

EPHESIANS

ALIVE IN CHRIST

WHO WE ARE TO
ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST

Ephesians 5:22–6:9

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 2:1–10 | Romans 8:12–17 | Isaiah 40:8

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 08.17.25

SUMMARY

The deeper Paul proceeds with his instruction to the Church, the more difficult it seems to get. As always, it's essential to remember everything Paul has said about who we are in Christ—the grace and mercy he's extended to us—how we were once dead in sin, but now alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10). With the understanding of who we are in Christ, Paul now moves into the subject of submission with an introductory statement imploring the Church to “submit to one another out of reverence to Christ” (v. 21). What follows are practical and specific instances where submission becomes part of the Christian practice. As Paul points out, Christ was the ultimate example of humility in submission, and as believers who are now “alive in Christ,” we will follow his lead. Christians or not, everyone answers to someone, and everyone, if not now, will answer to Christ (Philippians 2:5-11). But as followers of Christ, our calling is to reflect Christ's character now and forever: Wives should submit to their husbands because it is a reflection of Christ, who willingly and joyfully submitted himself to the Father's redemptive design. Husbands should love their wives in the same manner that Christ loved his Bride, the Church; he laid down his life for her. Children should honor and respect their parents as Christ showed honor to the Father. Paul even extends this instruction of submission to “bondservants,” many of whom were willingly working for their masters, but presumably, at least some were not. Why would Paul instruct such a thing? Once again, it's important to remember who we are in Christ—we are not defined by our earthly identities but by our status as believers who are now united with Christ, heirs with Jesus who share in his sufferings (Romans 8:16-17)! All Christians must remember that every situation in which they find themselves is of Christ's design to be used to conform us to his likeness—we're being made to be like Jesus. Moreover, it is the Lord's design for all believers—whether they are the authority figure or not—to be reflections of Christ, laying all pride and selfishness aside and seeking the glory of God alone.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Ephesians 5:22–6:9.

Why does the subject of submission seem to hit a nerve with so many, both inside and outside the Church? What is the ultimate objective for the Christian in understanding what biblical submission is?

Why must we be careful not to dismiss biblical instruction as “no longer relevant” as it pertains to culture or “modern times”?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.