

IMITATORS OF GOD

Eph. 5:1, 2

Intro: We come this morning to the third characteristic of our walk as Paul is describing it for us in Ephesians:

"Walk in love."

The first two are in:

- 1) 4:1. Our walk is both outward and inward.
- 2) 4:17.

The fact that Paul is describing one walk is obvious as we see how one characteristic contributes to another, and that the neglect of one hurts the others.

We reach something of a peak in our text today. It is closely related to the last two verses of chapter 4.

The standards in all 4 verses (4:31-5:2) are so far beyond our capabilities that we must recognize the Christian life as a supernatural life!

I. THE COMMAND TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD (Eph. 5:1).

A follower is an imitator. We get our English word, mimic, from the Greek word. Both words, unfortunately, have bad connotations. To us they may mean pretending, a false representation of the real thing, just an act that we put on.

But the word itself speaks of just the opposite -- that which is true -- both inwardly and outwardly, a genuine representation of whatever may be the example.

Here -- to be imitators of GOD! AND YET EVERY ONE INSTRUCTED IN THE EPISTLES WILL IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE THIS AS THE GOAL OF SALVATION ITSELF -- TO BE LIKE GOD!

Note: We all have a natural inclination to imitate others.

- 1) We see it in little children -- in the way we teach them to talk, in the games that they play, etc.
- 2) We see it as we get older -- the way we dress alike, and do things alike.
- 3) What is even more subtle -- it can be seen in man's tendency to want to think alike.
- 4) Paul has already touched on this in 4:17 ff. -- in the danger that we will mimic the Gentiles.

It is certain that we are going to imitate somebody. The question is, Who?

This noun and its verb are used 10 times in the NT Epistles -- not once in either the Gospels or the Acts.

CAN BE  
EITHER  
GOOD OR  
BAD.

Usually we are exhorted to be like other believers, i.e.,

- 1) Like Paul.
- 2) Like other believers -- either past or present.

At least twice Paul either commends or exhorts the early Christians regarding following him and the Lord. BUT HERE THE COMMAND IS GIVEN CONCERNING THE LORD ALONE!

Note these things inherent in the verse:

- A. The possibility. The very fact that we find it here is an indication that, as unbelievable as it may seem, this is possibility.
- B. The necessity.
  1. Obedience to the Word requires it.
  2. Our salvation demands that it be so.
  3. This is what the world needs.
- C. The attainability. It is only as a process: "Be ye" would be better translated, Become ye. The present imperative suggests a process that is going on. It will take time for you to become like God.

But we must also note the phrase, "as dear children." It means not only that the Lord loves us, but that we share His nature (which makes such a goal as we are talking about a possibility) through the new birth. Cf. 1 John 3:9,

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

But think of what is involved if we are to be like God:

- 1) We will need to know what He is like.
- 2) For this, we will need to be with Him, to spend time in His Word, to see Him as He is revealed there.
- 3) We will need to love Him. We are inclined to imitate those we admire and love.
- 4) And, since this is a process that will go on all through our lives, the things above must continue to be the main things in our lives.

And -- as this process goes on, two things will be developing in our lives:

- 1) Humility -- which takes us back to Eph. 4:1.
- 2) A hatred for sin -- which takes us back to Eph. 4:17.

Amy Carmichael, in her book, Gold by Moonlight, says:

"It is not by looking at sin that we see it for what it is, but by looking at the love of God and His pure holi-

ness. As we look at that we begin to understand something of the texture and nature of sin."

Does it grieve you that you are NOT like the Lord in so many ways? Do you pray and work to be like Him? Is that more important to you than anything else?

Spend time with Him in His Word with an open heart, desiring to do all that He asks you to do, and you will begin to see the process take place.

O to be like Thee! Blessed Redeemer,  
This is my constant longing and prayer.  
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,  
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

O to be like Thee! full of compassion,  
Loving, forging, tender and kind,  
Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting,  
Seeking the wand'ring sinner to find.

O to be like Thee! lowly in spirit,  
Holy and harmless, patient and brave;  
Meekly enduring cruel reproaches,  
Willing to suffer others to save.

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee!  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fulness;  
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

Is this your prayer -- really?

Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18.

But now let us go on to see . . .

## II. THE PARTICULAR WAY IN WHICH WE ARE TO BE LIKE GOD (Eph. 5:2).

It has to do with HIS LOVE.

See also Eph. 5:25.

In other words, the love that we as the "dear children" of God are to manifest is not a human love; IT IS A DIVINE LOVE.

What else can be said about it?

- 1) When we think of the contrast between "God" and us in v. 1, and between "Christ" and "us" in v. 2, we can see that it is a gracious love.
- 2) It is a love which existed before giving. Note that "loved" comes before "hath given." It has to be there before it can be expressed. In the case of our Lord, it

never had a beginning; it was always there. Cf. Jer. 31:3.

- 3) It was a sacrificial love. He had much that He could have given. He gave the most He could give; He gave HIMSELF!

People who cannot give things, can always give themselves -- which is the greatest gift! Parents often make this mistake: They will give things, but not themselves!

- 4) It was a love which sought FIRST to please GOD!
- 5) Finally, because it was the love of God and the love of Christ, it was a love that was always the same under all conditions. It was not a love which did not at times require discipline, but in spite of the difficulties it never changed.

If you want to see love illustrated, look at Christ on the Cross. If you want to see love described, read 1 Corinthians 13.

Concl: Do you really believe that such things are possible?

- 1) That we can manifest such a love as a way of life?
- 2) That we will become more and more like the Lord Himself?
- 3) That one day we will be like Him completely?

Three things are necessary:

- 1) Always remember the contrast between God and us. Here you have the two greatest possible extremes.
- 2) Let God be the great object of your love -- and of your life. Seek Him more than you seek even His blessings -- unless we are talking about the blessings that will change us.
- 3) Let the death of Christ on the Cross always remain in your heart as the illustration of the love of God -- the same love that is to be displayed through our lives.

## WALKING IN LOVE

Eph. 5:1-7

Intro: In the first part of Ephesians we learn what it means to be "in Christ." In the second part (beginning with chapter 4) we learn that when a person is "in Christ" you must expect that he will be like Christ (which is to be like God)! His life will be different.

But it is important for every child of God to realize that his life must be what God wants it to be, not what he thinks it ought to be.

And there is only one place where we can find what God wants and expects of us -- and that is in the Word!

So far we have learned two things about our lives as believers:

- 1) We must walk in humility. See 4:1-3. This is the only way there can be unity.
- 2) We must NOT walk like people do who do not know the Lord. One outstanding feature about a Christian is that he is going to be different.
- 3) Now we are learning that a child of God must walk in love.

There is certainly no lack of emphasis on this today, but as we go to the Word to find this aspect of our lives described, we find that there is a great deal of variation between many of the things we are hearing today when compared with the teaching of the Word of God.

Notice how Paul develops this. We soon learn that he does not mean for one moment that we are to love any and everything under all circumstances.

#### I. WE MUST BEGIN WITH GOD (Eph. 5:1, 2).

We have already considered these two verses. We have seen that we are to be imitators of God, to be like He is, and to walk in the love which Christ manifested when He died on the cross for us. We will not do that again.

But I want you to see this one thing **ESPECIALLY SINCE VERSES 3 THROUGH 7 DEAL WITH A VERY SURPRISING SUBJECT: THE DOCTRINE OF SIN!**

How did Christ show His love for us?

He gave Himself "to God" "for us." The greatest and first object of Christ on the Cross was to please God, not to save man!

Think about that and pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to understand it.

But there is this added emphasis: Most of us fail as believers because we do not know the Lord as we should. We spend far too little time devoting ourselves to becoming better acquainted with the Lord Himself. This always should be and must be the first objective we have in all that we do.

One of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival in England 200 years ago was William Romaine -- a man deeply taught in the things of God. He wrote a book called, The Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith. This is one thing that he has to say that applies to our Scripture this morning:

"It is much to be lamented that believers in general take so little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity; for want of which their faith is unsettled, and they are liable to many errors both in judgment and in practice. I would therefore most earnestly recommend it to all that are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in Scripture is revealed concerning the Trinity . . . , looking up always for the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit . . ." (p. 18).

If you want to read something written in our day that deals with the same subject in a wonderful way, read J. I. Packer's book, Knowing God. It will probably open your eyes to the immensity of this subject as you have never had them opened before.

Knowing God! How well do you know Him? How well do you you want to know Him?

Cf. David in Psa. 27:4. And see Paul in Phil. 3:10, 11.

I will always have light thoughts of sin until I have deep thoughts of God.

## II. WALKING IN LOVE MEANS NO COMPROMISE AT ALL WITH SIN (Eph. 5:3-7).

Can you think of any greater alternatives than the possibility that a child of God can be

- 1) like God, or
- 2) so unlike God as to be characterized by the sins mentioned in verses 3 and 4?

