



**Issues, Etc.**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio*

## TRANSCRIPT

*Rev. Todd Wilken, Host*

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# "Christian Vocation, Part 3: Husbands, Wives, Parents & Children"

**Guest:**  
**Pastor Peter Bender**  
**Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy**  
**Sussex, WI**

**Thursday, December 29, 2011**

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**WILKEN:** We've been talking about vocation this week, and we've talked about pastors and their people. We've talked about civil government and their citizens. And those seem to be paired vocations, and the ones we're going to talk about today are also pairs of vocations – that is, husbands and wives and then parents and children. But there's something more fundamental. These vocations are of a different caliber than the others, and I think it has to do with

their origin in creation itself, and with God Himself.

We're going to talk about husbands and wives, parents and children – part three of our five-part series on Christian vocation today with Pastor Peter Bender. It's Thursday afternoon, December the 29<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Peter Bender is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy in

Sussex, Wisconsin. Pastor Bender, welcome back.

**BENDER:** Nice to be back with you again, Todd.

**WILKEN:** Are these two pairs of vocations – husband-wife, parent-child – are they of a different caliber than all the other ones that we will talk about?

**BENDER:** There is a difference in character — especially if one thinks of, for example, civil government that we talked about in our last session. Civil government and the rule of law became necessary because of the problem of sin. If there hadn't been the problem of sin, there wouldn't have been a necessity for government to bridle the gross outbreaks of sin in the unbelieving world and even, for that matter, among Christians when their flesh gets the better of them. But husbands and wives – these offices, these stations and callings precede the fall into sin. At the beginning, when God created man in His own image – we're created in the image of the selfless God of love and the self-giving God of love. And He is husband in His very character and nature, as the one whose self-giving love brought the world and all things into existence. And man is said, then, to be made in the image of God, and immediately is told to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth and to subdue it and have dominion over the creation. And those are all of the things that husbands and wives and parents and children are involved in. I'd like to say that this is kind of like the climax to Luther's section on the Table of Duties, because no other section on the Table of Duties really rests upon the Gospel of Christ, the husband for His bride, the Church, and what that means for us in our callings. No other section does that like this section does.

**WILKEN:** Talk about that connection, if you would. It is getting a little ahead of ourselves, and I'm sure this is where we'll want to end our conversation. But there is

this explicit connection, made by St. Paul, of this created order of husband and wife with Christ and His Church that I think needs to be in the forefront.

**BENDER:** I think that's very well known among serious Christians: that the husband, according to Ephesians 5, is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, and the wife is to submit to her husband and his love as the Church submits to Christ. What is particularly interesting and, I don't think, well-known, is that the passages that Luther cites from the Table of Duties – particularly 1 Peter 3, regarding husbands and wives – anchors not only the office of husband in the person and work of Christ as He lays down His life for His bride the Church, which is Pauline language from Ephesians 5, but he also anchors the office of wife in Christ. And that's something that I think most Christians don't realize. And the particular point of connection is made by the apostle Peter in chapter 2, immediately preceding the section on husbands and wives. But they're linked together. "And Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate," and it says of Him in 1 Peter 2:23, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He was threatened, He committed Himself to the Father, who judges righteously." And Christ Himself bore our sins in this submission to the civil authority under God. And then it goes on immediately after that, the first verse of chapter 3, "Likewise, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands." So the submission of the wife to the husband is patterned after and likened to Christ's submission to Pontius Pilate and to the suffering and death of the cross. I wonder how many wives would like to hear that.

**WILKEN:** So where would we go primarily in Scripture to discuss husbands and wives – beginning with husbands?

**BENDER:** Well, we mentioned the Ephesians 5 passage. Luther, in his Table of Duties, begins with 1 Peter 3:7, and this

is the New International Version translation: “Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner or the weaker vessel, and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” There are words and phrases, Todd, in that verse 7 of 1 Peter 3, that need explanation and context because they link us to other portions of Peter’s epistle. The wives passage is actually in 1 Peter 3:5-6, the verses that precede this verse that I just read on husbands. So when Peter says, “Husbands, in the same way,” he’s hearkening back: in the same way that wives are called by the Gospel to submit to their husbands, in the same way, husbands are called to be considerate of their wives. And the consideration and the understanding that they’re to bring to their office is that wives are called “the weaker partner, the weaker vessel,” not because females and wives are ontologically weaker beings. Not by any means, but because their office is an office of submission and subordination to the husband. And the husband needs to be considerate of that – particularly the Christian husband, lest his flesh, which is going to tend towards domineering nature, take advantage of his wife’s subordinate position. So both the husband and the wife are called to live by faith in Christ’s submission: the husband to the Father’s will, and the wife also looks to Christ, who submitted Himself to God’s will when He suffered under Pontius Pilate.

