

Living in Rich Relationships

Feb 7/8, 2009

Last week we talked about how to lead a life worthy of your calling.

Ephesians 4:1-2 - *Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.*

Review of the Riches we have in Christ:

Week 1, Eph. 1- God loved you, he chose you, adopted you, made you faultless, he poured out His grace on you, purchased your freedom, forgave your sins, showered you with kindness, planned for you, gave you an eternal inheritance, gave you a new identity, a confident hope, and power to live free from sin.

Week 2, Eph. 2- We were dead, God raised us from the dead and gave us life, made you a masterpiece and has good things planned for you to do, a place to belong, and eternal citizenship in His Kingdom.

Week 3, Eph. 3- God gave us each an equal share in endless treasures, the privilege of sharing the secret plan of Almighty God, bold and confident access to His presence, unlimited resources, mighty inner strength by the Holy Spirit, experiential love of Christ, fullness of the Spirit, a supernatural dream from God and the significance of living that dream.

Week 4, Eph. 4- Paul said "therefore", to throw off the old nature and put on the new nature. Paul gave us a checklist of 10 characteristics to live worthy of our identity in Christ and live in love for each other. We learned about using the gifts God has given us to build His kingdom.

1. Imitate God in everything you do because you are His dear children. Ephesians 5:3-15

2. Understand what God wants you to do; He wants you to be filled by Him daily. Ephesians 5:17-21

He wants you to be filled so that you learn joyfully.

He wants you to be filled so that you live thankfully.

He wants you to be filled so that you love submissively.

Philippians 2:5-8 - *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God, and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

3. God submitted to us, so we imitate Him best by submitting to Him and each other. Ephesians 5:21-30

4. Submission to one another in love is the key to oneness.

Oneness glorifies God. Ephesians 5:31-33 - *As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

5. Rich relationships are the rich result of submission to one another through serving, giving, caring and sharing.

John 17:20-24 - *"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me." "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began.*

Discussion Questions:

1) What does submission mean to you? What is the Biblical meaning of submission? How does the Biblical meaning contribute to unity? How has society today made "submission" a negative idea?

2) Discuss what it means to be the Bride of Christ. How does this idea impact the way you view other believers? How well do you think the Church succeeds at being one Body?