

## **[Ephesians 5](#) – Life in the Spirit**

### **Video for [Ephesians 5](#):**

[How To Walk – Ephesians 5:1-17](#)

[Walking in the Light – Ephesians 5:15-21](#)

### **Audio for [Ephesians 5](#):**

[Ephesians 4:25-5:21](#) – The New Man and Walking in the Light

[Ephesians 5:22-33](#) – The Christian Marriage

### **A. Forsaking the darkness.**

#### **1. (1-2) Walking in love.**

**Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.**

a. **Therefore:** Here, Paul concludes the thought from [Ephesians 4](#), where he described how Christians should relate to one another.

b. **Be imitators of God:** The idea is simple – that we are to make *God* our example and model. We can't content ourselves comparing us among men. We must heed the idea of [1 Peter 1:15-16](#): *as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

i. It does not say, "Think about God" or "Admire God" or "Adore God," though those are all important Christian duties. This is a call to practical action, going beyond our inner life with God.

ii. We could say this is a continuation of the same idea Paul mentioned in [Ephesians 4:13](#) regarding the extent of Christian growth: *to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. We could also say that this is a continuation of the idea from [Ephesians 4:32](#), where we were commanded to be *forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*. God's behavior towards us becomes our measure for our behavior towards one another.

iii. It is important to see that *God is far more than our example*. Many errors come into the church when Jesus is presented *only* as an example of behavior. We are not *saved* by the example of Jesus, but *once saved* His example is meaningful to us. God is *more* than our example, but He is *also* our example.

c. **As dear children:** Children are natural imitators. They often do just what they see their parents or other adults do. When we act according to our nature as children of God, we will imitate Him.

i. As we do imitate God, we become representatives of God, especially before those who have shut God out of their life. “What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God, as dear children, they will be compelled to recollect that there is a God, for they will see his character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly mother: he could never answer that.” (Spurgeon)

d. **Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us:** As in all things, Jesus is our example. As He **has loved us and has given Himself for us**, we are to display the same kind of self-giving love.

e. **An offering and a sacrifice:** Jesus’ giving of Himself was obviously a sacrifice pleasing to the Father. We can also offer a pleasing sacrifice (**a sweet-smelling aroma**) as we give ourselves in love to others.

i. We often think we could lay down our life in a dramatic way to show our love for others. But God often calls us to lay down our life little by little – in small coins (as it were) instead of one large payment – but it is laying down our lives nonetheless.

ii. Adam Clarke on **an offering**: “An oblation, an eucharistic offering; the same as *minchah*, [Leviticus 2:1](#) and following, which is explained to be *an offering made unto the Lord, of fine flour, with oil and frankincense*. It means, any offering by which *gratitude* was expressed for temporal blessings received from the *bounty* of God.”

iii. Adam Clarke on **a sacrifice**: “A *sin-offering*, a *victim for sin*; the same as *zebach*, which almost universally means that sacrificial act in which the blood of an *animal* was poured out as an atonement for sin. These terms may be justly considered as including every kind of *sacrifice*, *offering*, and *oblation* made to God on any account.”

## **2. (3-4) A contrast to walking in love: conduct not fitting for the Christian.**

**But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.**

a. **Let it not even be named among you:** Paul groups together these ideas of sexual sin and impropriety, indicating that none of these are **fitting for saints** and should not even **be named among** God’s people.

i. Paul used a comprehensive list of sexual sins:

- **Fornication** (*porneia*), a broad word describing sexual sin.
- **Uncleanness**, another broad word for “dirty” moral behavior, especially in a sexual sense.
- **Filthiness**, which has much the same idea as **uncleanness**.
- **Coarse jesting**, which has the idea of inappropriate, impure sexual humor.

ii. We must notice the theme of the moral appeal. It isn’t “avoid these things so that you can be a saint.” Rather, it is “you are a saint; now live in a manner fitting for a saint.” The constant moral appeal of the New Testament is simply this: *be who you are in Jesus*.

b. **As is fitting for saints**: This emphasis on sexual sin was appropriate. The culture of Paul’s day (and in the city of Ephesus especially) was given over to sexual immorality. The sort of behavior Paul says is not **fitting for saints** was pretty much completely approved by the culture of his day (and our own).

c. **Covetousness... foolish talking**: Paul also included **covetousness** and **foolish talking** in this list because of their close association with sexual sin. The desire to have something that doesn’t belong to us and foolish speaking have both led many people into sexual sin. Yet **covetousness** and **foolish talking** also have relevance *beyond* their relation to sexual sin.

i. **Foolish talking** is literally “an easy turn of speech.” In the context, the idea is of the one who can turn every conversation into a joking comment on sexual matters, usually with a double-entendre.

d. **But rather giving of thanks**: Positively, the Christian is to give **thanks** for sex. We receive it thankfully as a gift, and we enjoy sex in a way that glorifies the Giver.

i. God’s purpose in giving sex is not primarily for the gratification of the individual, but for the bonding together of husband and wife in a one-flesh relationship. Certain expressions of sexuality are sin *not because* God wants to deprive some aspect of enjoyment, but because they work against His primary purpose for sex.

### 3. (5-7) The consequences of conduct not fitting for Christians.

**For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.**

a. **Has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God:** The people mentioned in [Ephesians 5:3](#) (the **fornicator**, the **unclean person** and the **covetous man**) have no inheritance in God's kingdom. If God's kingdom is alive in them, a transformation has occurred so that they cannot rest in the habitual practice of these things.

i. Paul's idea in this passage can be applied out of context in a condemning way. One might say, "Well, I've thought about committing fornication, so that means that I have fornicated in my heart and that means that I am as guilty as someone who has actually committed the act of fornication. Since I am as guilty as that one, and they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, neither do I, because of my thoughts about fornication." This deceptive thinking goes against the plain sense of God's word.

b. **Covetous man, who is an idolater:** Significantly, Paul says that the **covetous man** is an **idolater**. Idolatry happens in much more subtle (and powerful) ways than simply bowing down before a statue.

c. **Let no one deceive you with empty words:** We cannot allow **empty words** to excuse or minimize the judgment due to the practice of these sins. It is certain that **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience**.

d. **Therefore do not be partakers with them:** Paul assumes that Christians will not have their lives *habitually* marked by fornication, uncleanness or covetousness. Yet we should not even *occasionally* be **partakers with them** who are.