**WILKEN:** Can you talk a little bit more about “the weaker vessel,” or “the weaker partner” language there that the apostle uses?

**BENDER:** Yeah. “Weaker partner” or “weaker vessel” – I like that better, in terms of a translation – is weaker because of her office. She is called to a subordinate position, and secondly, she is the vessel that carries the new life. So the idea here

that the apostle Peter is talking about – and it’s found elsewhere in Scripture, too – is that it’s not so much weaker as it is precious. Precious because of her unique calling to bring the next generation into the world, to carry children, to give birth, to give new life to the world. And for the husband, he is giving his love and life to the wife, she’s receiving that – which is fundamentally a feminine thing to do – and then she nurtures and cares for that life in her womb, making her the very most precious vessel of humanity. And they’re both to be understood as equal heirs of the gracious gift of life. And if the husband doesn’t believe that, that they’re both, in terms of God’s grace and the plan of salvation, equal recipients – for God’s grace comes not at all by any merit, it’s not because we’re male or female or black or white or slave or free; we’re justified by God’s grace alone, and that faith in the mercy and grace of God is the way in which we all approach our stations and callings in life, even though we occupy different positions.

And one thing needs to be said about this subordination of the wife to the husband. In terms of the husband being the head of the wife, it is not a headship of the Law. It’s not a headship of domination, of coercion, like a king over subjects. It is uniquely a headship of love, a headship of self-sacrifice, and it’s patterned after Christ’s love and self-sacrifice for His bride, the Church. And the kind of submission, then, to which the wife is called, is like that of the church to Christ: allowing Him to forgive her, allowing Him to shoulder her burdens, allowing Him to carry the cross, allowing Him to love her. And that’s what she’s uniquely called to to.

**WILKEN:** Real quickly, about 30 seconds, do you think, maybe – I wouldn’t want to tamper with the translation, but do you think a good explanation of that term “weaker vessel” might be best expressed by talking about a more fragile vessel?

**BENDER:** Yes, exactly. Fragile, delicate, precious, in that sense, especially bearing the next generation, bearing the new humanity, the new life, and also because of her position of subordination.

**WILKEN:** Pastor Peter Bender is our guest. It's part three of a five-part series we're doing this week on Christian vocation. Today, husbands and wives, and a little bit later we'll talk about parents and children. These paired vocations; one goes with the other. You can't have one without the other. And they are vocations that are lived out explicitly in relationship to one another.

It's Thursday afternoon, December the 29<sup>th</sup>. We'll be right back and talk more about husbands and wives.

**[BREAK]**

**WILKEN:** Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* We're talking about the vocation of husbands and wives, and a little bit later, parents and children. I'm Todd Wilken. Pastor Peter Bender is our guest.

Pastor Bender, do you think that the Biblical teaching on husbands and wives has suffered because, at least in our culture today, we think about that relationship primarily either in romantic terms or simply in division of labor terms – “who does what where” kind of a thing, and not in the terms – I guess you could say the theological terms expressed here by the apostle.

**BENDER:** Yes, Todd, and I think what you're really putting your finger on is that we tend to think of it in Law terms rather than Gospel terms. Even when we're talking about marriage as romance, that is still fundamentally a question of the Law. Let me give you an example of what I mean. If we are attracted to someone because they're pretty, because we like their personality, because they please us in so many different ways, what is motivating, then, our attraction to them is, in a sense, works. In

