

Ephesians 4

February 7, 2011

Characteristically the epistles of Paul fall into two divisions:

- 1) The doctrinal section.
- 2) The practical section, which is the application of the doctrine to daily living.

The division is true of Ephesians:

- 1) In chapters 1-3 we have the doctrine.
- 2) In chapters 4-6 we have the practical application of the doctrine.

This does not mean that there are no exhortations for living in the doctrinal section. Nor does it mean that there is no doctrine in the practical section. But it does mean that the emphasis in the first part is on doctrine (1-3), and on the second part is practical living (4-6).

Many make 6:10-20 a third part of the epistle. It deal with the spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged in our conflict with our relentless enemy, the Devil, and all of his Satanic forces, and the only way that they can be overcome.

The epistle to the Ephesians was very likely to be a circular letter for all of the churches which were in towns that were in the vicinity of Ephesus. This probably included the towns mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3.

There are two main doctrines which Paul discussed in the first three chapters: the Gospel, and the doctrine of the Church, the Body of Christ. But, at the same time, no one can read the first three chapters of this epistle without recognizing how important prayer was to the Apostle Paul. From the time he was saved, prayer occupied a major place in Paul's life and teaching. But when he was arrested and kept from his usual work, prayer became even more important to him. We see this in the prayer in chapter 1, and again in the prayer in chapter 3.

The Christian life is discussed in the practical section as a "walk." It came to him (and to us) out of the OT. For that reason it is called a Hebraism, a figure of speech used by godly Hebrews. For example, we read in Genesis 5:22 and 24 we read that "Enoch walked with God." In Genesis 6:9 we read that "Noah walked with God." And in Genesis 17:1 that the Lord said to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." ***It speaks of conducting one's life in fellowship with God, progressively and increasingly, step by step.*** It is a very picturesque statement. In Hebrews 11:5 Enoch's life is described as one that was pleasing to God, which needs to be added in describing what it means to walk with God.

In Ephesians 4 through 6 the Apostle Paul used this expression five times:

- 1) In 4:1 "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
- 2) In 4:17 "that ye henceforth not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."
- 3) In 5:2 we are told to "walk in love as Christ also hath loved us."
- 4) In 5:8 we are to "walk as children of light."
- 5) In 5:15 we are told, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

4:1 The "therefore" immediately follows the first three chapters, but especially the prayer that he had just spelled out to them in chapter 3. He did not write to them as an apostle (although he had every right to do so, and to command them as to what they should do). But his entreaty as a prisoner of the Lord could have had even a greater influence upon them than his command as an apostle. It was not his calling that was the basis of his appeal, but their calling. They knew that their calling had to be in grace, in the grace of God, and that

they were totally unworthy of the blessings that they had in Christ. You and I are in the same position, aren't we? There was nothing in us, nor in any good thing that we might have done, to obligate God to call us to Himself and to His salvation. Their lives as believers were to reflect their total unworthiness for all that they had in Christ. By the way, the word church speaks of a called-out people, called out of the world, separated from the world, called to Christ.

Lenski says that the idea of being worthy is that of being of equal weight. Take the old balance scales as an illustration. We have our salvation on one side, and our conduct is on the other. This obviously is a challenge for which none of us is qualified. How could our conduct possibly balance the scales with our glorious salvation? Verse 2 gives us the answer.

4:2 Paul mentioned four things in verse 2, and then he added another one in verse 3.

What is the first? Not just "lowliness," but "all lowliness." Westcott said in his commentary, "The test of our true apprehension of the Gospel is our sense of the majesty of God" (p. 56). "Lowliness" is humility, and the word "all" before it seems to indicate not only our attitude toward God, but our attitude toward men, toward all men, believers and unbelievers alike. All of the words in verse 2 add to one another to contribute each of our lives toward what Paul will mention in verse 3, "the unity of the Spirit." We are not saved, and then set off by ourselves to have fellowship with the Lord, but we are saved and made a part of the body of Christ so that the characteristics that we seek to manifest before God, need to be obvious to each other in the Church.

What is "meekness"? While "lowliness" may have an application to both God and man, the emphasis has to do with God, but "meekness" shows our consideration of others and submission to them instead of standing up for "our rights" which we hear so much about today. Remember that the Lord said He was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:28-30). So Paul was exhorting us here to be like our Lord.

Next comes "with longsuffering." These three words all appear in Colossians 3:12-13. Conflicts have often appeared among the children of God. We must be prepared for them, and long for grace to behave while they are going on however long that may be. "Longsuffering" means *suffering long*.

And related to "longsuffering" is "forbearing one another in love." While we are faced with some difficult situation we are careful not to say the wrong thing, or to do the wrong thing. We must never forget commandments #1 and #2. And here it has to do with #2, loving one another as we love ourselves, or taking it higher as the Lord did, loving one another as the Lord has loved us.

And what is the purpose of all of this? Verse 3 tells us. See how the first three verses of this chapter are tied together toward the goal mentioned in verse 3.

4:3 At this point we all need to remember 1 Corinthians 12:13. At Pentecost in Acts 2 the Church, the body of Christ, was born. And 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us that from that moment on all believers have been baptized by one Spirit into one body. That body is the body of Christ, so we can say that we are not only joined to each other, but what is most important is that we are joined to Christ.

I had a Greek teacher whom I greatly respected, tell all of us who were in the class that there is one meaning of baptism, or to baptize, which means to put in *and leave there*. We are so accustomed to think of water baptism as going under, and raising up. That is the picture that we have of our salvation. It pictures our union with Christ in His death, followed by His glorious resurrection. It does not picture our being with Christ, and then taken out. It pictures our salvation. But in connection with the baptism of the Spirit, we are baptized into the

body of Christ, and that is where we are! Paul was not using the figure of water baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13, he was speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit by which we are placed into the body of Christ, *and that is where we will always be!* It is not like water baptism. In fact, it is distinctly different. Water baptism and Spirit baptism really have no connection with each other. One is symbolic, as is water baptism; the other is spiritual, a definite work of the Holy Spirit upon all believers from Pentecost until the Rapture, when the Church will be completed and removed from the earth. “Endeavoring to keep” is an assignment that has been give to each one of us by God. It means that we have a precious treasure, the unity of the Spirit among all believers, which needs to be guarded, and for which we need to put forth every possible effort to see that is constantly exercised, to make sure that it is maintained. And from the first verses of this chapter this is a work which we constantly need to be attending to in our own hearts. We are to firmly stand for the truth, but to stand against those personality traits and extra Biblical points that tend to divide us. And having said all of this, the Apostle Paul then gave the Ephesians and all of us in the Body of Christ a check list to keep constantly before us. These, and only these, will enable us to keep the unity of the Spirit.

When you look at the Lord’s work today, the multiplicity of churches, the great variety of doctrines many of which you can look in vain for in the Scriptures. The divisions had already started in the first century, and they have grown and grown until most people in churches today take all of this as the way God intended for His Church to be. One of the commentaries I have been using with real blessing and spiritual profit for myself, made a comment that I strongly disagree with. Speaking of the days when Paul was in prison and churches were largely on their own, this writer said, “As yet there was no outward organization binding together local churches.” That is true. But those organizations as they have come about through the history of the Church, have done more to divide Christians. Then this writer made a statement which I wish would describe where we are today. He added, “Their unity lay in their common vital relation to Christ, maintained by the spiritual sympathy which held together the members of each church” (Westcott, B. F., p. 57). That is exactly where we ought to be today. It is not organizations that we need, it is the Spirit of God Whom we need. There are going to be countless numbers of people in hell who are depending on membership in some church to get them to heaven, instead of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “The unity of the Spirit,” that is, the unity which the Holy Spirit has established among all believers, is a unity which calls for the constant attention of every true believer in Christ. It needs to be guarded with the greatest oversight.

Let’s look at the check list, and you decide if these are where your hope is.

4:4 The King James begins with “there is one body.” The “there is” has been added to make the translation clearer, but what we should read here is just, “one Body.” I think that the Apostle Paul wanted to jolt his readers. There is just one true Church. It is not an organization, but an organism, a living body. It is made up of people who in reality know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, and have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into that Body. Hopefully local churches intend to spread that truth. But I am afraid that is not the case with every church.

Next comes “one Spirit.” There is only one Holy Spirit. He is a Member of the Godhead, and equal with the Father and with Christ in their Deity. The Apostle John tells us that there are many spirits that have gone out into the world, but they are evil spirits. There is just one Holy Spirit.

And third we are told that we are “called in one hope of your calling.” The word “hope” is used in the Bible to describe why we have been saved and where we are eventually going to be. Most of you know all of this. We have been saved to be like Christ, and we are looking for Him to come back to take all of us to heaven. And at that time those who died in Christ will come with Him, be reunited with their glorified bodies, “And so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Life will go on on the earth, but the Church will be in heaven. All of this makes up

“one hope.”

4:5 “One Lord,” and his full name is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only Savior of sinners. It was through His incarnation that He was crucified for our sins that we might have eternal forgiveness and be declared righteous before God. “Neither is there salvation in any other . . .” Never believe anyone who tells you that there is another Lord, another Savior. Either He saves us, or we will not be saved.

“One faith.” This word is rich in meaning, but I believe that it speaks of the Bible because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” God has given us just one book with two parts, an Old Testament, and a New Testament. It is a living and powerful Word, infallible and eternal. It is truth. It reveals God to us, and it shows us our own need for God and His salvation. There is only one Word of God.

“One baptism.” I hope none of you will be disappointed when I tell you that this is not water baptism. This is the baptism of the Spirit, that work of the Holy Spirit by Whom we have been made members of the Body of Christ. There is only one true Church. We have many churches today – so many it has to be confusing to people. As I have said, it is not an organization, but an organism. The Lord’s people gather in local churches, and the best churches are those which follow the pattern laid out in the NT, and which most closely reflect the glory of the one body of Christ.

4:6 “One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Remember that when the Apostle Paul wrote these words, he was writing to the believers in Ephesus and to all other believers wherever the original letter went, and to those of us today, who are in Christ.

In the three prepositions, above, through, and in, we have the complete story of our salvation. He is “above” us in that He is absolutely sovereign over us. None is greater than He is. His power is absolute and constant, stretching from eternity to eternity.

He is “through us.” It is by the working of His sovereign power that He can guarantee the fulfillment of all of His promises, and will fulfill His purposes for us. He works all things together for good for us who know Him and belong to Him, the good being our ultimate conformity to the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And He is “in us.” He dwells in us in all of His fulness. Our hearts are His home. We are never separated from Him. He will never leave us, nor forsake us. He has promised His abiding presence. Fellowship with Him can be, and He wants it to be, a constant experience, the most blessed fellowship that any person could possibly experience. In the prayer which we studied last week in chapter 3, remember that the Apostle Paul prayed that the believers of Ephesus might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:19).

Let me call your attention to the fact that in verse 6, speaking of the one God and Father, this applies to all of us, and that He is above all of us, and He is through all of us, and He is in all of us. Oh, that we could really take all of this marvelous truth in, and rest on it, and partake of it, and experience the peace and joy that it can and will bring to all of us, from the strongest to the weakest. This ought to make us most diligent in what we are told to be in the opening verses of this chapter so that every member of the Church, the Body of Christ, can live in the enjoyment of what it really means to be a child of God. With all of the strength that God gives to us, we need to be “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

This is our salvation.

February 14, 2011

4:7 As we move from verse 6 to verse 7 here in Ephesians 4, let me read to you what Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote about how the first six verses of Ephesians are tied in with what immediately follows.

This is Dr. Chafer's comment:

The preceding portion of this Chapter has given particular emphasis to those great fundamental facts of the Christian faith which are at once its unifying features. The Apostle now turns to the consideration of that diversity of gifts which characterizes the fellowship of the saints in the prosecution of the ministry committed unto them; which ministry is, by divine intent, unto the building up and completion of the Church – the body of Christ. The unity is not forgotten; it is rather that which binds together in one incomparable organism all those who, under God, may serve in the exercise of diversified gifts (*The Ephesian Letter*, pp. 126,127).

Everyone who is saved from that Day of Pentecost until the rapture of the Church, is in the Church, the Body of Christ. Everyone one of us is a part of that body of which Christ is the Head. And the Apostle Paul who was chosen by God to reveal this mystery, has, under the direction of the Holy Spirit shown how our human bodies illustrate our relationship to each other in the body of Christ. So I am going to ask you to turn to 1 Corinthians 12:13 again, I want you to follow in your Bible as I read from verse 12 down through verse 27. You can see that in verse 28 the teaching of the Apostle continues as it does in Ephesians 4 when we get down to verse 11. (By the way, let me point out to you that even though we are in the practical section of the book, Paul digressed temporarily to give us some very important *doctrine*.)

(Read and comment on 1 Corinthians 12:13-27.)

(Romans 12:1-8 is also another passage that sheds light on the subject of our gifts in the body of Christ.)

The Apostle Paul assured each believer that Christ has given each member of the body of Christ, the “grace,” the gift by grace, to minister to the other members of the body of Christ, to enable the body to grow and to function as one body for the glory of God. The best way for us to determine what our gift, or gifts, may be is just to pay attention to how the Lord leads in our lives and the opportunities He gives us for ministry to others. Undoubtedly a part of recognizing our gift will be to pay attention to what we enjoy doing, what we are capable of doing, and the opportunities we have which the Lord places before us. Our first responsibility is to the Lord, then to others who are the Lord's people, and then together in our united ministry in the body of Christ toward the world.

4:8 This verse is at least in part a quotation of Psalm 68:18. There are several problems connected with it, but we have to recognize that the Spirit of God has a privilege that we as the Lord's people. He can quote from a passage which really does not say in its entirety what, in this case, the Apostle Paul was led to say, but it deals with the same subject. Paul here was showing that Christ had won by His victory on earth the right to confer gifts on His people as He chose to do. Psalm 68:18 speaks of the Lord's ascension which was preceded by His descent to the earth. So it speaks of His triumph over death, over sin, over Satan and all of the demons, which pictured Him as the mighty Conqueror, who had conquered as a note in my Bible renders it, “a multitude of captives.” We are not told who the captives were, nor what happened to them. The point of the quotation is simply to show the position that the Lord held by virtue of His many victories on earth.

4:9 Here the Apostle Paul sought to solve part of the problem by mentioning that He Who was in heaven had to descend into the earth before He could ascend into heaven. So these two verses contain the whole earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, and His victorious return to heaven where He now is in the place of

power at the right hand of the Father, and where He ever lives to intercede for the members of His body, the Church, who are on the earth. He is the mighty Conqueror, and He is prepared to lead His Church to victory on earth.

