

## November 12 - Ephesians 5:21-6:9

### Opening

What is one “low” from the last week? What is one “high?” Write them down, or, if you’re meeting with a group, take turns sharing them with one another.

Where have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life over the past week?

Think about your household during your childhood. What was expected of the different members?

### Prepare

Spend a minute in silence to center yourself and prepare to hear God’s Word.

### Read

Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9 twice. If you are in a group, have two people read it, one after the other, with some silence in between. As you read or listen, look for a word or a phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart. Circle it or jot it down. Linger over it and give it your attention. If you are in a group, take turns sharing your word or phrase and what it means to you or how God might be speaking to you through it.

*And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.*

## **Reflect**

What are the similarities and differences in meaning among “submit,” “love,” “respect,” and “obey?”

How does Christ feed and care for you (and/or your church)?

What ongoing relevance (if any) is there in the commands to slaves and masters, now that we no longer condone slavery?

What is your emotional reaction to this passage?

## **Pray**

Spend time in prayer for yourself and others. If you are meeting in a group, share prayer requests and pray for one another.

## **Practice**

Submit to another person when you otherwise wouldn't have to, out of reverence for Christ.

Call or write to your parents or grandparents.

Find a way to encourage or affirm your supervisor at work.

## **Closing blessing**

*You are washed by the cleansing of God's word, so that you might be a glorious church!*