

# **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE FAMILY**

Angel Negro

Christianity is the religion of everyday life.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: *“Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem”* (John 4.21).

God seeks worshippers who worship him in every situation and not just in a special place.

Paul said to those of Athens: *“God... does not live in temples built by hands”* (Acts 17.24).

Christianity is a life style, a behavior; it is the way we do things. It is a way of living and thinking.

When Jesus said of the temple: *“not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down”* (Matt 24.2) he was initiating a new age.

The prophet anticipated such a time, saying that the holy place would be at our place of work and in our home, when he stated:

*“On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty”* (Zech 14.20-21).

Jesus began his ministry saying: *“The kingdom of God is near”* (Mk 1.15). Jesus did not come to offer a new religion, but to establish a kingdom among us. And the kingdom of God is to be lived out twenty-four hours a day. Of those twenty-four hours, the places where we spend most of our time is at home and at work. In those two places the Lord wants to establish his kingdom.

## **The kingdom of God in the family:**

The first thing we need to know and affirm is that God is a family God; he loves the family and seeks the well-being of all families.

God said to Abraham (Gen 12.3) *“All peoples of the earth will be blessed through you”*.

When forming our families we count on God’s blessing. The best thing that can happen to us is to count on God’s blessing. We must believe and affirm that God wants the best for our homes.

The second thing that we must believe and affirm is what the prophet Jeremiah mentioned on the Lord’s behalf (Jer 31.1): *“I will be the God of all the clans [or families] of Israel, and they will be my people”*.

God is a family God and he is forming a people with complete families!

He is the God of our family, and our family is included in his purpose to form a people!

My family belongs to God!

My family enjoys God’s blessing!

My family belongs to God’s people!

## **Jesus taught us how to form a stable home:**

In Matthew 7.24-29, Jesus spoke of a man who built his house upon the rock and of another who built his house on sand. Jesus was teaching about two kinds of persons: one who builds his home on what Jesus taught and another who builds upon his own ideas and selfish plans. Jesus spoke of one who builds HIS HOUSE on the Word.

He’s not talking about building his institution, his business, his ministry or his church.

If the home, the family, is built on the solid rock of the Word, we can be sure of a stable foundation upon which to then build the church, our ministry, institutions, etc.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF A STABLE MARRIAGE

There are four elements in a stable marriage.  
Just as there are four legs on a table.

### **1) We recognize Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives**

- I must recognize him as the owner and absolute chief of my own person.  
This means that Jesus Christ is not serving me; instead, he is commanding my life.
- Surrender my will to him.  
When we pray to the Father, we say: “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt 6.10).  
We cannot do the will of both; either we do the Lord’s will, or ours.  
In order to do the Lord’s will, our will must surrender to his.
- Lay everything at the Lord’s feet.  
Time, money, future, possessions, family.

#### **- Is everything surrendered to the Lord?**

A good example of surrender is the complete life of Abraham.

God could have blessed his home in Ur of the Caldees.

But God appears in his life and makes him a proposal:

Abraham, what do you want? Do you want me to bless you, or make you a blessing?

What do you want? That I bless your plans or that you enter into my plans?

Either God blesses my program in life, or I enter into the Lord’s blessed program.

#### **Yet some say: NO! My future is already programmed.**

My studies, my marriage, my home, my children, my this, my that.

Ask me whatever you like, Lord, but **DON’T** change the scheme of my life; don’t change my program.

Paul had a program for his life and had to adjust it to God’s program.

#### **- What does it mean to surrender everything to the Lord?**

In Acts 9.3-6 Paul asks the Lord: What do you want me to do?

Which means: The disposition of his soul is to do God’s will.

Surrender means: **“To submit to his Word”**

- In all that is permanent
- In all that is circumstantial
- His Word becomes the norm for my life

Surrender means: **“To belong to another”**

When someone is taken prisoner in wartime, he says: “I surrender”, he becomes subject to another person.  
Paul considered himself a prisoner: *“a prisoner for the Lord”* Eph 4.1.

Paul called himself: “*A servant of Christ Jesus*” Rom 1.1.

What does a servant or a slave OWN?

What does a prisoner OWN?

Neither his life, his time, nor his goods.

The kingdom of God comes to a home when both husband and wife live under the government of Jesus Christ.

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## **2) The wife is subject to her husband as her head**

- Today women throughout the world have rebelled against God’s commandments.

