

Orange: Family + Church

The Family and the Church: Preparing for battle

To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind. (Edmund Burke)

Ephesians 5-6

Paul gives instructions on family relations and spiritual warfare in Ephesians 5 and 6. Taken together, these provide a blueprint for action.

Read Ephesians 5:22-24

Paul says that wives should “be subject to”, or submit, to their husbands. These verses are used improperly to suggest that the Bible condones violence, abuse or to assign a lesser value of women in relation to men.

Let’s look at more conventional example. A female police officer pulls a man over for speeding. She asks for his license and registration.

- Should the driver submit to police officer?
- Why or why not?
- Who (or what) gives her the authority in this situation?
- What happens if he does not?
- What is the role of the police officer in our society?

Continuing this (admittedly flawed) analogy: Supposed the policewoman has been suspended for breaking the law and insubordination; her badge has been pulled; and she is no longer in uniform or driving a police vehicle. Again, she confronts someone over for a traffic violation.

- Should the driver submit to the (suspended) police officer?
- Why or why not?
- What authority does she have?
- What has changed in this situation from the first example (above)?

With regard to submission:

- What happens to a football team that has half the players run the play called by the quarterback and half choose to run another play?
- What happens to a military unit which has half its members obey orders in battle while the other half disregards orders and makes its own decision?

If we accept submission by players in a huddle, police on the street and commanding officers in the military, why do we reject authority in the family?

One more comment: These verses point to Christ and his headship of the church.

- What did Jesus teach (and model) with regard to leadership? Give examples.
- See Mark 9:33–37 and Matt 20:20–24 for two lessons

Eph 5:25–33

Husbands are to:

- Love their wives (vs 25)
 - As Christ loved the church (vs 25)
 - As they love their own bodies (28–30)
 - As themselves (vs 33)
- Give themselves up for their wives (vs 25)
- Encourage their wives toward holiness (vs 26–27)

What do these verses suggest about leadership in the family? What role is the leader to play in the family?

Ephesians 6: 1–4

Children are to:

- Obey their parents (vs 1)
- Honor their father and mother (vs 2–3)

Fathers are to:

- Not provoke their children to anger
- Bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

With respect to all these commands for the family, we understand these principles can bring harmony, peace, order, good communication, mutual service and encouragement

toward positive goals. But with our sinful nature and a culture often set against God's design, how can we accomplish this?

Paul follows these verses on the family with instructions on spiritual warfare. The basics of spiritual warfare are HOW we can accomplish God's design for the family by working with the local church.

Ephesians 6:10-17

Paul begins by telling his readers to be strong in the Lord and His strength (vs 10) by putting on the armor of God.

- Why are we told to put on this armor? (vs 11, 13)
- Who (or what) are we fighting against? (vs 12)
- Do you believe that one of the "schemes of the devil" (vs 11) is an attack against the family?
 - What evidence do you see for such an attack?
 - What have been the results of these attacks?

Paul then tells us the armor includes:

- Truth
- Righteousness
- The Gospel of Peace
- Faith
- Salvation
- Word of God

How do these pieces of armor help us to win the battle?

How can the church help us "put on the full armor of God"?

- See Paul's teaching in Ephesians 4:11-12
- Could Paul be referring to the armor as the way to equip the saints?
- How does the local church do this?
- Read Hebrews 10:23-25. How do we hinder church's efforts in this role?

Ephesians 6:18-19

Once we know what to do as a member of our family, and we are instructed as to the equipment for battle, what does Paul say that we are to do?

- Does his command for battle surprise you?
- Why is this not our first response to an attack on the family?

Ephesians 6:20–24

Paul is writing from prison. He knows hard times, loneliness and bad circumstances (vs 20–21). Yet Paul shows us:

- We have spiritual family members in the church we can call on (vs 21)
- Comfort, peace, love and grace are available through Christ and His Church (vs 22–24).

Little Platoons

The Edmond Burke quote at the beginning of the lesson is contained in the book, In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government, by Charles Murray . Murray states, “We each belong to a few ‘little platoons.’ The great joys and sorrows, satisfactions and preoccupations, of our daily life are defined in terms of them. This observation, I will assert, applies to everyone, wherever his little platoons falls within the larger social framework.”

What—in addition to family-- are some of the “little platoons” to which you belong?

- Can a Life Group be a “little platoon”?
- What other “little platoons” are available through the local church and the kingdom of God?
- Are your “little platoons” equipped for battle?
 - If not, what is lacking?
 - What changes will you make to be more effective as a member?