

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
"Domestic Obligations" (1)
Ephesians 5:22

INTRODUCTION

1. The Christian behavioral scheme includes a. Redeeming time (v. 16) b. understanding the will of God (v. 17) and c. being filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 18).
2. The totality of proper Christian living is "walking circumspectly" (accurately) in view of the evil days (v. 15). Children of light are expected to shine accordingly (v. 8).
3. To "be filled with the Spirit" involves a. A command (be filled) b. A constant (keep being filled) c. A control (with the Spirit).
4. From the filling with the Spirit will rise a. Joyfulness (v. 19). Here are expressions of Psalms, hymns, and songs among the saints. b. Thankfulness (v. 20). Spirit-filled Christians will always be thankful for all things. c. Submissiveness (v. 21). Mutuality in this is a trademark of Spirit control.
5. The application of these truths to the domestic scene is imperative. In fact while Spirit control is usually for service in acts, here it is for the daily home routine which is more demanding. The wife is singled out first as the one expressing Spirit-control in her relationship with her husband. Note the following aspects indicated.

1. VOLUNTARILY v. 22

The verb "submit" is not included in some MSS, but its intent is obviously attracted from v. 21 as the form of "husbands" notes. There it is middle voice or hortatory. It is less than a command, but surely an earnest appeal. There is no forced submission to a demanding husband. Rather there is devotion to a worthy husband. The significance of the verb is not in any sense related to inequality, but to orderly arrangement. The term is used for the military, but that sort of response is not intended here.

2. PERSONALLY v. 22

The parallel passage in Colossians also includes "own" with husbands (though some MSS omit it). The word denotes husbands who are peculiarly and exclusively theirs. Its use teaches monogamous marriage. All forms

of extra marital relationships are effectively ruled out.

3. SPIRITUALLY v. 22

The particle phrase "as unto the Lord" does not express similarity, but notes the wife's obedience is to be regarded as part of her obedience to the Lord (cf. 6:5, 6). This is what should make the burden light. The parallel passage in Colossians refers to the same, but points back to the beginning of obedience to the Lord (3:18). Whatever, God lifts marital submission from fleshly depths to spiritual heights.

4. COMPARATIVELY vv. 23, 24

a. To Christ as Head v. 23

The basic comparison is between Christ as Head of the Church and the husband as head of the wife (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3). The superiority of the man in position is clearly taught in Scripture and this eminency of the husband is the ground for the wife's submission (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1-16). While there are analogous points between Christ and the husband, Christ is, in addition, the Saviour of His Body (Eph. 1:22, 23). This may suggest the husband is also to be his wife's protector and blessing.

b. To Church as subject v. 24

The Body (Church) is subject to Christ, so also is the wife. This verse is not repetitious, rather it shows the extent of subjection: "in everything." Extent is not the same as degree of subjection, for the husband's authority is not unlimited. So long as one's allegiance to God is preserved, and one's obedience to another is part of obedience to Him, liberty and integrity are retained.

CONCLUSION

Day by day relationships demonstrate the walk of a believer. May God be magnified in our home experiences. Amen.