they fight with the daughter-in-law there, they go and stay with another child.

And then come home sometimes. And get bored with each other and think, when shall we go again? This is sad. From the time your first child is born, you have to keep your children next to your wife or husband.

This is not the American way. This is the Christian way. I am an Indian.

100% Indian. But first of all I am a Christian. Then Indian.

Because India is not my God. Jesus Christ is my God. So I say that we must follow what the Bible teaches.

Not the culture which we see here when it comes to marriage. We can follow Indian culture in our dressing, eating, all these habits. But in marriage we must follow the Bible.

These are two very important rules. Relationship to our parents and our relationship to our children. Always keep your partner next to God in your life.

One more verse, Ephesians 5. And verse 31. This is another important verse in marriage relationships. Sorry, not 31, 33.

31 is what I just read. Man leave his father and mother leave his wife. That's also written here.

Then verse 33. Let every husband love his wife like he loves himself. Verse 28.

Like you love your own body. How do you love your body? Even if a mosquito sits on it immediately you drive it off. That's how you love your body.

Small hurt. You immediately remove the thorn from your body. Dear husbands.

Think how you love your body. Meditate on that. The Bible says if you fear God, obey Him.

Love your wife like you love your body. Care for her like you care for your body. Now I know all of your sisters are very happy listening to that.

Now I want to tell you something. The next part of that verse. You have to see to it that you respect your husband.

The same word used for fear of God. That type of respect for your husband is the head of your home. Respect your husband.

Speak respectfully. Of course husband must also speak respectfully to the wife. So when you have to take a decision wife can give her opinion husband gives his opinion and the husband must put these two opinions together and come to a decision.

Listen to this because he is the head. What is your ministry? To have children. How do you have children? You know how you have children.

You cannot have a child all by yourself. You know that. As a woman no matter how much you want a child you cannot have a child by yourself.

Now listen to me very carefully because this is exactly how we take decisions also. How do you have a child? The husband contributes something from his body and you contribute something from your body and inside your womb the two become one and your body processes that and makes a body and you have a baby. You do that.

Now in a decision you give your opinion from your mind and the husband puts his opinion from his mind but now he processes it and he takes a decision exactly like you have a baby. And just like there is a pleasure God has ordained in the physical relationship and you have a baby. In the same way you must have the same joy when you put your minds together and have a decision.

You cannot have a fight with your wife and have a baby. No, it's the same way in a decision God expects the man to take something from his wife and then take a decision. Just like she takes something from you and has a child.

This is how a truly Christian home must be built up. Now we can talk about bringing up children. My wife was at home all the time till the children the last child went to college.

That is why up to 1996 you never saw my wife come with me for any conference. I came to Tamil Nadu for 14 years before that. She never came.

I was travelling a lot so she will now tell you about bringing up children. I am not an expert in bringing up children. I am not an expert in bringing up children.

But I can only say that God and we brought up the children. If it were not for God's grace we both would have been failures in our children. Talking about the husband-wife relationship I want to say one or two things.

Because it begins with that how we bring up our children. When my husband was saying that husband and wife must care for each other I want to say that is the foundation which our children see. When they see that I care for my husband and his feelings and he cares for me that's an example for them.

When they see that I respect my husband and he respects me that's an example for them to talk respectfully to us. So there were some principles which we tried to follow in bringing up our children. We tried our best to talk respectfully to each other.

And when it came to my parents giving us advice I used to not take my husband's side, my parents' side at all. I wanted my children to see that daddy and I are united. I tried to show my love for my parents in practical things.

If they needed some help or some medical care I would do that for them. Same way with my husband's parents they knew that my husband had taken the decision to leave father and mother but I knew that they had brought up their son with so much care and spent so much money over him. And I myself was a mother of sons I did not feel that I could have the attitude to be bad to them.

I wanted to be extra nice to them. I wanted to take care of them in practical things. Every year we would visit them when they lived in Chennai.

Every December we used to go visit them and we used to go with the children and I would do all the cooking whatever I could do I would do for mine. Even though they had a servant I felt that I should do all the practical things for them. So we became very close.

I am thankful that when I could do something for them I did that and that has given me hope that my children will do the same in my life. Then in the home we never we tried our best not to talk about anybody negative things and always talk something which is good about people. I come across some young sisters who have grown up in our church and their mothers also have been in the church and the way some of those girls talk is exactly like the mothers talk the foolish things critical things which they heard.

So I want to urge all mothers if you have that habit of finding fault and criticizing please stop that habit. Even if I notice something I don't tell to anybody not even to my husband. I just say it's not important to talk about it.

So I can see the result of that in my children. They respect all the brothers and sisters in the church. If any brother has been disciplined and left the church my children are so sad that they left the church.

Even now they write to us and ask why so and so is not coming what happened and they say something good about that brother or sister. So throughout our life if we have that attitude of not criticizing and judging others that's the best thing we can do for our children. Then another thing which I can say is we both pray for our children.

Now for our grandchildren also everyday we pray for them and when they face some important decision or exam interview anything we pray for them and for their every detail of their life. We can't suddenly start praying we must pray develop that habit and as mothers we don't have so much time to just kneel down and pray but during the day just like we breathe in between in between we take little time here little time there to pray and we can save lot of wasted time use it for prayer. I said about how Jesus told his mother what have I got to do with you Jesus is our example but at the end of his life on earth when he hung on the cross in the midst of all that suffering he thought of where is my mother going to stay now she had 4 other sons they didn't believe in Jesus so he knew that she may be a little uncomfortable there with them so he tells John James and John were Mary's sister's children they were the first cousins of Jesus and he told John now you must take care of my mother so what do we learn from that that when your parents are old

husband's parents wife's parents you must do whatever you can to help them because they cared for you when you were a baby and helpless not only when you were a baby 20-25 years they cared for you when you were sick when you were in financial need now they may be sick they may be in financial need if you are a Christian you will take care of them your parents your wife's parents your husband's parents as much as you are able sometimes you may have to bring them to your house and you have to take care of them maybe till they die that is our job so leaving father and mother doesn't mean we don't care for them it means that we don't allow them to take decisions in our home Jesus did not allow Mary to take his decisions but he took care of her and that's the example for us have you heard that story of a man whose father was old and had nobody to care for him he was the only son the mother had died so he had to bring the father to his house but his wife was a very difficult woman always made life difficult for her husband's father kept on complaining to her husband you know you got to choose between your father and me whichever you want poor man he suffered and one day the woman said you better get rid of him we can't keep on taking care of him so they lived near a village people lived near a forest so they discussed and they decided they will take the father in one of those wheel barrows in which they carry sand and all and take him to the forest and leave him there take him to the forest and leave him there and let him die so the man took his father like that his little six year old boy said i also want to come with you okay we are going so they asked little boy asked where are you taking grandfather no he said the forest is nice the father likes to be there and let him let us take him there and let him watch it all for a little while then the little boy was smart he knew that he saw the fights at home he knew they were trying to get rid of them so they went and left the grandfather in the middle of the forest so as they were turning around the father the little boy said take that wheel barrow don't leave that over there because when you become old i have to take you and leave you here also we reap what we sow the way you treat your parents one day your children will treat you like that the way you must not have an argument in front of your children see there can be so many tensions in marriage that husband and wife have to discuss some things so i'm not saying there will not be such discussions but do it privately why should you make your children suffer with your arguments because it doesn't concern them and remember the illustration i used whenever you're having a discussion it's like having a sexual relationship and you and whether you like it or not your children will pick up that habit and you are sowing disaster for your children in their marriage already they are going to have the same type of gossip in their home when your daughters get married and they will have the same problems you face you can't tell them don't do as i'm doing there's a need of a lot of repentance among us as parents you must repent before your children my dear children we as father and mother are very sorry that we have given you a bad example by the amount of gossip we have done in our home we have reaped a lot of suffering because of that and we have caused a lot of suffering to other people also please please do not follow our example in this area dear brothers and sisters save your children from the problems you have faced Isaiah chapter 8 verse 18 Isaiah was a prophet and he says this I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel you should say this we and our children should be a sign and a wonder in our local church your children must grow up to value the church do your children value the church that depends on whether they have heard you valuing the church in your home in your conversation if your children don't value the church there's something they saw in you in your home that you don't value the your children should value the church so much they want to build up the church in their generation that depends on how you bring them up so it's a big responsibility there must be a sign and a and you need to pray for them regularly because the world is a very evil place and we have to pray much for our children to be protected you must give them godly values teach them that you must not compromise your Christian conviction to make money or anything in the world even if you lose something in the world stand true to christ so ultimately let's depend on god's mercy and grace to preserve

our family heavenly father we thank you for every family here we know it's very difficult to bring up godly children and it's very difficult in this day and age to even be a godly husband and wife but you said your grace is sufficient for everything so i pray there'll be many many godly homes in tamilnadu i pray in jesus name amen

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