

Ephesians 5
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Eph 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;
Eph 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us,
an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

What a command the Holy Spirit gives us here through the writings of Paul! We are to be imitators of the Holy Father, the One Who is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, Holy, Full of Glory, etc.! Theologians talk about two categories of characteristics of God: the communicable and the noncommunicable. The noncommunicable we certainly cannot share and I mentioned five of those above. Other noncommunicable aspects include self-existent, self-sufficient, and eternal. However even when we face the communicable aspects of God we run into some severe problems! Consider some of those communicable aspects of God: justice, wrath, wisdom, faithfulness, goodness, love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. These certainly are aspects of God that we should strive to have in our life, but God is perfect in all of them. Certainly part of the sanctification that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives is to be imitators of God in those communicable aspects. Here are some other relevant Scripture verses:

Deut 18:9 "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations."

Heb 13:7 "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."

3John 1:11 "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God."

The first tells what not to imitate and a lot of those detestable things are present in our country today. We saw in today (March 22, 2003) newspaper that the Oscar award films are "short on character lessons" and "Humanity's dark side in leading role". The two movies the comments are mainly referring to are "Chicago" and "Gangs". My wife and I were sure from the previews that we did not want to expose our minds to the movie "Gangs", but "Chicago" had received such excellent reviews that we did go to see it. Several times at the beginning we came very close to walking out, but we kept hoping that the movie would become cleaner and more interesting, but we were wrong. It was a movie that assaulted my senses and was the antithesis to everything that we hold dear. I would recommend that every Christian NOT see this movie. We left feeling dirty and it took several days of cleansing to get the effect out of our minds.

Certainly as Christians we should pay careful attention to Deut 18:9 and carefully research every activity under consideration before exposing ourselves to the activity. We certainly cannot depend upon the world's interpretation of a movie or whatever to completely base our decisions upon. Thus it is difficult for a Christian to find acceptable ways to spend on relaxation and entertainment. I personally have begun to collect some

of the old movies such as “The Glen Miller Story” to provide us with some means of spending some time on purely relaxation and entertainment. Such movies that stress the good aspects of humanity are certainly worthy ways for us to rest and be entertained for fairly short periods of time. I think that to obtain some ideas about the state of our country’s main methods of relaxation and entertainment we should watch some previews and read some of the worldly explanations of events, but we should not subject our minds to those events that clearly would grieve the Holy Spirit.

The third quotation above, 3 John 1:11 is also excellent advice for us in living our lives in a non-Christian world. I clearly remember quitting smoking when my son was about 2.5 years old. We were walking in the back yard together and I noticed that he was doing everything that I was doing. I suddenly realized that I was the main human that he was going to be imitating and I immediately quit smoking (that was 33 years ago). So we Christians need to be much aware of this warning in 3 John 1:11 both from the perspective of not imitating the evil that we see in the world, but we should also be aware that someone may be watching us and be imitating us so we need to be very careful what we actually do so that we do not be a factor in someone else stumbling in their Christian walk.

There are also a number of Scripture verses to which we can refer when we are thinking about whom we can imitate. The first is the second one listed above (Heb 13:7) and some others are listed below.

1Cor 4:16 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me.

1Cor 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Eph 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

1Thes 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

1Thes 2:14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

Heb 6:12 that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Since 1 Cor 4:16 contains a “therefore”, we need to back up and see what the “therefore” is there for and that involves looking at the preceding verse

1Cor4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

1Cor 4:16 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me.

Here Paul lifts up the familial experience as a working example. Paul is the one who brought the Gospel to them and was involved in God’s raising them from the spiritual dead. Thus Paul can be considered a spiritual earthly father even though only God Himself actually “saves” any person. Paul says that the people should be imitators of him rather than the tutors for event the tutors have learned from one of the apostles. Paul is

certainly worthy of imitation even though our primary task is to “imitate God” as we saw in Eph 5:1. Now Eph 5:1 also contains a “therefore” so we must understand the context of this verse. Remember that the original writings contained no chapters and verses. So what directly preceded Eph 5:1? Verses 4:17 – 4:32 contain many aspects of walking the Christian life that God is lifting up for us to understand and obey. However it seems that Eph 5:1 is directly referring to Eph 4:31-32 and that interpretation is reinforced by Eph 5:2. So that what God through Paul is primarily referring is that we should have the same forgiveness and love for each other that God has for us and in exactly the same way.

