

Strong Families

The Code, Week Eight

So far, we've looked at 7 other core values...

- JESUS FIRST
- MESSY MINISTRY
- PURPOSE DRIVEN
- AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY
- EVERYBODY BELONGS
- ANYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
- SERVANT LEADERSHIP

This week...

STRONG FAMILIES

We strengthen marriages, partner with parents, and pour energy into raising up a generation for Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV

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.

This is a radically NEW way of life.

It's different than the OLD me.

It's different than the world around me.

It's the way of love, designed by the God who IS love, exemplified perfectly by how Jesus lived and what he taught.

5:3... "But among you..."

5:8... "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.

Ephesians 5 is all about how to live as people changed by our relationship with Jesus.

It's not a list of rules, roles, and duties. It's a guide to living by countercultural values.

In verse 21 through chapter 6, verse 4, we get to Paul's **family values**.

Don't read this section as one who grew up in a traditional American family. Read it as one living in an ancient world with Jewish roots and Greek culture intersecting.

- Where women weren't valued.
- Where arranged marriages were common.
- Where men often had a lot of sexual experience before the age of 30, when they generally took wives that were in their teen years for the purpose of having kids, but NOT necessarily for love.
- Where there were a lot of rules for wives, like not talking to other men, staying at home out of trouble, etc.

It was a heavily **patriarchal** culture and a culture of **male dominance**.

Look for the countercultural values being communicated...

Ephesians 5:21-33 NIV

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. [22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. [23] 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. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26] to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, [27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. [28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— [30] for we are members of his body.

Ephesians 6:1-4 NIV

[1] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— [3] "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." [4] Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1. Service.

(Mutual Submission)

The part about wives submitting to their husbands was not intended to say that the forever order of things for Christians would be that the wife takes a subservient role.

Rather, Paul is urging women not to rebel and run away from their marriages even though they were hard, but to have a serving attitude instead.

2. Love.

Jesus' **self-sacrifice** for the church is the model of our sacrifice for one another - laying down my rights and privileges on behalf of others.

3. Honor.

Honor is seeing the image of God in someone and giving them the respect they deserve. It's also having respect for God's ordained order of things.

4. Empathy.

It is **feeling WITH** and **caring FOR** others.

Here's the question... are you willing to commit to being countercultural, as a family?

Jesus laid it all down to save for himself a church, a family, and he wants you in it.