

## APPLYING THE TRUTH AT HOME

### Part 2

## SPIRIT-FILLED WIVES

Ephesians 5:22-24

**Intro:** There are certain things that are very important that we need to keep in mind as we come to this part of Ephesians where the Apostle Paul was addressing himself to those early Christian families.

The first is, the importance of the Bible which we as Christians accept as the Word of God, inerrant, unchangeable, and sufficient for us in all matters that have to do with 1) our relationship with God, and 2) how God expects us to live our lives from day to day. And last Sunday I called your attention to what Solomon wrote some three thousand years ago, and which is recorded for us in the biblical book of Proverbs, chapter 29, and verse 18. This is what Solomon wrote:

18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Solomon used two words by which he was referring to the Bible. The first is “vision”; the second is “law.” He used “vision” because much of the Bible was given as visions from God. The Bible was given to us at different times and in different ways. Their supernatural character was apparent because of the unusual ways in which God revealed His Word and His will through the writers of the Bible. The writer of the NT book of Hebrews began that great book by saying,

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . . (Heb. 1:1-2a).

Dreams and visions were two of the methods God used to communicate to His people to give them His Word. “The Law,” on the other hand, was revealed directly to Moses. But as time went on, the expression, “the law,” was used for all of the Bible.

So what Solomon was actually saying, was this: If God had not given us His Word, man will live any way he wants to. He refuses to accept any other way but his own. He becomes ungovernable. This is what the writer of the book of Judges was describing when he said that in those early days of human history, everybody was doing what was right in his own eyes. Without the Bible, that always happens. And even when we have the Bible, if we don’t read it and study it to find out what it means,

society experiences the same results. This is basically where we are in our country today, and most of the world is with us. If we are left to ourselves we are going to make all kinds of mistakes because we are following what we want to do, not what God says that we need to do.

Now nowhere have we gone in the wrong direction more than we have concerning marriage and the family. And marriage and the family are so basic to everything else which God has ordained for us, to be wrong here is to be wrong in everything else. And one major influence that has affected us is the God-less, false teaching of evolution. The Bible does not teach evolution because the Bible teaches us the truth of God. The Bible teaches us the basic truth about our world and the universe in which we live. It is found in the first verse of the first book of the Bible:

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

And let me say very positively that anybody who doesn't start where the Bible starts, cannot be right about anything else.

On the sixth day of creation God made one man and one woman in His own image, and commanded them to be fruitful and to multiply and to replenish the earth. He gave Adam and Eve the ability and the desire to have children. That is the only relationship that can rightly be called a family. Unfortunately it wasn't long after Adam and Eve were created that they sinned against God, and this is why the human family, in fact all of creation, has been turned away from God and His will for the world which He created for His own glory.

Solomon had it right because he spoke from a wisdom that had been given to him by God. Going back to Proverbs 28:19, Where people do not pay attention to the Bible, man becomes ungovernable. Man casts off restraint, and only through the Gospel are people brought back to realize what God's will for human beings is. It is the family – one man and one woman giving birth to children. Bishop Moule, an English pastor of several generations ago, said, "It is not too much to say that the perfecting of the Home is the masterpiece of the Gospel" (Ephesians, p. 281). When people get back to the Bible, when they abide by what God has revealed in His Word, *keeping it, obeying it*, then true happiness will be the result. The home has to be made what God intended it to be, or we are going to face worse and worse judgments from God. God was laying the foundation for happiness in this world, when He created us to live in families under the blessing of God Himself. Sin, which is disobedience to God,

marred that, and the tragedy was emphasized by the fact that the first murder that was ever committed took place when Adam and Eve's first son killed his brother, their second son. The only solution for sin is the Gospel. Paul has been telling us in this book of Ephesians that when we come to marriage having trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior, living in obedience to God, then marriage can be a foretaste of heaven on earth IF the husband and wife do what God has commanded us to do as husbands and wives.

Let us consider first of all:

### **I. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.**

We have all noticed, I assume, that Paul mentioned three pairs of people who were in the church at Ephesus:

- 1) Wives and husbands.
- 2) Children and parents, with a special word to fathers.
- 3) Servants and masters.

Secondly, we notice that Paul mentioned in each case, the first one each had less authority than the first. I have not found any commentator who has expressed himself on this point. A couple of possible suggestions might be that all of us are under obligation to the Lord for the place that we have in the family. Another would be that often the obedience of the one with the lesser authority, is a key to harmony and good will in the home, or in the workplace.

Third, it is important to see that the Paul told each one in the three groups what she or he was responsible to do. Paul told the wives what they were to do; he did not tell the husbands to make the wives submissive. It is true that parents were to teach their children obedience, but the appeal for their obedience came from the Lord.

And then a final observation, and a most important one, is that our relationship to each other are always tied in with our relationship with the Lord. The home is to illustrate what our relationship is to our Lord. Paul did not deal with Christ and believers in one sense, and yet in another he did deal with it all the way through.

