

Ephesians 5:1-21

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not associate with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Awake, O sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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SOMEONE TOLD ME ONCE that the Bible did not have anything to say about how we were to live day by day. I asked him which Bible he was reading and had he ever read Ephesians and Colossians. He was not convinced so the two of us sat down and read those two epistles together. He said that he had to think some more about this matter. He didn't know it then, but that is what 5:10, 17 instruct a believer to do. In this man's defence, his background was in a church that did not teach the Bible; they would read a verse and then make some social application and never explain the context of the verse.

This is what the Bible means when it says to put off the old man and put on the new man. We need clear instruction about how to do that. This passage is one of the places in the Bible where we have the light of Christ.

The Enlightenment in Christ results in:

1. A LIFE of LOVE 5:1-2

Be a follower or imitator of God. Since God forgave us so must we forgive others, (4:32) and we will "walk in love." How does Christ love? Then that's how we are to love one another.

The reference here is to the Old Testament sacrifices, when offered in understanding and submission, were a "sweet-smelling aroma" to God and pictured the sacrifice of the Christ, the promised Messiah.

2. A LIFE of PURITY 5:3-7

With a few rare exceptions, the life-model presented by the movies and television is casual sex without serious consequences; greed without apology; drug-abuse, alcohol abuse and cancer free smoking; and language uttered by even children that should embarrass any mature person.

The idea here is not to be a solemn sour-puss, but to avoid participating in the behavior that characterizes the world system. Jesus mingled with sinners and was criticized for doing so by the "holier-than-thou" hypocrites, but He did not enter in to their excesses. He maintained His integrity among the worst of individuals. This is a difficult assignment for a Christian but it is not impossible to do.

3. A LIFE of LIGHT-GIVING

5:8-14

It is not enough to simply avoid the kind of behavior prohibited here, we are to expose (reprove) it. Now it takes God-given wisdom to expose someone's behaviour in such a way that they are helped and not angered by you. They may well become angry at the exposure, but do it in a way that you are not a self-righteous hypocrite.

For example, a person could say, "Well, I would never do a thing like that!"

What if you said, "The Bible teaches that we should not do a thing like that but the only way I can avoid it is by the grace of God."

Too often we don't expose the behavior to the person involved, but commit sin by gossiping about what we think we know or have had our ears tickled by to a third party.

4. A LIFE of WISDOM

5:15-20

Being wise does not require the accumulation of facts. A wise person begins in the "fear of the Lord." The Bible has given us the principles by which we can be wise. For example, the Bible tells a believer to marry a Christian; it won't give you a telephone number to call. The Bible tells us to invest our resources; it won't tell you which stocks to buy.

An example, perhaps the worst one, of being unwise is being drunk. If a person is out of control they cannot be wise.

Verse 19 is used by those who don't allow musical instruments in the worship service. First of all, the context is not a worship service but individual behavior. Even if you extend the context, the word psalm means "the tune played on a harp."

If I hold a song book, am I making melody in my heart?

Isn't the song book an instrument? To me the non-instrumentals are an example of the unwise referred to in the very text they use to support their position.

We have instruments used in the Old Testament. Instruments are mentioned in heaven. Can you believe there is anything inherently wrong with instruments?

And don't forget to be thankful!

SUBMISSION IN CHRIST Ephesians 5:22-33

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

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THE FEMINIST'S MOVEMENT has been successful to the degree that they have imposed a concept of "equality" that is not according to the Scripture. The rate of happiness and contentment thus produced may be measured in the divorce rate.

Marriage is no longer "til death do us part," but rather "til a better deal comes along." Men are more to blame for this state of marriage because, for the most part, they don't know and really don't care what the Christian model is for marriage. The stupid man likes the idea of being "the boss," but he doesn't love his wife in the way that Christ loved the church.

Paul here begins to deal with the Christian family. The Christian family is well defined in the Bible and it does not include so-called gays living together, or any other cohabitation outside of a married man and woman and their children.

The liberal theologians like to use Galatians 3:28 "...there is neither male nor female..." to try to support the ordination of women. But the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to also write, "I will not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...."

The point is that God has set out a definite order of things. The Christian wife is in subjection to her husband in all things just as the husband is in subjection to Christ.

1. SUBMISSION within the FAMILY of GOD 5:21

This verse may be part of the instruction of how we may be wise and not stupid. In the church we are to submit to one another in the fear (reverence) of God. We are first to understand what God has revealed to us and then not insist on getting our way. If the Bible says that women do not teach men, then it is rebellion to insist otherwise. In matters not clearly addressed in Scripture we try to find a principle that applies and then be willing to submit to one another.

2. SUBMISSION within the FAMILY of MAN 5:22-24

This passage is not difficult to understand. It simply takes a Christian husband and a Christian wife to make it work. Too often the husband tries to act like some two-bit dictator, humiliates his wife and reveals his own ignorance.

Yes, Verses 22-24 mean exactly what they say. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." And Verse 25 means what it says also!

Let's borrow an illustration from Gordon Clark. Take a young husband, wife, and three-year old child. The wife wants them to take a longer vacation than usual; the husband thinks he should buy term insurance instead. Democratic procedure requires the three-year old to break the tie.

3. SUBMISSION BALANCED by SELF-GIVING LOVE

5:25-33

How much must a husband love his wife? When the husband obeys this command, no Christian wife has any problem submitting to such a husband.

Christ set apart and cleansed His church. Some believe the "washing" is baptism. Baptism hasn't produced the effect claimed here. This is eschatological and not ceremonial. The event is future when the Bride of Christ is presented to her divine Husband. This cleansing is by the word, i.e. preaching. The church is being made ready by the preaching of the word of God.

We may miss the relationship described in Verse 28. It is not only that a man loves his arms and legs, etc. The wife is the body of the husband in the same way the church is the body of Christ.

Paul takes us back to the beginning of the human race to establish the sanctity of marriage. Mysteries are understood when revealed. The world will not understand the Christian marriage because it doesn't understand or believe in the relationship of Christ and His church.