

This morning we looked at the family as being anti-cultural. Anti-cultural to the point that the family unit is viewed as a threat and a drag to society. We end up with all these different organizations and factions pointing their guns at the Biblical family. We know they aren't pointing actual guns yet, but they have declared war on the family.

This war is presently over the mind and heart. In all actuality, Biblically, this war is a spiritual war. Presently we are in the battle of influence.

Influence- In a general sense, influence denotes power whose operation is invisible and known only by its effects, or a power whose cause and operation are unseen. W. D. 1828 edition.

Influence is at times subtle, we see this with the serpent and Eve, it can be loud, we see this with the religious crowds at the trial of Jesus Christ, it can be popular in the eyes of men, we see this at Mars hill in Acts 17 when Paul was at Athens, and there are good and evil influences.

Worldly, evil influences always influence us to go against the Word of God. These influences are appealing to our fleshly nature that we all battle with every day. These influences affect our pride: from our pride flows forth selfishness and unforgiveness. This is promoted in our world today. It is on bill boards, it is advertised through radio, television, internet, etc... and we see these things and they are subtle influences. These influences move us and shape our thoughts. Please understand that in warfare you have an enemy. The enemy understands that the sooner they can influence, the easier it is to control and to consume. They do this very subtle.

I'm not very old compared to some of you, but I can remember some ways in which this happened. I can remember when homosexuality was not accepted and was looked down on as sin. I can also remember how this was changed. The influence is called sitcom. It would only take up about a half hour of your time. These sitcoms were usually funny. In these shows they would insert a homosexual, and we would laugh at the show. This was influencing us and we didn't know it. Instead of saying that it is sin people would say that's their life leave them alone they aren't affecting us. Would you say the same thing about a drunk driver? We didn't see these influences back then but we are seeing the effects from it today.

Of course homosexuality isn't the only influence. In most of these sitcoms the men were betrayed as weak, stupid, silly, and not needed. The women were portrayed as loud, overbearing, critical, and self-sufficient. We see the effects of this influence today. These influences are not limited to those outside the church. These influences are also in the church today. We will talk more on parental influence later this week.

Men watch movies and want to be Rambo's or terminators or Chuck Norris, etc...

Kids watch movies and play games that show kids being rebellious towards parents and any type of authority.

You may ask how does this line up with Ephesians 5:18, we are getting there.

Verse 18- this verse has nothing to do with drinking or being drunk, but has everything to do with being controlled by the Spirit. To be filled is to be controlled by the Spirit. The terminology mixed with the way we talk today makes it appear that we are getting more of the Holy Spirit, when it is actually speaking of the Holy Spirit getting more of us. At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us, not part of Him, all of Him. We don't get more of the Holy Spirit He gets more of us. As He gets more of us we conform to be more like Christ. There are evidences that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Look at verses 19 and 20.

verses 19, 20- Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

From the abundance of our hearts our mouths will speak. Being filled with the Spirit doesn't mean that we are in some state of mindless babblings or a tremendous rush of feelings, but that we are controlled more and more by Him and the result is that we will praise Him in everything. You can't make a Spirit filled person mad. Some of you may say there are times that you want to be just like Jesus, you want to make a whip and chase your spouse out. Ha. I am sorry to inform you that is taking the Bible out of context.

Someone filled, controlled by the Spirit will not be complaining. You will love and love covers a multitude of sins. You won't be exposing the faults of your spouse to others; you won't be running them down, and they won't be the punch line of your jokes. Matter of fact, you will be doing just the opposite. You will be protecting them, proclaiming their good qualities, you will let them know how much you love and appreciate them. You will give thanks to God for them. You will do the same thing with your kids and kids will do the same thing with their parents. One of the results of a Spirit filled family is there will be love and respect one for another. The needs of others will be put before your own. You will look to see how you can serve others. There will not be a sense of competition amongst each other trying to outdo each other. You won't be trying to make someone else look bad so you look good.

