

# Marriage, Family and Servants

|          |                                                    |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------|
| SPEAKER  | Matt Ryniker                                       |
| DATE     | Sunday, July 27, 2025                              |
| PASSAGES | Ephesians 5; Ephesians 6; Genesis 3; Philippians 2 |
| MESSAGE  | Begins at 1:12:50 in the service                   |

## THE BIG IDEA

Paul's instructions to wives, husbands, children and servants take direct aim at the curse of Genesis 3 and turn both halves of it upside down. The result is not one party winning: it is a race to the bottom that, run properly, leaves no room for domination on either side.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Any passage of scripture lands somewhere on a scale from hating it, to tolerating it, to loving it — and the people who hate a passage at first are often the ones who come to love it most.
- ◆ Reading whole books rather than favorite chapters is the defense against a redacted Bible. Left to ourselves we keep only the wisdom we already agreed with.
- ◆ The world's question in a relationship is *what do I get out of it?* — in the reasons people marry and in the reasons they leave. Philippians 2 asks the opposite question.
- ◆ Genesis 3:16 curses the woman with a strong, unreturned desire and a husband who rules over her. Ephesians 5 inverts both halves: he loves her, and her submission is given, not taken.
- ◆ Submission that is willingly given ends the strife over who is on top. It is a gift, and a gift cannot be seized.
- ◆ "Love your wives" is not the easy assignment it sounds like. Christ loved by serving, and by washing feet that were genuinely dirty — not by working hard at a job and calling it sacrifice.
- ◆ A bad picture of God, often inherited from a man who mistreated us, corrupts the whole model — because husbands are told to look like him.

- ◆ The same logic runs into the nursery and the workplace: children obey, fathers do not provoke, servants serve as to Christ, and masters answer to a Master who shows no partiality.

► 1:12:50

Matt began not with the household code but with a scale, because he wanted the room ready for what was coming. Our default settings, he said, are not wise, pure or loving — so scripture challenges us, and the challenge is where the life is. He passed along a preacher's image he has never forgotten: Jesus holding a sword to a person's heart and saying *come*. "It'll pierce you, but there's life. He might wound us, but there's healing."

---

## The scale: hate it, tolerate it, love it

► 1:14:33

Picture any passage on a line. At one end, being pricked by it and — honestly — hating it. At the other, cherishing it, because those words once cut through the fog of your life and left God's fingerprints all over it. In between sits the largest group: the people who tolerate it.

His examples were deliberately uncomfortable. [Leviticus 18](#) on uncovering the nakedness of close relatives has a target audience that hates it and needs it, another that has never once been tempted and is glad it is there, and a third that simply accepts it as probably a good idea. Then [Ephesians 4:32](#) on kindness, [4:31](#) on bitterness and anger, [4:25](#) on truth-telling, [5:17–18](#) on drunkenness. Each has a different audience feeling the point of the blade.

Which is the argument for reading the whole thing. "If we just gravitated to God's wisdom when we liked it, we would have these little redacted Bibles" — skinny things. Matt's own joy in preaching straight through a book is that it forces everything out into the open, including the parts nobody would have chosen.

---

## What the culture says a marriage is for

► 1:18:27

Before opening Ephesians 5, Matt catalogued the reasons our culture gives for pairing off, drawn frankly from movies and pop songs rather than from scripture. *You complete me. I love the way I feel when I'm with you. You make me happy. I like the way you look. I like me better when I'm with you.* Nice tone, he allowed. Not a great message.

Then the reverse list, the reasons given for splitting: I deserve someone better, I want someone who makes me happier, I'm not excited about you anymore. Both lists answer the same question — what do I get out of this? He was careful not to overcorrect. God's wisdom is not the mirror image of the world's; it runs on a different axis entirely. Nobody is being told to marry someone whose whole vibe they cannot stand.

---

## Philippians 2, and the Tiger Woods problem

► 1:21:40

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4 ↗

Great theology until you apply it to dating and marriage, at which point most of us slide back down the scale. Matt named the dodge he had preached on a month earlier and called the Tiger Woods principle: we affirm humility, then smuggle pride back in by redefining it as accuracy. *True humility is knowing what I'm really worth* — and then we quietly inflate what we are worth and go looking after our own interests under cover of honesty.

The answer is the model Paul gives next. Philippians 2:6 — he “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped” — does not mean Jesus was less than God. It means he declined to exploit it. He knew his rank and his worth and did not descend as a chiseled golden warrior; he came as an actual baby, and let people spit on him, call him demonized, and slap him.

“*He knows his rank, he knows his title, he knows his worth, but he's not exploiting it.*”

---

## The curse, and what Paul does to it

► 1:30:06

Ladies first, Matt said, and read it without softening:

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

EPHESIANS 5:22-24 ↗

Then the obvious question: where is the sting? It stings because being lorded over by a man — particularly a man who is not good — feels like degradation. The fear has a name, and it has an address in scripture.

▶ 1:31:07

“To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.’”

GENESIS 3:16 ↗

Matt questioned "contrary." The Hebrew simply says *your desire shall be to your husband*, and the word for desire is strong and rare — it appears again in the next chapter, where sin's desire is for Cain and Cain must rule over it (Genesis 4:7), and once in the Song of Solomon, where the beloved's desire is for her lover (Song of Solomon 7:10). Imagine longing like that and getting domination in return. That is the curse, and that is what people brace for when Paul starts talking.

▶ 1:32:56

But watch the two halves. Paul says *submit*, not *be dominated* — and submission that is willingly offered ends the pecking-order fight outright, because one person has said, in effect, I'll see you at the bottom. And the very next thing Paul says is to the husbands: love your wives. The unreturned desire is returned; the rule is replaced by love. Both halves of the curse, inverted.