other words, they are something or they have done something that triggers in us affection. That's actually in the realm of the Law. Now, I don't want to dissuade anybody from loving their wives because they are pretty and so forth, or a wife loving her husband because he is handsome, but for us as Christians, when we say “I do,” we are being called and we are submitting ourselves to a different way of thinking. And we are called to love, not because the person is pretty or not because the woman never burns the pot roast, but rather we're called to love as Christ loved: freely and unconditionally, and in covering over sin. And especially when the beloved is, in what they have done or what they've become, unlovely. And, you see, that's fundamentally in the realm of the Gospel. “And to this faith we are called, because Christ loved us when we were without strength, while we were still sinners. In this is love, not that we love God, but that He first loved us and gave His Son for the atoning sacrifice for our sin.” So He loved us when we were quite unlovely and quite ugly, as a matter of fact. And it is His love received by faith that makes us beautiful. And that's picked up on in the wives' section in 1 Peter 3:6. And I like to include verse 5 in front of that, even though Luther doesn't do that in the Table of Duties' selection of passages. Verse 5 gives a context, and I think that the New International Version translation says it rather well. He says, “This is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands.” You see that same thing in Ephesians 5, where the wife is said to be cleansed by the washing of water and the Word, and she is holy and beautiful from her Redeemer because she has received His love and forgiveness. So there is nothing more beautiful, there is nothing more feminine under wives than to live by faith in the husband's love and to allow his – to receive his love and to allow him to love

you. And this is what it means to be governed by the Gospel.

**WILKEN:** Well, then let's turn to wives and deal with that word that is so difficult nowadays in our cultural context for, well, I think both wives and husbands, to hear and understand: that word "submission." You've already begun us well on the way to rightly understanding it. The old word may have been "obey," a word that's actually fallen out of many of the formula for a marriage ceremony, civil or otherwise. What is the proper Biblical understanding of obedience or submission. How do we rightly understand that?

**BENDER:** Sure. This Greek word, *hypotasso*, upon which it is based, is not best translated "obey," but "submit" or "subordinate oneself." And the Church is subordinate to Christ, and that relationship of Christ to His bride the Church is one of husband to wife. To be fundamentally masculine is to give love and to give life through that love, which is what Christ does when He shoulders the burden of His bride's sin and suffers and dies for her upon the cross. And then this submission or subordination of the Church to Him is that she, His bride, allows Him to do that, allows Him to be punished for her sin, allows Him to take responsibility, allows Him to pay the ultimate price. And Todd, He does so. Our gracious Lord, not begrudgingly toward His bride in the slightest. He does it willingly and freely. It's what He really wanted to do. And see, it's our faith in that love of Christ as our Bridegroom that, then, we believe in and that shapes our station and calling in life with one another. And so wives are called to that kind of submission as the Church submits to Christ.

In my work for 25 years now with couples, as a pastor, they have struggles and tensions all of the time. And believe it or not, one of the greatest causes of frustration is a husband that is not holding the sins of his

wife against her in the slightest, but she believes that she is unworthy of his love. And she will not allow him to forgive her and to accept her the way she is, with all of her faults and blemishes. She's constantly chafing like a hamster running in the wheel, thinking, "I've got to do something to make myself worthy of my husband's love," and sometimes, no matter how much he says "I love you, I forgive you just as you are," she still just can't believe it. That's because she's living under the Law rather than under the Gospel. And he wants to forgive her. He wants to give the Gospel to her. But she doesn't want to receive it because she just can't believe that he would love her just the way she is.

**WILKEN:** So then you say – and I think this is a great way of summarizing husbands and wives together – to be masculine is to give of oneself.

**BENDER:** Correct.

**WILKEN:** To be feminine is to receive.

**BENDER:** Right.

**WILKEN:** Talk about that, with a few minutes left.

**BENDER:** To be masculine is to give, and to be feminine is to receive. Now, someone will immediately counter, "But wives give a lot." And it's true. They give to their children, which is moving us into the next section in the Table of Duties. But their capacity to be able to give is in direct proportion to them receiving the love of their husbands. So Todd, as you began this hour talking about the pairings of husbands and wives, that pairing of husbands and wives has very much to do with the pairing of parents and children. The wife is enabled to live and, in her vocation as mother, when she is freely receiving and confidently receiving the love and the support and the care that is being given to her from her husband. Quite frankly, she runs out of gas, she runs out of

love to give without a husband there who is giving to her so that she can be mother to the children. Same thing for the Church. The Church lives and moves and has her being insofar as she is not doing things for her Lord, but receiving from her Lord that she might live in mercy and charity to the world around her. And so the Church is at her best and is most beautiful when she is receiving the love of her husband, Christ Jesus. And so also, in the Christian family, the wife is the most beautiful when she is receiving the love of her husband. And then she can – to use St. Paul’s language from Philippians, she’s able to do all things in the family through the love of her husband, which strengthens her.

**WILKEN:** With just a few seconds, then, it’s not a 50-50 thing, is it?

**BENDER:** No. Not at all. There’s giving and receiving that we are all called to as Christians in our vocation. But this unique giving of the husband is directed toward the wife, which means that the primary relationship in the home is that of husband to wife, and wife to husband. Only then can the relationship of parents and children be in proper balance.