#### 4. (8-12) The passing from darkness to light.

**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.**

a. **For you were once darkness:** As Paul condemned those who practiced fornication, uncleanness or covetousness as *the sons of disobedience* ([Ephesians 5:6](#)), he also recognized that this was the exact **darkness** Christians had emerged from. But now, having been enlightened, we are to **walk as children of the light**.

i. Again, the theme is repeated: you *are* **children of light**, so *live* like **children of light**.

ii. Paul doesn't only say that we were once *in* darkness. He says we **were once darkness** itself. Now, we are not only in the light, we **are light in the Lord**.

b. **For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth:** In contrast to the walk in darkness and wrath is the **fruit of the Spirit**, more fully described in [Galatians 5:22-23](#). **Goodness, righteousness, and truth** should mark us because we have the Holy Spirit in our life.

c. **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them:** Instead of associating with ungodliness, we expose the **unfruitful works of darkness**. However, we do not do this for the purpose of merely talking about them (which is **shameful**), but for the purpose of educating ourselves enough to avoid them.

i. Christians must guard against a prurient interest in **the works of darkness**, even in times of testimony or research.

ii. Paul was careful to say that we should avoid the **unfruitful works of darkness**, not the people who are in darkness.

## **B. Walking in the light.**

### **1. (13-14) The fact of the light's presence.**

**But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."**

a. **But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light:** Even the things done in **secret** will be exposed. They will be made **manifest** by the light of God's searching judgment.

i. This is a *reason* for avoiding and exposing the unfruitful works of darkness as described in [Ephesians 5:8-12](#). Since those unfruitful works are destined for exposure and their day will be over, it makes sense for Christians to avoid such unfruitful works.

b. **Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead:** Our participation in the light is shown by our resurrection with Jesus (He *made us alive together with Christ*, [Ephesians 2:5](#)). Paul quoted what was probably a worship chorus from the early church to illustrate this truth.

i. Remember that this exhortation to **awake** comes to *Christians*. A Christian may be asleep and not know it. If you are asleep, you probably do not know it. As soon as you become aware of your sleep, it is evidence that you are now awake.

ii. "This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous, too, because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake." (Spurgeon)

· We can speak when we are asleep.

- We can hear when we are asleep.
- We can walk when we are asleep.
- We can sing when we are asleep.
- We can think when we are asleep.

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

## 2. (15-17) Walking in the light means walking in wisdom.

**See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

a. **See then that you walk circumspectly:** Because this light was given to us, we should walk **circumspectly** – carefully, wisely, **not as fools**.

i. Adam Clarke thought that the phrase **not as fools** was connected to the practices of devotion to the ancient god Bacchus, worship with drinking and partying. “*Do not become madmen*. Here is a most evident allusion to the *orgies of Bacchus*, in which his votaries acted like madmen; running about, tossing their heads from shoulder to shoulder, appearing to be in every sense completely frantic.”

b. **Redeeming the time:** There were two ancient Greek words used for **time**. One had the idea simply of day upon day and hour upon hour. The other had the idea of a definite portion of time, a time where something should happen. It is the difference between *time* and **the time**. The idea here is of **the time**; it is a definite season of opportunity that Christians must redeem. This same word is translated *opportunity* in [Galatians 6:10](#).

i. Paul isn’t telling us to make the most of every moment, even though that is good advice. He tells us to seize opportunity for the glory of Jesus. It isn’t to make the most of time, but to make the most of **the time**.

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

c. **Because the days are evil:** This is another reason why it is important to walk wisely. Jesus spoke of a time when, *many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold* ([Matthew 24:11-12](#)). Surely we are in those times, **because the days are evil**.

d. **Understand what the will of the Lord is:** This is what real wisdom is. It is the contrast to being **unwise**. Our main understanding of **the will of the Lord** comes from a good knowledge of His word.

### 3. (18) Walking in the light means constant filling with the Holy Spirit.

**And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,**

a. **And do not be drunk with wine:** In contrast with the conduct of the world (being **drunk with wine**), we are to be **filled with the Spirit**. Paul's grammar here clearly says, "be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit."

b. **Be filled with the Spirit:** The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event that we live off of the rest of our days. It is a constant filling, asking to be filled, and receiving the filling by faith.

i. There is a wonderful and significant *first* experience with the filling of the Holy Spirit, often thought of as the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* ([Matthew 3:11](#), [Acts 1:5](#) and [11:16](#)). This is an experience valid and important for every believer.

ii. Much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual life can be attributed to the fact that we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.

iii. The ancient Greek grammar for **be filled** also indicates two other important things. First, the verb is *passive*, so this is not a manufactured experience. Second, it is *imperative*, so this is not an optional experience.

c. **Do not be drunk with wine:** The carnal contrast to being filled with the Holy Spirit is being **drunk**. The Bible condemns drunkenness without reservation.

i. **In which is dissipation:** Paul says that drunkenness is **dissipation**. This means that drunkenness is a *waste* of resources that should be submitted to Jesus. John Trapp writes of drinking "all the three outs" – "That is, ale out of the pot, money out of the purse, and wit out of the head." (Trapp's commentary on [Galatians 5:21](#))

ii. We should listen to what Proverbs tells us about drunkenness in passages such as [Proverbs 20:1](#) and [23:29-33](#).

iii. We must not think that *only* the state of “falling down drunk” qualifies as sin. Being impaired in any way by drink is sin, as well as drinking with the *intention* of becoming impaired.

iv. “The danger of drunkenness lies not only in itself but in what it may induce” (Wood). Practically, the world pays a high price for the ruin of alcoholism and drug addiction. To speak of alcohol alone, according to the United States Center for Disease Control, in 2010 88,000 people died of alcohol related causes in the USA, and excessive drinking cost the USA economy \$249 billion dollars – almost a quarter of a trillion dollars. It is fair to suppose that the figures are comparable if not worse in many other nations.

d. **But be filled with the Spirit:** Paul *contrasts* the effect of the Holy Spirit with the state of drunkenness. Alcohol is a depressant; it “loosens” people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance and judgment. The Holy Spirit has an exactly opposite effect. He is a stimulant; He moves every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance.

i. “We find it here imbedded amongst precepts laying down the great laws of self-control, and it comes just before the special directions which the Apostle gives for the quiet sanctities of the Christian home... But then, all the while, it is a thing supernatural. It is a state of man wholly unattainable by training, by reasoning, by human wish and will. It is nothing less than – God in command and control of man’s whole life, flowing everywhere into it, that He may flow fully and freely out of it in effects around.” (Moule)

