

# **Ephesians 5 - Walking in Love; Walking in the Light; Walking in Wisdom; Submission in Marriage; The Duty of Wives; The Duty of Husbands**

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## Ephesians 5

- (3) Walk of love (5:1–6)
  - (A) Positive (5:1–2)
    - (a) Imitate God (5:1)
- 1 Therefore be imitators of God**, as beloved children;
- 1 Therefore be imitators of God**, as beloved children;
- 1 So be imitators of God**, as his dear children.
- 1 Be ye therefore followers of God**, as dear children;
- After calling his readers to walk in unity (4:1) and holiness (4:17), Paul now urged them to walk in love

- "Therefore" - does not begin a conclusion to what preceded, but gives a reason for what follows (Cf. v7,14,17)
- "...be imitators of God" - the moment I begin to imitate God, I become a very loving person because God *is* love (1 John 4:8); it is His core nature

(b) Walk in love (5:2)

- (i) Command to love (5:2a)
- (ii) Example of Christ (5:2b)

2 and **walk in love**, just as Christ also **loved** you and **gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

2 Live lovingly, just as the Messiah also loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and sacrifice, a fragrant aroma to God.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

- "...walk in love" - a command, which Paul follows with an example...

— "love" - *agapē*

— "...loved" - *agapaō*

— "...gave Himself up for us" - the example of godly love that Paul gives is Christ's sacrifice — Christ loved us, so He tangibly, visibly demonstrated that love by giving Himself up for us by dying on the cross. God hasn't just said He loves us, He demonstrated it. His actions, not just His words, prove His love for us.

— We don't gauge or determine God's love for us based on whether or not we got the job we wanted, or if something worked out for us in our life. This is how many believers determine whether God loves them or not...if I sell my house and get the price and terms I want for it, then God loves me.

— If you define God's love for you in those terms, the inevitable conclusion you will come to is that God doesn't love you because many times in life things just don't work out how I think they should

— But we know that God loves us, regardless of how the minor details in our lives work out, because He's tangibly demonstrated to us His love through His shed blood.

— That's what love is: sacrifice (John 15:13: "...no greater love than to lay down life for friends."). We are to imitate this sacrificial love in our lives, on a moment-by-moment basis ("walk").

(B) Negative: abstain from evil (5:3-6)

(a) Responsibility (5:3-4)

(i) In conduct (5:3)

**3** **But sexual immorality** or any **impurity** or **greed** must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints;

**3** But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;

**3** Do not let sexual sin, impurity of any kind, or greed even be mentioned among you, as is proper for saints.

**3** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

- What is described in v3-6 is not love (*agapē*) but lust. We often think of lust in the sexual sense, and that's accurate, but more generally it is covetousness, desiring something that God has not seen fit to give to us (status, money, career, gifting, house, wife, etc.).

— Lust and love are opposites: you can't love if you're walking in lust. Lust can't wait to get but love can't wait to give; lust is about self-indulgence, love is about self sacrifice.

- In v3-4 Paul talks about our responsibility...

- "But" - a contrastive between believers who walk in love, with those characterized by the following vice list that portrays the behavior of unbelievers

- "...sexual immorality" - *porneia*, illicit intercourse among unmarried persons; any form of sexual immorality, including fornication, adultery, homosexuality, or pornography

— *Porneia* is a general term that includes anything that works against or is counter to the life-long union of one man and one woman within the sanctity of marriage

- "...impurity" - immoral acts, interests; impurity: books, pictures, other suggestive materials that feed the fires of passion

- "...greed" - the lust (sinful desire) for more; it is essentially idolatry (v5). In context, this greed is likely the coveting of someone else's body for selfish gratification.

— Not just lust for money, but sensual desire; insatiable greed to satisfy one's appetite outside the bounds of marriage (Ex 20:17)

— Covetousness and fornication are different expressions of the same basic weakness of fallen nature: uncontrolled appetite

— There should be no hint of these perversions of love in the believer's life, even in our speech (Cf. Ex 23:13; Deut 12:30; Ps 16:4)

— Sexual immorality was common among unsaved Gentiles, but it is totally inappropriate ("must not even be mentioned") for Christians

(ii) In conversation (5:4)

**4** and *there must be no filthiness* or **foolish talk**, or **vulgar joking**, which are **not fitting**, but rather giving of thanks.

4 and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

4 Obscene, flippant, or vulgar talk is totally inappropriate. Instead, let there be thanksgiving.

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

- Paul proceeds from immorality to vulgarity; the Christian's speech should also demonstrate love (Cf. 4:29)

- "...filthiness" - obscenity; dirty stories, suggestive jokes; all forms of obscenity and indecency

- "...foolish talk" - empty, vapid conversation; silliness; worthless, time-wasting talk (not necessarily "small talk")

- "...vulgar joking" - not necessarily joking around, but vulgar joking that uses clever wordplay, such as double entendres

- "...not fitting" - wit is a blessing, but when used with a base motive or style, it is a curse. Jests that are inconvenient (out of place) can pollute any conversation. Coarse jokes or talk with unsavory hidden meanings are to be avoided.

(b) Reason (5:5-6)

(i) Evildoers have no inheritance (5:5)

5 **For this you know with certainty**, that no **sexuallyimmoral** or **impure** or **greedyperson**, which amounts to an **idolater**, has an **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and God.

5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

5 For you know very well that no immoral or impure person, or anyone who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has an inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

- "For this you know with certainty" - was Paul warning or exhorting the Ephesians? Both. He is exhorting these believers because they are positionally different from unbelievers, and he is warning them, because if they act like unbeliever, they will incur temporal discipline.

— "you" - 2nd person plural; this addresses Paul's audience, the Ephesian church (believers)

— There is no room for doubt about God's attitude toward immorality: those who practice such things have no inheritance in the kingdom (Cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21)

- Since Paul already stated that all believers have an inheritance in Christ (1:3-14), here he is contrasting unbelievers with believers (Cf. v6; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:21; Matt 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18)
- If I'm saved, why should I allow my life to be dominated by these sins since these are the same sins that characterize unbelievers. Two reasons:
  1. Evildoers/unbelievers have no inheritance (v5)
  2. Evildoers will experience the wrath of God (v6)
- His point is that this type of behavior, which is common among unbelievers, should not characterize believers. If in fact these sins do characterize a believer, it doesn't mean that believer was never truly saved (Calvinism) or somehow lost their salvation (Arminianism).
- Taking this verse as evidence that a truly saved person cannot and will not practice these vices overlooks the fact that some genuine believers live carnal lives (Cf. 1 Cor 3:1-4)
- One way to confirm this interpretation to see if this view is consistent with what Paul says elsewhere in Ephesians. Does Paul tell the Ephesians elsewhere in this epistle that they, as believers, should not imitate unbelievers? In fact, yes he does--in this chapter (Cf. v3,6-8,11-12).
- To interpret this passage properly, you have to remember what Paul is doing in this epistle: in Eph 1-3 he tells the Ephesians who they are in Christ, and what they have/own. There are no commands given. But in Eph 4-6, he gives them 38 commands (Greek imperatives). The point is that once the Ephesians understood who they are in Christ, and what they have in Christ, then he tells them how to act/behave.
- In Eph 1-3 he tells them that they are holy, so that being the case (a reality), why would you act unholy? Acting unholy does not mean you aren't truly saved (Calvinism), or lost your salvation (Arminianism), it means that their actions are completely incongruent with their identity, and if they kept it up, they would go under temporal discipline.
- These are the same three classes of offenders as in v3: whoremongers, unclean persons, and covetous men
  - "...sexually immoral" - *pornos*, similar to *porneia* used in v3; a male who prostitutes his body to another for hire; a male prostitute; a fornicator
  - "...impure [person]" - *akathartos*, unclean in thought and actions
  - "...greedy person" - *pleonektes*, greedy of gain; eager to gain more of what belongs to others
  - "person" - third person plural; refers to other people outside of Paul's readers or himself (believers); it refers specifically to unbelievers
  - Note the change from "you" (2nd person plural, earlier in the verse), to "person" (3rd person plural, here, referring to a separate group of people besides his audience, in this case, unbelievers).
  - "...idolater" - an impure or greedy (covetous) person is an idolator:

1. False concept: God approves sensual greed
2. Puts person's own will above the Will of God
3. Worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25)

– "...inheritance" - not a reward; a reward is conditional, based on my actions/behavior. It is a reward for how I allowed the Lord to express Himself through me during my earthly life.

