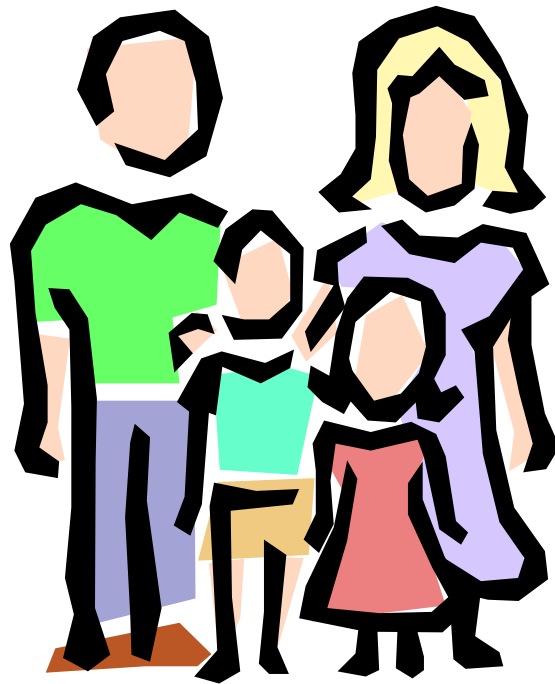


THE INGREDIENTS TO A HAPPY HOME



by
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Please open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22. I would like to bring a message entitled "The Ingredients to a Happy Home."

In Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4, the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother: (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

By way of introduction, let me say this, that no home is perfect. Every home is made up of an imperfect husband, an imperfect wife, and imperfect children. Therefore, no home is perfect. But God intended the Christian home to be a happy home. I hope you believe that.

Did you know that God created the home? In Genesis 2:18, the Bible says, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." In Genesis 2:24, the Bible says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Did you know that God fashioned Eve with Adam in mind, and then God Himself introduced Eve unto Adam? In Genesis 2:22, the Bible says, "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

In Psalm 127:3, the Bible says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

Thank God for the Christian home. But not every Christian home is a happy home. Why is that?

The Christians living there simply tolerate one another so much of the time. They are often contemplating divorce or have gone on to live together for the sake of their children or for the sake of their reputation.

Too many times, in the Christian home, the children are rebellious and dishonoring of their parents' authority. Fathers are absent in body. Mothers are at the office. Christian standards are rarely taught. Christian standards are rarely enforced. The television has become the baby sitter. Bickering, fighting, screaming, and yelling are common in many Christian homes today.

The Lord's name is rarely heard in many Christian homes, except in the profanity that comes from the television set. Church attendance is often sporadic. Church ministries designed for the Christian family are often ignored. Sports often come ahead of church services. Prayer and Bible reading are often overlooked. Greater value is often placed on getting things than in the blessing of spending quality time together as a family.

God's people are so busy trying to keep up with their neighbors and buying more things until finally, one day, when their children are gone, all they are comforted with is things and not their children.

Prayer is something offered only at mealtime, if then. There is an unforgiving spirit that usually brings about the exchange of harsh words. Chaos and confusion are the order of the day.

My dear Christian friends, these things are true as can be plainly seen by observing husbands and wives as they carry on together. If you get into a conversation with children and talk with them, you will find out what goes on in the average Christian home.

You say, "Preacher! How can all this be changed?" With the time remaining, we are going to look at three things that ought to characterize the Christian home if it is truly going to be a happy home. Love ought to characterize the Christian home. Submission ought to characterize the Christian home. Honour ought to characterize the Christian home.

Please notice, number one: Love ought to characterize the Christian home if it is going to be a happy home. In Ephesians 5:25, the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

The husband ought to be the expert on love in the home. He ought to teach his wife how to be loving. He ought to teach his children how to be loving. Love ought to characterize the husband. Love ought to characterize the wife. Love ought to characterize the children.

Husbands ought to love their wives, but wives ought to love their husbands. Husbands ought to love their wives; fathers ought to love their children; children ought to love their parents; and parents ought to love one another.

Titus 2:4, says of the older women, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."

In Ephesians 6:2, the Bible says, "Honour thy father and mother." That certainly must include love.

In Romans 12:10, the Bible says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." And, surely, brotherly love that exists in the house of God ought to begin in the Christian home. Don't you think so?

Listen folks, the mark of a godly home is love; and, if love prevails in a home between members, you will find a happy home. The words "I love you" ought to abound in the Christian home. The gentle touch ought to be felt in the Christian home. The affectionate glance ought to be felt in the Christian home. Not just by the husband; not just by the wife; not just by the children; but by all members of the household.

Acts of kindness ought to run rampant throughout the Christian home. Acts of thoughtfulness ought to run rampant throughout the Christian home. The giving of one's self ought to be the normal course of action in the Christian home. The doing for another ought to be the normal course of action in the Christian home. Not just by the husband; not just by the wife; not just by the children; but by all members of the household.

Husbands, love your wives, but let love itself characterize the Christian home.

Let me ask you something. Husbands, do you love your wives? Do you love your children? Wives, do you love your husbands? Do you love your children? Children, do you love your parents? Do you love your brother? Do you love your sister?

Love ought to characterize the Christian home. Not the cheap Hollywood love that promotes the physical, that promotes the carnal. I am not talking about that. Not the cheap selfish love that delights in being loved, that delights in being served. I am not talking about that. I am talking about what the Bible calls *agape* love. When Paul writes in Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives," he uses the word that means to set your affection on another, not because of what they can do in return for you, but because of the value you have come to place upon them.

The husband ought to love his wife. He ought to love his children. The wife ought to love her husband. She ought to love her children. The children ought to love their parents. Not because of what somebody else can do for you, but for the thrill of doing something for someone else. That kind of love is absent in the average Christian home today.

"If she would do so and so, I would love her." "If he were a better man, I would love him." "If my parents were more spiritual, I would love them." "If my

children were not so rebellious, I would love them." That attitude is not right. That has nothing to do with the Bible. You are to love your wife. Your wife is to love you. You are to love your children. Your children are to love you. Not because there is something good in it for you, but because you want to have the joy of giving to someone else.

Husbands, wives, and children ought to be marked by love. They ought to be marked by the selfless love. That is, you need to give yourself to others. You need to meet the needs of others. Real love says, "What do you need?" And, "Let me have the privilege of meeting that need." Husbands, do you say that to your wives? Wives, do you say that to your husbands? Children, do you say that to your parents? Parents, do you say that to your children?

Husbands, do you come home in the evening and help your wives with the dishes? You say, "Preacher! I don't like helping with the dishes." Who does? You don't help with the dishes because you like it. You help with the dishes because you love your wife. That's the difference!

Wives, do you serve your husbands? You say, "Preacher! I don't enjoy serving him." You don't serve him because you enjoy it. You serve him because you love him. That's the difference!

Dads, do you play house with your little girl? You say, "Preacher! I don't like playing house with my little girl." You don't play house with your little girl because you like it. You play house with your little girl because you love her. That's the difference!

Moms, do you play softball with your boys? You say, "Preacher! I don't like playing softball with my boys." You don't play softball with your boys because you like it. You play softball with your boys because you love them. That's the difference!

Children, do you talk to your parents? You say, "Preacher! I don't like talking to my parents because they have other interests." You don't talk to your parents because you like their interests. You talk to your parents because you love them. That's the difference!

The average dad is so selfish that all he cares for is what he wants. The average mom is so selfish that all she cares for is what she wants. The average child is so selfish that all he or she cares for is what he or she wants. You want what you want. You want what gratifies you. You want what satisfies you. Listen, folks, selfishness will kill your home long before anything else will.

We have noticed, number one: Love ought to characterize the Christian home. The husband ought to be the expert on love in the home, teaching his family how to love. But every one in the household ought to be marked by love. That is, they ought to be marked by the selfless love.

Notice, number two: Submission ought to characterize the Christian home if it is going to be a happy home. In Ephesians 5:22, the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." That is good advice for any wife. But that is good advice for all of us. Every Christian home ought to be marked by a submissive wife and by the presence of submission itself.

Think with me! It is just as wrong for a husband not to submit to Jesus Christ as it is for a wife not to submit to her husband. Husbands, don't you forget that when you get so upset with your wives because they will not submit. It is just as wicked for you not to submit to Jesus Christ.

It is just as wicked for a teenager not to submit to the preaching of the Word of God as it is for a wife not to submit to her husband. It is just as wicked for a family not to submit to the Word of God as it is for a wife not to submit to her husband.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord;" but, folks, let submission itself characterize the Christian home.

In Ephesians 5:21, the Bible says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Submission ought not just characterize the wife. However, she ought to be the one that best exemplifies the spirit of submission. She ought to be the expert at it, but that does not mean that she is to be the only one.

Husbands, wives, and children ought to be marked by submission. In James 4:7, the Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Paul said it this way in I Corinthians 11:3, "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ." The mark of a godly home is submission; and, if submission prevails in a home between members, you will find a happy home.

Question! What does it mean to be submissive? It simply means you are to trust in the rule and overriding sovereignty of God. That is, you are to give yourself to the rule of another. Therefore, you ought to submit yourselves in your homes to the rule of God. In Colossians 3:24, the Bible says, "For ye serve the Lord Christ."

Husbands, wives, and children ought to be submissive to the preaching and teaching of the pastor and spiritual leaders. In Hebrews 13:17, the Bible says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

The Christian home ought to be characterized by submission to the rule of the will of God personally. In Ephesians 6:6,7, the Bible says, "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

The Christian home ought to be characterized by submission to the rule of earthly authority. In Ephesians 6:5, the Bible says, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh." You are to be submissive in all

things. The Bible says, in Colossians 3:22, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh."

