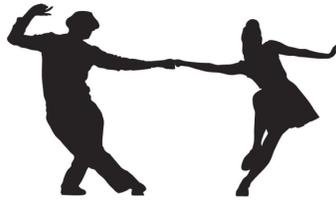


“Rockin' the Roles”

Allan Pole on Sun. a.m. September 2/18



Theme: There is strength in following God's blueprints for key human relationships.

Text: Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Here's a thought: An African proverb teaches, "The chief is servant of all."

At a reception honouring musician Sir Robert Mayer on his 100th birthday in 1979, elderly British socialite Lady Diana Cooper got chatting with a friendly woman who seemed to know her well. Lady Diana's failing eyesight prevented her from recognizing her fellow guest, until she peered more closely at the magnificent diamonds and realized she was talking to Queen Elizabeth! Overcome with embarrassment, Lady Diana curtsied and stammered, "Ma'am, oh, ma'am, I'm sorry ma'am. I didn't recognize you without your crown!"

"It was so much Sir Robert's evening," the queen replied, "that I decided to leave it behind." This is the kind of quiet humility Jesus would have applauded. The queen could easily have grabbed the spotlight, but she willingly gave the place of honour to another.

Homes and hearts are breaking all around us. Children rebel and parents are frustrated. Labour disputes are common and often hamper our economy. What is the answer? The Bible provides God's blueprints for key human relationships. If you think faith is reserved for church meetings on Sunday mornings it is time to think again.

The Apostle Paul instructs in Ephesians 5:21-6:9:

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or

wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honour your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. 5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. 9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him. NIV

Despite our society's shifting views, the Bible establishes ground rules for:
Marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33)



Mutual submission is the foundation for healthy human relationships. Submission to another does *not* imply unquestioning obedience when the directives given to you clearly violate God's will. Submission is lived out when you do all you can to serve others without making them the master of your life.

God established in the beginning that marriage is to be one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant. God and his design for marriage do not change.

Wives. The Apostle Paul mentions only two instructions. The first is to submit to your husband. To submit does not imply inferiority, neither does it mean that all women are to be in subjection to all men in every situation.

Wife, your second responsibility is to respect your husband. Yes, respect is enhanced by the husband's godly manner of living. From the beginning, however, there must be an underlying respect for your husband that he can build upon. Few things will boost a man's confidence or win his affection more than his wife's undying respect.

Woman, if you are seeing someone and not yet married, ask yourself, "Is he following Jesus Christ? Does he have the qualities that I admire in a man?" If not, get out of this relationship or be prepared for a lot of heartache!

Woman, if you married a man who lacks the qualities you admire, ask the Lord to forgive you for disobeying His Word in choosing a mate. You then need to sort out what ways your husband is asking you to compromise your dedication to Christ. In all other areas you are called by the Lord to submit to your husband.

Woman, do you think you have it rough? The man's role in marriage is tougher.

Husbands. Men, you will notice that our instructions take more space in today's text than the women's, but can be summarized in two words: *love her!* Your fulfillment of this role can make or break the warmth in your marriage. As you love your wife, you will make it much easier for her to submit to you and for your confidence to blossom. Husband, do yourself a favour - love your wife!

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 describes what love looks like:

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. NIV

Have you heard about the manicurist who married a pedicurist? They waited on each other hand and foot.

Paul's description of the husband and wife's dedication in Ephesians chapter 5 is a beautiful picture of fulfillment that comes through the giving of oneself to another. The Lord's ways point to abundant, fulfilled living!

The Bible establishes the ground rules for our roles in:
Marriage

Family (Ephesians 6:1-4)



Children, your role is defined by two assignments. The first is to obey your parents. There are several reasons for this: it is right, it is in your best interest and it promotes a long life. Here is the principle: when children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives.

No child is above Luke 2:51, “Then he [Jesus – God Himself] went down to Nazareth with them [Joseph and Mary] and was obedient to them.” NIV

Children, your role secondly is to honour your parents. It bugs me when I see children disrespecting their parents in real life or on the screen. This is neither cute nor funny, but wrong!

Fathers, you are told to do two things in today's text. First, do not be harsh or do not have unrealistic expectations of your children.

2,000 years ago, the father had supreme authority. When a baby was born into a Roman family, she or he was brought out and laid before the father. If he picked her up, it meant he was accepting her into the home. But if he did not pick her up, the child was rejected. She could be sold, given away or left to die by exposure to the cold.

We fathers are called to shape the will of our child without breaking the spirit. This is accomplished by establishing reasonable boundaries and enforcing them with love. Be sure to avoid any implication that the child is unwanted, unnecessary, foolish, ugly, dumb or a disastrous mistake.

Other ways you can exasperate is by continually failing to keep promises and treating issues that are important to your child as being *unimportant*. Juvenile delinquency is often traced to “parental delinquency!”

When I considered whether or not I wanted Brenda to be my lifelong mate I was impressed by her relationship with her father - they expressed affection and respect toward one another. Seeing this assured me that Brenda would probably have a healthy view of God and herself as we faced life's challenges together.

Your second duty, dad, is to provide training and correction. Effective training

for your child begins in your own heart and life. What habits do you keep? What are your values and priorities? Who are you when no one but your family is watching?

The Bible establishes the ground rules for our roles in:

Marriage

Family

Work (Ephesians 6:5-9)



"I've worked here for eight years," an overworked employee complained to his boss, "and I've been doing the work of three people. I want a raise."

"I can't give you a raise," the boss answered. "But if you tell me who the other two people are I'll fire them."

Although these instructions were originally given to slaves and masters, the principles in today's text would apply to any employer/employee relationship. There were probably six million slaves in the Roman Empire in that day and slavery was an accepted institution. The ministry of Christ-followers was not to overthrow the Roman government or its institutions, but to preach the Gospel and win the lost to Jesus. Paul's ministry contributed to the death of slavery and the encouragement of freedom. However, he explains further in 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 that he was careful not to confuse the social system with the spiritual order amongst God's people:

20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you - although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to. NIV

Employees. If you have a supervisor at work, you have a number of obligations to fulfill. You are called upon to obey and respect your employer. To engage in slothfulness and sloppiness when your boss is not looking shows that you do not truly understand that God is always watching! To be a Christ-like employee is to go above and beyond the call of duty. Diligence and

thoroughness ought to be your identifying marks.

Employers. Character is revealed by what a person does when given authority. Are you tempted to exploit, verbally abuse or intimidate your employees? Remember - your Creator and Saviour is peering over your shoulder, observing how you relate with those who call you the boss. It is unfortunate when an employee says, "My boss is supposed to be a Christian, but you'd never know it!"

An African proverb teaches, "The chief is servant of all." Jesus explained the way to be a leader is first to be a servant.

During the American Revolution a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. Asked why by the rider, he retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal!"

The stranger apologized, dismounted and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job done, he turned to the corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again." George Washington then got back on his horse and rode away.

Despite our society's shifting views, the Bible establishes the ground rules for our roles in:

Marriage

Family

Work

There is strength in following God's blueprints for key human relationships.