Verse 21- Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

This word submit is a bad word in our culture today. When you and I hear it there is almost an instant response of rebellion or overbearing. Where does this come from? You may say it comes from all those influences we talked about earlier, but it doesn't. An influence comes from the outside, our problem is what's on the inside, our sin nature. These influences manifest and help ignite the rebellion that we are born with. This rebellion, this sin nature, is a product of the fall. Genesis 3:14-21.

Verse 16- desire- a stretching out after; a longing;- desire. Describes the strong feelings of desire that one person had for another, but it was not always a healthy desire.

This same word is used in Genesis 4:7.

The desire of sin is to rule over us: now go back to Genesis 3:16; the desire of a woman is to rule over the man. This is part of the fallen nature. Ladies think about this for a second. Is it natural for you to submit or rebel to your husband? Is it natural for you to want to rule over the man?

How often when your husband tells you to do something that you want to scream, I don't have to listen to you; you aren't my boss.

Now look at the last part of verse 16- and he shall rule over thee.

We have the woman wanting to dominate and rule over the man and the man wanting to dominate and rule over the woman: we have Cleopatra the queen of denial and Rambo, these two get married. How do you view this relationship? This isn't good, it is conflict from the get go. Then you bring kids into this conflict. This is your nature and then we have the influence of this world system. Add all this up and it equals disaster.

Instead of being a family unit you end up with selfish little units under one roof, a house divided, and it will not stand.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

We are born into total depravity, we are born in rebellion to God and His Word; then by His grace He saves us, but after we are saved we still struggle with these things. We see ourselves in light of Romans 7 in doing what we don't want to do and not doing what we want to do.

Romans 7:23-25

It is our responsibility to crucify our own flesh.

I John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve;

Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
submitting- to submit oneself, to be subject, to be obedient.

To allow oneself to be in subjection, to be obedient. To grant, give, or yield. I think we can all agree this is hard, even impossible to do. Apart from being controlled by the Holy Spirit this is impossible to do. This is part of the spiritual warfare that we are in.

II Corinthians 10:3, 4- For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Let's go back to Ephesians 5:18- And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Notice the Bible says nothing of us trying to live in the power of the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit. Our flesh is influenced by all these things around us, the Holy Spirit is not. The Holy Spirit will lead, guide, and direct us according to the Word of God and will always point us to Christ and not ourselves. Our dependency is upon Him.

A Spirit filled family is not fighting, bickering, arguing, amongst each other. A Spirit filled family is not in competition with each other trying to outdo each other and are not glad when someone fails. A Spirit filled family does not pattern themselves after this present evil world. A Spirit filled family shows the fruits of being Spirit filled: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23.

A Spirit filled family does: verses 19-21.

A Spirit filled family is not selfish, and forgives.

Unforgiveness hurts. Unforgiveness binds the one who is holding unforgiveness. Bound to the past and therefore cannot go forward in the present. No joy. How many families are in utter turmoil because of unforgiveness?

We spoke earlier of the influence of this world. This world says we don't have to forgive and that we shouldn't forgive and that we should get even. People write bestselling books on unforgiveness.

If a husband or a wife harbors unforgiveness towards their spouse, they will have a miserable relationship. They will get to a point where something clicks and they just don't care anymore. Some stay until the kids are grown and then they go; others pack up and go before then.

Unforgiveness destroys families.

You and I are never more like our heavenly Father than when we forgive someone, especially when they don't deserve it.

Unforgiveness results in broken fellowship. This is within the home between husband and wife, parents and children, between children, etc... this also applies outside the home.

Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 6:12-15

What keeps a relationship together is forgiveness. When we are Spirit filled we will forgive; the husband will love and cherish his wife; the wife will lovingly submit; and the children will lovingly obey. We are to be fully surrendered to the Lord and then to each other.

This is a choice that we have to make.

How is your family? None of us are perfect and we are to be becoming more like Christ every day. Don't make others do right, you do right. Be the Spirit filled person.

In the family unit there are different roles and functions, Lord willing we will look at those this week starting with the husband tomorrow night.

We are thankful to be caught by His grace. To God be the glory.