These are the possibilities -- extreme though they may be!

### A. The six sins which Paul mentions (Eph. 5:3, 4).

It is necessary sometimes to be specific, but Paul does not go into details. See v. 12.

(Define the six sins -- sins of immorality and of the tongue.)

In both of these verses Paul specifically states that these sins can never be considered as in place when they are found in the life of a child of God.

B. Four personal expressions (Eph. 5:4b-7):

These four things will help us more than anything else as we begin to walk in love so that we may really know what it is to show the love of God to others.

1. The way to keep from using your tongue in the wrong way: Be thankful! See Eph. 5:4.

Thankful for what? (Relate this to vv. 1, 2.)

2. Do not give up one of the first things you learned as a child of God (Eph. 5:5).

"For this ye know" is a combination of two Greek verbs for know which probably means to know by your own experience.

This is what brought us to Christ -- the knowledge that such people cannot go to heaven! AND THIS HAS NOT CHANGED!

Often the things which you know in your heart without having learned them from anyone else are more reliable than things which men would teach you.

3. Two warnings (Eph. 5:6, 7). These are the third and fourth personal expressions.

- a. Do not be deceived (Eph. 5:6).

Isn't it interesting to see "~~the~~ wrath of God" put along side of the love of God?

With God two things are still true:

- 1) There is no change in right and wrong. The Law of God is behind most of what Paul has been saying in chapters 4 and 5.
- 2) Sinners will still be punished eternally in hell. "The wrath of God" expresses two things about God's attitude toward sin: (1) It will not change; (2) It is going to be punished in hell.

There are those who will try to teach you other-

wise, either by their words, or by their lives.  
 "Let no man deceive you with vain words."

- b. "Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them"  
 (Eph. 5:7).

The verb actually means, Do not become . . .  
 The possibility remains.

Contrast the use of the word "partakers" with  
 its use in Eph. 3:6.

Concl: Have your ideas of LOVE made you careless and compromising with sin? If so you are not going God's way and can never have His blessing as long as this continues.

It might be rather shocking to us that Paul would write to the Ephesian believers in this way, but he does!

These were sins that were a part of their way of life -- as they have become a part of our way of living in America. Nothing would be of more help to our country in this bi-centennial year than for those of us who know the Lord to live the way the Lord wants us to live. Our problem in this country is not basically economic, or one of international relations; it is a moral problem.

Is there anyone here this morning whose life is described by the sins (any of them, or all of them) in verses 3, 4?

Then it can only mean one of two things:

- 1) You are not saved, and need to be, or
- 2) You are saved, but are living far, far from the Lord!

Which is it? You know in your own heart.

What is the answer?

We have it in the first two verses of the chapter. To walk in love we have to be like the Lord is. Love and sin never go together. May the Holy Spirit give us no rest in our souls until knowing the Lord, we make it our aim to be first and always pleasing to Him.



WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT  
Eph. 5:7-14

Intro: As the Apostle Paul describes the life of a Christian for us in the Epistle to the Ephesians, two things are obvious:

- 1) The possibilities for sin that are open to a child of God.
- 2) The pressures to sin that are continually upon him.

Add to this the fact that the character of a life that is pleasing to God has to be described for each one of us. We do not just automatically know what it is. Therefore -- our need for the Word of God.

Our passage this morning contrasts two things we are all acquainted with: darkness and light.

Darkness indicates two things primarily:

- 1) Ignorance.

See Eph. 4:18.

In 1 John 2:11 John speaks of the man who "walketh in darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Prov. 4:19 is another passage which tells us the same thing: "The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble."

- 2) Sin.

See 1 John 1:5-8.

One who has been saved has been "called . . . out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). That is the reason for the instruction we have in our text this morning.

Here Paul gives us no less than SIX REASONS why we should walk in the light -- which would be the opposite of walking in darkness (as described in the two points above).

I. BECAUSE WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO SO (Eph. 5:8).

How responsive are we to the Word of God? Do we really accept it as having ultimate authority over our lives? Or do we argue with it? Do we take it, or leave it? Do we promise ourselves that one day we should think about it? HOW DO WE TREAT THE WORD OF GOD?

There is no question here as to what God wants us to do. "Walk as children of light."

Listen to Paul's words in Rom. 13:12b,

"Let us . . . cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

There is no option here; it is a command.

II. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT CHANGE THAT GOD HAS MADE IN OUR LIVES (Eph. 5:8a).

We are not only in darkness; we were so closely identified with it that we "were once darkness."

Think about that for a moment!

But now we are so closely related to the light that it can not only be said that we have the light, or that we are in the light, but now we are light in the Lord -- but only because we are "in the Lord"!

For a person to claim to be a Christian and yet to be living in darkness is the greatest of contradictions!

III. BECAUSE THIS IS THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT (Eph. 5:9).

This verse should read, "The fruit of the light," not "of the Spirit,"

- 1) Because of the best manuscript authority.
- 2) Because of the context.

The change was probably made because of the similarity between this passage with "fruit" (singular) and "works" (v. 11 - plural) and the same thing in Gal. 5:19 and 22.

To walk in the light means to walk in:

- 1) "Goodness" -- meaning especially purity, but also including kindness and the like.
- 2) "Righteousness" -- which always points to measuring up to a certain standard or rule. Here it must be the Word of God.
- 3) "Truth" -- is faithfulness, genuineness, consistency.

IV. BECAUSE THIS ONLY IS "ACCEPTABLE UNTO THE LORD" (Eph. 5:10).

A part of our ignorance and sin was that our lives were centered in doing what we wanted to do. As the "children of light," we are to approve through testing and trial that which pleases God!

As we do this, we realize that His way is far better than ours ever was -- or could be!

V. BECAUSE THIS IS OUR GREATEST DEFENSE AGAINST SIN (Eph. 5:11).

Remember Paul's word in Rom. 12:21, "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

A vacuum cannot be left in our lives. You cannot take away without replacing that which was taken away with something else. Or that which was taken away will return.

Note the expression: "the unfruitful works of darkness."

It is not that they are "unfruitful" at all, but that they are never capable of bringing to us that which we are really looking for in life.

The only way we can be kept from sin is through walking in the light. And this has to be "in the Lord" (v. 8).

Finally, and most of the passage seems to be pointing in this direction (as we have seen in vv. 3-6),

#### VI. BECAUSE THIS IS THE LORD'S WAY OF REACHING THOSE WHO ARE IN DARKNESS (Eph. 5:11-14).

What is our relationship to the world -- to those who are still in darkness?

We are not to have "fellowship" with them (which means participation), but we are to "reprove them."

"Reprove" is identically the same word that is used in John 16:8. (Turn to the passage in John and show the emphasis upon, "unto you.")

We are to expose, to convict, to rebuke.

But how? Are we to become familiar with all that they are doing so that we know all of the horrible details?

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Such a thing is a shame, and exposes us to the dangers of sin.

HERE IT IS: WE CONVICT PEOPLE WHEN WE WALK IN THE LIGHT!

It is the light that exposes, not more darkness!

Look at v. 13. Charles Hodge gives us the meaning of this passage when he says,

"He (Paul) does not say 'Reprove evil, for you are light,' but, 'Reprove evil, for evil when reprovved by light is manifest, and when manifest, it is light,' that is, it is changed into light, or corrected" (p. 103).

The NASB says, "But all things become visible when they are

exposed to the light, for everything that becomes visible is light."

And the Old Testament encourages such a hope for those who are darkness and are in darkness! (Read v. 14 -- probably a summarization from several OT passages, which the Holy Spirit has a perfect right to do!)

Concl: The sanctification of believers leads to the salvation of those who are lost in sin.

Cf. Matt. 5:14-16.

WALKING CAREFULLY

Eph. 5:15-21

Intro: I trust that the Spirit of God is getting through to each one of us in these things that relate to the lives we live, here in Eph. 4 and 5!

As Paul comes to a close of his description of our walk, our lives, as described in these two chapters, the burden that is on his heart has to do with the people of the world who are without Christ. Who do you know of from NT times who was more concerned, or who was used more in reaching the people of the world, than the Apostle Paul was? We are not reading the words of a man who was content with theory, but one who had seen hundreds of people turn in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had seen churches established all over the Roman Empire. Therefore, he is one who is worth hearing.

All through his discussion of our walk the one thing that he insists on is that we must be most concerned about pleasing God. THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US TO NOTICE AS WE COME TO THIS PART OF THE BOOK WHERE HE IS TALKING ABOUT OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD THAT HIS EMPHASIS DOES NOT CHANGE! In reaching men with the Gospel we still must be most concerned about living a life that will please God.

Is this really registering in your own heart?

We seem to have forgotten this. Some have never learned it. It is not the sort of teaching that we hear today. The emphasis is more upon doing things as much like the world as we can so that in their own way we can reach them. This is not what the Apostle Paul is teaching here!

Instead, the first thing we have in our text we might call,

I. THE PERIL OF EVANGELISM (Eph. 5:15a).

There are real dangers confronting the child of God when it comes to reaching people with the Gospel. That is what this verse means. The warning is in the word, "See"! It means beware, look out, there is danger ahead, you are moving into enemy territory. It means that while you are trying to save people from the hands of the Enemy, the Enemy is going to be trying to get you. He has placed land mines in the path which will discharge when you put your foot on them.

This is the reason Paul says, "Watch your step. Walk circumspectly. Walk carefully. The Enemy may get you while you are trying to get him!"

If we are going to win people to Christ, we need to be aware

of the risks involved and make adequate preparation.

Paul is getting us ready for that which is coming in chapter 6, beginning with verse 10. There are no greater risks in any warfare than there are in seeking to reach people with the Gospel of Christ.

The risks are the highest for one who has just been saved.

But they are equally high for a child of God who is not really walking in fellowship with the Lord.

There have been many who have been pulled down into sin again as they have been seeking to lead others to Christ.

Now notice: Your greatest safeguard is in the way you walk, in the way you live, in the methods that touch your life as you seek to see other people saved!

## II. THE REASONS FOR THE WARNING (Eph. 5:15b, 16).

There are three of them here.

- A. Because of the difference there is (and always will be) between a person who is a Christian, as compared with one who is not.

A fool is a person who does not have, or does not know, or is not obedient to, the Word of God. A "wise" person is one who knows the truth; who believes the truth, and whose life has been changed by the truth.

In other words, one is a Christian; the other is not!

If you know the Lord, you are different and you must live in a completely different way from one who does not know the Lord. And Paul writes this in the context of telling the Ephesian believers how to reach Ephesians who do not know the Lord as their Savior.

Now -- as strange as it may seem, such teaching as this immediately raises all kinds of controversy among professing Christians, especially in our day today. There is strong support today for the teaching that we need to become just as much like the non-Christian as we can so as to make him comfortable in order that he will listen to what we have to say. And they say,

"But what about 1 Corinthians 9:19-23?"

Let us look at it. And we need to keep three things in mind:

- 1) The meaning of the passage itself.

- 2) The added light given by the context. See the remainder of the chapter.
- 3) The harmony of this passage and the rest of the NT teaching.

We must conclude that Rom. 12:1, 2 and 2 Cor. 6:17, 18 are just as necessary in evangelism as in our fellowship with the Lord or anything else that affects our lives as believers!

A second reason for the warning:

- B. Because there are special times when our testimony will be especially needed (Eph. 4:16a).

Paul is not saying primarily here that we as Christians should not waste time (although that also is certainly true). He is referring instead to the fact that in the work of reaching people with the Gospel there are times when the Lord will be working with people in a particular way. They may be watching us and we need to be prepared for such a time.

The Lord is directing the warfare -- we are not! See how this entered into Paul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts -- getting to to the right place at the right time to be with the right people!

This is illustrated in the ministry of our Lord -- when He spoke to the woman at the well (as recorded in John 4).

We do not know when we will come upon such opportunities and this is the reason that we have to be walking carefully all of the time!

- C. "Because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16b).

See Eph. 6:13, "the evil day," and 6:16, "the wicked," or the wicked one, the Devil. But the root is the same. He is the Evil One.

We do not live in good days. They are corrupt days, and CORRUPTING days. Consequently, they are full of tragedy and peril. Dangers confront us on every side. Ruin and heartache are the order of the day!

The world has not changed -- and it will not change until the Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth. We are in enemy territory!

III. THE SOLUTION (Eph. 5:17).

This verse deserves to be the life verse of every child of God in every generation. What heartache we would avoid, and what blessing we would receive, if this were our goal!

Remember that this has to do with evangelism which is our warfare.

Let me point out four things of importance:

- A. My primary concern needs to be "the will of the Lord" -- not my will, not the will of other Christians, not the will of the world, BUT THE WILL OF THE LORD.
- B. The will of God can only be found in the Word of God.  
  
Do you really believe that?
- C. We are naturally ignorant of the will of God. It is something that we need to learn.
- D. We must put it altogether -- which is the meaning of understand.

As we do, there will be an overflow -- and we will take that up next time in verses 18-21. These are the results when a person gives himself to the Word of God, seeking to know the will of God!

Concl: What are you doing in your life on a regular basis to get more and more acquainted with "the will of God"? Are you reading the Word? Do you really believe it? Are you obeying it? Is it the one thing that determines how you live?

Do you cry out to God for understanding? Do you know that the Holy Spirit has been given to you to "guide you into all truth"? Is pleasing God more important to you than pleasing yourself, or than pleasing other people? Are you willing to stand alone, if need be, to do the will of God?

For those of you who have recently received Christ, learn to check everything by the Word. Don't let older Christians force you into the battle before you have some basic training. How long that will take, the Lord will show you. But the first priority is to understand the will of God! It is a subject that you will never exhaust, but there are certain basic truths that you must start with.

Do we want to see the Lord's blessing as a Church in reaching Portland with the Gospel? Then here is where we must start, and this is the way we must continue. May God teach and lead us to do His will that we may see great victories in His Name!



WHO IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Eph. 5:18-21

Intro: A tremendously important subject -- as is our relationship to each member of the Godhead!

We will concentrate this morning on Eph. 5:18.

We will do it in this way:

- 1) First, making sure that we understand the verse itself.
- 2) Second, the context:
  - a) The verses which immediately precede verse 18.
  - b) Other references to the Holy Spirit in the book of Ephesians.
- 3) Third, related passages of Scripture which are found in other parts of the New Testament in particular.

I. THE VERSE ITSELF: EPHESIANS 5:18.

A. It has to do with believers.

Only believers have the Holy Spirit living in them.

B. The verse presents two possibilities -- for the child of God.

Yes, a Christian can get drunk.

C. One of these possibilities is forbidden; the other is commanded.

If you as a Christian ever get under the influence of wine (or any other intoxicating drink), you are violating the will of God. You are out of the will of God.

On the other hand, if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, you are just as much in violation of the will of God!

D. Notice the word, "excess," or "riot." It is really the key to the verse.

It will help us to note that it is the same root as the word which is used to describe the life of the prodigal son in Luke 15:13, "riotous living."

Interestingly this word comes from the same root as the word, salvation. But it has an "a" (alpha) in front of it, ἀσωτία, which is one way the Greeks made a negative out of a word -- like we do with the word, amillennialism, which means no millennium. "Riot" is not saving, or wasteful, destructive, throwing away.

This makes us see that the question that Paul has in mind is the question of control. A man who is drunk with wine loses control of himself -- his speech, his emotions, his judgment -- everything!

On the other hand (and in a good sense), a believer who is "filled with the Spirit" comes under the control of the Spirit so that he is enabled to do things that he could never do otherwise!

Verses 19-21 will illustrate this for us.

But now the question comes up, How does a child of God come under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit?

Obviously there must be a yielding on his part to the Holy Spirit, but just what does this mean?

Are we just to pray and expect that we will be filled as a result of our praying?

Note two things:

- 1) Nothing is said about praying for the filling of the Holy Spirit in this passage!
- 2) Nowhere in the Bible do you find that we are exhorted to pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Note also: Nothing is said here about speaking in tongues as an evidence that we are filled with the Holy Spirit!

How are we filled with the Holy Spirit? "A text without the context is a pretext." Therefore, let us look first at . . .

## II. THE CONTEXT OF EPHESIANS 5:18:

### A. The verses which immediately precede our text.

This takes us back to Eph. 5:15-17. Two things stand out:

1. We are to be walking accurately, carefully, according to some rule. See verse 15.

Obviously the one and only guide for our walk, our lives, is the Word of God.

2. We are to understand "what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

The only place that we can learn the will of God is in the Word of God.

Thus, we establish a vital connection between the Word of God and the doctrine of the filling of the Spirit.

But now let us look at . . .

B. Other references to the Holy Spirit in the book of Ephesians.

There are 12 in all, but we will look at just three to see the connection between the Holy Spirit and the Word.

1. Eph. 1:17. He is the Teacher of the Word.
2. Eph. 3:5. He is the Revealer of the Word.
3. Eph. 6:17. The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit."

Thus, it becomes clearer and clearer that you cannot expect to come under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit without being pre-eminently involved with the Word of God!

But -- does the New Testament support this teaching? Let us now look at . . .

III. RELATED PASSAGES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- A. One of the key passages on the inspiration of Scripture: 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.
- B. The parallel passage in Col. 3:16. This is a very convincing verse -- which places the meaning of Eph. 5:18 beyond any doubt whatever.
- C. In the Gospel of John: 14:26; 15, 26, 27; 16:12-15.
- D. In the book of Acts. There are two passages that are especially important:
  1. Acts 2:4, 11b-16.
  2. Acts 4:23-31.