Wives, you ought to teach your husbands how to be submissive. You ought to teach your children how to be submissive. You ought to let your family see an example in you of what submission really is. Then husbands ought to learn. Then children ought to learn.

Listen, folks! Rebellion in any form will always bring shame and misery to any Christian home. You tend to think of rebellion in the sense of a bossy wife. You tend to think of rebellion in the sense of disobedient children. But I say to you, there are just as many rebellious husbands today who will not submit to the rule of God, who will not submit to the authority of God.

Submission is a blessing in a home. Paul said in I Timothy 5:4, "Let them learn first to shew piety at home." The word "piety" simply means "to show reverence." What is the Bible saying? It is simply saying this. You are to learn reverence, respect, and submission at home first.

Eli was the high priest whose sons Hophni and Phinehas were very rebellious. They committed immorality at the temple gate. They were disobedient. They were rotten. They were wicked. One day God judged them. But long before Hophni and Phinehas were rebellious against God, they were rebellious against their father, Eli.

Long before Absalom rebelled against God, he rebelled against his father, David.

You can read the Bible through, and you will find that submission is the blessing of the home and rebellion is its blight. Rebellion says, "Nobody is going to tell me what to do. And I don't care what the Bible says. And I don't care what the preacher says. I'm going to do what I want to do." That kind of attitude will never bless your home. It will always be a blight.

We have noticed, number one: Love ought to characterize the Christian home. We have noticed, number two: Submission ought to characterize the Christian home. But notice, number three: Honour ought to characterize the Christian home if it is going to be a happy home.

In Ephesians 6:1,2, the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother...."

Children are not only told to obey their parents (we have already talked about that in the concept of submission), but they are also told to honor their father and mother.

Dad and mom, don't you tolerate your children dishonoring you, dishonoring the position that you hold. Don't you do that!

No Christian home is totally Christian when honor is not a part of that home. Regarding the virtuous woman, God speaks of honor when He says, "Strength and honour are her clothing." (Proverbs 31:25)

In I Peter 3:7, the Bible tells the husbands to honour their wives: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife." Children are to honour their parents; but a woman is to be clothed in honor, and husbands are to honour their wives.

One mark of a godly home is honour; and, if honour prevails in a home between members, you will find a happy home. Honour is what God deserves. Honour is the proper attitude toward spiritual leaders. And all of that kind of honoring begins in the Christian home.

To honour means "to defer." That simply means saying, you go first. It is the absence of the critical spirit. In Philippians 2:14, the Bible says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings."

It is not only children that gripe. Children gripe because mom and dad gripe. It is not only children that complain. Children complain because mom and dad complain. It is not only children that criticize. Children criticize because mom and dad criticize. It is not right when a child does not honour his parents. But it is not right when a woman is not showing honor. It is not right when a man is not showing honor.

Children, honour your parents; but, folks, let honour itself characterize the Christian home.

Husbands! You ought to honour your wives because they are God's choice for you.

Wives! You ought to honor your husbands because they are God's choice for you. In Ephesians 5:33, the Bible says, "...and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Reverence means "to honour," which simply means "to show respect."

Children! You ought to honour your parents because they are God's choice for you. We talk about God's absolute sovereignty. That can be seen in a family when a child is born. You had no choice of the family into which you were born. That was the sovereign act of God. And you ought to honour your parents because God handpicked every one of your parents.

Listen! No home where the spirit of bitterness prevails will be a happy home. No home where the spirit of contention prevails will be happy a home. No home where the spirit of strife prevails will be happy a home. So let there be instead the sweet spirit of honour and respect.

The children ought to be the experts in showing honour. They ought to be the ones who will show you, dad and mom, what it is to give honour and respect to those in authority.

Mark it down! If your home is marked by disobedience, disobedience will eventually prevail in the church. If bickering marks your home, bickering will eventually prevail in the church. If your home is unspiritual, lack of spirituality will eventually prevail in the church. If your home is carnal, carnality will eventually prevail in the church. If your home is rebellious, your church will eventually become rebellious. If these things—rebellion, carnality, lack of spirituality, bickering, and disobedience—mark your home, then they will eventually prevail in your church. You can count on it! Whatever the makeup of the home, it will eventually prevail in the church.

Now! I am concerned about your Christian home. I want you to have a happy home. I hope you want the same thing. But it is not going to happen by accident. It is only going to happen as you do what is right, as you do what the Bible says, as you do what God says.

If I were to ask you to describe your Christian home today, would the words love, submission, and honour come up in your list? If you are going to have a happy home, love ought to characterize your home; submission ought to characterize your home; and honour ought to characterize your home.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

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