

# EPHESIANS CHAPTER 5

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## Introduction:

1. Paul has been demonstrating God's wisdom in creating a new society composed of Jews and Gentiles.
  2. Paul sees an alienated humanity being reconciled, a fractured humanity being united, even a new humanity being created. It is a magnificent vision.
  3. Because God has done all of this, he expects new standards of living, both as individuals and as groups of saints in the church.
  4. Paul has just laid down some rules for conduct as believers:
    - a) Don't tell lies, but tell the truth.
    - b) Don't lose your temper but be sure your anger is righteous.
    - c) Don't steal, but work and give.
    - d) Don't use the gift of speech for evil, but for good.
    - e) Don't be unkind or bitter, but kind and loving.
- This new chapter also opens with "**therefore.**" Based on God's example of forgiveness, this is how we should live:

**(5:1) Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. (2) Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.**

- Such a lofty Father to **imitate!** The command is not simply avoiding sin, but be imitators of **God.**
- Children **imitate** their parents in many ways such as mannerisms and thought patterns, especially when they know they are **loved** (we are **dear children** vs. 1).
- Our example of how God **would** live is to see how Jesus **did** live. We must be familiar with His life. So the sacrifice of **Christ** was **to God a pleasing aroma.** **William Barclay** says the expression is used some 50 times in the Old Testament.

**(3) Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people.**

- **Sexual immorality** is the first issue on this list. It was common in Ephesus. There was a small sign pointing the way to the bordello as visitors came from their ships.
- We use words that take the force out of God's warnings. It's more than an "affair." It's **immorality**. It's more than "casual sex." It's **fornication**. It's more than "gay love." It's **sodomy**. It's more than "pro-choice." It's **murder**.
- Probably all three words—**immorality, impurity and greed**—related to a sexual theme and not money. This rules out porn viewing and adult videos for Christians. With the availability of the Internet, an increasing number of men (some of them preachers) are addicted to pornography.
- **Immorality** opens the door to a host of other evils. Murder, broken homes, broken friendships and sexual disease such as AIDS may follow in the wake of **immorality**. Young lives may be changed forever. No wonder Paul wrote, "**Flee fornication.**" (1st Corinthians 6:18 NASB)

**(4) Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes -- these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.**

- **Obscene stories.** What would the entertainment industry do without **obscene** drama?
- **Foolish talk** and **coarse jokes** are not allowed. TV writers take note and TV watchers change channels.
- We are to be **thankful** for sex. It is a gift from **God**. This *raises* its value rather than *degrading* it as the world does by their humor.
- While we are not to make *humor* of sexual themes, the Christian was *not* told to ignore the subject of sex as though it did not exist.

**(5) You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.**

- **Idolatry** is closely connected with **immorality**. Our most notoriously **immoral** entertainers are called **idols** regularly in our media. (Simple Google for “Hollywood idols.”)
- *The future phase* of the church is always called **inheriting the Kingdom of Christ**. It is drawn from the picture of Israel crossing the Jordan River to **inherit** the promised land. Leviticus 27:24.
- Observe Paul’s broader use of “**greedy**.” A **greedy** person is also an **idolater** as he **worships the things of the world**.

**(6) Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey Him.**

- Some teachers would say that a loving **God** would not punish anyone. Some tout their great freedom in Christ which seems to have no measurable limits. These teachers are **excusing sin**. **God** is loving, but He can also be **angry** with those **who disobey Him**.
- **Francis Foulkes** writes:  
 “But neither Law nor Prophets in the Old Testament, nor Gospels nor Epistles in the New Testament, allow men to regard lightly the sins that break the bonds of marriage, destroy the sanctity of the family, and cause children to be brought to birth without parents to be responsible for their nurture and training.”
- It is unpopular to discuss the **anger** of **God** on anyone except our worst enemies. However, **God** is saving His **anger** for those who continue to **disobey Him**.

