

# OpenTheo

## Ephesians 5:18 - 5:33



### **Ephesians** - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg delivers insights on Ephesians 5:18-5:33 in a spiritual context, highlighting the effects of alcohol on moral judgment and the importance of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He discusses the concept of submitting to one another and the hierarchical relationships between wives and husbands, children and parents, and servants and masters. He emphasizes the importance of following Christ's example of love and nourishing and cherishing one's own spouse as Christ does for the church.

### **Transcript**

In the midst of Ephesians 5, and the section I had just read, we were low on time and I mentioned that I had really hoped to spend more time on the last four verses that we had looked at, which were verses 18 through 21. I don't want to spend very much more time on it because we have quite a lot in addition to these verses that we need to cover, but I want to read them again and just refresh your memory as to what Paul was saying in verses 18 through 21 of Ephesians 5. He said, Do not be drunk with wine, which is dissipation, 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. Now, this is a lengthy sentence and the basic command is not really against drunkenness, although it certainly is included there.

It makes it clear that drunkenness is sin, drunkenness is forbidden, and there are places, and we saw some of them yesterday, where Paul lists drunkenness or drunkards among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 and 10, and in Galatians 5, 19 through 21, these are both passages that list a long list of sins, which it says in both places those who commit those sins will not inherit the kingdom of God. In other words, they'll be lost.

And therefore, we know that drunkenness is a sin, and we'd know it even if Paul didn't say it here. He does say it here, but that's not, I don't believe that his point is to emphasize the negative prohibition of drunkenness in this place, but rather the contrast.

He says, but be filled with the Spirit.

Now, drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit are, in some respects, likened. On the day of Pentecost, when people were filled with the Spirit, and were told they spoke with other tongues, and people couldn't understand what they were saying, it sounded like gibberish to them, there were some who mocked and said they're filled with new wine, recognizing that behaviors that were inexplicable naturally or that were abnormal in this way might well be caused by intoxication. Now, intoxicants do something to you spiritually.

And in fact, there's a reason why liquor has come to be called spirits, because there is a spiritual aspect to the effect that alcohol has on people. It's not just a feel-good kind of experience, though it may have that effect as well. It says in Hosea chapter 4 and verse 11, harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart.

The heart comes under a form of bondage. Now, it's possible, of course, this is merely speaking of something that modern people refer to as addiction, alcohol addiction. Although it's also possible that it's speaking of something more in the spiritual heart, not just the matter that the heart gets set on drinking and therefore drinks a lot.

But rather, while under the influence of alcohol, the heart is trapped in a condition that it is not in at other times. The Bible says in Proverbs 25, 28, he that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls. Now, a city in those days that had no walls was going to be captured, was going to be taken captive, enslaved, was going to be conquered.

It was defenseless. Now, the person who hasn't the rule over his own heart, over his own spirit, is like a defenseless city that will be taken captive. If you don't rule your own spirit, it will be ruled by some other.

And that other may be another human being, but it might also be some other spiritual power. This, I think, is the principle objection in Christianity to consciousness-altering drugs, whether alcohol or any other consciousness-altering drug, is that the person who uses them surrenders the control of his mind or of his spirit in some measure, depending on the strength and the dosage and frequency and so forth of the drugs. But it has an effect on your perception.

It has an effect not only on, in the case of alcohol, on your response time, for example, when driving, but it has an effect on your moral judgment. And so do other intoxicants or consciousness-altering drugs. Anyone who grew up in the 70s, as I did, has known many, many people who smoked marijuana and who took harder drugs than that.

Almost everyone I knew smoked marijuana, although I never did myself. But it was interesting to me when I saw certain people who had been Christians and had walked

with the Lord and had given up drugs, some of them actually went back to drugs. In fact, some of them went back to drugs without regarding themselves as backstabbers.

Some of them still regarded themselves as good Christians, but still smoked marijuana. But it was so obvious when they would go back to smoking marijuana how their moral judgment was altered. Their conscience was not as sensitive or not as well-informed or something, not able to tell right and wrong when they were in the habit of using the drug.

And alcohol is spoken of that way in Proverbs and elsewhere as something that takes away the moral judgment. Apparently alcohol and other drugs that have their effect on altering the mind have a moral effect on the people who abuse them. It says in Proverbs 31, verses 4 and 5, It is not for kings, O Lemuel, who is the king himself, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.

The person who is intoxicated is more inclined to pervert justice because they don't have a firm grasp on justice. Their moral behavior, their moral scruples are weakened, and the person who is drinking like that will be more likely to, it says elsewhere in Proverbs, to behold the strange woman and so forth. A lot of moral problems are in the path of the person who uses intoxicants and consciousness-altering drugs.

And so the Bible forbids it. And yet, in spite of that fact, the Bible likens being filled with the Spirit in some ways, with intoxication, or with at least the use of wine. We know that Jesus himself spoke of his new movement, the life of his movement, as new wine, to be put in new wineskins.

He says you don't put new wine in old wineskins, because the wine is alive, the wine is growing, the wine is fermenting, and it expands when it does that. And when it expands, it changes its size, and it affects its container. And if the container is a stretched-out, brittle, old wineskin, then the container will break, and you'll lose the wine and the skin.

He says for a new wine, you need new skins. Now there's something about Jesus' spiritual movement that he brought, unlike the law and its brittleness and inflexibility, that he likened to wine that was new and fermenting. You know, wine, Jesus turned water into wine also.

And I think it's more than a little significant that he did so using pots that were used for ceremonial cleansing of the Jews. The Jews had these pots that they carried water in or kept water in for ceremonial hand washing. And the six water pots in John chapter 2, which Jesus had filled with water and then turned it into wine, which was drunk, were pots that were used for that purpose, we are told.

They were of the type that were used for the ceremonial washings of the Jews. And I

think it's symbolic that Jesus took that water, as it were, that was used for washing externally, and the law, of course, could only cleanse a man's external behavior, symbolized by washing the outward, and he changed it into wine, which when consumed, changes the heart, changes the perception. Now a little bit of wine, actually, although Christians are very sensitive about this, and especially anyone who's seen anyone enslaved to wine or to alcohol is more likely to be a teetotaler and wholly against any use of any kind of alcohol in any measure.

Yet the Bible, and I can appreciate that, by the way, I can appreciate that sensitivity, but the Bible does not say that wine, in small quantities, is bad. In fact, it implies that it is good. It brings pleasure, it brings delight to the heart of man, it says in the Psalms, and also in Judges, chapter 9. So there is an effect of wine when it's not used in excess that is cheering.

In fact, even the proverb that we read a moment ago in Proverbs 31, it says, it's not for kings to drink because they'll forget judgment, it says, do give wine to the one who's perishing so that he might forget his agony. Apparently speaking of wine as an anesthetic, or something that would numb pain, or something. Wine is not in all its uses wrong.

The good Samaritan poured wine and oil into the wound of the man who had fallen among thieves. Wine was a disinfectant. It was used in almost every drinking occasion.

I don't mean drinking, I should say dining occasion. At every meal table in the ancient world, there was wine, alcoholic wine. It was usually mixed with the water.

In fact, it was usually mixed in such quantities with water that you could hardly become intoxicated with it, because according to the ancient writers of the period, both the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews, all mixed wine with water at their meal tables, usually four parts water to one part wine. And you can see, of course, that if that was the mix, the wine would hardly be able to be tasted in the water with that kind of dilution. And it certainly would take an awful lot of gallons of drinking to get a person drunk on it.

But the purpose must have been certainly to disinfect the water. So wine has good purposes too, it's not just a bad thing. And drunkenness is an abuse of wine.

But the thing that motivates people to abuse wine is no doubt a sense of emptiness, a sense of a need of cheering, a need to be encouraged. And when people drink wine, many times they're made more bold, they're made less inhibited. And some of these things, being bold, being cheered, just having the spirits lifted, these are not bad attitudes to have, but wine is the wrong place to get them.

To have your spirit lifted and to go to wine to do it, is to neglect the means that God desires for the lifting of our spirits and the removing of our self-consciousness and to

make us more bold and so forth. I mean, the fullness of the Holy Spirit has many of those effects. The early Christians filled with the Spirit apparently had exhibited not only, probably not only their language, but probably their countenances, probably the joy on their faces, probably their exuberance added to the effect that caused some people to say, they're filled with new wine.

And there is something that people from ancient times to the present have always found attractive about getting drunk. I have never found it attractive and I've never deliberately been drunk. There have been a couple of times when in the company with other Christians even, we were having a beer or something, which I don't, you don't drink anymore, but in my younger years, I used to have beer with pizza or something.

And sometimes I'd drink a little more than I thought, usually only a very little more so that I didn't even know it had affected me until I got up to leave. And then I felt that it had affected me and I couldn't understand why anyone would want to welcome such effects on their mind. I thought, man, this is bad.

How do you get sober real quick? You know, because I can't imagine anyone in their right mind wanting to get out of their right mind, which is, it's not so much that I had drunk so much that my moral judgment seemed impaired. I just didn't feel like I was in control as I like, as I prefer to be of myself. I felt like I was under the control of another.

And I felt like that is a scary situation of being, I can't imagine anyone wanting it, but apparently there's something in man, corrupt man, that finds some escape in that and just needs to be cheered up and seeks that cheering in wine. You know, people have always talked about there being a God-shaped hole in people, in their soul, that they're trying to fill with something. Alcohol is one of those things, perhaps, that they try to fill it with.

But alcohol at very best is a counterfeit spirit. And it is not what God wants us to be involved with because the fruit of the spirit is self-control. And so the Holy Spirit is totally at odds with alcohol in terms of its actual bottom-line effect.

Alcohol causes a person to lose self-control. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of self-control. A person under the influence of the spirit may have outward signs of being cheered and maybe bolder or whatever, and in some ways not be acting the way that a normal person acts in some ways, but it won't be not, it will not be exhibited in a lack of self-control.

That is one area in which the Holy Spirit is opposite of wine. And I think it is that one area where wine is most objectionable. Because a man who has no rule over his own spirit is defenseless against spiritual invasion.

And his heart is enslaved. And therefore, it is not like the Holy Spirit to deprive a person

of self-control if they are a godly person. Now as a judgment against someone, sure.

I mean, God through his spirit would cause somebody like Saul when he was pursuing David, you know, the spirit came upon him and he stripped himself naked and propped on the ground all day long while David got away. You know, I mean, that was like a judgment on Saul. But you don't find that in the life of spiritual saints, because to have one self-deprived of self-control is a judgment, it's not a blessing.

Now, Paul here then makes a contrast between being drunk with wine and being filled with the spirit. The contrast suggests some comparison, but it also is more a contrast than a comparison. Instead of finding one's exhilaration in drinking, one should be exhilarated and empowered and emboldened by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, he says this in a way in the Greek tense that suggests a continual being filled. Be being filled with the Holy Spirit is the way some have translated it. So that he's not just talking about the act of getting filled with the spirit, which in all likelihood his readers all had done.

These were people in the Pauline churches. Paul routinely ministered the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time that he converted people. And therefore, it's not likely that very many of them, or any of them perhaps, had failed to be baptized in the spirit when he wrote this letter to them.

But it is also clear, and if you associate with spirit-filled people or spirit-filled assemblies on a regular basis, you find this so, that people can be baptized in the Holy Spirit at one point, and then at some time later not very much filled with the spirit at all. Not walking in the spirit, not exhibiting spirituality. There can be every bit as much carnality in a church that emphasizes the baptism of the spirit as there is in a church that never mentions it at all.

And that is because being filled with the spirit is not a one-time deal. Being filled with the spirit is a walk. As Paul has been saying all the way through here, it's a way we walk.

We're to walk in the spirit. And walk in the fullness of the spirit. And it's not automatic that just because somebody gets baptized in the spirit that for the rest of their life they now own fullness of the spirit.

It is as a relationship with anybody. The Holy Spirit is a person. And any relationship with a person requires maintenance, requires some kind of ongoing communion, some kind of ongoing give and take for the relationship to remain strong.

And it is our relationship with the Holy Spirit that Paul is concerned with here. And he gives us some answers to the question that might arise, how do I be being filled with the spirit? Okay, I've been filled with the spirit, but how do I keep it this way? How do I maintain this fullness of the spirit? Well, the question would naturally arise, and Paul

anticipates this and answers it three ways. There are three ways in which you might see to it that you remain filled with the spirit.

One, speaking to one another. Actually, I think the King James is speaking to yourselves, but I believe to one another is also a good translation. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Now, on the surface, this command sounds like, he's talking about the way we're supposed to communicate with each other. And it almost sounds like we're supposed to be singing to each other. I don't know if this is referring to possibly the kind of singing that was done in Israel and possibly in the early churches, where antiphonal singing, where one side of the room would sing out one line and the other side would sing out the other line.

There are forms of singing that resemble this today. Antiphonal singing is not the most common way that we sing in church today. There are other special ways of singing, like singing a song in rounds or whatever.

But even today, you'll occasionally find churches where, okay, this side of the room sings this line and that side of the room sings that line. And there was antiphonal singing and antiphonal chanting spoken of even back in the Pentateuch, apparently as part of Jewish worship and may well have been part of the early church worship. And so speaking and singing to yourselves or to each other could speak of one group of Christians in the room singing a line to the other group and them singing it back and so forth.

But the main thing here is not so much the emphasis on what you're doing to one another as what's going on in your heart. You're singing a melody in your heart. Because you have melody in your heart that you sing out loud.

If you sing out loud and there's nothing in your heart, it's just the same kind of hypocrisy as praying or any other kind of religious action where it's not in your heart. And probably there's a lot of that that goes on in church. I would have to admit that there's times when I sing the songs on the page or on the overhead projector screen and my mind is somewhere else, but I'm singing the words.

And that's not what Paul says to do. It's not just singing to each other or singing out loud that keeps a person from the Spirit. It's having the melody in the heart.

You're more likely to find a person who walks continuously in the Spirit if you find a person who spontaneously breaks out in song, simply giving evidence that that song has been in their heart for a while. It's now breaking out of their mouth. I remember traveling in Europe when I was 19 with another Christian man who was in a band with me and he was a very, very godly spiritual man.

Very humble, very excellent musician too. But I remember we slept out in a grain field

once. We were traveling from northern Germany down to Munich actually for the Olympics in 1972 and it was more than one day drive.

