

Making Children . . . Disciples of Jesus

Identity vs. WEdenity

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“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:1-4

“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. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Ephesians 5:23-25

In three verses, he says it three times:

*Verse 23: marriage: even **as Christ** is the head of the church.*

*Verse 24: marriage: **as the church** submits to Christ.*

*Verse 25: marriage: **as Christ** loved the church.*

Filling the Earth . . . With Worshipers of Jesus

1. HAVING CHILDREN IS GOD’S WILL

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Genesis 1:26-28:

After the flood we read in Genesis 9:1, *“God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’”*

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Habakkuk 2:14

“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate” Psalm 127:4-5

“They were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” Mark 10:13-14

2. HAVING CHILDREN IS NOT AN ULTIMATUM

“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Genesis 2:18

“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. . . . I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is.”

1 Corinthians 7:7, 26

Having Hundreds of Children

“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.” Mark 10:29-30

Being “Children of God”

“It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” Romans 9:8

The Most Important Family

“Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 4:15

Begetting Spiritual Children

“Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.” Romans 16:13

3. MAKING MARRIAGE A PLACE FOR MAKING DISCIPLES

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise), ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.’ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

“My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck.” Proverbs 6:20-21

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as.” 2 Timothy 1:5

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God [a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:14-17

*** Parents Pointing to Christ and the Church**

So what turns out is that the deepest meaning of marriage—displaying the covenant love between Christ and the church—is underneath this other meaning of marriage—making children disciples of Jesus. It is all woven together. Good marriages make good places for children to grow up and see the glory of Christ’s covenant-keeping love.

May the Lord give us a united focus on what really matters in marriage: Husbands and wives loving like Christ and the church, and the children seeing it, and by God’s grace, loving what they see.