**WILKEN:** And we’ll talk about that on the other side of the break.

It’s Thursday afternoon, December the 29<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Peter Bender is our guest. He’s pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy in Sussex, Wisconsin.

**[BREAK]**

**WILKEN:** Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* I’m Todd Wilken. On this Thursday afternoon, we’re continuing our series on Christian vocation today: husbands, wives, and we’re about to talk about parents and children, which kind of leads us to talk about fathers and mothers first, two other paired

vocations. We kind of put them together as parents.

So let’s turn to parents and children if we could, Pastor Bender. First of all, taking that word “parent” by itself. Just for the sake of time, we say “parents,” but we really are talking about two separate vocations, aren’t we – father and mother.

**BENDER:** Yes. “Parents” is the general term that we have from the catechism under the Table of Duties, but in the passage that Luther cites from Ephesians 6:4, it doesn’t say, “Parents, do not exasperate your children,” but “Fathers, do not exasperate” or, “provoke your children to wrath,” as the old King James put it. And that’s significant, because it indicates we’re not just talking about the office of parent, but the unique office of father, the unique office of mother. They’re both parents, but they bear the image of God and they exercise dominion in the home in different ways. There are masculine and feminine characteristics of each office. And when St. Paul begins that verse citing fathers, it’s not to the exclusion of mothers, but it indicates the hierarchy in the home and that the fathers are the head of the household for the welfare and the benefit of the entire household and that of their children. What is particularly emphasized here, “fathers do not exasperate or provoke them to wrath,” is what one of our Missouri-Synod church fathers, C.F.W. Walther, would talk about in his theses on Law and Gospel – that fathers, while they have a role to maintain order and to sometimes wield the discipline and punishment in the home, the Gospel has to predominate. That’s what Walther said. So to the extent that fathers use the Law, to the extent that they discipline, it is always done with charity and for the cause of repentance of their children, and for the cause of the fathers being able to bestow forgiveness and love and mercy upon their children. If they live exclusively by the Law, then the children can never please father

and mother, they can never do what is right, and they can despair or be driven to wrath or exasperation.

**WILKEN:** I find this, at least in my experience doing what I do now as a radio host, one of the questions that I get most frequently from Christian fathers. And it usually is not that they are exasperating their children, but that their children are exasperating them. And they feel a sense of failure as a Christian father, and I think it often stems from a misunderstanding of what their job is.

**BENDER:** I agree.

**WILKEN:** They think, "I'm the spiritual head of this household, my wife's in line but the kids are teenagers and I can't keep them in line. I must be failing," because they view their primary job as to kind of keep civil order in their family, rather than a spiritual order in their family. What do you think?

**BENDER:** Sure. There are a couple of things that I think we could say about that. If God couldn't keep Adam and Even in line, we should not think that as earthly fathers, we're going to be able to just make everybody toe the line and everybody will do what is right in the home and all the children will be dutiful and so forth. A couple of times we've emphasized over this series that we can only do what we're given to do in our vocation. And when I say that, that's a call to live by faith in what God gives us. As ministers, we're called to preach faithfully according to the Word of God, and the conversion of hearts is going to be up to God the Holy Spirit through that Word to work that when and where He pleases. So also here, when it comes to parents, and fathers dealing with their children.

I think, Todd, it's very important that parents cultivate a dispassionate kind of attitude toward their children, recognizing that we're all sinners. The flesh is going to have its way from time to time with all of us. But we

administer the Law and punishment in a dispassionate way. Sometimes there will be a real deep change of heart in our children, sometimes not. Sometimes it'll happen immediately, sometimes it's going to take a while.

The exasperation and frustration that you cited on the part of parents, and particularly fathers, is really an exasperation of their own mistrust, not to commend their office and their work to God. Do what you're called to do as a father, and let the chips fall where they may and commend that work and your children to the Lord in prayer. And trust His Word to work it out.

