

Content

As we continue to go through this passage in Ephesians on marriage and relationships I want to continue to explore “big picture” issues. I am doing this to avoid our tendency to simply look at this as a series of do’s and don’ts, a kind of checklist mentality to discipleship. Last week we explored the “big picture” issue of God’s creation design and intent in His creation of the institution of marriage. This morning we want to explore what I consider to be essential in Paul’s approach to marriage. In v.21 Paul says, “Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Reverence for Christ or the fear of the Lord is the key to following the biblical directions that Paul gives in the rest of the passage. So how do we cultivate reverence for Christ? That is the question the sermon will address. And we will explore by looking at two things. (1) Reality. We will explore some realities that hinder our reverence for Christ. And (2) Renewal. We need to cultivate a continued hope in the goodness and love and grace of Christ. We need to continually renew our hope in the goodness of Christ.

Gospel Connections

Larry Crabb writes in his book *The Marriage Builder*, “*We cannot cultivate interest in following biblical direction if we believe nothing good can happen. Before the responsibilities of marriage will be regarded as inviting opportunities rather than pointless duties, the core of a person’s attitude must shift from despair to hope.*”

That attitude shift, which I believe results in an attitude of reverence for Christ can only come from a continued trust and surrender to the gospel of Christ. And it is the gospel that Paul gives in v.25 as the ground for his instructions to husbands, when he says “**Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.**” The implication is that it is only to the degree that I am continually renewed in the love and goodness of Christ as revealed in His abandoning Himself out of love for me that I will be able to experience a reverence for Christ that will move me out of myself to love others, especially my wife or husband.

Application and Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically
 - a. What insights did you learn?
 - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don’t understand?
 - c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to

change as a result of this passage of Scripture?

2. How would you define reverence for Christ? What does reverence for Christ look like to you in daily life?

3. What is essential to changing the basis on which your marriage relationship is built?