

Ephesians XII

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Why do we address family, children, and relationship with parents, and social life in the middle of ecclesiology? Because the elements of family and social life are important to establishing glorious church. The reason for the fall of Roman Empire is attributed to the destruction of families. Family is formed before the formation of people and a nation. A family is a basic unit of society. It is also most fundamental and essential unit in a nation. The world cannot survive without families. According to Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave* his prophecy about future points to the destruction of families. Focus on the Family has a strong influence in America although it is not a church. They advocate the restoration to protestant family. America is focusing on the restoration of families. The truth is Korean families are also breaking down. I suspect our divorce rate is higher than America. This is Satan's strategy. He is breaking down families in order to destroy churches. We cannot touch the painful areas in family and their wounds. However, I intentionally touch upon them. It is so sad to see the destruction of families.

The pastor's family is more significant because it serves as a model to all the families in a church. If a pastor's family is fighting all the time, then the church members' families will not have any peace in their home. I will speak more on this but pastors are poor in management of their energies. I am one of them but I am trying my best to do better job with it. Pastors do not allot their energies to their families. One pastor wrote "a pastor should die upon returning home and a husband must prosper." Pastors should not try to pastor in their family. I won't talk about pastor's wife today but focus on pastors. You can see this in the main text that the reason for the fall of family is attributed to husband. The wife can directly break up the family as it seems on the outside but the husband contributes to it on the inside. I am preaching with the repentant heart. When pastors come home, they should be just husband and father. Church members have their own husband and a pastor separately; however, for a pastor's wife the downfall of her pastor means the downfall of her husband and vice versa. Pastor's wife is admirable. She can't help but put everything on her husband because if her husband stumbles, her pastor stumbles, and if her pastor goes down, her husband goes down, too. A pastor's family is unique and important for that reason. The downfall of a pastor's family will result in the failure of his ministry.

I emphasize this again that when the family goes down, the ministry goes down as well. The reason is how can a pastor who can't share the love at home tell his believers to love? That is hypocritical! Suppose you spend 100% of your energy on ministry but your family is broken up. That's a failed ministry. We should divide our energy better. God desires us to see spending our energies 50 50 to nurture the beautiful family. In order to establish the glorious church we must form such a beautiful family. A church and a family cannot be separated.

The first qualification of a pastor according to 1 Timothy is to be above reproach. A wife of a pastor should acknowledge him before anyone else. If a pastor's wife does not acknowledge him, then whatever or however he serves in his church and ministry they are all hypocrites. When a pastor is not acknowledged well inside and outside the church but his wife acknowledges him, then he is a good pastor. If his children recognize him like "my dad is a man of God," then a pastor is a great father. A pastor should be acknowledged at home. Let's look at how we can have a beautiful family.

Paul speaks in verse 21, "And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." In the typical expository message a text is selected up to verse 21 and then another text is selected from verse 22. However, in the Greek text it ends with verse 20 and begins a new text from verse 21. In short, verse 21 begins with the text we have for today. It does not belong to the previous message. So, the last message ends with give thanks to God. So, today we begin a new message with "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." What does this mean? The husband and wife relationship we have talked about up to now is summed up in obedience to each other. It is about serving each other. When a couple breaks up, the blame does not lie with husband 100% or with

wife 100%. Both are at fault. I said earlier that the husband contribute to the direct cause of break up. Therefore, both are subject to one another.

The next part from verse 22 to 24 is about wife. Let's look at what Paul says about wife "wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord." The duty of wife is unconditional obedience. It is obedience like unto the Lord. Pastors' wives, you don't like to hear that, do you? Nevertheless, it is your duty to obey. This is the order of creation. You may say this is the age of female dominance and so on, but the duty of wife is obedience. Please do not say directly, "No, that's not..." to your husband when you do not agree with him or the circumstance does not fit you.