4:10 What we have here had been the burden of Paul's prayer in chapter 1, his third request – which let us read from verse 19 to the end of chapter 1. (Read Eph. 1:19-23.)

Our ultimate assurance of the triumph of the Church is not to be seen in the Church herself, but in the Head of the Body, our Lord Jesus Christ. What looked like the greatest possible tragedy that could ever happen, was suddenly turned into the most glorious victories, and which was announced to those who came first to the tomb on the first day of that week, as they were greeted by the words of the angel, "He is not here; He is risen!"

We all need to remember these truths when the testimony of the Church on earth seems to be almost extinguished and its presence ignored. God's purposes for the Church will prevail because of the multiplied victories of the Head of the Church, the risen, glorified, and exalted Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

4:11 Now we come to those who were given to the Church at its beginning, as leaders of the Church.

The first to be mentioned are *the apostles*.

The Apostles had a unique place in the ministry of our Lord. By definition an apostle is one sent forth from another on a special mission. There originally were twelve. One of them, Judas Iscariot, proved to be an impostor, and was finally guilty of betraying the Lord into the hands of His enemies. Our Lord Himself is called an Apostle in Hebrews 3:1. Here He is called the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

In addition to Matthias who was elected to take the place of Judas, Barnabas is also called an apostle (Acts 14:14), but not in any official sense. It can be said that the authority of the NT rests upon the authority of the apostles and the commission that they had from our Lord. In the coming kingdom of God on earth the apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. See Matthew 19:28.

The apostles were all men who had seen the Lord in His resurrection glory. As the apostles died, they were not replaced.

Second in line were *prophets*. In Acts 15:32 Silas and Judas (not Iscariot) are spoken of as prophets. The word of the prophet is described in 1 Corinthians 14:3: "And he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." In the OT prophets were foretellers and forthtellers, but in the NT it seems that they were mainly forthtellers, special teacher of the Word for the purposes stated above in 1 Corinthians 14:3. But this office seems to have ceased early in the history of the Church like the apostles. And neither group was replaced.

Third we come to *evangelists*. As their title suggests, they were men whose main mission was the preaching of the Gospel. Westcott, Chafer and others believe that they were missionaries, possibly even pioneer missionaries who went out to preach the Gospel where it had not been preached before. This is one of the passions of the Apostle Paul. See Romans 15:20.

The fourth group were *both pastors and teachers*. Many speak of this office today as pastor-teacher. As the Gospel spread through the Roman world, local churches were located where believers could have fellowship together, where they could be taught, and where they could receive personal instruction concerning how to live

for the Lord, and encouragement to tell others about the Savior. Specifically verse 12 gave the responsibility of men occupying all of these positions, but it was especially the work of the pastor-teacher.

4:12 As some of you may have heard me say before, this verse should have been translated without any commas so it would be one simple statement of the work of the pastor-teacher in the local church. It is a sort of three in one definition of the work of the pastor-teachers. Often in churches more than one man may be supported by the church to give his full time to this ministry. But you see that it was to prepare others to share in the ministry that the body of Christ might be built up in the faith.

This verse states what is the primary purpose of the local church. It is not the evangelization of the world, but the edification of believers. The ministry of the pastor-teacher is primarily to the people of God. Evangelism will follow as well-taught believers go out from the church into the world to bear testimony to the Gospel of Christ. Pastors themselves need to be taught. In the past young men thought to be qualified for the ministry of the Word went and lived in the homes of older pastors, and were trained that way. Many have been self-taught. Seminaries have been used by the Lord, but as many seminaries drifted away from the Scripture, Bible institutes came into existence. It seems that there has been throughout the history of the Church, the body of Christ, a constant change in how men have been trained for the ministry in the local church. And there has always been the need that pastors continue to study, continue to grow, continue to apply the Word to their own lives in order to continue to be useful instruments that the Spirit of God blesses to the spiritual growth of people in local churches.

The ultimate goal is stated in verse 13.

4:13 The thought here is not of the individual growth of each Christian, but the growth of the whole Church, the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul here speaks of the ultimate goal in the ministry to believers, a goal which will only be reached when the Church is in heaven. Notice that the Apostle Paul said here, “the unity of the faith.” This is doctrinal unity. “The faith” is Biblical doctrine. The Church on earth is far from that today, but in the purpose of God doctrinal unity will be experienced finally in heaven. It appears from this verse that one of the evidences that the Church is approaching the time of the Lord’s return, will be a Spirit-led move on the part of the Holy Spirit for greater agreement on the part of individual believers toward “the unity of the faith.”

But we see now too much of what Paul mentioned in verse 14.

4:14 Here, in verses 14, 15, and 16 Paul emphasizes how that goal is to be reached, before he returned to the practical emphasis of this part of the epistle.

The problem in the local church, and so in the greater body of Christ, is that too many of the Lord’s people remain as *children in the faith*. They are saved, but they are not growing. And so they are tossed this way and that by “every wind of doctrine” which comes along. And those winds of doctrine keep coming which expose how greatly the Church is in need of Biblical instruction. What is “the sleight of men”? It is the trickery which false teachers use to turn believers away from the plain teaching of Scripture. The believers that are most susceptible to false teaching are those who do not know the truth of God’s Word. So they are wide open to deceit. The Apostle Peter gave a solemn warning which the people of God in every age need to pay attention to. It is found in 1 Peter 5:8-9:

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren

that are in the world.

February 21, 2011

It is no disgrace to be a child of God, that is, as one recently born into the family. But it is shameful for any of us to remain as children. John Eadie says that “ceasing to be children is . . . our duty” (p. 315). And the Lord has established the ministry to the Church, and to churches, that we might no longer be children in the faith. Any professed servant of the Lord who has any other purpose than to see the people of the Lord grow, is not a true servant of Christ.

Paul mentioned two characteristics of spiritual childhood. One, its tendency to be open to every doctrine that comes along, and two, the possibility of being influenced by them. We see this in Paul’s words, “tossed to and fro,” in the first place, and then “carried about with every wind of doctrine.” “Every wind of doctrine” indicates that false teaching does not just come from one or two places, but from all directions. People who are not established in the truth are prone to accept anything that comes along, especially where the Bible is used in some way. Get newborn babes in Christ started by reading the Word with prayer, and then to find a place where the Word of God is taught and applied for daily living.

The words at the end of this verse picture the false teacher as something like a gambler “winning by dishonesty without being suspected of it” (p. 316).

4:15 There is a question here as to whether the words “in love” go with ‘speaking the truth,’ or with the following words, “may grow up into Him.” And it seems to me that the context would favor, “in love may grow up into him in all things.” One expositor translates it, “in love to Him.”

Now we all know that no Christian can grow without the Word. The Apostle Peter wrote about the same time as the Apostle Paul did these words, “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Peter 2:2-3). Thus he linked the Word with Christ. Christ is the key to Scripture, and seeing Christ in the Word is how we come to an understanding of Scripture. In the last verse of Peter’s second epistle he emphasized this relationship between Christ and the Word when he wrote, “But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

So it does now change the meaning of Ephesians 4:15 just to move the comma which was placed there by the translators and not as the Apostle Paul originally wrote it. The original has no punctuation. So without changing the text, we can read verse 15,

But speaking the truth, in love may grow upon unto Him (Christ) in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

This ties in well with verse 13.

So I repeat, there can be no growth apart from the Word of God, reading it and understanding it. But we cannot understand it unless we see its connection with Christ. And our verse here indicates that it not only means seeing Christ in the Word, but learning to love Him through the Word. I refer again to what the Lord did with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, the account of which is given to us in Luke 24.

“In all things” Bishop Moule translates, “with an ever deepening and more vivifying contact **into Him, in all respects**, as to your whole being and your whole life” (italics mine) (p. 194). The more our knowledge of the truth of God’s Word is related to Christ, the greater will be our faith, our hope, and our love for Him, and for each other. So often in our Bible reading and teaching this relationship between Christ and the Word is sadly

lacking, and so are the fruits that we should be getting from the Word. The Lord told the Jews in His day, “Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

4:16 This brings out the effect of such teaching as the Apostle Paul had been speaking about, will have upon the whole Body of Christ, and even upon individual churches.

This teaching which relates the Word not only to Christ, but to a growing love for Christ, not only joins together the various parts of the Body, but causes them to function in the place that each part has in the body, and ultimately results in the increase of the body, but of the edifying of the body, and of the love which the members of the body are to have for each other, and for Christ, the Head of the Body.

So the Word must be taught and learned, but it must be taught in its relation to Christ, Who came as a revelation of God the Father. And the teaching of Christ will always produce a love for Christ. This is the Holy Spirit’s picture of what the Church should be, and can be under the blessing of the Holy Spirit Who loves to take the things of Christ, and show them to us. We can never exhaust the teaching of Scripture. With all of us, regardless of how long or how well we have studied the Word, there is always more to learn. And the same is true of Christ. There is always more to learn of Him, and the more we learn, the more we will love Him.

There has always been a scarcity of this kind of teaching. Too often teaching is divisive instead of edifying and uniting. And that is because there is often so little of Christ in our teaching, and often when we speak of Him, it is not because of our love for Him. Remember that the Apostle John in writing to the Ephesian church toward the end of the first century could commend them for their orthodoxy, and for their service, and even for their loyalty to the name of the Lord, but he rebuked them because they had left their first love, meaning that all that they did, was not done out of love for the Lord Himself. It is possible to preach and teach Christ, without really loving Christ. And the Lord knows the difference, and so should we! Let us all take a good look at our fellowship with the Lord. Is it better, or worse, than it used to be? It can hardly be the same because it either increases or decreases. If you think it is the same, it is probably not what it used to be.

Now we come to the next point in our outline:

VIII. “Walk not as other Gentiles walk (Eph. 4:17-32).

As we begin this section let us contrast verse 17 through 19 with the first three verses of chapter 4. In the first verses of chapter 4 we are told how believers are to walk; in verses 17 through 19 we are told how unbelievers walk. Paul had been speaking in the first sixteen verses about how saved Gentiles are to live. Now he warned them how unsaved Gentiles live with orders from the Lord that they were not to live that way.

Now you would never have a passage like this in the Bible if it were not possible for believers to live the way they used to live. A true believer cannot continue to live the way he used to live, but he can depart from a godly walk temporarily, or occasionally, and this was a warning from the Lord not even to do that. We still have our old nature, the flesh. We live in a world that is fallen in sin, and captive to sin. And the Devil is still alive and is still our Enemy. When the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, He died not only to save us from the penalty of our sin, but He died to deliver us from this *trilogy of evil*.

This whole passage deals with the flesh. The world is represented by the “other Gentiles” mentioned in verse 17. And the Devil is mentioned in verse 27. But it is clear from this passage that our main problem in living for the Lord has to do with our old nature, the flesh.

The Apostle Paul taught us that “the carnal mind,” the mind of the flesh, “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). And in Romans 12:21 he told us, “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” So it is not enough for us to seek to stay away from doing what is sinful in God’s sight, there has to be a positive replacements of that which is “good” in God’s sight. In the passage before us here at the end of Ephesians 2 the Apostle Paul spoke of *putting off the old man, and putting on the new man*. So again let me emphasize that our victory over sin is not just a matter of not doing the wrong thing, but we must oppose the evil by doing what is right in the sight of the Lord.

But let us first look at the negative side.

4:17 Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to know that he was speaking for himself. He really believed what he was about to say. But he also wanted them to know that he was speaking for the Lord, on behalf of the Lord. He was speaking by divine inspiration!

The “therefore” that Paul used here shows that he had not forgotten what he had just written, but that he was building upon it, and showing the need for what he had just written. But it also gives unity to what he had just written to what he was about to write. And it would emphasize the importance of what he was continuing to say. So with reference to verses 1-16 and 17-32, it was not either-or, but both-and. The ultimate perfection of the Church always must be considered along with its present advancement. So writes John Eadie, pp.326, 327.

Here the Apostle Paul was insisting on what the Apostle James wrote in chapter 2 of his epistle, that a living faith is always followed by godly living. And yet it is important that we be reminded of this, and that we take measures in our lives to see that those changes are evident in our lives. If there are no changes, then we are not saved.

February 22, 2011

The word “henceforth” means *no longer*. The Apostle Paul was addressing a church that was at least made up of Gentiles. The course of their lives had been one way before, but now it was to be a different way. See 2:1-3. How had they, and all unbelievers walked, before they were saved. It was “in the vanity of their mind.”

Bishop Moule describes this expression in the following words. They lived under an *illusion* . . . beclouding their reason; for the principles of it can only seem good to man’s mind when the eternal facts are hidden from it, and sin, the great failure of all failures, seems to bring freedom and gain (p. 211).

In man’s unregenerate state, it seems to him that that which he hopes will bring life, actually ends in death. So the thought here is that man lives under a great deception. He is deluded. And this was the approach that the Devil took with Eve in the Garden of Eden. He told her that that which God had warned her would bring death, would actually make them like God, and that God did not want them to be like He was. That was a major lie when we now know that the whole purpose of our redemption is that we will be made like the Lord.

Moule said, “They mistake lie for truth, and sin for happiness” (p. 211, footnote 2). The natural man lives with that deception, and only the Holy Spirit can show him that what he believes is a lie!

A further description of the natural man is given in verse 18.

4:18 The natural man cannot think straight about God or himself. He is ignorant of the truth, but thinks that he knows what is right. And he is locked in to his ignorance by a hard heart. And so with these words

the Apostle Paul shows the utter hopelessness and helplessness of all people who are without Christ. Eadie says in his commentary that a child in the youngest class in Sunday School “will answer questions that the greatest minds of the old heathen world grappled (with) in vain” (p. 330). The people with the greatest minds in the world have, if they do not know Christ, are ignorant of the simple statement in Scripture that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

For the Apostle Paul to say that man has been “alienated from the life of God,” implies what we know about Adam and Eve, that they were created in the likeness of God and in fellowship with God, or they could not be said to have been “alienated from the life of God.” Adam’s sin affected the whole human race, and it is only by the grace of God that anybody can be awakened to the sinfulness of his heart and his total alienation from God and a life of godliness. How thankful all of us should be that God in His grace has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light!

But this is not all that the Apostle Paul had to say about people without Christ. See verse 19.

4:19 Man, in his sinful condition, has made a bad situation worse. Eadie says that for man to be “past feeling” means that he is “beyond shame, or the sensation of regret” (p. 332). Oh, he may have a sense of guilt in some cases, and try to hide his sin, but such feelings are not sufficient to make him look for the remedy. Romans 1 tells how man has gone deeper and deeper into sin. And this in itself is evidence that God judges sin with more sin. Men give themselves over to greater sin which Paul described as “lasciviousness.” What is this? Greek scholars have not been able to learn the etymology, the origin, of this word, but by its use in Scripture most scholars take it to mean *unrestrained lust*. And it usually points to sexual immorality which has become so prevalent in our day. The longer people refuse to have anything to do with the truth of God, the deeper they go into sin. And sins never seem to travel alone. The Apostle Paul explains “lasciviousness” here as working “all uncleanness with greediness.” Without God, man is governed by his sinful nature, and he is led deeper and deeper into sin. Man does not know it, but even his self-righteousness is described in Scripture as “filthy rags.” See Isaiah 64:6-7:

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

What a dark, dark picture Scripture gives us of man in his sin, and without God! And man’s destiny, apart from divine intervention, is horrible beyond all human imagination. In one word it is hell, eternal judgment and suffering with no hope that it will ever change.

But Paul changes the picture for us beginning with verse 20.

4:20 The word “but” suggests a complete change. And “you” is given the place of emphasis in this verse. It means that the world is still the world, and sin is still the slave master that it has always been. But things are different now. “Ye have not so learned Christ.” It is important to understand that the Apostle Paul did not say, “Ye have not so learned *about* Christ,” but, “ye have not so learned Christ”!

The emphasis is upon Christ in this verse like it is in Philippians 3:10, “That I may know Him . . .” And like it is in Colossians 2:6, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

The Christian life begins when we know Christ, and it continues as we increase in our knowledge of Christ, not just as a doctrine, but in a living relationship with Christ, the Person, and in daily fellowship with Him as we

grow in Christ. So Paul was not speaking here of an accomplished fact, but of a growing knowledge through daily fellowship with Him. The only way such knowledge can increase for us is through the Word. And our knowledge of Christ teaches us immediately that we are no longer to live like other Gentiles who do not know the Lord, the way in which we walked before we knew Him. Knowing Christ is transforming in its effect upon our lives. It may begin with doctrine, but it results in a life of personal and living relationship with Christ. Only true believers know what this is.

Verse 21 gives further clarification of what Paul's words in verse 20 mean.

4:21 There is a difference in hearing the Lord, as compared with just hearing about Him. Many hear about Him who never hear Him. The same can be true of the difference between being taught "by Him," or just learning about Him from others. The Lord Himself deals with those whom He calls to Himself. The disciples on the road to Emmaus knew a lot about the Lord, but what a difference it made when the Lord taught them Himself. Their hearts burned within them while He spoke to them and opened their eyes to know Him.

February 28, 2011

As we continue in this the second part of the practical section of this epistle, it is important that we remember that in the first section, which begins in verse 1 of chapter 4, the Apostle Paul said, that we are to walk worthy of the calling which we, as the people of God, have received. He meant that our lives are to show God's purpose in calling us to salvation. If we go back to chapter 1, while Paul did not speak of it particularly as our calling, yet that is what he was talking about in 1:4. (Read.) In 1 Thessalonians 4:7 he did say that we are "called unto holiness." Here in Ephesians, as Paul told the Ephesian believers how he was praying for them, his first request was "that ye may know the hope of his (God's) calling" (1:18), and earlier here in chapter 4, verse 4, Paul said that "ye are called in one hope of your calling." And to be holy is to be like the Lord Jesus.

Now when you consider who God is, as compared with who we are, you know and I know that in no way do we even begin to be worthy of such a calling. Therefore, as Paul said in 4:2 our lives are to be characterized with humility and longsuffering toward God, and patience toward each other. This harmonizes with the emphasis that the Apostle John made in 1 John. We are to have a humble heart toward God, and toward each other.

In this second part of the practical section, beginning with 4:17, we are told that we are not to live like unsaved Gentiles live, which is how we used to live. Paul mentioned Gentiles because the Ephesians church must have been predominantly Gentile.

Well, this means that they are no longer to be or do the way they used to be and do, but the old way of living was to be replaced by a new way of living. And so as we come now to verse 22 Paul describes the old way of living as what they were to "put off," and the new way of living as to what they were to "put on." It is like taking off our old clothes, and putting on the new. And, of course, all of this applies today to us as well.

4:22 The way the Apostle Paul states this would allow us to translate the putting off and the putting on as infinitives, which they are in the original language. So relating this verse to verses 21 and 22, and what they had learned from Christ, it was that they were to put off the old man (v. 22) and to put on the new man. So these would be exhortations.

When we turn to the parallel passage in Colossians 3:9 and 10, this is what we read:

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created

him (Col. 3:9-10).

So in Ephesians the putting off and putting on seem to be what they needed to do, while in Colossians it is spoken of as something that they had done. And so we can say that it was both – when they were saved, this change was made in them, but in actual experience it was still what they needed to do. And this seems to be Paul's emphasis here in Ephesians.

“The former conversation” is their former conduct. “The old man” was the way they lived before they knew the Lord, and had been taught by Him. They old life was lived by “deceitful lusts.” They were led to believe that they were on the right track when actually they were deceived and living on the wrong track.

The transition between the old life is stated in verse 23.

4:23 This renewal is stated here as something that is continually taking place. As true Christians we learn to think differently about life. God is in our thoughts. We are learning more and more about Christ. We are a new creation. The Spirit of God continues to teach us and to transform us. It is an inner change that results in a change in behavior. Before God was not in our thoughts as anyone about Whom we needed to be concerned; now He is the One for Whom we are to live. It is a change, but never a perfect change. It is a growing change that results in less and less of sin and more and more of holiness. The change is never complete in this life. It will be completed when we see the Lord at His coming.

Romans 8:16 tells us that “the Spirit itself (or better, Himself) beareth witness with our spirit (human spirit) that we are the children (τέκνα) of God.” There is a renewal that is instantaneous when we are saved, but it increases as we grow in our understanding of the Word of God.

4:24 The object of the renewal is an increase in outward evidence in the way we live that we are new creatures in Christ. And this new life is aware of the deceitfulness of the old life, and is concerned about a new life “in righteousness and true holiness.” Righteousness when mentioned with holiness means *being and doing right*; holiness means free from any defilement by sin. A better translation regarding the word “true,” would be *of the truth*, and probably applies as much to the word “righteousness” as it does to the word “holiness.” Both “righteousness” and “holiness” are ours through the Gospel, but are produced in us by the Holy Spirit using the Word. The NASB renders this clause, “And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God which has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

At this point, beginning with verse 25, the Apostle began to speak about particular sins which need to be put off, and what has to be put on in their place.

4:25 It seems that it is significant that the Apostle Paul began this list with the sin of lying, not telling the truth. The fall of the human race into sin came about through the Devil's lie. God had told Adam and Eve that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that, if they did, they would die! The Devil told Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” On one occasion when the Lord was speaking to the Jews, He made this charge against them, and against the Devil. You will find our Lord's words in John 8:44:

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

It is significant that the Apostle Paul began with this sin. It is a sin that every person who has ever lived, has been guilty of. Cf. Psalm 58:3:

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

We have been learning a lot about the tongue from the epistle of James, haven't we? James stated a very signi-

ficant truth when he wrote, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (Jas. 2:2b).

But note the special application that the Apostle Paul made of the need to be truthful. In the last part of verse 25 we read, “speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.” We need to be truthful with everyone, but we need to be especially truthful with our fellow-believers. Evidently if we are truthful there, then we will be more inclined to be truthful with everyone else.

4:26 There are times when it is wrong and sinful not to be angry. There were times when the Lord was angry while He was here on earth. There are numerous illustrations of God being angry in OT times. He is going to be angry with the wicked eternally. But we must not be the kind of a person who cannot be reconciled to another person with whom he has had trouble. We are probably not wrong in saying that Paul’s chief emphasis here, consistent with the context in verse 25, that Paul’s main emphasis here is that we are to make our differences with our fellow-believers, short-lived. It certainly would apply to a husband and wife, and even to parents in disciplining their children, or two Christian friends. Even when believers may differ over doctrine, we are not to let that mar our fellowship. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:18-19:

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

4:27 To “give place to the Devil,” is to put ourselves in the place of temptation – like David did when he saw Bathsheba bathing. Or it is to be unforgiving, or to seek some place for revenge when offended by someone. The Devil and his demons are quick to take advantage of any sinful situation. We need to be careful about what we read, or about what we watch on TV. Pornography on TV has become a major problem for a lot of professing Christians. A refusal to forgive is a situation that the Devil loves to take advantage of.

4:28 Often we find in Scripture that the correction of some sin is by getting involved in that which is just the opposite. So the cure of stealing, is working. But not just working by itself, but in order that the former thief may be able to give to others who are in need. In addition, one commentator has written:

The Christian philosophy of labor is thus lifted far above the thought of what is right or fair in the economic field; it is lifted to the place where there is no room for selfishness or the motive of personal profit at all. *Giving becomes the motive for getting* (italics mine, Wilson, Geoffrey, *Ephesians*, p.100).

Cf. Acts 20:33-35 where the Apostle Paul was saying “good bye” to the Ephesian elders. Listen carefully as I read what he said to them:

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Charles Hodge, an honored expositor of Scripture, wrote in his commentary on Ephesians:

No one lives for himself, and no one should work for himself alone, but with the definite aim of helping others (p.162).

The same principle about how it is possible for us to be a blessing to others if we are careful about doing the right thing ourselves. Here in verse 29 it has to do with our speech.

4:29 We are reminded here again that the tongue can be used as an instrument of blessing for others, or it can cause corruption. We are reminded again that the tongue can be an instrument of great blessing and great

good, or it can be an instrument of evil.

My former teacher in Seminary, Dr. Harry Ironside, told about an experience he had when a group of Christian husbands and wives got together for an evening of fellowship. As the hour started to get late, the ladies excused themselves to prepare refreshments. As soon as the ladies left the room, one of the men said, “Now that the ladies are gone, I’ve got a story I want to tell you men.” Dr. Ironside interrupted him immediately, and calling him by name, said, “Wait a minute. If your story is not fit for the ladies to hear, I wonder if it is suitable for the Holy Spirit to hear.” The man immediately was rebuked, and he said, “I’m sorry, Dr. Ironside, I forgot all about the Holy Spirit.”

I think that we are often more interested in making people laugh than we are to benefit them by what we talk about. This verse is a verse that I memorized years ago, and it always rebukes me when I read it or even quote it to myself. All of us need to remember that when we talk to anyone, we need to leave them a little better than they were when we met them.

When we get into chapter 5 we are going to come to a passage which touches on this same theme, and it is in connection with the third characteristic of our walk with the Lord, our walk in love. And in connection with what we have been learning in 1 John about loving one another in the family of God, this is a very appropriate Scripture. Perhaps these words have ministered to your heart as you have read through Ephesians. Let me read the first four verses of chapter 5 while you look at them, and listen. **(Read Eph. 5:1-4.)**

Notice that the Apostle Paul linked together sins of the whole body (“fornication”) with sins of the tongue (filthiness, foolish talking, jesting). Sometimes we need to help people by giving them money. But how often do we realize that we need to help people by the words that we say to them.

The other day Katie, my sweet granddaughter, sent me a picture which she had drawn of their new dog, Payton, And written below the picture were the words of Isaiah 40:29-31. I was having one of those “down days” that all of us have, and reading those verses was just like the Lord was speaking them to me. Katie really ministered to her Granddaddy that day, and I was very, very thankful. We never know what people we meet are going through. How important it is that we have a word of encouragement for them! I’m not talking about preaching to them, just something that the Lord might use to bless their souls. Some things we should never talk about. Others, words of encouragement, ought always to be in our hearts so they can easily slip out of our mouths.

Do you remember that good verse, Isaiah 50, verse 4?

4 The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

So let us remember Ephesians 4:29. Put it on your list of verses to memorize. And then be sure to do what it says. You can be a blessing to someone, and that will always bring blessings to you too.

To do otherwise is to . . .

4:30 Grieve the Holy Spirit – and that is what we are *not* to do. You know, the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is a Member of the Trinity. And He lives in your heart all day long, day after day, and night after night! What does it mean to grieve Him? It means, as you might guess, to make Him sad. You and I can by our walk make Him sad, or we can make Him glad. But what is important for us to know about grieving the Holy Spirit is that when we do, He never leaves us, but He withdraws from us those blessings which otherwise would be poured out upon if we were living to please Him.

I take it from the word “and” at the beginning of verse 30 that Paul is not referring to what he has just said, but he was adding what he was about to say. We can grieve Him by saying bad things when we could be saying good things, but we can grieve Him by what follows in verses 31 and 32. But before we go on to those verses, notice the Paul reminds us here that all of us, without exception (if we know the Lord) “are sealed unto the day of redemption.” What does that mean, and what day is that?

The fact that we are “sealed,” is evidence that we belong to Him. That is permanent. In that we are totally secure. See 1:13. “The day of redemption” is the day when we and all of the Church will see Him, and then we will be *where we want to be and where we need to be, and what we have been saved to be – “like Him” – our Lord Jesus Christ – “for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:2).

Verse 31 is negative; verse 32 is positive.

4:31 Six things are to be “put away.” These characteristics do not belong to the child of God:

- 1) “Bitterness” – harsh, resentful, sharp and disagreeable.
- 2) “Wrath” – an outburst of anger, but which goes as fast as it came. Rage is a good translation.
- 3) “Anger” – a more settled form than wrath, which waits for an opportunity to get revenge.
- 4) “Clamor” -- outspoken complaint, like the children of Israel often opposed Moses and Aaron.
- 5) “Evil speaking” – blasphemy against God and man, slander, designed to hurt people, unrestrained denunciation.
- 6) “All malice” – what Eadie calls the root of all vices, bad-heartedness, desire to harm others.

All of these are to be put away by the people of God. They are expressions of the natural man, not the man of God.

4:32 The characteristics in verse 31 are characteristics of the natural man. The characteristics in this verse are of the people of God. But these are the results of spiritual growth. The verb “be” could be translated “become.” The Apostle Paul mentioned three characteristics here:

- 1) “Kind” – courteous, earnest desire to help in any way possible.
- 2) “Tenderhearted” – full of deep and mellow affection (Eadie), sympathetic. Just the opposite of the traits mentioned in the previous verse.
- 3) “Forgiving” – and forgetting, even before forgiveness is sought and asked for, Eadie says “full and free and irretrievable.”

This section of the practical section concludes with a reference to the Gospel. In dealing with others the unsaved are inclined only to think of themselves. The believer is to remember Calvary, and the grace that has been extended to all believers as more and more they reveal by their lives that they have been saved to be made like our Lord.

March 7, 2011

As we move into Ephesians 5 we come to the third “walk” in this practical section of this epistle. The first was at the beginning of chapter 4: “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” The second was in 5:17: “that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.” The “other Gentiles” are Gentiles who are not Christians.

Now we come to the third “walk,” in 5:1-2. We are to “walk in love.” Now when some people come to a statement like this in the Bible, they will ask themselves, “Now what does this mean?” That is a good question

if you begin looking at the context of a statement like this instead of just trying to figure out on your own what the Apostle (in this case) meant. So let us begin with 5:1 to see how Paul continued writing, possibly by reading again what led up to this statement, and what followed.

5:1 Obviously verses 1 and 2 of this chapter form one sentence. The word “therefore, as we have seen before, is *there for* a reason. The Apostle was drawing what he was about to write, with what he had just written. So let us read verse 32 of chapter 4, and then read on into chapter 5. Now we are in a position to see that verse 32 of chapter 4 is the beginning, or led the way for the exhortations that follow in chapter 5. The first exhortation of chapter 5 is that we are to “be followers of God, as dear children.” And the “therefore” now means that in verse 32 the Apostle Paul was talking about what it means to “be followers of God.” Nobody has ever been kinder than God has been to us, His people. Nobody has been more “tenderhearted” to us than He has. Nor has anyone been more forgiving to us that God has been. So if we are going to be “followers of God,” we are going to be kind, and tenderhearted toward others, and be forgiving of others just like the Lord has forgiven us. That is a big order, isn’t it? But if we are going to be following God in our daily living, these are some of the things that we are going to need to do.

But before we leave this verse, let us notice Paul’s words, “as dear children.” Whose “dear children” were the Ephesian believers? They were God’s “dear children,” and so are we. Now this speaks of how God feels about us. We are His “dear children.” He saved us because He loved us, and He continues to love us. His love never changes, nor does it ever cease. But there is a real suggestion here that just has been motivated by His love for us, we should be motivated by His love for us to follow Him and to live like our Lord did while He was here on earth. But as I started reading Deuteronomy this week, and saw how Moses reviewed God’s dealings with the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, and then from Egypt to Canaan, although there were times when God judged them for their disobedience, I just had to recognize that the Jews would never have gotten into the promised land if God had not loved them, and loved them dearly.

So, bring this all down to us today, and knowing how much God loves us, always has loved us, and always will love us, we are to be motivated to follow Him, to obey Him, not by our love for Him (which is so imperfect), but by His love for us!

The word “be” is the same word that Paul used for “be” in 4:32, and really would be better translated (as I said last week), *become*. Sad to say, none of us follows the Lord as we should, but we are to spend our lives here on earth becoming more and more obedient, and becoming more motivated to obey God because of His love for us.

Now we are ready for verse 2.

5:2 Now we are ready for our side of our relationship with God. Our “walk,” our daily living, is to be motivated by our love for the Lord. Now Paul does not add to verse 32 of chapter 4 yet, but he gives us the greatest illustration of God’s love for us, as the pattern, and as the illustration, of how we are to love each other, and what it means to “walk in love.”

There is no greater example of love than that which is to be seen at Calvary. It was the expression of God’s love for us in sending His only Son to die for us that we might be saved, but it was an expression of our Lord’s love for us in coming to give Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Notice that Paul said that Christ gave Himself “for us,” but as “an offering and a sacrifice to God.” Charles Hodge said that our Lord’s sacrifice “for a sweet-smelling savor,” could be called “a savor of rest,” – “that is, that which composes, pacifies, or pleases” (p. 166). God laid on His Son the penalty for our sins, and brought eternal benefits to us, His elect, who were just as

deserving of total judgment as any sinner who is sentenced to eternal judgment in hell.

From verse 3 of chapter 5 down through verse 7 Paul emphasized primarily what walking in love *is not!* And at that point we get to the fourth characteristic of the way we are to live which is stated in verse 8: “walk as children of light,” which is closely related to walking in love.

But before the Apostle proceeded to speak of what it was to walk in love, he spoke very strongly about what it was not!

5:3 The world’s idea of love, as compared with the love of God, is as far apart as two things could possibly be. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 we have a passage which is very similar to what we have here in the beginning of Ephesians 5. (“Concupiscence” in 1 Thess. 4:5 is *lustful passion*.)

“Fornication” includes all kinds of sexual immorality – including adultery and incest. Geoffrey Wilson said in his commentary on Ephesians that this course of living, including “all uncleanness and covetousness” were “all but universal in the ancient Gentile world” (p. 105). And I am afraid that we have to say the same thing about American culture today. The more an individual or a nation turns against the Lord, the deeper that person falls into all kinds of sin, but especially so with sexual immorality.

“All uncleanness” is anything that can lead to sexual immorality – reading suggestive literature, looking at sexual pictures, pornography. Today TV is a major source of “uncleanness.” “Covetousness” is greed. See 4:19. Some commentators link this to man’s passion for sex, but the general consensus is that it “avaricious greed” (Eadie, p. 370). It is a sin which leads to other things, such as, stealing and lying. See Col. 3:5; Luke 12:15; Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 9:5.

These sins are so abominable in the sight of God that they are never to be mentioned as consistent with the life of a child of God. The Apostle here called believers “saints” to emphasize that we have been called to holiness, and that there is never to be any compromise with sin, no excuse for a child of God to be involved in sin. “Saints” are not a special, a higher class of believers, but all believers are “saints,” and so there is not excuse for any child of God to be involved in sin in any form.

But then the Apostle went on to speak again of sins of the tongue as he had in 4:29. And it is because sins of the tongue can often lead to the grosser sin. Sins in our talk can often be the first step in a sinful walk.

5:4 “Neither filthiness” – Eadie says of this word “denotes indecency, obscenity, or wantonness, whatever, not merely in speech but in anything, is opposed to purity” (p. 371). There seems to be a tendency in everyone to grade sins from those that we feel are not so bad to those who are gross. But the word of God warns us against all sin. When the Devil tempted Eve, there was no possibility that she could have committed adultery, but he tempted her with food that was good to look at, pleasant to eat, and desirable to make Eve wise. But this led to Adam’s sin, and to the judgment of God upon the whole human race. There is *never* anything good about sin, and yet the corruption of our nature always makes it appear to be good.

“Foolish talking” is the talk of fools. Proverbs 14 and 15 have a lot to say about fools. King David said, The fool hath said in his heart, no God for me” (Psalm 14:1), and his speech demonstrates what he believes. Foolish talk often leads to sinful talk. God warns us in his word not only to avoid sin in every form, but to avoid those things that can lead us easily into sin.

What is “jesting”? This is to make light of sin, a story that can be taken two ways, either good or bad, and the

hearer who takes it in a bad way is the one who is accused of having an evil mind.

The Apostle says that none of these things is ever proper for the child of God.

But how are we to guard against it? It is by giving thanks to God. This is always proper for the child of God, but unfortunately it is often the most neglected of what we say. Psalm 113:3 tells us that “from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord’s Name is to be praised.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” We overcome the wrong use of the tongue by using it God’s way as Paul stated it in Romans 12:21, “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

At this point it is a good exercise for all of us to stop and to think of the many blessings God has given to us each day for which we have failed to give Him thanks. We all will be surprised at how often we have failed to thank God for the blessings He daily “loadeth” upon us as we are told in Psalm 68:19: “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

5:5 Often in Scripture we are reminded of truth that we already know, but have been inclined to forget.

With regard to salvation, many people are prone to treat as a Christian any person who has ever made a profession of faith in Christ. But the Scripture puts the emphasis on what is going on in our lives now, at the present time. For example, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). “We know” now “because we love” now “the brethren.

So we know that whatever claims a person may make for himself, if he continues to be a whoremonger, or an unclean person, or covetous, which is idolatry, he has no “inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Such a person is unsaved regardless of what he professes to be true of himself. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, any person who is in Christ, is a new creature, a new creation. Old things, the old life has passed away, and all things have become new. So the supreme test of a person’s profession, is not in what he says about himself, but in how he lives. He will not be perfect, but he will be changed. This we know, or should know if we don’t.

Covetousness is so common in the world that we fail to understand, apart from the Word of God, what it is. It is idolatry. The desire for things holds the place in our lives that God should have. Advertisements are specifically designed to make idolaters out of all of us. Covetousness is a violation of the tenth commandment, and so it has always been condemned along with having other gods before the Lord, in place of the Lord.

But what we may not know is mentioned in verse 6. And this is a point on which many people are deceived – both the false professor, and the person who believes what that person claims for himself when there is no evidence of a change.

5:6 The person who claims to be saved, but whose life contradicts what he says about himself, is speaking “vain words.” They are words which mean nothing. He is just as unsaved as he ever was, as unsaved as any other person who has never made such a profession. He is telling a lie, which is anything that is not true! He may be sincerely deceived, but when he stands before the Lord he is going to be judged by the truth.

And because his profession is false, he is in just as much danger of the wrath of God as every person is who has never professed to be a Christian. He belongs to “the children of disobedience.” See what Paul said about “the children of disobedience in 2:2.

March 14, 2011

5:7 I think that we are all inclined to give a person the benefit of the doubt, but herein lies a danger for all of us, but particularly for those who are young in the faith. Again here the word “be” means “become.” It suggests that the person who is not really a Christian, but claims to be, may try to use persuasive words to lure the Christian into sin. We all have friends who are not Christians, but they must not become *close* friends!

For many years there has been a growing tendency for Christians to compromise with the world. I can remember days in which movie attendance was frowned upon by spiritual leaders, as was dancing, drinking alcoholic beverages. But today movies are brought into our homes, and you can be sure that being such a secret place has caused many Christians to get hooked on pornography just by beginning to look at movies which supposedly are harmless. Lucille and I were dinner guests with a Christian couple not long ago, and I have no doubt about their faith, but they offered us a glass of wine before dinner. I could tell by their reaction when we refused as graciously as we could, that they were surprised and perhaps a little bit offended. And this was not the first time that this had happened to us.

Another relationship that we had with a Christian couple came to an end when we expressed surprise that they were going to have dancing at their daughter’s wedding. Their daughter, as far as I remember, never came to church with them.

Lucille had a roommate in college who was a pastor’s daughter, but she differed with Lucille about certain standards that Lucille had with the comment that Lucille was more serious about being a Christian than she was. She was not an immoral girl at all, but she left room in her life for some things that were not consistent with Scripture. The problem is, that little compromises lead to taking greater liberties that can dampen our relationship with the Lord.

I have told many of you that my Dad was not raised in a Christian home. He never had much to say about his childhood and early adult years. But he did let us know that he got addicted to gambling. That became a real snare to him, and probably led to other things. But as I was born my Dad had been a Christian for several years, and said repeatedly that he did not want his boys to be raised like he was. So one restriction in our home was that we were never to bring a deck of playing cards into our home. And I heard him say many times, “If you don’t learn to play cards, you will never learn to gamble.” That is the way my Dad lived as a Christian about drinking and many other things.

Now the Bible is very clear about what it teaches concerning “the world” and worldly living. Among our memory verses in James that we have this week is James 4:4 which says:

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

I can assure you that there are plenty of preachers in Portland that would never chose that verse as a text for a sermon. We are even taught to be friendly with the world. Many churches deliberately plan their services to make non-Christians feel comfortable, feel “at home,” when they come to church. So the pastor tries to be a “stand up comedian,” and the services are designed to make people “feel good.” Where do they find these ideas in the Word? They don’t!!! They get it from the world. It works in the world, so why shouldn’t it work in our churches? It brings people in by the hundreds and thousands, but the message of the church has to be watered down in order to keep them. And then most of them only go to church once in the week.

The Bible is very clear about what the world is, and what our relationship with the world should be. And Ephesians 5:7 is a good illustration of what it should be. The verse suggests that the world is constantly putting

pressure upon us to be like they are. But that is just the opposite of what the word of God tells us about how we should live. And the verse I read to you from James 4:4 is another verse. And I have called your attention before to verses like Romans 12:1-2 (read), and 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 (read), and 1 John 2:15-17 (read).

Actually the world *hates* what we as Christians stand for, and by hate I means *rejects*, and would gladly do away with it if they could. Have you noticed in hearing reports about what is going on in our world today? We are hearing more and more about the persecution of Jews and Christians. The world hates our God, our Savior, our Bible, and those churches that are true to the faith. The Lord Jesus spoke of many important things to His disciples the night before He was crucified. And among this were His words about the world found in John 15:18-19:

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

But at the same time that we realize that we are no longer a part of the world as such, let us beware of giving the people of the world the impression that a Christian is a person who doesn't attend the movies, doesn't drink, doesn't gamble, doesn't commit adultery, doesn't lie, and so on. Let us be strong in showing the world that we believe just as much in Romans 12:2 as we believe in Romans 12:1; that we believe just as much in 2 Corinthians 7:1 as much as we do the last verses of chapter 6; that we believe just as much in 1 John 2:15-17a, as we do the last part of verse 17.

What the Apostle John is telling us in Ephesians 5:7 is, as I have reminded you before, just what we find in Romans 12:21: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil of good." The Bible gives us two kinds of commandments – position commandments, and negative commandments, things we are to do, and things that we are not to do. So to have the complete picture, we need to do what God commands us to do, and to stay as far away as we possibly can from what He commands us not to do.

Even though we are not living under the Law today like the Jews did in OT times, yet I find it very profitable every year to read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Over and over again the Lord warned the children of Israel not to live like the Egyptians from whom God had delivered them, but neither were they to live like the Canaanite nations whose land God was giving to them. And the Lord warned them that the reason God judged Egypt, and the reason that He was ordering the complete destruction of the Canaanite nations, was because those nations were guilty of doing what was sinful in God's sight. And although the politicians and dictators of the world are not paying any attention to God today, God is the One Who is sovereign over all nations, and He is going to show it some day, and it may be very soon, by bringing judgments upon the world such as the world has never seen. And, as we should be the saddest to say, God is going to judge in an eternal HELL all who go out of this life not knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin and its penalty and power.

So how tremendously powerful are Paul's few words in Ephesians 5:7, speaking of the world, "Become not ye therefore partakers with them." You don't want to go their way; you want them to come your way.

But why is it always going to be easy to go their way? Verse 8 gives us the answer, and also bring us to our next "walk."

5:8 It is because we used to be like they are, but now we are changed. By the use of the word "for" the Apostle indicates the reason why he could give the exhortation that he gave in verse 7. As I have said many times, no one can truly be saved and still continue to live like he did before.

Notice that Paul did not say that we used to be in darkness, and now we are in the light. But he made it much stronger. He said “ye were once darkness; but now . . . light in the Lord.” And so we are to “walk as children of light.” We are to show by the way we live, what we really are. We don’t become light by what we do, but we show that we are light by the way we live, the way we walk.