— An inheritance, on the other hand, is unconditional. I'm in the will, I'm getting my inheritance regardless of how well I do in this life; it's not conditional on my actions/behavior. In fact, in legal terms, my inheritance is already mine, I just don't have access to it or enjoyment of it yet.

— Paul is clear in 1:18 that all believers are candidates for receiving an inheritance, but not all believers will receive rewards (Cf. 1 Peter 1:4-5).

### **"Vice Lists" in the NT**

- 1 Cor 6:9-10
- Gal 5:19-21
- Eph 5:3-5
- Rev 21:8; 22:15

### **Various Views on NT "Vice Lists"**

1. Loss of salvation
2. Professors of salvation, but not possessors
3. Believers who fail to remain in fellowship with God
4. Believers who will not enter the kingdom
5. Believers who will forfeit rewards in the kingdom and not reign with Christ
6. Believers who are exhorted not to live like unbelievers

(ii) Evildoers will experience God's wrath (5:6)

**6 See that no one deceives you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

**6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

**6 Do not let anyone deceive you with meaningless words, for it is because of these things that God becomes angry with those who disobey.**

**6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.**

– "...empty words" - words that teach that living a moral Christian life is unimportant

— They are empty because they are void of content, containing no truth

- "...these things" - the characteristics described in v5 (sexual immorality, impurity, greed/idolatry)
- "...the wrath of God" - *orgē*, the temporal display of God's displeasure with human sin; here, directed toward unbelievers
  - Paul is saying that unbelievers are under the *orgē* (passion without limits) of God, so why would you as a believer want to behave like them?
  - Believers are free from God's wrath, but we can still experience His temporal discipline when we sin and act like unbelievers
  - There is a time future when the wrath of God will be poured out on the earth, and believers have received a ticket out of that wrath through the blood of Christ (the Rapture). We escape God's wrath for sin because His wrath was absorbed by Christ, standing in our place.
  - Those whose faith is not in Christ for salvation have nothing to look forward to other than fiery indignation
  - So because the wrath of God is coming upon the world because of these sins, why would I, as a blood bought saint, live according to those same sins? These sins are very far removed from my new identity in Christ.
- "...the sons of disobedience" - Paul tells us who these are in 2:2: unbelievers. Disobedience characterized those in the Ephesian church before they came to Christ.

(4) Walk in the light (5:7-14)

- (A) Do not become involved with evildoers (5:7-10)
  - (a) Command: do not get involved with evildoers (5:7)

7 **Therefore do not become partners** with them;

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;

7 So do not be partners with them.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

- "Therefore" - because God will judge evil and evildoers (unbelievers)...
- "...do not become partners" - a command/imperative; do not be intimately linked with people ("sons of disobedience" v6) who display the lusts (lifestyles) of v3-5 ("them")
  - It is inconsistent for Christians, as the object of God's love (v2), to become partakers with the objects of God's wrath (v6) by joining them in selfish, immoral, impure conduct
  - To take part in this behavior is to dishonor the name of Christ, to wreck other lives, to ruin one's own testimony, and to invite retribution (2 Cor 6:14—7:1)

(b) Reason: believers are changed people (5:8a)

(c) Command: walk as children of light (5:8b-10)

(i) Walk as children of light (5:8b)

8 for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; **walk as children of light**  
8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

8 For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light,  
8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

- Paul is saying that you're a different person now...before you came to Christ, you had an "old" identity; once you came to Christ, you received a new identity (Cf. Eph 1-3)
- Since I now have a new, changed identity, why would I go back to my old, unchanged identity?
- It is obviously possible for believers to not walk "as children of light" (Cf. 1 John 1:6-7), otherwise the command would be unnecessary
- "...walk as children of light" - the command restated
- How do we "walk in the light"? You walk in the fruit of the Spirit (v9).

*The gravest disservice that any man can do to a fellow man is to make him think lightly of sin. [Barclay]*

#### (ii) Fruit of the light (5:9)

- 9 (for the fruit of the light *consists* in all **goodness, righteousness, and truth**),
- 9 (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- 9 for the fruit that the light produces *consists* of every form of goodness, righteousness, and truth.
- 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- "...goodness" - inclusive term for all moral excellence
- "...righteousness" - integrity in all dealings with God and Men
- "...truth" - honesty, equity, and reality; when "word and the deed become one" (Matt 5:16; John 3:20-21)
- These three qualities are the opposite of the fruit of darkness (4:18-19), and sum up the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)
- The "fruit of the Spirit" are the character traits that God seeks to replicate in our lives as we submit moment-by-moment to the power of the Holy Spirit

#### (iii) Please the Lord (5:10)

- 10 as you **try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.**
- 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
- 10 Determine what pleases the Lord,
- 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

- "...try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" - God's will for my life
- While the child of light walks as a child of light, they will continually be trying to discover what the will of God is ("acceptable unto the Lord"), so that they can do it and thereby please God
- Finding out what pleases God and what doesn't please God is part of what it means to "walk as children of light"
- How do we learn what is pleasing to the Lord? The only way is through a consistent study of the Bible. There is no other book written, or no other resource you can tap in to, that can fulfill this need other than Scripture.
- Proving includes putting every thought and action to the test: what does the Lord think about this? Our conversation, our standard of living, our clothes, books, business, pleasures, furniture, friendships, vacations, automobiles, sports...

(B) Do not become involved with evil works (5:11-13)

(a) Command: do not participate but expose (5:11)

- 11 Do not **participate** in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;
- 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;
- 11 and have nothing to do with the unfruitful actions that darkness produces. Instead, expose them for what they are.
- 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- "...participate" - *synkoinōneō*, root word *koinōnia*; adding the *syn* prefix [with] means "to have a high level of fellowship"
- When we fellowship with people involved in the "useless deeds of darkness" it relieves the guilt and embarrassment of them for their evil deeds; your fellowship gives them your stamp of approval
- Children of light should also abstain from joining the sons of disobedience in their "works," but should instead expose believers who do them because their deeds are unfruitful (v9)
- It is the *deeds* of unbelievers that Christians must shun, not the unbelievers who do them
- He's saying: for us to live in sinful darkness is inconsistent with who we are
- In fact, our presence around those things should cause us to expose them. We expose the evil deeds of believers when we bring light to them.

(b) Reason: shame of evil works (5:12)

- 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
- 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
- 12 For it is shameful even to mention what is done by these disobedient people in secret.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

- Believers should not even discuss the "secret" dark deeds of people in normal conversation. Doing so draws attention to them and may make them attractive to the carnal minded.
- It is better to keep the dark deeds done in the dark, in the dark

(c) Explanation: light exposes the darkness (5:13)

13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

13 But everything that is exposed to the light becomes visible,

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

- On the other hand, when light shines on evil deeds, other people see them for what they are: evil
- This verse does not contradict v12...Paul assures us that God will bring evil to the light of day and show it to be what it is

(C) Conclusion: Enlightenment of Christ (5:14)

14 For this reason it says, "**Awake, sleeper**, And arise from the dead, And **Christ will shine on you.**"

14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

14 for the light is making everything visible. That is why it says, "Wake up, sleeper! Arise from the dead, and the Messiah will shine on you."

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

- This is a paraphrase of Is 60:1 (Cf. Rom 13:11-13; 1 Thess 5:1-11)
- "...Awake, sleeper" - "Wake up!" *Carpe diem!* "Seize the day!" Make the most of opportunities for our King!
- It's important to start living according to our identity...wake up and stop being involved with evildoers and evil deeds
- It is important that believers wake up and rise from the deadness of their former unsaved lifestyles. If they do, Christ will shine on them in blessing as the sun warms what its rays touch.
- "...Christ will shine on you" - a promise that Christ will shine blessings on us like the sun's rays warm us on a cool day

- The moment we decide to "wake up" we will have a purpose in life that glorifies Him. The most exciting thing we can do this side of eternity is to be used by God for His eternal purposes.
- When we reach the point in our Christian journey when we say: "I'm going to give up on the sinful things I'm doing; I'm going to give up identifying myself with sinful people who are dragging me down; I'm going to turn over a new leaf and begin to walk as a "child of the light"...an amazing thing happens: God promises to bless us.

(5) Walk of wisdom (5:15-17)

(A) Walk circumspectly (5:15)

- 15** So then, be **careful how you walk**, not as unwise people but as **wise**,
- 15** Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,
- 15** So, then, be careful how you live. Do not be unwise but wise,
- 15** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- "...careful how you walk" - walk (live) carefully; comes from two Latin words which mean "looking around"
- The Greek word *akribos* (translated "careful"), carries the idea of precision and accuracy; live carefully, live skillfully, live wisely. "See to it that you walk carefully" is the meaning. The opposite would be walking carelessly and without proper guidance and forethought.
- Careful living is essential to being wise (skillful) and pleasing the Lord (v10). We should not leave the Christian life to chance; we must make wise decisions and seek to do the will of God.
- "...wise" - wisdom is discovering the principles and truths of God, then ordering our lives to live consistently with those principles
- The book of Proverbs contains nuggets of wisdom to help us live a careful, skillful, wise life

(B) Use time wisely (5:16)

- 16** **making the most of your time**, because **the days are evil**.
- 16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
- 16** making the best use of your time because the times are evil.
- 16** Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- "making the most of your time" - how important is it for us to redeem the time, number our days (Ps 90:12)
- We as Christians only have three things on this earth: time (whatever limited time God gives me), treasure, and talent. I have a choice about how I'm going to invest these things.

- And there are only two things in this life that will live on into eternity: God's Word (Is 40:8) and the souls of men (Eccl 3:11)
- So living wisely means that I take my three areas (my time, treasure, and talent) and invest them into the two things that will last for eternity (God's Word and the souls of men)
- "...the days are evil" - life is short; time passes by quickly; life is a vapor that appears for a little while, then it's gone (James 4:14; Ps 103:15-16)

(C) Understand God's will (5:17)

- 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.
- 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- 17 Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.
- 17** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
- The second time Paul tells us to understand what the will of God is (Cf. v10)
- Just like in v10, the only way to understand God's value system, the only way to understand the mind of God, is through a consistent intake of God's Word
- This is how we have our minds renewed (Rom 12:2); the world system seeks to conform our minds to its value system, so we must renew our minds on God's will through His Word

## Summary

- Walk according to your identity, by...
  - Imitating God by walking (living) in love - example: Christ's sacrifice
  - Don't practice:
    - Sexual immorality (illicit intercourse by unmarried people)
    - Impurity (immoral acts or interests - movies, books, websites)
    - Greed (the sinful desire for more; discontentment; idolatry)
    - Filthiness (obscenity)
    - Foolish talk (empty conversation; worthless, time-wasting talk)
    - Vulgar joking (double entendres; vulgar wordplay)
- Vice List (v3-6) - correct interpretation is not that if you do these things, you somehow lose your salvation and don't go to heaven. Rather, it's a contrast to say that these are the things that characterize unbelievers, so as a believer you should not imitate (or partner with) them.
- Instead of practicing the things that unbelievers do, we should instead use our time and energy to walk according to our identity ("children of light") and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
- Same thing is repeated in v11-14...don't become involved in the evil deeds of unbelievers, but instead live your life in such a way that your character exposes their evil. If you do this, God will bless you (v14).

- Live carefully/skillfully (v15), not as unwise but as wise
  - Wise = discovering the principles and truths of God, then ordering our lives to live consistently with those principles
  - Wisdom = knowledge applied
- Two of the ways we live carefully/skillfully is to make the most of our time (v16) and to understand what the will of the Lord is.
  - Living wisely can be summarized as: God gives us three things (time, talent, treasure) and He tells us that two things are eternal and will last forever (God's Word, Is 40:8; the souls of people, Eccl 3:11).
  - So living wisely means that I take the three things that God gave to me (time, treasure and talent) and invest them into the two things that will last for eternity (God's Word and the souls of men)

#### (6) Walk of the spirit (5:18–6:9)

##### (A) Command to be filled with the Spirit (5:18)

18 And do not **getdrunk** with **wine**, in which there is **debauchery**, but **befilledwith the Spirit**,

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

18 Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but keep on being filled with the Spirit.

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

— "...get drunk" - *methyskō*, to be intoxicated; the idea is to not allow yourself to be under the control of a foreign substance

— Do not allow yourself to be under the control of a foreign substance (hard alcohol, wine, street drugs, prescription drugs, marijuana, cigarettes, etc.)

— "...wine" - mentioned in the Bible as recommended medicine (Prov 31:6; 1 Tim 5:23); our Lord provided it at Cana (John 2:1-11). Forbidden when:

- It leads to excess (Prov 23:29-35)
- It becomes habit forming (1 Cor 6:12b)
- It offends another believer (Rom 14:13; 1 Cor 8:9)
- If there is any doubt (Rom 14:23)

— What about social drinking? There is no passage in the Bible that forbids any alcoholic intake, so this topic would go under the category of freedom in Christ. We have many freedoms in Christ, but we are never to abuse them.

— However, drunkenness is often prohibited in the Bible. Intake of enough alcohol where it begins to affect your thought process or ability to function, even in the slightest, is prohibited.

- "...debauchery" - *asōtia*, dissipation; a disorderly and wasteful life as a result of a lack of self control. It can also be defined as those who waste their time and their resources attempting to gratify their sensual desires.
- Debauchery or dissipation is never referred to as being "under control"; it's always referred to as being excessive (Cf. 1 Peter 4:4)
- Same word used of how the prodigal son lived his life (Cf. Luke 15:13)
- When we allow mind-altering substances to control us, we are engaging in dissipation
- "...be filled with the Spirit" - passive voice, imperative mood, meaning: allow the Holy Spirit, who already indwells you, to completely control you. It also has the notion of continual filling, over and over again.
- Paul says that instead of that drunken binge that won't end well, be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are to replace a life of drunkenness and dissipation with a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- This is a command, not a suggestion; it's just as much of a command as to not be drunk with wine or to avoid vulgarity, greed, etc. that Paul covered earlier in this chapter. God commands us here to be *perpetually* filled with the Holy Spirit.
- At the point of faith in Christ, there are ministries of the Holy Spirit that begin immediately:
  1. The Holy Spirit indwells you (Rom 8:9); if you don't have the Holy Spirit indwelling you, you're not saved. At that point, our body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).
  2. I am baptized into the body of Christ (church) by the Holy Spirit (baptism of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13)
  3. The Holy Spirit sealed us (Eph 1:13; 4:30)
- "filled" - why do I need to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit if the Holy Spirit already indwells me?
- As Christians, we can allow sin into our lives. The moment we allow sin into our lives, the moment we decide to go our way instead of God's way, is the moment I "quench" the Spirit. I have limited the access that the Holy Spirit has over me. The Spirit is in me, but He's not in complete control.
- James 4:5 says that the Spirit's purpose is to indwell the believer, and that He yearns earnestly for the believer's total devotion and loyalty. James encourages the believer to not shrink the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives by living a life pleasing to the world.
- The Holy Spirit is jealous to fill us completely and fully control us, but we limit Him because of sin
- Because of the reality of human sin, we need to be perpetually refilled with the Holy Spirit. For example, in Acts 2:4 the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, then in Acts

4:31 the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit again. This is an example of the idea of perpetual filling of the Spirit.

— Because Spirit-filling is repeatable does not necessarily mean the believer lost his previous filling. It can also mean a new area of one's life has been placed under the control of the Spirit. The Apostles were filled with the Spirit at least three different times (Acts 2:4; 4:8,31); Stephen at least twice (Acts 6:3-6; 7:55); Paul at least two different times (Acts 9:17; 13:52); Barnabas in Acts 11:24. In none of these cases was the previous filling lost. In every case, a new area needed to be under the Spirit's control, so in each of those areas, they were filled with the Spirit.

— ***When I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, I don't get more of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gets more of me.***

— *The baptism of the Holy Spirit connects me with the body of Christ; my filling of the Holy Spirit means my body belongs to Christ.* [Wiersbe]

- This "filling" is not automatic...not every Christian is perpetually refilled by the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but not perpetually refilled with the Holy Spirit.