Concl: Our answer now is very clear. No one can be filled with the Spirit of God unless he is filled with the Word of God. The Spirit of God controls us and directs us by the Word and always according to the Word. If anything is contrary to the Word, it cannot be of the Spirit.

What are you doing about learning what is in the Word? The Holy Spirit will teach you. He will remind you. He will strengthen you -- so that the Word will control you in every step you take.

Are you reading it? Is the Word the most important and strongest influence in your life? Does the Word of God settle things for you? Are you conscious right now of things in your life that are contrary to the Word of God?

- If you are not filled with the Word you cannot be filled with the Spirit. And if you are not filled with the Spirit, you are living in disobedience to God. This, in turn, can breed countless other sins and troubles in your life.

Nothing is more important than for us to get into this relationship with the Spirit of God -- and stay there!

THE MARKS OF A SPIRIT-FILLED MAN  
Eph. 5:18-21

Intro: This, of course, applies equally to women, to young people, and even to children. Cf. the case of John, the Baptist, "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15b). This was obviously a special case.

A Spirit-filled child of God is one who has come under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit. He is a person who does what the Spirit of God wants him to do, but he is also a person who does the will of the Spirit in the power of the Spirit!

While there are conditions laid out in the Word of God concerning how we are filled with the Spirit of God, yet no one is able to predict what the Holy Spirit may see fit to do at any time through one who is Spirit-filled. Jonathan Edwards, who ministered in the early 1700's in New England, tells in his book, A Narrative of Surprising Conversions, how "God in so remarkable a manner took the work into His own hands" (p. 16).

There are many things about the work of the Spirit of God which cannot be planned. His work is, in many respects, unpredictable!

Who could have anticipated what happened in the book of Acts?

Cf. John 14:12-14; Eph. 3:20, 21; Jer. 33:3

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In dealing with our text this morning we need to recognize that not all of the marks of a Spirit-filled Christian are given in this one passage. Therefore, I intend to point out from what we have here in Ephesians, as well as from other parts of the Word of God, what some of the other marks of a Spirit-filled Christian are.

Then -- we will come back to Ephesians 5:19-21.

Here are the more prominent marks, or evidences, the signs, of a Spirit-filled Christian:

- 1) He is one who gives priority and pre-eminence to the Word of God. He believes it. He obeys it. He is more concerned about the Word than he is anything else. And he is continually growing in his understanding of the Word. There is no stereotyped handling of the Word of God. You do not hear the same things in the same way ever and over. Instead, there is a growing, an enrichment, of a Spirit-filled believers relationship to the Word of God and his understanding of the Word.

How long could you pray the prayer of Eph. 1:15 ff. for a

particular child of God? The answer: As long as he lives! We will only grow and our faith will only grow as long as our knowledge of the Word increases.

- 2) Closely paralleling his emphasis on the Word, the Spirit-filled Christian will be marked by his love for the Lord Jesus Christ. You will not be able to talk to him very long before he will be speaking to you about the Savior.

He delights in fellowship with the Lord. He loves to hear about Him, to learn of Him -- Who He is, what He has done and is doing, and all about His coming. Cf. on this latter point, Eph. 1:18 -- the first request.

- 3) Prayer. See this in the early Church. They were praying continually. It was their main work. Cf. Eph. 6:18; Jude 20.

For a Spirit-filled Christian, prayer is not just a part of his life and work; it is his life and it is his work. Prayer always precedes any great work of God, and it always continues on as a vital part of that work.

Cf. Moses in Ex. 18:19.

- 4) Holiness of life, spiritual life -- which always means "the fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:22, 23.

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you are going to be a holy person. There will be an increasing sensitiveness to sin, and an abhorrence of it. There will be a greater and greater longing to be like the Lord Jesus Himself.

Cf. Eph. 3:16.

- 5) Dependence upon the Lord. You will find a growing distrust of self -- of a person's own wisdom. He will be looking to the Lord for understanding, for guidance (cf. Eph. 5:17), and for blessing.

And the Spirit-filled Christian will be given guidance and wisdom by the Spirit of God -- a wisdom that he could never have in himself.

- 6) Power and boldness in witnessing. See Acts 4:31-33.

This can mean opposition and even death, as it did in Stephen's case. Note what is said about him in Acts 6:3, 5, 8, 15; 7:54-60.

A tragic defeat? NO! See the suggestion in Acts 7:58b, and then read Acts 22:20! One man laid down his life as the Spirit of God reached out to touch the life of the man who was to be used of God as no other has been!

For us? Acts 1:8 tells the same story.

- 7) The filling of the Spirit transforms our relationship with

other believers. Then we see fellowship, oneness (unity), and love. Cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Acts 2:41-47.

Now -- to look at our text!

Paul here gives three evidences that a child of God is filled with the Holy Spirit -- one in each of these three verses: 19, 20, and 21.

They are:

- 1) Joy -- which is expressed in singing!
- 2) Thanksgiving -- and such thanksgiving that runs beyond
  - a) The ability of man.
  - b) The thought of man.
- 3) Submission.

#### I. JOY (Eph. 5:19).

This is one of the paradoxes of the spiritual life -- that joy comes from surrender to God, to the Holy Spirit. We expect that it will mean just the opposite.

Think how little there is of true joy in the world, even among believers.

The Devil always has some way of counterfeiting, or perverting, the things of the Lord -- things which the Lord made possible for His own glory.

Nowhere is this perversion more obvious than in music. And this has become one of the most divisive areas in the Church today.

The tendency of the Church almost always has been to mimic the world. The world often has more of an influence upon what is going on in the Church than God does through His Word! You can always find the present trends in the world showing up in the Church. Almost always they are met with a warm response, and often with numerical increase.

But the question for those who are concerned about the blessing of God and the fulness of the Spirit is this: WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD SAY ABOUT MUSIC -- if anything?

The answer is that it says plenty -- more about music than it does about most other things.

The fact that Paul mentions it first in this passage is evidence of its tremendous importance. This is given further support from the fact that the longest book in the Bible is the Psalms -- the hymnbook of Israel, and the book to serve as a guide for the Church.

What Paul is really saying here is this: IF YOU ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT IS GOING TO BE SEEN IN YOUR APPRECIATION OF MUSIC. There is going to be JOY in your heart that you have never known before, a joy that will be expressed in singing. The question is: What kind of music, and what kind of singing?



THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN US  
Eph. 5:18-21

Intro: In the past three Sundays I have sought to establish three things concerning the filling of the Spirit:

- 1) It means to be brought under the control of the Spirit of God. This never will be absolute in this life, but it is a control that is to become progressively stronger the longer we live.
- 2) The Spirit of God exercises His control over us through the Word of God. The more we give ourselves to reading the Word, to believing it, to obeying it, the more we can expect the blessing of the Spirit of God in our lives.
- 3) Speaking of blessings, the third thing that we have noticed is that the blessings are not limited to what we have here in Ephesians 5. We have gone to many other passages of Scripture to see other blessings that we will have in addition to what we have here.

This morning we want to look at the specific blessings which the Apostle Paul mentions in our text. There are three:

- 1) Singing.
- 2) Giving thanks.
- 3) Submitting.

These are three outstanding evidences that a child of God is Spirit-filled.

I. "SINGING" (Eph. 5:19).

Paul does several things in this verse:

- 1) He tells us that singing is an evidence of being filled with the Spirit.
- 2) He tells us what singing is.
- 3) He tells us what we are to sing.
- 4) He tells us how we are to sing.
- 5) He tells us for whom we are to sing.
- 6) He tells us to whom we are to sing.

Obviously singing is very important in the lives of God's people because there is a great deal in Scripture about singing. The longest book in the Bible is the song book of Israel: the Psalms.

But the world also sings. And it is easy for our singing to be perverted by the world's singing. Everybody ought to be able to distinguish between the two.

There is a place for:

- 1) Love songs. Not seductive, sensuous, but wholesome.
- 2) Fun songs.
- 3) Patriotic Songs.

But there is a difference when we sing "to the Lord."

Let us notice our text:

A. Why are we to sing?

Paul says, "Speaking to yourselves," or, to each other. In Col. 3:16 Paul says it this way: "Teaching and admonishing one another . . ."

Singing is a means of communication. But even more: it is a means of spiritual ministry. A ministry that we have to each other.

Who cannot testify, who has been to church very much, of the blessings received:

- 1) Through hearing a large group of the Lord's people sing?
- 2) Through the words that are sung.

Illus.: Hearing To God Be The Glory in Vancouver, B. C.

We do not sing for the world; we sing for the Lord and for the Lord's people, for each other! If we keep this in mind we will be spared a lot of mistakes.

B. What are we to sing?

Here Paul is very specific, and the implication is that he needs to be because it is easy for the people of God to get away from the will of God in their singing.

He mentions three types of singing: "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

What does he mean?

1. "Psalms."

