

EPHESIANS 5

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ephesians chapter 5 as we continue our study through Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus.

Keep in mind that Paul opened up this letter with doctrine, all that God has for us and it took him the first three chapters of this letter to share with them correct or healthy doctrine.

Now that we know these things, Paul moves on and he opens up Ephesians chapter 4 with these words, "**I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.**" Ephesians 4:1.

In other words, now that we know correct doctrine, we need to apply these things to our lives or walk worthy of that high calling by which we have been called.

And the focus of these last three chapters, Ephesians chapters 4 through 6, focus on our Christian walk.

And in our first point we saw how we are to walk as we looked at our ***WALK IN UNITY***, which covered Ephesians 4:1-16.

Then, we began looking at our ***WALK IN PURITY***, which covers Ephesians 4:17-5:18. We will be finishing up looking at this point in our study this evening.

From there, which we will begin to look at this evening, we have our ***WALK IN HARMONY***, Ephesians 5:19-6:9.

And then we will finish up our study in Ephesians next time by looking at our ***WALK IN VICTORY***, which is found in Ephesians 6:10-24.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Ephesians chapter 5, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we continue to ***WALK IN PURITY!***

EPHESIANS 5**VERSES 1-2**

Paul opens up here with the word, “**therefore.**” And remember what I have told you about this word, what you should do when you come to it.

When you come to the word “**therefore**” ask yourself, “*What it is there for!*”

In this case it flows from what Paul was saying in Ephesians chapter 4, “**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**”

Ephesians 4:32.

In other words, we are to relate to others as God relates to us; in love, with forgiveness! That is how we are to walk.

In fact, the word “**followers**” in the Greek is MIMETES, (mim-ay-tace’), and it means to imitate, and here, we are to be imitators or reflect the nature of God in our lives!

Remember when you were kids how you would imitate your parents.

Little boys would get out their tools and work on a project like their dad.

Little girls would get out their dolls and be like their mom.

Okay, so I am totally politically incorrect, but that is how it was when I was growing up!

Thus, we as children of God, should imitate our Heavenly Father by walking in love, as we forgive each other.

Like I have said, His nature should flow from our lives. That is how we become imitators of God!

Spurgeon put it like this, and I think he nails it. He wrote, “What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God, as dear children, they will be compelled to recollect that there is a God, for they will see his character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly mother: he could never answer that.”

Now, as we walk in this love, this *AGAPE* love of God, it is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God. The aroma, the fragrance is pleasing to God.

It reminds me of what Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

As we surrender our lives to God as a sacrifice to Him each and every day, it is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice to Him.

Now let me also say this. You can’t do this on your own. You have to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live this kind of life because this AGAPE love does not flow naturally, but supernaturally! And you must be in the Word of God, filling your mind with the things of God! Then we can walk in this love of God towards others!

But, if we don’t, well, there is another aroma out there that is not pleasing to God and Paul is going to pick up on that next.

VERSES 3-4

Can Christians behave like this? Absolutely!

How can that be?

Because, as Christians, if we refuse to surrender to the Holy Spirit, if we are not going to walk in the Spirit, then what will be manifested in our lives are the works of the flesh, the lusts of the flesh because it will be all about me!

And keep in mind that this is a section dealing with our walk in purity!

And Paul is telling us here what our conduct and what our speech should not be.

Now please understand that by not doing these things, avoiding these things doesn't make you a saint.

What Paul is saying is that since you are a saint, walk accordingly, walk in purity! I hope you understand that, it is important.

And here, in this area of our conduct, Paul lists sexual sins, all kinds of immoral behavior, we see that greed should not be a part of a child of God's life, it is not proper, it does not fit who we say we are, at least it shouldn't!

And he starts out with "**fornication.**" This Greek word, PORNEIA, deals with all kinds of sexual immorality. We get our English word, "pornography" from this Greek word!

Then Paul speaks of "**uncleanness.**" This Greek word, AKATHARSIA, is more of a general term than porneia and it speaks of anything that is unclean, that is filthy!

Then Paul talks about "**covetousness.**" This is having a strong desire or lusting after something. When it is directed towards money, it is greed. When it is directed towards another person, it is lust! We are to be content in the Lord and yet, here we see the opposite of contentment!

These things are not fitting for saints, that is not how we are to walk!

