



The Home Stretch

Ephesians 5:21—6:9

Week 12 | Mar 25, 2018

Summary: The household has always been the basic building block of human society, but in ancient times it was also the backbone of the economy. Almost everything was a cottage industry, so parents and children and slaves were often together in one compound, making a life together in every way. Therefore “house codes”—rules for relationships in the household—were a norm. The Jews, Greeks, and Romans all wrote them. Patriarchy was firmly entrenched, so the rules reinforced the rights of male headship while delineating the responsibilities of everyone else (and the consequences of failing to obey).

But the gospel changed all that in Christian homes. Everyone had equal value and status in Christ, and the royal law of his kingdom was love. So the first order of business was not to assert one’s rights, but to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21). Yes, the male was still the head of the household, but that meant less “authority over” and more “responsibility for.” He was responsible for the thriving of each person, especially his wife, whom he loved with the selflessness of Christ. The Gospel stretched him and everyone in new directions. Each person was called to **a new mindset**, one of having responsibility to Christ for each other. Each person had **a new mission**, furthering the future Christlike glory of everyone else. And each person was called into **a new mode of living**, following Christ as their example for every role and relationship.

Discussion:

1. Read Ephesians 5:21—6:9. Count the number of times that “Christ” or “Lord” appears in the text. What does this tell you about focal point of a Christian household?
2. Discuss the primary relationships addressed in these gospel-shaped house codes:
 - **Wives and husbands** — If you are married, what do you find most challenging about God’s word to you? And how do you work out the dynamics of “wives submit to your husbands, and husbands love your wives”?
 - **Children and parents** — If you have children, where are you most challenged in raising your kids generally, and discipling them in Christ specifically? Where are you most encouraged? Does this passage suggest any changes you should make in your parenting?
 - **Workers and bosses** — On a scale of 1-10, how healthy and functional is the overall relational environment where you work? What is one way you could move the needle in a positive direction?
3. Pray for each other in your areas of acutest relational need.