

The Christian Family in Biblical Perspective
Seven Essentials in the Christian Family – Essential #1
“Christ As Foundation/Fountain/Focus – Triumph Of Truth Over Technique & Tools”
Ephesians 5:22-33, 6:1-4
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April 26, 2009 – Morning Sermon

While you are turning to our text for this study will you allow me to make one personal note? Many of you know I had surgery this last week and some extensive tests. The Lord has been very gracious in all of them and in the midst of them we are reminded again of God’s marvelous kindness to us in and through you with your personal remembrances, expressions, kindness and most of all your intercessory prayer which is I’m sure what the Lord used in allowing me to be here this morning. Cindy and I and our family thank you so much for that. On the note sheet I have listed the titles and dates of the sermons on the Christian family that I will be preaching on. I look forward to being with you this evening at our church picnic and then I am also looking forward to the choir’s spring concert coming next Sunday night. Please invite your friends to that as well. Now look with me in Ephesians and how I thank God for His Word that is true.

Ephesians 5:21-6:4 says, **22** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The grass withers and the flower fades. The Word of God abides forever, by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

It’s not often that you have the opportunity to handle a text that was actually life changing for you directly and even vocationally as this text was. Early on in my ministry and life as I was being called to ministry, I was looking to God’s guidance as to where I would land. Theologically I was being drawn to the Presbyterian Church in America and this verse sealed the deal for me. Which verse was that? It was Ephesians 5:21 which says, “*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” As I was studying through the book of Ephesians and I got to that which said the hallmark of the Christian life is the ability to submit to one another and the environment of that submission is out of

reverence to Christ that was the deal that sealed my coming to the Presbyterian Church in America. I didn't believe in independent Christians so I didn't believe in independent churches and I finally found the system of church government, which is not perfect by any means, that I not only saw was faithful to God's Word but it also was a system in which every church and every person was accountable to somebody and called to submission. I said, "Man, I can land there."

Another reason I am coming to this text today is because of what my mother did for me so I could go to school. "Harry, what do you mean?" Before you could go to school there were two things that you had to learn to do. One was you had to know how to tie your shoes. My mom would say, "Son you can't go to school until you learn to tie your shoes." The second thing was you had to be able to button your shirt. Now we have solved the shoe thing because most people use Velcro now but you still have to be able to button your shirt. Do you remember those early days when you had to button your shirt and you ran out of buttons but you had a hole left? Do you remember those days that you ran out of holes but you had a button left and you would try to fix it but you couldn't match it up? Then your mother would come to the rescue. She would say, "Son, each button had its own hole and they match up. You can't get the buttons to line up until you get the first button right. So it's very important for you to get the first button right." That is where we are going in this study, to get the first button right for Christian family and therefore Christian marriage. If we don't get this one right, the other six essentials you can dismiss. They will only be temporarily helpful. We are going to talk about husbands, wives, parenting and all those essentials that come in Ephesians 5 but if we don't get the first button right the rest of them are vain, useless, only temporarily helpful.

This is the first button which is submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of the Lord. Let me tell you why this is so important. How is it that the Bible tells me to make my marriage and therefore my family or my family and therefore my marriage a priority of focus and yet it warns me not to let it become idolatrous. What is it that will allow me to give proper attention, affection and intention to my family and my marriage yet not let me take God's good and necessary gift and put it in place of Him? I am not to put my marriage, my spouse or my children as my savior. So how can I do that and yet recognize that marriage and family is something God has given me and I can better serve Him with it, yet realize I don't need that because I only need Christ who is sufficient? How is it that I can walk what seemingly is contradictory? How can I give focus without falling into idolatry? How can I embrace what is good and necessary without letting it rival Christ or diminish my trust in the sufficiency of Christ?

Let me go further. What am I going to do in the day that I fail my spouse and I am not the husband I ought to be? What am I going to do the day my spouse fails me? What's going to happen the day that as a parent I didn't raise my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I started letting the world guide my parenting instead of the Lord? What will I do in that day? What will I do in the day that my children with the sin nature that they are born with do not honor me as their parent? What's the key to my response in that day and what about the day I falter? What about the day I sin? What about the day my spouse sins? This is the key to that day as well. How do I possibly live with this seeming contradiction in the Bible?