And Paul's not done. Next he speaks of "**filthiness.**" And this is speaking of any talk that is degrading and disgraceful. Think of it including dirty stories, suggestive jokes with a sexual connotation, and all forms of obscenity and indecency.

The fifth point that Paul speaks of is "**foolish talking.**" And the idea here is someone who talks like a moron or a fool by dragging everything that is decent and moral into the mud or into the gutter you might say!

And lastly, Paul speaks of "**course jesting.**" And this is even worse than foolish talking because it takes it even more into the gutter. It is vulgar humor, vulgar talking!

In regard to these last three points, Stott tells us, "All three refer to a dirty mind expressing itself in dirty conversation."

And we can even throw "**idolatry**" in there, or anything that we worship or love more than God!

And again, Paul says that these things are not fitting for a child of God!

Instead of this kind of speech Paul says we are to give thanks or have grateful language. You see, the other kind of speech can be harmful to people, it can hurt them, and it may even destroy them.

We are not about destruction but construction, building people up and that is a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God.

It is as Paul said in Colossians 4:6, "**Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**"

Notice the difference between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh!

VERSES 5-7

Now you may be wondering, *“Who is Paul speaking to here, the Christian or the person who is not saved?”*

First of all, as a Christian, you cannot lose your salvation.

But what if a person is involved in these things and says he is a Christian?

Please understand this, just because I say I am a great football player doesn't make me one. My actions must reflect what I am saying.

The same is true here; if his actions don't match up to his profession of faith it is an empty profession.

Does that mean we as Christians will never stumble, never sin? Of course not, but it is not the pattern of our life, it is not a habit and our desire is to live a holy life unto God!

A good example of this is David and his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. Both were capital crimes and yet, God extended grace and mercy to David as he repented. And David was broken over what he had done.

Here's the thing. If you claim to be saved and you live that lifestyle and there is no conviction that what you are doing is wrong, then you were never saved!

And that is what we see here. Paul is speaking to the unsaved person who is spiritually dead to the things of God and this lifestyle doesn't affect him at all, there is no conviction of sin.

And notice what Paul says in Ephesians 5:7, **“Therefore do not be partakers with them.”** In other words, in light of all that God has for you as a Christian, don't get involved with them because they will bring you down!

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 6:9-11, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”**

We were like that but not anymore because we have been washed in the blood of Jesus, he has cleansed us, and our sins have been forgiven!

Remember, we are to imitate Christ, we are to reflect His nature in this dark world. And yet, what we see happening today is we want to be like the world and thus, people don't see Christ in us, but they see the world in us!

Again, **“Therefore do not be partakers with them.”**

And please understand that this is not a suggestion. Paul is commanding us not to be a co-participant with them.

Paul, in II Corinthians 6:14-18 tells us, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”**

The Lord is calling us to come out from among them and thus, we need to walk according to the high calling by which we have been called!

VERSES 8-12

Notice what Paul is saying here. He is saying that we “**were once darkness**” not that we “*were once in darkness.*”

Our lives were dark; the works that came forth were fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting and the like.

But now we are light because we are walking in the light, we have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Paul put it this way in Colossians 1:13-14, “**He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**”

Again, the idea is walking in purity as God has called us to walk!

One writer put it like this, “This indicates a complete change of being. Christians are so penetrated [and saturated with the presence of God and His light/truth] that they could be described not simply as being enlightened but now having become light themselves.” (Source Unknown)

Now let me ask you this. “***How do we find out what is acceptable to the Lord?***”

It is so easy and yet we make it so hard.

God has told us in His Word, and we need to ***find out*** what He desires of us.

The problem comes when we disagree with what God has said or we think we know better than God or we think this is not for us. And guess what, when we do that, we are partaking of that which is evil, we are going back to the darkness.

Think about how often this is done.

“In God’s eyes we are married so sex is not wrong!”

“I know he is not saved, but I’m sure after we date, he will come to know the Lord. He may even be saved and doesn’t even know it!”

“God wants me to divorce my wife to marry this other woman, it is His will!”

“I’m in control of my drinking!”

And the list can go on-and-on. Anything that goes contrary to God’s Word is wrong! Don’t justify your sin, repent and get right!

Now we know we are living in a dark world and the darkness seems to be growing more and more.

But let me ask you this. *“What happens when you turn the lights on in a room?”*

It expels the darkness!

What’s my point? It is this. As we enter a room, as we are around people, their sins are exposed, brought to light with the hope that they would see their sin, repent and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16, **“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

We are to radiate the love of Christ in this dark world and as we do, our Father in heaven is glorified!

But, if we allow darkness into our life, then people will not see Jesus!

Remember what Paul said in Romans 13:12-14, **“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”**

May we do that!

Think of it like this, “When we are living in obedience to God, that fact in itself will be a testimony against wrong. When those around us see us helping rather than exploiting, hear us talking with purity instead of profanity, and observe us speaking truthfully rather than deceitfully, our example will itself be a rebuke of selfishness, unwholesome talk, and falsehood. Simply refusing to participate in a dishonest business or social practice will sometimes be such a strong rebuke that it costs us our job or a friendship. Dishonesty is terribly uncomfortable in the presence of honesty, even when there is no verbal or other direct opposition.” (Source Unknown)

VERSES 13-14

Here is something that people think many times. They think they can get away with sin. But I don't care how smart you think you are, how clever you think you are at hiding your sin, God will bring it to light either in this life or when you go before Him.

Now who is Paul speaking of in these verses? Is he speaking of the Christian who is asleep or the unsaved person who needs to come to the light?

I think both do fit here.

First of all, for the unsaved person. They are dead in their trespasses and sins and they need to awaken to the fact that apart from Christ, they will end up in Hell. In other words, they won't get away with anything!

You see, the solution for all sinners is to awake from their spiritual sleep, the deadness of their spirits and receive Jesus into your life, ask Him to be your Lord and Savior and you will instantaneously be transported from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light!

Look at what Jesus will do if you allow Him, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1-10, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

It doesn't get any better than that so arise from the dead and only Jesus can take your dead spiritual body and make it alive once again to God – let Him!

We also see many who are saved that are in this spiritual sleep, they are unaware of what is going on around them.

Warren Wiersbe put it like this, “That Easter morning, when Christ arose from the dead, was the dawning of a new day for the world. Christians are not sleeping in sin and death. We have been raised from the dead through faith in Him. The darkness of the graveyard is past, and we are now walking in the light of salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a new day, and we ought to live as those who belong to the light, not to the darkness. “Lazarus, come forth!”

And Spurgeon wrote, “The man who is asleep does not care what becomes of his neighbors; how can he while he is asleep? And oh! Some of you Christians do not care whether souls are saved or damned . . . It is enough for them if they are comfortable. If they can attend a respectable place of worship and go with others to heaven, they are indifferent about everything else.”

We need to stop sleepwalking and walk with an awareness of what is going on around us, looking for opportunities to shine for Christ wherever we go!

And as we read on, Paul is going to talk about how we walk, which is very important in the days we are living in!

VERSES 15-16

Instead of sleepwalking Paul tells us that we need to walk, move forward

“circumspectly.”

The Greek word translated **“circumspectly”** carries with it the idea of ***“precision and accuracy”*** but also has the idea of ***looking, examining***, and ***investigating*** something with great care. But this Greek word further includes with it the idea of ***alertness***.

Let me illustrate for you what not walking circumspectly looks like.

Years ago, I was at a nursing seminar in the Milwaukee area, I got up early in the morning to go running. Some snow was falling, and it was beautiful out even though it was still dark.

As traffic was building on the roadway, which I was not familiar with, for whatever reason I was not paying attention, which is a bad idea. So, as I am running, I ran right into a sign, knocking me to the ground.

What's my point? I was not running carefully; I was not watching where I was going!

That is what Paul is speaking of here. We are to walk carefully, pay attention to what is happening around us, where we are walking because the days are evil, it is dangerous, and you don't want to be drawn into it.

In other words, be wise with what you watch, be wise on the Internet, be wise with your relationships at work!

And as we are walking carefully, we also need to take advantage of the days we are living in, the opportunities that come our way. We shouldn't cower and hide ourselves but buy up the time, use it for God's glory, to bring people into the kingdom of God – to shine forth our faith!

You see, the Greek word for “**redeeming**” was a term used in the marketplaces which meant to “*buy out*” or to “*purchase completely.*”

Also, the word “**time**” is not the Greek word CHRONOS, which is time in the sense of seconds, minutes and hours; but KAIROS, which is better translated “*opportunities.*”

Paul used this same word in Galatians 6:10, where he wrote, “**Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.**”

The idea behind redeeming the time is that you buy up opportunities like a shrewd businessman. You make the most of every opportunity for Jesus Christ.