— The Spirit does not have the control over a believer's life that He would like to have in every situation. This is why Paul gives us this command. The vast majority of Christians, who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but are not continuously refilled by the Holy Spirit (walking under the Spirit's control on a moment-by-moment basis).

— The textbook example of this is the church at Corinth...they were saved, but they were constantly walking in the flesh rather than in the Spirit

— Paul is adamant about believers being filled with this Holy Spirit because this is the source of the Christian's power, and by extension, the church's power

— What are some things I can do to be refilled with the Spirit?

1. Confess sin (1 John 1:9) - acknowledge to God that I have taken control in a situation and I want to relinquish control back to Him

2. Obey the revealed will of God (Cf. v17)

3. The moment a believer begins to do this there will be immediate results (v19-21)

— The ministry of Spirit filling is accomplished when the believer submits any part of his life to the control of the indwelling Spirit, then he is filled with the Spirit in that area of his life, and that area of his life is controlled by the Spirit.

— We do not use the Holy Spirit; He uses us (Luke 4:28; Acts 13:45)

— It is a voluntary measure I take to allow Christ to live His life through me (**Gal 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.)

- Justification - faith alone in Christ alone

- Sanctification - all Christ, but requires our cooperation
- Glorification - faith alone in Christ alone

- Gal 5:16: walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

- I can't overcome sin through willpower in and of itself. I overcome sin by submitting myself to the commands of God, under the Spirit's power
- If you as a believer do not understand your relationship with the Holy Spirit, all you have is a series of rules to follow... "don't smoke, don't chew, don't go with girls who do." Or more commonly, serve, give, volunteer!
- However, that's not how we're to live our life...we don't become sanctified by following a set of rules (that's what the Pharisees did)...we become sanctified by walking moment-by-moment under the Spirit's power

- Because Spirit-filling is repeatable does not necessarily mean the believer lost their previous filling. It can also mean a new area of one's life has been placed under the control of the Spirit.

- The Apostles were filled with the Spirit at least three different times (Acts 2:4; 4:8,31); Stephen at least twice (Acts 6:3-6; 7:55); Paul at least two different times (Acts 9:17; 13:52); Barnabas (Acts 11:24). In none of these cases was the previous filling lost.
- In every case, a new area of their lives needed to be under the Spirit's control, so in each of those areas, they were filled with the Spirit.

- Why do I need to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit if the Holy Spirit already indwells me? At the point of faith in Christ, there are three ministries of the Holy Spirit that begin immediately:

1. Indwelling (Rom 8:9) - if you don't have the Holy Spirit indwelling you, you're not saved. At that point, our body becomes the temple (home, dwelling place) of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).
2. I am baptized into the body of Christ (the church) by the Holy Spirit (baptism of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13)
3. The Holy Spirit sealed us (Eph 1:13; 4:30)

- However, Christians who are currently experiencing these three ministries can allow sin into our lives. The moment we allow sin into our lives, the moment we decide to go our way instead of God's way, is the moment I "quench" the Spirit. I have limited the access that the Holy Spirit has over me. The Spirit is in me, but He's not in complete control.

- James 4:5: Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"?

- The Holy Spirit jealously desires our total devotion and loyalty, but when we live like the world, we alienate the Holy Spirit and shrink His influence in our lives. We essentially move the Holy Spirit into the "broom closet."

- The Holy Spirit is jealous to fill us completely and fully control us, but we limit Him because of sin
- See [Holy Spirit](#) for a complete explanation of filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Remember the format Paul has used many times in this epistle (Cf. 4:25-32):

- **Negative command:** Don't do "A"
- **Positive command:** Rather than doing "A," do "B" instead
- **Reason:** because X, Y, or Z will happen (positive or negative)

For v18:

- **Negative Command:** do not get drunk/intoxicated (with any substance)
- **Positive Command:** instead of getting drunk, be filled with the Spirit
- **Reason:** outlined in 5:19—6:9

### A Contrast & A Comparison

- The contrast Paul gives in this verse is between being controlled by a foreign substance (in this case, wine) and being filled with the Spirit
  - To be "drunk" with wine means "to be controlled by" wine. Thus, to be "filled with the Spirit" means to be controlled by the Spirit. It means that the Spirit has possession of the life (actions, words, attitudes, behaviors, intentions, motivations) of a believer.
- The comparison is that when someone is drunk, they do not act in a normal way: they are loud, rude, obnoxious, their inhibitions are lowered, they don't care about the feelings of others, they have no control over their tongue but say whatever comes into their mind
  - In the same way, when a person is under the control of the Holy Spirit, they act in an "abnormal" (supernatural) way: the "normal" way would be the works of the flesh (Cf. v3-5; Gal 5:19-21). The "abnormal" (supernatural) way would be the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
  - When someone insults you and you respond with kindness, that is abnormal/supernatural. It's not the way people typically respond. The filling of the Holy Spirit causes a person to operate at a supernatural level because it's not me operating, it's the Holy Spirit through me.

### Spirit Filling

Three different Greek words are used, and all translated by the English word "to fill" or "to be filled."

The first form is a verb that is used 8x. This word is used only by Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Book of Acts. In Luke, the word is used of John the Baptist (Luke

1:15); Elisabeth (Luke 1:41); Zacharias (Luke 1:67). In the Book of Acts, it is used of the twelve disciples in the Upper Room (Acts 2:4); Peter (Acts 4:8); the apostles (Acts 4:31); Paul (Acts 9:17; 13:9).

The second Greek form is an adjective which is used 4x, also only by Luke in the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts. In Luke 4:1, it speaks of the Messiah being filled. In the Book of Acts, it is used of the seven deacons who are filled (Acts 6:3), of Stephen (Acts 7:55), and of Barnabas (Acts 11:24).

The third Greek form is also a verb, and it is used 2x. The first time is by Luke (Acts 13:52) where it is used of the disciples. It is used the second time by Paul in v18, where the command is given to be filled with the Spirit.

These are all the passages where the filling of the Spirit is found. In every case except one, it is used by Luke, either in his Gospel or in the Book of Acts. The only exception is v18, where Paul used the term. Luke was a close associate of Paul and traveled extensively with him.

### **Conditions for Spirit Filling**

1. A dedicated life - we must be yielded to the Spirit's control. This involves the initial acts of dedication (Rom 12:1), and the continuous direction of one's life by the Spirit in daily living.
2. An undefeated daily walk - an undefeated life means we are living consistently with victory over sin in our daily lives (Eph 4:30). This means responding to the light of the Word as it is continuously being understood (1 John 1:7).
3. A dependent life - we must depend on the work of the Spirit (Gal 5:16).

Yield yourselves completely (Rom 12:1-2). Let His Word dwell in us richly (Col 3:16). Be emptied of self (Gal 2:20). It is interesting that at Pentecost, they were accused of "being drunk" (Acts 2:13-15). Self control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23; 1 Cor 14:32). To fill a cup with a new ingredient, it must first be emptied of the old. To be filled with *Him*, we must first be emptied of *us*.

### **Out of all of the verses in the entire NT that speak to the daily walk of the believer with Christ, which one do you think is most important?**

I would argue it is 1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

ISV says "If we make it our habit to confess our sins..."

Marriage example: Think of your relationship to the Holy Spirit as depicted in marriage...

- Husband and wife, married positionally and this can never (for this illustration) change. However, in our relationship, the husband can do things to offend the wife.

- What happens when he offends her is that their fellowship and intimacy is broken...sometimes they stop speaking for a short time, sometimes she'll just leave, or things are just awkward.
- Their relationship is hindered, they lose intimacy, they lose the enjoyment of each other, they lose the closeness that they had before...but their position as a married couple doesn't change. They are still married.
- This situation goes on until he apologizes for his behavior. That's when the barrier to intimacy, closeness, and fellowship is brought down. When he apologizes for his behavior, he doesn't all of a sudden become her husband again...he was always her husband, his position as her husband never changed. Their fellowship, closeness, intimacy were damaged for a time period, but not the marriage itself.
- This very closely illustrates our relationship with God...when we sin, we offend God (which is what sin does), but it doesn't mean I lose my salvation and need to get saved all over again. But what it does mean is that my relationship with Him is damaged, my intimate, moment-by-moment fellowship with Him is obstructed.
  - It may mean, because of my guilt, that I stop being in the Word for awhile, it may mean my prayer life suffers or goes into drought, it may mean I fall out of fellowship at church or small group or friends/family.
  - Until I confess my sin to the Lord and ask for forgiveness, my relationship with God will be this way. But once I humble myself enough to confess my sin and ask Him for forgiveness, in a split-second my sins are washed away and I have restored fellowship with Him.
  - I never became unsaved because of my sin, but my sin broke my close moment-by-moment fellowship with Him.