It's not good for man to be alone and then God has given me a wife and God has given me children. God has given me a family and with that family I can better enjoy and

glorify Him yet Christ is enough and this family is momentary. It is not the world to come and I am supposed to make it an intentional priority yet in my devotion to Christ Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:29b, “*Let those who have wives live as though they had none.*” The Bible is telling me to be intentional and prioritize and to make my wife the number one priority in my human relationships yet over here it tells me I am to live as if I have no wife. How do you put those two together? Jesus says. “If you come after Me you have to leave father, mother, wife, and brothers and sisters.” How do you do that and yet the Jesus who I come after says, “I want you to love your wife as I love the church”? How do I put those two things together?

The key is the first button. We are not going to psychology today. We are not going to take a trip to therapy marriage or techniques in marriage. We are not going to go there. We are going to go to the Scriptures. We are going to go to God's word to guide us in the family. By the way, there are a number of passages we will cover. There are passages in I Peter 2 and 3, Colossians 3, and there is this definitive passage which we are walking through in the next eight weeks here in Ephesians 5 and 6. We are not just going to go to this text in Ephesians 5 and 6. I am asking you not to start where everybody starts in their study of the Christian family in this text. I am asking you to start at an incomplete sentence in Ephesians 5:21 which says, “*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*”

I want you to draw our first essential from this verse in Ephesians 5:21. Now remember what we said. We said the family is a God-given designed institution. The family is one man, one woman for one life with parental responsibilities for their children. This is not Christian theology. It is a creation law. When God made us that is the way He made us to function and any redefining of family away from covenantal, monogamous, heterosexual responsible parenting will soon destroy the society that misses God's definition. We have gone beyond the family as defined in creation to what is the Christian family? The Christian family is empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit. The Christian family is directed by God's Word and believes its precepts. God's Word tells us what a Christian husband does, what a Christian wife does, what Christian parents do, what covenant children are supposed to do toward their parents. Christian families are guided by the precepts of God's Word. We are encouraged by the promises of God's Word such as “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your household” and the promises for you and your children. So we are encouraged by His promises and we are directed by His precepts. The Word of God guides us in the Holy Spirit empowers us.

Then we focus upon Christ and essential number one. Before you cover anything else in Ephesians 5:22 through 6:4 is the phrase that kicked Paul into chapter 5 verse 22 through 6:4 which is Ephesians 5:21; “*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” This verse is an incomplete sentence so we will have to look at the rest of the sentence and we will do that in just a moment. This is a hinge verse. It is out of this verse that Ephesians 5:22 through 6:4 flows. When Paul says submitting to one another he will now explain how you do that. So where is the first place that my submission of reverence for Christ ought to be seen? It should be seen in the husband's loving leadership and sacrificial love to his wife and the wife's respect and submission to her husband, in the parent's submission to their children and in that they raise them in and for the Lord, and it

should be seen in the children's submission to their parents in which they honor them, respect them and obey them in the Lord.

So here is this description of submitting to one another in the marriage which overflows to the family and overflows into parenting and then by the way he will take it beyond that to employer and employee, master and slaves, citizens to their governor and he'll take it out even further but he starts right here in the immediate, priority relationships of life. But they all flow from our reverence for Christ in our submission to one another. If that is not right the rest will falter. If that is not in place the rest may be temporarily engaged for a period of time but they won't last. The daily power, the constant right motivation, the constant model, the consistent ministry that takes place in all of it, all happens out of the context of this very first essential. Now what is the essential?

The first essential is an authentic, gospel driven relationship with Christ that is marked by reverence is the foundation, the fountain and the focus for all relationships of believers and they will be embraced with the purpose of submitting to one another. In other words, as Christ saves us and He becomes our focus, as the gospel drives us and empowers us, Christ centered gospel driven will be seen by a life that has this overall motif – “I want to honor the Lord and in my life I want to reverence Christ, whether I eat or drink or whatsoever I do” will be reverence to Christ and in relationships it will be marked by submission. Christ is the fountain, the focus and the foundation of all of my life and in this reverence for Christ, my desire is to submit in human relationships. The first place that will be seen is my family and in order to be seen in my family, it will be seen in my marriage.

One may be thinking, “Harry, how do you know this verse is so important?” Let me try to explain to you about this hinge verse. Ephesians 5:22 says, “*Wives submit...*” the word submit here in this verse is not in the original manuscript. The verb is not there. The verb is supplied and verse 22 from verse 21. Ephesians 5:21 says, “*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” Then Ephesians 5:22 “*Wives to your husbands...*” they put the word submit in because that is the context. This is a hinge verse which sets up everything it covers. By the way it is built on everything that went before it as well. In Ephesians chapters 1 through 3 it tells you 27 times to be “in Christ.” Then Ephesians chapters 4 through 6 starts off, “Therefore let us walk in a manner worthy of our calling in Christ.” Ephesians chapters 1 through 3 cover the blessings in Christ and you're in Christ and Christ is in you. Ephesians chapters 4 through 6 tell you what it means to live for Christ. Put off the old man and put on the new. Walk in a manner worthy of your calling. Honor Christ. Here is the fruit of the Spirit. Here are the deeds of the light. Get rid of the deeds of the darkness. Then he comes to this almost resounding statement in Ephesians 5 that is like a symphonic musical moment of glory.

Ephesians 5:15-18 says, **15** *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.* Here he is saying here is this new life for Christ and the first thing I want you to do is to walk thoughtfully, carefully and look where you're walking. Satan has got mine fields all over the place so be careful how you walk. You only have so much time so redeem the time. Don't waste the days. Let your rest be purposeful. Let your recreation be purposeful. Let your roles in your

relationships be purposeful. Be careful how you spend your time according to God's Word. How do I want to spend my time? You want to spend it according to the will of God, and God's revealed Word. Know what the will of God is. Know the Word of God but in order to do God's Word, who do I need? I need God. I need the Holy Spirit so don't get drunk with wine because that will dissipate your life. That is debauchery. Be filled with the Spirit for He will bring order and direction to your life.

Now if I am filled with the Spirit how do I know it? Some would say that you will speak in tongues. Can the Holy Spirit give you a language that you do not know in order to accomplish a purpose? Absolutely He can, but while certainly there are extraordinary gifts of the Spirit that doesn't seem to be the evidence. What is the unassailable, always workable evidence of the Holy Spirit being in your life? He says there are four things. If Christ is leading your life by the Holy Spirit and not the addictive things of this world then he says here are the four things that you are going to be doing. One of them we just finished doing so let me ask you with the evidence of the Holy Spirit, 15 minutes ago we were standing singing two marvelous, biblical songs that exalt Christ and if the Holy Spirit was within you, do you know what you were doing? You weren't watching, you were singing according to this passage.

Ephesians 5:18-21 says, **18** *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.* Your mouth was open because the Holy Spirit was in your heart and you couldn't wait to speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. That happened if the Holy Spirit was there and working.

The second way that you know the Holy Spirit is evident according to this passage is through *singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart*. While you were speaking aloud to one another from your heart you were giving up praise to God. It wasn't either or it was both and because what is in the heart is what comes out of the mouth. So if the Holy Spirit is there, you were speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and then from your heart you say bless the Lord O my soul, all that is within me bless His holy name.

The third way you see the evidence of the Holy Spirit is found in Ephesians 5:20; *giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...* What will you be doing if the Holy Spirit is in your life? You will have a life of gratefulness – thanksgiving in everything and trusting God's good care. It is not that all things are good but that all things work together for good.

So what is the fourth thing that will happen when the Spirit is evident? The fourth thing that will happen is in verse 21 of Ephesians 5 and that is submitting to one another in the fear or in the reverence of the Lord. Do you want to see where the Holy Spirit is working? You will see it when God's people are submitting to one another out of reverence to Christ and not out of amazement of how wonderful the person is that I'm submitting to but out of reverence for Christ who has loved me and because He has loved me I love Him. Because I love Him I trust Him. Because I trust Him I want to honor Him in all that I do and in all my relationships. The first place it will be seen is in my

marriage, in my family, in my parenting, in my job and in my citizenship. It will just flow right on through, this life of reverence to Christ.

