

Imagining the Kingdom – 15: God’s Subversive Ways of Power

Jerry Cisar — September 17, 2023

Text: Ephesians 5:21—6:9

Introduction



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LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What feelings has this text evoked in you? Explain.
- Why is it important to pay attention to our hearts in dealing with texts like this?
- What might the scriptural context of our text tell us about it?
- Why is culture important to keep in mind? What are some things about Roman culture that are relevant to our text?
- How might Paul’s Jewish culture influence what he means in what he says?
- How does the cross reveal God’s upside-down view of power?
- How can we see the call to mutual submission demonstrated in husbands, fathers, and masters?
- How might Paul’s instructions manifest the kingdom of God in the midst of whatever cultural power structures we live in?
- How do these passages speak to you?

I. Pay Attention to Our Hearts

- A. The state of things

- B. We love to be right.

II. Pay Attention to Context

- A. There is more than one kind of context to be kept in mind.

B. Scriptural context

i. What precedes it (4:17—5:19)

ii. What follows it (Eph. 6:12)

iii. The controlling metaphor of this letter is adoption.

C. Roman Household Codes

D. Paul's Jewish Context

i. "as you do to the Lord" (5:22) & "Now as the church submits to Christ" (5:24)

ii. "in the Lord..." (6:1) & "just as you would obey Christ" (6:5)

B. Fathers exercise power in this way:

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

i. "Exasperate" is "provoke to wrath/rage"

ii. "...in the training and instruction of the Lord."

F. F. Bruce: "The 'training and instruction of the Lord' would involve Christ's example, with due regard to his 'meekness and gentleness' (2 Cor. 10:1), as well as putting into practice his precepts."

"Children will more readily learn these lessons (the instructions of Christ) if the parents themselves show the way—by following Christ's example and practicing his precepts."

C. Masters

"And Lords, do the same things to them." (6:9a)

III. Pay Attention to God's Perspective

A. Husbands exercise power over your wives this way:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...