There is no question what is meant here. He is speaking of that book of the Bible which carries this title. These are the divinely inspired songs of Israel and the Church. You will never go wrong if you stay just as close to them as you can.

Read them. Notice what they say. Notice how they say it.

Illus: Spurgeon's "Our Own Hymnbook" in which the first songs are the hymns.

Also: The Scottish Psalter.

There was a time when the Lord's people felt that to

sing anything but the Psalms was heresy. This was not right (as Eph. 5:19 indicates), but it would have been far better to err in that extreme than to have gone as we have.

How strange it is that the justification that is given for the wild music that you often hear in churches is that it is of the Spirit!

2. "Hymns."

This is music that is God-centered!

Have you ever noticed how much of our music is man-centered?

These obviously are songs written after the Psalms were written, but carrying on the same emphasis -- keeping the Lord pre-eminent!

3. "Spiritual songs."

The very term links it with the Holy Spirit, and to link it with the Holy Spirit links it with the Word.

But somehow we have gotten the idea that as long as the message is right, it makes no difference what the music is.

If there is one thing that stands out in the New Testament it is that there is a difference between

- 1) The Spirit of God and the flesh.
- 2) The things of God and the things of man.

In our music today we have tried to combine the two, and it is worse than trying to combine oil and water. Christian music is not Christian words set to music that has come straight from the world. It is music that is distinctly different all the way through -- not written for man's approval, but written for the glory of God and primarily for the blessing of His people. As in the ministry of the Word of God, let us be the same about our music -- giving people what they need, not just what they think they want.

Oh, dear young people, do not cheat yourselves by neglecting the great music of the Church -- most of it from the past, although some from the present. You will be robbing yourselves of that which is going to mean the most to you in your relationship with the Lord.

What kind of music do you listen to all week?

One thing is sure: When the Holy Spirit gains control of our lives it is going to affect what we enjoy in music.

C. How are we to sing?

"In your heart." It has to be real. The Lord wants to know that we mean what we sing. Perhaps we do the wrong thing to make everybody sing.

D. To whom do we sing?

We sing:

1. "To" each other -- for teaching, admonition, edification.

But also

2. "To the Lord" -- for His glory and honor and praise.

If our singing does not meet these two qualifications, it cannot be from the Spirit of God.

## II. "GIVING THANKS."

The Spirit of God will make us conscious of our blessings. Cf. Jas. 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift . . ."

A. The details:

1. When? "Always."

2. For what? "For all things."

3. To whom? "Unto God and the Father."

4. How? "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This brings us down to the smallest details of our lives. But it also includes the things that we do not like as well as the things we do like.

Illus.: The couple next to us in the restaurant -- handsome, healthy, with means (money and car plus many other things) -- and they dove right into their food without ever giving God thanks for anything!

B. In the book of Ephesians:

1. Eph. 1:3 ff.
2. Eph. 1:16.
3. Eph. 3:20, 21.
4. Eph. 5:4.

### III. "SUBMITTING."

This means that there is going to be a brokenness, a yieldedness about a Spirit-filled Christian that you will not find in most.

William Gurnall in his book, The Christian in Complete Armour, tells about seeing a tombstone on which were engraved these words,

"Here lies one against his will."

We do not want to live the way the Lord wants us to live, and when it comes time to die, we are not in agreement with that either! There are some people the Lord is never able to please.

Or, we might not object to submitting ourselves to the Lord, but we do not like "submitting" ourselves "one to another."

These words mean that "Christ" (the better reading) is in full command. He can be trusted -- as Abraham learned in Genesis 13 when he let Lot have the first choice.

#### A. Some reasons for submitting:

1. Eph. 1:11.
2. Eph. 1:19-23.
3. Eph. 2:10.
4. Eph. 2:20-22.

#### B. The people who must learn it:

1. Wives (Eph. 5:22).
2. Children (Eph. 6:1).
3. Servants (Eph. 6:5-8).

But also:

4. Husbands and fathers. What called for greater submission than for Christ to manifest His love for us?

5. Masters (Eph. 6:9) -- because they have a Master in heaven, and they must be submissive to Him!

Concl: Our Lord's words to the Twelve following the request of the mother of James and John. See Matt. 20:20-29.

Cf. also Phil. 2:1-11.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE HOME  
Eph. 5:22-33

Intro: We come to a new division in the book of Ephesians.

- All that Paul has been teaching is now to be focused upon the home -- the place of greatest need in America today!

What do we see when we look out upon our city and our country today?

- 1) Unhappy families -- dissatisfied married couples.
- 2) Broken homes -- divorce is a way of life in America, and increasing at an alarming rate.
- 3) Couples living together and having children -- with no marriage.
- 4) Mothers raising children in homes where there is no father or husband.

WHY?

Because:

- 1) We have turned away from God.
- 2) We have rejected His Word.

But with all of our supposed wisdom and with all of the counseling that is being done, we have not improved upon some obvious things which we find in the Scriptures:

- 1) That man was created by God.
- 2) That man was created as male and female so that we could have marriage, homes, and families.
- 3) That, since the above are true, only God can tell us what a home is and how it is to function.

BUT WITH ALL THAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE WORLD AND ITS PROBLEMS, THE MOST ALARMING SITUATION THAT WE HAVE TODAY IS TO BE SEEN IN THE WAY THE CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD, HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE SAME PROBLEMS.

As we look at all of these things, and as we come today to this section of Scripture in Ephesians, I want, first of all, to ask:

I. SOME BASIC QUESTIONS -- questions which we all need to ask, basic questions, personal questions, questions which will determine how much profit we are going to receive from the verses ahead.

A. The first question: Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?

The way you answer this question will determine the importance you will give to what we are going to see. If you do, . . . If you do not, are you really sure? Have

you honestly investigated this tremendously important question?

- B. Question #2: Do you believe that the Word of God is right? Are you willing to accept what is taught here without argument? Can you get better help anyplace else?

Do you argue with the Lord, or does the Word of God settle things for you?

- C. Question #3: Do you believe that God has told us all that we need to know about being husbands and wives and children?

Cf. 2 Pet. 1:3-21 -- esp. v. 3.

We live in a day of seminars . . .

- D. Question #4: Do you believe that we can do what God tells us to do in His Word?

Is it possible for a wife to be submissive . . . ? Is it possible for a husband to love his wife as . . . ?

Obviously, the standard is out of our reach. Is it attainable?

If you can answer these four questions with a Yes, then you are ready to go ahead. If not, you have some problems to settle in your own mind and heart.

As we move on, let us notice as our second major emphasis this morning,

## II. THE BACKGROUND OF OUR TEXT.

Quite obviously Paul does not begin this Epistle with the truth that we have here in chapter 5. He has been talking about other things, leading up to this. From the Epistle itself, what kind of a person is Paul addressing here in ch. 5 when we consider the things that we have been considering up to this point?

Let me point out at least 7 things from the first 4½ chapters -- things which describe what a woman should be before she becomes a wife, and things which describe what a man should be before he becomes a husband.

Paul is writing to:

- A. Christians -- the people of God, believers, "saints" (1:1). The Lord never expected men to live without Him.



What is a Christian? If I were not a Christian, and I wanted to be, what would you tell me to do, and why?

- B. Instructed believers -- those who have been taught the truths of the Word of God.

This is what Paul always did, and what he has been doing in this Epistle from the very beginning of the book -- **TEACHING!**

- C. Assured believers. Paul is aiming at convincing the people of God of the truths of the Word of God so that they can have confidence, assurance.

- D. Growing believers. Cf. 1:17; 4:15.

- E. Hopeful believers -- those who are moving toward eternity with a realization of what is ahead.

Cf. 1:18; 4:4.

- F. Obedient believers. This emphasis begins in chapter 4 and comes right up to our text. It has to do with our walk, our lives.

- G. Trusting believers. They were not doing it on their own. They were "faithful in Christ Jesus" (1:1).

The first part of Ephesians speaks of the spiritual preparation for marriage -- things which we find are almost totally neglected.

But let us look at one other thing by way of introduction to our passage this morning as we spend several Sundays considering the instructions which Paul gives us.

Let us look at Paul himself. How can he help a Pastor to know what he should be doing to help his people concerning marriage and the home? How does he give help to a Sunday School teacher? What can a father and mother learn from Ephesians which will help them prepare their children for marriage?

### III. THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL.

- A. He was teaching them -- teaching them the Word of God.

- B. He was praying for them. See 1:15-23; 3:13-21.

- C. He was encouraging them.

- D. He was an example to them. Cf. 3:1-12; Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 11:1.

Concl: Wherever you may be in life today, whatever your circumstances may be, whatever mistakes may have been made, whatever the impossibilities are that you face -- whether you are single or married or divorced; whether you are having trouble or are not having trouble (for the moment) -- whatever the conditions are, DO NOT FAIL TO GIVE YOUR PRIMARY ATTENTION TO THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE SEEN THIS MORNING -- THINGS WHICH WE CAN SEE IN EPHESIANS ALONE AS FORMING THE FOUNDATION FOR A LIFE AND HOME RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE PLEASING TO THE LORD.