**WILKEN:** When you say dispassionate, you mean, "Don't take it personally." Is that what you're saying?

**BENDER:** I think that's part of it, not to take it personally, but also – there are things that our children will do as sinners that just frost us. And to grab them and in anger, discipline them and spank them and beat them and so forth – perhaps they need discipline, but it needs to be administered like the judge who simply passes the sentence upon them in an unemotional, dispassionate way. But that's not the only thing that parents do. They also are called to forgive, whether or not the children believe and desire that forgiveness. Discipline in the home and forgiveness are two different things. Sometimes parents think, "If I forgive my children, that means that I can't punish them or discipline them." Not at all. I often give the example of what's happened in our own home several times. There are certain consequences for certain behavior. If you play the ball in the front yard and you're not to do that – you're explicitly told not to do that – it's going to go through the front picture window, and it happens to do that. They know what the punishment is. It may involve spanking. And they may come, after having done that, and say, "I'm so sorry, Dad, I broke the window."

And so, “I forgive you, now bend over and receive the punishment.” And this is the same thing that happened with David in the Old Testament. When Nathan said to him, “The Lord has put away your sin. You will not die,” there were still consequences that he suffered for the rest of his reign as king. And that taught him to live by faith in the mercy of God.

**WILKEN:** This relationship between parents and children is one of those – we were talking earlier about husband and wife; that one has a continuity. Although it grows and deepens, it has a continuity throughout life. It is precisely designed to have that continuity.

**BENDER:** Right.

**WILKEN:** But parents and children are different, I guess if only in this sense, that in the vast majority of cases, the children will leave and go and become husbands, wives, parents to their own children in the future. What is it? How is it that that relationship does change and doesn't change as our children grow into adults themselves?

**BENDER:** I think that it's a great question because the commandment, “Honor your father and your mother” isn't suddenly set aside once the children grow up and have families of their own. But the relationships do change. When a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, the primary relationship for him is to his wife and no longer to his parents. It is as if the headship has been transferred. In other words, when the children are in the home and are growing up, their head is their father and they're connected to God, so to speak, through him. And a daughter's head is her father. When the man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife and a new home is created there, then the head of every man is Christ. “The head of Christ is God,” as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians. And then the headship of those daughters who have become wives also undergoes a

transfer, so to speak. No longer does she understand her connection back to God through her father, but now it becomes through her husband. At least, that is the ideal and kind of the Biblical portrait.

**WILKEN:** Let's take a break right there and explore that a little bit more on the other side of this break.

Pastor Peter Bender is our guest, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy in Sussex, Wisconsin. This is part three this week of a five-part series on Christian vocation. We're talking husbands, wives, parents and children. When we come back, we'll talk more about how that relationship, that headship, transfers and changes throughout our lives. Stay tuned.

**[BREAK]**

**WILKEN:** Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* I'm Todd Wilken. We're talking with Pastor Peter Bender in part three of our five-part series on Christian vocation. We're talking about parents and children for the next ten minutes of the program. Pastor Bender is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy in Sussex, Wisconsin. Peter, tell us about the Concordia Catechetical Academy.

**BENDER:** The CCA is an auxiliary of Peace Lutheran Church here in Sussex, and it's dedicated to promoting Luther's Small Catechism, faithful Lutheran catechesis not only in our own congregation, but in the Church at large through an annual symposium that's held the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June, and through the production of catechetical materials for both youth and adult, and the Lutheran Catechesis series, of which the *Lutheran Catechesis: Catechumen* and *Catechist Editions* are a part, including material on the Table of Duties that we've been discussing, is all a part of that. Our congregation – it's kind of one of our big



mission outreach auxiliaries to the world around us.

**WILKEN:** Folks, you'll find a link to the Concordia Catechetical Academy at our website, [issuesetc.org](http://issuesetc.org). Go to the "Listen on Demand" page.

Now, let's talk a little bit more about that transfer of headship, as you were putting it. It doesn't mean that the father ceases to be the father to his daughter when her spiritual head becomes her husband. He remains a father, but it kind of sounds like you're saying he has to cede that authority that he enjoyed while she lived under his roof to another man who will take that authority for her and their children.

**BENDER:** That's right, and that's fundamentally a call to faith, to trust in God and what He calls us to be, and what He calls us to do in His Word. And we should spend some time, probably before our time is up, talking about what happens when we fail, or when others to whom we are yoked fail. The wife that marries that husband and who apostatizes from the faith, or who fails in his responsibilities or the child who has a parent who fails – then what does that mean? There are clues to what that means in some of these passages in the Table of Duties. But God is calling us to live by faith in what He gives, and it's especially when those around us fail – when a husband fails to be that husband. Then the father needs to continue to direct his wife, to let that husband be the husband that he is, and trust God to do you good through that husband, even though he has failed. It's not right, for example, for the father to go over to the son-in-law's house and give him "what for," it's rather given to him to direct his wife to be faithful, as God gives her the strength, to that husband.

