

New Morning Magical

Play your position!

Today we begin in Ephesians chapter 5 and the Apostle Paul starts off with a wonderful instruction:

- 1 Become, then, imitators of God, as beloved children,
- 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.

When you look at the first verse, you can see that the phrase, "*as beloved children*," is the key to becoming an "**[imitator]** of God." How often as a child did you and your friends create entire worlds of make-believe? You gave no thought to limitations that adults use to keep their imaginations reigned in. Children can imitate anyone and imagine being in any environment. It's this child-like acceptance and ability to think beyond rational limits that Paul is encouraging here. Yeshua encouraged much the same attitude in Matthew 18:

- 2 And, calling a little child to Him, He stands it in their midst,
- 3 and said, "Verily, I am saying to you, If you should not be turning and becoming as little children, you may by no means be entering into the kingdom of the heavens.
- 4 Who, then, will be humbling himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.

Children are innocent, unspoiled, and entirely accepting; they don't get in their own way, because they aren't busily trying to figure everything out. These are the characteristics that the Messiah *and* the Apostle recommended.

Let's move on to Ephesians 5:3:

- 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.

Watch your mouth Paul says here; and don't you love his word, insinuating? It's like a combination of insinuation and innuendo. Great word!

Jump to verse 6 now:

6 Let no one be seducing you with empty words, for because of these things the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness.

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

8 for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord. As children of light be walking

9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

10 testing what is well pleasing to the Lord.

Notice in verse 8, Paul says, “*You were once darkness, yet now you **are** light in the Lord.*” In other words, you weren’t just IN darkness, you WERE darkness! Even better, you aren’t just IN light; you ARE light in the Lord. You can KNOW you’re light by the fruit in verse 9: all goodness and righteousness and truth. So, how are you doing with all that?

Notice that verse 9 is a parenthetical phrase; so let’s read verses 8 and 10 together and see what we get:

8 for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord. As children of light be walking

9 ...

10 testing what is well pleasing to the Lord.

How do you “**[test]** *what is well pleasing to the Lord*”? Now verse 9 comes back to help us:

9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)

Everything in that list is “*well pleasing to the Lord,*” which is to say that anything NOT on that list is NOT “*well pleasing to the Lord.*” It’s so simple a child can do it – in fact, ONLY a child can do it, in the sense of you and me adopting a child-like attitude and approach to the Father.

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.

“Watch what you’re doing,” Paul says in verse 15, “and be wise about it.” As you walk wisely, you actually reclaim, or “buy back” this season in which the days are wicked.

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

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.

Verse 20 through the first part of verse 21 is a hugely important instruction, because “*giving thanks always for all things*” doesn’t leave anything out. Not only the good things are included, but the bad and the ugly; the situations and relationships you wish had been different or hadn’t happened at all. The whole *Memory Re-Framing* program that Barbara and I developed boils down to how genuine, heartfelt gratitude dissolves emotional pain, and even the physical effects or conditions that can result.

The last half of verse 21 sets up what follows next:

being subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
22 Let the wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord,

The key phrase here is, “*as to the Lord.*” Christ doesn’t only set the standard for subjection, He IS the standard. Husbands who do not rise to Christ’s standard should not expect their wives to be subject to them and cannot demand it of them. We’ll see as we read on.

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.

Notice again that Christ is the standard, and the ecclesia is an example for the wives. What is Christ’s attitude toward the ecclesia? Entirely benevolent, kind and nurturing, right? This is exactly the right comparison for how husbands are to behave toward their wives.

25 Husbands, be loving your wives **according as** Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for its sake,
26 that He should be hallowing it, cleansing it in the bath of the water (with His declaration),
27 that He should be presenting to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless.
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.

Let me interject here that when a husband plays his position rightly, there's never a problem with the wife being able to honor his position before God; Paul is writing this to the Ephesians as a means of correction, as much as explanation.

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."

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

The notion of the relationship between Christ and the ecclesia was never compared to marriage before Paul wrote this section of Ephesians. Husbands should be in fear and trembling that they may fulfill their roles properly, because this is the highest standard that Paul sets before them.

33 Moreover, you also individually, each be loving his own wife thus, as himself, yet that the wife may be fearing the husband.

Subjection of wives to husbands CAN work properly so long as everyone is playing their position rightly. There is no room for either spouse to lord it over the other, or assume some kind of superior position. We should also acknowledge the time in which Paul wrote this letter, which I gather was pretty firmly patriarchal and women were pretty much considered second class citizens. We don't live in that kind of culture, thankfully, so when you see these passages used as an excuse to put women in their place, so to speak, you are witnessing improper application of the Scriptures due to misunderstanding them in the first place.

Let's move on into the first part of Chapter 6, which goes along the same general theme:

Chapter 6

1 Children, be obeying your parents, in the Lord, for this is just.

2 'Honor your father and mother' (which is the first precept with a promise),

3 that it may be becoming well with you, and you should be a long time on the earth.

Insisting on obedience in our children is essential for them to grow up into decent citizens. When children are unruly or disobedient, the fault is not with the children, but with the parents. Just as husbands must play their position rightly with respect to their wives, so must parents with respect to their children.

4 And fathers, do not be vexing your children, but be nurturing them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

In this next section, substitute employees and employers for slaves and masters, and it'll make more sense today:

5 Slaves, be obeying your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the singleness of your heart, as to Christ,

6 not with eye-slavery, as man-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul,

7 with good humor slaving as to the Lord and not to men,

8 being aware that, whatsoever good each one should be doing, for this he will be requited by the Lord, whether slave or free.

The "requiting" that Paul mentions in verse 8 is a reference to the Dais of Christ that we explored in an earlier Morning Magical.

9 And, masters, be doing the same toward them, being lax in threatening, being aware that their Master as well as yours is in the heavens, and there is no partiality with Him.

10 For the rest, brethren mine, be invigorated in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

I know this is shorter than usual, but it's a good stopping point before we get into what to me is the exciting subject of the "panoply of God," or the complete armor of God.

So until then,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN