

Let's Talk FRIENDSHIPS, MARRIAGE, PARENTING, & WORK
FROM THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

THE ART OF RELATION SHIPS



Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

THE ART OF RELATION SHIPS



Introduction

Relationships touch every part of our lives, so let's talk about them: friendships, marriage, parenting, and even work. In this series, we'll walk through parts of Ephesians 5 and 6, where Paul shows us that who we believe Jesus is shapes how we relate to others every day.

We'll begin with a simple truth: when we understand how deeply we are loved by Christ, it changes how we love in return. From there, we'll take a closer look at the different relationships we navigate and what it looks like to live out our faith within them.

Each week of this guide includes a message summary and notes page, Scripture passage, discussion questions, prayer and a few recommended resources. So, grab your small group, family, friends, and your One, and join us as we walk through this series together.

THE ART OF RELATION SHIPS

Weekly Summary

Who you understand Jesus to be shapes how you engage with the world and the people around you. This week, Lydia kicked off the series in Ephesians 5, beginning with a foundational truth: when we understand how deeply we are loved by Christ, it propels us to love well in return. She talked practically about what that looks like in our everyday relationships and how our lives become a witness for Christ through the way we love.



Message Notes



**FOLLOW GOD'S EXAMPLE,
THEREFORE, AS DEARLY
LOVED CHILDREN AND
WALK IN THE WAY OF LOVE,
JUST AS CHRIST LOVED US
AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US
AS A FRAGRANT OFFERING
AND SACRIFICE TO GOD.**

Ephesians 5:1-2



Discussion Guide

What are you most looking forward to learning during this series?

What is one quality you value most in your relationships? Why?

Take a few minutes to Read Ephesians 5 together. What stands out to you?

Who you believe Jesus is shapes how you live. How would you describe your understanding of Jesus right now? How is that reflected in your daily life?

What do you think it practically means to “walk in the way of love” in your current relationships?

Are there relationships in your life where it feels difficult to respond with love? What might it look like to follow Christ’s example in those situations?

Can you think of a time when someone’s love pointed you toward Jesus?

Take time to pray together and ask the Lord to protect and guide your relationships and to draw you closer to Jesus and to one another.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the people You have placed in our lives—friends, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and even those who challenge us.

Teach us to see others as You see them and to love as You love us.

Let us be thoughtful in our words, considerate in our interactions, and show grace when we disagree.

Help us to listen humbly, speak kindly, and act with compassion.

May our lives reflect Your love.

*In Jesus' name, **Amen.***

Resources

Daily Devotions: available on the Sunnybrook App or at sunnybrookchurch.org

Read: *5 Ways to Build Lasting Friendships*
<https://finds.life.church/lasting-friendships/>

Read: *Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World* by Jennie Allen

Watch: *The Community Practice* on Right Now Media
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/900374>

THE ART OF MARRIAGE

Weekly Summary

In 1950, nearly 80% of U.S. households were led by married couples. Today, that number has dropped to around 47%, and divorce rates remain high. Fewer people are getting married, and more marriages are ending than ever before. This week, Erich walked us through the reality that even the most faithful, faith-filled marriages are still imperfect—and that we all need help.

Looking at Ephesians 5, Paul offers followers of Jesus both biblical wisdom for loving one another as husbands and wives and a reminder that Christian marriage is a message. Whether we realize it or not, our lives are preaching, and people are listening.



Message Notes



INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST.

WIVES, SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS AS YOU DO TO THE LORD. FOR THE HUSBAND IS THE HEAD OF THE WIFE AS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY, OF WHICH HE IS THE SAVIOR. NOW AS THE CHURCH SUBMITS TO CHRIST, SO ALSO WIVES SHOULD SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS IN EVERYTHING.

HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER TO MAKE HER HOLY, CLEANSING HER BY THE WASHING WITH WATER THROUGH THE WORD, AND TO PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF AS A RADIANT CHURCH, WITHOUT STAIN OR WRINKLE OR ANY OTHER BLEMISH, BUT HOLY AND BLAMELESS. IN THIS SAME WAY, HUSBANDS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR WIVES AS THEIR OWN BODIES. HE WHO LOVES HIS WIFE LOVES HIMSELF. AFTER ALL, NO ONE EVER HATED THEIR OWN BODY, BUT THEY FEED AND CARE FOR THEIR BODY, JUST AS CHRIST DOES THE CHURCH—FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY. “FOR THIS REASON A MAN WILL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE UNITED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO WILL BECOME ONE FLESH.” THIS IS A PROFOUND MYSTERY—BUT I AM TALKING ABOUT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. HOWEVER, EACH ONE OF YOU ALSO MUST LOVE HIS WIFE AS HE LOVES HIMSELF, AND THE WIFE MUST RESPECT HER HUSBAND.

Ephesians 5:21-33



Discussion Guide

What is one small thing that makes you feel cared for or appreciated?

Is there a couple in your life that has modeled a godly marriage to you? What qualities about them do you admire? If you cannot think of one, what qualities would you expect to see?

Even faithful, Christ-centered marriages are still flawed and need help. Why do you think it's important to acknowledge this?

Read Ephesians 5:21-33. Paul calls husbands to love their wives “just as Christ loved the church.” What stands out to you about the way Christ loves the church? How does that raise the bar for marriage?

Paul also calls wives to respect and submit “as the church submits to Christ.” What does healthy, Christ-centered submission look like?

A Christian marriage is a message, and the people around you are listening to you preach. So, in a culture where marriage rates are declining and divorce is common; how can married followers of Christ model to those around them?

Take time to pray together and ask the Lord to protect and guide your marriage and to draw you closer to Jesus and to one another.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the gift of marriage, and the sacred responsibility to love one another with faithfulness and grace.

Grant us wisdom when decisions feel heavy, patience when communication feels strained, and grace when we fall short.

Help us to celebrate together, listen deeply to each other, show compassion, forgive freely, and not keep a record of wrongs.

*In Jesus' name, **Amen.***

Resources

Daily Devotions: available on the Sunnybrook App or at sunnybrookchurch.org

Marriage Mentoring: In our Marriage Mentoring Ministry you are matched with a mentor couple who walk along with you to tackle the issues and challenges you may be facing in your marriage. For more information, contact Laurie Van Cura at laurievc@sunnybrookchurch.org.

Read: *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?* by Gary Thomas

Watch: *The Art of Marriage* on Right Now Media
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/794346>

Listen: Unscripted Podcast Love & Marriage Episodes 78-81 and a new episode release on Feb. 17.

Marriage Retreat: Side by Side Ministries. Friday, March 6th & Saturday, March 7th at the Headline Event Space in Le Mars, IA. Register at sunnybrookchurch.org.

THE ART OF PARENTING

Weekly Summary

In the first century, “household codes” were a familiar part of Greco-Roman culture. What wasn’t familiar was what the Holy Spirit, through Paul, had to say about them in Ephesians 6. Scripture turns the idea of headship upside down.

This week, Erich explored the difference between traditional Greco-Roman household codes that were designed to preserve authority and hierarchy, and the New Testament vision, which calls believers to imitate Christ in every relationship, including parenting. Parents are reminded that being a “good parent” isn’t about being perfect, but about pointing your children to the One who is perfect.



Message Notes





CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD, FOR THIS IS RIGHT. “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER”—WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH A PROMISE—“SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU AND THAT YOU MAY ENJOY LONG LIFE ON THE EARTH.”

FATHERS, DO NOT EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN; INSTEAD, BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD.

Ephesians 6:1-4



Discussion Guide

What was one lesson you learned as a child that stayed with you into adulthood?

Read Ephesians 6:1-4. Paul addresses both children and parents in this passage. Why do you think he does that?

What do you think it looks like in real life for parents to “bring children up in the training and instruction of the Lord”?