#### **4. (19-20) The Spirit-filled life is marked by worship and gratitude.**

**Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

a. **Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord:** When we are *filled with the Spirit*, we will have a desire to worship God and to encourage others in their worship of God.

i. The connection with being filled with the Spirit and praise is significant. Those who are filled with the Spirit will naturally praise, and praise is a way that we are filled with the Spirit.

b. **Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs:** This variety suggests that God delights in creative, spontaneous worship. The most important place for us to have a **melody** unto God is in our **heart**. Many who can’t sing a beautiful melody with the voice can have beautiful melodies in their heart.



i. The emphasis is more on *variety* than on *strict categories*. “We can scarcely say what is the exact difference between these three expressions.” (Clarke)

c. **Giving thanks always for all things to God:** The one who is filled with the Spirit will also be filled with thanksgiving. A complaining heart and the Holy Spirit just don’t go together.

i. Paul recommends the same pattern for our thanksgiving as he practiced in prayer in [Ephesians 3:14](#) – giving thanks **to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

ii. “Every hour, yea, every moment has brought a favor upon its wings. Look downward and give thanks, for you are saved from hell; look on the right hand and give thanks, for you are enriched with gracious gifts; look on the left hand and give thanks, for you are shielded from deadly ills; look above you and give thanks, for heaven awaits you.” (Spurgeon)

## **5. (21) The Spirit-filled life is marked by mutual submission.**

### **Submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

a. **Submitting to one another in the fear of God:** When we are *filled with the Spirit*, it will show by our mutual submission to each other; and the submission will be done **in the fear of God**, not the fear of man.

b. **Submitting:** The word **submitting** here literally means, “to be under in rank.” It is a military word. It speaks of the way that an army is organized among levels of rank. You have generals and colonels and majors and captains and sergeants and privates. There are levels of rank, and you are obligated to respect those in higher rank.

i. We know that as a person, a private can be smarter, more talented, and a better person than a general. But he is still *under rank* to the general. He isn’t submitted to the general so much as a *person* as he is to the general as a *general*.

ii. The idea of submission doesn’t have anything to do with someone being smarter or better or more talented. It has to do with a God-appointed order. “Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that ‘rank’ has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability.” (Wiersbe)

iii. We also see from this *how important* it is to be “under rank.” In the military, they have a name for it when you no longer want to be “under rank.” They call it “mutiny.” “Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so society would be in chaos without submission.” (Wiersbe)

c. **Submitting to one another:** To understand what this means, we can first examine *what it does not mean*. It does not mean that there is no idea of “rank” in the body of Christ. We can see how someone might take that impression. “It says we should be **submitting to one**

**another.** So I should be submitting to you and you should be submitting to me. No one has any more obligation to submit than anyone else.”

i. We know this is what Paul *does not mean* because that would be a clear contradiction of other things that he wrote. For example, in [1 Corinthians 5:1-5](#), Paul clearly tells the Corinthian Christians to submit to his authority and to do something. Can you imagine the Corinthian Christians answering back, “Well Paul, you wrote that we should be **submitting to one another**. So we think you should submit to us here.”

ii. Or, another example is [Hebrews 13:17](#), which says *Obey those who rule over you and be submissive*. If Paul meant that there was no “rank” or “order of authority” among believers, then this command in [Hebrews 13:17](#) is meaningless.

iii. The idea of this military word is more easily applied when one rank is above another. Yet here Paul didn’t use it in that way. It is easily applied when you tell a bunch of privates, “Submit to the generals.” It is a little more difficult to get a hold of the meaning when you say to a group of privates “Submit to one another.” Paul isn’t emphasizing the idea of *rank*, because he addresses all Christians. But there is something else important here.

iv. Paul means that we should take this “under rank” attitude of the military and apply it to our everyday dealing with each other. When a man joins the military, the first thing he does is strip away his individuality. He is now the member of a company or a battalion. He is no longer an individual. When you join the army, you essentially sign away your right to decide what you want to do with your life and your time. An army is filled with individuals, but they can never be individualistic. That is the first thing that a man is broken of when he joins the army.

v. “Let no man be so tenacious of his own will or his opinion in matters indifferent, as to disturb the peace of the Church; in all such matters *give way to each other, and let love rule.*” (Clarke)

vi. In practical action **submitting to one another** implies the following, all in line with the idea of being a “team player”:

- The Christian must not be thoughtless, but think of others.
- The Christian must not be individualistic, must not be self-assertive. “Self-assertion is the very antithesis of what the Apostle is saying.” (Lloyd-Jones)
- The Christian must never be self-seeking.
- We must have a “team attitude.”
- We must be happy when someone else succeeds or does well.

- We must bear our own discomforts and trials with courage.

d. **In the fear of God:** This is an important point, because Paul repeats the idea all through the extended section speaking about submission:

- *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

- *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

- *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ.*

i. The words **in the fear of God** describe what should be our *motive* for **submitting to one another**. We should submit to one other – see ourselves no longer in an individualistic way, but as a unit, as a company or a battalion – out of respect for God the Father respect for Jesus Christ.

ii. The motive for submission is *not* social kindness. The motive for submission is *not* the law of God. The motive for submission is *respect for Jesus Christ*. If we respect Jesus, we then should submit to one another because we love Jesus. Paul uses the term **fear** in this passage, but it is a **fear** – a respect – that is *compatible* with love. It is a fear of disappointing Jesus, a fear of grieving Him. That is totally compatible with love. When you really respect someone, you care about pleasing him or her, and you are afraid to disappoint that one.