This is the main point of Jesus teaching in John 13: washing disciples feet...

John 13:10: Jesus \*said to him (Peter), **"He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet; otherwise he is completely clean. And you are clean—but not all of you."**

- Background:
  - No indoor plumbing
  - Walking around all day in desert, with sandals, you'd get sweaty/dirty
  - No shower, so you'd go to bath house to clean yourself, then walk home
  - When you got home, your feet were dirty (dirt roads, sandals), but you wouldn't go back to teh bath house to bath again, you'd just wash your feet
- The point of Jesus' teaching here is... if you are a Christian, you have been bathed, you are clean (positionally), you are going to heaven
  - But as you walk around in daily life, you sin, and your fellowship and intimacy with the Lord is fractured.

- Rather than going back to the bath house to bath again, you just need to wash your feet. You just need to utilize 1 John 1:9 (the Christian's bar of soap) in order to restore fellowship with the Lord.
- The washing of our feet is not a restoration of our position with God, but a restoration of our fellowship with God
- Notice the contrast with Judas "but not all of you" - Judas needed a bath (he wasn't saved), the rest of the 11 disciples just needed to wash their feet to restore fellowship

Paul will now go on to describe the consequences or outcomes of a believer being Spirit filled...

(B) Evidence of the Spirit's control (5:19—6:9)

- (a) Speaking (5:19a)
- (b) Singing (5:19b)

19 speaking to one another in **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritualsongs, singing** and **makingmelodywith your hearts** to the Lord;

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

19 Then you will recite to one another psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; you will sing and make music to the Lord with your hearts;

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

- How do we know if/when the Holy Spirit has filled us and we haven't grieved or quenched Him? You know that the Holy Spirit is controlling you on a moment-by-moment basis when four things happen in your life:

1. Desire for public worship (v19a)
2. Private worship (v19b)
3. Thanksgiving (v20)
4. Submission (v21)

— If you're moment-by-moment filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll have a desire to praise the Lord in your thoughts

— "...psalms" - OT psalms, which both Christians and Jews used for worship

— "...hymns" - songs that eulogized God in worship, magnifying who God is and His attributes

— "...spiritual songs" - general term that covers all other kinds of vocal praise

— "...singing" - vocal praise to God

— "...making melody with your hearts" - inaudible praise, from the heart

- God is not interested in religious rituals, but the sincere worship that comes from our hearts (Cf. Is 29:13)
- If you're moment-by-moment filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll have a desire to praise the Lord in your thoughts

(c) Thanksgiving (5:20)

20 **always** giving thanks **for all things** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to *our* God and Father;

20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

20 you will consistently give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah;

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

- An attitude of gratitude is a clear sign that you are filled with the Holy Spirit

— If you're a "glass half empty" person, this may be more difficult for you because when you look at your life, you just see the problems and not the good things and blessings God has given you

— You're so focused on what God *hasn't* done yet that you can't focus on what He *has* done

— If you have a tendency to dwell on the negative, you're not giving thanks in all things and consequently you are quenching the Holy Spirit, you're not being controlled by the Holy Spirit

— One of the best ways to move you out of that negative mindset is to sit down and simply focus on the blessings that you do have

— *Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God has done.*

— In 2 Tim 3:2, Paul lists 18 specific indicators of the last days...ungratefulness is on the list. Being unthankful, selfish, uncourteous.

- "...always...for all things" - I tend to thank God for blessings, but not the things I see as negatives

— Walking in the Spirit means also being thankful for the trials and tribulations that we go through. We can be thankful in the difficult times because we know that God is putting us through these to build our character, to make us "perfect" (not sinless, but we sin less) and "complete" (perfectly equipped) because God knows trials are the only way to manifest these traits in our lives (James 1:2-4).

— It is only possible to be thankful in all things when we already filled by the Holy Spirit and we recognize that God is at work in our lives for His glory and our good

(d) Submission (5:21–6:9)

(i) Command of submission (5:21)

21 and **subject** yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

21 and you will submit to one another out of reverence for the Messiah.

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

– "...subject" - *hypotassō*, to submit, to rank under; when the Holy Spirit controls us, we will have a submissive spirit. The opposite would be to dominate others and exalt oneself over them.

— Jesus submitted (*hypotassō*) to His own parents (Luke 2:51), and to the Father (1 Cor 15:28)

— The demons submitted to the disciples (Luke 10:17); the angels are currently in submission to Christ (1 Peter 3:22); citizens must submit to their government (Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1)

— "...to one another" - *allēlous*, God has put in place an authority structure: in marriage (v22-33), in the home (6:1-4), and in business (6:5-9); there's also an authority structure in the church (1 Tim 2-3)

— A person who is controlled/filled with the Holy Spirit has the desire to submit to the authority structure that God has established

— If you are under the control of the Spirit's influence, you look at the authority structures that God has established and instead of complaining about it or fighting it, you recognize that God is the One who established it, so you submit yourself to it fully

- Evangelical feminism jumps on the use of *allēlous* and argues that it means "everyone to everyone" or something that everyone must do to everyone else.

— To support this view, they quote a number of verses where *allēlous* does that that sense (John 13:34; Gal 5:13). But just because *allēlous* means "everyone to everyone" in some verses doesn't mean that it has this meaning in all verses.

— In many other contexts in the NT, *allēlous* doesn't mean "everyone to everyone" but rather "some to others" (Matt 24:10; Luke 2:15; 12:1; 24:32; 1 Cor 11:33; Gal 6:2; Rev 6:4)

— "...in the fear of Christ" - if you are under the control of the Spirit's influence, filled with the Spirit, looks at the authority structures, recognizes that God has established them, and because they fear (reverence) God, they willingly submit themselves to what the Creator has established

- So walking in the Spirit is the opposite of exalting oneself, it is the opposite of seeking to dominate other people; instead, it is an attitude of submission to what God has called different people to do in the various roles of life

In the context of person-to-person submission, some use this verse to argue that Paul really means a less offensive, tit-for-tat submission, where each party simply considers the other's needs. They believe this verse implies a mutual, 50/50 submission, in order to make God's commands more politically correct.

But Paul follows the command in v21 with the ways in which we submit, namely wives to husbands, children to parents, slaves (employees) to masters (bosses). If Paul were only emphasizing a general principle of mutual submission, why would he provide specific examples? If he wanted to emphasize the mutuality of submission, he would have said 'wives submit to your husbands as husbands submit to your wives'; 'slaves submit to your masters as masters submit to your slaves'; or, 'children submit to your parents as parents submit to your children.'

(ii) Practicality of submission (5:22—6:9)

(a) Husbands and wives (5:22-33)

Marriages have been in trouble since Gen 3. The fall of man did not only damage our vertical relationship with God, but it also damaged our horizontal relationship with others, including husband and wife. Unless you understand what God said to Eve after the fall, you will have no idea what Paul is saying to wives in v22-24. In Gen 3:16, God describes a power struggle within marriage...the woman will "desire" (to rule over) her husband (feminism), and the husband will compensate by dominating his wife in a harsh manner (chauvinism).

God's purpose through the commands of v22-33 is to take man and woman back to His original design in Eden, before the Fall. God is not coming up with something new in this passage, He's simply taking us back to Gen 2 and describing the relationship between Adam & Eve, before the Fall created this power struggle between men and women.

The Edenic curse (Gen 3:16, see notes there) created a power struggle between husband and wife, male and female, for who is going to have the authority. This was the beginning of feminism (the woman ruling over the man) and chauvinism, the man trampling down the woman. But in Eph 5:22-33 Paul gives Christian couples clear instructions on how to unwind this curse. When God tells the wife to submit to her husband (Eph 5:22-24), He is giving the wife a remedy for feminism, and when God tells the husband to love his wife (Eph 5:25), He is giving the husband a remedy for chauvinism.

