

“THE MOTHER’S ROLE”

1/17/16

It’s been said that “...*the sweetest thing in all the world is ... a mother's love!*” And, it’s that very special love that we’re going to talk about today. **Parenting is a verb ... and love is what you do best, mothers!** So, with that in mind, what is a mother’s role in the family? To love those entrusted to her the way that Jesus loved... But, how? As we continue to study biblical principles for parenting ... *this is where we have to begin!* Here’s *the first step*; listen, now, to Paul’s words to the Ephesus church...

“Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Savior of the church, his body. ²⁴ And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ.

²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it.**

³¹ **As the scripture says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one."** ³² **There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. ³³ But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband. – Ephesians 5:21-25, 31-33 (TEV)**

Mom’s find themselves wearing many hats—being a wife, a sister or sister-in-law, and being a mom, of course. The most important relationship, however, is *between mothers ... and God*. And, that’s really what the scripture we just read is all about. Today, *let’s start with the foundational relationship in the home—the parental one...* (Now, if you’re a single mom, or aunt who’s helping raise kids, or a grandma who’s doing the same, please hang in there with me; I believe God’s word is for you today, too...) Let me begin here: Basically, ***a mother’s role, folks, is to learn to love those in her home just like Jesus would ... and teach them to do the same!*** And, the first step is this:

A MOTHER WILL LEARN TO LOVE LIKE JESUS WHEN SHE LEARNS THE TRUE BIBLICAL MEANING OF ‘SUBMISSION’ IN THE HOME... Vv. 21-22 - “Submit yourselves to one another *because of your reverence for Christ [italics mine]*. ²² Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands *as to the Lord [italics mine]*.” ‘Submission’—the whole idea of that word—just rubs against our western grain doesn’t it? God has laid out a plan for the family to function perfectly ... yet we, because we’re human beings, spend a great deal of time fighting about

who's going to be in charge in the home! But, I assure you that's *not* what God had in mind...

A farmer's boy decided to get married. His father said to him, "John, when you get married, your liberty is gone."

The boy said he did not believe it. The father said, "I'll prove it to you. Catch a dozen chickens, tie their legs together and put them in the wagon. Hitch up the two horses to the wagon and drive into town. Stop at every house you come to, and wherever you find the man is boss, give him a horse. Wherever you find the woman is boss, give her a chicken. You'll give away all your chickens and come back with two horses."

The boy accepted the proposition and drove to town. He had stopped at every house and had given away ten chickens when he came to a nice little house and saw an old man and his wife standing out on the front lawn. He called to them and asked, "Who is boss here?"

The man said, "I am" Turning to the woman, the boy said, "Is he boss?" The woman replied, "Yes, he's boss." The boy asked them to come down to the street. He then explained his reason for asking and told the man to pick out one of the horses. He said he would bring the horse back to him that afternoon. The old man and the old lady looked over the horses carefully, and the husband said, "I think the black horse is the better of the two."

The wife then said, "I think that bay horse is in every way the better horse. I would choose him."

The old man took a careful look at the bay horse and said, "I guess I'll take the bay horse."

The boy smiled and said, "No, you won't; you'll take a chicken."

The biblical idea of 'submission' means that we are submitting to love those around us, in the family relationship, like Jesus loved us! That, folks, applies to every parenting situation—married, single, or otherwise! It's a huge, almost superhuman love, but this is what the Apostle Paul is really talking about in Ephesians 5! In marriage, it's a mutual submission—a heavenly partnership, if you will... Yet, what do we do? We get this submission thing all twisted up ... and spend way too much time fighting about who's the boss...

Actually, it's no surprise; God told us that this relationship (marriage) would be strained from the start... Family struggles are inherent in 'the Fall' ... and God addressed this phenomenon to Eve when he said this (Gen. 3:16, NRSV):

“To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your *desire* shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’”

If we look ahead to Genesis 4:7 (NRSV), we read this...

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its *desire* is for you, but you must master it.”

The ‘desire’ (teshuqah) spoken of in both of these verses is the same word—*not* the woman’s sexual or emotional desire for her husband; *it’s an illicit desire to usurp his ‘headship’ (God’s given place for him) in the family.* It’s really like sin’s desire to master us (Gen. 4:7)—the Hebrew word in both counts (teshuqah) meaning ‘to compel’ or ‘to seek control over’...

Now, all who’ve been married for awhile thought this was all in your head! No, it’s not! It’s part of our fallen nature to rebel against the family structure that God’s put in place! So, mothers, what’s your role in all of this? To submit to love your husband (really, for the both of you to submit to love one another—a *mutual submission*) ... *as to the LORD* (and that last part is what’s most important)!

So, is there a godly plan for the home? Yeah ... and it’s all hinged on *personal relationships with Jesus Christ!* But, are we willing to do things God’s way—submit to love *all* those God has asked us to? And remember, ***learning to love like Jesus ... is caught, not taught!*** We’re supposed to be loving like Jesus in our family, as well as teaching our children to do the same (and that applies to any parent—married, single, or any of the other possibilities we’ve mentioned). *Our kids have to see this kind of love first, before they’ll begin to live it in their own lives—a love so strong for Christ ... that those in charge of the home are willing to do things God’s way, teaching their children about this kind of commitment through their actions!*

ADMITTEDLY, IT TAKES A HUGE AMOUNT OF LOVE TO SUBMIT TO ANYONE ... ESPECIALLY THOSE CLOSEST TO US! Am I right? It’s really about putting God and God’s ways first in our lives. It’s not in our human nature to submit to love like this, but *with God’s help we can!* And, when we do, we’ll know the blessings I was talking about last week—the blessings of our children, the blessing of being a mom... Secondly:

A MOTHER WILL LEARN TO LOVE LIKE JESUS ... WHEN SHE REALIZES HOW JESUS HAS LOVED HER! How in the world has Jesus loved you, mothers ... and me ... and everyone else his life has touched?

Not once in scripture have I ever read a story about Jesus taking the world’s position and asking, “What’s in it for me?” ***“Jesus, someone needs your help.”*** ***“What’s in it for me?”*** Nope; that’s not the way Jesus lived... Rather, Jesus’ way was always to ask: “What can I do for you?” Now, that’s LOVE ... Jesus’ way! His leadership (and the kind of leadership he expects to see in the home, by the way) is called SERVANT LEADERSHIP...

Can you imagine a life any better than one where you have those closest to you always asking, “What can I do for you?” Folks, *just as Jesus submitted his life to*

his Heavenly Father and loved the way he was asked to, we need to do the same; we need to submit our lives to loving as God asks us to love—the way Jesus loved! That kind of loving will = success in parenting (being a mom)...

Moms, don't ever forget DEUTERONOMY 6! Here's God's plan for 'mothering' (parenting=verb), which so many women do today...

⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. ⁷ Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. – Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (TEV)

And, just in case you're a mom who's not feeling quite up to the task some days, remember this: *God's not so much concerned with your ability ... as he's concerned with your availability!* If you make yourself available to love the way Christ has shown us to love, you can succeed in all that God asks of you as a mother!

Thank you, moms ... for loving us the way you do! Thank you for remembering that parenting is a verb ... and that LOVE is what you do best!