

Ephesians Chapter 5 Continued

Ephesians 5:17 "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord [is]."

"Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is":

Knowing and understanding God's will through His Word is spiritual wisdom.

For example, God's will revealed to us is that people should be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4), Spirit filled, (Eph. 5:18), sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3), submissive (1 Peter 2:13-15), suffering (1 Peter 2:20), and thankful (1 Thess. 5:18).

Jesus is the supreme example for all (see John 4:4; 5:19, 30; 1 Peter 4:1-2).

"Wherefore":

This looks back to the evil days of verse 16.

Since the current age is so perilous orally, Christians must clearly understand "what the will of the Lord is."

In the last lesson, we saw some things that the Christian should not be caught up in.

Now, we see that to be involved with the sinners in the world, or to be caught up in sin ourselves, is unwise.

We are instructed here not to be unwise.

Not being unwise or foolish includes, among other things, not becoming anxious or panicked.

The wise will seek the will of God and do it.

Many people I know say that they would do the will of God, if they knew what the will of God for their life was.

My suggestion to them is to study the Word of God, for in the Word of God, you will find the will of God.

The wise believer knows that only in the Lord's will and power can anything good and lasting ever be accomplished.

He won't be foolish by running frantically in every direction trying to see how many programs and projects he can become involved in.

Such activity easily becomes futile and leads to burnout and discouragement, because it works in the power of the flesh even when it is well intentioned.

Trying to run ahead of God only puts us further behind in His work.

The unwise believer who behaves in a foolish manner tries to function apart from God's will and is inevitably weak, frustrated and ineffective, both in his personal life and in his work for God.

The only cure for such foolishness is to find and to follow the will of the Lord.

When a person is saved, sanctified, submissive, suffering and thankful, he'll find that he is already in God's will.

"Delight yourself In the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4), David tells us.

In other words, when we are what God wants us to be, He is in control and our will is merged with His will and He therefore gives us the desires He has planted in our hearts.

Understanding the Word of God comes from allowing the Holy Spirit of God to teach you what the Bible is saying to you.

Jesus spoke in parables, so that the world would not understand.

Those guided by the Spirit of God are the ones who understand.

Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

The verse which these words introduce is one of the most crucial texts relating to Christian living, to walking "in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called" (4:1).

Being controlled by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for living the Christian life by God's Holy standards.

God's way cannot be properly understood or faithfully followed apart from the working of the Spirit in the life of a believer.

"And be not drunk with wine":

Although Scripture consistently condemns all drunkenness, the context suggests that Paul is here speaking especially about the drunken orgies commonly associated with many pagan worship ceremonies of that day.

Christians are not to seek religious fulfillment through such pagan means as getting drunk with wine, but are to find their spiritual fulfillment and enjoyment by being "filled with the Spirit".

The context of this passage further indicates that Paul was speaking primarily about the religious implications of drunkenness and not moral.

The frenzied, immoral and drunken orgies of pagan ceremonies that were an integral part of temple worship.

In the mystery religions, which began in ancient Babylon and were copied and modified throughout the Near East and in Greek and Roman cultures, the height of religious experiences was communion with the gods through various forms of ecstasy.

This is the type of pagan worship with which the Ephesians were well acquainted and in which some had once been involved and even many of the Corinthians had a difficult time divorcing themselves from this type of worship.

The way of the flesh is characterized by the pagan religion that centered around drunken, immoral orgies of supposed ecstasy, in which a person tried to progressively elevate himself into communion with the gods.

It was the way of self, pride, immorality, greed, idolatry, confusion, deception, fantasy, falsehood and even demonism.

To achieve an ecstatic experience, the participants would use self-hypnosis and frenzied dances designed to work themselves up to a high emotional pitch.

Heavy drinking and sexual orgies contributed still further to the sensual stupor that their perverted minds led them to think was creating communion with the gods.

It is the way of darkness and foolishness.

Paul rebuked them strongly saying “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless, a sharing in the blood of Christ?

Is not the bread which we break, a sharing in the body of Christ?

I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:16, 20-21).

Drunkenness mocks a person by making him think he is better off instead of worse off, smarter instead of more foolish, and happier instead of simply dazed.

It is a favorite tool of Satan for the very reason that it deceives while it destroys.

Surely it presents vulnerability to demons.

The drunk does not learn his lesson and is deceived over and over again.

Even when he is waylaid, beaten and finally awakens from his drunken stupor he “will seek another drink” (Proverbs 23:35).

Scripture shows drunkenness in its full ugliness and tragedy, as always associated with immorality, dissolution, unrestrained behavior, wild, reckless behavior and every other form of corrupt living.

It is one of the sinful deeds of the flesh that are in opposition to the righteous fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23).

Drunkenness is first of all a sin.

It develops attendant disease as it ravages the mind and body, but it is basically a sin, a manifestation of depravity.

It must therefore be confessed and dealt with as sin.

A Christian not only must avoid sin but must avoid the potential for sin.

We should not allow ourselves to get under the influence or control of anyone or anything that leads us away from the things of God even to a small extent.

The safest and wisest choice for a Christian is to avoid even the potential for wrong influence.

Even when something is not habit forming for us, it may be for someone who is looking at and following our example.

Because alcohol is universally acknowledged to be highly addictive, a Christian’s drinking unnecessarily creates the potential for the alcohol addiction of someone else.

“But be filled with the Spirit”:

True communion with God is not induced by drunkenness, but by the Holy Spirit.

Paul is not speaking of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling (Rom. 8:9), or the baptism by Christ with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), because every Christian is indwelt and baptized by the Spirit at the time of salvation.

He is rather giving a command for believers to live continually under the influence of the Spirit by letting the Word control them, pursuing pure lives, confessing all known sin, dying to self, surrendering to God’s will, and depending on His power in all things.

Being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done.

Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking in the Spirit.

Christ exemplified this way of life (Luke 4:1).

“Be filled”:

Here means “be continually filled,” emphasizing that the fullness of the Spirit is a repeated experience for believers.

When a person is drunk with an alcoholic beverage, his walk, talk, and sight are all controlled by the alcohol.

You lose control of yourself when you get drunk.

The only wine that any of us need is the new wine (Holy Spirit).

When we are filled with the Spirit, we are filled with the understanding that Spirit brings with it.

God desires that the minds of Christians be controlled by the Holy Spirit so that they will walk in the Spirit, speak on behalf of God, and understand the things of God.

Because people are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at salvation, they do not need to get more of the Holy Spirit, but the filling of the Spirit occurs when the Holy Spirit gets more of the believer.

Every Christian should be filled with the Spirit in order that he may have God’s power to serve Him (Acts 1:8).

As we establish our fellowship with God through confession of sins (1 John 1:9), and yield to Him (Romans 6:13), we can be filled with the Spirit if that is our desire (Matt. 5:6), and prayer (Luke 11:13).

This verse gives an example of what is and what is not the Lord’s will (verse 17).

Believers are not allowed to be intoxicated with alcoholic beverages; the reason for this prohibition is “wherein is excess; that is, drunkenness leads to moral intemperance.

This is clearly contrary to God’s will.

His will is that Christians “be filled with” (by), “the Spirit;” that is, they are to allow Him to fill them with God’s own life, character, and virtues.

The analogy between these two moral states is this: a person filled with wine is under its influence; similarly, a Christian is filled with the Spirit when He controls his thoughts, attitudes and actions.

In fact, it was the coming of the Holy Spirit that made real all the promises of Jesus Christ.

Christians have just claim to all Christ's promises the moment we believe in Him, but we cannot have their fulfillment until we allow His Spirit to fill us and control us.

Unless we know what it is to be directed by the Holy Spirit, we will never know the bliss of the assurance of heaven, or the joy of effective work for the Lord, of having our prayers answered constantly or of indulging in the fullness of God's own love, joy and peace within us.

Submission to the will of God, to Christ's lordship and to the guiding of the Spirit is an essential, not an optional, part of saving faith.

A new untaught believer will understand little of the full implications of such obedience, but the spiritual orientation of his new nature in Christ will bring the desire for submission to God's Word and God's Spirit.

A person who does not have that desire has no legitimate claim on salvation.

Being filled with the Spirit detaches us from the desires, the standards, the objectives, the fear, and the very system of this world and gives us a vision of God that comes in no other way.

Being filled with the Spirit makes everything else of secondary importance, and often of no importance at all.

To be filled with the Spirit involves confession of sin, surrender of will, intellect, body, time, talent, possessions, and desires.

It requires the death of selfishness and the slaying of self-will.

When we die to self, the Lord fills us with His Spirit.

The principle started by John the Baptist applies to the Spirit as well as to Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

The person who is Spirit controlled and who bears the Spirit's fruit is the person who belongs to Christ and who has "crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit," Paul continued, "let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:24-25).

To walk in the Spirit is to fulfill the ultimate potential and capacity of our life on earth as God's very own children.

Verses 19-21

There are four results of being Spirit filled, verse 18:

1. Believers speak to one another with “psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs: that is, they exhort and instruct each other;
2. There is “singing” and the “making” of “melody,” of individual song and praise for the Lord;
3. There is “giving thanks always” the Spirit enables the Christian to be grateful “for all things,” divinely allowed to enter his life since they will be used for good; and
4. There is mutual submission, that is, showing deference to the wishes of one another, as long as that to which the believer submits is in “the fear of God”, which is to say, in accord with what pleases Him.

These verses summarize the immediate personal consequences of obeying the command to be filled with the Spirit, namely singing, giving thanks, and humbly submitting to others.

The rest of the epistle features instruction based on obedience to this command.

Ephesians 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"

Following His command to be filled with the Spirit, Paul gave a summary of the consequences of obedience to that command.

“Psalms”:

Many Old Testament psalms were put to music primarily, but the term was used also of vocal music in general.

The early church sang the Psalms.

Many of the Psalms primarily speak about the nature and work of God, and especially in the lives of believers.

Above everything else, they magnify and glorify God.

“Hymns”:

This refers primarily to songs of praise, which in the early church were probably distinguished from the psalms, which exalted God, in that they specifically praised the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many biblical scholars believe that various New Testament passages (such as Col. 1:12-16), were used as hymns in the early church.

“Spiritual songs”:

Probably songs of personal testimony expressing truths of the grace of salvation in Christ and songs that covered a broad category that included any music expressing spiritual truth.

Because we have salvation we sing songs of salvation.

“Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day (Psalms 96:1-2; 149:1).

“Making melody”:

Literally means to pluck a stringed instrument, so it could refer primarily to instrumental music, while including vocal also.