Thus the imitation of God to which Paul is primarily referring is a walk in love, the kind of love that God had for us while we were yet sinners. This love gives regardless of what the recipient does. We can only have this kind of forgiveness and love if we ourselves have come to understand the holiness of God and the unholiness of ourselves. Remember what Jesus said at the end of “the Lord’s prayer”:

Matt 6:14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matt 6:15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

These sentences are not a legalistic methodology for obtaining forgiveness from God, but they are a statement about the only kind of heart that can truly forgive others. If we have “come to the foot of the cross” in the full meaning of this phrase (see preceding writings on Ephesians regarding our forgiveness), then we know that as sinful and hopeless as we were, we have been forgiven and we have been set free from any lasting self-condemnation. In that state, we have a new heart, we have been born again, and then we really are able to forgive others who transgress against us.

The word Paul used that is interpreted “imitate” can also be interpreted “to mimic” and, of course, that means to fully copy another person’s actions in all details. My son was mimicking me and so I quit smoking. I also was careful to control other Adamic actions around him! How do we totally mimic someone else? We have to spend time with that person and carefully observe all of his/her actions and reactions. In this dispensation that means that we must spend time reading the Word of God, praying to God so that He may work changes in us, and spend time meditating on Scriptures to let the verses truly transform us as noted below.

Rom 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

**Eph 5:3 “But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;
Eph 5:4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”**

EPH 5:5 for this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Eph 5:7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;”

This section begins with the word “But”, and we know that this means that what follows would be in direct contrast to what had come before. Here Paul gives us some examples of activities that should certainly not exist in our lives and he ends these comments with a grave warning. The answer to world problems is not new programs, but new people (meaning born-again people). The problem with people is their heart as we see in these two verses:

Matt 15:18 “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.”

Luke 6:45 “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

To be born again, means that a person has a new heart and with this new heart the following occurs:

Rom 10:10 “for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Then for the rest of our natural lives, the Holy Spirit works in our life to bring us toward holiness in the process called sanctification. Paul states a few human traits that should not even be hinted as belonging to these born-again people, the Children of God.

1. Immorality. This word is a translation of the Greek word “porneia” from which we get our word pornography. However its use here really refers to sex outside of marriage and in some translations is taken to be the word “fornication”.
2. Impurity. This has already been discussed in Ephesians 4:19 and means people who no longer are adaptive to any type of moral imperatives. They continually seek to fulfill their lives with no concern for anyone else and such behavior is a hallmark of the totally secularized person.
3. Greed. This word comes from the Greek word “pleonexia” and literally means “the lust for more”. In Col 3:5 the same Greek word is referred to as idolatry because the outworking of this greed makes a god of whatever the person is seeking.
4. Filthiness. Some translators translate this word as “obscenity” and it refers to both indecent and offensive speech. A person exhibiting this trait would, just as an impure person, have to regard for moral standards. Nothing commands this person’s respect.

5. Silly Talk. This is sometimes translated as “foolish talk” and comes from the Greek word “morologia” and means one who talks as a fool. The emphasis is not intelligence, but again with a person with no regard for moral standards. This sort of talk would be uttered to make fun of the high moral standards of Christians. Many television shows have attempted to make humorous the drunkard and this type of projection would indeed be silly talk.
6. Coarse Jestings. Such talk would be examples of “double-entendre” or statements with a double meaning, especially when the second meaning is risqué. People making such statements think that they are extremely clever, but their conversation is “morologia”. These last three are certainly the usual manner in which an impure heart expresses itself in matters pertaining to proper Christian behavior.

