

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Church at Ephesus
Pastor Nathan E. Lewis
Part Five

“walk” as lifestyle/behavior, must be reallllly important to the Apostle Paul. In Ephesians 2:8-9 he tells us that faith is a gift of God...
...and then he makes the “ya gotta walk the talk” point over and over and over again.



Review:

“in Christ,” and like phrases = united to Jesus Christ

For the Apostle Paul, being united to Christ means that we must practice our faith in a manner pleasing to God and we must do so in a community of faith. We must not only please God, but also we must build loving relationships.

Ephesians 5:15-21

(15) Paul, not only Jewish, but a Pharisee, recipient of the finest education in the Hebrew Scriptures available in his day, would consider “wisdom” to be the correct application of knowledge:

knowledge = what I have mentally retained of God’s Word and world.

wisdom = the best application of what I know of God’s truth.

(16) The wise person not only applies God’s truth, but does so efficiently, without any procrastination. Our best combat of evil in this world is to “walk” - behave “wisely” - applying God’s truth without delay.

(17) The opposite of being wise is to be foolish. And so, Paul defines wisdom, the opposite of foolishness as “understanding *what the will of the Lord is.*” God’s will is not a mystery, when it comes to our lifestyle and behavior! God moves in mysterious ways, and much of what he does and how he does it in this world goes beyond our understanding. But the Holy Scriptures sufficiently tell us which lifestyles are holy and which behaviors are pleasing to God.

(Pastor Richard Cox has been teaching a study in the Book of Proverbs, for years at the Men's Bible Study on Wednesday mornings at Sterry. This book is all about the difference between the wise person and the fool. The Hebrew Scriptures - The Old Testament - is divided in the Jewish canon: 1) The Torah, the Law - Five Books of Moses; 2) The Nevi'im, The Prophets; 3) The Ketuvim, "Writings." The Ketuvim, or "Hagiographa," includes the historical books and the Wisdom Books. Proverbs is one of the Wisdom Books, teaching us how to **walk the talk**. -A big shout out - much thanks - to Pastor Cox, for his diligent and fine teaching of how to behave in a way that is wise - pleasing to God... And a big shout out - much thanks - to Jeff Baroli, who is now team-teaching with Richard, and who, with his son, Henry, has been facilitating the morning Men's Bible Study...well, until the pandemic...but Lord willing, again soon!)

(18) The wise person is controlled by the Holy Spirit - not controlled by a substance, like wine, or any other thing or person other than the Holy Spirit.

(19-21) Here's the community/relational part again - united to Christ, we are united to one another in our wise walking. One of the main activities of the wise community of faith is our **worship** of the one, true God. A big part of our worship is to sing together to the praise of God. Much has been written about the three classifications of worship music Paul lists here - "*Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.*" Most explanations distinguish these three as different kinds/genres of songs. But Paul may be telling us to worship by singing the songs of various generations, so that together we are one community of faith singing, not only the songs of our day and culture, but the songs of many generations and cultures. If I am correct about this, then the three-fold descriptions would be as follows:

Psalms = The songs of the Old Covenant temple worship

Hymns = The songs of the early church and generations preceding our own

Spiritual Songs = The songs our our own day and particular culture

When we sing across the generations and cultures, we express and build our unity as one Body of Christ!

Our collective/corporate worship is our constant expression of gratitude - thanksgiving for EVERYTHING. We give thanks to the Father as one community united to the Lord Jesus Christ - "*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Paul supplies us with one more component to our unity to one another as those united to Jesus - **submission to one another**. To submit means that we practice community. We listen to each other. We follow each other. We treat each other as equals even when we have different roles to perform. (This pandemic of 2020 is really challenging our union, communion, our corporate worship of God and our submitting to one another. We must find ways to rise above and break through the isolation we must endure for a season.)

Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9

Submission Assures our Unity in the Church, Family, and Economy

Submission is most difficult for us in our modern and post-modern culture in the west, because of our rugged individualism. (I am truly amazed and heartened at the wide-scale submission of the world, national and local communities in the wake of this pandemic 2020!)

5:21 = submission in community of faith - the church

5:22 - 6:4 = submission in the family

6:5-9 = submission in the marketplace - the economy

(21) We submit to “*one another*,” a term appearing hundreds of times in the New Testament, referring to our union to each other by virtue of our union to Christ, and thus to our equality in Christ. Regardless of our nationality, ethnicity, age, gender, or economic status, as members of Christ’s church, we are equal members - sisters and brothers united to Christ Jesus. **Galatians 3:28** - “*There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

(22-33) Paul goes to great lengths to make this one big point - submission in the marital relationship is like submission in the church. (24) “*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands...* (25) “*Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...*”

Love and submission are profoundly inseparable. To love, as Christ loves, is self-sacrifice. To submit is self-sacrifice. All relationships work when all parties put the interests of others before their own (Philippians 2). Submission in the family, just like submission in the church is all about our union to Christ Jesus, who models for us self-sacrificial love.

(22) “*Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord.*” All of us in the church submit to the Lord - that is Jesus Christ - who is perfectly holy and perfectly submissive himself. He alone is the model and in this command becomes the measure of the husband. Though no husband is able to match the perfection of Jesus, nevertheless, he is to strive toward Christ’s self-sacrificial love soon to be Paul’s next instruction in this paragraph. The husband is one, who is to put the interests of others before his own, as Paul instructs in Philippians 2. And so, this submission of a wife is her response to such a husband - not to a cruel, selfish, overbearing husband, but to one, who follows Jesus.

A wife’s submission is her response to a self-sacrificial husband. Some readers wonder why Paul does not address the husband first, calling him to self-sacrificial love and then address the woman’s response in submission. The reason for this, is that “submission” is Paul’s main point in this context, and he has just used the word, “submission,” in (21) calling all of us members of Christ’s church to submit to one another. And so, he begins his instruction to the family with the word “submission,” addressing first the wife. Actually, what confuses many readers is Paul’s emphasis in this section on Christ! Paul seems less interested in the family and more interested in how the family reflects the relationship between Christ and his church.

Here are some bullets on what Paul means by calling wives to submit to their husbands:

*The wife’s response to her husband should reflect her response to Jesus Christ.

*The wife’s response to her husband should be an appropriate response to her receiving self-sacrificial love. When a husband self-sacrificially loves his wife, and she responds selfishly or fails to notice, then her response does not reflect her relationship to the Lord. But her submission does reflect her relationship to Jesus Christ.

*Submission means a lifestyle and behavior of appropriate, loving response to self-sacrificial love.

* Submission does not mean blind obedience, subservience, inequality, silencing of opinion or constraint of will. The Holy Scriptures do not tolerate patriarchal misogyny, even though the narratives include patriarchal misogyny.

*Submission is the wife’s opportunity to pattern her responses after Jesus Christ, the model of submission. (Read Philippians 2).

(23) The word the Apostle Paul uses here for “head,” is the Greek word, “kephale.” By using this word, Paul is referring to God creating the man first and then the woman out of man. Kephale describes the fount, the source from which one springs. The correlation between the man and Christ is this: The church springs from Christ. The source/foundation of the church is Jesus Christ.

This is Paul’s reason for the wife’s submission to her husband. She is to behave in such a way that her union to her husband reflects her union to him as equal members of the human race, memorializing the very order in which God created the human race. God created the woman after he created the man, and so, the woman has never lived one moment without a man charged by God to self-sacrificially love her. No woman has ever lived more than a few moments without a man failing or refusing to do what God has created him to do - that is, self-sacrificially love. But such a sad reality is a result of human sin, not God’s created ideal or model for our relationships. A wife’s lack of submission may be the result of a husband’s failure to self-sacrificially love or it may a wife’s personal sin. Paul leaves that to every wife to determine. And the rest of us should not be quick to judge.

