

Christian Households

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Jesus Christ is the defining influence in every household relationship that we have, according to the New Testament. Paul often talks about the roles of various members of households in his writings. Martin Luther called these household instructions the “Haustafeln”, or household instructions. Peter includes these instructions in his first epistle as well. We are admonished to treat others in the household according to their new status in Christ. This pertains to husbands, wives, children, and slaves.

Paul begins his section in Ephesians with the admonition to “be subject to each other in reverence for Christ.” Notice that these instructions are not a part of some philosophical scheme to have a happy home. They are genuinely and intensely Christian ideals. Your relationship to Christ is foundational to how you treat others in the home.

Read the passage in Ephesians and look at how often the relationship is compared to Christ and his relationships. Wives should learn to submit to their husbands just as the church is subject to Christ. Husbands are to learn to love their wives by observing and studying how Christ loves the church. Slaves are to obey their masters as if they were obeying Christ. Reverence for Christ is the first rule of the home. This means that the home should be a place where everyone sacrificially gives up their life for the others in the family. So if your family is dysfunctional and marked by hostility and disarray, or anger and disrespect, then your relationship with Christ is probably out of sorts as well. Our homes are a good measuring stick for how well we are submitting to Christ.

May Christ rule our homes, and may we joyfully and gladly submit to one another in reverence for Christ.