“In your heart to the Lord”:

Not just public, but private.

The Lord Himself is both the source and the object of the believer’s song filled heart.

That such music pleases God can be seen in the account of the temple dedication, when the singing so honored the Lord that His glory came down (2 Chron. 5:12, 14).

When a believer walks in the Spirit, he has an inside joy that manifests itself in music.

God puts music in the souls and then on the lips of His children who walk in obedience.

A person who does not have a song in his heart cannot sing from his heart or with his heart.

He can only sing with his lips, and neither his music nor his message will have the power of the Spirit to bless others in Christ’s name.

I never cease to amaze at the wonderful messages contained in the beautiful hymns the writers brought for all of us to enjoy.

When there is no one else around to share them with, then singing lifts your soul.

Many times, repeating the 23rd Psalm brings perfect peace to me.

All of the Psalms are beautiful, but Psalms like the 91st Psalm bring hope.

God loves for us to sing just to Him.

We should be a sweet, sweet sound in His ear.

Many of the spiritual songs are like prayers.

Whatever we do, sing, read Psalms, pray, or just praise God, shows the love we have for Him.

To whom do believers sing?

Although believers sing among themselves, their songs are to be directed to the Lord.

Our singing and making melody is not for the purpose of drawing attention to ourselves or of entertaining others but of rejoicing in and praising God.

Whether we sing a solo, singing with a choir, or singing with the congregation, our focus should be on the Lord, not on ourselves or other people.

He is the audience to whom we sing.

Music that honors the Lord also blesses his people.

A beautiful, soothing piece of music can calm one's nerves, remove fear and anxiety, reduce bitterness and anger, and help turn our attention from ourselves and the cares and problems of the world to God.

Ephesians 5:20 "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

"Giving thanks always for all things":

Believers' thankfulness is for who God is and for what He has done through His Son, their Savior and Lord.

A medieval legend tells of two angels sent to earth by the Lord to gather the prayers of the saints.

One was to gather the petitions and the other the thanksgivings.

The angel responsible for petitions was not able to carry them back to heaven in one load, while the angel responsible for thanksgivings carried his back in one hand.

The sad fact is that God's children are more prone to ask than to thank.

William Hendriksen commented that "when a person prays without thanksgiving he has clipped the wings of prayer so that it cannot rise."

When are we to be thankful?

Always!

To be thankful always is to recognize God's control of our lives in every detail as He seeks to conform us to the image of His Son.

To be thankless is to disregard God's control, Christ's lordship and the Holy Spirit's filling.

Nothing must grieve the Holy Spirit so much as the believer who does not give thanks.

There are three attitudes of thankfulness.

The first is easy and that is to thank God for the things He has blessed us with, which is right as the bible instructs us to be thankful for the things we are given.

The second, is that of being grateful for the hope of blessing and victory yet to come.

The first level is after the fact; the second is in anticipation of the fact, which is more difficult than thanking Him afterward.

Thanking God before a blessing is more difficult than thanking Him afterward and requires more faith and spiritual maturity.

This second level is where faith and hope begin because it involves not only the unseen but the yet inexperienced.

The third level is thanking God in the midst of the battle, while we are still undergoing trouble or testing, and even when it looks like we are failing or being overwhelmed.

If we can thank God only when things are going well for us, our thankfulness is on the bottom rung of faithfulness.

If we can thank Him in anticipation of what He will do in the future, that's when we show more spiritual maturity.

But to thank God while we are in the midst of the pain, trials, or persecution shows a level of maturity that few Christians seem to know much about, but that our heavenly Father wants all His children to have.

Notice that even our thanksgiving has to be done in the name of Jesus.

This says that we should thank God for all things good and bad.

We must assume from that, that sometimes the things we call bad are really a way to help us grow in the Lord.

Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose."

Notice also, that the thanks is to the Father.

The greatest gift we can give to God is a thankful heart, because all we can give to Him is simply grateful recognition that all we have is from Him.

We give Him thanks for all things because He has given us all things and because giving thanks in everything “is God’s will ... in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:18).

To glorify God is to thank Him no matter how much we may be hurting, disappointed or even fail to understand.

The Spirit filled Christian is “overflowing through many thanksgivings to God” and continually gives thanks to Him “for His indescribable gift” (2 Cor. 9:12, 15).

The only person who can genuinely give thanks for all things is the humble person, the person who knows he deserves nothing and who therefore gives thanks even for the smallest things. Lack of thankfulness comes from pride.

If it were not for Christ, it would be foolish to be thankful for everything, because apart from Him all things do not turn out for good.

But because we are in Christ, the good things and the bad things all have a part in God’s conforming us to the image of His Son.

Ephesians 5:21 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

“Submitting yourselves one to another”:

Paul here made a transition and introduced his teaching about specific relationships of authority and submission among Christians (5:22 – 6:9), by declaring unequivocally that every spirit filled Christian is to be a humble, submissive Christian.

Submission is a general spiritual attitude that is to be true of every believer in all relationships.

Unfortunately, many people who know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord do not maintain their living according to His moral, marital and family laws.

Because they are not at all times filled with His spirit and fall to the level of the society around them, they are not sufficiently motivated or empowered to be obedient to their Lord in all things.

They possess the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not possess them.

Consequently, many Christian couples argue and fight worse than many unbelievers.