Geoffrey Wilson made a great statement on this verse which I want to read to you:

This exhortation teaches us that light is never given for mere intellectual illumination, but always to promote practical obedience. Our daily conduct must make credible our confession of faith in Christ. For though man cannot look into the heart, he does closely observe the outward appearance we present to the world (*Op. cit.*, p. 108).

5:9 There is a textual problem here. The KJV reads, “the fruit of the Spirit.” More recent translations read, “the fruit of the light.” Whichever way is the original, we cannot say, but taken either way, the meaning of the verse remains essentially the same.

Everything in us that has to do with our salvation is “the fruit of the Spirit.” And all that the Spirit gives us is “light,” divine light, dispelling the darkness of our original state. The word “light” may have found its way into this verse out of verse 8. So in one way, the two expressions, “the fruit of the Spirit,” and “the fruit of the light” mean the same thing. And they speak of three fundamental characteristics which are implanted in our hearts at salvation – “all goodness and righteousness and truth.” And it seems that the word “all” applies to all three words, “goodness and righteousness and truth,” three characteristics of the Christian life.

It seems to me that the word “goodness” has to do with the character of God.

All three of the Synoptic Gospel give us the story of the man who is identified in various ways in the three Gospels, but he was a wealthy man who came to the Lord asking the Lord what he could do to inherit eternal life. You will find the account in Matthew 19, Mark 10, and Luke 18. Now my only interest in that story at this point is in the way in which the man addressed the Lord, and how the Lord responded to him. He called the Lord, “Good master.” And the Lord picked up on that greeting by saying to that rich man, “Why callest thou me good? There I none good, but one, that is, God.”

Now as I thought about that expression, I wondered if the Apostle Paul in writing about salvation, was thinking about goodness as the character of God, which would mean His godliness. And we know that God’s purpose in saving us is to make us like Christ, which, in turn, means that we are being made like God. Charles Hodge said in his commentary on this word in verse 9 that “goodness is that quality which adapts a thing to the end for which it was designed and makes it serviceable” (p. 171). Now it is easy for us to read that we are “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,” that is, to the image of Christ. But how is such a complete transformation possible? It is only possible through the indwelling presence of Christ Himself. And the evidence that Christ is in us will be the growing fruit of godliness in our lives.

Now the second word that Paul used here was “righteousness.” Now a righteousness person is a person who measures up to a certain standard. It can be said that a person who obeys the laws of our country is a righteous person. That is, on the human level. Now a person who is righteous in God’s sight is a person who conforms to the will of God. We find it in the Word of God.

So I wonder if what the Apostle Paul was saying here is that the Christian life is a life that is to be judged in the light of Scripture. The portrait of a Christian is found in the Bible. And it is there for each of us to judge the progress we are making, but it is there also for the Church and even the world, to have some basis of judging

the reality, or lack of reality, of a person's claim to be a child of God.

The third word is "truth." This also can refer to Christ. He is "the Truth." But it can also refer to the Bible. The Lord Jesus told the Father in prayer, "Thy Word is truth." But the expression, "the truth," is often used in the Psalms to speak of *faithfulness*. A faithful person is a person who is always the same, unchanging. Now if we relate this to what the Spirit of God is doing in our hearts, He is doing the same thing in all of us. We can go back into the OT to study the lives of the people of God, and we can learn from them how we need to walk with the Lord, how we need to trust the Lord, what we need to believe, and so on, because the lives of faithful, godly people is always the same. We may be different as to where we are in our growth, but the standard of life is always the same. What it meant for Enoch to walk with God, is what it still means for us to walk with God.

So putting these three words together which speak of the fruit of the Spirit, or the fruit of the life which we have actually become, it is always godly, like God, always in agreement with the Bible, and always the same, faithful in all generations.

5:10 This verse seems to summarize the purpose behind what God has done in making us light in the Lord (v. 8), and the object of the work of the Spirit in v. 9.

Charles Hodge said it very well:

And so in this passage believers are required to walk as children of light, examining and determining what is acceptable to the Lord. They are to regulated their conduct by thinking of what pleases Him. That is the ultimate standard of judging whether anything is right or wrong, worthy or unworthy of those who have been lightened from above (p. 172).

And then Hodge continued:

This, therefore, is one of the numerous passages in the New Testament in which Christ is recognized as the Lord of the conscience; his will is our ultimate standard of right and wrong, and we are responsible to him for all our inner and outward actions. It is in this way that the sacred writers show that Christ was their God, in who presence they constantly lived, whose favor they constantly sought, and on whom all their religious affections terminated. He was not merely the God of their theology but of their religion (*Ibid.*).

"Proving what is acceptable to the Lord" is, according to John Eadie, what God has commanded and therefore approves. See p. 381. What the Christian life is, is no mystery, but it is all carefully and lovingly and truthfully laid out in Scripture, written by those who had learned it, lived it, and unhesitatingly encouraged others to do as they were doing.

March 28, 2011

This is the primary goal of everything that has to do with the lives of all of us as Christians. "Proving" is to determine and approve and do. We do this by the Word and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. "Acceptable unto the Lord" is that which is fully acceptable to the Lord. This is what makes the life of a Christian completely different from the non-Christian – and infinitely better! The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:21, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is how the Lord Jesus lived on earth as He said in John 8:29, speaking of His relationship with His Father, "I do always those things that please Him." Andrew Murray, in his book, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, said that the key to answered prayer is to pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." And he went on to point out that we cannot really pray that the Father will be glorified in our prayers unless we are living that way, that is, that God may be glorified in all that we do. There is probably no more important

matter that we need to give our attention to than that we are living to please God, which is what it means to live to the glory of God.

This is essentially what Romans 12:1 and 2 mean. (Quote.) We can't staddle the fence. There is a positive side to Christian living, and there is a negative side. The person who tries to do both inevitably winds up doing what he is not supposed to do if he knows the Lord. It is extremely important that in all that we are, all that we do, all that we say, and even in all that we think, that we are doing that which is pleasing to God, which, in turn, will be that which glorifies God.

Before we leave verse 11, let me give you a statement from Charles Hodge which is well worth noting. It has to do with the use of the title "Lord" in the NT. This is what he said:

The use of the word **Lord** is so predominantly used in the New Testament to designate the Lord Jesus Christ that it should always be used to refer to Him unless the context forbids it (p. 172).

We are saved to be made like our Lord. There is no greater example that we have of one who always lived to please and glorify God the Father than did our Lord Jesus Christ. So, because of the oneness between God the Father and God the Son, if we live to please the Lord Jesus, we can be sure that we are also pleasing God.

5:11 Here the Apostle stated the negative side of the Christian's life: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

We all know, or should know, that as Christians we can sin. And we know also that we will never, in this life, become sinless. But it is true that the longer we know the Lord, and the more we seek to glorify the Lord, the less we will sin. To "have . . . fellowship the unfruitful works of darkness" speaks of a close relationship with the people whose lives are characterized by sin. Solomon has given us an example of what the Apostle Paul was talking about here. I am referring to his word in Proverbs 22:24-25 where he said,

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Such a principle applies to many sins. We become like the people we associate with. That is the reason that we need to have fellowship with the Lord's people. So the Apostle Paul firmly shuts a door here.

But then he adds, "But rather reprove them." Now the Apostle did not mean that we are to go around criticizing other people for the way they live, whether Christians or not, or that we try to show that we are better than they are, but that we are to live lives that are pleasing to God so that our lives will reprove them. And we will see this in verse 13. But this meaning is also confirmed by what Paul said in verse 12.

5:12 I don't remember the exact years when what I am about to say was so prevalent, but it was especially bad back in the fifties or sixties when many Hollywood stars were claiming to be Christians. Some of them may have been saved, but others obviously were not. But these people became very popular speakers at youth rallies. And they would speak specifically of things that they had done, of sins they had committed. And so there was a feeling among many young people, even Christian young people, that if they had done what those movie stars had done, maybe they could draw crowds like the celebrities did when they talked about their sins. Ephesians 5:12 is a specific condemnation of this very thing. To talk about sin is to be tempted to sin. Just like reading the wrong kind of literature can lead to sin, or looking at the wrong kind of pictures, pornography. It is a trap that many people have fallen into.

About that same time in the years when this was going on, I heard a godly servant of the Lord say this. He said you don't learn about sin by talking about sin, or reading sinful literature, or by experiencing sin. The only place you can learn the truth about sin is from the Bible. The people who live in sin are blinded to its real

nature, blinded to what it does to us, and most certainly blinded to God's judgment upon it. True Christians don't brag about the sins they have committed. They are ashamed to talk about them. But you will find that they weep over their sins, and marvel at the grace of God in saving them from sinning more than they have sinned.

Now in verse 13 we come to that word *reprove* again. Notice what the Apostle Paul had to say.

5:13 Let us be clear on one point. Paul was not saying that we are to parade ourselves as being better than other people, or that we have become Christians because we are better than other people. What has been called *a-holier-than-thou attitude* is never acceptable. What he is talking about is a simple life in which a child of God is seeking to obey God by living according to the Word of God. The Apostle Peter said it very clearly in 1 Peter 3:15-16:

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Another important passage along this line is found in the same epistle and the same chapter. See 1 Peter 3:1-6:

1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Now going back to verse 13, the word for *reprove* here is the same verb that Paul used in verse 11. The main differences are that in verse 11 the verb is singular and active; in verse 13 it is plural and passive.

The reason that people live in sin and go on doing things that are sinful in God's sight, is because they live in spiritual darkness. They are blinded so that they cannot see the real nature of what they are doing. A Christian is a person who by God's grace has seen the light, and lives in the light of the Word of God, and actually becomes light in the world of people who are in darkness.

The margin of the Bible I use in my study suggests the word "discovered" as a translation of "reproved." The concordance in my computer suggests the words "convict" and "convince." This is the same word that our Lord used in John 16:8 when He spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world and said, "When he is come he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." So we are the instruments which God uses to awaken people to their error and their need, but the One Who actually does the work, is the Holy Spirit. And He does it by causing spiritual light to shine forth from the lives of those people who give forth the light of the Gospel.

E. M. Bounds, a believer of past days says that we are always looking for better methods, but God is looking for better men. In our concern to spread the Gospel, we are inclined to try to come up with better methods, but God is concerned about those of us who know the Lord, that we will be letting the light shine forth from our lives.

There is no method as powerful as the light that shines forth from a transformed life.

Notice the word “manifest” which the Apostle Paul used twice in this verse. It is a word which speaks of a revelation, something which makes clear what had not been known before. It is light that dispels the darkness. Verse 13 contains a self-evident truth, but it finds no greater illustration than in what the Gospel does to a human being, and the place that that human being forever afterwards has in this world of darkness.

March 29, 2011

5:14 Much has been written about this verse, mainly because we can find no such quotation in the OT. Some have said that it must be the quotation of some hymn with which the Ephesian believers were familiar. And yet there is no evidence to support that idea.

The idea that seems most likely to me is that the Apostle Paul did not intend to say that this was a quotation, but that he was summarizing what God had been actually saying to the human race by virtue of the fact that He had sent His Son through whose death we have the Gospel, and in this we see the grace and mercy of God in which, by the very proclamation of the Gospel, the Lord was speaking to all men saying that if they would give heed to the Gospel, they would arise from the dead, from spiritual death, and Christ would give them light.

I think we have an illustration of the meaning of this verse in John 11 where we have the account of the Lord raising Lazarus from the dead even after he had been dead for four days. Please turn with me to John 11. The key verse in understanding the fact that the Lord did not immediately come when He first had been told that Lazarus was seriously ill, is given to us in John 11:4. And our Lord reminded Martha of this when she in verse 39 resisted Him when He told those who were with Him and Martha at the tomb, and she reminded the Lord in so many words, that it would do no good to remove the stone. But notice what the Lord said to her in verse 40. See verse 40, and then the verses which follow down to verse 46.

Contrast this with what Lazarus said when he was first told by the other disciples that they had seen the Lord. I am referring to his words in John 20:24 and 25. They read on down in chapter 20 to the time when the Lord appeared to the disciples when Lazarus was present to what Lazarus said to the Lord then, and how the Lord responded to him in verse 29.

Man’s way is, “If I can see, I will believe.” God’s way is, “Believe, and then you will see.” What came first when Noah built the ark? Had it even started raining. No, by faith he built the ark, and later he saw the rain. What about Abraham? Did God give him the land, and then he believed. No, he believed God, left his home, and then saw the land. What did the Apostle Paul tell the Philippian jailor when he was asked what he should do to be saved. “Believe . . .” What happened? He believed and so did all of his family, and then they were saved. God gives the promise. We believe. And then we see. I think that this is what the Apostle John was saying to any unbelievers who were to read his epistle by his words here in Ephesians 5:14. God was speaking, but here he was speaking through the Apostle Paul. And it was a Gospel appeal. Believe first, “and Christ shall give thee light.”

When we come to verses in the Bible which we may not understand, begin by recognizing that what is given is the Word of God, and then the Lord will give us the light.

April 4, 2011

5:15 If the Apostle Paul were inclined to say that we need to be prepared to compromise with what we

believe in order to win people to Christ, this would be one place where you would expect him to say so. But he didn't! You will never read that the Apostle Paul, or any other writer of Scripture, recommends compromising with the world about what we believe, or how we are to live. In fact, his emphasis is just the opposite. The word "then" is the translation of the Greek word for *therefore*. So it refers us back to the last command that the apostle gave in verse 8 concerning our walk. If you read the entire fifteenth verse of chapter 5, you will see that to "walk circumspectly" is to walk wisely.

If you compare this verse in Ephesians with the parallel passage in Colossians, this is what you will read in Colossians 4:5 and 6 these words:

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Ephesians 5:17 also emphasizes the importance of wisdom. (Read.) What wisdom was the apostle talking about. He was talking about the wisdom of God. And where do we find that? We find it in the Word of God. The Apostle Peter has given us a very important statement regarding the resources that we have to live for the Lord, and to serve the Lord. You will find it in 2 Peter 1:3:

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness in Himself, God, and in Christ. But it is all spelled out for us in Scripture. We need to quit looking for new ways and new methods, and get back to the old ways, the ways that are spelled out for us in Scripture. Solomon tells us in the book of Proverbs that the wisdom of God is more precious than silver and gold. It was so in his day, and it still is today!

Going back to Ephesians 5:15, the word Paul used for see is the common Greek word to seeing. But the Apostle is using it here for us to take a good look at the way we live to make sure that we measure up to what he was saying. It is easy for us to think of someone else when we are reading the Bible, but the place where we need to look first is at ourselves. Paul wanted each of his readers to apply what he was say to themselves. And each of us ought to do that this morning. I need to ask, "Am I doing what the Apostle Paul said in this passage that I ought to do.

What does it mean to "walk circumspectly"? It means to walk carefully, not departing in any way from how we are taught to live in the Bible. I remember when I used to travel back and forth from Tacoma to Texas when I was in school down there, traveling by train, that when you boarded a train, right on the step in front of me were three words: "Watch your step." When you were a child walking with one of your parents, and you stumbled and maybe fell, didn't you hear these words, "You've got to watch where you are walking. Soldiers in time of war are taught to be careful where they walk. The Devil is always trying to get us to fall. If you walk the way the world walks, you are going to live to regret it. If you walk like the Bible teaches you to walk, you are never going to regret it. When the Devil tempted Eve, he was trying to trip her, and he succeeded. God has given all of us consciences to help us live the right way, but sin is such a powerful factor in every person's heart that we often do the wrong thing anyway. Such sinful living is even greater when we have the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in us. When you are a pedestrian and crossing a street, you had better look both ways before stepping off of the curb. But in our lives as Christians we need to be even more careful. In this verse not to be careful how and where you walk, is to be a fool.

5:16 This is a continuation of verse 15.

"Redeeming the time" is a very important word for all of us. The three words in English are the translation of one Greek verb. Time is something that we all have, and Paul said here that we are to rescue it from loss. We

are all guilty of wasting time, and when time is gone we can never get it back. This is actually an exhortation for us not to waste our time. We are to make the best use of our time that we possibly can, and in this passage Paul was thinking about the time we have with people who do not know the Lord.. We can't always be talking to people we would like to see come to Christ, but one way to redeem our time for them, is by prayer. None of us have as much timer left in our lives now as we did when we came in here this morning. We never know when life will end.

But I don't think that the Apostle Paul was thinking just about the uncertainty of life, but he was thinking about those opportunities we have to be with people, whether they are saved, or unsaved. If we just let nature take its course, "the days are evil," and opportunities are lost forever. It doesn't mean that we are always talking about the Lord, but it does mean that we are always thinking about Him and what He wants us to do in a given situation. I had a wonderful mother, and the Lord took her to heaven when she was only fifty-eight years of age. I didn't realize until after she was gone how much truth she had planted in my life as I was growing up. When I would go out with any of my friends, one thing she would say to me as I left was, "Remember whose you are!" I can still hear her saying it.

We are called upon to walk with the Lord in an evil, fallen world. And if we are not walking circumspectly, seeking to please the Lord in all things, the world is going to pull down. The only way to walk circumspectly is by living in obedience to the Word for one main reason, because we love the Lord and want to please Him first and always!

John Eadie said concerning this verse:

If these days so evil afforded any opportunities of doing good, it was all the more incumbent on Christians to win them and seize them. The very abundance of the evil was a powerful argument to redeem the time, and the apostle writing that letter in a prison was a living example of his own counsel (p. 394).

5:17 Now if we are to live as the Apostle Paul has instructed us, we need to know the will of God. And the only way to know the will of God is through reading and studying and being taught the Bible. How foolish even many pastors can be by speaking on political subjects, or encouraging the world's Godless psychology, or concentrating on the social problems of the day, rather than week by week expounding the unsearchable riches of truth which God has given us in His Word. Any substitute for Scripture produces people who are "unwise" regardless of how trained they may be in understanding the wisdom of men. Those who have no place for God or His Word are, in the eyes of God, the greatest of fools.

5:18 Dr. Chafer mentioned in his commentary on Ephesians that this is one of three passages in the NT which contrast drunkenness with the Spirit-filled life. The first is Luke 1:15 where we read of the angel who appeared to Zacharias telling him that he and his wife, Elisabeth, were going to have a child when they were actually too old to have children. But these are the words spoken by the angel to Zacharias when he was serving as the priest in the temple. Here are the angel's word which are recorded in Luke 1:16:

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

The second is in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and they were enabled to speak foreign languages which they had never studied, but which the people who spoke those languages clearly understood. The explanation of some who heard was, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13). But Peter stood up and said that it was too early for them to be drunk. Earlier in the chapter it is said that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. See Acts 2:4. And then the third instance is what we have here in Ephesians 5:18.

5:18 We might be surprised at the way the Apostle Paul addressed the people of God here, warning them against drunkenness, but he wanted the Ephesians to know that the person who gets drunk is a fool and unwise. That is not what the Ephesian believers needed. Rather they needed to be filled with the Spirit. To be drunk with wine is to be under the influence of overindulgence which, in turn, leads to debauchery, shame, and a wasted life.. To be filled with the Spirit is to be under the control of the Spirit, Who produces fruit in the believer's life (see Gal. 5:22-23) which enables us to live for the glory of God. The Apostle indicates that in verses 19 through 21 how we can identify a Spirit-filled life. But for now let us make sure that we understand verse 18.

This same verb, "be filled," was used by Paul in his prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 3, verse 19. The ultimate blessing that the Apostle Paul sought for them was "that ye might be filled with all of the fulness of God." No believer ever reaches that, but that is the goal. In the same way, and expressing the same truth concerning their relationship with the Holy Spirit, no one, except our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, ever attains to the ultimate fulness of the Holy Spirit, but that is to be our goal – greater and greater dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and greater and greater submission to His authority in our lives.

In Bible time wine was used for medicinal purposes (1 Tim. 5:23), but there are warnings in both the OT and the NT against the excessive use of wine. For example, in Proverbs 20:1 we read, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." One of the strongest passages against drinking is in Proverbs 23:29-35, and the context links it with immorality. Listen to Solomon's words in that passage:

- 29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?
 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.
 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.
 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.
 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.
 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
 35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

In our day when drinking has become such a major problem, it seems the part of wisdom to stay away from it altogether. My Dad had two good recommendations for his sons (and he had six of them). One was, "If you don't take your first drink, you will never get drunk." And a second was, "If you don't learn to play cards, you will never gamble." Those two statements are good warnings for everyone to be aware of

Remember that the Holy Spirit is God. Cf. 2 Cor. 13:14. He is totally equal in Deity to the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Apostle Paul said, "And be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit," in the first part of this verse he was putting his finger on that which was of epidemic proportions in that day and in that city. And it was well-known that drunkenness led to sexual immorality which threatened marriages in those days as it does today. That probably explains why the Apostle Paul went on after emphasizing the need that each of them to be filled with the Spirit, to speak of wives, husbands, etc. And one interesting point about the grammar of the two verbs in this verse is that they are both in the same tense, voice, mood, etc., showing that the effects of these two widely different ways of life had some of the same characteristics

Our text here in Ephesians 5:18 absolutely forbids drunkenness, but it also positively commands all believers to

be filled with the Spirit. And this is not just a single experience, or something that is to happen now and then, but it is to be a way of life. Nothing is said here about speaking in tongues. It is evident from the NT that the speaking in tongues was a temporary gift. Today evidence of a Spirit-filled life is stated in what Paul mentioned in verses 19-21, and similar evidences of a godly character and life.

I want to spend some time on the verb, “be filled. Let me give you a brief lesson in the Greek of the word that Paul used, but the same is true of the English translation. But first let us think about what the Apostle Paul meant by the verb, “be filled.”

But first, let me point out to you that we have already had this verb in Paul’s prayer recorded for us in Ephesians, chapter 3, and verse 19, where he prayed that the believers in Ephesus might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Both “filled” and “fulness” have the same root, even as “filled” and “fulness” do in English.

And then we have the same basic word in Ephesians 4:13 where the Apostle Paul was discussing the work of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers, which God has given to the Church. What was it? It was “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” – the same related word.

In all of these three texts, what did the Apostle Paul mean by being “filled with all the fulness of God” as well as by being “filled with the Holy Spirit,” or “the fulness of Christ”?

But there is one other text that we need to keep in mind to have the whole picture. In Colossians 2 the Apostle Paul was warning the Colossian believers not to be led astray by false teachers, and he used our word “fulness” to explain the reason why. See Colossians 2:8-9 where the Apostle Paul said the following:

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

I am indebted to my friend and trusted Bible expositor, John Eadie, for the best explanation I have found of these very important verses. It might sound like, if all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in our Lord in His humanity, and that we are to be filled with all the fulness of God, that we are to strive to attain Deity in this life. Now let me clear on this point. We have been saved to be “like” the Lord, but we will never be Deity. Well, how then are we to deal with these verses in which even the Apostle Paul prayed that we “might be filled with all the fulness of God?”

We have a key to what we are seeking to understand right in Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:19 where he prayed that they “might be filled with all the fulness of God.” In the first part of that verse he prayed that they might know the Lord of Christ which passeth knowledge.” What did he mean? He meant that believers can know the love of Christ, *but that we can never, at least on this side of heaven, know it completely, exhaustively, so that there is nothing else to learn about the love of God. We are always learning more and more, but never learning it all!*

Listen to John Eadie’s commentary:

As a fact manifested in time and embodied in the incarnation, life, teaching, and death of the Son of God, it may be understood, for it assumed a nature of clay, bled on the cross, and lay prostrate in the tomb; *but in its unbeginning existence as an eternal passion, antedating alike the Creation and its Fall, it “passeth knowledge.”* In the blessings which it confers—the pardon, grace, and glory which it provides—it may be seen in palpable [easily perceived] exhibition, and experienced in happy consciousness; *but in its limitless power and endless resources it baffles thought and description.* In the terrible sufferings

and death to which it led, and in the self-denial and sacrifices which it involved, it may be known so far by the application of human instincts and analogies; *but the fathomless fervor of a Divine affection surpasses the measurements of created intellect.* As the attachment of a man, it may be gauged; *but as the love of a God, who can by searching find it out?* Uncaused itself, it originated salvation; *unresponded to amidst the “contradiction of sinners, it neither pined nor collapsed.* It led from Divine immortality to human agonies and dissolution, for the victim was bound to the cross not by the nails of the military executioner, but by the “cords of love. It loved repulsive unloveliness, and, unnourished by reciprocated attachment, its ardor was unquenched, nay, is unquenchable, for it is as changeless as the bosom in which it dwells. Thus it may be known, while yet it “passeth knowledge”; yet it may be experimentally known, while still in its origin and glory it surpasses comprehension, and presents new and newer phases to the loving and inquiring spirit. For one may drink of the spring and be refreshed, and his eye may take in at one view its extent and circuit, while he may be able neither to fathom the depth nor mete out the volume of the ocean whence it has its origin (pp. 257-258, italics mine).

Now to return to our text in Ephesians 5:18. When the Apostle Paul said, “And be not drunk with wine,” he was speaking of one major problem that those early believers had. Drunkenness was more often than not a part of those early believers’ lives before they were saved. The effect of drunkenness is both progressive and overwhelming. But when a person was saved, Paul indicated in this verse that the drinking had to be stopped, and that the way they stopped was by being filled with the Spirit. Now, as we shall see in looking into the text, Paul was not talking about some sudden, ecstatic experience where they spoke in tongues and suddenly, as some people claim, entered into a sinless way of life. Two mistakes have been made in the Church today about the Holy Spirit. One is that there has been a lot of false teaching about the Holy Spirit, and so, as a result, many Christians feel that it is best not to get involved in learning about the Spirit of God. But here Paul was just as strong about saying, “Be filled with the Spirit,” as he was in saying, “Be not drunk with wine.” Christians have been delivered from the penalty of sin, and by our Lord’s death on the Cross He delivered us from the power which sin has always had in our lives. But this is related to our growth in the Lord, and that is where we need to learn about the Holy Spirit.

Now when the Lord Jesus was here on earth, although He was not a sinner, and not even capable to sin, yet we are told that, at the beginning of His ministry, He was filled with the Spirit. And He lived and carried on His miraculous ministry in the power of the Spirit. Now as it was true of our Lord that the fulness of God was in Him, yet there was a distinct difference for us to be filled with the fulness of God, as I have explained. So our filling is progressive, linked with our growth in grace and the manner of our daily fellowship with the Lord. A young believer can be filled with the Spirit as well as a more mature believer, but their capacity for the fulness of the Spirit will be very different. As we grow, the Spirit of God has a greater influence and a larger part in our lives. And that is brought out in the way that the Apostle Paul expressed to the Ephesians as a command, their need to be filled with the Spirit.

“Be filled” is in the present tense, in the passive voice, in the imperative mood, and is in the second person plural, “ye,” meaning *all of you.*

- 1) The present tense means that it is to be continuous. Some have translated it, *be being filled.*
- 2) The passive voice indicates that the subject does not do what is required, but that it is acted upon by some other person or power. Paul did not say, “Fill yourselves with the Holy Spirit,” but “be filled with the Spirit.”
- 3) The imperative mood means that it is a command to be obeyed.
- 4) The second person plural means that it is addressed directly to all to whom the instruction is given.

Now we do not have any passage in the Bible, as far as I know, that tells us how to be filled with the Spirit, that is, what must we do to be filled with the Spirit.. But I will tell you what I believe, and I am reasonably sure that I am right in what I am about to say to you.

- 1) I believe that it speaks of a way of living in which we are dependent upon the Holy Spirit.
- 2) I believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every true believer, that He has been given to us to teach us the Word, and especially to take the things of Christ and show them to us.
- 3) I believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to us to enable us to do that the Word of God commands us to do.
- 4) I believe that the Holy Spirit is concerned first about my character, and secondly about my conduct. The blessing of the Spirit will follow in our work when our character and conduct are pleasing to the Lord.
- 5) I believe that the filling of the Spirit is related to my growth in the Lord, that the more I grow, the greater is my filling. So a person recently saved can be filled to his capacity, but that as he matures, his capacity for the fullness of the Spirit increases.
- 6) Along with the passive command to be filled with the Spirit, there are two active commands regarding the Holy Spirit about which I need to be concerned, negative commands:
 - a) “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19). We quench the Spirit when we suppress, or stifle, what He is seeking to do in our lives.
 - b) “Grieve not the Spirit” (Eph. 4:30). See the context. We grieve Him with our sin.

These are both addressed to us, and are very important for us to remember and obey as the Spirit of God deals with us day by day throughout our lives. And three examples of the result of the Spirit’s work in our lives, is given to us in the following three verses: 19, 20, and 21. I would say that they speak of worship, thanksgiving, and fellowship.

In your Bible reading, especially in the NT, notice carefully the references to the Holy Spirit. Let me point out to you the statements that you will find in the epistle of Ephesians:

- 1) In Eph. 1:13-14 we are sealed with the Spirit.
- 2) In Eph. 1:17 He is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.
- 3) In Eph. 2:18 we are told that through Christ we have access by the Spirit to the Father.
- 4) In Eph. 2:22 we are told that we are built together as an habitation of God through the Spirit.
- 5) In Eph. 3:5 we read about the mystery which was revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit.
- 6) In Eph. 3:16 we are strengthened by the Spirit.
- 7) Eph. 3:20 is probably a reference to the Spirit although He is not mentioned by name.
- 8) In Eph. 4:3 speaks of the unity of the Spirit.
- 9) In Eph. 4:4 tells us that there is one Spirit.
- 10) In Eph. 4:30 tells us not to grieve the Spirit.
- 11) In Eph. 5:9 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit.
- 12) In Eph. 5:18 we are told to be filled with the Spirit.
- 13) In Eph. 6:17 tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.
- 14) In Eph. 6:18 says that we are to pray in the Spirit.

One book I would recommend for all of you to read on this subject of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer’s book, *He That Is Spiritual*.

April 18, 2011

Now before we go on to verse 19 of Ephesians 5, I want to go back to verse 18 to make sure that we all understand those words, “but be filled with the Spirit.”

I have mentioned that the verb, “be filled,” is in the present tense which indicates that the Apostle Paul was not speaking of an isolated incident, but a continuous way of living. Paul says nothing here about speaking in tongues, because speaking in tongues was a temporary gift given to some in the early days of the Church, but it no longer exists today. The evidence that we are being filled with the Spirit is to be seen in our character as

Christians, and in godly living such as Paul encouraged in verses 19 through 21 of the chapter, and in our relationships to each other in our homes as Paul went on to indicate from Ephesians 5:22 on.

It is an imperative, meaning that to fail to do this is being disobedient to God and to His Word.

It is in the second person plural, and that means it is not just for pastors, or Bible school teachers, or missionaries, but it is for all believers – from the youngest to the oldest, for boys and girls, for men and women, for all believers from the first century on to the end of time.

And, although this is addressed to us, it is in the passive mood, meaning, in this case that it is the Holy Spirit Who fills us with Himself. And since we are all at different stages in our lives as Christians, and our capacity for being filled with the Spirit differs, we need to realize that if we are being filled with the Spirit, the Spirit's fulness in our lives will increase as we grow in the Lord.

We all need to get these points firmly fixed in our mind if we are to understand what "be filled with the Spirit" means.

But if it is the Spirit Who fills us with Himself, what is our responsibility in such a relationship? What are we to be doing in response to this command?

The answer to that question is not as difficult to find as you might think. None of us has ever seen either God, or Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit. Neither have we met any of the Apostles of our Lord, nor have we seen and talked to anyone who saw the Lord while He was here on earth. But God has given us a book, and that Book is the Bible. How did we get it? The Apostle Peter has told us in his second letter, which is found in the Bible. And remember that Peter was one of the apostles who was intimately acquainted with the Lord Jesus. He heard our Lord teach many times. He saw our Lord perform miracle after miracle. More than that he was with the Lord on at least two occasions when the Lord spoke from heaven declaring that Jesus was His Son. But let me are to you what Peter wrote some thirty years after the Lord Jesus went back to heaven after His resurrection from the dead. Let me read to you what he said about our Lord and about the Word of God. You will find it in 2 Peter 1:16-21. This is what Peter wrote:

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now it is the twentieth verse of that chapter which is not as clear as it should be. Let me give it to you as it is translated in the New International Version, I will read the twenty-first verse with it:

20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Now what does this mean?

It means that although God used some forty different writers over a period from Moses to the end of the first

century A.D., the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture. Many of the writers of Scripture did not know each other, and so they could not have gotten together to decide what each was to write, and to do it so that there are no contradictions in Scripture, someone had to be in charge of what was written, and that Someone was the Holy Spirit! The Apostle Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16), and he was speaking of the Third Member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

Among the verses I pointed out to you in this epistle to the Ephesians, one of them told us that in our warfare with the forces of the Devil, that our weapon is, “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

When the Lord Jesus was with His disciples for the last time before His death by crucifixion, they met in an upper room. His ministry to them began there, and then continued as they left the Upper Room and walked toward Gethsemane. As they were walking along together, this is one of the things that He said to them. You will find these words in John 16:12-15:

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

There is a wonderful passage in Acts 4 which tells us that, in those early days of the Church, the apostles, Peter and John, were told by the Jewish authorities that they were not to speak or preach anymore in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And then they released them, and Peter and John we back to the believers. After rehearsing to the saints what had happened to them, they prayed together, and then we read this in Acts 4:31:

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Basically, to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Word of God.

Years ago at Central Bible Church we had a lady come to the church whose baby son had a brain tumor. She wanted us to pray for her son, which we did more than once. But she claimed to have been baptized with the Spirit and had spoken in tongues. She was sure that her son was going to be healed by the Lord, and so she refused to seek medical help. I tried to reason with her to seek medical help, but she refused. She was so convinced that the experience she had had of speaking in tongues was right that she said this to me, “Now that I have spoken in tongues, you could not convince me *even from the Bible* that I am wrong.” The result was that the baby died, and I really don’t know what happened to her. What was she doing? She was claiming that the Holy Spirit and the Bible will contradict each other. I doubt very much that she knew the Lord.

So I would say that if we are going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the starting point is going to be that we will fill our minds and hearts with the Word. And this calls for reading the Word.

But it also means getting into a ministry, into a church, where you will be taught the Bible. It is in the Bible that we are taught the truth about God (the Trinity), and that is where we are taught the truth about ourselves. The Bible gives us the Gospel, and it teaches us what salvation is. *But two very important points that the Bible teaches us is not only what we are to believe, but how we are to live. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Word.*

The more we know of the Word, and the more we live according to the Word, the more we will be filled with

the Spirit, and the more we will be able to do as the Apostle Paul told the Galatians, and that is to “walk in the Spirit.”

Please turn to Galatians 5:16.

What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit? It means to walk in union with the Holy Spirit. It means to walk in dependence upon the Spirit, and so to walk in the power of the Spirit. It means to walk in submission to the Spirit. It means to walk in obedience to the Spirit. It is to walk confidently in the Spirit, by faith.

The unbelieving world walks in the flesh. Only believers in Christ are capable of walking in the Spirit. Only by walking in the Spirit can we have victory over the flesh. By walking in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is being produced in our lives, from some, to more, to most. All of this is in Galatians 5. We live in the Spirit because we have been born of the Spirit.

April 25, 2011

Now let us go on to Ephesians 5:19. Verses 19, 20, and 21 give us three of the main evidences that a person is filled with the Spirit.

Dr. Chafer made a key point for us to remember, as we come to these verses, in that “it is only by a supernatural power that one may always be singing and giving thanks *always* for *all* things” (p. 152), as well as in submitting ourselves to one another in the fear of God. And that supernatural power is the Holy Spirit filling the child of God.

5:19 The main verb in the long sentence is “be filled.” The rest of the verbs in the sentence are participles, present participles showing “the blessed consequences of the Holy Spirit’s filling – speaking . . . singing . . . making melody . . . giving thanks . . . submitting . . .” (Wilson, Geoffrey, pp. 113, 114).

Notice in our singing we are “speaking” to each other, and at the same time we are “singing and making melody “to the Lord.” But with both, to each other, and to the Lord, it must come *from our hearts*. What a difference this will make in our singing if we keep this in mind. Music in the church is not for entertainment, but for ministry – ministry to each other and to the Lord! It seems that the words which the Apostle Paul used here indicates that he was speaking about music with words, not just the music itself. A piano or organ played without any singing can be a blessing, but only as the music reminds us of the world.

The “psalms” here means the singing of the Psalms that we find in the book of Psalms. “Hymns” are so-called because they are addressed to God. “Spiritual songs” are those that minister by the Holy Spirit to the spirits of believers, not to their flesh. Much church music from the hymnals qualifies for all three of these categories.

So there is to be a very close relationship between what is sung by believers and what is proclaimed from the Word. Many Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are prayers, and so this emphasizes the importance of prayers in the fellowship of believers. Worship is designed to minister to believers and to worship God. It is not to make unbelievers feel at home by adapting our music and the instruments that are used in the world. It is only in the last hundred years or so that musical instruments were used at all in churches. Spurgeon’s great congregations sang *accapella!* Most churches today have wandered far from the Scriptural pattern. Everything must be designed for the blessing of the people and for the glory of God. And it is only the Holy Spirit Who can make our worship meaningful for us as believers, and acceptable to the Members of the Godhead Whom we worship. But let us remember that worship is not to be limited to the meetings of the church. We are to

worship individually in our homes, and together as families. And it is only as personally we learn to worship the Lord, that our times together in our churches can be the blessing to us all that it should be. In fact, often believers come to church without having been faithful in their personal fellowship with the Lord, and the work of the Holy Spirit as we gather together is designed to send us back to our homes with our hearts revived and looking forward to our personal times of fellowship with the Lord by ourselves.

5:20 Not only are we as believers in Christ deficient when it comes to worship, but we are also very deficient in our thanksgiving, and this verse reminds us that the One to Whom we are to be thankful is *God!* He is our Father, our heavenly Father, the God to Whom we only have access through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as being our Father. He is the only true God. He is the One who provides for us, protects us, guides us, teaches us, and helps us in thousands of ways every day and night that we live.

Several years ago I began to notice that even Christians would say, “I am thankful I got home today without an accident; the traffic was terrible.” Or, “Shouldn’t we be thankful for this beautiful day?” The second Sunday in May will be Mother’s Day. I hope you can say like I can that I am more thankful in every year that passes, that I had the Mother I had – “had,” not “have,” because she has been in heaven for many, many years. But what is missing in all of these statements. *It is that we need to be identifying the One to Whom we are thankful. We need to be saying that we are thankful to God who protects us when we drive, who gives us beautiful, sun -shiny days, and who gave us the mothers that we have. It is good to be thankful, but it is so much better to be thankful to God – and to say so.*

But this is only half of what the Holy Spirit prompts us to say. We are to give thanks for all things – the good and the bad, the things we like, and the things that we don’t like – the rainy days as well as the sunny, the accidents as well as the safe trips home, and perhaps uncaring parents as well as those who loved us far more than we deserve.

Now to give thanks for “all things” doesn’t mean that we are happy about our trials and difficulties that come our way. But we as the people of God because we know that He works ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD, for our good. We know that He is always in control of our lives, even when we do stupid things. And the Holy Spirit is the only One Who can enable us to give the Lord thanks because He knows that our God does all things well. Every Sunday is for us a remembrance of the resurrection of Christ. *And every day is Thanksgiving Day for those of us who know the Lord. But we are not going to be thankful to the Lord apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit.* I think that most of us would have to say that we are learning to be thankful for all things. Every trial that comes our way gives us a fresh opportunity to thank the Lord for all things, but we are also learning that only the Holy Spirit can put that thanksgiving for God and to God in our hearts.

I believe that there is a divine order to be seen in these three verses, 19, 20, and 21. Let us learn to worship the Lord first. Then we will be better prepared to thank Him for all things. And that, in turn, as we shall see in verse 21, will be what the Holy Spirit will use to make us submissive. So let us go on to verse 21.

5:21 Taking these three verses as ways to identify a Spirit-filled Christian, this one could hardly come first. It has to be the last of these three.

I think most of us who have given any thought to what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, have felt that a Spirit-filled Christian is the one who comes out on top. But that is not the case. It may lead to great usefulness in the work of the Lord, but not necessarily so. I am sure that when we get to heaven we are going to be surprised to find out who those are who enter into the joy of their Lord.

The verb *submit* in Greek is a very interesting word. Actually it is just as interesting in English. “Submit” is a good translation. In the Greek it is the verb *τάσσω*, which means *to put*, or *place*. And the Greeks attached the preposition *ὑπό*, which means *under*, on the front of it, and formed the word *ὑποτάσσω*, which then means *to put under*, or *to put under the authority of another*. Our English word *submit*, is similar. It is from the Latin. *Sub* mean under, and the *mit* is from the Latin verb *mittere* which actually means *to send*. A synonym for *submit* is *to yield*. This is the Lord’s command to all of us.

Perhaps you remember the time when the disciples were with the Lord, and some of them got into a lively discussion with each other. When they got to the city the Lord asked them what they had been talking about. And they responded that they had been discussing who among them would be the chiefest, or greatest. And the Lord called all twelve of them together and told them, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

On another occasion Matthew says that the mother of James and John came requesting that their sins sit with the Lord on His right hand and left hand when He came into His kingdom. Mark says that James and John made the request for themselves. Obviously this was what all three of them wanted. After telling that those places were not for Him to give, we are told what the Lord did and what He said:

- 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.
 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:
 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:24-28).

The Lord’s way and man’s ways are different, and we all have to learn the Lord’s ways. In our passage in Ephesians 5, we learn that the believers who are living under the direction of the Spirit of God, filled with the Spirit, will be identified by a willingness to be submissive one to another.

Well, this raises the question, if they are all to be submissive, who is in charge? And the answer to that is, the Lord is in charge. After all, it is the Lord’s will that is to be done, not our’s. When we are all submissive to the Lord’s will, then there will be blessing and the work of the Lord will prosper. It is when some insist on telling the others what to do that we get into trouble. The disciples would be apostles, and the apostles would be leaders in the Church, the body of Christ, but they were to show their submission to the Lord by their willingness to be submissive to each other.

When we think of submission, we need to think of humility, of meekness, which is a fruit of the Spirit. Sin has made all of us naturally proud. We have to learn to be submissive to the Lord, and to each other, just like we have to learn to worship the Lord, and to learn to be thankful. All that the Lord said to His disciples while He was here on earth, was important, very important, not only for them, but much of the instruction that He gave them, was for us too. One very important command He gave to the apostles, is for us too. I am thinking of what the Lord said in Matthew 11:28-30:

- 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Reverence for the Lord as we learn to express it in worship (v. 19), and a heart that is learning to give thanks to the Lord for all things, will experience great joy in showing submission to the Lord by showing submission to

others who are in the body of Christ.

But the Apostle's final word in verse 21 is one we need to give our special attention. It applies in particular to verse 21, but it has to do also with all of these three last verses we have been considering. It is an expression that we don't hear very often these days even among believers, and you never hear it from people in the world. I am referring to the phrase, "in the fear of God."

It has one meaning for the people of the world; it has another for those who believe in Christ. Christians used to be known as *God-fearing* people. Solomon said this about the fear of the Lord, and it is a word that ought to be on every billboard in the country, and on every channel on TV. This is the verse: Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." A similar statement about the fear of the Lord is given in Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

The Bible thus makes it clear that all true wisdom and knowledge has its beginning with the wisdom of the Lord. To fear the Lord is to recognize that He is God, and to know that we are to give Him the honor, the reverence that is rightfully due to Him as God. It is to love and honor God in the deepest sense of the words. It is to recognize that He is supreme above all others to Whom we owe complete obedience. But it also means that we love Him so much that we show the greatest concern not to displease Him or grieve Him in any way. We fear God when we recognize that there is none greater than He, and that we stand in awe of Him.

