

## **EPHESIANS 5**

As he encourages us to live godly lives, Paul takes us to *the temple* (vv. 1–7) and reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus made for us. If we walk in love, our lives will be living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1–2; Phil. 2:17), fragrant to the Lord (John 12:1–8). Sin is ugly and a stench in God’s nostrils (Isa. 3:24).

Then Paul goes to *the field* (vv. 8–14) and reminds us that walking in the light produces spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22–23). If we walk in the light, we cannot have fellowship with the darkness (2 Cor. 6:14–18).

He takes us to *the marketplace* (vv. 15–17) and exhorts us to be like good merchants who know how to buy up an opportunity. When you walk in wisdom, you use your time wisely.

Then we follow him to *the banqueting hall* (vv. 18–21) and learn to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16–26) and be joyful, thankful, and submissive to one another.

Paul’s last visit is to *the home* (vv. 22–33) where he uses marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. Christ *loved* us and died for us, but today He *loves* us and cares for us. This intimate life is pictured in the Song of Solomon and can be a reality for all who will yield to Him.

## **EPHESIANS 6**

Spirit-filled Christians will manifest Christlikeness in the home (vv. 1–4), on the job (vv. 5–9), and on the battlefield (vv. 10–20). If we do not learn to obey at home, we are not likely to be obedient on the job or in the army of the Lord. Likewise, if we have not learned to *take* orders, we will not be too successful at *giving* orders, either as parents or as employers.

The danger in the home is parents who are *authoritarian* but do not exercise loving spiritual *authority*. The danger on the job is the employee who is a clock-watcher and does not obey from the heart, and the “boss” who forgets that he is second in command and will one day give an account to the Lord.

The danger on the battlefield is that we do not take the enemy seriously and therefore fail to put on all of the armor. By faith, you put on the armor through prayer, which must be done at the beginning of every day. Never underestimate the strategy and strength of the devil.

## **PHILIPPIANS 1**

Paul wrote, “For to me, to live is Christ” (v. 21). But he did more than *write* that statement; he *lived*. Jesus Christ is mentioned eighteen times in this chapter and is seen involved in many aspects of Paul’s life.

***His friends*** (1–11). Paul loved the saints in Philippi; he thought about them, prayed for them, and longed to see them. Christ made this fellowship possible.

***His circumstances*** (12–18). He was a prisoner not of Rome but of Jesus Christ, and his chains were “in Christ” (v. 13). Paul was practicing Romans 8:28—and it worked! Do you think first of Christ when circumstances are difficult?

**His future** (19–26). Paul’s life was in danger; if he lost the trial, he could be killed as an enemy of Rome. But when Christ is your life, death is not your enemy; and you have the assurance of being with Christ when life ends.

**His enemies** (27–30). When you suffer, you suffer for Christ’s sake; and you need not fear your enemies. The vital thing is that God’s people unite in Christ and oppose the enemy, not one another!

## **PHILIPPIANS 2**

**Look out** (1–11). Christ is the model for Christian life and service because He thought first of others, not of Himself. Do you look out for the interests of others, or do you think only of yourself? Do you have the servant attitude of Jesus Christ, willing to sacrifice for others? Will you empty yourself that others might be filled?

**Work out** (12–16). As you yield to the Lord, He works in and you work out; in this way, you fulfill His plan for your life (Eph. 2:10). God cannot shine *through* you until He works *in* you, so let Him have His way. You are a light in a dark world, a runner holding forth the living Word to a dead world.

**Poured out** (17–30). The image is that of the drink offering, poured out on the altar (Num. 15:1–10). Paul was willing to pour out his very life for the sake of the Lord and the church, and to do it *joyfully*. Timothy and Epaphroditus had the same attitude of service and sacrifice, giving themselves for others.

## **PHILIPPIANS 3**

**Rejoicing** (1). If you cannot rejoice in your circumstances, you can always rejoice in the Lord who controls your circumstances. Fix your attention on Him. He may not change your situation, but He will change you; and that is even better.

**Counting** (2–11). What is important to you? Do you feel you have made sacrifices to follow the Lord? Paul did not feel he had lost anything worthwhile by trusting Christ. Instead, he gained everything really worth having.

**Reaching** (12–16). Christians are like runners who refuse to look around or look back but keep running with their eyes on the goal. To look back at past successes or failures, or to look around to see what others are doing or saying, is to invite defeat. Heed Hebrews 12:1–2.

**Weeping** (17–19). This is the only mention of tears in a letter devoted to joy. Paul wept over professed Christians who lived to please themselves. Instead of having the mind of Christ, they thought like the world, and these people are with us today.

**Looking** (20–21). Paul looked up and eagerly anticipated the return of the Lord. Christ had taken care of his past (v. 13), and He would also take care of his future. And as for Paul’s present, his confidence was knowing that “He is able!” (v. 21).