

God's Will for My Family

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Preacher: Joshua Winters

[0 : 00] Well, we've been talking about praying all kinds of prayers for all kinds of people, and it wasn't actually my intention, but it happened that the Sunday that it came to talk about praying for our families was actually Family Day, so I thought, huh, that's good.

We've talked to the kids a little bit already, but this morning we want to ask the question, as we seek to pray for our families, what is it that God wills for our families?

What should we ask God to do in our families and for our families? What does he want to see in our families? And our answer this morning comes from Ephesians chapter 5.

If you have your Bibles, please open them up to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5.

Father, psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[1 : 45] Much like the passage that we looked at last week, Paul makes a statement.

He says, understand what the Lord's will is. Last week it was, this is the will of God. Understand what the Lord's will is, he said. What is the Lord's will?

He says that we not be under the influence or the control of substance, but instead that we be under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

And there are going to be things that that looks like. There are going to be results from that. Just like alcohol has its effects, the Holy Spirit being under his influence is going to have an effect on your life.

And it will come out and be seen in these ways, Paul says. He gives five participles. For those of you who are rusty on your grammar, that's a word that ends with ing.

[2 : 49] Speaking with one another, psalms, hymns, songs of the Spirit, singing, making music, giving thanks. What a wonderful picture.

And then we come to the last participle. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. And we're like, what?

One of these things is not like the others. These first four give you this picture of a church that is joyful and musical and thankful and worshiping. Submitting?

Is that really fit with that? According to Paul, it does. God's will is that we would live a life under the influence of the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit.

And one of the marks of that is submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. I had actually planned to preach on this passage last summer when we did our one another series.

[3 : 57] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. I was halfway through my week and things were looking good. But then all of a sudden, the more I started looking at the passage and really studying it, I realized, I've got to find myself another one another to preach on for Sunday.

Because this doesn't mean what I thought it meant. Up until last summer, I'd kind of just been under the impression that Paul meant that we should generally, as believers, submit to one another.

Defer to one another. What each other wants. But the more I looked at the flow, the grammar, the details, what Paul uses for the words, what he doesn't, what he omits, I started to see that this is not really a call for all of us to just generally submit to one another.

I took it out of context. Paul actually goes on to talk about the kind of submitting to one another that he wants there to be, that the Lord wants there to be.

You can see the flow of this in verse 21. He says, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives to your husbands. Then down to chapter 6, verse 1.

[5 : 13] Children to your parents. Then down to chapter 6, verse 5. Slaves to your masters. He's not talking about how we as believers should just generally submit to one another.

He's talking about how believers in any situation where they find themselves under another person's authority, out of reverence for Christ, submit to that person. Whether that's wives to husbands, children to parents, slaves or bond servants to masters. And so if we trace Paul's argument all the way through, it kind of goes like this. Understand what the Lord's will is. What the Lord wants for you. Well, what does he want for you? He wants you to live a life that is under the influence and control of the Spirit. And what does that look like? It looks like submitting to one another. And then the first place that he goes to apply this is to family. Is to family relationships. [6 : 19] And he starts with the wives. Verse 22. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

These words are not very popular in our culture today. Feminists balk at these words. The general attitude I think of our North American culture is that these words are dated. They're backwards. They're denigrating towards women. Men. There's a strong current of belief in our culture today that men and women are equal in every way. And even amongst Christians, this issue is not totally agreed upon.

[7 : 38] There are many Christians today who will look at a passage like this and their line of thinking would go something like this. Well look, he says slaves and masters.

Well we don't even have slaves and masters today. And so, you know, culture changes. Things change. The role of men and women in society today has changed.

And so what's written here doesn't apply to us. Paul was simply saying that you need to do what's right according to the cultural norms of your day. Which means submitting to your husbands.

Which means submitting to your masters if you're a bondservant. It's a very well-argued position. And there are many believers who hold to that.

And it shouldn't be something that we break faith with them over. But I think if we look more closely at what Paul is saying here. And at the overall teaching about men and women throughout the Bible.

[8 : 41] We'll come to a different conclusion. What is the reason that Paul gives for why wives should submit to their husbands? Submit yourselves to your own husbands.

Because it's fitting in our day and age. No. That's not what he says. He says submit yourselves to your own husbands.

For the husband is the head of the wife. As Christ is the head of the church. That's not a cultural reason.

God has made Christ to be the head of the church. The one in authority over his people. And in the same way. God has made the husband to be head of the home.

Of the household. Of the family. The one in authority over the family. He is responsible to God for his family.

[9 : 45] He will answer to God for his family. In a way that she will not. Paul gives a couple instructions about the manner in which we should submit as wives.

To our husbands. He says wives submit yourselves to your own husbands. As you do to the Lord. Down in verse 24.

He says it again. In case we might miss the importance of this. He says it again. As the church submits to Christ. So also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

And I don't think he means for us to press that so far. That we treat our husbands as if they are Jesus. In the sense that they are perfect.