### **C. The Spirit-filled life, submission, and responsibility in marriage.**

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

#### **1. (22) Walking in the light means wives submit to their husbands.**

##### **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**

a. **Wives:** Paul addressed **wives** and their responsibility in the Christian marriage first. This isn't because they are the bigger problem or because they need special attention. The reason is that the apostle was particularly concerned about this question of submission. That was the principle that he introduced in [Ephesians 5:21](#). This aspect of submission has a particular application to wives in a Christian marriage.

i. The same logic continues on into [Ephesians 6](#). Children are addressed before parents because Paul was primarily concerned about submission. Slaves are addressed before their masters because the apostle was primarily concerned about submission.

ii. There is no question that the apostle is continuing the thought from [Ephesians 5:21](#), *submitting to one another in the fear of God*. In many of the best ancient Greek manuscripts, [Ephesians 5:22](#) doesn't even have the word *submit*. It simply reads *wives, to your own husbands*. The topic is submission and Paul focused on a particularly important realm of submission – the Christian marriage, from the wife unto the husband.

iii. It is as if Paul said this: "I commanded you to submit to one another in a very general way. Now, if you do it in a general way, how much more so should **wives** do it to their own husbands in this special relationship of marriage."

b. **Wives, submit:** To **submit** means that you recognize someone has legitimate authority over you. It means you recognize that there is an order of authority, and that you are part of a unit, a team. You as an individual are not more important than the working of the unit or the team.

i. When we **submit** to God, we recognize God's authority and act accordingly. When we **submit** to the police, we recognize the authority of the police and act accordingly. When we **submit** to our employer, we recognize the authority of our employer and act accordingly.

ii. *Submission does not mean inferiority. As well, submission does not mean silence.* Submission means "sub-mission." There is a mission for the Christian marriage, and that mission is obeying and glorifying God. The wife says, "I'm going to put myself under that *mission*. That *mission* is more important than my individual desires. I'm not putting myself below my husband, I'm putting myself below the *mission* God has for our marriage, for my life."

c. **To your own husbands:** This defines the *sphere* of a wife's submission. The Bible never commands a *general* submission of women unto men in society. This order is commanded only in the spheres of the home and in the church. God has not commanded in His word that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education, and so on.

d. **As to the Lord:** This is a crucial phrase. It colors everything else we understand about this passage. There have been two main wrong interpretations of this phrase, each favoring a certain position.

i. The wrong interpretation which favors the husband says that **as to the Lord** means that a wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself. The idea is "you submit to

God in absolutely everything without question, so you must submit to your husband in the same absolute way.” This interpretation believes that the words “**as to the Lord**” defines the *extent* of submission.

ii. This is wrong. It is true that the wife owes the husband a great deal of respect. Peter sets this across when he praises Sarah, the wife of Abraham, as an example of a godly wife, when she called Abraham “Lord.” That doesn’t mean “Lord” in the sense of God, but “Lord” in the sense of “master.” That is a lot of respect. Yet still, it doesn’t go as far as to say, “You submit completely to God, so you must submit to your husband the same way.” Simply put, *in no place* does the Scripture say that a person should submit to another in that way. There are limits to the submission your employer can expect of you. There are limits to the submission the government can expect of you. There are limits to the submission parents can expect of children. In no place does the Scripture teach an unqualified, without exception, submission – except to God and God alone. To violate this is to commit the sin of idolatry.

iii. The wrong interpretation that favors the wife says that **as to the Lord** means “I’ll submit to him as long as he does what the Lord wants.” Then the wife often thinks it is her job to decide what the Lord wants. This interpretation thinks that **as to the Lord** defines the *limit* of submission.

iv. This is wrong. It is true that there are limits to a wife’s submission; but when the wife approaches **as to the Lord** in this way, it degenerates into a case of “I’ll submit to my husband when I agree with him. I’ll submit to him when he makes the right decisions and carries them out the right way. When he makes a wrong decision, he isn’t in **the Lord**, so I shouldn’t submit to him then.” *That is not submission at all.* Except for those who are plainly cantankerous and argumentative, *everyone* submits to others when they are in agreement. It is only when there is a *disagreement* that submission is tested.

e. **As to the Lord** does not define the *extent* of a wife’s submission or the *limit* of a wife’s submission. It defines the *motive* of a wife’s submission.

i. “It means: ‘Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord.’ Or, ‘Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands; do it in this way, do it as a part of your submission to the Lord.’ In other words, you are not doing it only for the husband, you are doing it primarily for the Lord Himself... You are doing it for Christ’s sake, you are doing it because you know that He exhorts you to do it, because it is well-pleasing in His sight that you should be doing it. It is part of your Christian behaviour, it is a part of your discipleship.” (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. “For the Lord’s sake who commanded it, so that ye cannot be subject to him without being subject to them.” (Clarke)

iii. **As to the Lord** means...

- A wife’s submission to her husband is part of her Christian life and obedience.
- When a wife doesn’t obey this word to **submit to your own husband, as to the Lord**, she isn’t only falling short as a wife. She is falling short as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- This is completely out of the realm of the wife’s *nature or personality*.
- This has nothing to do with a husband’s intelligence, giftedness, or capability. It has to do with honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This has nothing to do with whether or not the husband is right on a particular issue. It has to do with Jesus being right.
- This means that a woman should take great care in how she *chooses* her husband. Instead of looking for an attractive man, instead of looking for a wealthy man, instead of looking for a romantic man, a woman should first look for a man she can *respect*. G. Campbell Morgan recalls the story of the older Christian woman who had never married, and she explained, “I never met a man who could master me.” She had the right idea.
- If you want to please Jesus, if you want to honor Him, then **submit to your own husband as to the Lord**.

iv. “There can be no more compelling motive for any action than this; and every Christian wife who is concerned above everything else to please the Lord Jesus Christ, will find no difficulty in this paragraph; indeed it will be her greatest delight to do what the Apostle tells us here.” (Lloyd-Jones)

## **2. (23-24) Reasons for a Christian wife’s submission.**

**For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

a. **For:** The command given in [Ephesians 5:22](#) is difficult. God knows this, so He also includes *reasons* for His command. He wants us to understand the principle behind the command.

i. The first reason for a Christian wife’s submission to her husband is found in [Ephesians 5:22](#), in the words *as to the Lord*. This means that the motive of her submission must be obedience and respect to Jesus, instead of obedience and respect to her husband.