Now today is Mother's Day, a day when we honor our mothers. None of us chose the mother we have, and our mother's had no choice when we

were born as to what they were getting. But most of us can be very thankful for the parents that the Lord gave to us, and we are glad to have a day in the year when we can honor our mothers and another day to honor our fathers. When I was young, on mother's day my Dad bought carnations for all of us in our family. He got white carnations for himself and my mother as an indication that their mothers were not living, and red carnations for all of us kids because our mother was still living. And this was the practice in most families. Lucille and I did this when our children were young. Carolyn sends her mother a white corsage on mother's day, and she usually includes a white boutonniere for me. I guess this is a carryover from her days at home as a child.

A godly mother is a wonderful gift from God. She was raised and saved in a Methodist church in Fountain City, Indiana which was just a few miles from Richmond, Indiana. However, she was not well taught in the Scriptures. My Dad didn't become a Christian until about the time I was born. So they learned to trust the Lord as their family came along. There is something about having children that makes parents realize how much they need the Lord. It's not easy to raise a family. My Dad and Mother read the Bible every day, and I know they poured their hearts out in prayer to the Lord for the seven of us who needed a lot of prayer. I have a lot to thank the Lord for when I think of my Mother and Dad.

## **II. PAUL'S APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN WIVES (Eph. 5:22-24).**

One thing that has been impressed upon my mind as I have restudied this great epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, has been the connection between verses 22, 23, and 24 and the verses which immediately preceded them. I believe that Paul had reach a peak of the epistle when he got especially to verses 18-21. And that when he got to what is verse 22 in our Bibles, it was like he was addressing himself to Christian wives who were filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, as they followed him from one point to another through this epistle, it was his hope and prayer that every wife who ever read this epistle, and every young woman who was looking forward to marriage, would have been characterized as one who was filled with the Spirit of God. And by this I mean that they were seeing to it that the Word of God was dwelling richly in them, and they were seeking by God's grace to be all that the Lord wanted them to be. Remember that Colossians 3:16 helps us to understand Ephesians 5:18. So a wife who was a Christian, or a prospective wife who knew the Lord, had come to the place where she had no argument with the Lord about whatever He

wanted her to do. So when Paul came to the place where he said, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord,” she was ready to say to the Lord, “I delight to do thy will, O my God, yes, your Word is written in my heart.” You see, ladies, being filled with the Spirit is not just for preachers, but it is for wives, too. And your willingness to be submissive to your husband is evidence that you have already given the Lord that place in your life. Be sure to notice that Paul said that you should submit yourself to your husbands “as unto the Lord.” A submissive wife is showing her submission to the Lord by her submission to her husband – and this is even the case if you were saved after you were married, and your husband is still unsaved. Or, if due to not knowing the Word of God well enough when you got married, and you married a man who was not a believer, or if you knew that you shouldn’t have married the man who is now your husband, the Word of God still stands.

Blessing does not come to us if we say to the Lord, “Lord, I will submit myself to my husband IF . . .” and then you proceed to give the Lord conditions under which you will be obedient. The Lord’s will has to come first, and the blessing is sure to follow.

But I have had young wives say to me, “But verse 21 says that we are to be submissive to one another in the fear of God.” And I agree. We as Christians are not to be characterized as people who have to have things our way. We need to be submissive to each other. We are to be characterized as a humble, loving, people who are willing to be submissive to each other where sin is not involved. We need to be submissive to each other, but there is a special sense in which a wife needs to be submissive to her own husband, not to all men, but to her own husbands.

And then in verse 23 Paul went on to say *why* a wife is to be submissive to her husband. “For” (an explanation is coming) “the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.” What does “the head” mean, whether in the home or in the church?

There is a very important statement about *heads* in 1 Corinthians 11:3:  
3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Notice that “the head of the woman is the man,” but also that “the head of every man is Christ.” Head means the one who is in charge, the one who is responsible. The husband does not have authority to make his wife do

just what he wants her to do, but he is responsible before God to lead his wife to do what the Lord wants her to do. This means that a wife needs to stand solidly with her husband in the operation of the family. If a wife takes sides against her husband, she is displeasing the Lord, and will find that her actions turn out for the worst, not for the better. On the other hand, when a wife recognizes and support her husband, with reference to their children even she may feel that he is making a mistake, she is going to have the Lord's blessing upon her. The husband is the head of the wife, and Christ is the head of the Church, and as the Head of the Church, He is the Savior of the Church, so the husband's headship over his wife is for the preservation of their marriage and their family.

In verse 24 we have the "therefore," as the only safe position for the Church to take in her relationship with her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is to live in submission to His will, so the same is true for the wife in her relationship with her husband. Christ's will for His church is perfect. A husband's knowledge of the will of God must be made upon his understanding of the teaching of Scripture. There are times when a husband may be wrong. But with a wife who knows the Lord, who is submissive to the Lord, and who faithfully prays for His husband, the blessing of the Lord will abide on that home.

**Concl:** But this is only half of the picture. Next week, the Lord willing, we will consider the role of the Spirit filled husband. When the role of the husband and wife are consistent with Christ and His Church, the family will not only be maintained and sustained, but will make the home a place where husband and wife and children love to be. We must always remember that pleasing the Lord is to be our first priority.