

Correct Interpretation must harmonize with the rest of scripture

Ephesians 5 . . .

1 Become, then, **imitators of God, as beloved children,**

Imitate: to follow as a pattern, model or example...to be like; to produce a copy of

And we are instructed to imitate God as “beloved children.” –

Beloved = esteemed, dear, favourite, worthy of love

2 and be **walking in love, according as Christ also loves you,** and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor.

3 Now, all **prostitution** and **uncleanness** or **greed** -- let it *not even be named among you*, according as is becoming in saints --

4 and **vileness** and **stupid speaking** or **insinuating**, which are **not proper**, but **rather thanksgiving**.

5 For this you perceive, knowing that no paramour at all or unclean or greedy person, who is an idolater, has any enjoyment of the allotment in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 **Let no one be seducing you with empty words,** [*don't be lead astray by attractive inducements...with words that are devoid of contents*] for because of these things the indignation of God is coming on the sons of [**the**] stubbornness.

7 Do not, then, become joint partakers with them,

8 for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord.

9 As children of light be walking (for the **fruit of the light** is in all [every] **goodness** and **righteousness** and **truth**),

Fruit = that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result.

10 testing what is well pleasing to the Lord.

Testing = examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals; to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy

11 And be not joint participants in the unfruitful acts of darkness, yet rather be exposing them also,

12 for it is a shame even to speak of the hidden things occurring, done by them.

...

15 **Be observing accurately**, then, brethren, **how you are walking, not as unwise, but as wise,**

16 reclaiming the era, for the days are wicked.

17 Therefore do not become **imprudent**, but **understand** what the will of the Lord is.

Imprudent = without reason; senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly

Understand = make out the meaning

18 And be not drunk with wine, in which is profligacy, but be filled full with spirit,
19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing music in your hearts to the Lord,

20 giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ,

21 to our God and Father, being subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

22 Let the **wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord,**

23 for the **husband is head** of the wife even **as Christ is Head** of the ecclesia, and He is the Saviour of the body.

24 Nevertheless, **as the ecclesia is subject to Christ, thus are the wives also** to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, be loving your wives according as Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for its sake,

...

28 Thus, the **husbands also ought to be loving their own wives as their own bodies.**

He who is loving his own wife is loving himself.

29 For no one at any time hates his own flesh, but is nurturing and cherishing it, according as Christ also the ecclesia,

30 for we are members of His body.

31 For this "a man shall **leave his father and mother** and shall be **joined to his wife,** and the **two shall be one flesh.**"

Leave = to forsake, leave to one's self a person or thing by ceasing to care for it, to abandon, leave in the lurch

Join = to join one's self to closely, cleave to, stick to

32 **This secret is great:** yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia.

Secret = mysterion – that which was once kept closed and withheld but now is revealed

33 Moreover, **you** also **individually** [as opposed to the ecclesia now], each **be loving** his own wife **thus, as himself**, yet that the wife may be fearing the husband.

“**thus**” – what is Paul referring to when he writes, “**thus**”? Go back to verse 25 and read from there. The “**as himself**” he defined in verse 28. This may be why it is such a “**great secret**” as Paul writes in verse 32!

Now . . . when he writes in v 33, “**yet that the wife may be fearing the husband,**” here’s how I see this: **FIRST**, go back to v. 21 where Paul writes about “**the fear of Christ**” and he’s applying the term to everyone (read it).

The difference in the wording in verses 21 and 33 is curious. Paul does *NOT* say in verse 21, “**yet that you may be subject to one another in the fear of Christ**”.

Verse 21 is an instruction that starts in verse 17 and ends in “**being subject to one another in the fear of Christ.**”

Verse 33 appears to be conditional, “**yet that the wife may be fearing the husband.**”

It’s the “yet that” that makes the phrase not so much an instruction as it seeks to make the *condition* of “**fearing the husband**” dependent on conditions that warrant that fear...

So let’s now go back and look at the conditions, which once fulfilled, enable the wife to “be fearing” her husband just as everyone is “**subject to one another in the fear of Christ**” as we saw in verse 21.

