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A LITERARY AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF EPHESIANS 5:18-6:9

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

BY

SHANA CRESS

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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Abstract

Within Paul's letter to the Ephesians, there is a set of instructions termed the *Haustafeln*, or "household codes." Paul turns his focus upon roles within the home. The question that inevitably arises from a text nearing 2,000 years of age is one of relevance. Do these instructions apply to those of a different time and culture? Several matters need to be examined. Previous research has linked this passage to Aristotle, to Roman culture, and to Stoic philosophy. Since the form of the Ephesians household codes is said to resemble Aristotle's works, a reading of Aristotle's code is necessary. Roman household characteristics that need to be explored include the *pater familias*, the goal of harmony, and the Roman conceptuality of adultery. Stoic philosophy will be examined through the writings of Epictetus. By closely examining his discourses, we can look for similarities or dissimilarities to Ephesians. If Paul's goal was for Christians to blend in to the surrounding culture, then this will be evident as these subjects are investigated. In addition to this historical work, a literary analysis of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 will be performed. This thesis will argue that this passage on the household, Ephesians 5:18-6:9, is best understood against a Christian and not pagan philosophical background, situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is consistent with other Scriptural teaching.

This writing is dedicated to the memories of my grandparents, John and Marie Weddle. They were faithful followers of Christ who loved the church and me well. I am forever grateful for their ministry, their example, and the time I was able to spend with them. To my mother who raised me and has been quick to entertain my children so that I could move my focus elsewhere. Also to my beloved household: Scott, Penelope, Elias, and Nicholas Cress have helped me love and appreciate this text (and all of Scripture) in greater degrees every day.

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Acknowledgments

List of Abbreviations

BDAG

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago, 2000.

Liddell & Scott

Liddell, Henry George. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. 9th ed. Revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie and with co-operation of many scholars. With a supplement. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Bookstores boast shelves upon shelves of literature focused on families, how they function, and how to manage them better. The need for guidance for a better functioning home is not new. For centuries, there has been a need to discuss the household. Societies thrive or die depending on the health of their households. It is also a source of contention, as parties wrestle with each other over the best way to relate within families. It is no wonder that biblical scholarship should find a battleground in Ephesians 5, in which Paul addresses relationships in the home. This thesis will argue that this particular passage on the household, Ephesians 5:18-6:9, is best understood against a Christian and not pagan philosophical background, situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is consistent with other Scriptural teaching. To orient ourselves to the topic, the rest of this chapter will discuss the category to which this text belongs as one of the New Testament's celebrated "household codes" passages; survey the history of research in this area; specify the optimal parameters for considering this passage; and comment on Aristotle's views on the household.

Haustafeln

The Ephesians household passage is often discussed along with other household passages under the category *Haustafeln* or "household codes." Luther coined the term *Haustafeln* in reference to the sections of the New Testament that provide instructions for

the household.[1] In English this is woodenly translated as "house-tables." The relevant

sections that fall under this term are Colossians 3:18-4:1, Ephesians 5:22-6:9, and 1 Peter

2:13-3:9.[2] Research started focusing on this area in the early twentieth century, directing

attention first to the origin of these passages.[3] Then research started turning toward their

purpose and potential motivation. Two questions primarily guide the writing on the

Pauline household codes: From what source did Paul acquire his household codes, and

what was he trying to accomplish with them?

Previous research

Research in this area has developed due to the large amount of known household

literature from a wide array of ancient sources. In the ancient world, it was common to

write about the duties of members of the household.[4] Some conclude there is a definite

connection between New Testament *Haustafeln* passages and Greco-Roman thought

reaching back to Aristotle.[5] In this understanding, Paul takes the form of the household

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[1] F. F. Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 163. Timothy G. Gombis, "A Radically New Humanity: The function of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 2 (June 2005): 317n1. Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 214.

[2] The passages from Colossians and Ephesians contain the same structure, while 1 Peter does not address every individual in the household nor use the same structure. Aspects of 1 Tim 2-6:1 as well as Titus 2:1-10 are also sometimes included under the category of *Haustafeln*; see David C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBL Dissertation Series 71 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 13.

[3] Frank Thielman, *Ephesians,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 366.

[4] F.F. Bruce, *Colossians*, 161.

[5] James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 243. Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald, with Janet H.

code from another source and inserts it into his epistles. Scholars have shown evidence of similar writings of household codes within Stoic, Hellenistic, Greco-Roman, and Jewish literature.[6] There have been many phases of emphasis on the origins of thought that influenced or guided the writing of New Testament *Haustafeln* passages. Andrew Lincoln's commentary on Ephesians categorizes the major lines of thought on this issue. The categories of origin he cites are Stoic philosophy (major proponents: Dibelius and Weideinger), classical Greek philosophy (major proponent: Balch), Hellenistic Judaism (major proponents: Crouch, Lohse, Martin, O'Brien, Schrage, and Schweizer), and a Christian creation (major proponents: Rengstorf, Schroeder, and Goppelt).[7]

Research then turned to address the function of the *Haustafeln*. The two major options in this research involve whether Paul was writing to encourage Christians to live in such a way that they blend in with their surrounding society or in a way that is distinctly Christian. David L. Balch proposes that the household code in 1 Peter was written with an apologetic force. It was a way for Christians to blend in and not appear hostile to surrounding practices.[8] Others view the likeness of the structure to the Roman world as shallow. "This does not mean that some of his instructions do not overlap with ideas about marriage prevalent in Roman or Jewish culture. They do. But Paul's overall

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Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 118-119.

[6] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 366.

[7] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 357.

[8] David L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBL Monograph Series 26 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 83-121.

vision for each marriage partner is countercultural to the core."[9] Along these lines, Hoehner writes, "It was to be a display to the Roman world how believers who are transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit function within the family structure."[10]

Related to questions of origin and function is contemporary applicability. Dunn states that "they are not timeless rules and can no more be transferred directly to the different circumstances of today than can the rules of, say, Susannah Wesley (mother of John and Charles) for bringing up children."[11] He goes on to find the "timeless" parts of the household codes are solely in the phrases "as to the Lord" or "in the Lord." If the household codes in Scripture are borrowed from the surrounding culture, they are not applicable to today's reader.

Before turning to the second chapter, two additional issues must be addressed. The first is the explanation for determining the pericope for the household codes as 5:18-6:9. The second is a brief discussion of the relationship between Pauline household codes and Aristotelian household codes.

Determining the pericope

Most commentaries discuss the section of the household codes starting with either v. 21 or v. 22. Ephesians 5:22 is the first command to a member of the house, "Wives,

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[9] Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians,* Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 399.

[10] Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 727.

[11] Dunn, *Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 246.

submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."[12] The Greek text according to Nestle-Aland reads "Wives to your own husbands as to the Lord." There is a text-critical issue here which could affect the grammatical reasons for pericope determination. A large quantity of manuscripts contains some form of the verb ὑποτάσσω in v. 22. Even if this is so, this does not negate the thematic connection between v. 22 and the preceding verses. It also does not mean that it is certain that the verb was written in the original letter. Markus Barth concludes, "Since the later addition of the imperative is much more likely than its omission, the shorter text has more claims upon authenticity. In addition, the fact that 'subordinate' appears at different places in the variant readings of vs. 22 suggests that it is a secondary addition."[13]

Support for the absence of the verb is found in a manuscript dating from around 200 AD and one from the fourth century. Support for the absence of the verb is also found in Clement of Alexandria and Jerome, who indicates knowledge of a New Testament manuscript containing this reading. If the Nestle-Aland text is correct, then the verb "submit" is supplied by v. 21, "Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ."[14] The participle "submitting" is the fifth in a list that begins in v. 19, yet this is not the beginning of the sentence. For the beginning of the sentence, we must go to v. 18. The reason for backing up to v. 18 is both for the grammatical integrity of the passage and for emphasis on its connection to its surrounding context: a Spirit-filled life. O'Brien writes,

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[12] ESV.

[13] Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4 -6,* The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1974), 610n8.

[14] Author's translation.

The instructions in the household code of 5:22-6:9 follow directly from the admonition of 5:21, which itself is a significant outworking of the exhortation to be filled by the Spirit (v. 18). There is an evident movement within the whole unit, and no sharp division should be made between each of the paragraphs.[15]

If the correct reading lies in the majority of manuscripts, then a form of ὑποτάσσω is present in v. 22. This means that v. 22 is not dependent on the previous verse for a verb. Grammatically this does allow for more distinction between the two sections. It does not necessitate, however, complete distinction, as it is still very much connected in theme to the previous verses.

Pauline household codes compared to Aristotelian household codes

Many commentaries on Ephesians acknowledge another ancient household code written by Aristotle. A glance at Aristotle reveals some problems with this connection. Since this position is so highly referenced, it is beneficial to take a quick look at the text in question.

Aristotle's *Politics* is commonly cited as having similarities to the household codes of the New Testament.[16] The focus on household management present in Aristotle is very different from what is found in Ephesians, however. First, the focus upon the house is due to its categorization as a miniature city-state. Properly functioning households contribute to a properly functioning society and, therefore, are worthy of

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[15] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 378.

[16] Arnold, *Ephesians,* 369. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 216. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 366.

discussion.[17] Aristotle's entire motivation for the discussion is to achieve the ideal city-state. This will be shown to be an entirely different motivation than what is present in Ephesians. Second, even though the relationships in question are similar to Paul's writings, they are treated very differently by Aristotle. The relationships between husband and wife, father and son, master and slave are included in both Aristotle's writings and Paul's. Aristotle refers to slaves as live articles of property.[18] Paul, on the other hand, addresses slaves as part of a morally responsible audience capable of receiving instruction.[19] Aristotle starts his discussion with slaves because they are the smallest part of the house, whereas Paul starts his with husband and wife roles.

The household codes in Ephesians have been extensively researched and debated. By building upon previous research, and by expanding the parameters of the section to include surrounding verses, the connection to its surrounding context will be clear. Though Aristotelian writings bear witness to the presence of philosophical inquiry in the management of the home, it will also be made clear that Paul was writing toward a very different *telos*.

This thesis will situate itself within this ongoing scholarly conversation. First, the question of backgrounds will be addressed by showing the distinctiveness of Pauline material over against important cultural backgrounds, namely Roman family practices and Stoicism (chapters 2 and 3). Second, the text of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 will be studied, examining rhetorical and literary aspects of the text. This passage is best understood

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[17] Aristotle, *Politics*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 13:1253b2.

[18] Καὶ ὁ δοῦλος κτῆμά τι ἔμψυχον; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b33.

[19] Οἱ δοῦλοί ὑπακούετε; Ephesians 6:5.

within the overall plan of Ephesians (chapter 4). Third, the exegetical context will illumine the theological, Christological, and ecclesiological aspects of the text, placing it within the greater teachings of Scripture (chapter 5). Fourth, it will be demonstrated that the text of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 applies to Christians today just as much as it applied to the first hearers of the text (chapter 6). The goal will be to demonstrate that the Ephesians passage on the household is best understood against a primarily Christian and not pagan philosophical background, situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is consistent with other Scriptural teaching.

Chapter 2

Ephesians 5:18-6:9 and cultural backgrounds: A Roman house

To differentiate the relationships Paul is depicting from the surrounding culture, it is helpful to paint a picture of a Roman household. If Paul's goal was for Christians to blend in to the surrounding culture, then this will be evident when comparing Paul's writing to research on Roman families. The following analysis will allow a sharp contrast to be made at a later point in this study between Roman household norms and the household code in Ephesians. This thesis will argue the primary influence of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 was an understanding of Old Testament Scriptures and Christian teaching, not pagan philosophical background.

In Ancient Rome, the family was acknowledged as crucial for the functioning of society. The family was "the heart" of society.[20] Regarding the Roman family, the authority figure, the motivating goal, and the accepted practice of adultery will be explored.

Pater familias

The highest position of authority within the house was the *pater familias.* This role will be defined, as well as who was under this authority. These elements will help to show the distinct characteristics of marriage and the household in ancient Rome.

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[20] Eva Marie Lassen, "The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor" in *Constructing Early Christian Families,* ed. Halvor Moxnes (New York: Routledge, 1997), 104.

The term *pater familias* was not used to describe tyrannical rule of a male in the household. It was not in itself a title with negative connotations. This is not to say that negative actions which were tied to the status did not occur. *Pater familias* was a legal term, and it is most often found in Roman legal texts.[21] In order to be *pater familias*, a man had to be a citizen who was not under another *pater familias*. This means that fatherhood was not a requirement. The *pater familias* had *potestas* (authority) over all those within his household, as well as the property of the family. Those within the household included his wife, children (unmarried daughters[22] and sons), wives of sons (daughters would typically belong to the *pater familias* of their husbands), grandchildren, and slaves. Saller divides the authority threefold: 1) wife and children[23] 2) all other people within the household, and 3) all property used by the family.[24]

Much like today, families were blended. This is due to the high mortality rate, as well as the practice of marriage for alliances' sake. In an excerpt from Seneca the Younger, he acknowledges how it can be hard to be raised by a step-mother.[25] Even after a daughter had married, if a better situation presented itself, her father could potentially force her to divorce to remarry another. As for mortality rates, fifty percent of infants would not live to be ten years old; half of these children did not make it through their first

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[21] Richard P. Saller, *"Pater familias, Mater familias,* and the Gendered Semantics of the Roman Household,*" Classical Philology* 94 (1999): 184.

[22] There are many different views on the age in which girls and boys married. Usually for girls it was 12-14 and for boys 18-20. Shelton states that most often both boy and girl were in their teens at their first marriage, but also references an epitaph which depicts a woman who was married at the age of seven. Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 37.

[23] These would be legitimate children.

[24] Saller, 184.

[25] Shelton, 23.

year.[26] The average life expectancy was between twenty-five and thirty years.[27] The high mortality rate meant that there were often remarriages, which would combine children. Shelton makes an important note: "'Extended' families would contain fewer natural relatives, yet may have been more important in terms of both economic and emotional support than they are today."[28]

The *pater familias* had the authority to put his sons to death if they were behaving in such a way to bring dishonor[29] upon the family. There are recorded instances of this practice, but they are rare. Even so, it is important to emphasize that the power extended this far. The *pater familias* had authority over the life and death of his adult sons; this is significant power. Saller's essay on *pater familias* is very important for understanding this aspect of the role. He emphasizes the need to distinguish between actual use of the term *pater familias* and stereotypical understanding. He notes a particular instance in which a man had to step outside of his role as *pater* in order to execute his sons. This implies that the power over life and death was not the key function of the *pater familias*. He also emphasizes that "severity was not the natural connotation of *pater*, even in legendary times."[30]

Since fatherhood was not a requirement for the status, at times it would be necessary to find someone to inherit the estate. Adoption, a common practice, was one

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[26] Ibid., 16.

[27] Susan Treggiari, "Marriage and Family in Roman Society" in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 142.

[28] Shelton, 16.

[29] It was important not to behave in such a way as to shame one's family or community. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2003), 69.

[30] Saller, 190.

way this could happen. A *pater familias* might also adopt if his children had preceded

him in death. Someone could be adopted if they were not under another *pater familias* or

if their *pater familias* released them. Just as a *pater familias* could adopt, they could also

emancipate or disown their children. An adoption agreement would then be written up

between the parties, and the child or person's status would be transferred.[31]

Adoption was such a common practice that it can be seen practiced by emperors.

Augustus adopted his grandsons Gaius and Lucius. Augustus also adopted his stepson,

Tiberius Claudius Nero. Tiberius in turn adopted his nephew Germanicus. Adoption was

a way to secure an heir.[32] The importance of an heir and of continuing one's line provided

great motivation for embracing the practice of adoption. In order for the adoption to have

significant changes for the life of the one adopted, the *pater familias* need not have been

an emperor. The one who was adopted "was taken out of his previous condition, all old

debts were cancelled, and he started a new life in the relation of sonship to the new *pater*

familias, whose family name he took and to whose inheritance he was entitled."[33]

This, of course, also meant that the *pater familias* gained control over all that this

person brought with them, as well as control over their social relationships. The adopted

person became just as any other member within the household. This is a good example of

how the community defined the individual. The identity of the person who was being

adopted became radically influenced by their new family and situation. They also became

absorbed into the family unit, despite not being related by blood. This is interesting since

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[31] See adoption agreement, selection 41 in Shelton, 30.

[32] Treggiari, 176-77.

[33] Ferguson, 65.

protecting the legitimacy of the children born to the father was so important. This is a true testament to the status received by the adoptee. Even if they were adopted by someone of high status, they were brought in alongside legitimate children and accepted as such.

Acknowledgment as a *pater familias* did not necessitate having a large family beneath one's authority, although it might have been typical. There were many ways in which the authority of the *pater familias* could display itself. In regard to their wives, they could legally bring charges against the wife if she was suspected of adultery; he could put her to death; and, of course, he had the power to divorce her. Fidelity on the part of the wife was extremely important to insure her children were in fact her husband's. It is important to distinguish this responsibility of the wife from her husband; his fidelity was not necessary to protect their lineage. It is well-known that men partook freely in sexual activity outside the marriage.[34]

It was not the case that women owned nothing themselves. Women in ancient Rome could and did own property, as well as slaves.[35] They had great influence over the governing of the house and took authority in the absence of their husband. Depending on the laws of the time, women were allowed to keep their dowry as their own personal property in the event of divorce. Women were also able to initiate a divorce. In such a case, the children did stay with the father, and the woman had no right to the children

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[34] G.W. Peterman, "Marriage and Sexual Fidelity in the Papyri, Plutarch and Paul," *Tyndale Bulletin* 50.2 (1999).

[35] Treggiari, 163.

once she left the household.[36] These things must be understood in order to gain perspective on the *pater familias*. There was a limit on the authority associated with the title.

It is also important to emphasize the woman's role. Often the role of wife is dismissed as property of the husband. The view that participating within the public sphere as more important than the private sphere is still with us. To re-emphasize an above point, the household was the "heart" of society. Even if a wife did not participate in the public sphere, she did have a role that was important to the functioning of the household. It also came with protection from the outside world and provision of food and shelter.

Of course, if one has the authority to put their adult children to death, it should be no surprise that the authority to put the infants in the family to death rested with the *pater familias* as well. In ancient Rome, murdering an infant by abandoning them and leaving them to die was common practice. This practice was called exposing an infant. Children born to poor families were most at risk for this practice since there were not safety nets for those with little money, and starvation was a real threat. Female babies were then at even greater risk, as they were viewed to be a greater financial strain since the family would have to provide a dowry. It, of course, was not viewed as murder, as they were not members of society by birth but only after recognition by the *pater familias*. The decision to "expose" a child or to raise them rested with the *pater familias*.[37]

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[36] Legitimate children belonged to the father, while women would have power over their illegitimate children. Women who were concubines and had children kept the children due to their illegitimate status. Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 106.

[37] Shelton, 28. Ferguson, 80-82.

It is important to note that, though this was seen as a legitimate option, some infants were spared. Foundlings, as they were called, could be raised as adopted children. Families who could not have children might raise a foundling as their own. Of course there were those who would rescue an abandoned child to raise as a slave.[38]

There is a story about a husband who told his pregnant wife that if she had a girl, she was to expose the child. The wife begged her husband to change his mind up until the birth. Since he would not, her only choice to keep the child, who was a girl, was to hide her sex and raise the girl as a boy.[39] This is a testament to the power of this husband. This situation is almost unimaginable today. Not only did the mother of the child have no say in the life of her child, she was forced to create an alternate gender for her child. The *pater familias* had power over life and death.

Another element that was under the authority of the *pater familias* was the selection of spouses for their daughters. The choice was one made to the advantage of the family. Marriage is the linking of two families. In ancient Rome, the link between families was not something that passively occurred. It was the main event under the control of the *pater familias*. That said, it was not uncommon for a betrothal or even a first marriage to be ended by the father of the bride if a better situation presented itself. In this way, marriage was more like a company merger in today's context. It had to be profitable for both sides and was often strategic.

The *pater familias* was to be financially responsible for his family. The wife managed the household, but the finances (which were not seen as part of household

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[38] Treggiari, 177.

[39] Shelton, 28-89.

duties) were the responsibility of the *pater familias*. This did play a part in marriage arrangements. If there was a match that could be financially as well as socially lucrative, it would be taken. Thus the *pater familias* role came with expectations of positive attributes. The role was to be held by someone respectable, who was responsible.[40]

The way in which people functioned within the *pater familias* system, of course, differed.

> Our evidence suggests that the patriarchal system was subject to constant modification from very early. This does not mean the right to life and death was literally interpreted or that an adult son would have to ask his father every time he wanted to buy a sausage at the cook shop.[41]

This helps to put in perspective that although the *pater familias* could exercise certain amounts of control, it does not mean that he always did. It also does not mean that he was overly abusive and tyrannical. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that certain elements of his authority could aid him in behaving in such a way.

One theme consistent in the research of the *pater familias* is authority. The governing of the house rested with the *pater familias*. Even if they chose to be a benevolent husband and father, it was their choice. They were the final authority over those in their house, and they did not have another above them to whom they were to submit.

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[40] Saller, 190.

[41] Treggiari, 141.

Harmony: The mark of a successful marriage

The successful marriage of the time emphasized "harmony" rather than romantic love. Reasons for this stemmed from the formation and practices of marriage. As stated earlier, the household was foundational for society. Therefore marriage was not something extra or superfluous. It could be simply a necessity for the raising of legitimate children which would keep the family, as well as society, functioning. Cohick argues that while children were seen as a definite part of the marriage relationship, the ideal was "a harmonious relationship with each partner committed to the well-being of the other."[42]

Plutarch seems to encourage harmony in his *Advice to Bride and Groom.*[43] One of the ways he does this is by encouraging the wife to mirror her husband's feelings (#14). If her husband is happy, she too should be happy. If he is somber, likewise she should remain somber. Another way he encourages harmony is by the couple worshipping the same gods and having the same friends (#19). He instructs the wife to put aside friends and gods that are not the husband's and not to pursue those outside the husband. Plutarch also addresses the husband with ways to move toward a harmonious marriage. He warns against not eating with or having fun with their wives. These actions will encourage their wives to stuff themselves and to seek fun apart from the husband (#15).

An example of a harmonious marriage can be found between Pliny the Younger and Calpurnia. She was his third wife, whom he took at forty, and she was substantially younger than him. In his letters, he described actions she took to please him. These actions involved taking an interest in him and what he was doing. For instance, she read

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[42] Cohick, 109.

[43] Plutarch, *Moralia*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 2:297

and memorized his books and kept up with his court cases. These actions are one of an admirer, and it seemed to conjure genuine affection from Pliny. He wrote of great distress in her absence, while Calpurnia was away due to illness.[44] Of course, one can criticize a relationship between an older man and a younger woman, attributing her affection to love for a father figure. This relationship also appears to be one sided. Pliny's affection is based on the works of Calpurnia. She put a lot of work and effort into earning his love and making the marriage a success. His love was an appropriate reaction or response to such admiration.

The goal of the marriage was for the household to function smoothly so that society would in turn function smoothly. Plutarch's advice makes sense for a couple who was striving to live without conflict or disruption. The advice was to the disadvantage of the woman who must swallow her feelings and her own opinions. It was effective advice for people whose end goal was a harmonious house.

Adultery: A necessary evil?

The practice of infidelity was addressed in part earlier but needs to be fleshed out. As stated, infidelity was understood differently for husband and for wife.[45] A husband not only wanted his wife to abstain from sex outside the marriage, he wanted to be guaranteed of this by keeping the wife within the home. In his *Advice to Bride and Groom*, Plutarch gives an idea for keeping one's wife within the home.

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[44] Shelton, 45-46.

[45] Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 19.

> The women of Egypt, by inherited custom, were not allowed to wear shoes, so that they should stay at home all day; and most women, if you take from them gold-embroidered shoes, bracelets, anklets, purple, and pearls, stay indoors.[46]

The woman who remained within the home then was seen as virtuous.

Anyone who is married can understand the desire for their spouse to be faithful. In America today, it is not likely that many would accept this stationing of the wife indoors and hidden away from public. At least women would probably be reticent to the practice as it would inhibit their freedom. The wives of ancient Rome did not find their identity in the public sphere. Their identities were shaped by their husband, their children, and the activities involved in managing the household. The more the wife embraced this identity, as well as the mood and friends of her husband, the more likely it was that she would have a harmonious marriage.

In regard to the husband's behavior, Plutarch gives an explanation. Since the wife was seen as virtuous and respectful, the husband then reserved his lust for those who were worth less than his wife. This shows the amount of respect he had for her. Plutarch writes:

> If therefore a man in private life, who is incontinent and dissolute in regard to his pleasures, commit some peccadillo with a paramour or a maidservant, his wedded wife ought not to be indignant or angry, but she should reason that it is respect for her which leads him to share his debauchery, licentiousness, and wantonness with another woman.[47]

According to Plutarch, it is a husband's respect for his wife that would lead him outside the marriage for certain satisfactions. This was in part due to the prevailing cultural

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[46] Plutarch, "Advice to Bride and Groom," *Moralia,* The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 2:142.

[47] Plutarch, *Moralia,* 309.

stereotype that men were more sensual than women. At the same time, women were seen as having higher moral standards than men.[48] An exception to this was if the woman in question was a prostitute or concubine; these women were not seen as deserving any respect.

This "protection" of the wife from debauchery led to her being kept away from the public sphere. Within the walls of the home, there was usually a designated "women's quarters." While the respectable wife remained indoors, the sexually abused slave girls or concubines were not so confined. It was common practice at dinner parties that girls would be brought out for the guests for entertainment.[49] These women were not seen as deserving of the "respect" that the wives must receive. The wife did not deserve fidelity on the part of her spouse, and the other women of the house did not have any ownership over their own bodies.

This does not mean that men were allowed to engage in sexual activity with any one they pleased. Technically, adultery was between a married woman and a man who was not her husband. Thus any sexual activity with another man's wife also constituted adultery. A man could be tried and possibly killed for such an action. However, if a married man engaged in sexual activity with another man, a concubine, slave, or ex-slave it would not be counted as adultery.[50] The role of wife became a strange one. Though in some ways they were protected, due to the necessity to protect the husband's lineage, they were very much property. Though a woman would rather be "wife" than slave girl, it

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[48] Winter, 21.

[49] Ferguson, 77.

[50] Amy Richlin, "Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome," *Women's Studies* 8 (1981): 228.

was not a role of honor. It was a role with an important function, to provide children, but one that was not seen as deserving respect from her husband.

Adultery provides a window into the morality of Roman society. A married man and a married woman could engage in the same action and yet only one would count as adultery. This is a morality constructed to reinforce a particular balance of authority and roles. It also promoted harmony by ethically validating a potential source of disruption. Adultery therefore provides a window into the moral priorities of the Roman household.

Conclusion

The benefit of an overview of Roman households is twofold. First, it brings the reader closer to the world in which the early church existed. Second, by painting the picture of this household, it provides a comparison for the household in Ephesians. The three main points from this study of the Roman household were the extreme authority of the head of house, the goal of harmony in marriage, and the relative morality shown by the handling of adultery. These three distinctions and their lack of value in Paul's thought will give support to the idea that the Ephesians household passage is best understood against a primarily Christian and not pagan philosophical background, situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is consistent with other Scriptural teaching.

Chapter 3

Philosophical background: Stoic philosophy

Connections have been made between Paul′s letter to the Ephesians and the writings of Stoic philosophers. These connections are based on form and content. The household codes resemble Stoic teachings on the duties one has to others and the teaching of children to give full obedience to one's parents.[51] This thesis argues that Ephesians 5:18-6:9 is best understood as a consistent Christian ethic and not from a pagan philosophical background, situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul′s thought. In order to do that, this chapter will examine Stoicism and its theology, the primacy of the self in Stoicism, and specific excerpts on relationships in selected Stoic texts. If the household codes in Ephesians were connected to or influenced by Stoic principles, evidence should emerge from these three points of investigation.

Seneca is a well-known Stoic contemporary of Paul, living in the years A.D. 1-65. Although his writings will be utilized, for the current endeavor of examining Stoic philosophy, it is especially to Epictetus (A.D. 55-135) that we will turn. He taught at a time during the increase of the church and circulation of Christian teachings, making him an ideal candidate.[52] Epictetus was and is a renowned Stoic because of the work of his student Arrian. Arrian published *Discourses*, as well as the *Encheiridion* (or *Manual*); together these works preserved Epictetus′s teachings. A closer look at Epictetus can provide a window into the family relationships of those who embraced Stoic philosophy.

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[51] Thielman, *Ephesians,* 380-81.

[52] Ferguson, 363-68.

Stoic theology

Thorsteinsson observes that "...it cannot be emphasized enough how basic theology is to Epictetus' moral teaching."[53] God, or the gods, is the highest authority for the Stoic.

> Now the philosophers say that the first thing we must learn is this: That there is a God, and that He provides for the universe, and that it is impossible for a man to conceal from Him, not merely his actions, but even his purposes and his thoughts. Next we must learn what the gods are like; for whatever their character is discovered to be, the man who is going to please and obey them must endeavour as best he can to resemble them. If the deity is faithful, he also must be faithful; if free, he also must be free; if beneficent, he also must be beneficent; if high-minded, he also must be high-minded, and so forth; therefore, in everything he says and does, he must act as an imitator of God (2.14.11-13).[54]

The above quotation is from the first book of discourses and presents a god that is seemingly in contrast with the god typically presented in Stoic philosophy. This is a god who is relevant to daily life. He looks at people and, more specifically, he "provides for the universe." This god provides a purpose for people, to imitate him.

Stoic philosophy is panentheistic: god is everywhere, in everything. It would be appropriate to refer to this god as "nature" in the general sense. Epictetus seems to play with the distinctions of pantheism,[55] mixing in a personal theism. In an article on Epictetus's theology, Algra investigates this idea of a "theistic conception of god," defining theism as "god as person, who sees us, who speaks to us, who helps us, and to

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[53] Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 63.

[54] All translations are taken from W.A. Oldfather, trans., *Epictetus Discourses* in Loeb Classical Library.

[55] Epictetus is clear on the nature of God being "sense (νοῦς: "mind, as employed in perceiving and thinking, Liddell & Scott, 1180), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), right reason (λόγος ὀρθός) (2.8.2-3)." Author's translation.

whom prayers can be meaningfully addressed."[56] Algra concludes a discussion of

Epictetus's theology, stating, "Epictetus' theistic language appears to figure as the

preferred 'interface' between orthodox Stoic theology on the one hand, and his audience

on the other."[57] Epictetus was doing two things: embracing and internalizing the early

Stoic teachings and teaching and living within a particular context. His audience was

yearning for a closer god. This combination, as well as the presence of other influences

upon Epictetus, produced a pantheistic Stoic theology with decidedly personalized

emphasis.[58]

      One thing that must be emphasized is Epictetus' call for people to investigate and

think. In the above quotation, he is encouraging his audience to discover the attributes of

this deity and put them to practice. There is a sense of ambiguity in this section. Epictetus

does not know the exact attributes of his deity. The attributes must be discovered. Even

with the personal language, pantheism cannot be denied.

      Like many good teachers, Epictetus makes use of imagery to shed light on

theology. Epictetus grounds an image of the Stoic god into a relationship that people can

understand: that of father and son. In this case of divine fatherhood, many are not aware

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[56]This paper accepts Algra's definition of theism. See Keimpe Algra, "Epictetus and Stoic Theology," in *The Philosophy of Epictetus,* ed. Thedore Scaltsas and Andrew S. Mason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 52.

[57] Ibid., 52.

[58] Another aspect at work could be Epictetus's reliance on Socratic teaching. Long offers Socratic influence as an explanation for a differing theology from that of early Stoics. This need not be explored here other than to note that Epictetus's teachings were not merely recitations of things past, but were the outworkings of well-digested teaching. See A.A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 180-204. It is also important to note that Epictetus himself refers to God using different terms. He refers to him as Zeus, God, gods, nature, providence (προνίας), and the Deity. This is just to give a distinction that while he does seem to refer to one entity at times, it is not a nailed-down view of a one-person god.

of their status as a son of god and therefore cling to their physical body. It is rationality that distinguishes man, and this comes from god. Epictetus states,

> If a man could only subscribe heart and soul, as he ought to this doctrine, that we are all primarily begotten of God, and that God is the father of men as well as of gods, I think that he will entertain no ignoble or mean thought about himself (1.3.1).

Epictetus also teaches that god provides guidance to his children (2.7.11). The goal is not merely to use imagery in order to be understood by his audience. He is teaching them foundational truths that should pour out into their daily lives. The Stoic philosophy Epictetus presents involves turning inward in recognition of the self. This knowledge should not only enable a person to survive within a community, but live well with others. This is an inside-out approach. Theology is intrinsic to the study of Epictetus because it is intrinsic to who people are. Unlike many stereotypes of Stoic philosophy, the goal is never to remain inside. A person's acknowledgement of who god is and who he himself is should affect his or her other roles.

The highly practical nature of this philosophy is important for the topic of the household codes of the New Testament. Epictetus is presenting a philosophy where understanding will translate into action. The idea of internal thoughts becoming outward behavior is not one that is unique to any given philosophy or religion. The uniqueness lies in the specific understandings and the specific actions.

There is surface similarity here with the Ephesians passage. Paul is drawing on his theology as motivation for behavior. In both Stoic and Christian thought, theology may

be the underlying foundation for the practical application. This is where the similarity stops. This is because the theologies are vastly different.

The Stoic god is everywhere and in everything. This is different than the particular, personal God written about in Ephesians. Both audiences, Epictetus's and Paul's, are called to act out their inner convictions. Only one audience has the potential to achieve imitation of their deity in community. The theology of Paul does not allow for the amount of searching and discovery necessary in Stoic theology. The god of Stoicism, and its attributes, must be discovered. The God of Christianity reveals himself. Paul's theology is rooted in a particular, Christ. Epictetus does not have the same access to truth regarding the attributes of his deity. This emphasis on the self adds subjectivity to the imitation of the Stoic god. Christians avoid this subjectivity because they had actually met their God. Paul exhorts the husband to do what Christ did. The sacrifice of Jesus was a real historical event. The husband can imitate what Paul and others know to be true of Christ, their God.

The primacy of the self

Long states that "...the primary goal of Epictetus' theology is the light it can shed on human self-understanding and moral orientation."[59] How people are to behave towards their deity as well as towards each other stems from theology. For Epictetus, when foundational principles are embraced and understood (such as one's rationality) more

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[59] A.A. Long, *Epictetus*, 156.

specific roles can be better lived. It is the task at hand to explore the existential questions

of identity and roles of humans. Epictetus states:

> But God has brought man into the world to be a spectator of Himself and
> of His works, and not merely a spectator, but also an interpreter.
> Wherefore, it is shameful for man to begin and end just where the
> irrational animals do; he should rather begin where they do, but end where
> nature has ended in dealing with us (1.6.19).

This quote addresses two important ideas when it comes to personhood: man's role as

interpreter and spectator of god as well as how man should behave rationally.

In regard to personhood, we must address who or what man is before we can

address how he is to behave in daily life. In a section titled "How is it possible to discover

a man's duties from the designations which he bears?" Epictetus states:

> Consider who you are. To begin with, a Man; that is one who has no
> quality more sovereign than moral choice, but keeps everything else
> subordinate to it, and this moral choice itself free from slavery and
> subjection. Consider therefore, what those things are from which you are
> separated by virtue of the faculty of reason. You are separated from wild
> beasts, you are separated from sheep. In addition to this you are a citizen
> of the world, and a part of it...(2.10.1).

He distinguishes men from animals by acts of service. Irrational animals are here

to serve and not of "primary importance"[60] which is in reference to man. Man is to

be a rational being who has understanding and who recognizes himself as part of a

larger whole. Epictetus likens one's status as a citizen to the hand or foot. If the

hand or foot could reason, they would always make choices with the rest of the

body in mind. Likewise, man is part of a greater whole and he should act

accordingly with the greater whole in mind. Here again is reason behind the

movement from internal (thoughts, knowledge) to the external (actions, behavior).

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[60] Epictetus uses this phrase in 2.8.7 as well as 2.10.3.

Humans are innately communal and the community which they are part of is intrinsically part of their very being.

In an essay titled "Ethical Roles in Epictetus," Brian Earl Johnson discusses the roles of people with two categories: natural and acquired.[61] Roles termed "natural" are those which are given at birth. They include relationship to god and one's parents and siblings. Acquired relationships are those that one partakes in given their situation. These are not to be avoided nor sought. Included in these are relationships with neighbors and marriage. Understanding one's role in this world and how one should behave within that role is important in order to flourish.

When one understands oneself as a rational being, acting rationally is the next step. Epictetus defines acting rationally as "In accordance with nature and perfectly" (3.1.25).[62] The goal is to have people analyze their actions to see if they are in fact in accord with nature. When addressing a young man in a series of questions as to what element of superiority man has, he answers, "Your reason is the element of superiority which you possess; adorn and beautify that" (3.1.26). Epictetus is imploring people to know themselves and follow with appropriate actions.[63] It must be reiterated that the focus is the self. Just as it takes effort to determine the rightness of one's actions, one

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[61] Brian Earl Johnson, "Ethical Roles in Epictetus," *Epoche* 16, 2 (Spring 2012): 300. The following discussion on roles is often reliant on this essay.

[62] It must be noted the reference to deity that is within "accordance to nature." Long writes, "The Stoic God *is* nature, extending through everything, and, while Epictetus, unlike the early Stoics, gives no attention to explaining how God can be physically present everywhere, he does not differ from his predecessors over God's identity with the *natural* order of things" A.A. Long, *Epictetus*, 146.

[63] Johnson lists Epictetus's criteria for knowing oneself as (1) knowing one's particular capacities, (2) knowing one's social relations, and (3) choice. The first two he deems as fundamental criteria for the task of knowing oneself; the third is something that sometimes must be done to locate a particular role. See Brian Earl Johnson, "Ethical Roles in Epictetus," *Epoche* 16, 2 (Spring 2012): 295.

should put forth proper effort to "beautify" one's rationality. In regard to the overarching task at hand, one should expect to work at his particular roles. The outward relationships remain secondary, for the greatest importance lies in the self.

It is the responsibility of a rational person to consider and analyze their actions. Epictetus is after a full-orbed view of the self. The internal reasoning affects the external actions. A person's actions are reflections of his understanding. Cochran writes, "Stoic virtue is built upon a view of personhood and moral agency that simultaneously allows for receptivity and accountability, and for authentic human moral agency in a world in which divine grace enables the pursuit of virtue."[64] Cochran is right; at the foundation of Stoic thought is the individual. There is a constant presence of the abstract divine, but the foundation is actually the self. There is only subjective interpretation of rationality to base all external actions upon.

In regard to man's connection with or to god, several more things can be observed in the previous quotes from Epictetus. First, god knows even the thoughts of man. This god is to be imitated by man. This god does not punish; one punishes themselves by not imitating god (or rationality) and being who they were created to be. Epictetus does give his students more information on man's responsibility to god or the gods. Epictetus urges his students to be grateful to god (τῷ θεῷ 1.4.32) for their gifts, acknowledge that everything comes from god (θεοῦ 1.9.4), and states that men should praise god (τὸν θεόν 1.16.20).[65] In fact Epictetus refers to praising god as man's work.[66]

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[64] Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, "Virtuous Assent and Christian Faith: Retrieving Stoic Virtue Theory for Christian Ethics," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 30, no.1 (2010): 118.

[65] Epictetus typically references God as θεός but fluctuates between singular and plural. There does not seem to be a reason for fluctuating that relates to a particular emphasis or scenario.

According to Epictetus, man's behavior should flow out of a deep commitment to rationality with an understanding of one's role in society. This rationality (or god, or nature) does not give guidance. It is the responsibility of man to reach out and pursue the deity. This rationality operates as a non-paternal entity. There is no punishment from this god, and there is no love. The relationships in a person's life are important, but only in so much as they effect the individual. The goal of nurturing relationships is to keep oneself in a state of harmony. There is nothing intrinsically relational about the rationality of the deity of Stoicism. The Stoic god does not desire relationship with man. The punishment of man does not happen. The Stoic god does not care about the flourishing of its followers. In constrast, the God of Christianity reveals himself and begins relationships with men and women. This will be discussed at greater length in chapters four and five.

Stoic excerpts on the household

In order to better understand a Stoic view of relationships within the home, specific excerpts will be examined. The goal is to better understand what Epictetus saw as issues in these relationships, as well as what things he believed are indicative of good relationships. This will also allow for a more direct comparison to the household codes in Ephesians.

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[66] This is my translation of τοῦτό μου τὸ ἔργον ἐστίν (1.16.21). "This is my work." W.A. Oldfather translates this as "task." Liddell & Scott has a wide range of potential glosses for ἔργον. The one that seems to fit here is "that which is wrought or made" or "his business, his proper work." BDAG glosses it as "that which displays itself in activity of any kind, deed, action." The word "task" brings up connotations of a chore, which is not how Epictetus seems to see the action. The point is that Epictetus understands praising God as an action that man is responsible to do.

In a section titled "How is it possible to discover a man's duties from the designations which he bears?" Epictetus addresses the role of "son," describing important characteristics.

> Next bear in mind that you are a Son.[67] What is the profession of this character? To treat everything that is his own as belonging to his father, to be obedient to him in all things, never to speak ill of him to anyone else, nor to say or do anything that will harm him, to give way to him in everything and yield him precedence, helping him as far as is within his power (2.10.7).[68]

The above description depicts a close loyalty within the family. It also entails responsibility and obligation within the family structure. Being a proper "son" elicits certain behavior towards one's father. The passage acknowledges a practice close to the *pater familias*. The father extends ownership over everything and everyone in his house. The father would own everything that his sons' owned. Embracing this aspect of the role of "son" is integral to the character of the son.

The above quote (2.10.7) also depicts hierarchy of loyalty. In *De Clementia,* Seneca speaks of the relationship a people should have to their leader. He writes:

> In his defence [*sic*] they are ready on the instant to throw themselves before the swords of assassins, and to lay their bodies beneath his feet if his path to safety must be paved with slaughtered men; his sleep they guard by nightly vigils, his person they defend with an encircling barrier, against assailing dangers they make themselves a rampart (1.3.3).[69]

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[67] Epictetus' audience was specifically male. Although Musonius Rufus, Epictetus's teacher, held that women had just as much ability for philosophy as men, this was a rare stance and not reflected in Epictetus' writings. This is in stark contrast to the Ephesian household codes where Paul writes directly to men and women.

[68] Oldfather's translation; author's translation is attached.

[69] Seneca, *Moral Essays,* trans. John W. Basore (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 1:367.

This quote aids our understanding of the subordinate's relationship to their leader. Just as the son is to be completely loyal to his father, people are to be loyal to their leader. This involves them protecting their leader with their lives.

By closely examining a passage by Epictetus general ideas as well as language similarities can potentially be found. The following translation was done to engage a prominent pagan ethic of the time.

> With everything alluring[70] or offers[71] use[72] (to you) or (that) you show affection for,[73]
> Consider carefully,[74] saying how is it?[75] beginning[76] from the least important things[77]
> If you are fond[78] of a jug, say[79] "I am fond of a jug[80]"

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[70] Ψυχαγωγούντων: "evoke or conjure up the dead by sacrifice"; here metaphorically to "lead or attract the souls of the living; win over; persuade; allure" (Liddell & Scott, 2026). Cf. "to lead someone's soul astray, attract, beguile" (BDAG, 1098).

[71] Παρεχόντων: "hand over, furnish, supply; yield, produce; present or offer" (Liddell & Scott, 1338). Cf. "to make available, give up, offer, present; to cause to experience something, grant, show" (BDAG, 776).

[72] Χρείαν: "need, want; as a property, use, advantage" (Liddell & Scott, 2002).

[73] Στεργομένων: "love, feel, affection; generally, to be fond of, show affection for; to be content or satisfied" (Liddell & Scott, 1639). Cf. "to have a benevolent interest in or concern for, love, feel affection for" (BDAG, 943).

[74] Μέμνησο: "give careful consideration, remember, think of, care for." This translation chose "give careful consideration" to reflect the effort involved in the process of altering one's priorities (BDAG, 652). Elsewhere Epictetus speaks of training that takes time, which is reflected better by the word "consideration." The alteration to "consider carefully" was done to read better in English. This word is also used in 2.10.7, Epictetus urges his students to contemplate certain truths about stoicism. This emphasizes Epictetus' desire to see the fruits of their knowledge and not simply have his students be able to recite lessons.

[75] Oldfather translates ὁποῖόν ἐστιν "what is its nature?" Given the context this is surely what Epictetus is concerned with, that is the nature of the object, this is just a more literal translation.

[76] Ἀρχάμενος ἄρξομαι: fut.mid. "to initiate an action, process or state of being, begin" (BDAG, 140).

[77] I could not find an exact reference to this word, I am translating it as it is a form of μικρός.

[78] Subjunctive.

[79] Ὅτι as quotation marker translated as "say."

> For when it breaks[81] you will not be disturbed[82]
> When you kiss[83] your child or wife[84], say[85] you are kissing a human[86].
> For when they die[87] you will not be disturbed[88]. *Encheiridion* 3[89]

The above passage contains two things that are likely to be found disturbing to a modern audience. The first is the movement from one's jug to one's wife or child. The second is the obvious final statement that one would possibly not be disturbed by his wife or child's death. Before addressing the precise content of this excerpt, it is important to acknowledge different circumstances that separate today's reader from Epictetus. The reader should also keep in mind, as Long urges, that "Epictetus is a marvelous resource for giving us a window on the kinds of concerns and anxieties that young and elite men in the Roman empire typically experienced."[90]

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[80] Epictetus maintains word order when speaking of being fond of a jug, in both instances it is "jug" followed by the verb "to be fond of" in the Greek: χύτραν στέργω.

[81] Κατεαγείσης: "break" (Liddell & Scott, 922). Κατάγνυμι: "break" (BDB, 515) Aorist Subjunctive.

[82] Ταραχθήσῃ: "stir, trouble; trouble the mind, agitate, disturb" (Liddell & Scott, 1757-58), Future Passive Indicative.

[83] Καταφιλεῖς: "kiss, caress; esp. of an amorous kiss" (Liddell & Scott, 919).

[84] Though this language is of course not bound by word placement, this phrase does seem interesting with the placement of the child first and the wife last: αν παιδίον σαθτοῦ καταφιλῇς ἤ γθναῖκα.

[85] Again ὅτι is used here to mark speech.

[86] Ἄνθρωπον is here translated "human" as it is the child and wife's mortality which is being discussed. The phrase in the Greek is ὅτι ἄνθρωπον καταφιλεῖς this translation attempted to reflect the brevity and terseness which seems evident in the Greek, Oldfather translates it more smoothly as "say to yourself that you are kissing a human being."

[87] Adverbial participle use of ἀποθνήσκωω.

[88] Ταραχθήσῃ Future passive indicative.

[89] Author's translation.

[90] A.A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 383.

In ancient Rome the infant mortality rate[91] was high. As noted in the previous chapter, it is estimated that half of children born would die before the age of ten, and one third would die in their first year of life. In fact, Treggiari cites the average life expectancy to be between twenty-five and thirty years.[92]

If children did not die from natural causes, there was the practice of infanticide by way of exposing infants. This was done because of the cost in raising children, particularly girls. The ideal family situation was two boys, in case one died, and usually only one girl would be allowed to survive. This is because of the added cost of a daughter′s dowry without the financial benefit of being able to earn the family money. According to Ferguson, "...no moral voice was raised against infanticide until Musonius Rufus and Epictetus."[93] Shelton, in a sourcebook about the social history of Rome, addresses the high infant mortality rate, saying "...some scholars have suggested that Roman parents remained more detached than modern parents so that, if their child died, their grief would be less crushing."[94] That said, an excerpt follows where a couple provided a memorial for their daughter who was a year and half when she passed away.

Given the historical background, men were not necessarily less affectionate toward their family members. The issue of mortality was simply always before them. The way one deals with grief becomes important. In the excerpt above, Epictetus moves from

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[91] This is regarding infants that have been born, not taking into account abortions.

[92] Susan Treggiari, "Marriage and Family in Roman Society," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World,* ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 142.

[93] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 81.

[94] Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History,* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 26.

a beloved broken jar to the passing of a wife or child. It is a move of intensification; however, it is one that would be applicable to his audience. Roman men would indeed know the feeling of broken pottery, and they would more than likely know the feeling of losing a child and/or their wife. If they did not know it yet personally, they might know it in the future. Epictetus' goal in teaching this is to protect one's mind from the debilitating effects of passions. For Epictetus, grief was an incredible obstacle for the mind.

Furthermore, it is important to call to attention to what Epictetus is not saying. He is not teaching the physical withdrawal from wife and child. He does not make a point to abstain from showing physical affection to one's wife and child. Neither is he imploring men to abstain from engaging in marriage and child-raising. His purpose is to prevent one from being disturbed. This is not to minimize what Epictetus is asking of his students. In his context, losing family members is a real and frequent situation. Epictetus views grief as an inhibiting emotion that one should control. The move from jug to person is identifying one's lack of ability to control events. A person cannot keep his jug from breaking and can certainly not keep their family members from death.

In order to emphasize that Epictetus is not promoting one to abstain from affection to one's family, another passage can be used. In 1.11 of the *Discourses* Epictetus begins an exchange with a man who claims to have a wretched experience with marriage in regard to his children. The man had a daughter who was sick and found himself unable to stay by her; so he ran away and did not return until his daughter was well. When Epictetus asked if this was a right action, the man replied that he was acting naturally, behaving like most other fathers.[95] They decide to explore whether or not the

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[95] The man identifies a common practice for dealing with grief, fleeing the situation.

man's action was "right" and by that "in accordance with nature."[96] The starting premise is telling:

> Epictetus[97]: Does family affection seem to you to be in accordance with nature and good?
> Man: Of course (1.11.17)

In Socratic style, Epictetus questions the man regarding not only his actions but the way others who love the girl should act. This is a wonderful passage that shows the wit and intensity of Epictetus. Before this next passage, Epictetus questions the man as to whether others remained near the child and if they should have also abandoned her. He concludes a series of questions with the following:

> And would you pray to be so loved by your own that, because of their excessive affection, you would always be left alone in sickness? Or would you, so far as this is concerned, have prayed to be loved by your enemies rather, if that were possible, so as to be left alone by *them*? And if this is what you would have prayed for, the only conclusion left us is that your conduct was, in the end, not an act of affection at all (1.11.26).

In sum, the starting premise was that family affection is in accordance with nature and good. The conclusion was that a father who abandons his sick daughter is not acting with affection toward his child. Even though this was common practice in ancient Rome, as stated by the father, through Epictetus' logic he determines it not in accordance with nature. This passage is important in regard to the family relationships. It should be characterized by affection, not abandonment. The potential death of the child is no reason to abstain from giving the child affection.

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[96] As noted earlier actions must be analyzed to determine whether they are "in accord with nature."

[97] The speaker is emphasized here to show the dialogue form of this discussion. It is not outlined like this in the *Discourses*.

The last passage was used to give perspective on the one preceding. Epictetus did not bar parental affection. In the section titled "That we ought not to yearn for the things which are not under our control" Epictetus is claiming that happiness and yearning are two things that cannot coincide within an individual. If one is yearning for something, they are not happy. He uses Odysseus as an example:

> For happiness must already possess everything that it wants; it must resemble a replete person: he cannot feel thirst or hunger. – Still, Odysseus felt a longing for his wife, and sat upon a rock and wept.- And do you take Homer and his tales as authority for everything? If Odysseus really wept, what else could he have been but miserable? But what good and excellent man is miserable?....if Odysseus wept and wailed, he was not a good man (3.24.17-20).

Epictetus rebukes the action of Odysseus, who wept over Penelope. This passage does have a commonality with the earlier passage involving broken pottery. Epictetus is calling his students to abstain from grief. In this instance, it is longing for something that is not in their possession and that they have no control over. Epictetus calls for acknowledgement that one cannot keep one's wife and child alive. It is out of the man's control, and he needs to realize it in order to not be disturbed by their death. In the passage about Odysseus, Odysseus longs for something outside of himself that he has no control over.

These passages help to understand how Epictetus would deal with family relationships. For example, the parent and the child have roles which are intertwined and involve the other. They must perform their roles to the best of their abilities with the understanding that they have no control over how the other performs their roles. A good parent could have a bad child; a good child could have a bad parent. This is out of one's control, so it should have no bearing on their individual performance.

Stoic philosophy, and Epictetus for that matter, can be very hard to understand in regard to avoidance of grief or mourning. Epictetus was trying to prepare his students for the worst, so they would not be shaken. The *Discourses* are writings that can give strength in hard circumstances. It is important to remember the *Encheiridion* was a manual for Roman soldiers. The early audience of Epictetus had more of an acquaintance with death, with moody emperors, and untreatable illness. In a way it was a different world. In other ways it was the same. The loss of a spouse or child produces a reaction of grief; how we choose to deal with that reaction or prevent it varies.

Reydams-Schilis discusses the self coping mechanisms utilized to deal with the loss of a child in Stoic thought. Especially regarding infants, upper class Roman children, were typically cared for by servants.

> The point here is not that the Romans did not love their children, or that they loved them less than our culture does; they loved them all too dearly and when they could afford to do so had the recourse to techniques of emotional cushioning to protect themselves from the pain of bereavement and the pangs of a sharpened sense of vulnerability.[98]

This all the more puts the above story of the father who abandoned his sick daughter into perspective. The father determined what he did was natural because it was the normal way people behaved. Epictetus was calling for a radical change in the way parents dealt with the sickness and death of their children. Children should receive affection from *all* who surround them in times of need, family and care takers; yet such affection should never be allowed to harm one's own rationality. Odysseus's grief was improper, just as abandonment was improper in other circumstances.

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[98] Gretchen Redams-Schilis, *The Roman Stoics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 122.

Conclusion

For Epictetus detachment was necessary in order to preserve the self. This is a very important idea for Epictetus and Stoic thought. The end goal and motivating force was to attain rationality, or accordance with nature. The Stoic god (rationality, nature) was not relational. A follower of Stoicism would address their relationships in such a way as to not be bothered by them. The relationship could disrupt one's pursuit of rationality. Affection was necessary for the relationship and the other person. The harmony of the relationship depended on it. For Epictetus these two ideas went together to form a flourishing being. It is not the goal of the present study to determine if his idea was even possible. It was his attempt to protect the mind while actively living within the community of the time.

The ideal person understands that humans have "the capacity to oversee themselves and to acknowledge their internal divinity, which is also the voice of objective reason and integrity as their only authority."[99] The individual of course must devote time to understanding his own nature and actions. In order to live well, the internal mind must be free and undisturbed. Epictetus states that proper functioning involves being grateful to god, which is acknowledgement that all things external are outside of our control and that internal rationality is divine. In the Ephesians text we see an external action in the context of relationships portrayed as Christ-like. For Paul, the closest thing to divine was not inward rationality, but outward action which resembled an

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[99] Long, *Epictetus*, 26.

actual historical event. For the Stoic, one's role within the house needs to be addressed so that in managing it he may achieve rationality. For the Christian, the role within the house provides an avenue to act out an attribute of the Christian God.

This idea of self-preservation is a major difference from the Ephesians text. Epictetus addresses relationships so they do not interfere with the individual's pursuit of rationality. Paul does not urge Christians to guard themselves within relationship to one another. Especially in regard to the relationship between husband and wife, instead of boundaries, intimacy is emphasized. Purity in action for the Stoic is a means to achieve purity of the mind, which is god-like. For the Christian, purity in action and purity of the mind are both pursued as ways to be God-like. The major difference, of course, is between a God (Jesus Christ) who is knowable through history and a god (rationality) who is unknowable. As will be demonstrated, the Ephesians *Haustafeln* passage is best understood against a primarily Christian background, in distinction from possible pagan philosophical influences. This Christian background is situated within the epistle as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is consistent with other Scriptural teaching.

Chapter 4

Ephesians 5:18-6:9 in Christian perspective

Two relevant sources of historical background, Roman households and Stoic philosophy, have been explored in the previous chapters. Instead of indicating the influence of these backgrounds on Paul's thought in Ephesians, the study has demonstrated significant areas of dissimilarity. Now the Ephesians passage will be examined closely. First, there will be a brief literary description of the text. Second, an analysis will be done of key words important to the understanding of the passage. Third, the pericope's placement within the greater literary context of Ephesians will be demonstrated. The background of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 is primarily Christian, this is reflected by its form and content.

Literary description

The Ephesian household code progresses through the roles beginning with the husband and wife relationship. This is the closest, most intimate relationship within the house. The wife is addressed first, which also starts a pattern of having the secondary role fronted. Addressing the secondary role at all is counter to the surrounding culture, let alone addressing them first. This dignifies all the roles within the house. They all have a function and they all are responsible for their functions.

In Ephesians the roles are held by believers.[100] There is an acknowledgement of individual submission of the role to Christ. The whole household falls under the authority of Christ. The authority of the head of house does not end with himself. The authority extends to Christ. There is theological foundation for roles in the home, as was the case in Stoicism. Every role is accountable to God. It is not the case that a particular role would be insignificant enough to escape the attention of God. Men are to be godly husbands, fathers, and masters. Likewise, women are to be godly wives, mothers, and masters. Each role requires submission to God.

The crucial nature of submission to God is demonstrated by a brief analysis of the Ephesians text. In v. 21 mutual submission is done out of reverence for Christ (ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ). This is followed in v. 22 by the command to wives to submit to their own husbands as to the Lord (ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ). In v. 23 the husband's role is described as the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. In v. 24 this leads to submission to the head, both in the case of the wife and the church (ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ). In vv. 29 and 30 Paul explicitly outlines the hierarchy we are a part of: Christ is the head of the church who are members of his body (ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ). Therefore, anyone who belongs to Christ is a part of Christ's body and is under Christ's authority. In chapter 6 vv. 5-6, the section on δοῦλοι and masters begins with a command for the slaves to obey as they would obey if Christ was their master. They are not to see themselves solely as servants to their master, but also to Christ (δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ ψυξῆς). In v. 9 Paul explicitly places the

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[100] Best, 191.

master and slave under the same authority (εἰδόντες ὅτι καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ προσωπολημψία οὐκ ἔστιν παρ᾽αὐτῷ).

This brief analysis diverges substantially from the structure of the *pater familias.* Even a benevolent *pater familias* would not resemble the portrait of the family head as revealed in Ephesians. According to the *pater familias* model the man would have the authority over his house.[101] The view of the house in the New Testament suggests that Christ is actually head over everything. The man of the house is subject to Christ. This is not the addition of another "head" of the house. All roles in the house are affected by placing Christ at the head. Everyone is to submit to Christ. Within this is the hierarchy of the rest of the household to the roles of husband, father, and master.

The husband's role in Ephesians 5:22-33 receives the greatest attention. There are nine verses aimed at the husband; within those verses the husband is provided with two examples. The major example is between Christ and the church and the minor is loving one's own body. This section is bookended with imperatives, ἀγαπᾶτε and ἀγαπάτω. The verb ἀγαπάω occurs six times within the nine verses focused on the husband. This passage does not give the husband a list of rights or privileges. Instead it outlines how the husband is to serve and love the wife by providing a discussion on the appropriation of Christ. A husband is to love, cherish, and nourish his wife. This is opposite of the presented roles in the *pater familias* as well as in Stoic philosophy. According to Seneca, the people are prepared to die for their leader; if carried over to marriage, it would be the wife who would die for her husband.

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[101] See chapter two on Roman marriage.

Obviously, the view of headship in Christian households excludes adultery. "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body" (Eph 5:28-30). There is no room within the structure of this passage for concubines or prostitutes as there is no intrusion between head and body. They are not addressed because the instruction demands they not be present within the relationship. This is distinctly counter to the Romans and Greeks, but similar to the Jewish religion. Sex was reserved for marriage, and any practice of sex outside of the marriage relationship was seen as sin or immoral.

The overall passage, 5:18-6:9, contains two Old Testament references. The first is in 5:31, where Genesis 2:24 is given as pointing to the relationship between Christ and the church. The relationship between Christ and the church in turn provides an illustration for the relationship between husband and wife. The use of this verse roots the code in creation. It is a declaration that there are creational reasons behind the structuring of the household. The second Old Testament verse is in 6:2, where instruction is being given to the children. The verse is either from Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16, as it mirrors these from the LXX.[102] For this thesis the importance lies in the presence of these two verses from the Old Testament. In the 25 verses that this thesis names as the Ephesians household codes, there are two references to the Old Testament. Moreover, there are only three verses separating the references. The background for the passage is evident. The

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[102] Thielman, 400.

Ephesians household codes is drawing from the Old Testament revelation of God as creator and lawgiver.

This brief analysis highlights three aspects which are different from the surrounding Roman and Hellenistic culture. First, the theological basis provided by Christianity is considerably different than Roman understanding. Romans saw marriage as a way to ensure legitimate heirs and to further their society. Therefore, much of the focus is legal. Second, in Stoic philosophy one could argue for a theological basis, but the focus remains more on the self than on a god. Any attention to the relationship of man to God would be done in order to address the self. Third, the key word in the husband's instruction is love. Out of these nine verses directed to the husband, the word that is repeated over and over is love. As stressed in chapter two, a *pater familias* did not have to be a harsh tyrant of their home. The overall societal structure, however, did allow for this to happen. There is no room within the Ephesians household codes for a tyrannical ruler. In fact, the command to fathers is to not provoke their children. The command to masters is to stop threatening. This husband/father/master is one who would take positive actions that bear witness to his love and care for all in his household.

Key words

A complete analysis of Paul's language is beyond the scope of this study, but even a preliminary sketch provides insight into important Pauline themes. The word κεφαλή occurs twice in v. 23 and is applied to Christ as well as the husband. Christ is κεφαλή of the church and the husband is κεφαλή of the wife. There are several glosses for this word. It could be referring to the head as a body part. It could also be communicating a

high status. Within this category are two options: 1) higher rank or superiority or 2) uppermost point.[103] The way this is interpreted has implications for the rest of the household codes passage.

For those wanting to downplay the images of hierarchy within the house, the idea of origin is emphasized. Weber-Han writes "...the head therefore means where the origin is and not where the rulership begins. Many people who are looking for biblical backing for their beliefs in a church hierarchy generally do not consider the whole passage but just verses 22-24."[104] Weber-Han wants to emphasize the equality amongst men and women. Although Paul definitely supports women using their gifts, this does not mean he is against all forms of hierarchy between men and women, and especially in this case of husband and wife.

Michelle Lee-Barnewall does an important study of Paul's use of κεφαλή in the household codes. She analyzes the rhetorical use of κεφαλή. She emphasizes how Paul reverses the expected assumptions of what the role of head actually involves. Lee-Barnewall makes use of Grudem's wider contextual work on κεφαλή while expanding the implications of Paul's use and his audience's understanding. She concludes that the initial intent would be communicating a different type of leadership, a Christ-like leadership involving sacrifice of self rather than assertion of dominance and power.[105]

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[103] BDAG, 541-2.

[104] Cindy Weber-Han "Sexual Equality According to Paul: An exegetical study of 1Corinthians 11:1-16 and Ephesians 5:21-33." *Brethren Life and Thought* XXII Summer 1977, 169.

[105] Michelle Lee-Barnewall, "Turning κεφαλή on its Head: The rhetoric of reversal in Epheisans 5:21-33," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture* edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, 599-614. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Lee-Barnewall correctly acknowledges the peculiar type of authority that Christ, as well as the husband exhibits. Thielman also acknowledges this distinct form of authority. "In Ephesians, Christ's authority has been used not to control the church but to reconcile it to God at the cost of his own life (2:13, 16; 5:2; cf. 1:7) and to equip the church with what it needs for accomplishing God's purposes (4:7-16)."[106]

Another important word in the household codes is ὑποτασσόμενοι which appears in 5:21 and provides the verb for v. 22. This word, "submit," is the connecting participle for the section of household codes to the previous section. In a discussion on reading this participle as imperatival, Wallace writes

> Although there is an obvious connection between vv 21 and 22, v 21 can just as easily function as a hinge between the two sections. The thought of vv 15-21 flows right into 5:22-6:9. This section on the (extended) family, whether it starts at v 21 or v 22, is the only major section in the body of Ephesians to begin *without* a conjunction. It is as if the instruction in the former section is meant to be "ringing in the ears" of the hearers as they turn to the issue of the family[107]

Since the participle can be attached to a verb it should be read as such. This supports a grammatical connection between the household codes and the discussion on Spirit-filled living.