Matt added a boundary and did not bury it: never to anything immoral. And the willing part is the whole point. "It's a gift. It isn't taken. It can't be taken. It has to be given."

---

## Where the husband's sting is

▶ 1:35:04

At which point, he said, the men relax — *this message is brought to you by the men's ministry of Hope Chapel* — and the women wonder where his half of the cost went. So read it closer.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

EPHESIANS 5:25–27 ↗

"As Christ loves the church is not just in degree, but in manner." How did he love? [Matthew 20:28](#) — he came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. So the husband's goal is not to be served.

► 1:36:48

Men have long counted working hard at a job as their laid-down life. Jesus did not only provide financially for the church. He also took a towel and washed his disciples' feet ([John 13:4–5](#)) — and Matt was quick to insist that this was not yet a ceremony. In a foot-washing service today he would feel he was doing you a favor: showered, socks, air conditioning, feet fine. Then, it was an actual chore. Find the parallel in your own house: the gross job that has to be done regularly and nobody wants.

He noted who Jesus aimed that at — religious men like himself, the ones who wanted the long tassels and the fancy greetings in the marketplace and the special chair at the feast. Jesus made fun of them.

*“In the world system it's a race to the top. This is a race to the bottom. And I'll see you there.”*

► 1:39:30

If both are racing downward properly, there is no oppression and no degradation available. Paul keeps going: [Ephesians 5:28–31](#) — love her as your own body, since no one ever hated his own flesh — and the "one flesh" language, Matt pointed out, is used in the Old Testament of kin, bone of my bone. You are making a brand-new family.

---

## A bad picture of God ruins the model

► 1:41:01

Here Matt named the failure mode he thinks does the most damage. Husbands are told to look like God — but many of us painted God's character years ago from the template a father or stepfather who mistreated us left behind. Children project their dad onto God; grown men then work backward from that projection to decide what a husband should be. A vicious cycle.

What scripture actually says is that leaders in Christ's body never lord it over anyone. Humble service, doing the things nobody wants to do, to the point of embarrassment. So, husbands: your wife is going out of her way to honor Jesus — not primarily you — by living a life of deliberate submission. What would it look like for you to find your way all the way down to the bottom with her? To serve her in ways so humbling that if she did not honor and respect you at home, you would be humiliated?

► 1:43:02

“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

EPHESIANS 5:32–33 ↗

At home, Matt said, we get the privilege of theatrically acting out Christ and the church — children watching, before they can even read, the message of Christianity played out in their own living room. And yet Paul repeats the commands in verse 33, so it is never *only* analogy.

---

## Children, and servants, and masters

► 1:44:05

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right... Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

EPHESIANS 6:1–4 ↗

In the baptism classes he and Holla teach, this is the point they save for the end. Keep obeying your parents, because the analogy runs on into your heart. Make a habit of saying no when your parents ask something and you will have built a reflex — *I don't really want to do what you said, I'm going to do what I said* — waiting there the day your heavenly Father asks. The same boundary applies: never into anything immoral.

► 1:45:40

Then the workplace. [Ephesians 6:5–8](#) tells servants to obey with a sincere heart as they would Christ — not with eye-service, as people-pleasers — knowing that whatever good anyone does he will receive back from the Lord. Nobody, Matt granted, goes above and beyond at Walmart because they love Walmart. But that is how we would serve Jesus, and Paul says we can serve that way, for the sake of what it does in here. And it cuts upward too: [Ephesians 6:9](#) — masters, do the same, and stop your threatening, because their Master and yours is in heaven and shows no partiality.

---

## Could we learn to love it?

► 1:48:08

Matt closed by gathering the three points — Paul inverts the curse, he pricks both sides, and it looks like a race to the absolute bottom — and then pushed past tolerating. Notice that Paul did not say the same thing to wives and husbands. He said different things. Could we get to the place where we love that men are not women and women are not men, rather than merely accepting that the scriptures talk that way? "The way God made you is good... Together, we are the image of God, and we're not the same."

Same question all the way down the passage. Could we learn to love that children obey their parents instead of ruling the roost? Could we learn to love serving an employer the way we would serve Jesus — and could employers learn to love treating their employees knowing that Jesus is watching, with no partiality in him? Where each of us sits on that scale, he said, is between us and Jesus. Next Sunday: the armor of God.

---

**FOR FURTHER STUDY****SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- [Leviticus 18:6–8](#)
- [Ephesians 4:32](#)
- [Ephesians 4:31](#)
- [Ephesians 4:25](#)
- [Ephesians 5:17–18](#)
- [Philippians 2:3–4](#)
- [Philippians 2:6](#)
- [Ephesians 5:22–24](#)
- [Genesis 3:16](#)
- [Genesis 4:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:10](#)
- [Ephesians 5:25–27](#)
- [Matthew 20:28](#)
- [John 13:4–5](#)
- [Ephesians 5:28–31](#)
- [Ephesians 5:32–33](#)
- [Ephesians 6:1–4](#)
- [Ephesians 6:5–8](#)
- [Ephesians 6:9](#)

**FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP**

1. Name a passage you have hated, tolerated, and then come to love. What moved you along that scale?
2. Which of the culture's lines about relationships — you complete me, I like me better when I'm with you — has quietly shaped what you expect from the people closest to you?
3. Matt argued that Ephesians 5 inverts both halves of the Genesis 3 curse. Where do you still feel the curse operating rather than the inversion?
4. What is the foot-washing job in your household — the ordinary, unglamorous chore nobody wants — and who has been doing it?
5. A race to the bottom starts with one person going first. What is one specific thing you will do this week, without waiting to see whether the other person moves?

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

**Watch the full message:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywML9iHKU58&t=4370s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.