Gen 1-2 is God's plan and purpose for marriage; Gen 3 is the problem in marriage; Eph 5:22-33 is God's solution to the problem. Eph 5:22-33 is the answer to the Edenic curse. It's designed to take marriages from the thorns and thistles of Gen 3 back into the paradise of Gen 1-2. See [Ephesians 13 The Christian Marriage - Part 1 \(Eph 5:22-24\)](#) for expanded comments on this passage.

(1) Wife's submission (5:22-24)

a. Imperative: wives submit (5:22)

**22** Wives, **subject yourselves** to your own husbands, **as to the Lord.**

**22** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

**22** Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord.

**22** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

— "...*subject yourselves*" – *hypotassō*, to rank under; this is a command, not a recommendation or suggestion. The wife's responsibility in marriage is to submit to her husband (Cf. notes on v21).

— The Greek word *hypotassō* does not simply mean "obey." The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use *hypotassō* because for a wife to be submissive to her husband often does not involve obeying commands or directives. A husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the Church will seek advice and discussion about the course of action to be followed rather than lay down dictates. This is why Paul, when talking about wives, used *hypotassō* instead of the specific word *hypakouō* ("obey"), which he used for children (6:1) and for servants/employees (6:5).

— Nevertheless, a wife's attitude of submission to her husband's authority will be reflected in numerous words and actions each day which reflect deference to his leadership and an acknowledgment of his final responsibility—after discussion has occurred, where possible—to make decisions affecting the whole family.

— In today's culture, submission has the idea of oppression. But biblical submission is nothing close to oppression—it is order. Christ submitted to the Father, and wives do not out-rank Christ. If Christ had the humility to submit Himself to the Father, wives should willingly follow His command to submit to their husband.

— Submission is not just a grudging passivity (duck and let God punch him). To obey Christ's command to submit, a wife must *attempt to know the heart of her husband*, to *honor that heart*, to *come in line with its desires* and joys, its instincts and its passions, and to *align herself and her children with those desires* and passions.

- Wives must not belittle their husbands, wives must lift up their husbands.
- Wives should not refuse their bodies to their husband, but they are called to give of themselves with joy.
- Wives should not attempt to "dominate him," but we should desire to increase his authority and respect in every way possible, whether in the eyes of our family, neighbors, children, friends or community.

— The famous Prov 31 passage shows a woman who uses her great initiative and creativity to control a sphere of influence given her by her husband, in order to bring honor to his name

— A wife's job in submitting to her husband is far more than simply acquiescing when his will happens to cross hers, or allowing him to make decisions without objecting. A wife is to bring all things together under one head, her husband. In other words, in the sphere of her home, where her husband is head, she is to gather, collect, and submit all those things that are under her supervision (including her children!) to her husband's control.

- Although this verse is in the imperative mood (meaning it is a command), a wife is to willingly place herself under the direction of her husband, under the covering and protection that his leadership provides. Submission is the wife's personal choice, but this verse is clear that it is God's clear direction for the wife, and that submission must be done willingly and joyfully.

- Submission does not indicate inferiority or involve losing one's identity and becoming a non-person:

- Gen 1:26-28 makes it clear that male and female are created *equal* before God
- Gal 3:28 is clear that God sees *no difference* between male and female in salvation or in the church, and that they are *equal under God in every way*

— But equality does not require sameness. This distinction between role and value is where Satan loves to go, and where the world makes the mistake. They think that in order for men and women to be really equal, they have to be able to do the same exact things.

— God did not design men and women to be interchangeable: women can do things that men cannot do, and men can do things that women cannot do.

— Some women fear that submission will lead to abuse or a feeling of being used.

Submission does not mean blind obedience or passivity. It means putting yourself under the authority of someone else.

— Women will generally submit to their husbands when the husband is walking out his commands (love his wife as Christ loves the church), but there's no conditional clause here only allowing for submission upon agreement

— The word "support" is a good synonym for the biblical concept of "submit." A wife submits to her husband when she voluntarily "organizes" herself so she can complete her husband.

— Submission is essential for achieving oneness in marriage

- We live in an ordered universe, in which there is authority and submission to authority everywhere (Cf. Rom 13:1). Authority and submission relationships are therefore natural and necessary to maintain order:

- God has authority over man (James 4:5)
- Man has authority over nature (Gen 1:28)
- Husbands have authority over their own wives (Eph 5:22)
- Parents have authority over their own children (Eph 6:1)
- Governors have authority over those they govern (1 Peter 2:13-14)

- Employers have authority over their employees (1 Peter 2:18)
- Spiritual leaders have authority over those they lead spiritually (1 Peter 5:2)
- We are all called to submit to others in Scripture:
  - Church members are to submit to faithful pastors (Heb 13:17)
  - Everyone is to submit to government authorities (Rom 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14)
  - Everyone is to submit to God (James 4:7)
  - Wives are to submit to their own husbands (Eph 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1)
- Other uses of *hypotassō* in the NT show that this word never means a mutual submission one to another, nor does it mean to be thoughtful and considerate, or to act in love toward another. The term always implies a relationship of submission to authority:
  - Jesus is subject to the authority of his parents (Luke 2:51)
  - Demons are subject to the disciples (Luke 10:17; clearly "act in love, be considerate" cannot fit here!)
  - Citizens are to be subject to government authorities (Rom 13:1,5; Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13)
  - The universe is subject to Christ (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22)
  - Unseen spiritual powers are subject to Christ (1 Peter 3:22)
  - Christ is subject to God the Father (1 Cor 15:28)
  - Church members are to be subject to church leaders (1 Cor 16:15-16 [Cf. 1 Peter 5:5])
  - Wives are to be subject to their husbands (Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:5; compare Eph 5:22,24)
  - The church is subject to Christ (Eph 5:24)
  - Servants are to be subject to their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18)
  - Christians are subject to God (Heb 12:9; James 4:7)
- Paul summarized the wife's duty as submission and the husband's duty as love, however wives are also commanded to love their husbands (Titus 2:4)
  - "...as to the Lord" - wives are to be submissive to their own husbands as an expression of her submission to the Lord
  - Paul did not say they were to be subject to their husbands in proportion to how much the husband is submissive to the Lord
  - In submitting to her husband, the wife is obeying the Lord who has commanded her to do so
  - There is no mention or even hint that Paul is saying that women are inferior to men (Cf. 1 Peter 3:7)
  - God has ordained human government, including the governing structure within the home
  - In submitting to the husband, the wife is submitting to the Lord (Cf. 1 Cor 11:3; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1ff)

Col 3:18: Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Titus 2:5: *to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.*

1 Peter 3:1: In the same way, you wives, be subject to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the behavior of their wives,

b. Reason: husband is to lead (5:23)

23 For the husband is the **head** of the wife, as **Christ also is the head of the church**, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

23 For the husband is the head of his wife as the Messiah is the head of the church. It is he who is the Savior of the body.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

- We learned in 1:22 that Jesus is the Head of the Church; the church is subject to, or submissive to, Jesus Christ

— Paul gives us that knowledge, that right understanding, in Eph 1-3; now he says, here's how you apply it: as Christ is the Head of the Church, the husband is the head of the marriage. As the church submits to Christ, the woman should submit to her husband.

— A Christian marriage should serve as a witness of our relationship with Christ. As people who will never read the Bible see your marriage, they should see in your marriage a picture of God's relationship with the church.

— God intended our marriages to be evangelistic because there are many people who don't know Bible doctrine, they don't understand Bible doctrine, and they don't care about Bible doctrine, but they can still see a portrait of God's love for His church and the church's submission to Christ through your marriage.

— This is why marriage is under assault today by Satan and the world...Satan is trying to destroy your marriage because your marriage is an evangelistic tool to the unsaved world  
- "...head" - the husband's headship in the marriage involves loving, serving, caring for, and leading his wife. These are all things that Jesus does for the Church.

— Headship is not dictatorship: he loves, leads, guides, provides, protects, and cares for her

— A good definition of headship: the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.

- What does headship look like in the context of marriage?

