

the capacity of parents toward children who are dependent and whose natural parents are dead or have abandoned them.

Further, it can be seen to include all those to whom we stand in authority relationships. That is, the principles that apply in parent-child relationships also apply in other authority relationships.

In Scripture there are three spheres in which authority relationships are God-ordained: the family, the church, and the state. In each of these spheres relationships may be expressed in terms of superordinates, equals, and subordinates.

[1] Authority relationships in the family

[a] Authority relationships between parents and children

Luke 2:51 -- "And he (Jesus) went down with them (His earthly parents) and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 -- "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Ephesians 6:1-4 -- "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

[b] Authority relationships between husbands and wives

Ephesians 5:22-23 -- "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

[2] Authority relationships in the church