That they are perfect. That you know. They say jump. And we say how high. I think the general gist of what he is saying there. Is that the way that the church submits to Christ.

[10 : 54] Is out of deep reverence and respect. For the position of authority that he has over us. In the same way wives are to submit to their husbands.

With reverence and respect. For the position of authority that God has given them. In the home. In the family. And notice those words that he says at the very end of verse 24.

He says wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Finances. Decision making.

Parenting. Education. You name it. The implications of this are that the husband has the final say. He will answer to God.

For everything. When it comes to your family. Right about now those of you who are married. And our women are thinking. Whew. This is not what I signed up for.

[12:00] That sounds awful. I mean have you met my husband? That doesn't sound like a good idea.

If I hadn't put my foot down many times in our marriage. Our family would have been ruined. The trouble with submission.

Is not one that's unique to this scenario. None of us likes to submit. To authority. We are wired away from that.

Because of sin. None of us likes to be told what to do. Or how it's going to go. Or to have to come under the authority of someone else.

And yet. And yet. Paul says. This is a mark of the spirit filled life. Submitting to one another. Out of reverence for Christ.

[12:57] Wives to their husbands. It raises all sorts of questions as well for you women. I know. What if my husband is in the believer?

What if my husband is battling addiction? What if my husband is abusive? And these are very important questions as well. And this is not the only word that we have in scripture.

About this relationship between husbands and wives. There are other places to go to. As well as we think about those questions. But this is the general principle.

That Paul gives for the relationship between wives and husbands. Wives are to submit to their husbands. And to respect him as having authority in their family.

Now. This doesn't mean that this is without exception. If God asks you not to do something. This is clearly sin.

[14:02] If you do this it's evil. And your husband asks you to do it. Then God trumps your husband. But as a general rule.

Wives are to submit to their husbands. And this is not easy. It's not easy at all. Maybe you have had some wrestling with this.

With your own marriage. But bear in mind. That the Lord knows. That your husband is a sinner. He will answer to God.

For how he leads your family. You may have wrestled with this for years.

But there's no prayer so precious to God. As that of somebody under authority. Calling out to him and saying. Lord help me. To live this the way that you want me to.

[15:16] Help me obey my parents. Help me submit to my husband. Even though we don't agree in this situation. And things are not looking good here.

The Lord will answer that prayer. And he will carry you through wives. Right about now you men are probably thinking.

Wow. I'm so glad I'm not a wife. A woman. Because that sounds hard. Having to submit to another person. But I hope you know men.

That a part of the reason of why it's hard. Is because they are married to you. You make it hard for them.

Ofentimes. To submit. To come under your leadership. Because of your own. Our own selfishness. Our abuse of the authority.

[16:23] That God has given us. And if you think the women have it hard. Wait till you hear what Paul has to say. To you men. In verse 25. He says this.

He says. Husbands. Love your wives. Just as Christ loved the church. And gave himself up.

For her. He did this to make her holy. Cleansing her. By the washing with water. Through the word. And to present her to himself. As a radiant church.

Without stain. Or wrinkle. Or any other blemish. But holy. And blameless. In this same way. Husbands ought to love.

Their wives. The wives have been called. To submit to their husbands. But you men. Husbands.

[17:17] Have been called. To die. For your wives. To lovingly. Lay down. Your life. For your wife.

This is an incredible. Thing. That God has called. Us. As men. To do. And it is not easy. This means that.

You have been given authority. In your family men. Not. So that you can. Build. So that we. Can build. Our own little kingdom. Our own little empire. With our. Wife and our children. As our servants. To keep our lives. Going. Well. And comfortable. To cook for us. And to. Clean up after us. Our family. Has not been given. To us. So that we can. Have help. To. Do. And to get. What we want.

[18:17] In life. The example. That we've been given. Is the example. Of Christ. We are to love. Our. Wives. The way that Christ. Loved. His people. Which was. Death. He gave. Up. His. Life. Out of love. To serve. His bride. Paul actually. Fills up. What he's saying here. With details about. What Christ did. He said that. He gave himself up. For her. To make her holy. To set her apart. In a special way. He was attentive.

To. The needs. Of his people. Their great need. And so. At just the right time.

[19:18] He. I might be. Losing battery here. David. David. He was attentive.

To her needs. She was filthy. And he did. What was necessary. He went to the cross. To make her clean. She was stained. With sin. It says. And he. Gave up his life. To make her. Her radiant. To do what was best. For her. We are called. As men. To follow. In how we love.

Our wives. To put this in terms. That we men. Understand. Imagine that you were. Invited. To go on.

[20:16] An adventure. To. Go through. Special training. And to join. In a special mission. An operation.

By the Canadian military. And. If you go on this mission. Your family. Will be compensated. So richly. How would you.

Think about. Such a decision. That'd be a pretty big decision. Do I go. Do I join the military. Do I leave my family. To go and serve. And what if you knew.