So, what are the conditions? Go back to verse 1 and ask the questions with me here:

1. Are we being imitators of God as beloved Children?
2. Are we walking in love, according as Christ also loves us and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor? Are we smelling sweet to God?
3. Is there anything ungodly or foul that could be named among us or (verse 4) are we rather demonstrating thanksgiving?
4. V6 – is anyone seducing us with empty words? Where is your instruction coming from? To Whom are you listening? Is it God? Is the holy Spirit guiding you into all the truth? Is it a religious structure with an agenda...an indoctrination? You know how you can tell the difference? Look at the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5. If it’s not all on that list, something isn’t lined up with the word of God. Let’s look at it:

Galatians 5:22-23:

Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law.

It’s interesting in verse 6, that being seduced with empty words brings on the indignation of God...in this case, on the “*sons of THE stubbornness.*”

5. V9 – are we walking as “**children of light**?” How would we know? We’ll know it by the “**fruit...in every goodness and righteousness and truth.**”
6. V10 – are we “**testing**-examining, proving, scrutinizing, *what is well pleasing to the Lord*?”
7. V15 – Are we observing accurately, how we are walking, not as unwise, but as wise?”
8. V17 – are we imprudent - without reason; senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly...or do we understand – do we make out the meaning – of the Lord’s will?
9. V18 & 19 – What’s our demeanor and comportment? How are we behaving ourselves?
10. V20&21 – this is a biggie, I believe, and will define us: Are we “**giving thanks ALWAYS for ALL THINGS to our God and Father, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ**?” Are we “**subject to one another in the fear of Christ**”? NOTICE there is no mention of gender in “*one another*”!

11. V22-24 sets a proper order, but everything preceding this has to be in place for it to have validity. Notice that the relationship of the wife to the husband is defined “*as to the LORD.*” It is further defined in V24 in comparison with the ecclesia, as it “*is subject to Christ.*” THUS are the wives also [subject] to... The standard set here is Christ. If that standard is not being met, all bets are off and we’re in deep trouble! This is not a license for men to put their wives into a bondage kind of submission. On the contrary, Paul is about to lay out the highest standard for husbands to come up to – they better be rightly and completely subject to Christ IF they expect right order in their relationships to their wives. It’s all well and good to expect wives to be subject to their husbands and for husbands to be the heads of their wives, but we must be living according to the standard of Christ Himself in His relationship to His ecclesia...and, lest we forget, in the fear of Christ!
12. V25 lowers the boom. This is a direct instruction to husbands. Once again the standard is Christ loving the ecclesia to the point of giving Himself up for it. So, husbands, “Are we loving our wives like that?” Like it or not, if that standard is not being met, we have nothing to say about disharmony or strife in our marriage. In fact, I believe that failing to live by this standard is what will produce disharmony and strife.
13. V28-30 – yet another standard is set up, namely our own bodies. That is, just as we cherish and nourish our bodies, that’s the example in the natural of how we ought to be loving our wives. And Then Paul puts a big cherry on top when he writes, “*for we are members of His body.*” Its like saying, if you don’t take care of your wife like you’d cherish and nourish your own body, you’re dishonoring – you’re wounding – Christ’s body, because you’re a member of it!
14. V31 – Are we forsaking, leaving to themselves, ceasing to care for, abandoning our own families of origin? And are we joined – Cleaved to – stuck like glue – to our wives? V32 – it’s no wonder this is a “Great Secret!” Paul says this has been kept closed and withheld until now...this definition the Apostle has just given of right order and right relationship between husbands and wives, between individuals and the ecclesia, and between both and Christ. Who sees *this* kind of marriage relationship? Whose marriage do *you* know that reflects Paul’s standard here?
15. V33 – We’re back to “**thus,**” placed strategically between Paul’s definite instruction to husbands -- *individually* – to be loving “his own wife THUS, AS himself, “SO THAT the wife may be fearing him.” Paul could also continue, “If you don’t love THUS, as Yourself, She’s won’t be fearing you in a right way (as fearing Christ) because you haven’t earned it! Husbands have to do their part or wives CAN’T do theirs.

There is a very helpful recording by Pastor Bayless Conley, titled “Women in Ministry.”