Why is there such an urgency to do this? Paul tells us, “**... because the days are evil.**”

Jesus said in Matthew 24:12, “**And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**”

And I don't have to tell you how evil the days have become. But we are to not let that distract us or cause us to hide our light, but we are to shine brightly in this dark world so that the darkness may flee, so that some may come to saving faith!

Let me share this with you to show you what I mean about people being asleep on what is going on around them, ignoring the signs and it is costly. We are told,

A young American couple, Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghegan, 29, quit their jobs to take a year-long bike trip around the world.

Sadly, the trip took a fatal turn on a route near the Afgan border where they were stabbed to death by alleged ISIS terrorists. The couple ignored warnings about the dangers of the region, claiming to believe that evil was a make-believe concept.

Earlier on their journey, while in Morocco, Austin wrote:

“You watch the news and you read the papers and you're led to believe that the world is a big, scary place. People, the narrative goes, are not to be trusted. People are bad. People are evil. People are ax murderers and monsters and worse.

I don't buy it. Evil is a make-believe concept we've invented to deal with the complexities of fellow humans holding values and beliefs and perspectives different than our own – it's easier to dismiss an opinion as abhorrent than strive to understand it. Badness exists, sure, but even that's quite rare. By and large, humans are kind. Self-interested sometimes, myopic sometimes, but kind. Generous and wonderful and kind. No greater revelation has come from our journey than this.”

- <http://bit.ly/2kFdaH9>

Here's the thing. As man moves farther and farther away from God the more evil he will become. You see, he is living in rebellion against God and thus, all the good, all the pure things of God, he is not interested in and we see that today!

And the heart of man has become cold, it is callous and agree with me or not, the days we are living in are evil!

Listen to these two stories and see what conclusion you come to. These are from a few years back, but things have not gotten better.

We are told,

In Massachusetts, a 15-year-old was accused of murdering a college student during a mugging, then bragging to his two high-school-age accomplices that the knife he used went all the way through the body. After the boy's first appearance before the court, his friends cried – not for the person who had been murdered, but because a high bail had been placed on their friend. Someone asked one of the friends what an appropriate punishment would be for a murderer. “Counseling”, he replied. Another friend, a girl, said, “What's the big [bleeping] deal? People die all the time.”

The days are truly evil!

Actor River Phoenix collapsed and died outside a fashionable L.A. hot spot, but his death hasn't slowed down the club scene at all. Cliff Cantor, a co-owner of the club Dragonfly said, "Nothing's changed. Look around. Nobody's talking about it. The people who go out and do drugs are doing them . . . Business as usual. The week started out on a really glum note. But it's really reassuring to see that people aren't going to wallow in remorse." One 20-year-old named Carol said: "People are pretty jaded about the whole thing. I mean, we're sad, you know? But what are you gonna do?" "Order another drink," quipped her male companion.

The days are truly evil!

What can we do?

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16.

Remember, Paul is telling us *"See that you walk or live your Christian life carefully with great precision, looking all around and giving strict attention to all things as one might do when passing through a very dangerous place."*

VERSE 17

This really is pretty simple. If we are going to walk in wisdom as Christians it is absolutely imperative that we know what the will of God is for our lives.

We must hate sin, as He does. (Proverbs 8:13)

We must have that reverential fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 9:10)

Thus, we must know the Lord and the only way to do that is to be in His Word, the Bible and be open to what the Holy Spirit is showing us!

If you want to walk circumspectly, first of all you must be in the Word of God!

But notice what Paul says next.

VERSE 18

Paul starts out by telling us what we are not to do. He says, “**And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation . . .**”

And the idea here is that of “living without limits - to live with reckless abandon.”

One Greek scholar said, “It refers to escapism and the tendency to throw all restraints overboard and live out of control.”

That is what the world is doing apart from Christ and it is not what we should be doing as Christians.

Notice what Paul tells us we should be doing. He says that we must “**be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit.**”

The idea is a total surrender, moment by moment, day by day, week by week and-so-on, to the Holy Spirit!

In contrast, drinking is wasteful and as much as you think you are in control, it has control over you!

It is far better to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

Think about it, alcohol is a depressant and it depresses our self-control.

The Holy Spirit is a stimulant; He controls every aspect of our life.

Who do you want to be controlled by?

And some may wonder what it means to be “**filled with the Spirit**”?

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest gives four things that come through in the Greek that will help us to understand what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

1. ***“Be filled with the Spirit”*** is a command (imperative in the Greek) that God expects us to obey.

It’s a command that is plural in the Greek which means it applies to all Christians, not just to a select few like missionaries, pastors and evangelists.

It’s a command because we can’t begin to do the work God has called us to do without the power that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

I believe that this is the greatest need in the Church today and the single greatest reason the church is so ineffective in the world in its work for God, and why we are losing the culture war to the devil when Jesus clearly promised us that against His Church the gates of hell would not prevail.

We are trying to do the work of God in our own strength, ingenuity and intelligence and not in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A. W. Tozer wrote, “If we removed the Holy Spirit from the work of the early church 90% of what they were doing would have come to a stop. If we removed the Holy Spirit from the work of the church today 10% of what is being done would come to a stop.”

2. In the Greek the verb ***“filled”*** is in the present tense and denotes a continuous action or ***“be being filled with the Spirit.”***

Why is that important?

Because God never intended us to be reservoirs to ***“contain”*** the Holy Spirit, but channels through which the Holy Spirit could flow to a lost and dying world.

3. In the Greek the verb *“filled”* is in the passive voice which indicates an action being done **to us** and not controlled **by us**.

In other words, we do not fill ourselves, the Holy Spirit does the filling, but our responsibility is to permit the Spirit to fill us.

You see, the Holy Spirit will never force Himself on us but will fill us as much as we desire or as much as He can depending how much we are already filled with self.

4. In the Greek the word *“filled”* expresses the idea of being “controlled by.”

And the point is this. You are either controlled by yourself or by others influencing your life or by the Holy Spirit. Self is just what it says, it is only concerned about you. Others are only interested in themselves so how they influence you will be a reflection of them. But the Holy Spirit influencing our lives will reflect the nature of Jesus!

Some powerful points!

As we read on, we are going to move into our third section on walking that covers Ephesians 5:19-6:9 and it deals with our **WALK IN HARMONY!**

And this is awesome because you will not be able to walk in harmony unless you are submitted to the Holy Spirit. So you can tell how you are doing here by how you treat others!

Listen to what Paul says next.

VERSES 19-21

Please understand how important this is because it is a reflection of a life that is surrendered to the Holy Spirit's guiding and it is a life filled with joy, overflowing with joy, so much so that we speak to one another in Psalms or Old Testament Psalms sung with stringed instruments. We speak to one another with hymns or praises composed by Christians. We speak to one another with spiritual songs. Our joy just bubbles forth, it bursts forth with singing unto the Lord and others witness that joy.

Not only is there joy but we give thanks to God for all that He is doing in our lives, the people He brings into our lives!

And then there is submission. Submission to the Lord and as we place ourselves under His authority, we submit ourselves to others!

Of this Erdman tells us, "It is a phrase too often neglected . . . It names a test of spirituality which Christians too seldom apply . . . Many persons feel that shouts of hallelujah and exulting songs and the utterance of praise in more or less "unknown tongues" are all proofs of being "filled with the Spirit." These all may be spurious [false] and deceitful and without meaning. Submission to our fellow Christians, modesty of demeanor, humility, unwillingness to dispute, forbearance, gentleness – these are the unmistakable proofs of the Spirit's power . . . Such mutual submission to their fellow Christians should be rendered 'in the fear of Christ,' that is, in reverence to him who is recognized as the Lord and Master of all." Exactly!

Another writer put it like this, “Biblical submission to authority is recognizing that God, my Creator, is the ultimate authority and has all power. As clay in the potter’s hand, I, His creation, should yield full control of my life to His will. This includes submitting to and obeying all delegated human authority over me, realizing that when I do so, I am actually submitting to God’s authority. Likewise, when I rebel against delegated authority, in essence I rebel against God Himself.” (Source Unknown)

Keep in mind that this section deals with walking in harmony and the key to walking in harmony is not only being filled with the Holy Spirit, but it is also submission to those whom God has placed in authority over us and in doing that, we are walking in the fear of God.

As we move on, we are going to deal with relationships – marriage, children, employers, employees – and the key is submission folks in all these things!

You see, if you think about it, you really don’t need more books on marriage, on relationships, nor seminars, DVD’s, and-so-on.

What we need to do is submit to one another in the fear of God and that is only done as we submit to the guiding of the Holy Spirit.

Do you see how this is all working together? I hope so!