That this mission. Was. So significant. That this would actually. Change. How things go. For your country. For generations.

To come. An incredible opportunity. To serve. And to love. Not only your family. But your country. All the training.

[21:12] Will be provided. It's going to be an adventure. The band of brothers. What if you knew. In advance. Though.

That this. Mission. Was a one way trip. That there is a hundred percent. Chance. That you would not be coming back. From this alive. That's what marriage is.

It's a one way trip. Where you. Give up your life. To serve. Your family.

Your wife. You were called. To lay down. Your life. This means. That you will have to make. Difficult decisions. This means. That sometimes. You're going to have to say no.

To something. That you want. You may have to give up. Plans. Or dreams. In order. To serve.

[22:14] And to meet the needs. Of your wife. Your family. That's the kind of love. That Christ had. For the church. And so often.

As men. We get that backwards. We think. It's all about me. And my mission. And what I want to do. With my life. And my family's here. To serve me. And help me do that. No.

The example. We're given. The example. We're given. We're given. We're given. The opposite. You have been given. Authority. You are the head. Of your home. Not so that you can. Achieve what you want.

In life. But so that you. Like Christ. Can serve your family. By giving up your life. For them. This is difficult.

This is something. That we need. The Lord's. Help. To do. As men. Marriage is meant. To be a picture. Of the gospel. God's desire.

[23:12] For our families. Is that. They show. A little bit. Of the relationship. Between the father. And the son. And the son.

And his bride. And when marriage. Is done. God's way. It's a beautiful thing. Both Jen and I.

Have had the privilege. Of growing up. In families. Where this was. This was lived out. Well. And so. From the time. We were married. We have sought. To live. Our marriage.

This way. And in. As much as we have. With the Lord's help. We have had an amazing marriage. It's been wonderful. Doesn't mean. That we've done it perfectly.

I know. I blow it. I blow it. Every. Every. Day. Every week. Jen doesn't do it perfectly. Either. But God's way. Is the best way.

[24 : 06] And we know. Countless couples. In our lives. Whose marriages. For lack of a better word. Suck. They have heartache. They have conflict.

All the time. The wife. Is trying to manipulate him. Into doing. What she wants. Him to do. Because. She can't find. Any other way. To control him.

To get what she wants. And the husband. Just sees her. As there for his. Pleasure. When he wants her. And when he needs her. And marriages. Are blowing apart.

Families. Are ripped apart. Children grow up. Without a mother. And a father. God's way. Is the best way. God's will. For family. Is the best way.

Submission. Is not. Inherently. Evil. Even Jesus. The son of God. Had to submit himself.

[25 : 02] To the father's plan. And he did that. And it was a beautiful thing. And it's a beautiful thing. When we. Do family. Like this. So as we finish up.

What's left of. Family day weekend. I want to challenge you. Women. To understand. What the Lord's will is. For you. In your family.

Submitting. To one another. To your husbands. Out of reverence. For Christ. I want to challenge you men. To understand. What the Lord's will is. For you. In your family.

In your family. Leading. By lovingly. Laying. Down. Your life. For your family. Kids.

I want to challenge you. To understand. What the Lord's will is. For your life. Obeying. Your parents. In everything. As we.

[26 : 05] Come to a close. I want to. I want to bring this back. To prayer. We've been talking about prayer. How should we pray. For our families. Instead of praying.

God. Please bless. And be with. And bless. And be with. And bless. And be with. Let's use. The picture. That we get here. Of what a family. Should look like.

To help shape. Our prayers. Wives. Pray for your husbands. That they would. Find.

What they need. From the Lord. To carry the mantle. Of headship. Of leadership. In the family. And that they would do it well. That they would not be crushed. Or cave.

Under the pressure. Of that. Husbands. Pray. And ask. That the Lord. Would help you. To see.

What your wife. And what your children. Really need. And how you can meet.

[26 : 59] That need. And what you need. To give up. In your life. In order to serve them. Well. With that position. God has given you. Kids.

Pray for your mom. And dad. Pray that they would make. Decisions. That please God. And that are. Are good. For your family. Some of you probably.

Already do this. But if you don't. I would encourage you. To begin. This week. The habit. Of praying. Every day. For every single person. In your immediate family. I hope some of you.

Do that already. But if you don't. I would just like. To encourage you. To make this. A habit. Every single day. For the rest. Of your life. Everybody.

In your immediate family. Pray for them. If you need a list. To remember. To do it. Get it. If you need. To make a little photo album. To keep in your wallet.

[27 : 57] Or your purse. Or if you just need. To take some pictures. On your phone. So that as you do it. You can look at their faces. You can see their eyes. You can remember. Who they are.

And what's going on. In their lives. But this is so important. That we pray. For each person. In our family. Every day. And.

As we do. Let's allow. God's vision. God's desire. For family. To shape. What we ask him for. Amen.