It is what solves the dilemmas for me. It is Christ that I am living for therefore if God calls me away from this life for martyrdom I'm ready to live as if I don't have a wife. Yet as long as I live for Christ I know He has entrusted that wife to me, that husband to me, those children to me. Yet if it's for Christ and Christ has called me away from it than I'm willing and I have my mandate in submitting to one another because I am filled with the Spirit. I have my motive and that is out of reverence for Christ.

Here are just a couple of thoughts. The first thought is to take a moment and if this button is number one then let's understand the fear of the Lord or reverence for Christ. The context is God's will and God's Spirit works in my life so that I trust Christ. I love Him who first loved me. I love Him with my heart and therefore the result He says is out of reverence for Christ in all of life's relationships you will submit to one another. So let's back up. Is there a life of submission? Why? It is because I trust Jesus and I love Jesus. Why do I love Jesus? It is because He first loved me. Why am I free to put my trust in Him? It is because the Holy Spirit has allowed me to kill me and that's why I'm not going after marriage techniques to make my wife manageable for me. That's why I am not going into therapy marriage in order to make sure my wife is meeting my needs. Christ is my life. Now Lord, what do you want to do with me as I submit to my wife, to love her as a servant sacrificially, to lead her as a servant?

One may be thinking, "Harry are you there?" I am somewhere between zero and 100% effective in this. My wife can give you the grade. Please make sure I am not in the area when you ask her. But this is the button that must be fastened first. It is of Christ, from Christ, to Christ. "Harry are you saying there are not good consequences when you live a godly life in your home?" You don't do what you do because your husband may act more like he is saved then he does right now. You don't do this because of consequences. You are doing it out of reverence for Christ. If you don't have the reverence for Christ and fear of the Lord then the fears of this world will eventually stop you from walking in obedience to God's Word. When there is the fear of the Lord because of the love of Christ, perfect love casts out all fears - fear of death, fear of the unknown, fear of a spouse, fear of marriage, fear of everything. They can be cast away because the Holy Spirit has delivered us from self-reliance, self absorption, self-centeredness, selfishness. In fact He has delivered us from self itself. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. Our default in everything in life even in saved people, is to make it about me and the Holy Spirit frees you to die to yourself and make it about Christ. Out of reverence for Christ I am now delivered to live in submission to one another specifically to my spouse, my children, my parents and others. God has given me the freedom to do that.

Secondly, what are the dynamics of this Christian submission? I have tried to choose his words carefully. I hope to startle you. Christian submission is totalitarian without totalitarianism. "Harry, what do you mean totalitarian?" It is in *every* relationship. My submission to Christ is shown in my submission to the policeman, to the governor, to those in authority over me. I am submissive in my parenting because I am submissive and raising my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They are not there for me. I am there for Lord to bring them to the Lord. I am called to be free to do that but by the way I am not called to totalitarianism. My call is not to make my wife submissive to me. My call is not to make my husband submissive to me. I am not called

to put others into subjection. I can call them to Jesus and He will lead them to submission but I am called to put myself in submission because of my reverence for Christ.

Are there any limits to this? Absolutely there is. We submit ourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ therefore if a human to whom I'm responding is calling and commanding me to do something that would irreverence Christ, disobey His law, then I must obey God rather than man. My submission is out of reverence to Christ therefore if anyone is calling me to transgress Christ's honor with my life, to violate His Word, then I cannot submit to you because the One to whom I'm submitted that allows me to submit to you, is telling me to irreverence Him. My submission must always reverence Christ in the way it is done and why it is done. So if you are calling me to be irreverent to Christ with my life I can't do that.

Will there be times when a husband or a wife have done so much that we have to seek the protection of Biblical divorce? Yes and I will address that but what is it that can guide me when I actually realize my wife is a sinner or my husband is a sinner? What is it that keeps me on track in that day and how can I respond when they come back and ask me to forgive them? I can forgive them out of reverence to Christ because He has forgiven me. I can go and ask for forgiveness to them because Christ has forgiven me when I have done that which is dishonoring to them.