If you are a parent or caregiver, do you feel the pressure to be perfect? Does it make you feel better knowing you don’t have to be, you only have to point them to the One who is?

Would you say that Christ is at the center of your home? If not, are there steps you can take this week toward that?

Take time to pray together and ask the Lord to protect and guide your families and to draw you closer to Jesus and to one another.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of our children and the calling to care for them.

Give us understanding, gentleness, kindness, and grace when we fall short.

Help us to lead with love and reflect Your compassion in our homes.

Strengthen parents in every season, comfort those who grieve or long to be parents, and surround all families with Your peace.

We entrust our children to You.

*In Jesus' name, **Amen.***

Resources

Daily Devotions: available on the Sunnybrook App or at sunnybrookchurch.org

Listen: Unscripted Podcast Parenting Episodes 25-34

Watch: *The Art of Parenting* on Right Now Media
<https://app.righnowmedia.org/en/content/details/462812>

Read: *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family* by Paul David Tripp

Parenting Class: Starting March 2 for five weeks. We'll explore the four stages of parenting, how to parent with the end in mind, an approach to discipline that strengthens relationships, and how to help your child develop a faith of their own, and more. Register at sunnybrookchurch.org.



THE ART OF WORK



Weekly Summary

Belief in Jesus is meant to shape every area of our lives, including our work. What difference does faith make in the workplace? Many believers keep faith and work separate, but our allegiance to Jesus should influence how we show up each day and how we treat those around us, including our bosses.

This week, Lydia walked us through Ephesians 6 as we studied the passage closely and explored what it looks like to live out our faith with co-workers, those we lead, and those we work for.

Message Notes



SLAVES, OBEY YOUR EARTHLY MASTERS WITH RESPECT AND FEAR, AND WITH SINCERITY OF HEART, JUST AS YOU WOULD OBEY CHRIST. OBEY THEM NOT ONLY TO WIN THEIR FAVOR WHEN THEIR EYE IS ON YOU, BUT AS SLAVES OF CHRIST, DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM YOUR HEART. SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS IF YOU WERE SERVING THE LORD, NOT PEOPLE, BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT THE LORD WILL REWARD EACH ONE FOR WHATEVER GOOD THEY DO, WHETHER THEY ARE SLAVE OR FREE.

AND MASTERS, TREAT YOUR SLAVES IN THE SAME WAY. DO NOT THREATEN THEM, SINCE YOU KNOW THAT HE WHO IS BOTH THEIR MASTER AND YOURS IS IN HEAVEN, AND THERE IS NO FAVORITISM WITH HIM.

Ephesians 6:5-9



Discussion Guide

If you could switch jobs with anyone for one day, who would it be and why?

What is one word that you would use to describe your current work situation or season?

Many believers keep their faith separate from their work. What are some reasons people hesitate to bring their faith into their workplace?

Read Ephesians 6:5-9. In verse 6 Paul talks about not working only “when their eye is on you.” What does integrity at work look like when no one is watching?

Paul also addresses those with power and authority. What does it look like to lead in a way that reflects Christ rather than with control or fear?

For those who feel undervalued or discouraged in your work, does this passage offer you hope? Why or why not?

Take time to pray together and ask the Lord to protect and guide your work and to draw you closer to Jesus.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of work and the call to use our skills with integrity.

Grant us discernment in our decisions, steadiness in challenges, and mercy when we fall short.

Help us to work diligently, serve humbly, and reflect Your character.

When we feel weary or discouraged, strengthen us.

Guide our work, provide for those seeking employment, and help us trust You with the outcomes.

*In Jesus' name, **Amen.***

Resources

Daily Devotions: available on the Sunnybrook App or at sunnybrookchurch.org

Read: *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey

Watch: *Every Thought Captive: How Renewing Your Mind Can Change Your Life* on Right Now Media
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/920259>

Listen: Unscripted Podcast. New episode releasing March 3.