We got started late and therefore we stopped in a grain field and slept in our sleeping bags out in the field before the next day going to Munich. And I just remember this man who traveled with us, he's been a friend of mine for years, in the morning he was singing and worshiping God before his eyes were even open. I mean, just as soon as he was awake, before his eyes were even awake, his heart was awake and he was singing and making melody in his heart.

And I would have to say that this was not out of character at all for him. I mean, he is a man that if you knew him, you'd feel that you're in the presence of a Spirit-filled man. And this was a good example to me of this verse, how that a spiritual person will be singing in their heart.

When you're doing mundane chores or whatever, walking down the street alone, just singing to the Lord, coming out of your heart. Not because it's a religious duty to do, not because it's part of a ritual, but because the heart is full of song. And if you give expression to that song and you maintain that song in your heart, it is part of the way in which you maintain the fullness of the Spirit in your life.

You create an environment of worship. He inhabits the praises of his people, it says in Psalm 22. And by providing in the temple of God, which is your body, an atmosphere, an environment of praise and worship, you provide an environment in which the Holy Spirit is pleased to dwell in.

As opposed, for example, what it says in verse, in chapter 4 of Ephesians, in verse 30, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed to the day of redemption. What's that? That follows the statement about don't let corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. And it is itself followed by the statement, let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

Wrong attitudes, wrong speech, grieves the Holy Spirit. But an environment of worship, making melody in the heart to God, that is a place where the Holy Spirit is pleased to dwell. The second thing has to do with giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition to having a melody and keeping your own heart cheerful and keeping your own heart on the Lord, you need to be responsive to your circumstances with gratitude to God. Now to be thankful for all things requires that a certain mentality, a certain mindset is consciously and deliberately maintained. One is that the only way you could give thanks to God for all things is if you have a high view of the sovereignty of God.

If you believe that God really is in all things, how could you thank God for something if



you don't think he had anything to do with it? And there are things which we see God in all the time, although sometimes we're even negligent to see him when he's obvious. I mean, if you pray for some tremendous thing and it happens, you're almost certainly going to spontaneously thank God and see that God answered your prayer. If things go well for you in general, you're very likely, if you're a spiritual person, to give thanks to God routinely.

Thank you, God, for our food. Thank you for this wonderful house we live in. Thank you for our good health and so forth.

Thankful people do that. But there's an additional level of thanks that is less likely to occur spontaneously, especially with unspiritual people, and that is when things are adverse. When we are treated badly, when things go badly, when we have a disappointment or a reversal of our fortunes, then it is less natural to thank God.

But the exhortation here is to give thanks always for all things to God. And the only way you can do that, as I said, is if you really believe God had something to do with all things. God is involved in all things in your life.

And if you have something happen that you like, or if you have something happen that you would don't like, in either case, it's God's providence. Grumbling, in any circumstance, is rebellion against God's providence. Unless you don't believe in God's providence being quite so particular, but I do.

I think the Bible does, and I think it's implied in Paul's exhortation that we can thank God for all things, even negative things. Things negative in the sense of our perception and experience of them, because all things work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to his purpose, so that even if things are bad in themselves, they can be exploited by God. They can be a stepping stone in God's path toward blessing.

And for that reason, we can thank God for them by faith. If you believe that God is good and that God is sovereign, then thanking him will be natural and not at all strange, although we might forget to do so. And it's necessary not only to have a high view of God's sovereignty and of his goodness so that we could find occasion to thank him in all things, but we have to remember to do so.

And if we don't remember to do so, we'd be forgetful of God, and it becomes much more, of course, likely that we will grumble, that we will not see God in everything. Not because our theology doesn't allow us to, but because we're forgetful to, because God is not visible. He's not obvious.

And what is obvious is our circumstances. And the inward man is renewed, Paul said in 2 Corinthians, as we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are seen.

So that God is not seen by our eye, but we need to remember to look at him.

We need to keep in mind, we need to make a habit of thankfulness at the times when we least are inclined to, to be thankful for everything. It doesn't mean that you have to, in some kind of a knee-jerk way, just start saying, praise God, praise God, or thank God, you know, every moment. As some people I know actually have done, not so many anymore, but I know someone who still does.

There have been people in my past, in years past, who did that all the time. It sounded very mechanical, and sometimes not very sincere, but it certainly means that we need to keep a true attitude of gratitude. I didn't mean that to rhyme like he did, but an attitude of thankfulness to God for everything, if we hope to be being filled with the Spirit.

You cannot, while grumbling, be filled with the Spirit. Can't happen. So you've got, in one sense, the inward disposition of the heart, in making melody in your heart toward the Lord, that has to be maintained.

You've got to have this attitude toward circumstances, that everything is something to give thanks for, to God. And the third thing he says is submitting one to another in the fear of God. And submitting, of course, is a hard thing to do, because it means basically you rank yourself under somebody else, and you act as if they're your master, and you're their servant.

Now this is not, let me talk about this, submitting to one another in the fear of God, because this exhortation is followed immediately by three examples. The first is, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, in verse 22. And the chapter division, of course, is artificial.

The next example, after talking about wives and husbands, is in chapter six, verse one, children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. He also gives instructions to the fathers. And then, but not that they should obey their children.

And then in verse five of chapter six, servants be obedient to those who are your masters, according to the flesh, with all fear and trembling, and also to those who are your masters. Now, in verse 21, there is this statement, submitting to one another in the fear of God. And then we have three examples of situations in which people need to submit to other people.

Wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to their masters. Now, I want to talk about this submission thing from two sides. First of all, in view of what it follows, in view of its being the tail end of verses 18 through 21.

And then I want to talk about it in terms of its being an introduction to the rest of the book of Ephesians. In terms of the first context, submitting to one another in the fear of God as the tail end and the final clause of the long sentence that begins in verse 18.

Submissiveness of heart is part of what it requires to be filled with the spirit.

Submissiveness of heart means that you see yourself as the servant of all, in a sense. That you are more inclined to defer than to demand. More inclined to give in and yield to somebody else's preferences than to assert your own rights.

More concerned about pleasing others than about pleasing yourself. More quick to do that which will assist another person than to try to persuade somebody to do that which will assist you. That's the servant's heart.

That's a servant's attitude. That's the submissiveness which is spoken of here. To be the servant of all.

This obviously has to do with relationships with other people. You see, there's three things here about being filled with the spirit. One is to keep your heart an atmosphere of joy and worship and singing.

Secondly, view every circumstance as a gracious providence from God that you can thank him for and do remember to thank him for. And thirdly, your relationship with other people. That you see yourself as in the role of servant to all.

And in that role, you gladly lay down your rights, you gladly defer, you gladly let someone else have what they prefer if there's a conflict. You see, you're doing this, you're going to avoid conflicts. You might have conflict with your ego, you might have conflict with your selfishness, but you won't have conflict with other people very often if you're generally willing to lay it down.

Now, of course, there are times when you must stand your ground not for your own selfishness but because of principle. There are principles that you must withstand the evil. And later on in Ephesians 6, he's going to talk about that.

We need to stand against the wicked one. In verse 13 of chapter 6, therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and to have done all to stand. To be a submissive person doesn't mean that you don't stand against evil.

There is a taking a stand in moral indignation against certain forces that is appropriate for Christians. But when it comes to relations between yourself and other believers, the general attitude that will maintain the fullness of the spirit in your own heart and mind is that you do not press for your way and that you'd rather do to others what you'd have them do to you, rather than requiring them to do to you what you want them to do to you, you do to them what you'd like to have done to you. And this is the golden rule in all relationships.

And this is, these are the habit patterns that a Christian must have if they hope to be filled with the spirit all the time. And if you're not, I hardly think you'll be able to walk in

the spirit all the time. And if you don't walk in the spirit all the time, you will not be overcoming the flesh.

The Bible says in Galatians 5 that you must walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. If you walk in the spirit, the spirit gives power over the flesh, but you must maintain this walk in the spirit. And that's what Paul tells us in these verses.

Now, having said that about that context of verses 18 through 21, I want to look at verse 21 in connection with the following context, because what follows for a great number of verses after verse 21 is an expansion on it. There is, of course, the necessity for all Christians to be servants of all, but there are also certain relationships in which one party is obliged to submit or to be the servant of another party. And in those particular defined relationships, the other party is not called upon to submit to the same degree or with the same regularity to the other party.

Now, this is important to bring up because when you read in verse 22, wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the 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. This obviously speaks of a a priori obligation of the wife to fit in with the husband's plans and to submit to his overall leadership of the home.

And there have always been in both men and women an element of rebellion. Ever since the time of Adam and Eve, men and women both have a rebellious streak and submission to others is always difficult. It's hard for men to submit to other men, in many cases, and it's hard for women to submit to men.

And I imagine many times, I know it's hard for children to submit to parents. But all of these things are, notwithstanding the difficulty, part of the description of what God has in mind for us in our various roles in society. But when one says today, because in addition to the ages-long rebellion that's been the heart of men and women, there is in our own age and especially in the last 30 years, a deliberate attempt on the part of certain social forces to obliterate all distinction in roles of men and women, both in marriage and in society in general.

This movement was started by women whose names can be given. Most people who have been, who are over 40 years old would remember the names of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem and people like that, rebels against God, just people with no morals whatsoever of any Christian sort who were the spearheads of a movement that we today call feminism. Of course, feminism had its origins long ago in Western society, back probably in the 1800s, but since the 60s, there's been a resurgence through the leadership of these women and the magazines and books that they wrote, so that what began in the 60s through these women was the attempt to obliterate any distinction between men and women in society.

The argument was that women had been held down. Women have throughout history not been out in the job market quite as much as men have because the opportunities have not been there. Women have been confined and imprisoned at home with children doing mundane things that don't give them any opportunity to express their creativity and their innate genius.

Therefore, in order for this injustice to be redressed, it's necessary to change society in general and to change the assumptions about society, the assumptions that women are the child bearers and child nurturers and the husband is the protector and the nurturer of the family. This idea had been in at least Western society for centuries because the Bible teaches it. This idea was recognized by all evangelicals 30 years ago as a demonic plot to undermine motherhood, to undermine womanhood, and to basically destroy the family and society.

Now, those who wrote these books and articles, the ones whose names are best known, who headed it up, of course they've had many disciples since, they made no bones about the fact that they did want to destroy the traditional family. They believed the traditional family was an oppressive unit that oppressed women. Of course, these people had no concern about what the Bible said because they were not Christians.

Not only were they not Christians, they were anti-Christians. Many of them were lesbians, and this is not a cheap shot. This is simply the fact about these people.

They were, in many cases, lesbians, man-haters, and therefore they depicted all men as woman-haters, which is a mischaracterization in my experience. I haven't met very many men who are really woman-haters. I've certainly met a lot of men who like to exploit women, but I've met women who like to exploit women and like to exploit men too.

I mean, human beings are fallen, and because of the fall, sinful people exploit other people if they can. But the structure of the family, which places the husband as the head and the wife as the governess of the children and the home manager, which is clearly described in Scripture, is not an institution that is itself harmful to women. If anything, it is protective of women.

After 30 years of the feminist movement now changing the whole set of assumptions about men and women in our society, it has been observed that women are not better off. It's true they can be executives and doctors and lawyers and judges, but most of them who have children live with deep discontent because they don't feel that they have the time for their children and for the career that they want, and yet they've been told by their leaders that the career is more important than the children, that children are better raised by surrogates, better raised by government nannies, better raised by hired professionals. This is the official line of feminism.

And although the early evangelicals, I should say evangelicals in the early feminist

movement saw that that was a satanic lie, as is so often the case with the church, the church came around. The church decided that satanic lies, you know, if you can't beat them, might as well join them. And so you find it's almost not permissible in the church today to suggest that God has designed different roles for men and women in society and in the home.

Notwithstanding the unpopularity of it, I'm not the least bit ashamed to say that God does say this, but when people now look at these passages, they're more likely to try to interpret them in feminist ways because the church has picked up the feminist ideology. And the feminists write about this passage. I've read their books.

I have several of them on my shelf. I've read some of them in articles by them. The Christian feminists, the so-called evangelical feminists, they call themselves, they deal with these verses.

And what they say is, first of all, it's wrong to say that wives must necessarily submit to their husbands because Paul said everyone must submit to everyone else in verse 21. And so they act as if Paul never wrote verse 22 and he only wrote verse 21 and that Paul's opinion about submission is found only in verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. But somehow Paul's opinion of submission is not found in verse 22.

Wives submit to your husbands as well. Now, some people just can't see how those two things can go together. How can husbands, wives, and everybody else be told to submit to each other? And yet one party in a relationship is told to submit to the other party in the relationship as part of a role that they have in a hierarchical structure.

And that's very clearly what Paul says is the case. It's like the church is submitted to Christ. The wife is like the church.

Christ is like the husband. Therefore, the wife should submit to the husband as the church submits to Christ. There's no question but that Paul is laying out two different roles in a hierarchical relationship.

Similarly with children and parents in chapter six, verses one through four, and with servants and masters in chapter six, verses five through nine. There are three different hierarchical relationships that are here given. And in each case, Paul speaks to one member of the relationship, the wife, the child, and the servant in the three particular cases and says submit to the other party.

And then in each case, he speaks to the other party, to the husband, to the parent, and to the master. And he gives instructions to them too. And those instructions are that they should be sensitive, not domineering, you know, loving, self-giving, and so forth.

So both sides of these hierarchical couplets receive specific instruction. And if, I mean, I think anyone can tell that if both parties would do what they're told to do here, no one

would find the situation oppressive. Because the ones who are in the position to oppress are commanded not to do so.

Now, it should be pointed out that throughout this entire section, Paul does not address anyone in terms of their rights, but only their duties. The wife's duty and the husband's duty. The husband is not told it's his right to have his wife submit to him.

And the woman is not told it's her right to have the husband love her. The husband is told what his duties are and the wife is told what her duties are. And we might ask, well, what if one party doesn't fulfill their duty? Is the other one then released from obligation? Well, maybe in certain extreme cases, there might be such a case.

I mean, if a parent is about to beat his children to death, for the children to escape would be not submissive, but it would perhaps be excusable in such extremities. If a husband or a father or a master tells one who's subordinate to him to do something that is clearly sinful and clearly against the teachings of the word of God, then it would seem like there, again, we have an example of a time when submission should not be rendered to that person on that occasion. But the fact that the person on the other side of the relationship is simply imperfect or not ideal or not completely obedient to fulfill his or her duties does not biblically release the other party from their duties because Christ wants us all to see what my responsibility is, not what somebody else's responsibility is toward me.

Peter, in addressing one of those situations, in 1 Peter 2, in verse 18, he speaks to servants. Servants be submissive to your masters with all fear. Okay, same thing Paul said in Ephesians 6, but then he says, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

Now, Paul speaks to the servants and to the masters. He tells the servants submit, and he tells the masters not to be harsh. But what if I'm a Christian, I'm a servant, and my master is a Christian, and he should not be harsh because he's a Christian, but he is harsh.

Should I then not be submissive? Does the other party's neglect of responsibility suddenly absolve me of my responsibility? Apparently not. Peter said servants be submissive even if your masters are harsh. They shouldn't be, but if they are, you still are a servant, and you should still be submissive.

Likewise, Peter says in 1 Peter 3, verse 1, likewise you wives 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 while they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear or reverence. So, here we have some of the same situations, same kinds of relationships addressed in Peter that Paul does. And while Paul tells the servants, children, and women how to relate in their part of the relationship, and he also tells the husbands, fathers, and masters how to do it in their side of the relationship, he does not say in any

case what you are required to do in a case where the other person in the relationship is not doing what they should do.

But Peter tells us, even if the other party doesn't do what they should do, you still need to do what you should do. That is a clear teaching of Scripture. So that if my wife, for example, did not in my perception love me, or I should say submit to me, as the church should submit to Christ, it is not my place to stop loving her and stop cherishing her and stop nurturing her.

I can't just say, well, she didn't submit me, so I'm going to just leave home for a few months and act like a bachelor. I still have obligation. And contrary-wise, if she felt like I didn't love her as Christ loved the church, it does not absolve her of the commands of God upon her.

And so we see that Paul recognizes, and so does Peter, and by the way, so does every society that's not been overly feminized, and even feminist society recognizes hierarchy in some situations. In the corporation, that feminist CEO certainly expects her subordinates to submit to her in the corporation. She's not egalitarian in that situation.

And I dare say that many feminists, they fully expect their children to toe the line. Under parental authority, I've never met anyone yet, although you sometimes hear rumblings of it this way, that speak of total egalitarianism between parents and children. You'll see your total liberals who think that children should have the right to take their parents to court because they don't pay them allowance for taking the trash out, things like that.

I mean, there are people who are now advocates of children's rights, but no one who is sane does that. No one in their right mind suggests that children should run the home just as much as the parents do. I mean, if someone was to argue that, we'd have to say, at what age? Two months? Two months old? We're going to have them run the home? They practically do anyway, but the fact is that they don't have a position in the home that entitles them to, but the parents do.

The parents have the right and the responsibility to dictate the children's schedules, what they will eat when they'll go to bed, how they will be educated, what they will wear. This is innately, all parents act, even if they, even the ones who say they believe in egalitarian in this case, they all still require the children to brush their teeth when the children don't want to do it. I mean, everyone knows that there are relationships, whether corporate business relationships or certain family relationships or even civil relationships with reference to government and citizens, that are not 100% egalitarian.

And this is, of course, the great inconsistency of the feminist, because the feminist says, wait, Paul said, submit to one another. That means everybody submits to everyone else equally. Well, they apply that only in the case of husband and wife.



They don't apply it in the case of children and parents or employees and employers, because those are situations where everyone knows that's absurd. The only reason they can assert it in the case of husband and wife relationships is because it does not seem innately absurd. It is not absurd to suggest that a wife could run a household.

Many wives have done so very effectively. It does not seem absurd to suggest that a wife or a woman could be a good pastor of a church or head of a corporation. It's happened.

There are very capable women, every bit as capable as any man. And certainly there are women that are much more competent than some men. There are wives that are more intelligent, gifted, capable, competent than their husbands.

No one will deny this, but that's not the issue. You see, because it doesn't seem absurd for wives to rule the house because they might be competent to do so, it gives the feminist mentality the luxury of suggesting that husband-wife relationships mentioned in scripture here are perhaps outmoded, outdated, not so mandatory. But because it is absurd to think of the janitor governing the CEO or the child, the two-year-old, governing the parent, they would mean, in those cases, a hierarchical structure as opposed to an egalitarian structure.

The point, though, to make is that Christians don't make their decisions about roles based upon what is plausible or what is not ridiculous or something like that. It is true that Christianity is not ridiculous, but there are other things that are not ridiculous that are not Christian either. Egalitarian in marriage is a model that is not ridiculous, but it's not Christian.

And the Christian's life and convictions are based upon the revealed mind of God in the scriptures, not upon social fads, pagan social influences, nor even what just is plausible. I have seen homes, I have seen companies, I've seen churches run by women. It has not always been an obvious disaster.

I say an obvious disaster because at some level I believe it is a disaster because the woman, whether there's obvious disaster or not, is not experiencing the role that God has her in. And I would consider it a great disaster if God had called me to be a garbage collector that I became the head of Great Commission School. A great disaster not because being a garbage collector is such a noble calling, but because it'd be a disaster to miss my calling.

It'd be a disaster to live my life, which I only get to do one time, and miss the purpose of it, miss the position that God from the foundation of the world had planned for me to occupy. That is a disaster, a personal disaster. And there are other ways in which the feminist agenda, although it doesn't look disastrous to have a woman as the head of a corporation or the head of a church or the head of a home, doesn't look disastrous

immediately, yet after 30 years of this kind of social engineering we see the disaster in the lives of children and in the stress upon women, stress in the negative sense.

I mean, I'm not talking about emphasis, I'm talking about stress-related disease and things like that because of the women trying to have it all and do it all, which they were told by their leaders that they could, but no one has found possible to do. You can't be a great mom and not be with your kids. You just can't do it.

You can be a protector of your kids, you can provide for your kids, but mom means more than that. And of course, I'm just picking on the feminists right now because they're the ones that are the major opponents of what we're reading in this particular passage. And what I wanted to get at is that the evangelical feminists are feminists as much as any other feminists, and in all of their presuppositions the only difference is they try to say the Bible teaches feminism.

You see, the original feminists didn't ever pretend that the Bible teaches feminism. In fact, they saw themselves as ranged against the Bible. The Bible was the enemy.

The Bible was that patriarchal book that kept women oppressed. We needed to get away from the influence of the Bible as far as the original feminists were concerned. The evangelical feminists have simply, they take the same philosophy as the other feminists, they just say a different way.

They say, no, the Bible teaches this. Now, how do they get it out of this? Well, they really love the verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. And they say, well, that shows that nobody's over anybody else.

But in order to do that, you have to look at one verse and ignore how many verses that follow it, 12 in this chapter, as well as nine in the next chapter. So what about 21 verses? It's one verse against 21 verses, but you can't put verses against each other. All the verses of scripture must be harmonized because they're all from the same mind.

It cannot be that verse 21 could mean one thing and verses 22 through 33 mean something different. And we just have to decide which of the two things we agree with. And we'll agree with verse 21 or we'll agree with the other passage, but we can't agree with both.

Now, obviously Paul was not a schizophrenic. Paul did not forget when he wrote verse 22 that he had just written verse 21. And in all likelihood, he did not when he wrote verse 21 do so without the awareness that he was about to write verse 22 as well.