**(7) Don't participate in the things these people do. (8) For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!**

- Break off with **people** who make excuses for sin. They may lead us astray. They should not be our entertainers or preachers – like those who teach that everyone is a child of God.
- Jesus is light personified:

**The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone.** John 1:4

**(9) For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. (10) Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.**

- Our task as Christian is not so much trying to figure out what is *sin and avoiding it* but to learn ***what pleases the Lord.*** This was the rule of life for Jesus:



**And the One who sent Me is with Me -- He has not deserted Me. For I always do what pleases Him.** John 8:29

**(11) Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.**

- In verse 8 Paul had warned about **darkness**. Now he goes a step further and says that we are to expose them.
- Whatever is meant by not participating in **the worthless deeds of evil and darkness**, surely we are not to have people with values of **darkness** as our bosom friends.
- While writing this section, I warned an acquaintance on *Facebook* that their post looked like an invitation to a lesbian wedding. They quickly responded that it was a

joke. I accepted that, but there wasn't any clue that I could understand that it was a joke.

**(12) It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret.**

- Some sin is too graphic to **even talk** about in detail. Not every sin needs to be vividly described.

**(13) But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, (14) for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."**

- All that our eyes can see is **light** reflected from material objects. Perhaps he means that exposing evil to the **light** is the best means of turning it to something useful.
- The source of the quotation is not clear. It may have been modified from the prophets or it may have been a line from a recently written hymn they were using.
- There are three metaphors:
  - a **sleeping** person **awaking**,
  - a resurrection **from the dead** and
  - a **light** shining on the subject person.

**(15) So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. (16) Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.**

- Our style of life needs to be wisely chosen, not merely borrowed from those we like who are nearby.
- Our time needs to be conserved and used in a way that will benefit God and His people. Each of us is assigned 168 hours per week.



**(17) Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.**

- We must *move away* from the **thoughtless** use of our lives including our time.
- We must *move toward* **understanding** what the **Lord** would have us be doing. This takes some investment of time itself.

**(18) Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,**

- Getting **drunk** is banned. Rather than be **filled** with spirits, we are to **be filled with The Holy Spirit**. Alcohol is a *depressant*. **The Spirit** of God is a *stimulant* to become like our Lord.

**(19) singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.**

- **Singing** is a church group activity and is another reason to be in the assembly.

- **Psalm:**

“a striking or twitching with the fingers (on musical strings)”; then, “a sacred song, sung to musical accompaniment, a psalm.”

(from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)



- The 136<sup>th</sup> Psalm contain antiphonal possibilities where one group sings the praise or history sentence and another group repeats **“His faithful love endures forever”** a total of 26 times. For today any song that allows the refrain to be repeated after each verse could be sung that way. We can have interaction while praising God. Ladies could sing to men or those under 30 could sing to those 30 and over.

- **Hymn:** *humnos*. A definition can be drawn from the usage in two places in the New Testament. In Matthew 26:30 Jesus and His disciples concluded the Passover feast by singing a **hymn**. It would have been vocal only and probably drawn from *The Great Hallel* of Psalms 113-118. The other case in the New Testament is in Acts 16:25 where Paul and Silas sang **hymns** while clamped in stocks in jail. This would have been vocal only also.
- **Spiritual songs:**

The *psalmos* denoted that which had a musical accompaniment; the *ode* (Eng., “ode”) was the generic term for a song; hence the accompanying adjective “spiritual.” (from *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
- The method of being filled with the Spirit includes **singing** that is centered on the **Lord**. This writer turns on Christian music at the first tilt-up in the morning and listens when there is a moment throughout the day. Even without others present, the music is a great joy as well as reminder of the Scriptures.
- Our **singing** should occupy an important place in the worship assembly. Even those who watch remotely can participate.

**(20) And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (21) And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

- **And give thanks for everything** is a very broad statement. If we can learn to do this, there should not be cause for despondency.
- **Submit to one another** shows that a fellowship of people is meant and not independent individualism.

**(22) For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.**

- God spoke of the woman's natural desire to be in charge.

**Then He said to the woman, "I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you."** Genesis 3:16

- Being married was assumed. People just living together in any culture destroys the home foundations in the culture. Marriage is always a legal contract.
- Be subject to your **husbands**. A lady is not to be subject to *any other* man. Other men may prove to be more exciting and conversational. They may even have better judgment. The Christian **wife's** task is to build up her own **husband**.
- **As to the Lord**. Being a believer is voluntary and being subject to one's **husband** is voluntary in just the same way. There is no requirement for a **husband** to get his **wife** into line.