Paul also discusses such behavior as unfitting of a born-again person in the following verses:

Col 3:5 “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Col 3:6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come,

Col 3:7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

Col 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,”

In our Ephesians study we see that Paul tells us instead to give thanks. For what should we give thanks? Well, we really should not have to ask that question! We give thanks for God choosing us to become born-again creatures with a pure heart, people whose sins have been paid for by Jesus Christ, and people who have had the righteousness of Jesus Christ put into our account.

Paul then goes on to give us a grave warning pertaining to those people who exhibit the above characteristics. He plainly calls them idolaters as they certainly are, and he plainly says that these people have no place in the kingdom of Christ and God. He then warns us to not be deceived by people who come to us with such empty words, words that make promises that are false. There are many people filling the airways with empty words today, and we must judge such by the Word of God. God promises that His wrath will be upon these people, so we should not participate with them in any way. Here I am reminded of the following:

Psalms 1:1 “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!”

Note the progression of events denoted here that starts with walking with these people, progresses to stopping and standing with them, and then ends with people sitting with these people, implying a particularly close association with them. The following is also a verse that we should have memorized and have our children and their children memorize:

1Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

Please always remember the above verse and don't be tempted by Satan to walk in the way of the wicked since you are so strong that being associated with such people will surely not affect you!

Eph 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light

Eph 5:9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

Eph 5:10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Eph 5:11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

Eph 5:12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

Now Paul moves on to tell us why we should not do any of the things that he had just mentioned. The word “for” tells us that what follows explains why the above behavior is required. Note that he says that we were formerly darkness, not that we formerly walked in darkness. He also says that we are now light in the Lord, not that we walk in the light of the Lord. Isn't that interesting!! We were darkness. We are now light **in the Lord**. So we were darkness in and of ourselves, but now we are light in the Lord, not in ourselves. These statements expose the vast difference between Christianity and other religions. In other religions one studies the foundations of the religion and begins to walk in the light of that religion, meaning that the person follows the principles of that particular religious doctrine. Christianity is vastly different than any other religion. All people originally are darkness for there is no light **within them**. The Christian is a born-again person with a new heart and a spirit that now is alive and is part of the Kingdom of God. The light that we have become is the presence of God Himself within us so that we now possess light that can shine into the darkness of the world.

The word “light” appears 200 times in the entire Bible and 72 times in the New Testament. The same word is in Genesis 1:3 as seen below.

Gen 1:3 “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

This verse has puzzled me for many years, as I could not understand what God created here when He “let there be light”. What I can say is that God has always been the creator of light and after a person is born again, he/she then also becomes light that again is created by God. Note also that there is a distinction from the sun and the light:

Psa 74:16 “Thine is the day, Thine also is the night; Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.”

Furthermore God says:

Isa 45:7 The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.

God makes it perfectly clear that He alone is the one who formed light and created darkness. We don't normally like to associate God with being the One who created calamity, but here it is clear that indeed that is so.

A Seed

We normally think of the sun as the natural source of the light in the world, but the Word of God tells us that God prepared both the light and the sun. So what is "light"? We get a clue from

Psa 97:11 "Light is sown like seed for the righteous, And gladness for the upright in heart."

God associates this light with a seed, but only for the righteous. So the light is something that is available only for the righteous and God Himself sows it to us, the righteous. What is the purpose of a seed? A seed is planted so that it brings forth another result. For example, a planted acorn will, if properly planted, bring forth a mighty oak tree. But the acorn does not bring forth another acorn. This seed analogy then means that the light put in us by God brings forth something else within us as it functions within our life.

God's Word

We also see further:

Psa 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path."

Psa 119:130 "The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple."

So the Word of God is a light (same word) for the path of the righteous, meaning that the Word of God will guide our path in this world. We also see that the unfolding (true understanding) of God's words gives (yields, brings forth) light and this proper teaching of the Word of God brings understanding of God even to the simple. Also note the following:

Wisdom

Isa 5:20 "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

The context here has to do with wisdom so there is a special "woe" assigned to people who substitute the wisdom of the world for the wisdom of God, which reminds me of the following:

Col 2:8 "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Now we seem to be making some progress in our understanding of "light". Light is associated with the wisdom of God that provides guidance for God's people and is obtained by God sowing it in His people and in the proper interpretation of His Word to His people.