VERSES 22-24

People today tend to freak out with what Paul is saying here. They say he is a male chauvinist pig and today we would call it toxic masculinity! Sorry, men are to be men and women need to be women and because we are not submitted to God, there is a struggle in this area!

First of all, please understand that God is not saying that women are inferior to men.

God has just placed the man over the woman, that is how He has established the family, it is how it is to work.

Thus, as you submit to your own husband it is your service rendered to the Lord, you are walking in harmony in the fear of the Lord.

Today there is such an attack on the family unity that we don't even know what a family is anymore.

But God has established roles within the family unit so the family can function properly. Look at families today and you tell me if they are functioning properly!

Also, please notice this is not subject to your husband being a great guy. You submit willingly, lovingly as unto the Lord – period!

Now let me also say this. That doesn't mean if there is physical abuse, emotional abuse that you stick around and be a punching bag for your husband.

You need to separate until he gets help and the problem is resolved.

Also, if he wants you to do something illegal or something that goes against God's Word, then you obey the Lord who is over all!

And if you think about it, this is what Paul is saying here, *“I commanded you to submit to one another in a very general way. Now, if you do it in a general way, how much more so should wives do it to their own husbands in this special relationship of marriage.”* Absolutely!

And again, this is unto your own husband, keep that in mind because there are some that feel you need to submit to every male. That is not what Paul is saying here, not at all.

One writer put it like this in regard to the family and what we see and what we should see. He wrote,

I recognize that this whole issue of authority and submission in the home is not very popular, but do you know why? It's because we've had our minds literally brainwashed that we are doing an injustice to women by categorizing them in this way.

If you have trouble accepting these principles it's because you are a part of a society that has been victimized by a godless, Christ-less, non-biblical philosophy of living that has been perpetrated for centuries on human thinking.

What we're seeing today in our society is the result of the thinking of the French Revolution which was a humanistic, egalitarian [equal] approach to life. They believed in a society where there was absolute equality - a classless, godless kind of humanistic existence.

These ideas have been brewing for years and have now come to full brew and our age is drinking them in - no classes, no sexes, no distinctions, no authority, no submission and no humility.

Our society has been victimized by this atheistic approach to life. And the Church instead of rejecting it falls right into it by supporting equal right for homosexuals, advocating women elders and women preachers and functioning on a philosophical godless hermeneutic [interpretation] that forces a reinterpretation of the Bible in terms of our present time instead of accepting the authority of the Word of God.

- John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*

Let me also say this. Many men are very familiar with these verses here in Ephesians regarding wives, but they are not too familiar with what Paul says next about husbands. So I will fill you in!

VERSES 25-29

I don't think this is taught too often, but it needs to be. Husbands are to love, AGAPE love, unconditional love, their wife as Christ loved the church and died for the church. That is AGAPE love!

“But she does not deserve it!” someone may say!

That is not the issue. Did we deserve God's love for us? Absolutely not and yet He freely loved us and that is how we are to treat our wife!

I remember when I worked back in Illinois a guy came up to me, he worked in the open heart unit with me, and knowing I was a Christian, he quoted me this verse, **“Wives, submit to your own husbands”** and he stopped there.

Again, that is the problem. Many men do that very thing and negate their responsibility in the marriage relationship.

As the spiritual leader of the family we are to care for our wives, make them feel loved, help them grow in the Lord.

Ladies, if your husband did this you would have it far better than any women's liberation movement could take you!

And the reality is ladies; true satisfaction can only come from the Lord! If you do that you will never be disappointed.

And again, men may complain about their wife, listing all the things she does not do. But maybe the reason there is a problem is you are not tending to the garden because if you do, your wife will bloom!

Let me show you what I mean with this story from the early 1800's. We are told,

It has been said that an Eastern newspaperman went "down South" prior to the Civil War to interview the southern ladies. He had heard they were more feminine, desirable, and submissive to their husbands than were their counterparts back East, and he desired to know why. After his interviews, he wrote an article stating that, "The difference with southern women is ... southern men." His article continued to describe how southern gentlemen treated their wives and daughters with total respect and honor. In other words, the wives were cherished and the women's response was to live up to their reputation of being noble ladies.

- Source Unknown

How true that is.

Now, let me also say this. As the spiritual head of the family, the husband is to help his wife grow in the Lord, read the Word of God, and as it is done there is the cleansing in both as the Word of God is working in their lives!