The facts are that Paul's thought must be seen as consistent throughout. And therefore all the verses must be interpreted in whatever way harmonizes all the others. Now, let me tell you what I think is happening here.

The word submitting in verse 21 is a military term. Now, we all know that at chapter 6 verse 10, Paul starts talking about the church as if it was an army. Put on the armor of God.

You've got a battle to fight. We're wrestling against principalities and powers. We've got to withstand the evil and we've got to fight.

Well, that's a martial metaphor. That's a military metaphor. And whenever people think of the spiritual warfare passages in Ephesians, of course they think of Ephesians 6, 10 through 19 especially, or 18.

But I believe the military metaphor begins here at Ephesians 5.21. Submitting is actually a military word in the Greek. It means to rank under. Hupotasso.

Hupo means under and tasso means to rank or to be arranged in an orderly ranking like military troops. So to say if somebody submits himself to someone, it means he ranks himself under someone. He assumes a lower rank under another person.

That's what I was talking about in verse 21. If we are to submit to each other, it's to see ourselves as a servant of others. You see yourself as of lower rank than another.

But in talking about an army, you realize that an army always has various ranks. You don't have all the soldiers just run off doing their own thing. There's a chain of command in the army.

Now, there's not such an extensive chain of command in Christian life because the head of Christ is God and the head of every man is Christ and the head of the man is the woman, it says in 1 Corinthians. What's that? Did I say the head of the man and the woman? Sorry, I meant it backwards. Yeah, I meant it the other way.

But the head of the woman is the man, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11. And there is something of a chain there. Now, I don't do with this teaching what many people do.

Many people talk about the chain of command and make some kind of big authority system going. All I believe is that God wants us to see ourselves as each having a position in the army. There is something that God has in mind for us each to do.

And if you were in an ordinary army, you'd certainly know if you were a private that your sergeant was over you and that he had people over him and so forth and that there's various ranks and that you might be an equal person to him. You might be a smarter person than him. You might well be a much more spiritual person than him, but that made no difference in terms of functioning in the army.

It had to do with who is in the position to organize and to head up and to lead. And

leadership, unfortunately, in the world's eyes goes to the one who's regarded as superior to another person. Usually the most educated person, you know, rises in the corporation, the most skilled person rises in the athletics team or whatever, and leadership is usually associated in the minds of the modern world with superiority.

It's always been that way in armies and things like that. But in Christianity, leadership is not given to people who are necessarily superior, although in some cases it is. The elders of the church should be people of high moral standing, perhaps higher than some of the younger Christians, but in the case of husbands and wives, parents and children, there are some areas where a husband would be superior to a wife and other areas where a wife would be superior to her husband.

Each gender has its own strong points and often there's corresponding weak points in the other gender. And children have their own strengths, perhaps that their parents lack, faith being perhaps one of them, but parents have superiority in some other ways too. But in the Bible, people are not superior in the sight of God to other people.

If they are righteous people, if they're godly people, they're all basically on the same footing before God, all saved by grace, all equally sinners. But to speak of God's regard for people is not the same thing as to speak of God's ranking of people in his army. When he says, rank yourselves under one another, at one level this means we should all see each other as one that we're willing to submit to.

I'm willing to take a lower rank than every other man. But when it comes to certain responsibilities in certain tasks like the marriage task, or the parent task, or the employment task, or the government task, or any other practical endeavor that involves more than one person, there needs to be some functional leadership. And God has simply ordained that the husband will be in that position of leadership in the home, the parent will be in leadership over the children, the masters will lead their servants, and the rulers will lead their citizens.

Sometimes the rulers are very inferior people morally, but they're still the rulers. Sometimes the master may be very inferior in character to his slave, but he's still the master. And it goes all the way down, parents, husbands, and all of that.

And so Paul understands the army of God to involve people ranking themselves under their proper leaders. And you don't go out to war, as we read about when you put on your armor and go out and fight the wicked one later on in chapter 6, you don't go out to war until you know where you stand in the army. Until you have some knowledge of what function you're going to be in.

Not everyone does exactly the same thing. Some people are going to go out and preach the gospel in foreign lands, others are going to stay home with the stuff. Some are going to just raise little disciples in the home, others are going to make disciples out of other

people who've been conquered in battle.

There's all kinds of different functions. Now it's not for the soldier to decide which function he will have or she will have. The soldier doesn't decide what his rank will be or what his function will be.

Now in private civilian service, I mean if you're just going to free enterprise civilian work, you can decide what you want. You can own your own company, you can do whatever you want. But you join the army, suddenly you lay down all your rights to decide those things and your commanders tell you what you will do, when you will do it, in what way you'll do it, and so forth.

An army is different than civilian life. It says in 2 Timothy 2, verses 3 and 4, you therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

In war you don't pursue your own civilian interests. In war you are contrary to one thing, and that's pleasing the one to whom you are a subordinate, pleasing the one who is your commander. And so also, our commander is God.

He is the one who enlisted us to be a soldier. Therefore we don't say, well I'd like to be in this role or that role, I'd like to do this function or that function. The only obligation of a Christian is to find out what God enlisted me to do.

What is the will of God for my life? If I'm still going to seek my own will, I've joined the wrong army. I've joined the wrong religion. In fact, in all likelihood, I haven't joined at all, I've just pretended to join, because when you become a Christian you die to yourself.

You take up a cross, you follow Jesus, you give up your own agendas and say, okay, enough of that, it's time for me to start doing the will of God. I wish I'd started sooner, because I've missed a lot of opportunities to do the will of God earlier in my life. And from now on I'm going to do it, whatever God wants me to do.

And a true Christian, it seems to me, at least normative Christian, is going to have one passion, that's to know the will of God. But there are many Christians, feminist and otherwise, who their one passion is to make sure that they get out of life the position they want, and that no one holds them back from it. And that is simply not Christianity.

That's just baptized paganism. Christianity has an entirely different spirit than that. God, you tell me what you want and I'll be glad to know.

Might not be the job I would have dreamed of, but it's good to know. There's the frustration that comes from doing an undesirable task that you know God wants you to do, is not as great as the frustration of wanting to know the will of God and not knowing

it. I've known many people frustrated not knowing what God wants them to do.

And once a true Christian knows what God wants them to do, their delight is found in doing it. Why? Because they love God no more than they love themselves. That's Christianity.

It's joining God's army and saying, okay, I'm giving up my civilian freedoms in order to please him who called me to be a soldier. And he says, okay, good, you submit to that person. You submit to that person.

And you submit to that person. I've got you involved in this task in our army, and that is called Christian family. That is called this business, this church, this society.

I've got these different positions here. I'm assigning you to this position. Then the Christian says, it's a delight to know.

It's a delight to know God's will for my life. Now, we live in a time where a person can be a member in good standing in the church and not be a Christian in those terms. And we have church leaders, men, who don't have that Christian spirit at all.

And we have all kinds of people in the church who don't know the first thing about dying to self, about taking up a cross, about joining an army, about living to please another than themselves. And because they don't know the first thing about it, it's scary, really, to think. I mean, I can't, I don't know if people can have those deficiencies and still be a Christian saved or not.

I guess only God knows that. But it's, I certainly couldn't give any assurance. It's so worldly and so absent of the Christian spirit.

And yet, you know, in the church, and the church has many such. Now, having said that, let's look at what the commander says. It says, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church. And he's the savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Now, that's to the wives. He talks to the husbands next. But let me just say this.

One of the principal objections that evangelical feminists have to traditional Christianity is that when it talks about the Christ being the head of the church and the husband being the head of the wife, they say we've interpreted that word head incorrectly much too long. The Greek word is *katholi*, and they say that really in ancient Greek, this word didn't connote what we think it was. We think of a head of a corporation or the head of an army.

We think of someone in charge, someone in command, somebody with authority over others. And the evangelical feminists in their books and magazine articles, I've read this so many times, I can't count them anymore. This is a very common argument.

They say *katholi*, head, does not mean an authority. It means a source of something, like the head of a river, a fountainhead. And that Christ is the head of the river, not authority, but the source of it comes from Christ.

And the husband is the head of the wife in the same sense. The husband is the source of the wife. And they think that this is referring back to Genesis where the woman was taken out of the man, out of his rib.

Therefore, the man was the source of the woman. And so they argue. Well, there are several fatal flaws in this particular argument, one of which is that their lexicology is wrong.

There is certainly not adequate support in the ancient literature of the use of the word *katholi* to support the notion that it had a regular meaning of source. There are cases where it did speak of the end of a river, but the word was used plural of both ends of the river, not only the head of the river, but the mouth of the river. So that one would be the source, the other would be the opposite of the source.

To speak of the head of a river in the ancient Greek did not necessarily mean the source of river. It just meant the end, either end of the river. It is true that *katholi* has had a number of metaphorical meanings in many languages, but in Greek, the most frequently used meaning in ancient Greek was that of a leader, of a person in authority, the head of the troops, the head of the state, the head of this or that enterprise was always in ancient literature, well, not always, but more often than any other meaning, it meant the leader, the one in charge.

Now, even if that were not true of Greek literature in general, it certainly is true in Paul's use of the word *katholi*, because it says in Ephesians chapter one, in verse 22, it says, and God has put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to be the *katholi*, the head over all things to the church. There's no way that this word head could mean source here. It's not about things being put under his feet.

He's the head over these things. It clearly is speaking in terms of an authority role. Furthermore, it's obvious here as well, because Paul says in Ephesians 5.22, wives submit to your own husbands as Lord for, that is because the husband is the head of the wife.

Now, it wouldn't make sense if he said submit because he's your source, because it is not inevitable that one must submit to their source. For example, grown children don't have to submit to their parents, which are their source. Just the fact that someone is the

source of something doesn't mean that they have any, that's not an argument for submitting to them.

The argument is this, you should submit because he's your head. In other words, there is something innate about a head that the proper response is submission to a head. That means head is used in an authority meaning, and that's the way that it's always used in the scripture as near as I can tell when it's not referred to a natural head.

Of course, the word *katholi* literally means the head of a body, a literal head, a biological unit. But as in other languages, the Greek uses the word metaphorically, a head of, like I've said, a head of state or a head of an army, a head of a home. So, the feminists have desperately tried to demonstrate that man is, the husband is not the head of the wife in the traditional sense.

The problem is that Paul makes the linkage here and in 1 Corinthians 11, that the headship of the husband over his wife is analogous to the headship of Christ over his people. And it shouldn't be surprising that the feminists would find it possible to eliminate the authority of the husband over the wife because they've already had authority of Christ over his people. Because they are not concerned to follow the Lord, they're concerned to follow their agendas.

A person who would follow God must lay down his agendas and follow the instructions. And that is what God intends. Now, the wife is like the church in this relationship, and the husband is like Christ in the relationship.

And that is not just a position of privilege. Christ in relationship to us doesn't just claim all the privileges. He is the servant of all.

He is the one who died, not us. He's the one who sacrificed everything. This is the kind of head we're talking about here.

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Now, there are some phrases in here that perhaps would repay some examination. First thing is, of course, that the metaphor of Christ in the church is retained both in the instruction of the wife and the husband.

To the wife, she submits to her husband because he's the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. And just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their husbands and everything. But then, husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church.

So, the models, there's role models here. There's a role model for the wife and there's a



role model for the husband. The role model for the wife is the obedient church, obedient to Christ.

The role model for the husband is Christ, the self-sacrificing head. Now, what does the husband do and what did Christ do? First of all, love. What does love involve? Well, Paul explains this.

Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Love is giving. Love is not demanding.

Love is giving. Love is sacrificing. Jesus gave himself for the church.

By the way, it should not be thought along with the Calvinists that this proves limited atonement, that Jesus only died for the church and only the elect. To say that Jesus died for the church or gave himself for the church does not in itself mean he gave himself for the whole world. The issue here is not trying to discuss the range of the effect of the atonement.

The purpose here is to show what Jesus did for the church. What Jesus did is he gave himself for it. It does not address the question, which is a separate issue, whether he gave himself for all the world additional to the church.

I think when I come to these kind of passages, I think of, in the Calvinist question of limited atonement, the parable Jesus told about the man who found a treasure in the field. He wanted that treasure, so what did he do? He sold all he had and he bought the field so that he could obtain the treasure. Now, if the field were the world and the treasure the church in the world, which is likely, at least there's one interpretation of it, it would be equally just to say that the man sold all they had to buy the treasure or to say the man sold all he had to buy the field.

Indeed, he bought the field, but he bought it because he wanted the treasure. He didn't care about the field. He wanted a treasure, but he had to buy the field to get it.

Therefore, it would be equally true, depending on the way a conversation was going, to talk about how this man bought this treasure for such and such a price. He had to pay everything to get this treasure. Or to say, in another context, he had to give everything to get the field.

And the Bible says both things about Jesus. He died not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world, it says in 1 John 2. And here it says he gave himself for the church. Both are true.

He bought the world so that he could obtain the church, the elect. And so the husband must also be prepared to give himself, lay down his life, for the salvation of the wife. And by salvation, I mean the well-being.

It mentions Christ, of course, gave himself for it. And he's the husband. He's also the savior of the body, it says in verse 9. So the husband is the savior or the protector of the wife as well, and should be prepared as Jesus laid down his life to save the church.

Husband must be prepared to lay down his life to protect or save his wife. He did this, it says in verse 26, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the word. Now the washing of water has been understood variously.

Most commentators seem to feel that it refers to baptism. There are some who don't want to give baptism such an important role, and they would say no, washing of water is just another way of saying of washing of the water of the word, that the mention of the word there, the word is the water, a metaphor of cleansing. Jesus said you're cleansed by the word, you're cleaned by because the words I've spoken unto you in John chapter 15.

And it says in Psalm 119, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to your word. So the word of God cleanses in one sense. And some feel that what this is saying is that he sanctifies us by the cleansing of the water of the word, a washing with the word.

Our minds are washed by meditating on the word of God and so forth. That's why you've seen it. But I must say that I think probably those who think that washing of water is a reference to baptism.

And I'm not sure. I mean it could be either way. But he mentions, it would appear two things here that cleanse the church.

One is the washing of water, and the other has to do with the function of the word. And as I recall when Jesus gave the commandment to disciples, there were two things he said to do in making disciples. One was to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

And the other was to instruct them or teach them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you. So there are two parts of making disciples. One is baptizing them into the church.