**b. For the husband is the head of the wife:** Paul states here the second reason for a wife's submission. It is because the husband is **the head of the wife**. In its full sense **head** has the idea of *headship* and *authority*. It means to have the appropriate responsibility to lead and the matching accountability. It is right and appropriate to submit to someone who is our **head**.

i. When you look at the Biblical idea of headship in other passages such as [1 Corinthians 11](#) and [1 Timothy 3](#), the emphasis is put constantly upon the fact that the man was created first and not the woman. So there is a priority *by creation* for man. The Scriptures also emphasize the fact that the woman was made out of the man, taken out of the man to show a connection to him, and that she was meant to be a help for man, a help for man that was fitting for him.

ii. "Notice that the Apostles lay great stress upon it. Man was created first. But not only that; man was also made the lord of creation. It was to man that this authority was given over the brute animal creation; it was man who was called upon to give them names. Here are indications that man was put into a position of leadership, lordship, and authority and power. He takes the decisions, he gives the rulings. That is the fundamental teaching with regard to this whole matter." (Lloyd-Jones)

iii. Passages such as [1 Corinthians 11:7-10](#) make the point that God created Adam first, and gave him responsibility over Eve. This happened *before* the fall. Therefore, this passage makes it clear that before and after the fall, God ordained there be different roles between husband and wife. The difference in roles between husband and wife are not the result of the fall, and are not erased by our new life in Jesus.

iv. "What he is saying is that the woman is different, that she is the complement of the man. What he does prohibit is that woman should seek to be manly, that is, that a woman should seek to behave as a man, or that a woman should seek to usurp the place, the position, and the power which have been given to man by God Himself. That is all he is saying. It is not slavery; he is exhorting his readers to realize what God has ordained." (Lloyd-Jones)

v. "When a woman gets married she gives up her name, she takes the name of her husband. That is Biblical, and also the custom of the whole world. That teaches us the relationship between the husband and the wife. It is not the husband who changes his name, but the wife." (Lloyd-Jones)

**c. As also Christ is head of the church... Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands:** Paul presents here a third reason for a Christian wife's submission to her husband. She should submit because the relationship of the husband and wife is a model of the union between Jesus and the Church.

i. This point is simple and clear. We have a model for the marriage relationship: the relationship between Jesus and the church. In that relationship, the headship of Jesus Christ is unquestioned. So also is the husband the head of the “team” that is the one-flesh relationship of husband and wife.

ii. Perhaps the Christian wife doesn’t want a “head” or a leader of the team between husband and wife. If that is the case, the wife does not understand a Biblical marriage, and will always work against it in one way or another. It is the same dynamic as a Christian saying he doesn’t want Jesus to be his “head.”

d. **And He is the Savior of the body:** We can understand how the **husband is head of the wife** in the same way that **Christ is head of the church**. Sometimes it is difficult to see how the husband is the *Savior of the body* in the way that Jesus is the **Savior of the body**, that is, of the Church.

i. Lloyd-Jones thinks Paul used the wider understanding of the word **Savior**, which can simply mean *preserver*. [1 Timothy 4:10](#) speaks of Jesus being *the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe*. How can Jesus be the *Savior of all men*? In the sense that He *preserves* all men and *blesses* all men with good things from heaven above. It is in this way that husbands are to be their wife’s *savior*. Paul essentially repeats the same idea in [Ephesians 5:28-29](#): *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

ii. “What, then, is the doctrine? It is clearly this. The wife is the one who is kept, preserved, guarded, shielded, provided for by the husband. That is the relationship – as Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, so the husband nourishes and cherishes the wife – and the wife should realize that that is her position in this relationship.” (Lloyd-Jones)

e. **Of the body:** The picture of the **body** shows how essential a Christian wife’s submission is. “The wife must not act before the husband. All the teaching indicates that he is the head, that he ultimately controls. So she not only does not act independently of him, she does not act before him... it is equally true to say that she must not delay action, she must not stall action, she must not refuse to act. Go back to the analogy of the body. Think of somebody who has had a ‘stroke’... the arm is not healthy, it resists movement.” (Lloyd-Jones)

i. “We can sum it up thus: The teaching is that the initiative and the leadership are ultimately the husband’s, but the action must always be co-ordinated. That is the meaning of this picture – co-ordinated action but leadership in the head. There is no sense of



inferiority suggested by this. The wife is not inferior to her husband; she is different.” (Lloyd-Jones)

f. **Therefore:** We see in this passage three reasons for a wife’s submission to her husband:

- It is part of her obedience to Jesus (*as to the Lord*).
- It is appropriate to the order of creation (**the husband is the head of the wife**).
- It is appropriate because of the model of the relationship between Jesus and the Church (**as also Christ is head of the church... as the church is subject to Christ**).

i. The first reason is compelling enough, but in itself it doesn’t close the issue. If all we had was *as to the Lord*, it might be fair enough to ask, “Aren’t men to live *as to the Lord* also? Shouldn’t men submit to their wives in obedience to Jesus in the same way?” Then you wouldn’t have a real “head” of the home. This is the goal in some marriages. “No one is really in charge. We’re equal partners. I’ll submit to you sometimes and you submit to me other times. We’ll just let Jesus be our head and work out each situation as it comes along and see who will submit to whom.”

ii. To say it simply, that isn’t a Biblical marriage relationship. It ignores the essential order of creation, and it ignores the model of the relationship between Jesus and the Church. This leads us to carefully notice something in general about submission. The principle of submission is presented in many different ways in the New Testament.

- Jesus submitted to His parents ([Luke 2:51](#)).
- Demons submitted to the disciples ([Luke 10:17](#)).
- Citizens should submit to government authority ([Romans 13:1](#) and [5](#), [Titus 3:1](#), [1 Peter 2:13](#)).
- The universe will submit to Jesus ([1 Corinthians 15:27](#) and [Ephesians 1:22](#)).
- Unseen spiritual beings submit to Jesus ([1 Peter 3:22](#)).
- Christians should submit to church leaders ([1 Corinthians 16:15-16](#) and [Hebrews 13:17](#)).
- Wives should submit to husbands ([Colossians 3:18](#), [Titus 2:5](#), [1 Peter 3:5](#), [Ephesians 5:22-24](#)).
- The church should submit to Jesus ([Ephesians 5:24](#)).
- Servants should submit to masters ([Titus 2:9](#) and [1 Peter 2:18](#)).
- Christians should submit to God ([Hebrews 12:9](#) and [James 4:7](#)).

iii. We notice that none of these relations are reversed. For example, masters are never told to submit to servants, Jesus is never told to submit to the church, and so forth. The consistent use of the idea of submission in the Scriptures illustrates basically a “one-way” submission according to how God has arranged the order of authority.

iv. If Paul stopped at [Ephesians 5:24](#), it would be easy for a Christian wife to feel that all the obligations were on her. Thankfully, he continues and shows what obligations the Christian husband has in marriage. But the Christian wife still has her obligations.

- Both husband and wife are called to die to self – submission is the way the wife does it.
- Both husband and wife are called to sacrifice – submission is the way the wife does it.
- Both husband and wife are called to see their marriage as a model of Jesus’ relationship with the church – submission is how the wife honors that model.
- Both husband and wife are called to honor the order of creation – submission is the way the wife fulfills her place in that order.

g. **To their own husbands in everything:** Paul says that the wife should be subject to her husband **in everything**. Does he really mean **everything**? This needs to be understood in the same way we understand submission in other spheres. For example, when Paul says in [Romans 13](#) that the Christian must submit to the state, we understand there are exceptions. So, what are the exceptions to **everything**?

i. *When the husband asks or expects the wife to sin*, she is free from her obligation to submit. This applies in a place of clearly Biblical sin – such as signing a fraudulent tax return. It also applies in matters of true Christian conscience. But we must be very careful to distinguish between true Christian conscience and mere opinion. Yet the wife does not have to submit to a request to commit sin.

ii. *When the husband is medically incapacitated or insane*, she is free from her obligation to submit. A wife does not have to submit to the requests a husband makes when he is insane or medically incapacitated.

iii. *When the husband is physically abusive and endangers the safety of the wife or children*, the wife is free from her obligation to submit. She does not have to submit to his violence.

iv. *When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery*. Obviously, a wife does not have to submit to her husband’s adultery, and just accept it. The Bible says she has the right to “come out from under his rank” in such cases. “If the husband has been guilty of adultery the wife is no longer bound to give him obedience in everything. She can divorce him, she is allowed to do so by the Scripture. She is entitled to do so because adultery

breaks the unity, breaks the relationship. They are now separate and no longer one. He has broken the unity, he has gone out of it. So we must not interpret this Scripture as teaching that the wife is this irrevocably, inevitably bound to an adulterous husband for the rest of her life. She may choose to be – that is for her to decide. All I am saying is, that this Scripture does not command it.” (Lloyd-Jones)

### **3. (25a) The simple command to Christian husbands: love your wife.**

#### **Husbands, love your wives,**

a. **Husbands, love your wives:** Paul’s words to Christian husbands safeguards his previous words to wives. Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives.

i. According to [2 Timothy 1:7](#), God has given us the spirit of power – but also of love. Power, in their Christian life, is always to be exercised in love. “It is not naked power, it is not the power of a dictator or a little tyrant, it is not the idea of a man who arrogates to himself certain rights, and tramples upon his wife’s feelings and so on, and sits in the home as a dictator... No husband is entitled to say that he is the head of the wife unless he loves his wife... So the reign of the husband is to be a reign and a rule of love; it is a leadership of love.” (Lloyd-Jones)

b. **Love your wives:** Paul used the ancient Greek word *agape*. The ancient Greeks had four different words we translate **love**. It is important to understand the difference between the words, and why the apostle Paul chose the Greek word *agape* here.

i. *Eros* was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, *erotic* love. It refers to love driven by *desire*.

ii. *Storge* was the second word for love. It refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child or between family members in general. It is love driven by *blood*.

iii. *Philia* is the third word for love. It speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. It might be described as the highest love of which man, without God’s help, is capable of. It is *fondness*, or love driven by *common interests and affection*.

iv. *Agape* is the fourth word for love. *Eros*, *storge*, and *philia* each speak about love that is *felt*. These describe “instinctive” love, love that comes spontaneously from the heart. Paul *assumes* that *eros* (desire) and *phileo* (fondness) are present. Christians should not act as if these things do not matter in the marriage relationship. They do matter. But Paul’s real point is to address a higher kind of love, *agape* love. *Agape* describes a different kind of

love. It is a love more of *decision* than of the *spontaneous heart*. It is as much a matter of the *mind* as the *heart*, because it chooses to love the undeserving.

v. “*Agape* has to do with the *mind*: it is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live.” (Barclay) *Agape* really doesn’t have much to do with *feelings* – it has to do with *decisions*.

vi. Strictly speaking, *agape* can’t be defined as “God’s love,” because men are said to *agape* sin and the world ([John 3:19](#) and [1 John 2:15](#)). Yet it can be defined as a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.

- It is a love that loves without changing.
- It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment.
- It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing.
- It is love that loves even when it is rejected.
- *Agape* love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive.

vii. We can read this passage and think that Paul is saying, “Husbands, be kind to your wives.” Or “husbands, be nice to your wives.” There is no doubt that for many marriages this would be a huge improvement. But that isn’t what Paul wrote about. What he really meant is, “Husbands, continually decide to practice self-denial for the sake of your wives.”

#### **4. (25b-27) The standard and example of a Christian husband’s love.**

**Just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

a. **Just as Christ also loved the church:** Jesus’ *attitude* towards the church is a pattern for the Christian husband’s love to his wife. This shows that the loveless marriage doesn’t please God and does not fulfill His purpose. This is love given to the undeserving. This is love given *first*. This is love that may be *rejected*, but still loves.

i. “It is possible that some husbands might say, ‘How can I love such a wife as I have?’ It might be a supposable case that some Christian was unequally yoked together with an unbeliever, and found himself for ever bound with a fetter to one possessed of a morose disposition, of a froward temper, of a bitter spirit. He might therefore say, ‘Surely I am

excused from loving in such a case as this. It cannot be expected that I should love that which is in itself so unlovely.' But mark, beloved, the wisdom of the apostle. He silences that excuse, which may possibly have occurred to his mind while writing the passage, by taking the example of the Savior, who loved, not because there was loveliness in his Church, but in order to make her lovely." (Spurgeon)

b. **Just as Christ also loved the church:** We might say that Paul taught two things at once here. He taught about the nature of the relationship between husband and wife, and he taught about the relationship between Christ and His Church. Each illustrates important principles about the other.

i. It demonstrates the Jesus loves his church with a *special* love. Jesus loves the world and died for the world; but just as a husband can have a general love for everyone, he must also have a *special* love for his bride.

ii. "I ask you to notice what is not always the case with regard to the husband and the wife, that *the Lord Jesus loves his church unselfishly*; that is to say, he never loved her for what she has, but what she is; nay, I must go further than that, and say that he loved her, not so much for what she is, but what he makes her as the object of his love. He loves her not for what comes to him from her, or with her, but for what he is able to bestow upon her. His is the strongest love that ever was." (Spurgeon)

iii. Using the love of an ideal husband as a pattern, we could say that Jesus has a *constant* love for His people, an *enduring* love for His people, and a *hearty* love for His people.

c. **And gave Himself for her:** Jesus' *action* towards the church is a pattern. This helps us define what *agape* love is all about: it is self-sacrificing love. How should a husband love his wife? **As Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.** What did that involve? Perhaps the best statement concerning that matter is in [Philippians 2:5-8](#), where it shows that the focus of Jesus was on the church. It was for the church that He did what He did, not for Himself.

i. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross* ([Philippians 2:5-8](#)).

ii. This word is especially needful for husbands who see headship in submission with worldly understanding instead of godly understanding. Some husbands think that because God said they are the head of the home and the wife is obligated to submit to them that

they do not have to be humble, lay down their lives, and sacrifice for the benefit of their wife. They need to understand the difference in thinking between worldly headship and godly headship.

- Worldly headship says, “I am your head, so you take your orders from me and must do whatever I want.”

- Godly headship says, “I am your head, so I must care for you and serve you.”

- Worldly submission says, “You must submit to me, so here are the things I want you to do for me.”

- Godly submission says, “You must submit to me, so I am accountable before God for you. I must care for you and serve you.”

iii. This is not the height of romantic love as the world knows it. This isn’t love based on looks, image, the ability to be suave and cutting-edge cool. This is love expressed through *sacrifice*.

d. **That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word:** When Jesus **gave Himself** for the church on the cross, it also provided cleansing from every stain sin makes. Since the work of Jesus on the cross comes to us through the Word of God and the preached word, it can be said that we are washed **of water by the word**.

i. When Paul wrote **the washing of water by the word**, he used the ancient Greek word *rhema*. “It is true that *rhema* is not quite the same as *logos*, but carries with it the definite sense of the *spoken* word... it may have the sense of that truth as *proclaimed*, the *preached* Word or Gospel.” (Salmond) There is something cleansing about being under the teaching of the Word.

ii. “I do not believe that baptism is intended here, nor even referred to. I know that the most of commentators say it is. I do not think it. It strikes me that one word explains the whole. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water, but what sort of water? By the Word. The water which washes away sin, which cleanses and purifies the soul, is the Word.” (Charles Spurgeon, a confirmed Baptist)

iii. This speaks of Jesus’ work for the church. Obviously, a husband cannot spiritually cleanse his wife the same way Jesus cleanses the church. Yet a husband can take an active, caring interest in his wife’s spiritual health. As the priest of the home, he helps her keep “clean” before the Lord.

e. **That He might present her to Himself a glorious church:** This means that Jesus Himself shares His prospects, His future with His bride. A Christian husband should also

share his prospects and future with his wife. Even as a wife will share in the husband's future, so we will share in the glorious future of our Lord.

i. "Since the Church is not fit for Christ by nature, he resolved to make her so by grace. He could not be in communion with sin. Therefore it must be purged away. Perfect holiness was absolutely necessary in one who was to be the bride of Christ. He purposes to work that in her, and to make her meet to be his spouse eternally. The great means by which he attempts to do this, is, 'he gave himself for her.' " (Spurgeon)

f. **Not having spot or wrinkle:** The idea isn't that the bride is in this state *before* the wedding day, but *on* the wedding day. We are made this pure in heaven when we are joined to Jesus Christ in a way beyond all previous experience.

i. "The Holy Ghost seems to exhaust language to describe this purity. He says, 'Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!' She shall have nothing like a spot, nothing that can be construed into a wrinkle; she shall be fair, and the world shall be compelled to acknowledge that she is." (Spurgeon)

ii. "When He presents her to Himself, with all the principalities and powers and the serried ranks for all the potentates of heaven looking on at this marvelous thing, and scrutinizing and examining her, there will not be a single blemish, there will not be a spot upon her. The most careful examination will not be able to detect the slightest speck of unworthiness or of sin." (Lloyd-Jones)

## **5. (28-29) The application of the principles to the duty of a Christian husband.**

**So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church.**

a. **So husbands:** In [Ephesians 5:22-24](#), Paul gave three reasons for a Christian wife's submission to her husband. In addressing the Christian husbands, Paul also gave three reasons to love their wife:

i. First, they should love their wife this way because *this is what love is*. Paul indicates this in [Ephesians 5:25](#): *Husbands, love your wives.*

ii. Second, they should love their wife this way because *the relationship between husband and wife has a pattern*: the relationship of Jesus and His church. Paul indicates this in [Ephesians 5:25-29](#): *Just as Christ also loved the church... So husbands ought to love their own wives... just as the Lord does the church.*

iii. The third reason is found in [Ephesians 5:28-32](#). The Christian husband must love his wife this way *because you are one with her*, just as Jesus is one with the church.

**b. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies:** The single word **as** is important. Paul did not say, “So ought men to love their wives in the same way as they love their bodies.” That would be an improvement in many cases, but that is not the meaning. The meaning is, “So ought men to love their wives because they *are* their own bodies.”

i. A man must love his wife as he would his body, as a part of himself. As Eve was a part of Adam, taken out of his side, so the wife is to the man because she is a part of him. The reality of this union must dominate the husband’s thinking and actions in marriage.

ii. “The Apostle puts it in this form in order that a husband may see that he cannot detach himself from his wife. You cannot detach yourself from your body, so you cannot detach yourself from your wife. She is a part of you, says the Apostle, so remember that always.” (Lloyd-Jones)

iii. “The husband must realize that his wife is a part of himself. He will not feel this instinctively; he has to be taught it; and the Bible in all its parts teaches it. In other words, the husband must understand that he and his wife are not two: they are one.” (Lloyd-Jones)

iv. This means that for success in the marriage relationship, we must *think* and *understand*. The world relies upon overly romantic ideas about love and upon feelings to make marriage work, and never really makes a person *think* and *understand* about marriage.

**c. He who loves his wife loves himself:** Simply said, when you love your wife, *you benefit yourself*. Perhaps it is better to put it in the negative: *when you neglect your wife, you neglect yourself, and it will come back to hurt you*.

i. We all know what it is like to neglect something – like a noise or a maintenance issue on an automobile – and it comes back to hurt us. Husbands, it is *even more true* regarding your wife, because *she is part of you*. Only a fool neglects his own broken arm or infected leg; yet there are many foolish husbands who hurt or neglect their wives and they do and will suffer from it.

ii. “On the practical level, therefore, the whole of the husband’s thinking must include his wife also. He must never think of himself in isolation or detachment. The moment he does so he has broken the most fundamental principle of marriage. In a sense, the moment a man thinks of himself in isolation he has broken the marriage. And he has no right to do that! There is a sense in which he cannot do it, because the wife is a part of himself. But if it happens he is certain to inflict grievous damage on his wife; and it is damage in which he himself will be involved because she is a part of him.” (Lloyd-Jones)



d. **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it:** Any man in his right mind is going to take care of **his own flesh**, even if it is just in the sense of feeding and clothing and caring for his own body. He knows that if he doesn't, *he* is going to suffer for it. In the same way, once we know the Biblical fact of this unity, if we are in our right minds we will *nourish and cherish* our wives because she is part of us.

e. **Just as the Lord does the church:** The principle of *oneness* also is dominant in the relationship between Jesus and His people.

- There is oneness of *life*: We share the same vital resurrection life that resides in Jesus Himself.
- There is oneness of *service*: We are privileged to be co-workers with our Lord.
- There is oneness of *feeling*: Jesus feels a unique sympathy with us, and we feel a unique sympathy with Him.
- There is oneness of mutual *necessity*: We cannot exist without Him and He cannot exist without us, in the sense that a redeemer is not a redeemer without any redeemed; a savior is not a savior without any saved
- There is oneness of *nature*: The same genetic code links us with our Savior, and we are partakers of the divine nature
- There is oneness of *possession*: We share in the riches of His glory both now and in the age to come
- There is oneness of present *condition*: When our Savior is lifted high, so are His people with Him.
- There is oneness of *future destiny*: We will be glorified with Him.

## **6. (30-32) The mystical union between Jesus and the church, and its relation to marriage.**

**For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

a. **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones:** Paul here brings the analogy back in a circle. First, the relationship between Jesus and the church spoke to us about the husband-wife relationship. Now the marriage relationship speaks to us about the relationship between Jesus and His people.

**b. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh:** Paul quoted this essential passage from [Genesis 2:24](#). Relevant to marriage, it shows that just as the first man and the first woman were one – she was taken from him, and then brought back to him – so it could be said of every married man today that he is **joined to his wife**. God did the joining. Husbands can resent it, they can resist it, they can ignore it, but it doesn't change the fact.

i. It shows a fundamental principle for promoting oneness in marriage: there must be a *leaving* (of former associations) and a *cleaving* (joining together as one).

**c. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church:** It would be easy to think that the [Genesis 2:24](#) passage (also quoted by Jesus in [Matthew 19:5](#)) *only* speaks about marriage. Paul wants us to know that it also speaks about the relationship between **Christ and the church**.

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

ii. It is also true in regard to the pattern of marriage in general.

- It shows us that Jesus wants more than just an external, surface relationship.

- It shows us that Jesus wants us to be *one* with Him.

- It shows us that there is a sense in which Jesus is incomplete without us. Adam was incomplete without Eve; we can say that Eve makes up the “fullness” of Adam and makes up that which was lacking in him. And that is exactly what the church does for Jesus; [Ephesians 1:23](#) says of the church, *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*.

iii. It shows the common connection of *unity* and *oneness* in the two relationships. “Unity, mark you for that is the essence of the marriage-bond. We are one with Christ, who made himself one with his people.” (Spurgeon)

**7. (33) A summary comment to husbands and wives.**

**Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.**

a. **Nevertheless:** Paul really taught on two things at once. He teaches about marriage, but he also teaches about God's *pattern* for marriage – the relationship between Jesus and His people. So in [Ephesians 5:31](#) and [32](#) he has focused on the relationship between Jesus and His people and is getting really excited about it. Then Paul seemed to remember that his original topic was marriage, so that is why he used the word **nevertheless** in [Ephesians 5:33](#).

i. This was Paul's way of saying, "I know I got off the topic a little bit. So let's come back to the matter of marriage, and I'll sum it up for you. **Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**"

b. **Let each one of you:** This means that *everyone* is included. We can say this about all the teaching on marriage. It is easy to say, "Well, I'm just not that sort of person, so I'll never do very well." Husbands do it, saying, "I'm just not very loving." Wives do it, saying, "I'm just not the submissive sort." But no matter what our natural disposition is, we have a target to shoot for, and **let each one of you in particular** means we all should set our eyes on the target the Bible shows us.

c. **So love his own wife as himself:** Paul again stressed the *unity* that a husband must recognize and let shape his thinking and his actions.

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

ii. "He is given the position of dignity and of leadership and of headship; and if he understands what it means he will never abuse it, he will never misuse it, by being harsh or dictatorial or unkind or unfair. To be guilty of such behaviour is a denial of the marriage principle, and means that there is an absence of the Spirit." (Lloyd-Jones)

d. **Let the wife see:** Paul called the wife to pay special attention here. This may be a point where many wives might excuse themselves for one reason or another, but Paul emphasized, "**Let the wife see.**"

**e. Let the wife see that she respects her husband:** This word **respects** is the same word often used of the reverential fear and awe the disciples had toward Jesus. It is a strong statement, but it indicates that the wife should respect the husband so highly that it points in this direction.

i. “The Apostle used a very striking word here. It is rightly translated in the Authorized Version as ‘reverence’; but the word really means ‘fear’. ‘And the wife see that she fears her husband’. But we must remember that there are different types of fear... he speaks of ‘reverential’ fear. What it really means is ‘deference’, ‘with reverential obedience’.” (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. “The wife is to treat her husband with deference; in other words, she is to recognize this biblical and Christian view of marriage, she is to regard the husband as her head, the head of this new unit. They are both one, but there is a head to the unit, as there is a head to our body, as Christ is the Head of the church.” (Lloyd-Jones)

**f. Let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband:** If Paul’s message in this great passage could be boiled down to two principles which must govern our thinking and our actions as married people, those two are:

- Husbands: Understand that you and your wife are one, are a unity.

- Wives: Understand that your unity has a head – your husband.

i. Wives are quick to embrace and understand the *husband’s* principle, and they want *that* to be the governing principle of the marriage.

ii. Husbands are quick to embrace and understand the *wife’s* principle, and they want *that* to be the governing principle of the marriage.

iii. But we must let *our* principle govern *us*. When you have a husband thinking, “I’m one with my wife, and I must think and act that way,” and a wife thinking, “My husband is the head of our oneness, and I need to respect and defer to him as the head,” then you will have a healthy, Biblical marriage.

iv. “The supreme thing always is to consider our Lord Jesus Christ. If a husband and wife are together considering Him, you need have no worry about their relationship to each other.” (Lloyd-Jones)

# Attention:

*In observance of Easter Weekend there will be No Meeting Next Week!*



*Our Next Live Meeting Will Be Held Monday, 4.28.25*