**WILKEN:** Now, the passage that you had referenced before is simply the Fourth Commandment. And, of course, it says, "Honor your father and your mother." Going

back to children in a more conventional sense – that is, when they're under our roof, what is in the word "honor"? Because that seems distinct from simply "obey your parents."

**BENDER:** Sure. And what's in that word is the understanding that there is a respect and a reverence directed to them. Not because of their merit – in other words, how well they've succeeded because they've earned my respect. But rather, there's a respect and a reverence directed toward them because God stands behind that office and God has placed them there. And for better or for worse, they are our parents and we received life from God through them. So Luther makes a big point of this in the Large Catechism, that we honor our father and our mother not because they merit it, but rather, for God's sake, because He has given them to us and He stands behind them. And so for the sake of the commandment of God and His institution of the offices of father and mother, we honor them. And this, again, is what it means to live not under the Law but under the Gospel. To live under the Law would mean they've got to earn my respect and love and devotion and honor. To live under the Gospel means no, I'm going to extend them honor and respect and obedience and love and reverence for Christ's sake, because Christ honored us in His sacrifice upon the cross. And we didn't deserve it. Therefore, it is fundamentally a Christian thing, governed by the Gospel and faith in Jesus to honor others and respect them and show deference to them, even though they don't deserve it according to their works. But according to God's order they do.

**WILKEN:** The beautiful thing about this vocation of children, as Luther points out earlier in the Small Catechism, is this command that governs that vocation is a command that has a promise attached to it. With about a minute, talk about that promise.

**BENDER:** Yeah, and St. Paul picks up on it in the Ephesians 6 passage, where he not only cites the Fourth Commandment, “Honor your father and your mother,” he then goes on to say, “That’s the first commandment in the Ten Commandments that has a unique promise attached to it, namely, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life upon the earth.” And when I’m talking to kids about this, I ask them very simply, “If Mom and Dad tell you to do something, and you grumble and complain about it and you ignore it and you don’t do it, do things go well for you in the home?” “No, no, no.” “Or do things go better for you if you say, ‘Yes, Mom and Dad’ and then you hop to it and do what they ask you to do?” Well, of course when you do as you’re told, things go better for you. It’s kind of as simple as that: there are causes and effects to our relationships in this world on the horizontal plane – that is, in our relationships to one another. It’s how the world works and operates. And that’s partly what the Old Testament and what the New Testament are talking about with the promise attached to the honor and the deference afforded to parents under the Fourth Commandment. It also kind of indicates that that becomes a key passage for understanding the way in which everything works in the world. You can also apply it to civil government, and living by faith in honor of the civil government under the laws of the land. Things are going to tend to go well for you, and you’re going to tend to enjoy long life. So it’s not just in the area of the home life with children and their relationship to parents. But it also extends across society and culture.

**WILKEN:** With about 30 seconds, Peter, would you tell us about tomorrow’s conversation on Christian vocation. Talk about workers, employers, supervisors – about 30 seconds for a preview.

**BENDER:** Sure. We’re going to carry this theme over about living by faith in the undeserved love of God in Christ, living by faith in the Gospel, and how that shapes our relationship to unbelieving supervisors and employers who aren’t Christian in the slightest and make sometimes unreasonable demands upon us, and that it is the Gospel and our faith in the undeserved love of God in Christ that shapes the way in which we think about our office as workers or supervisors and how we live with one another in those offices.

**WILKEN:** Pastor Peter Bender is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church and Director of the Concordia Catechetical Academy in Sussex, Wisconsin. Peter, thank you again.

**BENDER:** Thank you, Todd.

**WILKEN:** Again, it all comes back to God’s gracious gift to us. In what manifold ways He showers His grace upon us! First and foremost, in His Son Jesus Christ, the source and the fount of all mercy, all grace, all forgiveness. But then that cross is expressed in the real and everyday relationships that God has put us into. There’s no sense in avoiding them. We have fathers and mothers, we are children. Many of us are husbands and wives, and we have our children. And this is a gift from God to us. He shows us wherein He daily permits us to live in that grace and mercy won for us at the cross by Jesus Christ. This is what it means to have a Christ-centered marriage and family. Not that somehow we enliven Christ or we imitate Christ, but that Christ is alive in this through the forgiveness of sins.

I’m Todd Wilken. Thanks for listening to *Issues, Etc.*