Walk in Light

We see from the following that those who walk in the darkness have no light, so the person who does not have light planted within himself walks in darkness (obeys and participates in the evil of the world) and has no fear of the Lord.

Isa 50:10 "Who is among you that fears the Lord, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God."

This light is not just for our pleasure, but God has a purpose in giving us this light:

Isaiah 42:6 "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,"

We, the righteous ones, are to serve as a light to the nations, meaning that the wisdom and glory of God that He has placed in us will cause us to be able to be the true leaders needed by the nations to follow the true God.

Jesus, the Light of the World

The Bible certainly contains analogies of this light with that given by the sun and the other heavenly bodies:

Jer 31:35 "Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day, And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The Lord of hosts is His name:"

Jesus told us that He was the light of the world while He was in the world:

John 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Believers are Sons of Light

He also said that while he was here, they should believe in Him so that they could become "sons of light":

John 12:36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them."

Jesus also compared this "light" with the light of a lamp:

Luke 11:36 "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."

Of course, to have no dark part in our body at all would be complete sanctification and then we would be totally illumined (completely understanding all aspects of God) and this will not occur as long as we are here.

God is Light

We even have the Word from God that He is light:

1John 1:5 "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."

The analogy seems to be that God has given the world light (general revelation) and to each of His children He has given a more special light (specific revelation). It seems then that "light" is not just a physical phenomenon but also a philosophical phenomenon generated by God Himself. Since we know from the above that the light functions as a seed in the life of the righteous person, then what is brought forth from this seed is the very Glory of God within the person of the righteous ones. This light is then the very cause of the sanctification (bringing a person more and more into the very likeness of God) of the righteous.

Created Light

So what is the meaning of the first verse we looked at in our pursuit of an understanding of the word "light"?

Gen 1:3 "Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light"

Even though the Word says that God is light, we know that this verse does not mean that God created Himself!!! Also even though Jesus said that He was light, the verse does not mean that God created Jesus at that point in time for the Trinity has always existed. This concept might belong to the following general category of secret things that we will not know until later:

Deut 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

However if we look at the next few verses in Genesis we see the following:

Gen 1:3 "Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Gen 1:4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Gen 1:5 And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day."

Although some have said that this means that God now first let the light reach the earth, this is not what the verse says. To "let something be" means to create it. From all that we have studied above, I very tentatively want to say that what God "let be" here was the very Glory of Himself that would be reflected by all of creation. The separation that He created then was between a knowledge of the true meaning of all of creation and the knowledge that His creature man could discover on his own about the creation itself.

Thus He Himself created a divide between a general revelation of Himself and a specific revelation of Himself and it is only those who receive the seed of light who can correctly understand the Glory of God. He then set up the physical analogy of the two understandings as "day" and "night" that is consistently used throughout Scripture. What God then set up from the very beginning of the creation is that understanding about Who He is can only be understood by His specific revelation to those whom He elects. The most brilliant of all people cannot develop that true understanding of spiritual things unless God Himself acts first.

This creation of light and its separation from darkness is then like a veil that God has placed before all creation and it was only at the completion of the work of Jesus Christ that the veil was torn for those whom He chooses. I believe that the following verses corroborate this interpretation.

Mark 15:38 "And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

2Cor 3:15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

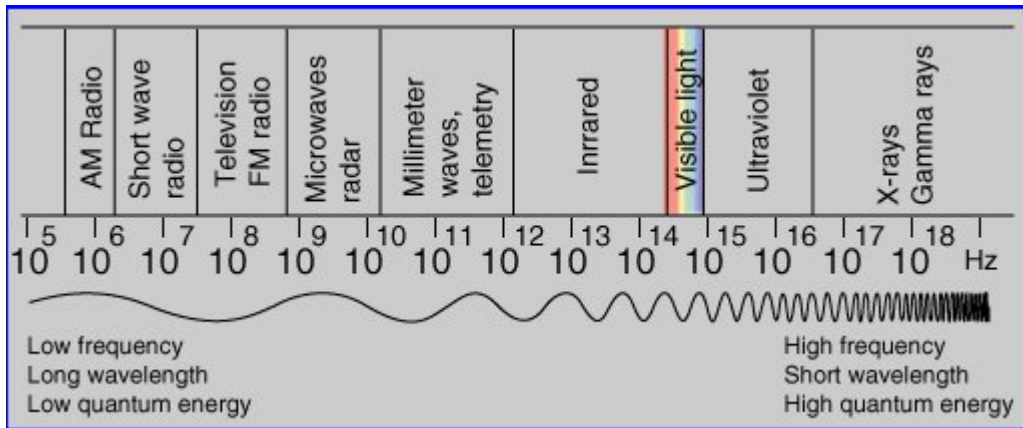
2Cor 3:16 but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

In summary then, the light that God created as He told us in Genesis 1:3 is the general revelation that looking at all His creation would show forth His Glory. In essence He "painted" creation with His Glory. He also separated this revelatory light from the darkness so that only His children could understand the creation as a manifestation of the Glory of God. Looking at such heavenly scenes as the one below, anyone can see an example of the general revelation of light showing forth His Glory. However only special revelation can reveal to God's children the true purpose of the heavenly creations: to reveal something of the Glory of a personal, loving Father in Heaven Who loves His children and desires that they all appreciate His radiant Glory. We also see this revelation clearly stated in the following Scripture.

Rom 1:20 "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."



As a scientist, I cannot help but also note the correlation with the vision that God has given us of the electromagnetic spectrum. The visible region of the electromagnetic spectrum is a very small fraction of the total electromagnetic spectrum so that we are legally blind regarding the entire spectrum. Notice below⁹ a large portion of the electromagnetic spectrum and note that the visible region is only a very small portion of the total spectrum.



Relating vision to the total revelation of God, the world is blind and only has a general revelation as discussed in Romans chapter 1 and the above discussion. Once we are born again, God plants the seed of light within us and we then become light and have the special revelation of God that He only gives to His children.

Looking at the rest of these verses, Ephesians 5:9 is not in the oldest manuscripts, but it seems consistent with Gal 5:22-23 and both tell us the fruit of the light or the Spirit (all goodness and righteousness and truth). Ephesians 5: 10-12 elaborate upon our behavior in the world as the chosen people of God for whom God has torn the veil. Paul tells us to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, and how do we do that? We have to “learn Him”. Remember our discussions about how we are to “learn Him”? We discussed this concept

of “learning Him” rather than “learning about Him” in our elaboration of Eph 4:20 so here again we are urged to learn Him so that we would know what is pleasing to Him.

Paul then tells us not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. The people who are still darkness are the people who have not been given the seed of light and so that are still darkness as we once were. The deeds that these people do are totally unfruitful so that they do not store up treasures in heaven for themselves and they do not do deeds that bring real love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control. We are told not only to not participate in these deeds, but we are to expose them, but in verse 12 he says that it is disgraceful to even speak of these evil things done in secret. How are we to expose them if we should not even speak of these secret acts? We can just let our light shine upon the deeds of darkness. I have heard a number of stories of Christians who were strongly criticized for being judgmental toward a sinner even though the Christian did not say a word! Merely the presence of a known Christian can expose those who are practicing deeds of darkness.

Eph 5:13 “But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Eph 5:14 For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.””

Verse 13 seems to validate my comments above as Paul tells us that ALL things become visible when they are exposed by the light. Our light exposes the deeds of darkness. Certainly the last part of verse 13 must be taken in a spiritual sense for certainly “everything that becomes visible is light” cannot be taken in a physical sense. We could ask “is light to whom?” and that would lead us on another path. Another valid interpretation of the last part of verse 13 is “where everything is made visible there is light” and either interpretation lead us to the conclusion that Paul is referring to the spiritual rebirth of a person such as happened to the people at Ephesus and elsewhere. Verse 14 certainly also seems to reinforce this interpretation.

Verse 14 is a religious hymn that Paul is quoting. The exact origin of the hymn is not certain. Most people think that verse 14 is based upon Isaiah 60:1 and is a baptismal hymn sung by people as someone was being baptized. In the primitive church baptism was described as an enlightenment (photismos) perhaps being the basis of understanding of Heb 6:4 and Heb 10:32. Certainly the exhortations to “awake” and “arise” place this hymn in the context of a resurrection or rebirth. These people who have been born again can now have the light of Christ shine upon them. Personally I like the analogy with a rebirth and a resultant baptism very much. It seems very appropriate as a hymn to be sung at a baptismal service.

Eph 5:15 “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,

Eph 5:16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Eph 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Eph 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Eph 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
Eph 5:21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Therefore – based upon all that has been discussed above – we should be careful how we walk in this world. I am afraid that I often walk as an unwise man, and I am ashamed when remembrances of such times are brought to my mind. We Christians have an incredible array of assistance to help us walk in the world and yet, we often walk as blind men rather than people of sight. We walk into situations with little or no prayer, with little or no Bible study relating to such situations, and shamefully with little or no dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Such shameful times seem analogous to our walking into a situation wearing spiritual blinders and then we are surprised when something bad happens to us as a result of this foray into enemy territory without being properly prepared. I am reminded of the following Scripture:

Luke 14:31 “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?”

This verse is in the context of Jesus telling the people the cost of being His disciple starting with the following exhortation.

Luke 14:27: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Of course, to “carry his own cross” means to die to self. Nobody at that time did not understand what “carry his own cross” meant as the horror of crucifixion was well known. Today we hear people say something like “your spine problem is your cross to bear” and this is a terrible misinterpretation of this phrase.

But to “die to self” is not a once in a lifetime event as is clarified in the following:

Luke 9:23 “And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

When we walk into situations unwisely we then are not in a self-dead mental attitude. The spiritually alive person will prepare for war properly as we will learn more about later.

Continuing with verse 16, we begin to see some areas in which the Christian can exercise wisdom as he/she walks in the world.

I. Making the most of your time

Most people do not seem to understand the importance of time and especially do not seem to contemplate what little time they have available even if they live a long life. There are many Greek words for time. The Greek word “chronos” refers only to the flow of time and is the word from which we obtain the word “chronology”. The Greek word “aion” is interpreted in English as “age”. However neither of these words is used in this section. The Greek word used is “kairos” and refers to a moment that is especially significant or favorable. Jesus used this word when He said “My appointed time is near” (Matt 26:18). Therefore, when Paul tells us to “make the most of our time because the days are evil” he is telling us that we should treat each moment as a moment in time that is especially significant or favorable.

God has seen to it that we live here at this particular time in history and we are treat each second as a very precious moment in our time allocation. None of us knows when our end on this earth will come. God has allotted us each a period of time in which to live here:

Psa 139:16 “Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.”

Before the beginning of time, God put me here in this time/space period. God has allotted to each of us a period of time on earth and He has chosen us as His children to walk in the paths that He created for us:

Eph 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

So we are to make the most of our time, all the time, to the glory of God.

II. Understand the will of the Lord

Our next exercise of wisdom that Paul instructs us to use is to understand the will of the Lord. Certainly part of knowing the will of the Lord is to study the Scripture, which reveals much of the will of the Lord for us. However this command is in the context of wisdom so it probably means more than just the accumulations of knowledge from the Word of God. We are to know the way of the Lord and we are to use God’s wisdom in walking in the world. We particularly need to know what God is doing in this time period that we share with Him in our physical form. We are also to know the spiritual gifts that God has given us and to use the faith (the enabling power of God) that God has given us to use our gifts to “get on God’s bandwagon” as some people say. There are many programs, Bible studies, books, Christian movements, etc happening in our space/time existence but it is only by using God’s wisdom that we can determine how we should be using our time. So to “understand the will of the Lord” is a very complicated command, but one that God has given us the faith and wisdom to obey. We need to be alert, pray constantly, meditate on the

Word of God, seek wisdom (James 1:5), and carefully weigh each opportunity that is put before us in our walk in this world. I so wish that I could say that I have always done that! However, I have not and I have suffered needlessly because of my disobedience. Let us all renew our covenant to “Learn Him” and to understand His will.