Many families in false religions for example, and even some unreligious families, are more disciplined and harmonious on the surface than some Christian families.

A carnal believer will have discord in his family just as he has discord in his own heart and in his relationship to God.

This is foundational to all the relationships in this section.

No believer is inherently superior to any other believer.

In their standing before God, they are equal in every way (Gal. 3:28).

James said, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?

Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?” (James 4:1).

Conflicts in the church, in the home, and in marriage always result from hearts that are directed by the self rather than by the Spirit of God.

When self insists on its own rights, opinions and goals, harmony and peace are precluded.

The self centered life is always in a battle for the top and then it pushes others down as it climbs up in pride.

The Spirit centered life, on the other hand, is directed toward lowliness, toward subservience, and it lifts others up as it descends in humility.

The Spirit filled believer does “not merely look out for his own personal interests, but also for the interest of others” (Phil. 2:4).

“In fear of God”:

The believer’s continual reverence for God is then the basis for his submission to other believers (Proverbs 9:10).

This just means to have respect for the other people’s rights.

Don't feel that you must always be right.

Be humble toward those fellow servants of God.

Christ humbled Himself and washed the feet of the disciples.

He also, said that the greatest among them should serve the others.

Verses 5:22-33

The theme of submission mentioned in verse 21, is now taken up and developed in detail from the church in general to the Christian household in particular.

Accordingly, submission authority is treated in three domestic relations: that of:

1. Wives and husbands (verses 22-33);

2. Children and parents (6:1-4); and
3. Servants and masters (6:5-9).

Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands”:

Having established the foundational principle of submission (verse 21), Paul has then applied it first to the wife.

Wives are not qualified and therefore applies to every Christian wife, regardless of her social standing, education, intelligence, spiritual maturity or giftedness, age, experience, and of any other consideration.

Nor is it qualified by her husband’s intelligence, character, attitude, spiritual condition, or any other consideration.

Paul says categorically to all believing wives: submit onto your own husbands.

The wife is not commanded to obey her husband, as children are to obey their parents and slaves their masters (6:1, 5).

A husband is not to treat his wife as a servant or as a child, but as an equal for whom God has given him care and responsibility for provision and protection, to be exercised in love.

She is not his to order about, responding to his every wish and command.

As Paul; proceeds to explain in considerable detail (verses 25-33), the husband’s primary responsibility as head of the household is to love, provide, protect and serve his wife and family, not to lord it over them according to his personal whims and desires.

The command is unqualified, applying to every Christian wife, no matter what her own abilities, education, knowledge of Scripture, spiritual maturity, or any other qualifications might be in relation to those of her husband.

The submission is not the husband’s to command, but is therefore for the wife to willingly and lovingly offer.

“Your own husbands” limits her submission to the one man God has placed over her, and also gives a balancing emphasis that he is hers as a personal intimate possession (Song of Solomon 2:16; 6:3; 7:10). She submits to the man she possesses as her own.

“Your own husbands”:

This suggests the intimacy and mutuality of the wife’s submission.

She willingly makes herself subject to the one she possesses as her own husband.

Husbands and wives are to have a mutual possessiveness as well as a mutual submissiveness.

They belong to each other in an absolute equality.

The husband no more possesses his wife than she possesses him.

“As unto the Lord”:

Because the obedient, spiritual wife’s supreme submission is to the Lord, her attitude is that she lovingly submits as an act of obedience to the Lord, who has given this command as His will for her, regardless of her husband’s personal worthiness or spiritual condition (verses 5-9).

“As unto the Lord:” This is a comparative clause.

But in Greek there are two different types of comparative clauses.

1. **Elucidation**, which means that wives are to give their husbands the same unquestioned, absolute submission they give Christ. Would this apostle expect wives to render the same submission to imperfect husbands they give to their perfect Lord, when other apostles recognized the periodic need for believers to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29), if the wills of human and divine authorities clash? It is better then, to take this comparative clause as that of:

2. **Emphasis**, which means that wives are to submit to their husbands as submission rendered by them truly is submission rendered to Christ Himself. When the wife yields her will to that of her husband, she yields to the Lord, provided the husband’s directions are “in the fear of God” (verse 21), that is, those conforming to God’s will.

People are wives and husbands in the flesh.

In the family realm, there can be only one head of the house, and that is the husband.

This is just saying to women who have chosen to be a wife, bow to the wishes of your husband in the family realm.

With the Fall and its curse came the distortion of woman’s proper submissiveness and of man’s proper authority.

That is where the battle of the sexes began, where women’s liberation and male chauvinism came into existence.

Women have a sinful inclination to usurp man’s authority and men have a sinful inclination to put women under their feet.

The divine decree that man would rule over woman in this way was part of God's curse on humanity, and it takes a manifestation of grace in Christ by the filling of the Holy Spirit to restore the created order and harmony of proper submission in a relationship that has become corrupted and disordered by sin.

Both before and after the Fall and the consequent curse, man was called to be the provider, protector, guide and shepherd of the family, and woman called to be supportive and submissive.

The only time it is alright to go against your husband, is if he turns against God.

Then you would have to choose God over your husband.

The family on earth is really an example of the family in heaven.

God, the Father, is supreme ruler.

Wives are to submit even when their husbands "are disobedient to the word, so that they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior" (verses 1b-2).

Instead of nagging, criticizing and preaching to her husband, a wife should simply set a godly example before him, showing him the power and beauty of the gospel through its effect in her own life.

Humility, love, moral purity, kindness, and respect are the most powerful means a woman has for winning her husband to the Lord.

The manner or attitude of submission is to be as to the Lord.

Everything we do in obedience to the Lord should also be done first of all, for His glory and to please Him.

Those to whom we submit, whether in mutual submission or in response to their functional authority, will often not inspire respect.

Sometimes they will be thoughtless, inconsiderate, abusive, and ungrateful.

But the Spirit filled believer, in this instance the wife, submits anyway.

Because that is the Lord's will, and her submission is to Him.

A wife who properly submits to her husband also submits to the Lord.

And a wife who does not submit to her husband also does not submit to the Lord

Ephesians 5:23 "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."

“Husband is the head ... Christ is the head”:

The Spirit filled wife recognizes that her husband’s role in giving leadership is not only God ordained, but reflects Christ’s own loving, authoritative headship of the church.

“Savior”: As the Lord delivered His church from the dangers of sin, death and hell, so the husband provides for, protects, preserves, and loves his wife, leading her to blessing as she submits (Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6).

“For” gives the reason why verse 22 calls for wifely submission.

Just as Jesus is the divinely appointed “head” or authority over His church, in the same way the husband is the divinely appointed “head” or authority of his wife.

The head gives direction and the body responds.

A physical body that does not respond to the direction of the head is either crippled, paralyzed, or spastic.

Likewise, a wife who does not properly respond to the direction of her husband manifests a serious spiritual disfunction.

On the other hand, a wife who willingly and lovingly responds to her husband’s leadership as to the Lord is an honor to her Lord, her husband, her family, her church, and herself.

She is also a beautiful testimony to the lord before in view of the world around her.

“And he is the savior”:

Or the protector of the body.

As Jesus is responsible to provide for the welfare of His church, so the husband is responsible to protect his wife.

“In both cases the responsibility to protect is inseparably linked with the responsibility to provide spiritual leadership.

There is a critical statement here, that we must not overlook.

The husband is the savior of her body, not her spirit.

Christ is the head of the entire church, including the woman.

The difference is the church has to do with the spirit, and not with the flesh.

Jesus Christ quickened our spirit, not our flesh.

The supreme and ultimate model of submission is Jesus Christ Himself, who performed the supreme act of submission by giving His own sinless life to save a sinful world.

Christ is the Savior of the body, His church, for whom He died on the cross.

He is the perfect Provider, Protector and Head of His church, which is His body.

Ephesians 5:24 "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing."

“In every thing”:

The extent of the wife’s submission to her husband is in every thing.

That is, in every area of life and in every issue that may arise, those which the wife may agree with, and those which she may not.

Again, “in every thing,” is limited only to those directives of the husband that are “in the fear of God” (verse 21).

That is, those conforming to God’s will.

This is showing the church (men and women), are first subject to Christ.

It also shows that in the realm of the flesh, in the home, the wife is subject to the husband.

Jesus Christ is the divine role model for husbands, who should provide for, protect, preserve, love and lead their wives and families as Christ cares for His church.

Wives are no more to be co-providers, co-protectors, or co-leaders with their husbands than the church is to have such joint rolls with Jesus Christ.

Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything as well.

Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"

Man was created first and was given headship over the woman and over creation.

But their original relationship was so pure and perfect that his headship over her was a manifestation of his consuming love for her and her submission to him was a manifestation of her consuming love for him.

No selfishness or self-will marred their relationship.

Each lived for the other in perfect fulfillment of their created purpose and under God's perfect provision and care.

The Fall itself involved a perversion of marital roles and God's curse because of the Fall also affected marriage.

Eve sinned not only in disobeying God's specific command but in acting independently of her husband and failing to consult Adam about the serpent's temptation.

Adam sinned not only by disobeying God's command but by succumbing to Eve's leadership, thus failing to exercise his God given authority.

Because of her disobedience, God cursed the woman to pain in childbirth and to a perverted desire to rule over man.

The man was cursed to toil, to difficulty, to frustration in wresting sustenance from the land, and to conflict with his wife over her submission.

Both were cursed with death as the penalty for their sin (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 5:15-19).

Marriage was then corrupted because both the man and the woman had twisted God's plan for their relationship.

They reversed their roles, and marriage has been a struggle ever since.

The command, husbands, love your wives, continues Paul's explanation of the mutual submission mentioned (in verse 21).

The husband's primary submission to his wife is through his love for her, and the apostle makes clear that this is a boundless kind of love.

Christ loved the church before He brought the church into existence.

He chose and loved His own even "before the foundation of the world" (1:4), because God's love is eternally present, having no past and no future.

"Love your wives":

Though the husband's authority has been established (verses 22-24), the emphasis moves to the supreme responsibility of husbands in regard to their wives, which is to love them with the same unreserved, selfless, and sacrificial love that Christ has for His church.

Christ gave everything He had, including His own life, for the sake of His church, and that is the standard of sacrifice for a husband's love of his wife (Col. 3:19).

God provides for husbands to love their wives with a measure of Christ's own kind of love.

The husband who submits to the Lord by being filled with His Spirit (verse 18), is able to love his wife with the same kind of love Jesus has for His own bride, the church.

The Lord's pattern of love for His church is the husband's pattern of love for his wife.

The world's love is always object oriented.

A person is loved because of physical attractiveness, personality, wit, prestige, or some other such positive characteristic.

In other words, the world loves those whom it deems worthy of love.

And such love is necessarily fickle.

As soon as a person loses a positive characteristic, or that characteristic is no longer appealing, the love based on the characteristic also disappears.

It is because so many husbands and wives have only that kind of fickle love for each other that their marriages fall apart.

As soon as a partner loses his or her appeal, love is gone, because the basis for the love is gone.

God can command His own kind of love from those who belong to Him because He has given them the capacity to love as He loves (Romans 5:5; 1 Thess. 4:9), and because His commanded love must, therefore, be a matter of choice (James 2:8; 1 John 3:7, 16-18, 23; 4:7, 11).

It is an act of the will as well as of the heart.

And it seems to be a principle that whatever we choose to love and practice loving soon becomes attractive to us.

But a Christian's loving with Christ's kind of love is not based on the attractiveness of the one loved but on God's command to love.

Loving as Christ loves does not depend in the least on what others are in themselves, but entirely on what we are in Christ.

A husband is not commanded to love his wife because of what she is or is not.

He is commanded to love her because it is God's will for him to love her.

It is certainly intended for a husband to admire and be attracted by his wife's beauty, winsomeness, kindness, gentleness, or any other positive quality or virtue.

But though such things bring great blessing and enjoyment, they are not the bond of marriage.

If every appealing characteristic and every virtue of his wife disappears, a husband is still under just as great an obligation to love her.

If anything, he is under greater obligation, because her need for the healing and restorative power of his selfless love is greater.

That is the kind of love every Christian husband is to have for his wife.

The Greek word rendered "love" is agape (Greek agapao), which denotes the willing sacrificial giving on the husband's part for the benefit of his wife, without thought of return.

As Christ "gave himself" for the church, so there is to be no sacrifice, not even the laying down of his life that a husband should not be willing to make for his wife.

The husband who loves his wife as Christ loves His church gives everything he has for his wife, including his life if necessary.

If a loving husband is willing to sacrifice his life for his wife, he is certainly willing to make lesser sacrifices for her.

He puts his own likes, desires, opinions, preferences, and welfare aside if that is required to please her and to meet her needs.

He dies to self, in order to live for his wife, because that is what Christ's kind of love demands.

That is his submission.

The love of Christ was the agape love.

This type of love is not because of what it can get in return, but is unselfish love which loves even the unlovable.

Verses 26-27

Sanctify ... cleanse ... holy ... without blemish":

This speaks of the love of Christ for His church.

Saving grace makes believers holy by the agency of the Word of God (Titus 2:1-9; 3:5), so that they may be a pure bride.

For husbands to love their wives as Christ does His church, demands a purifying love.

Since divine love seeks to completely cleanse those who are loved from every form of sin and evil, a Christian husband should not be able to bear the thought of anything sinful in the life of his wife that displeases God.

His greatest desire for her should be that she becomes perfectly conformed to Christ, so he leads her to purity.

Ephesians 5:26 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"

For husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His church is to love them with a purifying love.

Divine love does not simply condemn wrong in those loved but seeks to cleanse them from it.

Christ's great love for His church does not allow Him to be content with any sin, and moral or spiritual impurity in it.

As we continue to confess our sins, Christ "is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The word is the agent of this sanctification (Titus 3:5), the objective of which is a blamelessness and holiness that makes us fit to be presented to Christ as His own beloved and eternal bride, to dwell in His glorious presence forever (Rev. 21:1).

Love wants only the best for the one it loves, and it cannot bear for a loved one to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful.

When a husband's love for his wife is like Christ's love for His church, he will continually seek to help purify her from any sort of defilement.

He will seek to protect her from the world's contamination and protect her holiness, virtue, and purity in every way.

He will never induce her to do that which is wrong or unwise or expose her to that which is less than good.

When a young man says he loves a young woman, but wants her to compromise her sexual purity before they are married, his love is the world's lust, not God's love; and it is selfish, and certainly not serving.

That sort of love defiles' rather than purifies.

This verse may be paraphrased: "That He might perfectly sanctify the church, having cleansed her by the gospel accompanied with the washing of water."

When will He "perfectly sanctify" the church?

When He returns for her in glory.

When was the church "cleansed"?

At conversion.

How was her conversion effected?

"By the gospel" (word).

And what ritual is to be associated with one's conversion?

"The washing of water," that is, water baptism, which is the outward symbol of that showing an inward change.

This is speaking of Christ and the church.

"Sanctify" means made holy.

The washing of water by the Word.

The Word of God does cleanse the person.

Ephesians 5:27 "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."

In an immeasurably greater way Christ gave Himself up for the church.

His cleansing of believers is not ceremonial and symbolic, but real and complete.

The soteriological truth in this analogy is that saving grace makes believers holy through the cleansing agency of the Word of God, so that they may be presented to Christ as His pure Bride, forever to dwell in His love.

It is with that same purpose and in the same love that husbands are to cultivate the purity, righteousness and sanctity of their wives.

The ultimate purpose of Jesus' love for the church is to present her to Himself as a chaste bride.

As a man wants a sexually untainted virgin as bride, so Jesus wants His church to be without moral flaw.

The only way for the church to be without spot or wrinkle is for that church to be grounded in the Word of God.

The study of the Word of God is what makes the church ready.

Jesus paid the price in full for the church.

He made the church acceptable with His precious shed blood.

He (Jesus), is also the One it is presented to.

Another Scripture calls the church a chaste virgin.

It just means that the church had been faithful to the Lord.

The church had not followed after false gods.

Ephesians 5:28 "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

“As their own bodies”:

Here is one of the most poignant and compelling descriptions of the oneness that should characterize Christian marriage.

A Christian husband is to care for his wife with the same devotion that he naturally manifests as he cares for himself (verse 29), even more so, since his self sacrificing love causes him to put her first (Phil. 2:1-4).

“Love their wives as their own bodies”:

In the end, a husband who loves his wife in these ways brings great blessing to himself from her and from the Lord.

Because as Christians, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, we should be taking proper care of them.

Giving them the right food, maintaining reasonable strength, getting enough rest and so on.

When our body is healthy we have a sense of well-being; and when a husband meets the needs of his wife, with the same care and concern with which he meets the needs of his own body, he will also have a sense of well-being and pleasure as a by product of his love.

This verse develops the idea, introduced (in verse 27), that sacrificial love benefits the giver as well as the receiver.

The church certainly profits from Christ's love (verse 26), in that she is granted salvation, but Jesus also benefits from His love in obtaining her as a pure bride (verse 27).

Similarly, the husband who "loveth his wife loveth himself," that is he profits from this love as does his wife.

Notice again here, this has to do with the body of flesh.

When they are married, they become one flesh.

That is what this Scripture is saying; when it says he loves himself.

With God there is no male or female, because He looks on the spirit.

In heaven, there will be no marrying and taking in marriage.

All believers in Christ (male and female), will be the bride of Christ.

These very same people will all be sons of God.

You see gender is just for this earth in the flesh, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the spirit.

Verses 29-31

The assertion of (verse 28b), that the husband who loves his wife loves himself is substantiated by Paul's reasoning in the verses:

As the church is a part of Jesus' body (see verse 30), so is the wife a part of her husband's body (verse 31).

Thus, when the husband loves her, he loves himself.

As a man who cares for his body benefits himself (verse 29), so the husband who loves his wife brings much profit to himself.

Ephesians 5:29 "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:"

The husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will no more do anything to harm her than he would to harm his own flesh.

His desire is to nourish and cherish her just as he nourishes and cherishes his own body, because that is how Christ also does the Church.

When she needs strength, he gives her strength.

When she needs encouragement, he gives her that.

And so with every other thing she needs.

Just as God supplies “all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19), the loving husband seeks to supply all the needs of his wife.

The blessed marriage is the marriage in which the husband loves his wife with unlimited caring.

Something is basically wrong if she is looked at only as a cook, housekeeper, occasional companion, and sex partner.

She is a God given treasure to be loved, cared for, nourished and cherished.

“Nourisheth ... cherisheth”:

These express the twin responsibilities of providing for her needs so as to help her grow mature in Christ, and to provide warm and tender affection to give her comfort and security.

To nourish a wife is to provide for her needs, to give that which helps her grow and mature in favor with God and man.

To cherish her is to use tender love and physical affection to give her warmth, comfort, protection, and security.

Those responsibilities are primarily the husband's, not the wife's.

As Christ provides for His church, so the husband provides for his wife and family.

To hate your wife, would be as if you hated your own flesh.

They (husband and wife), are one in the flesh.

A man would not hit himself, but that is really what he is doing if he hits his wife.

The Lord loves the church as His bride.

Ephesians 5:30 "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Christ provides for us as His church because we are members of His body.

Not to provide for His church would be not to provide for Himself.

He shares common life with His church, and we are members of His body, His flesh and bones, His present incarnation on earth.

Paul said, “The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6:17).

“Members of his body”:

The Lord provides for His church because it is so intimately and inseparably connected to Him.

If He did not care for His church, He would be diminishing His own glory which the church brings to Him by praise and obedience.

So in marriage, the husband’s life is so intimately joined to the wife’s that they are one.

When he cares for her, he cares for himself (verse 29).

This is a spiritual statement of the church being the body of Christ.

Many of the manuscripts do not include the last seven words of this Scripture.

The Lord Jesus Christ took on the form of flesh upon the earth.

God is Spirit.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:31 "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 quoted from (Genesis 2:24).

Paul reinforces the divine plan for marriage which God instituted at creation, emphasizing its permanence and unity.

The union of marriage is intimate and unbreakable.

“Joined” is a word used to express having been glued or cemented together, emphasizing the permanence of the union.

God’s standard for marriage did not change from the time of Adam until the time of Paul, and it has not changed to this day.

“Leave his father and mother”:

A husband and wife have a better chance for a successful marriage if there is some independence, physically, emotionally and financially, from parents and in-laws.

One of the greatest barriers to successful marriage is the failure of one or both partners to leave father and mother.

Parents are always to be loved and cared for, but they are no longer to control the lives of their children once they are married.

This, again, is speaking of the arrangement of husband and wife in the flesh upon the earth.

God made male and female to procreate life with Him upon the earth.

Male and female genders are for this earth.

This Scripture is speaking of a husband and wife living together as one family and making their own family.

Not only are they one flesh, but between them, when they have a child, they two are the child that they produce.

“I hate divorce says the Lord, the God of Israel” (Mal 2:16).