These words, and many more just like them, describe the place that God is to have among all men and angels.

But the people who ignore God and live their lives any way that they choose, have reason to fear God as a God of judgment. Anyone who ignores God, or who thinks that there is no God, is a fool, the greatest of fools. And they will learn some day that ignoring God was the greatest mistake that a person can be made. On the other hand, the person who fears the Lord, is the person who knows true happiness, is on the way to heaven. To fear the Lord is their greatest joy and security.

So we who believe are to be submissive to one another because we know that this is most pleasing to Him, and most glorifying to Him.

Remember how the Lord demonstrated His submission to His disciples when He washed the disciples' feet when they were together in Upper Room. See John 13:1-17.

See what the Apostle Peter wrote in the first eleven of 1 Peter 5, which showed where he put his emphasis as he brought his first epistle to a close. And see how much Peter had learned when compared with his reaction to having the Lord wash his feet when they were all together in the upper room.

In the outline that I gave you at the beginning of our study, I just gave you what I believe were the major points of the message of the Apostle Paul.— emphasizing what he had to say about the application of the doctrine of the epistle (chs. 1-3) to the ways in which the doctrine was to affect their daily "walk." Five times the Apostle used this important word in this section, giving five different characteristics of the Christ life – four positive, and one negative. They are as follows:

- 1) "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are call" (4:1).
- 2) *Negatively*, "walk not as other Gentiles walk" (4:17).
- 3) "Walk in love" (5:2).
- 4) "Walk as children of light (5:8).

And now we are discussing the fifth and last time the Apostle used the word in this practical part:
5) “Walk circumspectly” (5:15).

The English definition of “circumspectly” is “being attentive to all circumstances,” like soldiers would be who were going through an area that was thought to have been planted with land mines. Literally it circumspectly comes from two Latin words which combined means *to look around*, or we could paraphrase it as meaning, *Watch your step*. Perhaps your parents told you when you stumbled over something that you needed to watch where you are going.

There is all of this in the Greek word that the Apostle Paul used, but his word included the idea of walking *accurately*. That is, there are right ways for a Christian to walk, but there are also ways that are not quite right, or altogether wrong! He had already told the Ephesian believers in 4:17 that they were not to walk as other Gentiles walk. And we have just seen in starting through this fifth time where the Apostle spoke of how they were to walk, that they were not to be drunk with wine, “but be filled with the Spirit.” So to “walk circumspectly means that to be able to walk *accurately* we need to be filled with the Spirit. It is not possible for any of us to walk circumspectly, or *accurately*, apart from the divine enabling power of the Holy Spirit. And what we are about to learn in the verses that we come to now in 5:22 is that the first place where all of this applies after we make the application to ourselves, is in our families, and after that, where we work.

Now it ought to be apparent to us that if we are to walk accurately and carefully, and it is not like we have been walking, or living, before coming to Christ, where are we going to learn what such a life is? *And most* of you know the answer to that question. We learn it from the Bible, which is God’s Word. And there, too, we find out that an accurate Christian life is a life that is pleasing to God. Now if a person is not a Christian, he, or she, is not going to be concerned about pleasing God. But for us who know the Lord, pleasing God has to be the greatest priority that we have. And it comes down to the word that we have just been talking about in verse 21. It is the word, submitting.

Now let us look at:

5:22 If you have a Bible that uses italics, or if you consult a Greek NT, you will find that there is no verb in this verse. But the translators are right in using the verb *submit* because it carries over into this verse.

R. C. H. Lenski, a very godly, Lutheran commentator suggests this for verse 22: “The wives to their husbands a unto the Lord.” If we do that, then we should move the period at the end of verse 21, replace it with a comma, so that the two verses would then read, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord, the wives to their husbands in the fear of Christ.”

Now verse 22 applies to all of us. We are all to be submissive to the Lord, but we are all also to be submissive “one to another in the fear of Christ.” If a person is a Christian, truly a Christian, he is going to be marked by an attitude of submission to others. A Christian should never be the kind of a person who is hard to get along with, or who cannot be happy unless things are going his way. Being submissive does not mean that a person has no convictions. He does. He always speaks the truth, and he always takes his stand upon the Word of God, but to borrow a statement from the Apostle Paul which he gave us in 4:15, we speak the truth in love.

At the very beginning of the practical section of the Apostle Paul’s epistle to the believers in Rome, we find his exhortation for submission – submission to God, and to the will of God. That is the first lesson we all need to learn when we are brought into the Family of God. We are to submit, to present, our bodies to God as belonging to Him. We are not our own; “we are bought with a price.” Let us all be reminded of the Apostle Paul’s

words in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Do our lives manifest that this is what we believe, and that this is a basic principle by which we live from day to day? Those of us who have just completed memorizing the Epistle of James, will remember that we had these words which apply to our lesson for today. I am thinking of James 4:6b-7:

6b . . . God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

And then a few verses later James added in verse 10:

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Nowhere is the need for submission and humility more strongly taught than in Philippians 2:5-11 where we are exhorted to have the mind of Christ who was the greatest Example of submission and humility that there ever has been, or ever will be.

But now as we look at our passage in Ephesians which begins 5:22 and goes down through 6:9, we find three groups of two each where the Apostle applies the need for humility:

1) Husbands and wives.

2) Fathers and children.

3) Masters and slaves, or applying it to our situation today, Employers and employees.

But you will notice that they are not listed in the order that I have just given to you. The Apostle, speaking, remember, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in this order:

1) First wives, then husbands.

2) Children, then fathers.

3) Finally, servants, and then masters.

So how is this different from the way we would list them? The answer: In each case God put the one with the lesser responsibility first. The wife is to be submissive to her husband. The children are to be obedient to their parents. The servants are to be obedient to their masters.

And notice another point of special importance. Paul told the wife what she is to do; he did not tell the husband what the wife was to do. In the same way he did not tell the wife what the husband was to do. And this pattern is followed right down to the masters in 6:9. In counseling husband and wives who have been having difficulties with each other, more than once the husband has said, "Well, if my wife is submissive to me, then I will love her as Christ loved the Church." (I don't think I have ever said to me that she would submit herself to her husband if he would love her as Christ loved the Church.) I usually pushed my Bible across my desk, and asked the husband if what he had just told me was what the Bible said.

When it comes to obeying God, each one of us is primarily responsible for ourselves. That is always true in any problem that we might have with someone else. Another person's disobedience to God, does not give me the right to be disobedient in return. There is a proverb of Solomon that helps us to understand that. It is found in Proverbs 16:7. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

But why is the one with the lesser responsibility mentioned first? I don't know that I know the full answer, but I can tell you what I think. I think that it is because the willingness of the one with the less responsibility is often the key to the solution. We are all to be subject to each other, but there is special grace given to obedient wives, obedient children, and obedient slaves. When a wife is submissive to her husband, it is hard for a

husband not to love her – and on down the line. See James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5. I had one exception to all of this years ago with a couple who were graduates of MSB. That is where they met. But I think that there was something mentally wrong with the husband. His wife was more than willing to be submissive to him even after years of both verbal and physical abuse. Their marriage finally ended in divorce.

But now let us look at God's plan.

(Read Eph. 5:22-24.)

In reading a passage like this (down to 6:9) it is most beneficial for us to deal with God's primary will in each of these relationships, and not with the exceptions. A girl who is contemplating marriage should meditate a great deal on these verses. These are verses the Lord is asking her to live why with the man she marries. She needs to examine her own heart very thoroughly to determine the degree of her own submission to the Lord. How complete is it? And what about the man she is thinking about marrying? Does he act like a man should who really loves the Lord, and is devoted to the will of the Lord? Obviously she not even consider at all being married to a man who does not know the Lord. It is not enough for him to promise that he will consider his relationship to Christ later. He must have given evidence that he knew the Lord before they met for her to be on secure ground regarding his salvation.

5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife.” This was made clear by God at creation, even in the order I which Adam and Eve were created, and why, especially, Eve was created.

The marriage relationship has been honored by the relationship which Christ has to His Church, and especially again in His work of saving His Church. Although here the Apostle was speaking to the wife, he brought in the fact that her husband was one who stood in the place of a savior to her, supporting and providing for her, protecting her, and that just as the Lord continues His saving work in our lives after we are saved, so a godly husband must always be concerned about the spiritual blessing and growth of his wife.

5:24 Just as the Church is subject to Christ in order to please Christ, so she is to seek to be pleasing to her husband in everything. She is not subject to all men, but to her husband alone. There is no one else who is to have the place in her life that her husband has. She grew up under the authority of her father. That authority is changed to her husband the moment she is married.

From verse 25 to the end of the chapter the Apostle Paul was addressing husbands.

5:25 The standard for a Christian husband's love for his wife, is the love that the Lord showed for the Church at the Cross, and when He continues to show for the Church until they are with the Lord. Just as the wife is to give herself completely to her husband, so the husband is to give himself completely to his wife. He gives his life for her, even unto death if necessary.

5:26 This and verse 27 are very interesting points to make regarding the marriage of a Christian man and a Christian woman. Christ not only gave Himself to save us from our sins, but He continues to give Himself to us for our sanctification and (see the next verse)

5:27 The Lord's ultimate purpose is our ultimate glorification.

Now when the Lord saved us, He knew that there was nothing about us that attracted Him to us. As Moses explained to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 7:7-8, the Lord did not set His love upon Israel for anything

that He saw in them, but simply because He loved them, and wanted to be faithful to the promise that He had made to their fathers. The same is true of us who have believed in Christ. God loved us while we were in our sins, and Christ died for us while we were still sinners, alienated from Him. Now it is different in the marriage of a husband and wife. They are attracted to each other, and they feel that they cannot live without each other. Nevertheless, all of us who are married have learned things about each other that we were not aware of before. They may not be major things, but some things are different. There is a special responsibility that a husband has toward his wife's sanctification, and the same is true of the husband's sanctification and how the wife can contribute to her husband's godliness by prayer, and by the godly example of her life. But here because Paul was writing to the husband in this section, and comparing him to the relationship that Christ has to the Church, just as the Lord is concerned about our sanctification, so a husband is to be concerned not only for the physical and material needs of his wife, but he is to be concerned about her spiritual needs. And this means that the Word of God must have a major place in their marriage. She is to grow in her sanctification because of the place that the Word of God has in their lives. The husband has a great responsibility before the Lord for the sanctification of his wife. She ought to become a more godly person because she is married to him than she ever would have been without him. They need to read the Word together. They need to pray together. They need to go to Church together. They need to encourage each other in the reading of good Christian books, doctrinal books and Christian biographies. The husband may be a pastor of a church, but he must remember that primarily he is the pastor of his wife, and their children as they come along.

But let us learn more from verse 27.

5:27 The Lord's purpose in His ministry to us, is to change us completely from what we were when He saved us. We all have spot and wrinkles which cosmetics cannot correct because they are spiritual. So the husband grows, and it is his responsibility to see that his wife continues to grow so that the longer they live together, the more glorious she becomes to him. In the same way, the longer we know the Lord, and have His ministry to us, although we are not aware of it now, yet we become more glorious to Him as we approach that day and become perfectly holy when we finally see Him, and all of the blemishes that sin has produced on us and in us, and gone – gone forever.

Can we see from this what a glorious thing a Christian marriage which produces a Christian home, can be? Obviously husbands need to grow, or they will not be able to help their wives and their children to grow. What the Church is, the home is to be, and what God intends for our homes to be, means that all of our homes will be like little churches. Our homes need to be places where the love of God dominates – not only the love of God for us, but the love of God in us and through us toward each other. We are to love each in the body of Christ, and that must originate in our homes where in love we are walking with the Lord and with each other so that our homes can be a foretaste of heaven upon earth.

Now as we come to the remaining verses of the chapter we come to a further emphasis upon the depth of love that a Christian husband should have for his wife. And this may sound a little strange to us.

5:28 In verse 25 we are told that we as husbands are to love our wives as Christ loves the Church. Here, and in verse 29 we are told that we are to love our wives "as their own bodies." Now we often comment about a proud person that he is in love with himself. That is not a good thing. Pride is always bad, and usually ugly. But did you know that there is a legitimate love that we all have for ourselves, that is, for our bodies? Originally the second commandment was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We all have a God-given love for ourselves. If we didn't have that as a basic part of our nature, it is unlikely that any of us would survive. Pain is a life saver for us sometimes. Even animals, birds, and even insects have self-preservation written into their nature. Birds will fly away as you and your car come down the road where they are. Even a

spider will run away if you hit him with a rolled up newspaper, but don't kill him. When a normal person gets sick, he wants to do something about it. I don't put my hand in a burning furnace because I love myself too much to cause myself that much pain and harm. Some people don't like to fly in planes, or get in a boat on the ocean, or drive along a narrow road on a steep cliff. Why? Self love.

Now if I love Lucille like I love my own body, I am experiencing true marriage love. I don't like for her to be sick. I don't like for her to be in danger of anything. Her welfare is just as important to me as my own welfare is. You would say the same thing about people you love.

5:29 Here Paul makes a general statement about every person who has ever lived. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." That is an amazing statement, isn't it? Regardless of the generation that you are talking about, regardless of the nation, man or woman, boy or girl – "No man ever yet hated his own flesh."

And then Paul added a very important point. This is how the Lord feels about us in the Church, His body. We are united to Him like the members of our bodies are a part of us.

5:30 We are so united to Christ. "We are members of members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." We are in union with Christ. But read on.

5:31 Until I married Lucille, I was under the authority of my father and mother. But when I married Lucille, I still was responsible to love them and honor them, and yet the relationship was different from then on because I was joined to Lucille, and we became one flesh. We were joined together in a living union by God Himself. And so my care for her since then has been equal to my care for myself, and at times even greater. This is God's picture of marriage. And He ought to know because He made the first man, and saw that Adam could not get along with a wife. And so He made Eve, and He performed the first marriage, making them one.

5:32 God has taken the marriage relationship which predated all other human relationships, and said that the marriage relationship is a picture of what is now the relationship between Christ and His Church. So understanding marriage, we are in a wonderful position to understand how great Christ's love is for us, and how with constant care He takes care of us, working our spots and wrinkles, making us like Himself.

So . . .

5:32 The marriage relationship helps us also to understand our relationship to Christ as His Bride, united with Him in a relationship that will never be broken. So the husband has one main responsibility to his wife, and that is to love her. The wife is to "revere" her husband. What does that mean? It means to respect. It is the word commonly used for fearing the Lord. She does not worship her husband, but she is to live to please him in submission to him.