Man is simple. When you treat him like that, he insists on his way knowing that he is wrong because of his pride. That's because he is simple. Man doesn't have the function. Man was created first. The earlier the product the simpler the function is. Some pastors think that man is superior. They are mistaken. Let's make a compare and contrast! What was man made with? Man was made with dust. What was woman made with? Rib! Does rib cost higher or dust? The last time I went to eat some rib in a restaurant, it cost \$30. Dust full of a truck doesn't cost \$30. We can't match woman even in quality. If you think you are superior when you are actually cheaper and oppress your wife, that's the beginning of your unfortunate life. Women are precious from the very beginning! This is the irony because God wants the woman to obey her husband. This is unconditional obedience. Pastors' wives, this is your wisdom. You can't get along well when you oppose your husband every time. If you want to speak to your husband, please pray first and wait for God's time to speak your mind. Please do not try to control your husband with your mouth all the time.

There is a strong work of spirit among women; the spirit of Jezebel. This spirit of Jezebel controls men. The characteristic of this spirit is that it kills prophets. If pastor's wife controls the pastor, the word of God that's preached through him dies. That's why you have to be a wise wife of a pastor. Unconditional obedience is required of a virtuous wife. That's the duty of a wife.

Why does Paul say to be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord? He explains in verse 23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." Just like Jesus Christ is the head of the church the head of the wife is the husband. That's the reason for the obedience. It is the same whether it is a church or a family. The church is more so. The big picture of ministry should be set and carried out by the husband, the pastor. On the other hand, pastor's wife should recognize the big picture and take care of the fine details of the ministry. Those pastors that pocket the salary and use it according to them are demonstrating their determination to lose the material authority. Let the wife take care of them.

The reason for the obedience is because the husband is the head. Jesus who is the head of the church carries out everything through the church. It is also true from the perspective of education in the church. The whole congregation is educated within the big boundary through the pastor. However, pastor's wife should touch the fine details. This necessitates the spirituality on the pastor's wife. Furthermore, sister should deal with other sisters because there are many areas pastor cannot really touch upon. If the pastor's wife does not train on her spirituality, it is not 50% of ministry the church will lose out but 90%. I would like to remind you 1 + 1 is not 2 but it can be even 100. Ministry that lost the involvement of the pastor's wife will be lost.

The duty of a wife is obedience and the duty of a husband is love. Paul speaks in verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." May I ask pastors, "Is love more difficult or obedience?" Love is much much more difficult. How far should the husband love? To the point of giving up his life! Love is giving up the life. When Jesus laid out the condition for divorce in the Bible, the premises of it was adultery. Jesus was saying that unless your wife becomes an adulterous woman or prostitute, do not divorce her. Why

did Jesus say that? Who contributes to cause the wife to become a prostitute? The husband does! The secret for the pastor's wife to obey the pastor is when he loves her.

It is so easy for the pastor's wife to obey when the pastor truly loves her. When you, pastor, love her, you will notice so many things begin to change. The food on dinner table... I don't need to say that. Just give her your love and everything will change.

I mentioned earlier that love is practical. What is love? It is obedience. The first gate of love is to hear what the wife says. Woman relieves herself through mouth. That's why you have to hear her out. If your conversation with your wife doesn't flow, she will start building stress inside. That's where love starts off. When I visit other churches to minister, I see so many of them that the last person to find out the ministry decisions is the pastor's wife. Such pastors are here. You share with deacons, elders and everyone else and who does your wife hear about them from? From other church members! She doesn't hear from the husband. This is why the stress builds up inside her. Communicate with her and hear what she has to say.

In my case, I am not very good at it, but honestly I have C average. I hear well what my wife says to me. Moreover, I made a vow to God before the marriage. I vowed "I will treat what my wife says to me as Your voice, God!" Yes, I made that vow and that's why I listen to my wife almost 100% of time. I don't have to mention that my wife is a wise woman. I don't like to write any letter but my wife writes letters frequently. She starts with "my beloved husband" and writes a letter about my faults and weaknesses. In short, we should communicate with our spouses.