- To go *ahead*, to take the lead. To take responsibility in every circumstance.

- In an argument, even if it's her fault, the husband is obliged to say the first reconciling words. She may beat you to it sometimes, and that's fine, but headship doesn't mean that she is obliged to say "I'm sorry" first.
- Christ is our example, and in the relationship between Christ and the church, who took the initiative to make all things new? Who left the comfort and security of His throne of justice to put mercy to work at Calvary? Who approached Peter first after three denials? Who has returned to you over and over and over again, forgiving you and offering fresh fellowship?
- Headship puts the responsibility for the relationship squarely on the husband, even in situations when the breaking of fellowship is the fault of the wife
  - "...Christ also is the head of the church" - Christ is never called the "King" of the Church; Jesus' relationship with the Church is never depicted through the King-Kingdom metaphor
  - Because He is Lord, He is the "head of the Church" (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18; 2:19; Cf. notes on Acts 10:36)
  - This is one of the works of Christ during His Present Session. See [Present Ministry of Christ](#) for details on what Jesus is doing from heaven today.

- c. Illustration: Christ and the church (5:24a)
- d. Application: follow church's example (5:24b)

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands **in everything**.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

24 Indeed, just as the church is submissive to the Messiah, so wives must be submissive to their husbands in everything.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

- Just as the church submits/is submissive to Jesus Christ in all things, a wife who is filled with the Holy Spirit, controlled by the Holy Spirit, enlightened by the truth of God's Word, will submit to her husband in all things
- "...in everything" - a conditional statement based on other passages
- If a husband tells his wife to stop going to church, stop reading your Bible, stop evangelizing, the wife has the freedom to not submit to those instructions because she is to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29)
- There is room/freedom for disobedience when the instruction is direct disobedience against God. This holds true for any human authority in any context...government, parents, etc.

— The husband's authority derives from God Himself as he operates as a servant of God. The husband's authority comes directly from God, thus he is subject to Scripture. The husband is not free to guide his wife or his family in ways that are contrary to Scripture.

See extensive notes on 1 Peter 3:1-7 (esp v7) for additional details on the husband's responsibilities and duties to his wife.

1 Peter 3:7: You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, *since she is* a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Paul here in context is talking about two Christians who are married (Cf. v21). But what if one spouse is saved and the other is not? First off, don't marry an unbeliever (2 Cor 6:14). If you already have married an unbeliever, or if one spouse was saved after marriage, Eph 5:22-33 is not governing that situation. There are other passages in the Bible that cover that scenario (1 Peter 3:1f; 1 Cor 7:12f). In 5:22-33 Paul is talking to a Christian married couple, giving them the way out of the curse placed on human relationships after the Fall of Adam & Eve in Gen 3:16. He's telling them how to unwind that curse and have a pre-Fall relationship with your spouse.

(2) Husband's duty to love wife (5:25-32)

a. Imperative: husband love wife (5:25a)

b. Illustration: Christ's love for the church (5:25b-27)

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,**

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,**

**25 Husbands, love your wives as the Messiah loved the church and gave himself for it,**

**25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

— "...love" - *agapē*, the highest form of love, the same love that God has for us; it is seeking the highest good for another person (Cf. 2:4)

— Practically speaking love requires an attitude of unconditional acceptance of an imperfect person, not based on her performance, but on her intrinsic worth as God's gift to her husband. The verbalization of this acceptance is part of loving. It's not I love you *if...*; it's just I love you.

— Love also requires sacrificial action. It involves placing the wife's needs before his own, such as doing something for her that she hates to do.

- Love also involves self-denial, such as giving up something he would enjoy doing in order to do something she would like to do. This type of love arises out of a commitment of the will, not just passing feelings.
- Three Greek words for love in the NT: *eros* (sexual passion); *phileo* (brotherly affection), and *agapē*, the highest form of love. It means to seek the highest good of another. The husband is to seek the highest good for his wife.
- God's has *agapē* love for us (Cf. 2:4), He wants the highest good for us
- The husband's job is impossible unless you're doing it in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit is mentioned in v18, before Paul embarks on the subject of marriage
- The command is for the husband to love his wife with the same love that God has toward him. An easy thing to say, a difficult thing to do.
- Experts tell us that people receive love from others in five different ways:
  1. Words: some people feel love through words that their spouse says to them; words of encouragement or positive reinforcement
  2. Quality time: spending quality time with your spouse; not being too involved in career or other endeavors so as to leave no time for your spouse (1 Peter 3:7)
  3. Gifts: flowers, candy, other gifts
  4. Acts of service: kind gestures, surprises
  5. Physical touch: sitting beside, holding hands, cuddling; close physical contact
- "...just as Christ also loved the church" - husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the Church
  - The extent to which He went for its welfare was giving Himself up in death to provide salvation for her (Phil 2:5-11). He gave up His rights, yet maintained His responsibilities. The biblical idea of authority emphasizes responsibility, not tyranny.
  - The husband will love his wife sacrificially (v25), sanctifying her (v26) and satisfying her (v28-30). No wife would mind being subject to a husband who loves her as Christ loves the Church.
  - "...gave Himself up" - Christ demonstrates His love for the church through self-sacrificing acts; Jesus' interaction with the church is embodied by the term selflessness; He is a Giver
  - This is Christ's relationship with His *bride*, the Church; illustration #3 (v29b-30,32) is Christ's relationship with His *body*, the Church
  - "...for her" - the church; Calvinism uses this verse as a proof-text for their doctrine of Limited Atonement: that only those elected by Christ can be saved because Christ only died for them; they believe that His blood only covers them, not anyone who is not elected
  - Other proof-texts Calvinism uses to argue for Limited Atonement include: Matt 20:28; John 10:15; Acts 20:28. However, all of their proof-texts lack exclusivity. This verse doesn't

say that God purchased "only" the church of God, or that He purchased the church of God "alone."

— If the biblical writers/Holy Spirit had wanted to communicate Limited Atonement to us, it would be a very simple thing to do. All they/He would have to do is add one word of exclusivity to these verses (the small Greek word *mona* (meaning "only" or "alone") in any of these passages. But they didn't, not even once.

— However, there are an abundance of verses that support Unlimited Atonement: John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:32,47; 15:18-19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 Tim 2:4,6; **4:10**; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; **2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2**; 4:14; 5:9. Of these, 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2 are explicit in including non-believers in Christ's atonement.

26 so that He might **sanctify** her, having cleansed her by the **washing of water with the word**,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

26 so that he might make it holy by cleansing it, washing it with water and the word,

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

- How does Jesus give Himself for the church? He sanctifies the church, He cleanses the church, He washes the church

- "...sanctify" - to set apart; the wife is to be "set apart." Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin.

— Also has the idea of purification and being set apart

— Since God's love seeks to completely those whom He loves from sin and any defilement, the husband should not be able to bear the thought of anything in his wife's life that displeases God.

— The husband's greatest desire is that his wife become more and more conformed to Christ, just as Christ's desire for His church is that it become more and more conformed to Him

— The purpose Jesus had in mind when He sacrificed Himself for His bride, the Church, was to set her apart for Himself as His own forever (Cf. Heb 2:11; 10:10,14; 13:12)

— See [Jewish Wedding Ceremony](#) for more details on how Christ is sanctifying and preparing the Church.

- "...washing of water with the word" - the means by which the husband sanctifies the wife...through the Word

— The Word is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to cleanse the Christian day by day

John 15:3: **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**

John 17:17: **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.**

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

27 and might present the church to himself in all its glory, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but holy and without fault.

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.

- The purpose of the sanctification process described in v26 (Cf. 2 Cor 11:2) is so that He may present it (the church) to Himself, "in all its glory" [ISV], in the end, without any spots or wrinkles or anything that would diminish its glory

— The goal/mission of the marriage mirrors the goal/mission of the church

— God will eventually present the church to His Son—as exclusively His. This will happen at the Rapture, when all Christians will experience full sanctification (glorification) and will join our Lord forever (2 Cor 11:2).

— The time that this is going to take place ultimately and finally is at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where members of the Church will have the wood, hay, and stubble burned away and the gold, silver, and precious stone purified by the fire of that judgment.

- Four characteristics of a glorified church:

1. No spot: no outward defilement
2. No wrinkle: no evidence of age
3. Holy: eventually reaching full sanctification
4. No blemish: no inward defilement

The reason why a young woman should not marry an unbeliever or an immature believer is because the man's model for love comes from his relationship with the Lord. If the man is not growing in his relationship with the Lord, if he is not experiencing the *agapē* love of Christ in his life, he has no model or formula with which to dispense *agapē* love to his wife.

c. Explanation (5:28-32)

i. Love wife as own body (5:28-29a)

28 So husbands also ought to love their own wives **as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;**

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

28 In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself.

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

– "...as their own bodies" – the biblical assumption of self-love (Lev 19:18)

— The Bible assumes that we love ourselves, that we take care of ourselves. We're great at feeding ourselves, bathing ourselves, making sure we get enough rest, getting enough leisure time, and doing the things I want to do.

— Our problem is not a lack of self-love, it's taking our self-love and dispensing it to others, including my wife

— The command to love your wife as your own body means that husbands are to take their innate self-love and dispense that same love to your wife. This requires husbands to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

— When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, He gives us the power to take our self-love and dispense it to others, namely our wives (Cf. Phil 2:4)

— "as" – some commentators have interpreted "as" as "being" here and in v33, which makes it a bit easier to understand

— Since in marriage, two people become one flesh, in a figurative sense a man's wife becomes part of his own body

— Consequently husbands should love and treat their own wives as they love and treat their own bodies (Cf. Lev 19:18)

– "...He who loves his own wife loves himself" – because the husband and wife are one body (Gen 2:24)

— In the previous verse (Gen 2:23) Adam said that Eve "was bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"

— When you enter into a marriage relationship, you're entering into the most intimate relationship you can possibly have with another human being

— Man is made up of three parts: body, soul and spirit. When a Christian couple gets married, they are uniting in all three areas at the deepest level possible. Thus, Jesus said,

**Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate.**

## ii. Christ cares for his body (5:29b-30)

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church,

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

29 For no one has ever hated his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, as the Messiah does the church.

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

- Loving yourself comes automatically, but loving your wife should come naturally as well because she is one with you
- "...nourishes" - involves providing security
- "...cherishes" - protecting by watching out for and caring for
- The model is this: whatever Jesus Christ does for His body, the church, a husband should do for his wife

30 because we are parts of His body.

30 because we are members of His body.

30 For we are parts of his body—of his flesh and of his bones.

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

- This is a concept Paul developed earlier (1:23-24)

- What does Christ do for His body, the Church?

- He directs His body
- He strengthens His body
- He nourishes His body
- He cherishes His body
- He provides security and protection (4:30; 1 Peter 1:5)

### **When a Man Loves a Woman (Eph 5:25-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7)**

- He will care for her by loving her (v25-33)
  - His love will be sacrificial (v25) (love her; understand her; love your wife *anyway*; He gave Himself up for her)
  - His love will be sanctifying (v26-27)
  - His love will be sensitive (v28)
  - His love will be satisfying (v29-30)
  - His love will be specific (v31-33)
- He will care for her by knowing her (1 Peter 3:7)
  - Be a spiritual leader (Ps 1)
  - Give personal affirmation/appreciation (Prov 31:28-31)
  - Speak romance in a language she understands (Song 6:4-10)
  - Initiate intimate conversation (Song 2:8-14)
  - Always be honest and open (Eph 4:15)
  - Provide home support and stability (1 Tim 5:8)
  - Demonstrate family commitment (Eph 6:4)

iii. The two are one flesh (5:31)

31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME **ONE FLESH**.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

31 "That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

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.

- Quoted from Gen 2:24 (this same verse is quoted 3x in NT: Matt 19:5-6; Mark 10:8; 1 Cor 6:16)

- "...ONE FLESH" - Adam acknowledged that Eve was part of himself (Gen 2:23)

— When a man and a woman unite in marriage, they become part of one another, in as close a unity as the one that existed before God physically "separated" Eve from Adam

— Scripture considers this tie as more fundamental, more binding, more permanent than any other tie that unites any other two human beings, including parent and child

— A man's relationship to parents is superseded by a higher loyalty to his wife. This should eliminate in-law troubles on the one hand, marital strife on the other.

#### iv. Mystery (5:32)

32 This **mystery** is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

32 This is a great secret, but I am talking about the Messiah and the church.

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

- "...mystery" - *mystērion*, in the NT, *mystērion* denotes, not the mysterious (as with the English word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words]

— The relationship between husband and wife in the bond of marriage and how it mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church, is the mystery. This is something brand new in God, that was planned before the foundation of the world, but that was just disclosed by Paul.

— From the beginning, manhood and womanhood were designed to display the glory of Christ in His relationship to the church, His bride

- Back in Eph 3:3-6,9 Paul disclosed a mystery to his readers: the church

— It was something brand new in God, planned before the foundation of the world, but that was just disclosed by Paul

- The application of this doctrine is: how Christ relates to the church is how a husband should relate to his wife
- From the beginning, manhood and womanhood were designed to display the glory of Christ in His relationship to the church, His bride
- The better you understand the doctrine of the church, the better husband you will be. In this case, the better a husband understands Ecclesiology (the study of the church), the better you will be able to relate to your wife.
- Many Christians just want practical advise, and don't want to get into doctrine or theology. But Paul says here that the better you understand the doctrine of the church, the better husband you will be. Theology/doctrine is the most practical thing you can devote yourself to understanding, and this is a perfect example of that.
- One of the purposes of marriage is to *model* Jesus Christ's relationship with the church. He leads, loves, and serves the church. The church reverently submits to and is subject to Him. When husbands and wives fulfill these responsibilities to one another, their marriage models the relationship between Christ and His bride.

### (3) Summation of responsibilities (5:33)

33 Nevertheless, as for you individually, each *husband* is to love his own wife the same as himself, and **the wife must see to it that she respects her husband**.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see *to it* that she respects her husband.

33 But each individual man among you must love his wife as he loves himself; and may the wife fear her husband.

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.

- Paul summarizes what he said in illustration #2 (v28-29a,31) in the relationship of a man to his own body
- "...the wife *must see to it* that she respects her husband" - in addition to being submissive to her husband (v22-24), Paul sneaks in one more command for the wife...see *to it* that she respects her husband
- "respects" - *phobeō*, fear, not in the sense of intimidation, but reverence; to venerate or to treat with deference
- Respect means to voluntarily lift up her husband for special consideration, treatment and obedience. It involves having consideration for his responsibilities and needs, and praying for him.
- One of the things the Holy Spirit wants to create in marriage is the respect that the wife has for her husband

- Words of encouragement that have a positive focus and build him up show respect for a husband, as does doing things that please him. Most husbands have a poor self-image. A husband must have the respect of his wife in order to feel successful as a man.
- Why does God command the woman to respect the man? Because, even from all the way back in Gen 1-2, God has given the man the responsibility of headship. After the Fall, man's headship was lost. But now in Eph 5, Paul is saying this is how headship is restored in the marriage: that a wife respects her husband.
- Headship is not to be interpreted as an authoritarian, chauvinistic rule as the pagan world all around us understands authority. Instead, it is servant-leadership, which is what Paul described in v25-32.
- And once that place of headship is restored to the husband, the woman is to have respect for that "office" and for the dignity that God originally gave to man before it was lost (Cf. 1 Peter 3:6, which uses Sarah as an example of submission and respect).
- If you watch TV today, and for a long while now, often sitcoms will portray the man as a bumbling idiot who can't do anything right. That is the world's image of the husband/man, but what God says in this passage is that I'm restoring the man to his role of leadership in the marriage, but as he leads the marriage, it is through the principle of *agapē*.

Paul's purpose for these instructions is to get Christian marriages back to paradise (Gen 1-2) and out of the curse (Gen 3). To do this, he gives the wife two commands: submission and respect, and he tells the husband that he is to dispense *agapē* love to his wife, which is illustrated in three ways: (1) Christ's love for His bride, (2) a man's love for his own body, and (3) Christ's love for His body.

Marriage can either be the closest thing to hell on earth (if you're stuck in Gen 3), or it can be the closest thing to heaven on earth if both partners are united and committed to walking about the commands of v22-33 under the direction of the Word of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit.