

The Book of Ephesians

Chapter 5

Ephesians 5:1–33 (NKJV)

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. ³ But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. ¹⁴ Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ ¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Verse and Chapter Breaks

There are times when formatting our Bibles, the editors/publishers put verse or chapter breaks in places that allow for unnecessary context interruptions. This is one of those occasions! The continuity of the present thought flows from Ephesians chapter 4:17 through chapter 5:21. Therefore, picking up here in chapter 5 we will continue the lessons on orthopraxy: proper behavior/practice.

Ephesians 5:1–8

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

Imitators

As believers, we are called to *“be imitators of God as dear children”* (vs. 1).

None of us are hard pressed to recognize that children who spend time with their parents learn to be like them. This, then, will be key to the development of the nature of Jesus the Holy Spirit develops in us. As believers, we are called to spend time with the Lord (and with His people). As we do, we are encouraged in growth.

The Perfect Model

We have the perfect manifest example of God in *“the Man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5). *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation”* (Colossians 1:15). Therefore, the “model” whereby we can measure what it looks like to be *“imitators of God”* is Jesus Himself.

The whole of Scripture reveals the attributes of God, and this should not be ignored. However, a special focus on the four Gospels will teach us much of Jesus’ character, mannerisms, methods, servanthood, and the way He handled others.

Walk in Love

The Gospel accounts show us that the things Paul assigned to the “the walk of love” (orthopraxy) is no different than what Jesus demonstrated. Jesus *“let no corrupt word proceed out of [His] mouth...,”* He only spoke those things that were *“good for necessary edification...,”* and His handling of others always *“impart[ed] grace to the hearers”* (4:29). He was not an *“idolater,”* a *“fornicator,”* or *“covetous,”* etc. (vs. 5). Jesus emulated what it means to *“walk in*

love” (vs. 2). Even His rebuke of the religious was an act of love! He was declaring the truth in order to call them to humility and repentance.

As Dear Children

Paul’s exhortation included the fact that the Ephesians were to be imitators of God “*as dear children*.” He did not want them to be rebellious, difficult, or indifferent “*children*.” He wanted them (and all of us) to abandon stubbornness and to put on a “ready mind” as an honorable disposition. As an earthly child is called to honor his or her father and mother, we are called to honor our Heavenly Father by reflecting the very nature of Jesus in all we say and do—moreover, in all we think!

Not of the Flesh

Our capacity to be “*imitators of God*,” and to “*walk in love*,” is not within our human capability or grasp. However, it is made possible by the indwelling Spirit of God—Who has “*sealed us for the day of redemption*” (4:30). Paul said, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells...*” (Romans 7:18a). However, by the power of God—through grace—we manifest the life and attributes of Christ. He is both the cause and effect of our growth. Our transformation (the transformation Paul called the Ephesians to embrace) is God’s work in us. Even our “surrender” is and must be attributed to His working in us—for He alone has both created and enabled us that we may will and do—for His good pleasure (see Philippians 2:12–13).

A Sweet-Smelling Aroma

Jesus loves us “*and [has] given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma*” (vs. 2). In response, we who have been justified freely by His grace and sanctified by His power are privileged to offer ourselves “*a living sacrifice*” unto God (see Romans 12:1). As we do, we too provide a “*sweet-smelling aroma to the Lord*.”

The language used here is borrowed from the sacrificial system—wherein the sacrifices foreshadowed our Lord. Jesus is tied to this fact here in the text.

Jesus fulfilled the Law and the sacrificial system. His once-for-all sacrifice was acceptable to God, and made possible our redemption and reconciliation to God. Moreover, through Jesus’ finished work we too may become a fragrant and sweet smelling aroma to God. Being “*sealed... for the day of redemption*” not only guarantees our safe delivery to an eternal life, but also to the finished purpose of God in us: ourselves as an acceptable offering—well pleasing to the Lord.

Sins of the Flesh

The Scriptures condemn “*fornication*” (porneia) (vs. 3). The fornication herein is any form of sexual infidelity. Fidelity is faithfulness to the Lord, a person, cause, or belief—demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support. It is the faithful reflection of truth (see the lessons on chapter 4, “What is Truth?” for definition). Although the Scriptures allow for no

“sexual” interactions with the Lord, we do note that there is indeed a form of spiritual fornication condemned in the Bible (see Revelation 14:8, 17:2–4, 18:3, 9 and 19:2).

Paul calls the believer to faithfulness in our representation of Jesus. Sexual infidelity does not represent His holiness and it should not be allowed in the life of a believer. Moreover, as much as some would defend sexual interactions apart from marriage by suggesting that the participants love one another, and therefore call the act acceptable, have failed to properly define love. *“Love does no harm to a neighbor”* (Romans 13:10), and therefore, sinning while involving another (for sin harms) is not love at all—and therefore must be redefined. When one serves their own interests at the expense of another, it is *“covetousness”* (vs. 3) lust—not love.