The verb ἀγαπάω is present six times within the nine verses. It is used as the command to the husband regarding the wife and the verb describing Christ's relationship to the church. In v. 27 there is a lengthy description of how Christ's sacrificial love for the church affected her. Then in v. 28 the infinitive form of ἀγαπάω is intensified by the presence of the indicative use of ὀφείλουσιν. This can be read as an indirect command.

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[106] Thielman, 378.

[107] David B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 651.

"It is important to understand that the normal force of the indicative mood is not thereby denied; rather, the assertion is simply in the desire, not the doing."[108] This coupled with the example of Christ and the church intensifies this command to the husband. The translation of ὀφείλουσιν to "should" as is used in the ESV, NLT, NRSV, and "ought" in the NASB, NIV is acceptable, but it does not necessarily communicate the full punch of ὀφείλω. Liddell-Scott glosses this word as "to owe, have to pay, or account for." This verb is also used in Philemon 18 where Paul is urging Philemon to free Onesimus, and if Onesimus ὀφείλει anything to charge it to Paul's account. "Should" may be a reasonable translation given the formula of infinitive following an indicative, but it does not help to see the sense of obligation that is present in this word. The command for the husband to love his wife intensifies as the passage progresses, evidenced by the semantic features of the text.

Two other important words are ἴδιος and ἑαυτόν. These words specify that wives are to submit to their own husbands (v. 22) and men are to love their own wives (v. 28). This passage is addressing the specific nature of the husband and wife relationship, not men and women generally. Thielman is right. "Both terms highlight the exclusive nature of the relationship between husbands and wives: they are to have a level of commitment to each other that is qualitatively different from their commitments to other men and women."[109]

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[108] Wallace, 451.

[109] Frank Thielman, *Ephesians,* Baker Exegetical Commentary New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 387.

The verb περιπατέω occurs seven times in Ephesians. Though not directly in the household code passage it is present leading up to it. This verb appears twice in chapters two and four. It then occurs three times leading up to the household codes in chapter five. The letter to the Ephesians is concerned with how they are walking or living. The household codes continue this concern by focusing on the daily life of the believer. The household code passage is an answer to the theme of περιπατέω.

Immediate context

The placement of the household codes in Ephesians flows from the rest of the letter. It may be a definite turn toward specific relationships, but this is not the first time in Ephesians that Paul addresses relationships. By studying the entire book, Paul's thought progression can be seen moving toward the practical theology of the household codes.

The first chapter of Ephesians describes the persons of the Trinity, highlighting our relational God. It concludes with the relationship of Christ and the church: "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (1:22-23). The relational aspect progresses as Paul reminds the Ephesians, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (2:13). This results in reconciliation to God and unity as Christ puts to death the hostility that exists between people (2:16). In Ephesians 2:19 as well as 3:6 Paul proclaims that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and citizens with the saints, no longer strangers or aliens. This is relational language. Paul is addressing how the Gentiles are to relate to Jewish Christians. They are

to become of the same group, of the same body. Ephesians 4 begins with a call for unity in the one body (v. 4). This involves being humble, gentle, and patient with each other.

Ephesians 4 continues with Paul stressing the growth of the body into Christ, building itself up in love. Paul urges the Ephesians to "be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (4:23-24). This chapter ends with emphasis on action in the context of relationship. It concludes basically by saying because you are in a relationship with God and sealed by the Holy Spirit (4:30), turn from some actions toward other actions in regard to relating to one another.

The beginning of chapter five sets up the household codes by declaring "...be imitators of God, as beloved children" (5:1). Paul is about to weave the relationship of husband and wife with the relationship between Christ and the church. The verses immediately preceding the household codes (Ephesians 5:15-20) are about living a Spirit-filled life. This involves how to relate to one another (v.19). There is a grammatical connection between vv.15-20 and 5:21-6:4. The participle ὑποτασσόμενοι is the fifth participle in a row starting at 5:15.[110]

Starting with 5:22, Paul then moves into the specific relationships that are found within the household.[111] The first part of Ephesians does contain more theological language than practical, but Ephesians 5:21-6:4 does not make an abrupt shift. Paul's vision of how a believer should live is clearly present in his mind throughout the letter. There is a clear progression of thought Paul is putting toward relationships. The

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[110] Ibid., 372.

[111] The move is a continuing thought started in Ephesians 5:15. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 720.

parallelism of language expresses this connection as well. Ephesians 5:2 and 5:25 are very similar. 5:2 καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγαπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. . .5:25 Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπῃσεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς. Ephesians 5:25 is focusing in on specific roles of members of the church. The overlap of language connects it to the preceding verses, which address life in the spirit.

Ephesians 5:22-33 is about the relationship between husbands and wives, but it is interlaced with the metaphor of Christ and the church. It is distinctly written in such a way that the household codes could not be simply lifted out of their context of Ephesians as a whole. Paul repeatedly emphasizes Christ and the church.[112] Some read this passage as so distinct that it stands out. MacDonald states that "...the household code stands out as a self-contained unit, influenced by tradition in both form and content."[113] This conclusion is demonstrated not to be true when the pericope is expanded even a small amount. The household codes flow from the preceding text.

Ephesians 5:21-6:9 is also connected to the passages following it. Clinton E. Arnold addresses this connection:

> The juxtaposition of the household code to the passage on spiritual warfare (6:10-20) likely suggests that this is one of the spheres of Satan's attack. It is crucial for the various members of the Christian household to be filled with the Spirit (5:18) and to appropriate the enabling power of

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[112] Lincoln emphasizes that Paul is still concerned with an actual marriage relationship. Paul does not seem to be using marriage as a mere symbol to talk about his real concern, which is Christ and the church. Paul is instead truly addressing marital relationships. Lincoln, 352-3.

[113] Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 325.

> God (6:10-18) to resist the attacks of the evil one directed at these important and foundational relationships.[114]

It is the position of this paper that the section of Ephesians labeled "household codes" flows out of its greater context. It is a primarily Christian document, consistent with other Scriptural teaching.

Conclusion

The style of the Ephesian household codes seems to be in direct contrast to the surrounding Roman culture. The first member of the household addressed is the woman, not the man. This elevates the secondary role. These roles of wife, child, slave are important and necessary roles within the house. They were not dignified by cultural standards. By calling attention to the lesser role first, Paul sets the tone for what is about to happen, a counter-cultural interpretation of roles. By addressing women, children, and slaves first, Paul is also implying their presence for instruction. All parties within the household are accountable to God, the ultimate authority.

There are several elements that clearly demonstrate the Ephesians household codes are a distinctly Christian form of expression. First, the submission of all roles to the authority of Christ grounds the text in Christian revelation. Second, the submission to the authority of Christ demands lesser authorities to avoid harshness when practicing their authority. Third, the lengthy instruction to the husband focuses on love. Within this description are two commands to the husband to love his wife (one of these with a sense of obligation to love), two examples of love, and six total uses of the verb for love.

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[114] Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians,* Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 364.

Fourth, the presence of two Old Testament references provides clear evidence of background. These four elements demand an understanding of the Ephesians household codes as a consistent Christian ethic.

Chapter 5

Wider context of Ephesians household codes

As demonstrated in chapter four, the Ephesians household codes are in agreement with the overall teaching and themes of the rest of the letter to the Ephesians. They are also in agreement with the rest of Scripture. In order to demonstrate this agreement, wider theological, Christological, and ecclesiological teachings in Scripture will be examined. The Ephesians household codes have theological foundation, Christological motivation, and ecclesiological application. This agreement supports the thesis that the Ephesians passage on the household is best understood as a Christian document, occurring as a natural progression of Paul's thought that is reflected throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Theological foundation

The use of Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 roots this passage in the Old Testament. This passage, Genesis 2:24 depicts the marriage relationship prior to the fall of man. This section of Genesis is telling the story of creation, how God created the world and filled it with order and care. In Genesis 2, God creates man and provides him with a helper, woman. These two are enjoined in a relationship orchestrated by God.

Genesis 2:24 is also quoted in 1 Corinthians 6:16 within a discussion of the seriousness of sexual immorality. According to Fee, in 1 Corinthians the emphasis is on the physical nature of the marriage relationship. Genesis 2:24 is used to emphasize that a

sexual union between two people links them in a serious manner. "Since it is unthinkable

that one should take away the 'limbs' of Christ and make them 'limbs' of a prostitute's

body, what could have prompted the latter idea in the first place?"[115]

This verse is also quoted in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7 as part of Jesus'

teaching. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus links divorce without the presence of adultery

to causing someone to sin. In Matthew 19, Pharisees test Jesus by questioning him on the

lawfulness of divorce. They are bringing him into a dispute between the school of the

Shammai and the school of the Hillel, which each held differing interpretations of

Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The latter understanding was that men could divorce women for

insignificant faults.[116] The text reads:

> And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to
> divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that
> he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and
> said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast
> to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two
> but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man
> separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a
> certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of
> your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from
> the beginning it was not so. And I say to you whoever divorces his wife,
> except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery"
> (Matthew 19:3-9).

Jesus cites Genesis 2:24, interpreting it to mean permanence for the practice of marriage.

Jesus also interpreted the action of Moses in permitting divorce to have been done

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[115] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 259.

[116] David Atkinson, *To Have and to Hold: The Marriage Covenant and the Discipline of Divorce* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 106.

because of something intrinsic to the people of Israel, not something intrinsic to the institution of marriage.

Bruner finds a major premise of the Pharisees' question to be that women are inferior to men. Jesus addresses this by his emphasis in v. 4. According to Bruner, Jesus' quotation of Genesis 1:27 is "an indirect criticism of the Serious (Pharisees), whose very question ("Is it biblical for *a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?") implies that males alone are God's responsible creatures, on whose paternal favor females and marriage humbly wait."[117] Moreover, Jesus' interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 shows a desire for Moses to protect women. Due to Moses' regulation women would be free to remarry because of the certificate given to them. Jesus stresses that this was not a mandate for husbands to divorce their wives but a way to limit and restrict this practice.[118]

This passage communicates three very important aspects of marriage among the early Christians. First, there is a theological basis for marriage. Marriage is not, nor was ever, meant to be a solely legal practice. It is instituted by God. Second, divorce was practiced, and for some people it was not controversial. By some it was accepted as a normative right. Third, women were seen as inferior within some communities. In the face of this, Jesus declares that women are also God's creation. By quoting Genesis 1:27 here Jesus is dignifying the women in question.

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[117] Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 2:250.

[118] Dan Doriani, *Matthew,* Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 2:180-81.

The other Old Testament verse in the Ephesians household codes is Exodus 20:12 in Ephesians 6:2. Exodus 20:12 is set within the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses for the instruction of the people of Israel. These are a people the Lord has rescued, provided food for, and now to whom he gives clear instruction. Exodus depicts God as great and powerful, displayed by thunder and lightning (Ex. 19:16). This all powerful God cares about all aspects of his people's lives.

Exodus 20:12 is also quoted in the gospel passages of Matthew 15:4, 19:19; Mark 7:10, 10:19; and Luke 18:20. Jesus' teaching ministry employs the use of the Ten Commandments. There are many other instances in which the Decalogue is alluded to in the New Testament that bear witness to the contemporary relevance of the Ten Commandments. Jones provides Matthew 15:19 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11 as examples in the New Testament where the Ten Commandments are used "...to provide the framework for moral analysis and exhortation..."[119] The explicit and implicit presence of the Ten Commandments in the New Testament alludes to the early Christian reliance on Old Testament teaching. Jones writes "The implication is that the Ten Commandments as a unitary code of conduct continue to structure the covenant way of life to which God's people are called "in the Lord," that is, in their identity as Christians."[120]

The presence of these two (Genesis 2:24 and Exodus 20:12) Old Testament verses and their use elsewhere in the New Testament testify to the presence of Christian material that was available to draw on for household codes. These verses were standard in ethical discussions within the Christian community. Paul was already writing within the context

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[119] David Clyde Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 107.

[120] Ibid., 108.

of extensive Christian reflection on marriage predicated on the teachings of the Old Testament as interpreted by Jesus. Early Christians were interacting with material which addressed morality within the home.

Furthermore, Paul repeatedly relied on the Old Testament in his other letters. Romans contains 49 direct quotations from the Old Testament. Of those 49, 18 are from the Pentateuch. First Corinthians contains five direct quotations from the Pentateuch. Second Corinthians contains four from the Pentateuch. Galatians contains nine direct Pentateuch quotations. Ephesians only has two from the Pentateuch, but six from the Old Testament as a whole. First Timothy contains two direct quotations from the Pentateuch, and Second Timothy has one. It was not atypical for Paul to draw from Old Testament teaching when addressing the early church. Paul regularly displays overt use of the Old Testament as the central source for his theology and ethics.

Christological motivation

The revelation of God to Israel provided a crucial background from which the early Christians drew to formulate their ethics. The life and work of Christ happens against this background. Christ is the motivating force in Ephesians. Bruce exegetes Ephesians 5:22 thusly:

> It is not that women are inferior to men, or that wives are inferior to husbands, either naturally or spiritually. But Paul recognizes a divinely ordained hierarchy in the order of creation, and in this order the wife has a place next after her husband. When she recognizes and accepts this subordinate place, he means, she does so 'as unto the Lord', acknowledging His ordinance.[121]

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[121] F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1961), 114.

Best writes that the motivating factor is what makes the household code found in Ephesians different from other household codes.[122] O'Brien defines this motivating factor as Christ. In the Hellenistic model of household codes, motivation was largely political, but in Ephesians it is Christ.[123]

The verb παραδίδωμι is used to describe the action Christ took for the church in v. 25. This verb is also used in Ephesians 5:2, saying that Christ gave himself up as a sacrifice. Romans 4:25 uses παραδίδωμι to communicate the death and resurrection of Christ as providing the means for God to forgive our sins. Ephesians 5:25 has this act in mind. Christ gave his life for the church. He died for the church. This is the example to the husband - complete sacrificial love.

The theme of Christ as our example is also prominent in Philippians 2:3-8:

> Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This passage makes the connection between Christ's work on the cross and focusing on others. The work of Christ not only has cosmic consequences, but also should affect how we treat other people. In John 13 Jesus washes his disciple's feet. John 13:14-15 states, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

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[122] Ernest Best, "The Haustafel in Ephesians (Eph. 5.22-6.9)," in *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 189.

[123] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians,* Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 406.

another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." The self-giving of Christ permeates the household codes in Ephesians.

Ecclesiological application

In the early church the activities within a household were important for several reasons. Christians met and worshiped together in their houses. This means that the people could link corporate worship among believers with household conduct.[124] This also places an inevitable focus on the house as well as its members. The household was the small community that made up the larger church.[125] Aristotle viewed the household as important because it was a miniature city-state. Roman emperors took an interest in the households when they were concerned it would affect the overall empire. Epictetus, and wider Stoic understanding, was concerned with the house in as much as it affected the self. The Ephesians household codes suggest an interest in the home that was particularly Christian. The differences point to the importance of the family.

The New Testament demonstrates the importance of the home. Households converted together (Acts 16:15, 16:31, 18:7-8; 1 Corinthians 1:16, 16:5; Philippians 4:22; 2 Timothy 4:19). They provided shelter for missionaries (Acts 21:4, 21:16; 2 Timothy 1:16; Philemon 22). They provided a place of worship (Acts 2:46; Romans 16:3-5; Colossians 4:15). As the quantity of texts indicates, a believer's home was far from a private residence. The home of a believer was an initial place of evangelism, a place to

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[124] Thielman, 365-66.

[125] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity,* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 60.

worship, and a tool for aiding others to share the gospel. In Ephesians, the interest in the home is distinctly Christian.

Greater Context: Ephesians 5 supported by other New Testament texts

The structure of the family among early Christians is depicted primarily by two New Testament texts. Ephesians 5:21-6:4 and Colossians 3:18-4:1 list specific roles within a household. This provides the relationships that are expected to be present in first-century Christian households. They are husbands and wives, parents and children, as well as masters and slaves.

Colossians 3:18-4:1 is the closest parallel to the Ephesians text. According to Carson and Moo, the Colossians passage was composed prior to the Ephesians text.[126] The emphasis in this passage lies in the slave/master relationship. This is the largest portion of the section. The pattern of addressing the subordinate party first is the same. The Colossians household code is consistent in content with the Ephesians household code, while being written at a different time to a different audience. Another text that highlights consistency in Paul's thought is in 1 Corinthians.

In 1 Corinthians Paul teaches:

> But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 1 Cor. 7:2-4

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[126] Carson and Moo date Colossians as late 50s to early 60s, definitely prior to 61 AD due to an earthquake. They date Ephesians in early 60s. D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 486-487, 522.

This passage illustrates that the ideal place of sex is within marriage and within the marriage both partners have access. This passage provides depth to hierarchical roles in Christian marriage. The wife has access to her husband in this passage. The wife's submission to her husband does not mean that he has sole control in their relationship. The wife has ownership and say in the relationship.

Conclusion

The household codes in Ephesians are in agreement with the rest of New Testament. The Ephesians household codes have a foundation in the Old Testament, motivation stemming from Christ, and were relevant for the early church. The ideas of submission, authority, obedience, and love are ideas espoused throughout the New Testament. Christianity cares for even the seemingly least important. That is shown in the Ephesian household codes and the rest of the New Testament. The Ephesians passage on the household are better understood as a primarily Christian text, influenced by the teachings present in the Old and New Testaments rather than the culture surrounding early church.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The household codes in Ephesians 5:18-6:9 have been extensively researched and debated. By building upon previous research, and by expanding the parameters of the section to include surrounding verses, the connection to its surrounding context becomes clear. Though Aristotelian writings bear witness to the presence of philosophical inquiry in the management of the home, Paul was writing with a very different *telos* in mind–reflecting the attributes of the God who had acted in history to save his people. If Paul were trying to apply Aristotle to his audience, it is curious why he used a different form and wrote to a different end. Paul's writing reflected his background in Old Testament teaching and his understanding of the gospel, the Ephesian household codes resemble a Christian ethic more so than a pagan philosophy. The historical context of the surrounding culture was incompatible with Ephesians 5.

The study of the Roman household in chapter 2 brought forth three main points: The extreme authority of the head of house, the goal of harmony in marriage, and the relative morality shown by the handling of adultery. In the case of leadership, it would be the followers who would be expected to sacrifice themselves for their leader. A leader would not be expected to sacrifice himself for his subordinates. Roman culture could understand a desire for children to obey their parents. If Paul was writing the household codes to be friendly to Roman practice, he missed the mark.

Chapter 3 investigated Stoicism, which highlighted distinct characteristics, to illumine a possible influence on Paul's writing. The particular personal God written about in Ephesians is different in many important respects from the Stoic deity. The Stoic god does not care about having a relationship with its followers. The God of Christianity reveals himself and begins relationships with men and women. There is nothing intrinsically relational about the rationality of the deity of Stoicism. Ephesians 5 rests on a relationship between God and man. This relationship affects all other relationships. Among Christians, Paul emphasizes an idea of self sacrifice rather than self protection. Especially in regard to the relationship between husband and wife, instead of boundaries, intimacy is emphasized.

There are surface similarities between Stoic principles and Christian principles. Morality is important in both Christianity and Stoicism. Both audiences, Epictetus's and Paul's, are called to act out their inner convictions. Only one audience has the potential to achieve imitation of their deity in community. The theology of Paul does not allow for the amount of searching and discovery necessary in Stoic theology. The god of Stoicism, and its attributes, must be discovered. The God of Christianity reveals himself. Paul's theology is rooted in a particular person, who is Christ. Epictetus does not have the same pathway to truth regarding the attributes of his god, there is no person at the source of his belief system. This emphasis on the self adds variation in understanding and practice to the imitation of the Stoic god. Christians had actually met their God. Paul exhorts the husband to do what Christ did. The sacrifice of Jesus was an actual historical event. The husband can imitate what Paul and others know to be true of Christ, their God. If Paul was influenced by Stoic thought, he did a poor job at appropriating the ideals.

The household codes of Ephesians were written in a style that was in substantial contrast to the surrounding Roman culture. There are several elements that clearly demonstrate the Ephesians household codes as a distinctly Christian form of expression. First, the submission of all roles to the authority of Christ grounds the text in Christian revelation. Second, the submission to the authority of Christ demands lesser authorities to avoid harshness when practicing their authority. Third, the lengthy instruction to the husband focuses on love. Within this description are two commands to the husband to love his wife (one of these with a sense of obligation to love), two examples of love, and six total uses of the verb for love. Fourth, the presence of two Old Testament references provides clear evidence of background. These four elements demand an understanding of the Ephesians household codes as being primarily influenced by Christian reflection, and any pagan influences pale in comparison to the prevailing contributions in Paul's argumentation of Old Testament thought, viewed through the lens of the teachings and salvific actions of the Lord Jesus.

The household codes in Ephesians are in agreement with the rest of New Testament. The Ephesians household codes have a foundation in the Old Testament, motivation stemming from Christ, and were relevant for the early church. The ideas of submission, authority, obedience, and love are ideas espoused throughout the New Testament. The use of the Old Testament both roots the text in what was considered Christian literature, but is also typical Pauline practice. The Ephesians household codes fit within other Christian writings better than they do within Roman practice or Stoic philosophy. The primary influence upon Paul regarding Ephesians 5:18-6:9 was Old Testament teaching and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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