III. Be filled with the Spirit

Here is the third exercise of wisdom that Paul commands us to obey. Many there are that misuse alcohol, but few there are that are truly “filled with the Spirit”. Why do most people get drunk? I am not a sociologist, but it seems to me that most people get drunk because they want to escape from the situation in which they find themselves. A Christian, upon feeling inadequate or afraid in a situation, should not turn to alcohol or drugs but to a renewed filling with the Spirit. First let us be clear about what “filled with the Spirit” is NOT. It is not a “second blessing” or baptism of the Spirit resulting in the speaking in tongues as some claim. There is one legitimate baptism by the Spirit and that is when the person first becomes a Christian. This is the moment when the Spirit regenerates us and unites us with Jesus Christ and is a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The filling with the Spirit to which Paul refers in this verse is something that is commanded here for us to obey. There are ten instances in Acts in which people are referred to as being filled with the Spirit and in each and every case the people immediately bore witness to Jesus Christ. This filling with the Spirit is a means to the end of us being totally illuminated in God as we studied previously in the Scripture: *Luke 11:36 “If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.”*

A totally Spirit-filled child of God would be in total oneness with God in every second of every day and in each step of every path taken in the world. Of course none of us will attain that spiritual perfection until we are in the full presence of God. However, this is a command that we should all seek to obey during every second of our existence. What a difference the world would be if every Christian concentrated every day to be as filled with the Spirit as possible. Every meeting I attend would be different, every interaction that I have with people every day would be different, all the time that I spend with my family would be different; all because I would be different!!!!

Be filled with the Spirit!!!

Then notice the difference resulting from these exercises of wisdom. Paul says that we would be:

1. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
2. Singing and making melody with our hearts to the Lord.

3. Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, the Father.
4. Subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

What a difference the world would be!

Eph 5:22 “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Eph 5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Eph 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

Eph 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

Eph 5:30 because we are members of His body.

Eph 5:31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

Eph 5:32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.”

These verses are all about Christ and the church and how that miraculous relationship is displayed by the interplay between the husband and the wife in marriage. Christianity is never just about one particular believer and God, it always involves other of God’s children for we are all part of the body of Christ: the Church. In this epistle, Paul discusses three interactions:

1. The wife with the husband and the husband with the wife.
2. The children to the parents and the parents to the children.
3. The slaves to the masters and the masters to the slaves.

In his book, “Life in the Spirit”, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones spends 236 pages out of a total of 371 pages on these verses that we are examining now indicating how important he thought these verses are. One of the best books that I have read on the Christian family and its relationship to our relationships to God is the book by Larry Christenson noted below.

Marriage is an institution developed by God as we see in the following verses:

Gen2:18 "Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Gen 2:19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

Gen 2:20 And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

Gen 2:21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place.

Gen 2:22 And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

Gen 2:23 And the man 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."

Gen 2:24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Gen 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Mat 19:4 "And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

Mat 19:5 and said,' For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?

Mat 19:6 "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.""

