



### **Part Three: Control and Expectations in Relationships // Jeff Brodie // August 23, 2020**

You struggle with control and expectations in certain relationships. We all do. Have you felt that in your marriage or with your significant other? Do you often want to micro-manage the choices your kids are making? Does it seem like things are spinning out of control at home with everything that's going on? Should you "let go" of something you care so deeply about? Family relationships can be hard, but what God has to say about your relationships can make all the difference. This week we explored how the teachings of scripture point us to a greater purpose in our families than we might see in the moment.

**Scripture:** [Ephesians 5:21-30 NLT](#); [1 Peter 5:5-7 NLT](#)

**Bottom Line:** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

#### **Getting Started:**

1. Often expectations, both spoken and unspoken, can be the place where cracks begin to develop in our relationships. Can you give an example of how expectations have played a role in your relationships today or in the past?
2. Where do you suppose that our expectations come from?
3. Why do you think that in our relationships, specifically marriage, we gravitate towards control or escape? Which would you say you gravitate towards in your marriage or closest relationships -- control or escape?

#### **Jumping In:**

4. Jeff shared how "COVID divorce" is actually a term that's beginning to grow in popularity as countries see divorce rates increase during the pandemic due to increased pressure. What are the pressure points that you or others have experienced through this time?
5. Jeff shared an image of a triangle with God at the top point and husband and wife at the bottom two points. Can you share some of the things or experiences that maybe you have unintentionally put in the space where God is meant to be in your relationship (e.g. your children; kids' sports; your business; etc.)?

**Discuss:**

6. Read [Ephesians 5:21-30](#). In the foundational verse (21) for the passage, the apostle Paul shares that mutual submission is the mark of a successful marriage. Why do you think that couples can struggle to submit to one another?
7. Paul shares that it's our reverence for what Christ has done for us (humbly submitting to death in our place) that motivates and strengthens us to serve our spouse. What do you think makes this so difficult? Where have you seen this modelled in a healthy way?
8. One of the challenges of submitting to or serving people around us is that we can feel like our expectations aren't being met. Read [1 Peter 5:5-7](#). What about this passage makes you hopeful, and how do you find it challenging?

**Pray:**

Consider sharing with your group what your next step as a couple needs to be. Do you need to take the awkward step across the canyon from pride to humility? Do you need to surrender your expectations of your spouse to God? Do you need to reach out to a professional for support in your marriage? Share that with your group, and together pray that God would give you the courage to take that next step into grace.

**Moving Forward:**

As you think about the list of expectations you have for your spouse, take time to write them out this week. Surrender that list of expectations over to God, knowing that He loves both you and your spouse more than you could ever imagine.