“Uncleanness” pushes further in description. *“Uncleanness”* indicates the broadest sense of sexual wrongdoing: homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, necrophilia, cultic sexual behavior, etc. These all fall into the classification of *“fornication”* but are further condemned as both physically and morally unclean. Paul said, *“let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints...”* (vs. 3).

Paul calls the believer away from *“covetousness.”* *“Covetousness”* involves a lack of satisfaction and a lust for more. Paul told Timothy, *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1 Timothy 6:6). Our truest satisfaction comes from a right relationship with the Lord. As believers grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, they grow in greater and greater contentment.

Fornication vs. Adultery

“Fornication” generally describes conduct outside the marriage covenant and therefore is most often applied to unmarried persons. However, *“fornication”* as used to describe sexual infidelity between unmarried persons also has a limited application to those who are married. Broadly defined, fornication is sexual in nature. However, when a married person commits an act of *“fornication,”* the marriage covenant is violated and the definition must be redefined as adultery. Therefore, adultery is the breaking of a covenant.

From a strictly Biblical perspective, marital adultery is the voluntary/participatory breaking of the marriage covenant through sexual infidelity—either mentally or physically—where one or both of those involved is married, and the other participant is not that person’s spouse. This form of infidelity is a violation of the marriage covenant. That said, adultery is not grounds for divorce as some might suggest. There are no New Testament passages that suggest adultery is justification for divorce. The only provisional allowance for divorce in the New Testament/Church Age is the unrepentant departure of a spouse. Under Old Covenant law, adultery was punishable by death. Therefore, divorce was unnecessary. Furthermore, following the death of the violating party, the living party was free to remarry without causing another adulterous occurrence. A detailed study of these things will be provided in our study of verses 22–33.

“Filthiness” (vs. 4) is obscene behavior. For example, a public display of sexual activity, etc. *“Foolish talking,”* and *“coarse jesting,”* (vs. 4) relate to speech and behavior. *“Foolish talking”* is indecent, unwise, and/or irresponsible articulation. Obscene speech is the use of

language that reflects behavior described in the definitions of *“fornication.”* *“Course jesting”* is any physical activity that alludes to the same. These acts are unacceptable to the Christian testimony and should be avoided. Paul simply said they are *“not fitting”* (vs. 4).

Those who are born again are a people called to live in grace, reflect righteousness, and walk in truth. Living this way demonstrates our *“giving of thanks”* (vs. 4) to the Lord.

“You” and “Them”

Often in Scripture there is distinction made between “you” and “them.” A careful student of the Bible will take note. To the believer it is said that *“no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them”* (vss. 5–7).

Paul points out that those whom he identified as the *“sons of disobedience”* live in and after the flesh. They have no *“inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God,”* but are worthy of the *“wrath of God.”* However, Paul’s illustrated communication pointed out that “those” who are unregenerated live in a way that the believer must avoid: *“Therefore do not be partakers with them”* (vs. 7). The contrast is “you” vs. “them.”

Not Appointed to Wrath

While it is certain that we as believers are not to live as *“the sons of disobedience,”* we are not those in danger of suffering the wrath of God—even when falling short, or dare I say, making the choice to disobey. Within the text Paul explained “you” *“were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord”* (vs. 8). Then he wrote, *“walk as children of light”* (vs. 8). The believer’s walk was his call! This was not a threat of wrath nor of disinheritance.

Jesus Christ suffered the wrath of God on behalf of every believer. Therefore, we know that *“God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Jesus said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life”* (John 5:24).

As those *“sealed for the day of redemption,”* we are to *“walk in love,”* live in truth, give thanks, and surrender (by God’s grace) to the power of God at work within us. We are not to be *“partakers”* with *“those”* who live in *“disobedience.”*

Can We Be Disinherited?

Please recall that in chapter 1 Paul wrote, *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory”* (1:13–14). The *“guarantee of our inheritance”* is not resting in us, nor upon us. It is secured by *“the Holy Spirit.”* We are the *“purchased possession”* and our *“inheritance”* is in the Lord, *“to the praise of His glory.”*

Ephesians 5:8–18

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

In the Light

The expression “*You were once darkness*” speaks to the fact that we were children of the world, children of the darkness. Now we are “*children of the light.*” Paul told the Thessalonians, “*You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness*” (1 Thessalonians 5:5). To the Philippians, he said we are to be “*blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*” (Philippians 2:15). Therefore, as the illuminated—those who dwell in the light and see, we are called to a new way of living.

But I’m Saved!

We have learned that believers are not in danger of suffering the wrath of God—even when falling short or acting out in fleshly rebellion. Jesus suffered the wrath of God on our behalf! However, because of the present fleshly nature, some gravitate toward an abuse of God’s grace by living foolishly. This should not occur!

As the saved, we are called to be thankful. We are instructed to set our hearts and minds toward the things of the Spirit—avoiding all sinful propensities as an offering of sincere worship.

Paul wrote the Romans saying, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*” (Romans 12:1). We are called to the same.

Moreover, we must also agree with the command he gave when writing, “*do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:2). We must not reject the calling God has on our lives! We must rightly reflect the truth that dwells within us, “*for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord*” (vss. 9–10).

The Fruit of the Spirit—Not of Man!

“*Goodness*” is moral excellence; it relates to character.

“*Righteousness*” is doing the right thing. It may be measured by right interpersonal relationships between man and man or between man and God.

“*Truth*” is (as we have learned) the absolute replication of the authentic or original.

With this in mind, Paul says, “*for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth*” (vs. 9). It is the “*fruit of the Spirit,*” not the fruit of man.

Jesus said that there is none good but God (Matthew 19:17, Mark 10:18). To the Romans Paul wrote, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells*” (Romans 7:18a).

In Isaiah we read about the so-called “*righteousness*” of man. “*But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6a). For this reason, Paul told the Philippians, we “*have no confidence in the flesh*” (Philippians 3:3b).

Concerning “*truth,*” we know that all men are liars. Paul wrote, “*What then? Are we better than they? Not at all... ‘Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit;’ ‘the poison of asps is under their lips;’ ‘whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness’*” (Romans 3:9–18 abbreviated).

With all of this being true, we know that there can be no “*goodness,*” “*righteousness,*” or “*truth*” in us—without the indwelling person of the Holy Spirit producing them. He is our “*goodness;*” He is our “*righteousness;*” He is the “*truth.*” The work (fruit of the Spirit) is His not ours. His work is “*acceptable to the Lord*” (vs. 10).

The Works of Darkness

In “*finding out what is acceptable to the Lord*” (vs. 10), Paul’s continuing exhortation is fittingly next. He said, “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret*” (vss. 11–12). Note that there is a blurry line between the “*works of darkness*” and the “*them*” within Paul’s condemnation. It seems that the works are personified herein. However, one might suggest that it is both the men who act and their works that must be identified. Inasmuch as dark works beget dark works, we must consider both.

The exhortation “*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*” in itself does not indicate a separation from those who practice the “*works*” (see 1 Corinthians 5:9–11). Clearly it is a call to separation from the “*works*” themselves. The expression demands a separation of one’s self from the “*works of darkness*” and the “*unfruitful*” by-products they produce. However, we are commanded to refrain from fellowship with professing believers who practice such things (1 Corinthians 5:11) and are cautioned from bonds with evil doers, “*For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*” (see all of 2 Corinthians 6:11–18).

“Fellowship” is *“synkoinoneite”* (to fellowship with). It speaks of “joining in” and “participation.” We are commanded to abstain from and reject the *“works of darkness”* (vs. 11).

Secondary By-Products

As briefly mentioned, the *“unfruitful works...that are done in secret [dark] places”* produce secondary manifestations and consequences. For example, an act of adultery may result in disease, lying, the grief and fleshly response of one’s spouse, suicide, divorce, the demise of the one with whom an adulterous action occurred, loss of testimony and credibility, loss of trust, damaged family relationships, hurt children, etc. The list is exhaustive!

We who desire good (both for ourselves and others) must be careful not to sow the seeds of evil. *“The wicked man does deceptive work, but he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward”* (Proverbs 11:18).

Expose the Darkness

Exposing the darkness requires wisdom, for *“it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret”* (vs. 12). Therefore, one must be guarded about how they expose that which is evil. For example, one might immediately expose the blasphemous nature of same sex marriage, but avoid sharing the horrible perversions practiced in the homosexual community. One may expose abortion as murder without showing pictures of mutilated human babies. (I will admit that the shock treatments do make an impact, but nonetheless, I think many *“works”* can be exposed while refraining from a display of the shameful and gory!)

We are light in the Lord. Therefore, let us expose the darkness (as required) by illumination of the truth. Those who refuse to expose the darkness often assist its continuance. Don’t allow yourself to be silenced. Be gentle, be kind, but be firm and direct. *“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy”* (James 3:17).

Whatever Makes Manifest is Light

As believers we have the illumination of the Spirit—and the Word of Truth. Right and wrong, as good and evil, are clear and defined. This is especially true when examining all things through the filter of love—for love honors God and does no harm to its neighbor (see Romans 13:10).

We know that *“all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light”* (vs. 13). Light illuminates the darkness and exposes that which is hidden.

Paul told the Thessalonians, *“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness”* (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

Wake Up

Of interest is Paul's segue to the following call. He apparently fitted together a few passages found in Isaiah when he wrote, *"Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light' "* (vs. 14). (Likely taken from Isaiah 26:19, 51:17, 52:1, and 60:1.) He then adds, *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* (vss. 15–16)

Circumspect living is walking according to a standard—and the standard is love. Fools ignore wisdom, fritter away valuable time, waste opportunities, squander resources, and do cause harm. The circumspect to the contrary walk in wisdom, redeem the time, and provide blessing. Those who are *"awake"* see the darkness and walk in the light. They see that *"the days are evil"* and therefore seize every possible opportunity to serve the Lord, minister to His people, and call to those who remain asleep. Those who are *"awake"* cast light on evil, dispel darkness, and *"warn the unruly"* (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Peter wrote, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). May the Lord use us in these evil days—and all the more as we see the Day of the Lord approaching. *"Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is"* (vs. 17).