There are so many ways that I can work that submission out. As a husband I can work it out through sacrificial love and servant leadership. As a wife I can work it out with respect and completing my husband. As parents I can work out my submission out of reverence to Christ in my children by raising them and leading them to the Lord and for the Lord. As a child I can work out my submission to Christ out of my honor and respect and obedience to my parents but it is all out of the reverence to Christ. That certainly brings a limit because if they are calling me to disobey Christ directly then I must reverence Christ. But out of reverence to Christ the way I do in a broken world will show the testimony of Christ.

This third thought allows us to move beyond formulas and techniques to manage trials and brings us to truth that trumps techniques and trials. Instead of behavior modification in the marriage for others manipulation, now I can come to God for a heart transformation. Lord, it's not simply that I want to learn a technique about Christian marriage that can manipulate the behaviors of others, as I do behavioral modification, but it is Lord, I have come to you in Christ for a heart transformation. When that heart transformation is given then I can give forgiveness when my spouse fails me or my children fail me. I can ask for forgiveness. That heart transformation gives me the perspective upon life where I can walk in a manner worthy of my calling where I want to reverence Christ with my life.

In order to button this first button I would like to give you three takeaways. Take away number one is to leave here today embracing the sacredness of a saved life. The phrase "submitting to one another in the fear of Christ" is the only time it's used in the Bible. Now the fear of Christ or reverence for Christ would you agree with me that it is pretty obvious that that is comparable to the fear of the Lord? Right? The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Those who have the fear of the Lord are filled with the joy of the Lord, right? But while it is obviously related to the concept that runs throughout the Bible that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and it sets you free from all other fears because it's one of reverence to Him who has saved you, it is also clear that

He has carefully chosen the second person of the Trinity, your Lord, your Savior, His Son, has carefully chosen His name as the governing statement of everything that we do in our life. In other words my life is sacred. I am filled with the Holy Spirit. My life bears the name of Christ. My life is sacred ground. My life is to be a living sacrifice for Christ and the first place that ought to be seen is in my marriage, then in my family.

Dare I say to my brothers and sisters whom I love dearly and learn so much from and to the singles here, how crucial this is to you? Please go through these other essentials with me and let's learn what that Christian marriage that in God's providence may be out there but it's here that your profile has been established. Who are you looking for? If you want someone who will submit to you, to carry out God's prescription to you, then you are looking for that man or woman who reverences Christ and if they don't they won't reverence your marriage. You need to look for that person who reverences Christ. I don't know how many zeros they have in their bank account. I don't know how many titles or degrees they have. You can certainly address all that. But you are also looking for that person who not only reverences Christ but will make their joy in Christ to help you reverence Christ with your life. That is who you are praying for and looking for. By the way that is also who you want to be. It's not so much, is Mr. right there but am I Mr. right? Do I reverence Christ and do I long for the day for that godly man or woman whom You have called me to does my husband or wife that I will be Your instrument, not to manipulate them but to spur them on to the reverence of Christ?

The second take away is not only the sacredness of life but the sacredness of your marriage. Your life is holy ground and your marriage and family is holy ground. God deliver us from the quagmire of using the Bible to manipulate people in my marriage and family and free me to rejoice in Christ in my marriage and to live with the reverence of Christ over my marriage. Please give me that. Can't you see it in the Bible? How does a man love his wife? He loves his wife like Christ loves the church. How does a man lead his wife? He leads his wife like Christ leads the church. How does a wife submit to her husband? She submits to her husband as to the Lord. Can't we see the sacredness of marriage here? In fact he says listen I didn't tell you about marriage, I'm really speaking about Christ and His Church but nevertheless this is the way we live in our marriage. This is sacred ground that we are talking about in our family and in our marriage. These children are gifts from the Lord that we now have stewardship over. This is sacred ground and I want to live it out of rejoicing in the sufficiency of Christ and reverencing the sovereignty of Christ. I want to rejoice in His sufficiency and reverence it.