The answer is here! Let there be no question about it. And it is all here. If we will only let the Spirit of God do His work in our hearts, yielding ourselves to His power and to His will, life can be not only what we want it to be, but it can be like God wants it to be! See 3:20, 21.

WHY MUST WE SUBMIT?  
Eph. 5:22-33 (Message II)

Intro: In v. 21 of our chapter we came to the word, "submitting." In our English text it is repeated in v. 22 (although not in the Greek; it is put there to give the idea). And then it is found again in v. 24 where it is translated, "is subject" -- "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, . . ."

It is obviously a very important word for the spiritual life and for the home!

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The dictionary defines submission as a yielding, a surrendering, an act of resignation, or of obedience.

In the Greek it is a military term. It is to put yourself under the authority of someone else -- as a soldier does in his relationship with his superior officer. As Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, he really ceases being an individual. He does not have the right to say when he is going to get up, what he is going to eat, what he is going to do, where he is going to go, etc. If he objects to his orders and refuses to obey them, he is guilty of insubordination and will be punished!

Other words related to this are:

- 1) "Reverence" in Eph. 5:33.
- 2) Obey in 1 Pet. 3:6.
- 3) And it involves humility according to Jas. 4:6, 7.

It is to put yourself under the authority of someone else. It speaks of serving others. It includes submitting decisions to others for a decision.

Possibly I have lost some of you already. But stay with me and let us see this through.

II. WHO AND WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?

According to our text, it includes:

- 1) Wives (5:22).
- 2) Children (6:1).
- 3) Servants (6:5).

As this word is used in the NT, it applies to:

- 1) The Church.
- 2) The home.
- 3) The nation. Cf. Rom. 13:1 ff.; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17.

Therefore, it includes everyone:

- 1) Husbands as well as wives.
- 2) Parents as well as children.
- 3) Masters as well as servants.

And we could go on to say:

- 4) The kings as well as the subject of the kingdom.  
(Remember the trouble that Rehoboam got himself into.)
  - 5) The rich as well as the poor . . . and so on and on.
- Paul says,  
"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ."

WITHOUT THIS SUBMISSION THERE CAN BE NO HOME,  
NO CHURCH,  
NO NATION.

It touches the life of every person. However, the special emphasis in our text has to do with believers.

Now we come to the main point this morning:

### III. WHY IS IT NECESSARY? WHY MUST WE SUBMIT?

We can already think of many, many problems -- reasons as to why in certain circumstances we can anticipate that this will not work. But notice carefully: PAUL IS NOT DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS. INSTEAD, HE IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THIS AS ABSOLUTELY VITAL IN THE HOME -- BOTH FOR THE HUSBAND AS WELL AS THE WIFE!

Remember that he is speaking especially of Christian wives and Christian husbands.

Why must we submit?

A. Because God says so!

This is not a wish, or a suggestion, BUT A COMMAND!

Do you look at it this way? Will you respond accordingly?

Calvin says, ". . . if we refuse . . . , we make war against God" (Sermons on Ephesians, p. 565). Failure to comply will eventually lead to judgment. Do not say that commandments are limited to the OT and to the Law, and that the days of judgment are over! The main difference between life under grace as compared with life under the law is the way in which things are done. But under both economies, absolute obedience to God is the goal!

B. Because we need it.

We can always be sure of this if it is in the Word of God. God does not issue foolish or unnecessary commands.

But how do we need it?

Because of the way in which our pride will cause us to do so many foolish things and to make so many mistakes.

Note the way Abraham handled the trouble with Lot after he had gone down into Egypt. See Gen. 13: 8. Did he lose?

C. Because others need it.

There is nothing that will draw a home, or a church, or a nation together like this!

We do need each other. Sometimes the wisest thing a husband can do is to submit a problem to his wife for her decision. And the opposite is also true.

A lack of submission says, "I do not need you!"  
This is true of a believer and God,  
of a husband and wife,  
of a parent and a child,  
of a master and his servant,  
and in all other relationships.

When a problem arises, how many times do you say, "What do you think?" Or, "What would you do?"

Many other reasons could be cited, but let me give one more from the book of Ephesians:

D. Because it will reflect our belief in the sovereignty of God and of Jesus Christ!

Note the third petition in Paul's first prayer:  
Eph. 1:19-23.

See Eph. 5:24 carefully. It does not say, Therefore, as the church ought to be subject to Christ, but, ". . . as the church is subject to Christ . . ."

See also Eph. 1:11 and the emphasis on the will of God. Do you believe it? Can you resist Him? Then bring this truth into every area of your life and into every relationship!

Cf. Deut. 6:2

It is submission "in the fear of Christ" (v. 21). Thus, within the limits of the Word  
"as unto the Lord" (v. 22).

## IV. HOW CAN IT BE?

Now our minds are filled with the problems that we can think of.

But what do the problems really mean?

Just one thing: SUCH A LIFE IS IMPOSSIBLE! That is absolutely right! Then you say, "Why take our time with something that will not work?" I have not said it will not work; I have said that it is impossible!

This is why Paul has placed these instructions, these commandments, where they are. Submission can only be realized . . .

A. By being filled with the Holy Spirit. (See the context.)

But the Spirit of God works through our own experience. Therefore, we must recognize two measures He will use as the Word is brought to bear in our lives.

B. It must begin in our homes -- during childhood.

Children and young people, be thankful if you have parents who are teaching you obedience. You will praise God for them more and more for the rest of your life.

And parents -- if you are failing in this, you are preparing your children for the most tragic life that they could possibly have. See Eph. 6:1-3.

Come to the Tuesday Bible Class and you will read a passage in Lev. 20:1-5 where the Lord says to Israel, If you don't, then I will -- with respect to idolatry!

See a delightful picture in Luke 2:51, 52 concerning our Lord.

C. It comes down to the deliberate, personal choices that we make.

Yesterday I read Mark 14. Note how He prayed in v. 36. And how he refused to let Peter use his sword. And how He submitted Himself to His enemies. WHY? Because He wanted to do His Father's will and He knew that His Father was in absolute control.

Concl: We have not gotten to the wives yet because there is

much to be done in all of our hearts. Submission is for ALL of us -- not just for wives and children and servants!

There are just two questions with which I want to close:

- 1) Have you ever really given your life to the Lord -- telling Him that you want to do His will in everything? If not, will you do it now?
- 2) If you have, do you face your relationships with this submissive spirit?

To be sure, there are problems. The Word of God deals with these too. But for now this is what we need to determine by the grace of God. Only He can bring us to this place by His Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit can keep us living this way to the glory of God.

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THE HOME, A MINIATURE OF THE CHURCH  
Eph. 5:22-33 (Message III)

Intro: Two lines of truth parallel each other here in Eph. 5:

- 1) The Church, the Body of Christ, teaches us what the home should be.
- 2) The home is an illustration of what the Church should be -- both as the Body of Christ, and in its local manifestation.

In the Church there are two positions that Paul is occupied with here:

- 1) Christ is the Head of the Body.
- 2) The Church is the Body -- made up of all believers in this present dispensation who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

In the home there are two main positions:

- 1) The husband.
- 2) The wife.

And bringing the two together, Paul:

- 1) Shows that the husband is to the wife as Christ is to the Church.
- 2) Shows that the wife's relationship with her husband parallels that of the Church to Christ.

Therefore, if we understand one of these, we understand the other.

Read vv. 22 and 25.

This morning we have these verses which deal with the wife and her relationship with her husband. It is significant that, since submission is the greatest need of our hearts, Paul addresses the less responsible person in each of the three relationships:

- 1) The wife before the husband.
- 2) The child before the parent.
- 3) The servant before the master.

Vv. 22-24 give us three points:

- 1) The will of God for wives (v. 22).
- 2) The explanation (v. 23).
- 3) The conclusion (v. 24).

I. THE WILL OF GOD FOR WIVES (Eph. 5:22).

The same submission which is spoken of in v. 21 is now to be displayed in a special way by each wife. This is God's will!



"Your own husbands" points to a unique relationship with one other person, an emphatic expression meaning "Husbands who as such are peculiarly and exclusively theirs" (Salmond, Exp. Gk. Test., III, 365).

"As unto the Lord" meaning:

- 1) As you submit yourself to the Lord.
- 2) As a part of your submission to the Lord.
- 3) Within the same limits of your submission to the Lord, i.e., within the bounds of the Word of God.

No woman should enter into marriage unless she is willing to do all of this for her husband.

Every wife should keep this before her. Make sure that the problems of your marriage are not here. A good marriage can be made even better through obedience to this expression of the will of God.

## II. THE EXPLANATION (Eph. 5:23).

Two things are stated here about Christ:

- 1) He is the Head of the Body, the Church.
- 2) He is the Savior of the Church.