- They do not want **limits**.
- They do not want **authority**.
- They want to **control**.
- They want to be the **head**.
- They want **equality**.
- They want **their rights to be respected**.

In Ephesians 5.24 the Word of God says: “*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything*”. Also in Col 3.18 we read: “*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord*”.

\* Subjection establishes “**limits**” for women, which is good for them... both for the woman and her family. We all need limits. God establishes limits for everyone, which is wholesome; it saves us from greater problems.

**1)** I know a woman who had a lot of **grace** in her words and deeds, but on one occasion her attitude **hardened** toward the leaders and pastors, *she lost her grace*. It was evident to everyone.

**2)** I know a woman, with a very kind disposition toward her husband. She is a very hard worker, **but** when anyone touches an area of her family, she jumps out like a “fighting cock”.

And she transmitted the same spirit to her children.

**3)** I know a woman who always has her way, she always gets what she wants. But she lost the fresh touch of God. There is sadness in her eyes.

In all three cases they went beyond the limits that God placed on them and they lost out.

- Subjection is a spiritual issue.
- It is voluntary, not imposed.
- It goes **beyond** who is right in the marriage, or who has the **last word**.

For example: if the man is an architect and the woman a pediatrician, and the children get sick, who should have the last word? Who gives medicine to the children?

**Subjection is a spiritual matter. It is inside, from the soul.  
Every woman knows in her heart  
whether she is subject to her husband or not.**

The apostle Peter mentions the key to subjection.

- A gentle and quiet spirit. *Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Pet 3.3-4).*
- On the inside: a quiet spirit, peaceful, not rebellious, subject, serene.

Subject is a completely spiritual matter; it is not a question of ability, nor of competence. Sarah called Abraham "lord" Why? Why is it written? What does it mean?

It was a sign of respect.

Respect for the husband comes from the heart.

In your inner being you can have an attitude toward your husband that is:  
proud, hard, authoritarian, disrespectful, bitter, unattentive, inconsiderate, uncourteous.

Or you can be:

serene, kind, sweet, gentle, respectful, humble, gracious, gentle.

This does not mean that you have no *identity*.

- A woman in a proper relationship expresses her reasons, makes known her viewpoint.
- If her husband is wrong, he is wrong. She is not silent, she presents her arguments.

Yet the problem is not in what she says, but in her heart.

When you have a discussion with your husband, you know what is in your heart, whether in your spirit you are subject or rebellious and unrelenting toward your covering.

**A woman achieves her full spiritual realization under the covering of her husband.**

- Paul tells us that Eve was *deceived*, not Adam (1 Cor 11.10).

In 1 Timoteo 5.5 Paul says of the widows that they are "really in need". What do they need?

Covering. A woman without covering is vulnerable to deception.

A woman should live under the covering of her husband or her parents; if these are lacking, then the church is her covering.

- Find your place, stand there, and you will not face spiritual deception from the course of this world.
  - The Bible teaches that we should be free of all contamination of the flesh and spirit (2Cor 7.1).
  - Men are more easily contaminated in the flesh.
  - Women are more easily contaminated in the spirit.

**God's order is spiritual:**

God → Christ → Man → Woman → Children

## DON'T BREAK GOD'S ORDER

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### 3) The husband loves his wife with the love of Christ

Ephesians 5.25-33

*<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." <sup>32</sup>This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

- The husband should love his wife even to the point of giving his life for her. This is not simply poetic language.

What does it mean?

- \* Without limits
- \* With sacrifice

Within marriage, love seeks the good and happiness  
of the other,  
**In the way** that the **other one** interprets  
goodness and happiness.

The husband says to his wife: When I have the money I am going to take you around the world on a cruise ship.

She says to him: Let's go walking and window shopping today hand in hand.

The husband says: You are worth a home with ten bedrooms, swimming pool and a jacuzzi.

She says to him: I would be satisfied if you fix the bathroom we have and the faucet that is leaking.

Husbands, always remember this: "In marriage, love means seeking the other's good, just as he (or she) interprets that good, and not the way you understand it".

How should a husband love his wife?

Just like Christ.

How does Christ show his love?

*"He gave himself up for her" v. 25: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

Love means **to give yourself continually** for the other's well-being.

