

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 20

Introduction: Last week we returned to our study in the book of Ephesians and as we did, we were looking at Paul's command in 5:18.

Notice Ephesians 5:18

The command is to be filled with the Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit and to be filled means to be "controlled by". God has saved us, and He is allowing us to live out our lives here so that in our new life in Christ we will bring glory to Him. This is done as we are surrendered over to the Spirit, and He then brings forth fruit in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

It is when this fruit is produced that we bring glory to God.

John 15:4-5, 8

⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

Last week we started to look at how the believer's life is to be as we are filled with the Spirit.

Notice Ephesians 5:19-20

There are three points to see here:

1. Present in church.
2. Participate in church.
3. Purpose in church.

These are manifestations of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Today as we move on, we are going to see more manifestations of being Spirit filled.

I. Spirit Filled in the Family
A. The Exhortation for the Wife

Notice Ephesians 5:22

Here is a verse that has been taken out of context so many times, it has been misunderstood by many and it has been used to suppress women. The word "submit" is one of the most hated words among women and the women's movement today mainly because it is so misunderstood. Many have taken this word and used it to make women feel inferior to men but that is certainly not the idea here.

Let me start in *Genesis* to show you the creation of the woman.

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

¹⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

²⁰ And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

²³ 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.

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The woman was not made from Adam's head that she was to rule over him. She was not made from the feet to show he was to rule over her. She was made from his side, under

his arm and next to his heart. That is where she is to be, under the protection of his arm and close to his heart.

Let us now get back to the word "submit". Submission does not mean inequality. Literally, it means "put yourself under, arrange yourself under someone, for a good and proper purpose." It is a totally voluntary action."

Notice Ephesians 5:21-22

In verse 21 we see that we are all to submit to others. This means we are to voluntarily to put ourselves under others. I show you this to help you to see that it is not only the woman who is called to submit. At the end of verse 22 we are given important information. The wife is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord. There have been some who want to interpret this in 2 ways that are wrong:

1. One wrong interpretation is the interpretation that favors the husband and says that "as to the Lord" means that a wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself. The idea is "you submit to God in absolutely everything without question, so you must submit to your husband in the same absolute way." This interpretation believes that the words "as to the Lord" defines the extent of submission.

1 Peter 3:5-6

⁵ For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

⁶ Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Peter tells us that Sarah called Abraham "lord", but this does not mean "lord" in the sense of God. It means "lord" in the sense of "master". No place in the Scriptures are we commanded to submit to another person as we would submit to God. There are limits to our submission. There are limits to how we submit to government, and to employers. The only One we are to submit to without exception is God.

So the wife is not to submit to her husband as if he was God.

2. The second wrong interpretation that favors the wife says that "as unto the Lord" means "I'll submit to him as long as he does what the Lord wants." Then the wife often thinks it is her job to decide what the Lord wants. This interpretation thinks that "as to the Lord" defines the limit of submission.

Listen to the words of Guzik:

"It is true that there are limits to a wife's submission; but when the wife approaches "as to the Lord" in this way, it degenerates into a case of "I'll submit to my husband when I agree with him. I'll submit to him when he makes the right decisions and carries them out the right way. When he makes a wrong decision, he isn't in the Lord, so I shouldn't submit to him then." That is not submission at all. Except for those who are plainly cantankerous and argumentative, everyone submits to others when they are in agreement. It is only when there is a disagreement that submission is tested."

The phrase "as unto the Lord" defines the motive of a wife's submission.

Listen to the words of Jones:

"It means: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord.' Or 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands; do it in this way, do it as a part of your submission to the Lord.' In other words, you are not doing it only for the husband, you are doing it primarily for the Lord Himself... You are doing it for Christ's sake, you are doing it because you know that He exhorts you to do it, because it is well-pleasing in His sight that you should be doing it. It is part of your Christian behavior; it is a part of your discipleship."

When the wife is filled with the Spirit, she will have a deep inward desire to please the Lord and in so doing she will be submissive to her husband.

B. The Example for the Wife

Notice Ephesians 5:23

Here Paul reminds us all that the husband is the head of the family just as Jesus Christ is the head of the church. The husband has been placed in the position of being the spiritual leader of the family.

The wife is not to rule over her husband because headship in the family is not given to her. To the men, I need to remind you that as the spiritual leader of the family you are to be ever learning and ever growing in the Lord so that you can lead your family. You have the responsibility of guarding and protecting your family from spiritual dangers.

But many men are divided in their allegiance just like those who received the letter of Hebrews.

Hebrews 5:11-14

¹¹ Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

C. The Expectation of the Wife

Notice Ephesians 5:24

Just as the church is to submit to the headship of Jesus Christ so to the wife is to submit to her husband in everything. This is the created order of authority in the family.

But this is not easy for the woman. In order for the wife to be submissive as the Bible commands she **MUST** be filled with the Spirit because when sin came into the world the woman's desire was to rule over her husband. Before sin there was **ONE** will in the world, and it was God's will. But after sin entered there were then 3 wills, Adam's, Eve's and God's and only **ONE** is the right will.

Genesis 3:16

¹⁶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

The word "desire" has a root meaning that has the idea of "seeking control" or "to master your husband".

The wife must resist the desire to control and to master her husband. **To glorify God in doing this it is only possible with the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Notice Ephesians 5:24 again.

Paul tells us here that the wife is to submit in everything. I need to clarify that for a moment. Tonight we are going to look at when we are to submit to the government and when it is justified to resist.

1 Peter 2:13-14

¹³ *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme:*

¹⁴ *Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

Peter says to submit to EVERY ordinance, but we know there are exceptions. So too there are times when the wife does not have to submit to her husband.

- **When he asks her to sin.**
- **When he is mentally not able to make sound choices.**
- **When he is physically abusive and endangers her and the children.**

D. The Exhortation for the Husband

Notice Ephesians 5:25

A man is never to act as a tyrant over his wife but instead he is to love his wife just as Jesus Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. The word for love here is "agape". Agape love is an unconditional love which means it is a love that expects nothing in return. It is a love that is based more on decision than it is on feelings. This is a love that is given even when it is not deserved.

Listen to what one teacher wrote concerning agape love:

The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.

- *It is a love that loves without changing.*
- *It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment.*
- *It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing.*
- *It is love that loves even when it is rejected.*

· Agape love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive.

E. The Example and the Standard for the Husband

Notice Ephesians 5:25b-27

Jesus' love for the church is the example that we as husbands are to follow. Let me explain what that means in light of loving our wives.

This agape love that we are commanded to exercise is a call to continually practice self-denial for the sake of our wives. All that Jesus did He did for us and not for Himself.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Conclusion:

- **Worldly headship says**, "I am your head, so you take your orders from me and must do whatever I want."
- **Godly headship says**, "I am your head, so I must care for you and serve you."
- **Worldly submission says**, "You must submit to me, so here are the things I want you to do for me."
- **Godly submission says**, "You must submit to me, so I am accountable before God for you. I must care for you and serve you."