Both of these are applied to the husband.

Concerning Christ, cf. Eph. 1:22; 4:15.

### A. The Head.

This grows out of creation. We have the foundation in Genesis 1, 2. And here is where God-less, atheistic evolution has brought disastrous results upon the home. You cannot set God aside, and His will, and still have all of the good results that you would like to have. There is a relationship between what has been taught to our children and the results we are reaping today -- with our children, and in broken marriages!

The proper emphasis is brought out by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9.

What does it mean? At least four things.

1. It brings out the intimacy of the relationship. Nothing is closer to the body than the head. They are one. They share one life. They have been joined together by God. The human body demonstrates this -- and likewise points back to creation. "And they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24b).

As Lloyd-Jones says (p. 123), a husband and wife are not like two kingdoms who have<sup>a</sup> diplomatic relationship, always in a state of tension, with the possibility of war breaking out at any moment. They are one!

2. The place of authority given to the husband is indicated.

He is the one who has the chief place of responsibility for his wife and for his children. He does not move ahead with disregard for them, but with the greatest concern.

Two great problems exist in our homes today:

- 1) Husbands who will not accept that responsibility.
- 2) Wives who will not let them have it.

3. It speaks of the difference between the two.

The one is incomplete without the other. They cannot survive separately. One does what the other cannot do.

This is the whole point of 1 Cor. 12. See esp. v. 21. How amazing this is when we bring it into the relationship which we have with Christ in the Church -- the thought that He needs us!

4. It teaches us that the wife cannot act independently of her husband -- either ahead, or behind, or in doing something else.

Dr. Walvoord used to say about a Christian and his relationship with the Lord: "The will of God -- nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!"

But the husband is also something else to the wife.

#### B. The Savior.

He does not save her in a spiritual sense. He does not die for her -- although he should be prepared to do so if that is necessary. But he parallels the Lord's total work of salvation -- preserving, providing, teaching, disciplining. Just as the Lord never loses sight of the spiritual and eternal for each of us, neither should the husband lose sight of these things for his wife -- and for his children! What a treat for a wife to have a husband like the Lord!

III. THE CONCLUSION (Eph. 5:24).

This is obviously introduced by the word, "Therefore."

Read this verse carefully. Very few do. Note that first Paul

- A. States a fact. It is not that the Church should be subject to the Lord, but that she is -- whether she likes it or not!

What a statement of the sovereignty of God!

Then Paul does three other things in this verse:

- B. Indicates a responsibility. Note the "as" and "so."
- C. Sets up a limit. The Lord's sovereignty is always within the limits of the will of God. However, we may find that we do not always know the will of God.

Sometimes we must say, as F. W. Faber wrote in his hymn,

"And all is right that seems most wrong,  
If it be His sweet will."

- D. Makes an application. "So let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Concl: A submissive wife is an obedient wife. A submissive Christian is an obedient Christian. Are we obedient "in all things" -- the little as well as the great?

Illustration: Deut. 22:6, 7. The same reward is given for this as is promises over all for obeying God, or for obeying parents!

Cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-4 -- where the husband is not a Christian! That which is "of great price" in God's sight brings great blessings and great rewards!

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE HOME  
Eph. 5:22-33 - Message IV

Text: Eph. 5:24, 25.

- Intro: The dictionary defines a fundamental as that which is basic, or essential, to anything. Thus, in talking about The Fundamentals of the Home we are dealing with those principles which are absolutely essential for any home -- principles which are absolutely necessary if a home is to be pleasing to God and if it is to bring blessing and happiness to those who are a part of that home!

The important thing about these fundamentals that we will be considering this morning is that they are not my ideas, gained from my experience, nor <sup>from</sup> the experience of any other man. But they are the fundamental principles which are revealed in the Word of God.

There are three of them:

- 1) The sovereignty of God.
- 2) The submission of the wife.
- 3) The love of the husband.

I. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (Eph. 5:24a).

You might ask: "Where do you see the sovereignty of God in this verse?"

Read the verse carefully.

Most of us read it as though it said, "Therefore, as the Church ought to be subject unto Christ . . ."

We do this because when we look at the Church from its beginning it is hard for us to think that the Church's history could be described as "subject unto Christ."

But it does!

It has not been the Church's choice, nor has it always been the Church's experience. The Church's history has been no better than Israel's. Nevertheless, it can be said that all through her history the Church has been subject to the Lord or she would have eliminated herself long ago.

The same is true of the home.

We must recognize this. There are those who are saying today that the home as we have known it is a thing of the past. That marriage is no longer necessary. And they are saying the same thing about the Church -- the local Church.

But let it be said here and now that God has not left these decisions up to man! Both marriage and the Church were established by God, and both are going to survive through His sovereign overruling power, and by His power alone. To try to ignore them or to do away with them is only going to lead to greater judgment from God!

The Church is "subject to Christ" in at least 4 ways:

- A. In its design. Cf. Eph. 3:9.
- B. In its beginning. Cf. Matt. 16:18.
- C. In its growth and completion. Cf. Eph. 4:11-16.
- D. In its glorification. Cf. Eph. 1:9-12.

We need this sense of the sovereignty of God in our homes. He established the home. He has preserved it and blessed it. And He will see it through all of its opposition from within and from without!

The Church has been "subject to Christ" even though many, many times she has not wanted to be!

## II. THE SUBMISSION OF THE WIFE (Eph. 5:24b).

Notice: "in everything."

The wife is not a slave. She is not <sup>to</sup> be ignored in the decisions. Her husband is to consider her to be one with himself. But she is definitely not the leader. Her God-given place is one of submission to the husband that the Lord has given her.

How wonderful it is to have learned this before getting married!

Learn from what God told the nation Israel about obedience. The Israelites were to obey:

- 1) ALL the commandments of the Lord -- not just the commandments that they liked or that were easy for them. Cf. Deut. 27:1,
  - "And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, Keep ALL the commandments which I command you this day."
  - The same word, "all," is used many times in the Law.
- 2) From the heart. Cf. Deut. 26:16,
  - ". . . thou shalt, therefore, keep and do them with ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL."
- 3) With joy. Cf. Deut. 28:47, speaking of judgments which would be theirs,

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God WITH JOYFULNESS, AND WITH GLADNESS OF HEART . . ."

Many problems in the home would be solved if such obedience were manifested by the wife.

III. THE LOVE OF THE HUSBAND (Eph. 5:25).

If wives feel that they have an impossible standard, what about the husbands?

And husbands -- what a different life our wives would have if we were as concerned about our love for them as we are about their submission to us!

EVERY HUSBAND OUGHT TO MAKE THE LOVE OF GOD, THE LOVE OF CHRIST, A LIFE-LONG STUDY!

Perhaps the lack of love which we show just displays that we do not know as much about the love of Christ as we think that we do.

What are the main characteristics?

- 1) Unsought - Rom. 5:8.
- 2) Undeserved - Eph. 2:4-7.
- 3) Unchanging - Jer. 31:3.
- 4) Unending - John 13:1.
- 5) Unmeasured - Eph. 3:19.

In His love, He "gave Himself." Are we doing that?

Concl: The love manifested by our Lord for Peter, and as brought to a climax in John 21:15-17.

Two things to remember:

- 1) The wife must love also.
- 2) These things are only possible through the filling of the Spirit.

ONENESS IN MARRIAGE  
Eph. 5:22-33 - Message VI  
(Final)

Intro: Text -- Eph. 5:28-33. (Read the entire passage from v. 22 to 33.)

We have been noticing in our study of Systematic, Biblical Theology on Wednesday nights that there is an amazing inter-relationship of truth in the Scriptures. One is tied in with another in such a way that it is increasingly apparent that you cannot be wrong about any one truth and still be right about the others.

That inter-relationship is seen in the passage before us here in Ephesians.

In order to understand marriage and the home, there are four major doctrines of Scripture which every husband and wife must know. They cannot be wrong about these and still be right about the home. They may not know any of them perfectly, but they must be right about what they do know. And they must continue to center their lives around and upon these major truths. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit every husband and wife must continue to search them out so as to understand them better.

The four doctrines are these:

- 1) Creation.
- 2) The work of Christ in salvation -- past, present, and future.
- 3) The Church.
- 4) The husband and the wife -- their duties and their relationship.

Note how all four of these are in our passage on husbands and wives: Eph. 5:22-33.

Regarding creation -- Paul even quotes Gen. 2:24 in Eph. 5:31 just as our Lord did. See Matt. 19:5.

If our homes are to be spared, we must come back to these four truths. (Comment briefly on each of them.)

Such an emphasis in this passage points to two important things:

- 1) The husband-wife relationship must be spiritual as well as physical.
- 2) A man and a woman must enter into marriage with more than just a superficial understanding of the Word of God.

Now -- in many ways these last 6 verses reach the highest level of truth in the whole passage. And this is connected with what we have been saying about the four major doctrines -- especially

one of them.

And so let me direct your attention to . . .

I. A MOST IMPORTANT STATEMENT.

You will find it in verse 32: "This is a great mystery."

Remember what this word, "mystery," means. Cf. 3:5, 9.

Note where and how it is used in Ephesians: 1:9; 3: 3, 4, 9; here; 6:19. It is a most important NT word.

Relating this verse to marriage it simply means that nothing like this has ever been taught so fully in all of Scripture.

This shows that the same kind of a oneness exists between a man and his wife that exists eternally between Christ and His Church -- a mystical union!

II. THE MEANING OF ONENESS.

All that can be said here can also be related to Christ and the Church, but let us think particularly about how it relates to husbands and wives.

A. The oneness of their origin.

Not only did Eve come from Adam, but they both came from God -- His creative power!

Adam was one man (although not the only one) who did not need to worry about whether or not he had married the right woman!

Are marriages made by God? ABSOLUTELY! Genesis 2 teaches this, and so does Gen. 24. See Gen. 2:21, 22. Also Gen. 24:5, 8.

Multiple marriages have always been contrary to the will of God, and so is all of the experimentation that has gone on and is going on in our culture.

Young men and young women -- wait for God's choice. And when that one comes along you will find that you were made for each other just as much as Adam and Eve were made for each other, and as Eve was made from Adam!

True marriages find their origin in God.

B. The oneness of their life.



Pay special attention to the difference between the creation of Adam as compared with the creation of Eve.

Adam was made from the dust of the ground; Eve was made from Adam's body -- from a rib. God breathed into Adam and he received life. No such statement is made regarding Eve -- leading to the possibility at least that she received even life from Adam.

C. The oneness of their living.

Nothing is said here about children. That comes later.

What is said? Two things:

1. They are to live for each other (Eph. 5:28, 29).

This is especially the husband's responsibility.

"Ought" speaks of the payment of a debt, something which is a necessity in view of everything that is to be considered -- which would point to God's purpose in marriage, the wife's needs, as well as the husband's needs.

2. They are not to allow the closest human ties to interfere. See v. 31.

D. The oneness of their destiny.

Note that the emphasis in the passage before us is not on where we will be, but on what we will be.

Illus: Only one thing I do not anticipate about heaven -- Matt. 22:30. We will not marry but will be like the angels. Just when we get to be what we should be, then marriage will be no more.

Notice the words "nourisheth and cherisheth" in v. 29 of Eph. 5. This is what our emphasis must be. It is not basically where we are, nor what we have, but what we are!

III. THE CONCLUDING WORD (Eph. 5:33).

Nothing of greater importance in connection with our homes can be said than this! Throughout all of the years a couple is together, THIS WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THEIR MARRIAGE.

Concl: Consider how these same truths relate to the Lord.

THE IDEAL HUSBAND  
Eph. 5:22-33 - Message V

Text: Eph. 5:25-28a.

Intro: Not only in this passage, but in Rom. 7:4 Paul makes it clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is the husband of the Church, and that the Church is His Bride, His Wife.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God."

When Paul wants to illustrate what the husband should be like, he points the husband to Christ. Christ is the Ideal Husband! Therefore, to understand the husband's role we have to understand the work of Christ.

In thinking about the work of Christ as it is presented in this passage, we will be able to see that we are not just to think about what Christ did for us in the past, but also about what He is doing for us now, and what He will do for us in the future.

Note:

- 1) V. 25 speaks of the past.
- 2) V. 26 speaks of the present.
- 3) V. 27 speaks of the future.

But notice this also as to the details of the passage:

- 1) The husband has a clear command given to him by the Lord: "Husbands, love your wives."
- 2) Then Paul gives the husbands a Wonderful Example: "As Christ loved the church." See also v. 28a -- "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies."  
We may not be able to love our wives to the same degree, but we certainly are to love them in the same manner.
- 3) Paul, in the third place, states the two objectives that the Lord had in mind. Both vv. 26 and 27 begin with in order that.
- 4) Finally, Paul details for us here and in other parts of this Epistle, the necessary means for achieving such a goal.

In learning some of the things that we need to know from this passage, notice, first of all . . .

I. THE WORK OF THE HUSBAND.

Basically it is this: He is to love his wife so as to make her what she should be both personally and spiritually!

Note the comparison here in this passage. Just as it was the work of Christ to sanctify the Church (and continues to be His work), so it is the work of the husband to sanctify

his wife, i.e., to make her holy.

Listen carefully, husbands. If your wife is not growing in grace, if she is not what she should be spiritually, it is your fault!

That may be hard to take, but how else can you take such a passage as we have here?

What a solemn thought this is! And yet this just has to be the case. Can you see now why Paul lays the foundation in this Epistle that he does, culminating with the exhortation, "Be filled with the Spirit"?

Before you cast this aside as being impossible, let us notice from the passage . . .

## II. THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH A GOAL.

The Lord not only gives us the power for such a work, but He lays out the details for us.

There are three things every husband needs to be concerned about in loving his wife "as Christ also loved the church."

A. The husband must devote himself completely to his wife.

We see this in the statement, "And gave Himself for it."

This means to give one's self over to the power and use of another, to live pre-eminently for his wife.

The Lord did this, and is still doing it. Cf. Eph. 5:2. See also Heb. 7:25; John 14:2b, 3; Rom. 8:28 -- and many other passages.

Are we doing this?

Are you living for your wife? Is she always in your thoughts, and the reason for your actions, and the one for which things are done?

Or, do you live for your work?

or for the things you want to buy,  
or for the fun you want to have,  
or even for your children,  
or possibly for your parents or other  
members of your family?

How many times have you heard a husband say, "Oh, I'm staying with my wife for the sake of the children." He has his role as a husband all out of adjustment.

Things will not work right in the home until the husband sets as his #1 priority that he give himself to his wife. He is devoted to his wife for her spiritual growth and conformity to Christ. How could such a goal mean that the wife is taking the Lord's place? It is giving Him His rightful place in the husband's life as well as in the wife's!

B. The husband must teach his wife.

Sanctification comes about "with the washing of water by the Word" -- the Word in such a special and personal sense that it comes to the wife as spoken by the Lord Himself!

In 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 Paul wrote these words:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Husband, what have you been teaching your wife about the Word? Has she learned how to walk with the Lord by being able to live with you? Is your life an example of what you would like for her to be, and what the Lord wants her to be? Are you becoming more and more like the Lord so that she will know what she should be?

Your wife will never be what you want her to be as long as you are neglecting the Word in your own life and as long as you are failing to lead her into the knowledge of the Word and into the experience of its truth!

You should be her favorite and most influential teacher. If you aren't, then this is where you need to begin.

But there is one more thing:

C. The husband must pray for his wife.

This is apparent because of:

- 1) The close connection all through Scripture between the Word and prayer. If the Word has its proper place in your life, so will prayer.
- 2) The close connection between the Spirit and prayer. If you are "filled with the Spirit," you will be a man of prayer.
- 3) The place that prayer has in Ephesians. Cf. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; 6:18. Re-read all of these passages thinking about and praying for your wife!

4) The close parallel between our text and John 17.

John 17 is really our Lord's prayer. Actually there are many ways in which He is the only One who could pray those words. But I want you to see this morning how much of it can be used as a husband as he prays for his wife.

In connection with our first two points as to the way the Lord wants us to go about our work as husbands:

- 1) See John 17:19. Read it,  
And for her sake I sanctify myself, that she also might be sanctified through the truth.
- 2) See John 17:17. Read it,  
Sanctify her through thy truth; thy word is truth.

And note how much more in this prayer is a guide for us as we pray for our wife when we note how Christ prays for the Church. See vv. 6 ff.:

I have manifested thy name unto the wife whom thou hast given me out of the world; she was yours, and you gave her to me, and she has kept your word. Now she has known that all things that you have given me are from Thee. I have given unto her the words which you gave to me, and she has received them, and she has known that I came to her from Thee, and she has believed that you sent me to her. I pray for her. I do not pray for the world, but for her whom Thou hast given to me, for she is Thine.

And then go down to the latter part of v. 11:

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name the one that you have given me, that we may be one.

Husband, do you pray for your wife? If so, how much, and with what words? If not, why not?

The older Lucille and I get, the more we pray for our children and our grandchildren. But it was impressed upon my heart (I am sure by the Lord) some time ago that I was not really praying for Lucille as much as I should. She actually should occupy more time in my intercession than anyone else! It is not because she needs it, but because she is my special, most important, spiritual responsibility. If things go bad with us, they will go bad with our children, and they will go bad in my work.

Concl: So often when I talk to couples who come to me to talk about problems they are having with their children we soon find ourselves talking about them -- the parents, their relationship to the Lord, their relationship to each other! IS THERE TROUBLE IN YOUR HOME? THEN LOOK TO SEE IF THE PROBLEM IS NOT RIGHT HERE.