**Studies in the Book of Ephesians: Solus Christus (Christ Alone) – Our Walk in Christ: Love**

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.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing[a] 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 as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him. (Ephesians 5:22-6:9)



BIG IDEA:

The big idea is ‘Relationships are laboratories for building Christlikeness’.

# Introduction

To be a child of God first, and then responding to the call God has called us to.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received (Ephesians 4:1)

Book of Ephesians are split into two focuses:-

* Vertical Relationship to God (Ephesians 1 – 3) – what happens within the church?
* Horizontal Relationship to Others (Ephesians 4 – 6) – what happens in the outer dimension?

If we are only focused on Vertical Relationship and not doing the things we are called to do, then we are merely being ‘religious’. And if we are only focused on our horizontal relationships, then it is only behavioural modification. The saying “too heavenly minded to be of earthly good” goes both ways. Hence, the need to strike a balance of focus in our relationships.

# Major areas that we can work on:

## Humility

Recognizing that humility is the secret to unity and in contrast, pride steals unity. In Corinthians 1:12 - 16, Paul reminds his readers about diversity where the church is like the body made of different parts yet every part is equally important.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2).

The need to recognize that we too are messed up people who are saved by grace.

## Unity

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

Pastor Chris re-emphasized the big idea of Terry’s sermon the week before, that “Unity is not just agreed upon. It has to be built upon”.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3).

Make every effort, DO ALL you can to keep unity in spirit.

## Maturity

We need to grow in maturity to be Christlike.

…until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

## Integrity

What is on our outside has to match what is on our inside. It really is about consistency, and key for us to learn to narrow the gap between the two sides of ourselves.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

Pastor Chris reminds us that as Christians we are called to be holy, to be set apart. Only then can we set out to be the salt and light in the world. In Ephesians 5:3-4, Pastor Chris infers that the scripture strongly indicate there must not be even A HINT of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity, or of greed. Key is **“HINT”.**

The Message Version gives a more contemporary tone to Ephesians 5:4, “Don’t talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn’t fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect”.

To ponder, “Are we consistent when no one is watching?”

To further unpack from the big idea, Pastor Chris helps us to define laboratories, it is meant for testing and experimenting. 3 major relationships that can test out the 4 traits above are marriage, parenting and the workplace.

Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another. (Ephesians 5:21)

Two major facets of relationships are: -

**Submission (docility)**

Too often the definition of submission is often misunderstood. This is a trait to be agreed submission and manageable, willing to be led, supervise or directed, easily handled and managed.

**Responsibility (love)**

The person that one submits to is someone who is responsible and worthy of the submission.

# Marriage Relationship

Ephesians 5:22-24 has this to say to wives, “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.”

Ephesians 5:25-33 has this to say to husbands, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 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 as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.  However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

The marriage relationship is a beautiful relationship which reflects Christ and the Church. This relationship requires one to die to self, such as the willing submission of the wife, and the love of the husband just as how Christ died for the Church. This relationship is truly a laboratory to test out the 4 major traits of Christlikeness.

# Family Relationship

The family relationship is another laboratory to really test out the 4 traits of Christlikeness.

Read Titus 2:1 - 10

Children, do what your parents tell you. This is only right. “Honor your father and mother” is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it, namely, “so you will live well and have a long life.” (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Referencing to the 5th commandment of the Mosaic Law, honour thy mother and father results in blessings.

Fathers, don’t exasperate your children by coming down hard on them. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master (Ephesians 6:4)

Note to parents, try not to make it too difficult for our children to honour us and end up losing out on the blessing.

# Workplace Relationship

In today’s context, the slave master relationship is really referring to employee-employer’s relationship.

To remember that really, we are not serving men, but we are serving God.

Servants, respectfully obey your earthly masters but always with an eye to obeying the real master, Christ. Don’t just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ’s servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you’re really serving God. Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free. (Ephesians 6:5-8)

Also, to be fair to your employees for the Lord is watching you.

Masters, it’s the same with you. No abuse, please, and no threats. You and your servants are both under the same Master in heaven. He makes no distinction between you and them. (Ephesians 6:9)

Conclusion:

**BIG IDEA:**

The big idea is ‘Relationships are laboratories for building Christlikeness’.

Demonstrate the 4 traits (Humility, Unity, Maturity and Integrity) so that you may be a salt and light to the world.

Sermon summary contributed by Michelle Wong.