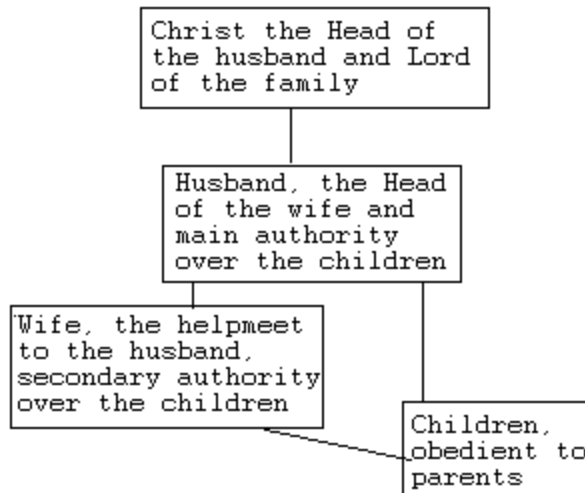
Now consider the above verses and the following verses.

1Cor11:3 "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

Col "3:20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."

We can use all these verses to deduce the following diagram:

God's Order for the Family



Since marriage is a holy ordinance, it is of the utmost importance. A violation in any way of the marriage covenant is a sin against Holy God. Also note that Satan did not waste much time in assaulting marriage as is recorded beginning in Gen 3:1. Satan continues to assault marriage as we have noticed in recent polls that there is not much difference in the divorce rate among people describing themselves as Christians as among those who do not say that they are Christians. Fornication (sexual relations with neither person married) and adultery (sexual relations in violation of marriage vow(s)) are also rampant in our country among stated Christians and non-Christians. Because God Himself instituted marriage and sexual relations, violations of both are especially repugnant to God and we must make extra special efforts to obey Him in these areas.

Note that these verses begin with a command of subjection of the wives to the husbands “as to the Lord”. The wives’ subjection should mirror the subjection that the wives have to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then Paul tells us why with Eph 5:23, which he begins with the word “for”. Here we begin to see the picture that God has painted in the world with marriage. The husband is the head of the wife in the sense that Jesus is the head of the church and he goes on to say that Jesus is the Savior of the church body.

In verse 24 he elaborates that the wife in subjection to her husband in everything is a picture of the church in subjection to Jesus Christ in everything.

Next he commands husbands to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and died for the church. Christ took the sins of all of his people of all ages (the church) upon Himself so that one day the entire church (all of God’s children) may be presented to God as pure, holy, and blameless.

Paul then goes on to say that the man should love his wife as he loves himself in the sense that he feeds and takes care of his body in all ways in the same manner that Jesus takes care of the church. We husbands are to devote ourselves to meeting all of the physical and spiritual needs of our wives.

We see the image that God has created then: the husband is a model of Christ and the wife is a model of the church. Their interactions should be perfect examples of the interaction of Christ with His church. When the husband is loving and caring for the wife as the most important task that he has, it is certainly easy for the wife to be in subjection to this man. For the husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church, he must learn Christ as thoroughly as possible.

Paul goes on to say that this is a great mystery, but that he has revealed what the mystery is all about. It is about the reference to Christ and the church. From this revelation we can easily understand:

Mal 2:16 "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel,"

My wife particularly lifts up verse 33 to the women in her Bible classes. She says that the verse speaks to the most important needs of men and women. The verse says for husbands to love their wives and for wives to respect their husbands. The biggest need for the husband is to be respected and the biggest need for the wives is to be loved.

It was not easy for Christ to go to the cross for His church:

Matt 26:39 "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.""

Of course, it was not possible for the cross was part of the plan of God from before the foundations of the world. "Good Friday" was a horrible day in both a human and a spiritual sense for our Lord, Jesus Christ. He endured a horrible death and the most horrible spiritual separation from the Father for the first time ever:

Matt 27:46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"that is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?""

This happened on what we call "Good Friday" because it is so good for God's chosen people. Jesus went through all of this for the church and we husbands are to be willing to do the same for our wives if need be for we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

On Resurrection Sunday, we then celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ because the resurrection proves that the Father accepted the sacrifice of Jesus and that indeed Jesus is the Son of God. So on Resurrection Sunday we should also celebrate the Christian family as instituted by God in all the spiritual reality that it reflects in our physical existence.

Wives be in subjection to your husbands as unto Christ Himself. Husbands love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. We who are husbands and wives should always strive to make this relationship as perfect as possible.

Praise the Lord!!

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