Walk in Wisdom

The Scriptures are filled with historical accounts and potent illustrations about the foolish and the wise. We as believers have come to understand that *"the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding"* (Proverbs 9:10), and thus, we reverence the Lord and study the Bible. Moreover, the maturing believer will see that *"wisdom is the principal thing; [and] therefore [seek to] get [the] wisdom [of God]."* (Proverbs 4:7a). Through the Scriptures we gain understanding of the *"Holy One"* and therefore seek to *"get understanding"* (Proverbs 4:7b).

Ephesians 5:18–21

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."

Don't be a Drunkard: Don't Get Drunk—Be Sober!

History (both modern and ancient) has shown that drunkards lack understanding and those who are drunk lack wisdom. Many foolish and hurtful things have been done (and said) by the intoxicated. Therefore, Paul exhorts all believers to be sober, awake, wise and filled with the Spirit. He wrote, *"do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."* (vs. 18)

"Dissipation" is the result of intoxication/drunkenness. *"Dissipation"* is *"senselessness"* or *"recklessness."* It manifests in rash and foolish behavior in word and/or deed. It implies *"being without restraint"* or *"without control."* Therefore, the believer should always be sober

and in control of his or her thoughts—and actions. Therefore *“do not be drunk with wine”* (vs. 18a) or any other mind-altering substance. Simply stated, it is unwise to be intoxicated.

Be Filled with The Spirit

In contrast to drunkenness and intoxication, Paul encouraged believers to *“be filled with the Spirit.”* Those who are *“filled with the Spirit”* are sober, awake, wise, and growing. The intoxicated are unwise and unaware—asleep to the times and the evils thereof. Those who are *“filled with the Spirit”* see that *“the days are evil”* and are therefore ready to give an answer to everyone who asks about the hope they have in Jesus (see 1 Peter 3:15).

Our words and thoughts must reflect the truth. We fail to properly represent the Lord when under the influence—of any substance that has a mind and/or behavior-altering influence. When we are *“filled with the Spirit,”* we are under the influence of the Lord. This is the call of every believer.

Worship by Thanksgiving and Praise

Rather than being drunk and *“rambling off at the mouth”* (see Proverbs 15:2 and Ecclesiastes 10:11–13), being filled with the Spirit lends toward *“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (vss. 19–20).

Herein we see a beautiful ministry of the Spirit: edifying praise to the Lord. When believers share with one another, reference, quote, or sing psalms, hymns, and Spirit-led choruses, the Lord is glorified, and believers are edified—built up. Songs of praise may be mutually shared whereby believers are reminded of who God is and all He does. Songs of thanksgiving reflect His provisions and are directed *“to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (vs. 20).

“Submitting to One Another”

Paul desired that the Ephesians view worship and praise as God focused—but also honorable toward those around us. Thus he wrote, *“submitting to one another in the fear of God”* (vs. 21). It is important to recognize the connection. There is no segregation between *“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (vs. 19) and *“submitting to one another in the fear of God”* (vs. 21).

We are called to prefer one another—to serve one another. Ministry and sensitivity toward others in the body honors the Lord. To the Philippians Paul wrote, *“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Philippians 2:4). Therefore, *“submitting to one another”* implies listening to one another, caring for one another, seeking what is best for one another—not seeking our own way. We are not independent of one another. We are called to serve the Lord, side by side, each part of the body doing its part, for the glory of God.

Submission: More than Compliance

“Submitting to one another” suggests more than obedience of one to another. Submission implies preferring the other with non-resistance—not just compliance. It is possible to obey, comply, or surrender while maintaining inner resistance. To this Paul speaks! He calls the believer to others-centered understanding, servanthood, and selfless ministry.

“Submitting to one another” does not disparage or suggest a lack of recognition for leadership. Leadership structures apply in all governance: in the Church, in the home, and in civil matters. Submission is a rule of servanthood and a disposition of the heart. Order turns to anarchy when we fail to recognize leadership and godly governance.

Inasmuch as submission is critical to the health of the Church, it is likewise essential in the home.

Paul’s note of this required a segue to family relationships.

Ephesians 5:22–24 and 33b

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything ...let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

On Women and Wives

We have noted that being submitted to one another does not deconstruct leadership or headship. God has set an order to the Church, to government, and to family relationships. However, it does show us all that we, as members of the Body of Christ, need each other. We should be listening to one another, learning from one another, exhorting one another, edifying one another. We should live “others-centered” rather than “self-centered” lives. We are not independent of one another but are called to serve the Lord, side by side, as individuals and as part of the body of Christ, giving glory to the Lord.

The same can be said about the marriage relationship: Husbands loving and serving their wives and wives loving and serving their husbands. As married persons we are called to listen to each other, learn from each other, exhort one another, and edify one another. A healthy marriage is modeled by “others-centeredness” not “self-centeredness.”