This is critical! Why? Because it is related to the glory of God! Of course, loving the wife itself is important but we have a relationship with church that cannot be separated. You will see this later "this mystery is great" according to Paul. What did he understand? The relationship between the Lord and a church is the same as the relationship between the husband and the wife. In another word, the breakup of a pastor's family results in breakup of the church. This is the danger. This is the reason you communicate with your wife, hear her out, and do everything with her. Let me give you an example. Suppose you have decided something as a pastor and your wife does not agree with it. Don't do it! I am serious because a wife is a helper, the strong right arm of Jehovah. When the strong right arm of Jehovah doesn't help you and you proceed, that's how you fail. Again, your wife doesn't agree to your plans, it is better not to follow through. When the pastor's wife agrees, that's when you proceed. When a pastor truly loves his wife like this, the church becomes beautiful.

Some may say like this, "Pastor Minh Kim, are you in pastoral ministry to please your wife? You are very ungodly!" However, please ask God whether the wife pleasing ministry glorify God or not. Ask Him!

What happens after you love in that manner? Let's find it out in verse 26 "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." What does this mean? It means you will be cleansed when you love like that. The reason you are dirty is because you haven't been loved. Moreover, the reason pastor's wife is dirty is because she has not been loved. It is the same with children and church members. Every soul that's not loved is going to be dirty. When a pastor loves his wife in that manner, she will be cleansed. Like the love of Jesus Christ cleanses the church, the love of pastor for his wife will cleanse her. The reason the wife pays attention to other things is because she does not feel her husband's love. That's why she is corrupted with other man, shopping, and self-realization. Let me tell you the wife that's loved by her husband can never pay attention to worthless things. I said earlier that the corruption of a wife is caused by the husband's fault. The first benefit of husband loving his wife is that she will be cleansed.

Pastor's holiness and purity are not enough to sanctify the church. The pastor's holiness and purity must be combined with the pastor's wife's holiness and purity to sanctify the church.

The reason is that the part of church the pastor's holiness and purity touch is different from the part of church his wife's holiness and purity touch. For example, the pastor's holiness and purity have a power to penetrate into the hearts of church members with the word of God. On the other hand, the pastor's wife's holiness and purity have a power to provide the energy for the church members to practically live according to the word. If the majority of the church members are not changing in their life, one of several reasons for that can be contributed to lack of appealing of holiness and purity of pastor's wife. There is tendency in church that a pastor seems to be spiritual. In another word, the church members tend to focus on the words he preaches and his authority overlooking the life he lives out. They also focus on the life of the pastor's wife instead of focusing on the life of the pastor. I will speak about this with regard to the children, but it is like this. When children need to be loved, they seek for the father. When they have needs like materials or so, they seek for the mother. It is the same principle. When a child scores 100 on a test, who does he want to show it off to first? It is the daddy. However, when daddy is drunk, and doesn't come home, what will happen to the child? In summary, when children need love, they go to daddy. When children have needs, they go to mommy. Likewise, the direction of what the pastor's holiness and purity do is different from the direction of what the pastor's wife's holiness and purity do. This is the reason the pastor's wife needs to be loved by her husband and become cleansed.

Let's look at the second benefit in verse 28 "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself." In conclusion, loving your wife means loving your pastors. If you don't love your own wife, then you are not loving yourself. Not loving yourself is rejecting the love of God. Not loving your wife is not just loving her but not loving yourself as well. That's abusing yourself and you can't do that before God. "He who loves his own wife loves himself." We are to love our wives. Seriously, if you, pastors, don't love your wife, please stop everything and repent over that.

Next, let's look at verse 29 "For no one ever hated own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." In short, husband that loves his wife matures. Pastor who runs alone diligently in his spirituality accomplishes nothing. Loving the wife is essential for your spiritual growth. This is the reason we train with pastor's wife in Zoe Ministry Network. Loving your wife contributes to your spiritual growth.

What is evil? Evil doesn't even have its own place to stay. When a pastor's wife leaves the side of her husband, that's evil. The reason a woman becomes a bad wife is due to leaving her husband's side. As long as she lives right next to her husband she won't become a bad or wicked wife. It is all right to use different rooms to focus more on prayer but be united quickly after the separation. Have your wife always right next to you.