Don't ever stop  
dating your wife  
and don't ever stop  
flirting with  
**YOUR HUSBAND.**  
www.1000.com

**(23) For a husband is the head of His wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church.**

- The **husband** is the God-assigned leader of the **wife**, the captain of the ship.
- He should encourage her to be the kind of person that she wants to be. Suppressing a wife's development is not an act of righteousness.
- He is not her boss and trainer and he is not superior by design, but he may be more aggressive by temperament or training.



- Christ is **Savior of His body** because of His personal sacrifice. This implies self-sacrifice by a **husband** on behalf of his **wife**.

**(24) As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.**

- **The church submits to Christ** by means of obeying His Word.
- This illustrates that the **wife** is to be subject to her **husband**. He is not to force her into **submission**. Her **submission** is conditional. Note the case of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25.

**(25) For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up His life for her (26) to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.**

- The **husband** is to **love** like **Christ loved**. **Christ** laid down **His life** for the **Church**. This raises a high standard for the **husband**.
- The **husband's** love, like **Christ's**, sacrifices in order to serve.
- **Christ's** purpose **was to make** the **church holy and clean**.
- The translation is odd. Consider these mainline translations.

*English Standard Version: . . . that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word . . .*

*King James Version: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word . . .*

*New American Standard Bible: . . . so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word . . .*

*New King James Version: . . . that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word . . .*

**Wilbur Fields** (*The Glorious Church, A Study of Ephesians*) comments on this variation:

The *washing of water* has been interpreted as referring to baptism by most commentators, both ancient and modern. (Compare Hebrews 10:22, and Titus 3:5) There have been some advocates of salvation by faith only who have tried to prove that the water mentioned here does not refer to baptism, and that Christian baptism has nothing to do with salvation or sanctification. Such interpretations are obviously not an effort to present what Scriptures say, but to prove by Scriptures the doctrines that one already believes.

Paul had spoken of *one baptism* in Ephesians 4:5 and that was, by definition, washing in water. So we take this verse 26 to include **washing of water**.

**(27) He did this to present her to Himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.**

- We have a picture of Christ, the bridegroom, preparing His bride for **glory**. To **glorify** is to set a person forth in their best possible light. All flaws will be removed from the bride by His sacrifice.
- **William Barclay** informs us about a custom of the time:

Christ cleansed and consecrated the Church by the washing of water on the day when each member of the Church took his confession of faith.

It may well be that Paul has in mind a Greek custom. One of the Greek marriage customs was that before the bride was taken to her marriage she was bathed in the water of a stream sacred to some god or goddess. In Athens, for instance, the bride was bathed in the waters of the Callirhoe, which was sacred to the goddess Athene.

It is of baptism that Paul is thinking. By the washing of baptism and by the confession of faith, Christ sought to make for himself a Church, cleansed and consecrated, until there was neither soiling spot nor disfiguring wrinkle upon it.

**(28) In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.**

- In the Greek text of this verse “**own**” (G1438) is used four times. While God had permitted polygamy in the Old Testament, monogamy is His ideal for believers.
- Self-love is presented: **Love** your **wives** as your **own body**. A **husband** cares about his **wife’s** pain, physically and emotionally.

**(29) No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. (30) And we are members of his body.**

- It is possible for a man to **hate** his wife because Paul brings up the subject. He must work at nourishing and cherishing her. This means he must not focus on what she does that he does not like.

**(31) As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."**

- This is from the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:24. The example of the first marriage is presented. Note that

polygamy is not in sight in this statement and parents are to become secondary. The words were prophetic because parents didn't exist yet.

- A new entity is formed: they are **one**.

**(32) This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. (33) So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

- Even though the words are here primarily to teach about the relationship between **Christ** and the **Church**, they also instruct us regarding the **husband** and **wife**.
- Note the carefulness of Paul saying his own **wife**. Men who are intrigued with someone else's **wife** are moving toward trouble that can destroy one or two homes. A man so drawn must step up his **love** and appreciation towards his own **wife**.
- The wife is to **respect her husband** including the way she speaks to him. For that matter, the man must speak **respectfully** of his **wife**.