

<sup>21</sup>Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

**6**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>24</sup>“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— <sup>3</sup>“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

<sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, <sup>8</sup>because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

<sup>9</sup>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.

*Roman Rule of Life*

**Patriarchal Hierarchy**

Divine (gods/goddesses)  
Roman Emperor (divine man)  
Roman Senate  
Free Men  
Their wives  
Their children  
Their slaves

*Christian Rule of Life*

**Mutual Submission**

Triune God (Father/Son/Spirit)  
Christ's Church  
Husbands and Wives  
Children  
Slaves

**Discussion Questions:**

Roman society was a strict hierarchy. The Christian alternative breaks that down. (See chart comparison) What most stands out to you as you see both ways?

Paul focuses on relationships – the relationship between God and Christ, Christ and the Church, Christ and Husbands, Husbands and Wives, Fathers and Children, Masters and Slaves. What dynamic seems to be the common thread? How is this applicable to relationships today?

“Submit” is often a loaded word? What does it mean to you? How should it be understood within the marital context? For those who are married, how has this been lived out in your own marriage?

What is the “profound mystery” of marriage and Christ and His church?

Paul references one of the 10 Commandments – honor your father and mother – but no others. Do the 10 Commandments have more to say about relationships? If so, what?

Some have used the section on slavery in this letter as proof that slavery as an acceptable moral practice in God’s eyes. Obviously, slavery today is not viewed in such a favorable light. How do you understand what Paul says here about slavery as applying to us now?

What most excites you about this focus on relationships? What confuses you? What scares you? Which emotion is dominant?