Husbands and wives are not to be independent of one another, but are called to live together, work together, and serve one another as a testimony to the glory of God. We live side by side as individual believers, but, as spouses, we are joined in unity for the glory and purposes of God.

Marriage—a Model

Marriage is a model and testimony to the relationship believers have with the Lord. As husband and wife we are a model of Christ and His Church.

We as believers are under the headship of Jesus. We are called to live our lives in submission to the Lord—and His will for our lives. In the same way wives are to live in submission to their husbands reflecting the same model of love and obedience.

Paul told the Corinthians, “...I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3). “Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (vs. 24).

Order in the Home

God has set His order of leadership and submission for the home. Husbands and wives while maintaining equal value do not have the same roles. God has established headship in Scripture. For this reason, Paul tells the Ephesians that “*the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body*” (vs. 23). He instructs every wife, “*submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*” (vs. 22).

“*Submit*” comes from the Greek word “hypotasso.” “Hypo” designates a place in order behind or below, and “tasso” is to place in order. Therefore, “*submit*” signifies a place in order. It does not suggest lesser quality, poorer gifting, lack of intelligence, worth, etc. In fact, many women have a higher intellect, greater education, better insight, keener discernment, and overall giftedness above many men. However, God has set an order for the home just as He has for the Church.

Submission does not suggest that a wife’s mission, usefulness, or calling are less than that of the husband’s. It simply signifies a difference of order and level of subjection to the leadership and therefore protection of her husband.

In argument some will cite a passage from Galatians that reads, “*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:27–28). However, this passage relates to salvation not the order of the home.

In Christ there is neither male nor female. Salvation is offered to and acquired by both men and women in the same way—by grace through faith in Christ alone. It is no more a declaration of co-equality in leadership than it is to suggest that there is no distinction between men and women.

The Battle for the Home

One of the greatest battles we face is for the home. Our adversary Satan is doing all he can to destroy the model God has set in place. For this reason, divorce is at an all-time high, and fornication is thought to be culturally acceptable.

The Bible condemns same-sex marriage, divorce, and heterosexual and/or homosexual fornication. These things are a direct assault on the foundational principles of marriage and the truths taught in the Bible. (See Addendum 1)

The Law of First Reference

The model God has set in order and mandated has its foundation in Genesis. God created man and woman to complement one another. Man is not independent of woman and neither is woman independent of man.

Man *“...is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God”* (1 Corinthians 11:7–12). (See also Genesis 2:7–25).

It cannot be overstated that God created marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Feminism in the Post-modern Age

Inasmuch as divorce and fornication are condemned in Scripture, so also is the unbiblical/God-rejecting secularist view on marriage and leadership in the home. The secular and popularized model denies headship and promotes a feminism not found in Scripture. A wife is a precious compliment to her husband, and the destructiveness of modern day feminism has harmed the Church, the home, and society.

Why Submission and Subordination?

The Scripture makes clear that a woman’s role is to be a wife and mother. She is to be a *“homemaker.”*

Paul taught Titus, *“but as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed”* (Titus 2:1–5).

The passage does not diminish women but provides them a place of honor and protection from the things of the world. Women are to be cherished and protected. They are to be provided for and loved. They are to be led into truth, supported, and cared for—as Christ cares for and loves His Church.

A man’s wife should not be placed in a position wherein she is forced to the front lines. She should never be made a target for the Devil, men, or culture. A woman who refuses to

acknowledge her role and position resists the Lord and makes herself vulnerable to attack and harm.

Paul's instruction to Titus does not suggest that a woman cannot work or serve outside the home. However, her first responsibility is to her husband, her children, and then to her church and community. Shamefully, many men have left their Biblically-prescribed roles—leaving their wives vulnerable to the temptation of stepping out of their God-ordained role. Moreover, some women have been forced to venture away from the Biblical model in order to provide for their families, and thus, leave their children and marriages vulnerable. When the Biblical model is rejected, marriages fail, children suffer and society decays.

Disobedient Men

The Scriptures do not ignore the disobedient husband. Men are accountable to the Lord. *“For the eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good”* (Proverbs 15:3). However, it is not the role of the wife to rebuke or disrespect her husband.

Peter wrote, *“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror”* (1 Peter 3:1–6).

To the Church in Corinth Paul wrote, *“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man, but to be in silence”* (1 Timothy 2:12). The context herein was applied to Church behavior—but also has application in the home. Therefore, women who are married to a man in disobedience must pray and trust the Lord to correct her husband. They are to treat their husbands with respect—not showing disrespect, not taking the lead, not usurping his authority. These women are to trust the Lord with the leadership of their husbands. Moreover, a woman is not responsible to God for the leadership of her husband. He is accountable—even if an unbeliever.

Unbelieving Husbands

Paul recognized occasions where a woman is married to an unbelieving man. He said, *“And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him”* (1 Corinthians 7:13). Therefore, we must conclude that a woman is to be submissive to her husband—even if an unbeliever. Her life in the Lord testifies to her trust and relationship with Jesus.