- And if your wife gets angry?                      Love her

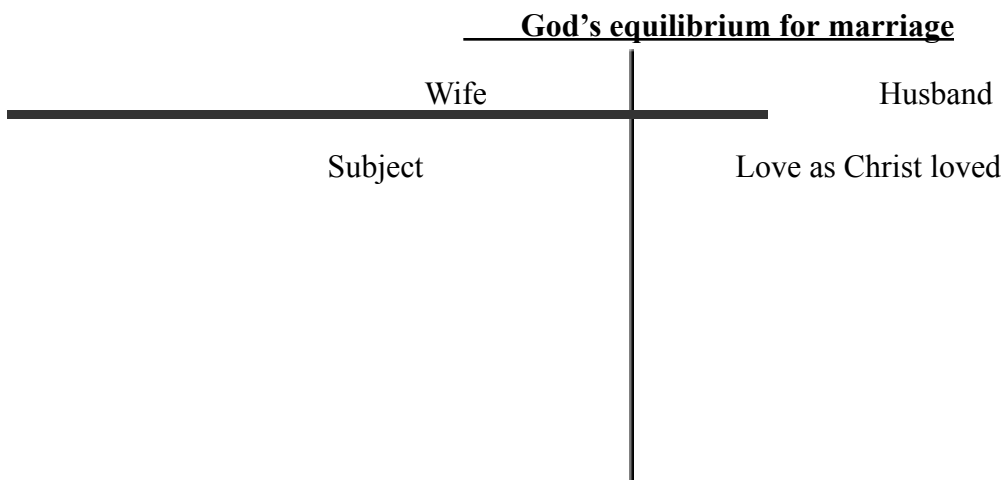
- And if she rebels? Love her
- And if she treats you badly? Love her
- And when she has one of those days? Love her
- And when she has a headache? Love her
- And when she is not subject? Love her

When you rebelled, did Jesus Christ stop loving you?

To love is to love like Christ loved.

It is the end of machismo, abuse, mistreatment.

*We are to love as Christ loved.*



*What is Christ's love like?*

- It is delicate, compassionate, comprehensive, merciful.
- Out of love he listens to us.
- Are you listening to your wife?

His love is strong, unchanging, even when we change.

Does your wife change? Love her.

**The love of Christ is NOT a response to our love.**

- He loved us first, and then we loved him.
- God tells the husband to love his wife. Why doesn't he say that to the wife? The love of a wife is in response to the love of her husband.
- Husband: Your love for your wife is not a response to her love for you.
- LOVE her, and your wife will love you.

**What woman does not want to be subject to a husband like that?**

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#### **4) Together we are subject to the Body of Christ, the church**

Why is it important to be united and subject to the church in order to have a stable marriage and family?  
Ephesians 5.30: “*for we are members of his body*”.

The church is the body of Christ on earth.

- If you are not properly related to the visible church, you can hardly be properly related to Christ who is invisible.
- V. 30 tells us that we are members of his body.

#### **Five reasons why the married couple should be committed and subject to the Body of Christ, the church**

1) A member that is organically related, **NOT** “stuck on”, *is part of the body*. This gives the member identity and a sense of belonging.

Without the body it is worthless.

When a hand is united to the body, it is beautiful, enjoyable, useful.

But without a body it is horrible. The hand derives its identity through its union with the body; it knows where it belongs.

2) A member that is united receives **nutrition**.

The life of the entire body nourishes it.

Without the body it rots away.

Psalm 133 tells us that in the body we receive blessing and eternal life.

3) In the body THERE ARE **limitations**.

- I cannot do what I like
- I am subject
- I am under control

This saves my marriage and my family.

When a married couple is not part of the church, what do they do when they face problems in their marriage?

Who helps them? To whom are they subject?

4) A member that is united to the body contributes to the building up of the other members.

- We all need to find our place in the body of Christ and be useful. This is possible if we are properly united to the Body.
- Visit each other, eat together. Strengthen the bonds of friendship and companionship.
- Serve others who are more needy or new in the faith. Participate in couples’ retreats. We should strengthen our marriages and give meaning to the family.

5) In the church there are models to emulate.

- The example of other families helps us to know how to live a Christian life in the home. We learn more from what we see than from what we hear.
- Our goal is to be like Jesus Christ.
- The church is the best frame of reference for our children.
- The more we are united to the church, the more united will be our children. In that framework they will find a marriage partner and form Christian families.

One of the areas on which the church needs to dedicate more work: ***“The family”***