The practical secret of loving wife and obeying the husband is found in verse 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother." Leaving his father and mother means he is going to be independent head of a family. Husband must have a clear leadership to rule over his family. In Israel the leadership of father is considered as the leadership of God. In the Old Testament, the Israelites consider the father's leadership the same as the leadership of God. As long as children remember that they do not lose the leadership of God. Since we lose the leadership of father, children do not absolutely obey God. If we can't rule over a family well, we can't rule over a church according to 1 Timothy. How can a man that can't rule over his family, rule over a church? Father's leadership in his family is the basis of all his leadership in all his relationships.

"A man shall leave his father and mother" means a man, pastor, should be able to lead his family economically, spiritually, and intellectually. Please do not rely on others. Only person you can rely on is God. You are a head of your family and when you allow the influences from your parents and in laws on your wife, it will lead to the suffering of your wife. That's a big mistake.

You should clearly draw the boundary and point out what's wrong to your parents and to your wife as well. Don't allow anything or anyone to divide you and your wife. This is very important.

That's the reason Paul is speaking "A man shall leave his father and mother and join his wife." "Join his wife" doesn't mean to be like her. It means union. Husband and wife are different but should acknowledge each other. They are different but they are supposed to become one. That's what husband and wife is all about. Although they are different, when they live together, they become alike. Otherwise, Jesus could have created everyone the same. Why would He create people differently? It is such a beauty to harmonize what is different or who is different for that matter.

"The two shall become one flesh." The couple should be healthy sexually. I bless my wife today that she will be healthy to have a sexual relationship beyond the age of 70. A pastor's sexual life is important. In one sense he is blocking out the work of immorality through his sexual relationship with his wife. A pastor should make his wife happy with regard to that. The wife has the authority over her husband's body whereas the husband has the authority over his wife's body. The work of immorality comes through the broken down sexual relationship between the pastor and the pastor's wife. Do not deprive one another!

I read an article about sexual life of a Christian on a Christian magazine that a woman experiences orgasm when she is filled with the Holy Spirit. When our spirit is filled spiritually, our physical sexual life also becomes good. When one is not filled with the Holy Spirit, he doesn't love his life, and he wants to sleep with her, she says, "Go away!" Isn't that true? When the wife feels that her husband loves her, then she will naturally receive her husband. When a husband is filled up spiritually, he loves his wife because he is full of the love of Jesus Christ. In short, when one loves his wife and he is filled with the Spirit of God, the couple's sexual life is supposed to be good. The sexual life, however, is only part of love. I sometimes see pastors treat it with shame and stay away from it but that's not the right mindset.

Why does the fervor of salvation disappear when we do not respond to the grace God has given us? That's because we have not acknowledged it in our life and stopped expressing it. It is the same with wife. You should talk to your wife "You are beautiful. How come you are more beautiful when you are getting older?" from time to time. You should also kiss your wife and express your love for her frequently. The sexual life of pastor's wife is also one of those things. You should express that for her. This is all important. I am not sure we have five children because we truly love each other but you should express your love for her in words and in physical ways.

God is also the same. Pastors, have you seen a sky in your ministry? Do you look at it every day and say, "You look so blue. How come you look so great in blue? Lord, forgive me that my heart is not like the blue sky." That's how you want to look at all the creations of God and express your heart including your wife and your church members. When you make those expressions, the sense, that doesn't lose the beauty inside of you, comes back alive. Those that can't express well can't hear the voice of God. That's the reason we all should express the love to the wife.

This life of the couple is revealed in the ministry. Yes, it is revealed in the ministry. The church members can feel the love of pastor and his wife secretly. They become happy when they feel the pastor couple's love for each other. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. What does "this mystery is great" mean? The relationship between the church and the Lord is the same as the relationship between the wife and the husband. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Next, let's address the relationship with the children. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right!" Children should obey the parents even when the parents are wrong as long as they do not go against the truth of God. I admit that I am not good at this, but I am supposed to do that. "Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise)." Children are supposed to obey the parents without any condition. So, when children obey the parents, they live long and they will be well. Children should obey their parents.

Let's look at the parents "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." What's scary is that Paul didn't say "parents," but "fathers." Who is responsible for children's education? Paul is saying that it lies with fathers. Fathers should get involved in children's education.

I have brought a little note about what expert in prison ministry said about prisoners he worked with over the years. He said that he never saw an inmate who did not hate his own father. This is very scary! When a father messes up, his son also messes up, too. Gangsters come out of broken home or single parent family. This infamous boss of organized crime in Korea was also from a broken home. Pastors are supposed to spend his energy at home... I know it is difficult to do that, but we really need to. We gotta do at least the minimum like hugging children and talking with them. Let's make a decision to do that!

In Book of Matthews, it is written "To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers." What that means is that mothers don't give birth to children but fathers do. This is important.

Fathers have the responsibility of children's education and the first standard of the education is that they should not provoke them. Instead of recognizing the children and embracing them fathers point out mistakes or faults to their children. It provokes the children. I admit that I do this quite often. Fathers should not discipline the children without controlling their emotion. Please do not discipline your children while you are raging. In my 18 years of living with God, God always speaks to me when I am so angry at my children, "Minho, forgive them. Minho, don't discipline them today. Minho, do it tomorrow." When I am raging, I can't hear God. But, He always speaks like that to me.

Next, Paul speaks, "Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." In one word, Paul is saying that teach the children the word of God. Let them be filled with the word of God. Let them continue to live by the word of God. Don't just pressure the children with "study hard," but say like "read the Bible and pray" and so on. One of the children may say, "God, my father tells the church members to pray but he tells me to just study." Let's stop telling the children in pastor's family to "study and study."

Discipline includes correction and instruction means disciplinary action. In short, when we need to rebuke our children, we really should. Parents of this age have only one or two children, so they don't discipline their child/children. According to Proverbs 13:24 "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently," we should be able to discipline our children.

Did you notice the word "again" in the beginning of verse 4? The reason for the insertion of "again" is to emphasize that in order for the father to properly educate his children he has to be an example to his children in his ways. When we obey our parents, our children learn to obey us. It doesn't work when we do not obey our parents. That's why we have "again." We need to be an example at all times.

According to Talmud when we receive more change after making a purchase, give it back in front of the children. It is teaching honesty to the readers. Parents should be a role model to the children all the time. In another word, children will learn from your model as the father and the pastor. This is what it means to be a leader all about! This is why fatherhood is difficult. We have

to be a father and a husband; a pastor and a leader. It is heavy! That's why we can't do this alone. All the pastors can't help but to fall down before God. We cannot do it on our own!

Next up is the relationship with a boss. This is pretty simple. Paul speaks in verse 5, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ." Whatever you are entrusted with, please do not do things paying attention to other people. This is important! In church we see some people who pretend to be busy when a pastor is around. It is also true with the prayer, too. Someone I know sleeps and snores during his prayer but wakes up when he hears my footsteps in the hall way and starts to pray. That's not good. We should do all things as if God is watching us.

Furthermore, Paul speaks in verse 6 – 7, "Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord and not to men." This is important for us. Paul continues in verse 8 "Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening." Masters/bosses, cease from threatening employees. The sermon is also the same that we are not supposed to omit a part of God's word. When God gives us the words to preach, we can't leave out any part of it. There are many instances when pastors skip when they come to sensitive topics. Preach all 66 books in the Bible. On the other hand, we are not supposed to add anything onto the word of God. If God didn't say it or the Bible, a pastor shouldn't say according to his intention. In short, we should be able to preach anything Bible talks about or God gives to us. However, we are not supposed to speak what is not spoken to us.

Our beloved pastors' wives, may God bless you to obey your husband. Now, beloved pastors, if you truly want to serve the obedient wife, truly love your wife. Please love your wife. Many pastors separate family from ministry, but this is not true. Family and ministry are not separated. Beautiful family will result in beautiful ministry. If you have beautiful ministry, it means you already have beautiful family. This is clear.

May God bless you to obey your parents! I know pastors do not have much time to serve the parents. However, let's make a decision to do the minimum. We may not do great things for the parents but let's do at least the minimum.

Furthermore, let's not provoke our children. Teach them the word of God and help them to live their lives in terms of all the relationships in the society that they are living their life before God. Business and relationship with coworkers at work are all important. Things like tax evasion are unthinkable. We don't even think about business that is not pleasing to God. Let's live our life as if we are before God.