As is Fitting in the Lord

The obedience of a wife to her husband is limited to and in subjection to the Lord. Should a husband ask or command his wife to disobey the Lord, it is then she can respectfully “disobey.” Paul told the women of Colossae, *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord”* (Colossians 3:18). Therefore, should a husband require his wife to disobey the Lord, her higher calling is to God Himself.

But I Disagree

Women who “don’t like” the leadership of their husbands are not to usurp or discredit his role and authority. Herein Paul said, *“...let the wife see that she respects her husband”* (vs. 33).

A wife is not to argue with or act in stubbornness toward her husband. She is to adorn herself with *“...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God”* (1 Peter 3:4). Her example will be a blessing to the Lord, will leave room for the Lord to provide conviction to her husband—without the distraction of human anger or reaction—and will provide the best possible testimony to her children.

A Difficult Passage

In Genesis, after the fall, we read of God’s disciplinary action taken against Adam and Eve. An attribute of that action was that Eve was told, *“your desire shall be for your husband”* (Genesis 3:16), and then God added, *“he shall rule over you”* (Genesis 3:16b). Without question this is a difficult passage.

By virtue of an overall Biblical thread, we can point to at least two things! First of all, the attributes of the curse were passed down to all men and women. Therefore, in this case, the specifics of the curse Eve bore were passed down to all women. Secondly, Eve, having been deceived, led her husband into error (1 Timothy 2:12–14) and would therefore be subordinated to his leadership. The subordination would involve the call to submission and, by virtue of the fallen and sinful nature, suffer an associated jealousy of and for her husband—wherein she would desire to lead or control. However, *“she shall be saved in childbearing”* (1 Timothy 2:15)—apparently suggesting that her longings will be satiated by bearing and nurturing children. These facts are documented throughout the Scriptures.

Paul wrote to Titus commanding that he, *“admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed”* (Titus 2:1–5). To Timothy he declared, *“Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully”* (1 Timothy 5:14).

A Faithful Helpmate

Women are called to be helpers to their husbands—a compliment. Therefore, a woman should share with her husband—helping him under by the leadership and power of the Lord. It should not be forgotten that God said, *“It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him*

a helper comparable [complimentary] to him” (Genesis 2:18). A Woman therefore is a gift from God—a help to him. She should not be disregarded.

Many women are gifted with insights that differ from those of men, and will therefore, benefit their husbands—if they are willing to recognize their gifting. Men are profited when they care about the things that matter to their wives. A Godly man will seek for and allow his wife to “weigh in” with discernment on decisions, child rearing, management of the home, service to the Lord, etc.

Self—A Present Problem

Finally, we are not unaware of our humanness and shortcomings. Therefore, it is recognized that teachings like this may be difficult to process—and may inspire unbiblical self-condemnation which can lead to discouragement and depression. May we all be aware of this fact! God has not called us to a standard that He is unwilling or incapable of accomplishing in us. It is His work in us, not our work in Him! God is patient with our humanness and understands that we are frail. Therefore, as a husband or wife, let us patiently care for each other! May we learn from one another and grow in the grace of God. We are not called to criticism or impatience. As we self-examine, we all see our weaknesses. May this fact lead us to greater dependence upon the Lord—not to condemnation of one’s self or of our spouse.

Are You Talking to Me?

Of interest is the fact that Paul speaks separately and directly to husbands and wives in this text. He did not write to the one about the other. Nowhere in this passage did he suggest that the man should command his wife to be submissive, nor did he suggest that a woman criticize the role and leadership of her husband. As husbands and wives we are all called to pray for one another, be patient with one another, love one another, and serve one another—for the glory of God.

A Reminder as a Segue

It is incumbent upon me to move forward in the text by reminding both men and woman that submission to a husband is rewarding and without burden when the man is a man of God—a man with the nature of Jesus.

Ephesians 5:25–33a

On Men and Husbands

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his

wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself...

A Difficult Passage—Part 2

After the fall, God took disciplinary action against Adam. To Adam God said, *“because you have heeded the voice of your wife”* (Genesis 3:17a), and have eaten from *“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”* (Genesis 2:17a), which He had forbidden, saying, *“you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Genesis 2:17b). And after having said these things to Adam, God pronounced judgment upon him saying, *“cursed is the ground for your sake”* (Genesis 3:17c), causing the man to provide for himself, his wife, and his family through the *“sweat of his brow”* (Genesis 3:19). Moreover, devastatingly God said that man would *“return to the ground, for out of it you were taken”* (Genesis 3:19); therefore man/mankind would suffer death.

As mentioned above, the attributes of the curse were passed down to all men and women. Therefore, in this case, within the specifics of the curse, Adam would, like Eve, suffer attributes of the curse, and would carry responsibility for sin and death throughout his generations—to all men (see Romans 5).

Secondly, since Adam heeded the voice of his wife, therefore being led into error (1 Timothy 2:12-14), he would be commanded to take authority over his wife and family—thus bearing the leadership responsibility. This ordination would require the man to provide for, lead, protect, and nurture his wife and family—wherein he would bear the burden of leadership and the associated responsibility. Therefore, with note, Paul gave greater focus and explanation to the responsibilities of the man—in contrast to those of the woman.

On Men and Husbands

Men are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. This calling is greater than one might initially recognize.

In brief, I can mention a few of the ways in which Jesus loves His bride:

- 1) Jesus planned for our redemption before the foundation of the world. Therefore, a godly man will plan for his future, his wife, and his family.
- 2) Jesus was the spotless lamb of God from before the foundation of the world. Therefore, a man is called to keep himself pure for his bride—before and after his wedding day.
- 3) Jesus is the head of the Church, and therefore man is called to headship—a responsibility Adam neglected prior to the fall.
- 4) Jesus loved us before we loved Him—and loves us in spite of us. Therefore, every man is called to love his wife even when she is unworthy, unlovely, or needs nurturing.
- 5) Jesus left the comforts of His home in heaven. Therefore, a man is to leave his father and mother and cling to his wife.
- 6) Jesus humbled Himself in order to serve the needs of His bride. Therefore, humility in leadership is becoming to a man.

- 7) Jesus was “others-centered” and put himself last for the benefit of His bride. Therefore, a man seeing to the needs of His wife and family is paramount in leadership.
- 8) Jesus bore the reproach and shame His wife rightfully deserved. Therefore, as best possible, a man will protect his bride from shame and embarrassment—suffering for her, in her place—without casting guilt or blame.
- 9) Jesus was punished for His bride. Therefore, if and when possible, a man will carry the burden and consequences of the sins, shortcomings, and failures of his bride.
- 10) Jesus laid down His life, protecting His bride from death! Therefore, a man must do all necessary to protect and provide for the overall safety, well-being, and life of his wife—and family.
- 11) When Jesus was taken from His bride, He did not leave her without comfort, care, protection and provision. Therefore, a godly man will provide for his wife, as best he can, in the event of his absence or death.
- 12) Jesus did not leave His bride without hope. Therefore, the husband is called to spiritually lead, cast vision, and provide hope to his wife and family.

I am sure this list could be further developed. However, I will leave that to the reader’s studious investment.

That He Might Present Her to Himself

Of interest to me is the special emphasis Paul placed on the role of Christ in serving His bride—that He might present her to Himself. He wrote, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (vss. 25–27).*

The passage seems to indicate that a man who does not invest in his wife may not find her to be the wife he desires. Please allow me to underscore this again. Paul points out that the Lord serves His bride, *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (vs. 27).* Therefore, the husband likewise. He must invest in his bride that she may develop and grow.

It has been said that a man who does not love his wife—investing in her—will be a miserable man.

The Scriptures plainly tell us that the woman was taken from man, for man. *“For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Corinthians 11:8–9).* Therefore, if a man desires the benefit of a great wife, he will love his wife and do all he can to provide her the best he has to offer—*“he who loves his wife loves himself” (vs. 28).* Therefore, men, love your wife!

Love

Paul said, “love” your wife. “Love” is translated from the Greek word “Agapao.” This is a verb describing a self-sacrificial love that seeks the best for its object. Therefore, Paul is instructing husbands to love their wives self-sacrificially.

Self-sacrificial love embraces the meaning we must develop. Therefore, we will examine the ways in which Christ loves the Church and gave Himself for her.

Initiation and Provision

First of all, Christ initiated a relationship with us—by first making the relationship possible. This is “*grace for grace*” (John 1:16). Jesus willingly laid down His life for us so that we could have a relationship with Him. Therefore, husbands should learn that the first attribute required in genuine love for one’s wife is provision and service.

When a man desires to take to himself a wife, he must be willing to initiate a relationship that will cost him. He must not look at marriage as self-serving, but as something he will sacrifice for—in order to gain. The Book of Proverbs tells us, “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD*” (Proverbs 18:22). However, we also know that Paul said, “*if you do marry...such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you*” (1 Corinthians 7:28 modified). Therefore, know that taking a wife is wonderful and beneficial to man—for “*It is not good for man to be alone*” (Genesis 2:18), but also recognize that the responsibilities and duties of being a husband are costly. They are first and foremost self-sacrificing.

Love vs. Lust

One of the greatest problems we discover in struggling marriages is a lack of understanding about the true meaning of love. Most people who marry today have not been given good teaching on the difference between love and lust. Lust is self-serving. Love is self-sacrificial. Lust seeks for what it gains. Love seeks for how it can give.

When a husband sees his wife as someone who is there to serve him and make him happy, he will end up disappointed. This is true for women as well! A woman who is looking to her husband for fulfillment and meaning in life will be sadly disappointed. Her role as a wife is first and foremost to be a servant to Christ—then to her husband! If she has children, the same rule applies: Jesus, her husband, and then her children! A woman’s fulfillment will come as she walks in step with her purpose in the Lord.