And we are to love our wives as we do our own bodies and if we did that, at least that, we would be doing well.

And let me say this. If you feel that you don't love your wife or spouse anymore. If you feel that you have drifted apart. Then I will tell you that your relationship with God is off!

Think about it like this. Take a triangle, and place your name at one point, your spouse's name on the other and God at the top of the triangle. And you will see that the closer you move to God the closer you move to each other.

Granted, one of you may have a problem and not be moving towards God but that should not stop the other from drawing close to God because if the person doesn't, then their actions will reflect that!

Now Paul's point of loving our wives goes far beyond loving them as our own bodies. Paul is saying that men ought to love their wives because they are their own bodies. What does that mean? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 30-31

Paul is saying that when a man and woman come together in marriage, they are one.

That word "**joined**" in the Greek is PROSKOLLAO, (pros-kol-lah'o) and it speaks of gluing together, adhering to one another.

That is why the man needs to leave his mother and father, the same with the woman, because they are joined together with each other, not their parents.

If the cord is not cut, then there will be problems. And we have seen that happen before.

Also, if in marriage the two are glued together, you can understand what happens in divorce.

Think of two pieces of wood being glued together and then, after it is dry, try pulling them apart.

You would have splinters, jagged edges, it would be a mess and so it is in divorce.

Jesus put it this way in Mark 10:6-9, "**But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**"

Here is the family and Jesus brings us all the way back to the beginning when God made them male and female. Like it or not, it is not male and male or female and female. Not because I said so, but because Jesus did!

And God has brought them together and no man should separate them or tear them apart!

Listen to what D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said regarding a Christian marriage. He tells us,

The danger is that we should think of marriage among Christians as essentially the same as it is with everybody else, the only difference being that these two people happen to be Christians whereas the others are not. Now if that is still our conception of marriage then we have considered this great paragraph entirely in vain. Christian marriage, the Christian view of marriage, is something that is essentially different from all views.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

It is a life that is filled and controlled by the Spirit of God. It is a life of submission that is filled with the AGAPE love of God. It is a life of sacrifice. It is a life of growing in the Lord. And if you fill your life with all that God has, submitting to His authority, you will have a marriage filled with blessings. I am not saying it will be easy, because the flesh loves to get in the way. But it will be a blessing when you surrender and submit!

VERSE 32

Now this is so important, especially in the days we are living in when marriage is something that many have no idea of what it is about. Many are not even getting married, including many Christians. But they are living together!

Notice what Paul is telling us here. Paul is saying that the Christian marriage is a picture; it is a type of Christ and His church.

The man being a type of Christ, the woman representing the church.

And thus, as the unsaved look at our marriages, they should be drawn to Christ.

They should see something vastly different in our marriages than they see in this world!

Think about marriage today, for many. They will stick it out until their needs are no longer met and then they will move on to the next person, and the next person, and the next person!

But for us as Christians, it is that AGAPE love that fills our lives and ministers to our spouse! And that is what the world should see, and it should open a door for us to speak of Christ!

Listen again to what D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said regarding Christ and the church. We are told,

Woman was made at the beginning as the result of an operation which God performed upon man. How does the church come into being? As the result of an operation which God performed on the Second Man, His only begotten, beloved Son on Calvary's hill. A deep sleep fell upon Adam. A deep sleep fell upon the Son of God, He gave up the ghost, He expired, and there in that operation the church was taken out. As the woman was taken out of Adam, so the church is taken out of Christ. The woman was taken out of the side of Adam; and it is from the Lord's bleeding, wounded side that the church comes.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

A beautiful picture.

VERSE 33

Paul goes back to his original topic of marriage and again stresses the harmony that should be seen in a Christian marriage, between a husband and a wife.

Again, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells us,

Unity is the central principle in marriage; and it is because so many people in this modern world have never had any conception of what is involved in marriage, from the standpoint of unity, that they are riding so loosely to it and breaking their vows and pledges, so much so that divorce has become one of the major problems of our age. They have never caught sight of this unity; they are still thinking in terms of their individuality, and so you have two people asserting their rights, and therefore you get clashes and discord and separation. The answer to all that, says Paul, is to understand this great principle of unity.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Folks, if there is disunity in marriage it means that there is an absence of the Holy Spirit there.

The solution is to submit to one another in the fear of God as you surrender your life to the Holy Spirit's guiding.

And I will close with this, **“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”**

Ephesians 5:17-21.