God has always hated divorce, and He will continue to hate it, because it destroys that which He has ordained to be unbreakable.

He hates divorce on any terms and for any reason.

He will tolerate it in certain instances, and will forgive it, as He will forgive any other sin; but He will never change His hatred for it, just as He will never change His hatred for any other sin.

Marriage is to be lasting as far as the earthly lives of the husband and wife is concerned.

Though He has made provision for divorce in the cases of unrepentant and continued adultery (Mat. 5:31-32; 19:4-10), and the departure of an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 5:17), death is God’s only desired dissolution for marriage.

God has always loved His people, the way Jesus Christ has always loved His church, and the way Christian husbands are always to love their wives.

The Lord never puts us away.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Peter admonished, “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).

Here we see three commands:

1. First, a husband is to be considerate of his wife. To treat your wife in an understanding way is to treat her with sensitivity and consideration. Many times, we hear wives saying that their husbands do not understand them or are not sensitive to their feelings or needs or do not communicate with them. Just because a husband may have many pressures and worries of his own is no excuse for his being insensitive to his wife, whom God commands him to love and care for as Christ loves and cares for the church.
2. Second, Peter teaches that a husband is to be chivalrous to his wife as “a weaker vessel.” True chivalry is not simply a formality of polite society; it reflects the attitude men should have toward all women, particularly their own wives. A husband’s courtesy toward his wife not only pleases her but also God.
3. Third, Peter tells husbands to honor their wives “as a fellow heir of the grace of life.” Husbands and wives should be the best of friends, not only in family matters and daily activities, but in spiritual things as well. A husband who is not considerate of his wife and who does not honor and respect her is defective in his spiritual life, and his prayers will “be hindered.”

The husband who gives his wife consideration, courtesy, and honor contributes to the beauty and strength of his marriage and gives an invaluable example and legacy to his children.

Ephesians 5:32 "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

“Great mystery”:

In the New Testament, “mystery” identifies some reality hidden in the past and revealed in the New Testament age to be written in Scripture.

Marriage is a sacred reflection of the magnificent and beautiful mystery of union between the Messiah and His church, completely unknown until the New Testament.

As Paul pointed out (in verses 23-29), marriage is a picture of the church and its relationship to Jesus Christ.

This mystery, this magnificent picture that men could never discover and that was unknown to the saints of the Old Covenant but is now revealed, is great.

God’s new people, the church, are brought into His kingdom and His family through faith in Jesus Christ.

He is the Bridegroom and they are His bride (Rev. 21:9).

A husband's greatest motive for loving, purifying, protecting and caring for his wife is Christ's love, purifying, protecting, and caring for His own bride, the church.

Christian marriage is to be loving, holy, pure, self-sacrificing and mutually submissive because those virtues characterize the relationship of Christ and the church.

“Bride of Christ”:

The relationship of Christ to His church is illustrated by that of a husband to his wife.

Christ is called the Bridegroom, and His church is called the bride.

Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify, cleanse and glorify it.

As wives should be submissive to and reverence their husbands, so Christians should submit to and worship Christ (Eph. 5:32; 1 Cor. 12:27).

All of this was to show the relationship of Christ and His church.

The relation of man and wife upon this earth shows a little shadow of the relation between Christ and His church.

There is order in heaven, as there is order upon earth.

The wife was made for the man as the church was made for the Lord Jesus.

It is very difficult to separate Christ and His church, and it should be equally hard to separate a man and His wife.

They should be as one.

Ephesians 5:33 "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband."

The use of “nevertheless” is intended to end the discussion and emphasize what in it is most essential to remember.

“Let every one of you”:

The intimacy and sacredness of the love relationship between believing marriage partners is to be a visual expression of the love between Christ and His church.

"Reverence""

Reverence in the above verse, means to have great respect for.

Women should be a compliment to their husband, not an embarrassment.

Women are subordinate to their husbands in the flesh, as the church is to Christ in the Spirit.

When Christian husbands and wives walk in the power of the Spirit, yield to His Word and His control, and are mutually submissive, they are brought much happiness, their children are brought much blessing, and God is brought much honor.

Again, we must take note that Paul was the only penman who had dealt with the relationship between the husband and wife relationship.

Ephesians Chapter 5 Continued Questions

1. We are not to be unwise, but understanding what the _____ of the _____ is.
2. How can you know the will of God for your life?
3. Be not drunk with _____, wherein is excess; but be filled with the _____.
4. Speak to yourselves in what?
5. What Scripture does the author say brings peace to their self?
6. Which Psalm brings hope?
7. Spiritual songs are sometimes like _____.
8. What does it show God when we sing, pray, and read Psalms just to Him?
9. What should we give thanks for?
10. How is the proper way to give thanks?
11. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own _____.
12. When is the only time it is alright to go against your husband?
13. _____ is the head of the church.
14. How are the husbands to love their wives?

15. What kind of love is Christ's love?
16. It is sanctified and cleansed by what?
17. What does "sanctify" mean?
18. Describe how the church should be presented to Him?
19. What makes the church ready?
20. Men should love their wives as their own _____.
21. He that loveth his wife, loveth _____.
22. Who is the bride of Christ?
23. Who are sons of God?
24. We are members of His _____.
25. Why should a man leave his father and mother, and cling to his wife?
26. What is "reverence" in verse 33?