Jesus did not seek us out because He was in need. He sought us out because we were! When a man takes a wife so that he can serve her, as Christ does the Church, then that man loves his wife. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the woman who has a husband who genuinely loves her will have few issues with submission. A husband who lives like and acts like Christ toward his wife will end up a happy man.

Sanctified–Set Apart

In verses 26 Paul said that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, giving himself for her, “*that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.*”

To *“sanctify”* is to set apart. To *“cleanse”* is to make clean or rid of evil. Therefore, the husband who desires a bride *“without spot or wrinkle or any such thing”* (vs. 27) can only aid her in becoming such through the word of God—the Bible.

The man who aspires to be a great husband is a man of the word—a man who knows the word. A man who lives by the word. The man who aspires to have a great wife is the man who leads his wife in the word. He will teach her, guide her, and protect her from error—as they grow.

As a bride grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, she is transformed day by day—more and more—into the image God created for her. A man who invests of himself—by the word—will have a wife set toward the *“glorious”* (vs. 27) described herein.

A man will receive from his bride as he invests in his bride. This too is a great mystery—as modeled—between *“Christ and the Church”* (vs. 32). Jesus transforms us *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious [bride], not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”* (vs. 27).

Leadership

If a man neglects to lead and teach his wife (as Christ leads and teaches His Church), he is failing to fulfill his God-given place of leadership. This is the cause of many failures and frustrations. Far too often a wife will be tempted to *“take the spiritual lead”* over the home because the husband is negligent of his duty. If or when that occurs, that man must rise up and fulfill his God-given role. His wife needs to submissively allow for it—even if he is growing at a slower rate than his bride. She is there as a helpmate. If he is wise he will let her help.

A Double Blessing

Paul said that *“husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies”* (vs. 28). This simple statement declares the propensity toward self-love. We tend to think first of our own interests—and our own desires. However, this is a trap.

Paul makes it clear that *“he who loves his wife loves himself”* (vs. 28). Then added, *“...no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church”* (vs. 29). Therefore, if a man desires blessing, he will invest himself in his bride. The Lord created and nourishes the Church first and foremost for Himself—according to His own good pleasure (see Ephesians 1:5, 9 and Philippians 2:13). Therefore, in the same way, a man who takes a wife must serve her in order to make for himself a bride who brings blessing and honor to him. It is a double blessing—for husband and wife!

Self-Examination

Men, if your wife is not the woman she should be, stop and look at yourself before you cast blame on her. She may indeed be rebellious, stubborn, and/or have shortcomings—even as there is in the Church. However, just as Jesus patiently serves to shape and perfect us, we must patiently serve our wives—in order to see growth toward the *“glorious”* bride we wish to

obtain. Remember, as mentioned above, “A man who does not genuinely love his wife will be a miserable man.”

When Impatience or Frustrations Occur

Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them” (Colossians 3:19). This indicates the need for patience and forgiveness.

Peter wrote, “Husbands, dwell with [your wife] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7 abridged). This suggests at least three items for consideration:

- 1) A husband’s wife is “*the weaker vessel*” in comparison to him. Therefore, a man must remember that his wife needs preferential treatment, support, and protection—she must be nurtured in love.
- 2) A husband’s wife is a fellow “*heir*” with him in the “*grace of life.*” Therefore, a man must remember that his wife is God’s daughter—and He is watching.
- 3) A husband’s “*understanding*” of his wife will affect his care and treatment of her. His recognition of who she is, “*gives honor*” to her—thereby enhancing a healthy marriage.
- 4) A husband who is impatient, bitter, and/or unforgiving will suffer a hindered prayer life—and thus negatively affect his spiritual fruitfulness, growth, and maturity. Therefore, a wise man will guard his heart, root out everything that hinders his walk or tears away at the love he is called to provide, and grow in grace and the work of his ministry.

As the bride of Christ, Jesus is patient with us! He likewise calls us to patience with one another.

Flesh of My Flesh—Bone of My Bones

Paul’s parallel use of husband and wife illustrates the relationship Christ has with His Church— “*for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones*” (vs. 30). He wrote, “*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church*” (vs. 32).

Paul pulled his recited reflection from Genesis.

“And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:18–24).

It has been said that God did not take woman from the man's head to rule over him, nor did He take the woman from his feet to be trampled upon by him. She was taken from his side, the place closest to his heart, from under his arm, to be held and protected by him. I can't assign credit here as I have no attribution—but I like it.

Leaving Father and Mother

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (vs. 31).

A man who is ready to marry will shift his allegiance from parent to bride. This does not suggest any disrespect or dishonor—but to the contrary. Parents are called to lead their children into adulthood so they might leave home and unite in holy matrimony with their spouse.

A Final Mention

“Let each one of you [men] in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (vs. 33).

Love begets love, respect begets respect, honor begets honor. When a man loves his wife *“as Christ loved the Church”* he will most often experience respect and honor from his wife. When a woman receives the love of her husband, she will often find that showing her husband respect and honor comes naturally. Therefore, *“let each one of you”* as husband—and wife—love each other, serve each other, honor each other, and show respect to one another.