My marriage should be committing worship. I want to commit worship. Lord I want to pursue my wife in a way that people will see how You have pursued Your bride. I want to honor my husband in a way that people will see how much I love you Jesus. By the way, when my sinner husband or sinner wife falters and confesses I want to be as quick to forgive as Jesus You are, because of the atoning work on the cross for me. We want to commit sacredness in our marriage. We want to commit worship in marriage.

I want to say another word but this is off the subject in a real sense. This is why I long for us to maintain the singular dynamic of what worship ought to be. We came here today to worship the Lord and as we came here today as God's people to worship the Lord, His bride, there are two things that are almost unbelievably difficult to put together and they are rejoicing and reverence. We go after reverence and we become morbid or we go after rejoicing and we become trivial. Somehow by God's Spirit worship when God

anoints it is both reverent and rejoicing. There is a reverence of Christ and a rejoicing in the sufficiency of Christ. Both are joined together.

Here is my best illustration of this. In the spring time and summer I do a lot of weddings. I love to see all the decorum that goes with the bride and people involved and everybody is smiling. Everybody is happy except one guy and he is standing up front sweating bullets and then they close the door. Everything gets quiet. Then the organ plays or the trumpet plays and they open the door and out she comes. As the officiating minister I always look at the groom at this moment and there is a transformation that takes place. The guy who was sweating bullets with eyes wide open all of a sudden is smiling from ear to ear and I can't get that woman down here fast enough for him to say, "I do, I do, I do!" Have you ever seen the joy in a wedding? Have you ever noticed the reverence that is there? They don't come skipping down the aisle. There is some decorum. What are we going to play? Oh I don't know perhaps "Put your hand in the hand of the man..." it doesn't matter just play what you want to. No, there is this joy and rejoicing and reverence. There is no triviality in the name of rejoicing and there is no morbidity in the name of reverence.

That's what happened when the chime struck this morning. The door opened in heaven. We are the bride and we came before the Groom at 10:55 this morning. Joy and reverence and a smile comes to His face - my bride in her glory has come. That is why if marriage is to be worship it will set the pace for life in our marriage. Rejoicing and reverence married together is how it ought to be.

The third and final take away is the sacredness of the gospel. We have the sacredness of life, marriage and now the sacredness of the gospel itself. When I was a kid my dad and mom would send me off to summer camp. My mom would say to me before camp started, "Son everything you need for the next week is in this locker." Then she had a string that she would put around my neck and attached to that string was the key to that locker. She said, "If you lose this key you can't have this week. Everything you need is in that locker and you can't get in that locker without this key." I would say "yes mother." This is the key. It is your gospel relationship with Jesus Christ, joyful and reverent, that leads you into all relationships and into your marriage and into your family. It is that you might know your Savior with joy unspeakable and reverence unfathomable.

I want to say this the way one of my brother's said it. He says it better but I'm going to paraphrase it. The gospel has not been given to get you to heaven. The gospel has been given to get you to God who will take you to heaven. Before He takes you to heaven He will send you back into life with Him and for Him in the reverence of Christ. By the way, for you to get to God this is the gospel. God Himself came for you therefore in Jesus who came for me I want my life to reverence with joy and let it first be seen in the holy ground of my family. Praise His Name! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Would You speak to our hearts? You may be a believer and you say "I don't want technique I want heart transformation in my marriage. I want this first essential. I want the reverence of Christ showing in my submission to my family, my marriage and to You to be seen. Do Your work in Me." May be you are reading this and you have never made that commitment to Christ. You need to button that first button with us and say, "Lord I want

to come to Jesus. He is my sufficiency. I want to know the joy and reverence of the Lord in my life. I want to be taken from the common to the sacred with my life, my marriage and my family. I want Christ to be exalted in me, through me as a man, as a woman, as a husband, as a wife, as a father, as a mother. I commit my life to Jesus alone as my Savior.” I have some things to give to you if you would contact us here at Briarwood that would help you in this new life. Thank you for the privilege to walk with you on this journey of sacred worship with all of life. Lord do Your work here I pray, O beautiful Savior. Be glorified in us and in our families. Be glorified in all our relationships. May our deep reverent love and joy in Christ be seen. Amen.