

I remember climbing in the bleachers at Battery Park in Sandusky on summer nights. Above the lights the sky was black, but we were in a world of light where grown men played a child's game, softball, and my mother tried to watch four children and her husband's performance all at once. I remember struggling to climb seat to seat, and the scary joy of being perched on the top row. I remember sifting my hands through the limestone that covered the ground under the bleachers, and my mother's warnings about sticking my fingers through the wire that protected us from balls thrown and batted. I remember blankets my mother provided to wrap around us as the evening took on a chill and we waited long beyond our bedtime. A father playing, a mother still guarding her children from danger after a long day of work.

Years later when I was grown, had children of my own, my mother told of an even earlier time, before my remembering. The Schlessman family was gathered. My father left my mother behind the moment we arrived to enjoy his family, my mother struggled with her four children, aged from a few months to six years old. There were dishes to put on the table, for the food was potluck, plates and napkins and silverware to provide for each of us, and the feeding and the disciplining and the watching over of we children on that long summer afternoon. My mother was instructing me on picnics and families, and being a father who helped with his children.

One more memory comes to mind, sitting in the car with my father after my mother's death. My father loved parties, the dancing, the laughter, the drinking. But my mother did not. So they did not go. A whole part of his life he sacrificed for her. I asked him about that. "It was no sacrifice" he said, I loved your mother.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. Husbands love your wives as

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. At ballgames and picnics, and nights spent at home, a husband and a wife were seeking to live out these words.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

To be subject is to accept another as Lord, ruler, master. To be subject is to allow the will of another to rule over my own will. To be subject is to put self second and another first.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

How easy it would be if we could count on one another. The wife would seek the will of her husband who at the same time would be sacrificing everything he has for her. Families would be together, the husband helping the wife with the children, not as grim duty but in joy. The wife would joy in serving her husband, and the home would be a place of peace, and harmony, a place provided by God for children to grow.

But husbands remain boys, playing when there is work to be done, or using responsibilities at work as an excuse to escape responsibilities at home. ^{In fact, there is no harmony of the wife} They have no respect for women, using and abusing ^{her} ~~them~~ ^{to demand} for ~~their own~~ needs ^{of} and pleasure.

And women remain children, expecting life to be easy as it once was, waiting to be sacrificed for, demanding, controlling.

All of this is sin, and where there is sin, everything that God intends is distorted.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. In Christ we are free to allow another to be our lord, to serve, to give, asking nothing in return. For in Christ you are all lords, children of the almighty God. No one on earth is higher, more precious, more exalted than you. In Christ you are worthy of every honor and glory for you are perfect in him, pure, holy. You are loved by God, loved eternally, embraced eternally by Christ,

held onto eternally. No one has any right to order you, demand of you, expect sacrifice of you.

But being loved by Christ, and wanting to be like him in every way, we follow him. We love as he loved, giving ourselves for others in the day to day places, in day to day ways. Though ~~he~~^{Jesus} was tired and wanted some rest, he saw the need of the crowds and taught them, healed them, fed them. Though his disciples failed him repeatedly, he continued to walk with them, to prepare them, to forgive them. Though by rights no one could ask anything of Christ, without our asking, he died for us and for our salvation. Out of reverence for him, revering him we live as he lived.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

In our homes, in the church, even out in the world, this is God's will for us. He has called us together to be a people who would freely choose to be subject to others, not to be served, but to serve.

As I look back on the home in which I grew up, I realize my parents both sought to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. In ways great and small they did that, in ways great and small they failed. But I am thankful that Christ was the center of our family. He has promised that when our accomplishments and our failings have all turned to dust, he will be our joy forever.

I pray for me, and for each of you, for my home and for each of yours, that we will be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. In Christ we are free to do that. Amen.