The second is giving them the word, teaching them how to live as disciples. And both apparently are part of how disciples are made and how the church is sanctified by salvation and by instruction. And baptism is simply an emblem of entering the church or being saved.

It's not baptism that itself saves, but in the early days of the Christian church, certainly in Paul's thinking, no one was in the church without having been baptized. In fact, no one was even considered to be a believer until they were baptized. They got baptized the same day so that he could easily speak of the baptism as the entry right into salvation, even if he did not think of it as the saving thing.

He could see it as the right of entrance into salvation. So Christ wants to save the church through the cleansing of it, through baptism, that is through the Christians coming into salvation. And by the word would be one way of understanding it.

The word would be the instruction, teaching them to observe all things Jesus commanded. It's not the only way to understand it. It's been pointed out that in ancient Hebrew custom at a wedding, the wife or the bride just before the wedding would take a cleansing bath, a ceremonial cleansing bath.

And that Paul may be alluding to that using that imagery and speaking of how Christ cleansed us and made us his bride and sanctified it. The Hebrew groom in a Hebrew wedding, as he gave the ring to his bride would say, you are thus sanctified unto me. Remember sanctified means set apart.

That's what the word means. So you are thus set apart to me. You can't go with any other man from now on.

You're mine. And it could be that Paul in using the word sanctify here is thinking of the marriage ceremony where Christ says, you're now mine. You're now set apart to me.

And there's been the bridal bath and all that, perhaps as part of what he's alluding to. He says, Christ has done this, that he might present a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Now the church is to be presented to Christ as a holy, glorious church, which when is the presentation? I, you know, as near as I understand it, when Jesus returns is when the church will be presented to the bridegroom.

We are currently betrothed, Paul said in second Corinthians three, uh, 11 three, that we are, we are betrothed to Christ. The wedding will take place at his return. Uh, and this whole time of the church age is that is the year of betrothal as it were between the betrothing and the wedding.

So the presentation of the bride to the husband is still future, but when she is presented, she will be a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any other such thing. She'll be holy and without blemish. This tells us something about eschatology.

I think this tells us something about the nearness or the farness of the event of the wedding is the church holy and without blemish is the church today glorious, not having spot or wrinkle. It will be when he presents it to himself in revelation 19, eight, it says that the wedding supper of the lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. And so it would appear that for the church to be joined with Christ, ultimately is going to be preceded by the church being cleansed and be spotless and glorious.

And we won't have time to explore the question of what that means in actual experience, but it certainly means something. And it would, uh, it would be worthy of

some deep consideration. Um, now he says in verse 28, 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 should become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Now this business that a man, when he loves his wife, loves himself has been interpreted various ways. There's a book that came out for husbands years ago, back in the seventies called do yourself a favor, love your wife.

And, um, obviously it seemed to be taking this verse to mean that if you, if you love your wife, you're doing yourself a favor, your wife will be responsive to you. She'll give you less problems and so forth and so on. And that's probably true.

I mean, that's no doubt a true, that's probably a true statement. I'm not sure that that's what Paul's saying here. If it says he that loves his wife loves himself.

Uh, I mean, it could be interpreted. He that does kind things to his wife is really doing himself a kindness in the long run. That could be the meaning, but it's, it may not be the meaning.

He may simply be saying that the wife and the husband are so joined in identity before God that we have become one flesh that it's like the body of Christ is one, one member suffers, all suffer. One member is exalted, all rejoice. So also with a husband and wife, they are one in such a way that an injury to the one is an injury to the whole unit, to the family.

And the man is part of that unit too. He injures himself. If he injures her, if he's kind toward her, he's being kind toward the unit that he is a part of the family unit, the marriage.

And so it may be more mystical than practical. He says, this is hard to say, but the point is that a man should, you know, basically saying what Jesus said, love your neighbors. You love yourself.

How do I love my wife? Well, if I don't know how, let me ask myself, how do I love me? How do I love me? Well, Paul tells me how I love it. I nourish and cherish my flesh. I protect it.

I feed it. I clothe it. I do as much as I can to keep it happy without sinning.

Likewise, that's how a man is to love his wife. She's part of his flesh. And as he, as he

nourishes and cherishes this part of his flesh, he needs to nourish and cherish the other part of his flesh, which is sometimes called the better half, the other part of his flesh.

Now, Paul establishes that the woman and the man are one flesh by, of course, appeal to that famous verse in Genesis 2, 24, which is quoted by Jesus and Paul and is basically the definitive text in the Old Testament about the nature of marriage. A man leaves his former solidarity with his mother and father and forms a new solidarity with his wife. It's a mysterious thing, Paul says, and it is an amazing thing because when you have children, you definitely feel that they are yours.

They're part of your family unit. And there's an instinct that's of God that both parents feel of protection of the children, possessiveness toward the children. It goes right against our nature to let somebody else take our children against our will and have their way with them against our will.

We somehow feel that since we brought these children into the world and have so much invested emotionally in them, they're ours. And that's a legitimate way to feel. But I'm sure that parents still feel that way even after their kids are grown.

But when the children are grown and they are, in fact, very much a part of their family, their person, the wife and the husband leave that and in a measure disassociate from that. That doesn't mean they break off all relationship, but they have a new identity. My children are identified as my children.

They bear my name, for example. My sons will always bear my name, but my daughters won't. But they are part of my family.

That's their identity. But when they marry, and it's particularly evident when a woman marries, she changes name. She doesn't have her father's name anymore.

The family name she once bore is exchanged for a new family name. And a new unit, a new family is formed. And the loyalties are shifted.

A woman must submit to her husband more than to her parents. A man must look out for the needs of his wife more than for the needs of or the wishes of his parents. That's why Jesus, who had lived at home until he was about 30 years old with his mom and probably took care of her and did everything she wanted because he submitted as a dutiful son.

Yet when he left home to take a bride, the church, his mother still tried to give him orders. Now they've run out of wine. He says, what do I have to do with you, woman? I mean, he was now off to take a bride.

He was leaving, as it were, mother in order to be joined to his bride. And so a mysterious transaction takes place and there's a oneness, a new solidarity, a new partnership between the husband and the wife that is, Paul says, a great mystery in verse 32 and

resembles that of Christ and the church and is intended. Therefore, the way that people relate to each other in marriage should self-consciously mimic the way that Christ and the church relate to each other because their marriage is a visible pattern like the tabernacle on earth was a visible pattern of heavenly reality.

So marriage is a visible pattern of heavenly realities. You cannot change the pattern without misportraying what the pattern is supposed to portray. So Paul says in verse 33, nevertheless, that each one of you in particular, so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband or reveres her husband.

Actually, the word is fear literally, but it means reverence in its usage. So because of the symbolism of marriage being a divine ordinance, a divine institution made to resemble Christ and the church relationship, so those who are participants in marriage must understand their roles and their responsibilities in terms of that model, that pattern, and seek to emulate it for the eyes of who watch, including God. Well, that brings us to the end of chapter five.

Much more can be said on those particular points, but not with the time we've allotted and we didn't get even as far as I would like to have today, but we have only chapter six to cover and hopefully we can do that easily in the time that we'll have allotted to this session, this series.