(24) “Everything” means in every category of life. “Everything” does not mean in every situation and in every response! If a husband fails to self-sacrificially love his wife, then she is not guilty of sin in her refusal to submit. “Everything” means that the wife may not respond to her self-sacrificial husband with a partial submission - submitting to him in financial matters, but refusing to submit in matters of social engagement. The wife and husband must relate to each other in all matters.

(25) The husband must relate to his wife in expressing to her self-sacrificial love - just as Christ has loved the church! A husband that does not “*give himself up*” for his wife, may not expect his wife to submit to him.

(26) Just as Jesus has made his church holy, through his self-sacrificial love, so the husband’s main work and purpose is to make his wife holy - that is, do everything in his power to enhance her God-created person. A husband that views his wife’s existence and work to serve his good, his will and his preferences is missing Paul’s point and most likely, do harm to his marital relationship, if not harm to his wife.

(27) The husband’s duty is to showcase his wife - to enhance her beauty, her intellect, her mission, her dreams, her holiness, her relationship to God....Everything for her! Everything for the reflection of God in her and in their marriage.

(28-30) The way a man loves himself is to love his wife. Self-sacrificial love does not expect or demand anything in return. But one who loves self-sacrificially is surprised by much love returned. These verses clearly present the equality between husband and wife. Love of self at the expense of other destroys this equality. Love of other promotes it. A husband who loves his wife displays the union between Christ and his church, members of Christ’s body.

(31-32) The marital union at its best becomes a picture of Christ and his church. The Son of God left his Father in heaven to unite to his church in this dark, cursed world. So, the man leaves his parents to unite to his wife in this fallen world.

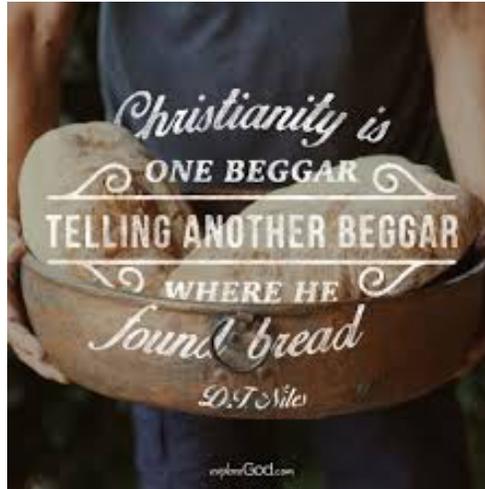
(33) The order some readers would like to see in the text now appears in this verse. The husband is addressed first and the wife secondly. Here Paul uses a synonym for “submission,” namely “respect.” A husband, who self-sacrificially loves his wife, wins her respect. The wife who submits to her husband, who self-sacrificially loves her, shows him the respect he is due.

Sterry Deacons are Busy!

Looking for Sterry Members and Friends, Who have are Out of Gainful Employment

If you are out of work or you know of someone who has lost his/her job, please let us know so that we can help. Call the Sterry Church office at (208) 722-6201 or Pastor Nathan at (503) 502-3026. We will inform the Sterry Deacons and petition for help.

What is a Christian?



I first learned this grace-filled truth from Jack Miller, founder of the New Life Presbyterian Church planting movement and founder of Serge Global Missions. Listening to Jesus, "bread," is not only a material need, but also a spiritual need. When we pray "The Lord's Prayer," - "Give us this day our daily bread," we are not only asking God to provide for our basic necessities, but we are also asking God to feed us the bread of heaven. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life..." Jack Miller taught me that begging for bread is a request for the Holy Spirit to nourish my soul!

Sterry Deacons are working are relieving material needs.

As they do so, let us pray daily for God to nourish our souls, to fill us with the Holy Spirit! Prayerfully consider giving a gift designated to Sterry Deacons so that they can help those who have been hit hard by Pandemic 2020. -A stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed.