Commentary: As we move to chapter 5 of Ephesians, we continue from chapter 4 with how we, as Christians, should live. First, we do so by following God’s example, then there are specific references to many areas where Christians fall or are tempted to fall. From there, we move to how we are to relate in family situations which, from the beginning of time, starting with Adam and Eve, have been problematic.

Ephesians 5 New International Version (NIV)

**5 1**Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2**and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1. Do you find yourself following God’s example or someone else’s example – at work? At home?
2. Paul uses the example of children in a loving family following their parents as how we should follow God. What examples have you seen in your children of them following your example?

This brings to my mind the children’s song:

*Boys and girls for Jesus; this our earnest prayer.*

*Boys and girls for Jesus, at home, at school, at play and everywhere.*

*We’ll tell the world of life in Jesus; He is all our song.*

*There is all you need in Jesus; won’t you come along.*

1. What mental images does “fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” conjure up for you?

**3**But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. **4**Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Here we are with the “no-no's” for Christians which seem to be so commonly ignored in society today. This is true in the prevalence of venereal diseases, beginning even in grade school, and with sexual impurity the rule among people of all ages. In language, even our federal elected officials and business people in meetings and presentations use the “F” word and its derivatives.

1. How do we keep our children (and ourselves) set apart from this?
2. Remembering to give thanks for all our blessings and not cursing bad luck or incompetent bosses, etc. can turn our hearts back to God. What blessings have you given thanks for this week?

**5**For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. **7**Therefore do not be partners with them.

1. These are the consequences of sinful behavior – loss of inheritance in the kingdom and incurring God’s wrath. Rhetorically speaking, how many of these things have we struggled with? What kind of peer pressure do you face or have you felt in business relationships or, perhaps, even in personal ones?
2. It is easier to avoid the less “acceptable” sins like murder and adultery, but what about the other “more acceptable” (or less unacceptable) sins?
3. Who do we work with, play with, even worship with that we need to avoid being partners with?

**8**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **9**(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) **10**and find out what pleases the Lord. **11**Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **12**It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. **13**But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. **14**This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
    rise from the dead,  
    and Christ will shine on you.”

Verse 8 is another reminder to “Live a life worthy of the calling that you have received.” from chapter 4. Here it is rephrased as “live as children of the light.”

1. As children of the light, we have now turned from that evil from whence we came and made to see it by the light. What examples of darkness in the world has the light exposed for you in this last week?
2. We are admonished to have no fellowship with works of the darkness, but rather to expose them. How do we do this in today’s world?
3. Can we in good conscience be silent in the face of these evil doings of others?
4. If, as in verse 14, we are asleep, do we see our own darkness? Are we oblivious to the darkness in others that need to see the light through us?

**15**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,**16**making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**17**Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.**18**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, **19**speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, **20**always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We don’t have a free pass to live as we wish (or do we?) rather, Paul encourages us to “walk circumspectly” (KJV) or “be very careful” (NIV) and make the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

1. Jesus said, in Matthew 24, that “many false profits will rise up and deceive many.” What should we do to “make the most of every opportunity: for Christ?
2. It is scary to see the callousness that New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo, and others have demonstrated for life by signing a bill to permit abortion up to the day of delivery.
3. We are admonished, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.” This clouds our judgement and causes us to make bad decisions. What else may cloud our decisions?
4. “Instead be filled with the spirit … with psalms, hymns and songs from the spirit. Sing and make music.” How does Christian fellowship help us in these evil days? Share some examples of how you have confronted these things or how you may have protested yourself or others against such evil.

Instructions for Christian Households

**21**Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**22**Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. **23**For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. **24**Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Wow! Here is one of the tough ones. How do we submit to each other in these times? It requires a complete, well-placed trust in God’s goodness and a leap of faith to place that kind of trust in others. The world is telling us to stand up for our rights, and that we should be able to do whatever we want to do. Now we have the “Me too” movement which, in concept, is a good thing. It has been perverted and somewhat discredited due to false attacks on politicians and college students that have later been proven false, but not without ruining lives and careers. But, more importantly “Me Too” and feminism in general undermine any woman wanting to submit to a husband on anything. Bad behavior by a lot of husbands hasn’t helped either.

The call here is as much to men to conform to Christ so that they are worthy of a wife’s submission and responsible for her care and welfare.

1. Are you worthy of your wife submitting to you?
2. How can you help her with obedience in that regard?
3. Some say that respect would be a better word than submit here. How do you feel about the word respect?
4. Have you ever insisted that your wife submit to your authority? How did that go? Would it be more correct to say that Paul meant “earned authority” and not “positional authority?”
5. Would Paul say that compelling your wife to submit was a perversion of what he is saying here?
6. What motivations should a wife have to “submit” to her husband?

**25**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her **26**to make her holy, cleansing[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29331b)] her by the washing with water through the word, **27**and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

1. Paul writes that husbands are to love their wives – not submit to them. Why do you think it does not mention submission?
2. What kind of love do you think Paul is referring to here; eros, storge, philia or agape love?
3. This verse doesn’t appear to leave any “out” for the man in a marriage. Did Christ leave himself an “out” in loving the church?
4. What words would you use to describe what a man’s love for his wife should be?

**28**In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29**After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church. —

1. Loving your wife as your own body means what?

**30**for we are members of his body.**31**“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **32**This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33**However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1. Why does Paul mix Christ’s relationship to the church with the relationship of a man to his wife?
2. Okay, I gotta ask it. What is the importance of “become one flesh?”
3. Here, in verse 33, Paul uses the word respect instead of submit. Any thoughts as to why? Does it mean something different here or is it just in a little different context?

What are the take aways from Ephesians 5? They are many and varied.

* Strive to be more like God – “imitate” his sacrificial behavior.
* Love God (The first and greatest commandment) and love others (…and the second commandment is like unto the first.)
* Live a life worthy of what you have been given as “Children of light.”
* Living outside of the light (many examples given) has serious consequences.
* Live in such a way as to be filled with the Spirit.
* Give thanks for the gift you have been given.
* Submit to God out of love recognizing his holiness and dominion over you.
* Apply these principles to your marriage using the example of Christ’s love (to the death) for his church.