

16. Learning the Foundation for Submission

In our last topic, we saw that we are to help our physical and spiritual children understand the will of God. We saw that one of the things that God desires is that all people would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We saw that it is also the will of God for us to share the Word of God with boldness with those who are not Christians. There are also many other things that are the will of God. In this, and the following two topics, we are going to see that it is the will of God that we are in submission to one another. In order to carry out the will of God, we see that we are to be filled with the Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:18-21, we see the attitudes that will be present in our lives when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18-19 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” We begin this section with a contrast so that we understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit. This form of the word translated “drunk” is only used two other times in the New Testament. Both relate to people who are unprepared at the coming of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:7-8 says, “For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.” Here, we see that as Christians we are to demonstrate faith, love and hope instead of drunkenness. “Dissipation” speaks about the drunken celebrations that often went along with the worship of idols.

Instead of being totally controlled by the effects of drunkenness, Christians are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The word that is translated “filled” means to *fill to the brim*. This word is used in the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:19 where Paul prayed, “To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” We saw in our last topic that one of the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that we will speak the Word of God with boldness. Here, we see that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, certain attitudes will be present in our lives.

First, we see that we will be speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Psalms is usually used to speak of a particular Psalm or a larger part of the Old Testament. However, in Colossians 3:16 we read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Here, we see that we use the Word of God to teach and admonish one another with wisdom. We are also to use hymns and spiritual songs for the same reason. The word “hymns” is only used in these two verses in Ephesians and Colossians and probably refers to a song that focused on Christ. “Spiritual songs” may refer to songs that speak of the salvation that Christ provided for us. The word translated “making melody” means to *play on a stringed instrument*. As a result, we can either sing in our heart or think of the tune in our heart.

Ephesians 5:20-21 says, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.” In these verses, we see two other attitudes that we will have. The second attitude that we will have is an attitude of thanks. Here,

we see that a true attitude of thanks gives thanks to God for all things. Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” In these verses, we see that God takes everything, including something that may be negative in our lives, and uses it to conform us to the image of Christ. As a result, we can be thankful for all things.

The third attitude that we see in these verses is an attitude of submission. Here, we see that we are to be submitting to one another in the fear of God. 1 Peter 5:5-6 says, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” The word that is translated “submitting yourselves” means *to arrange yourself under the leadership of one another*. It has the thought of humbly placing our full potential at the disposal of another person. We are going to see that we are given six examples of submission. In this verse, we see that we are to submit ourselves to all Christians. In the following verses, we see how:

Wives place their full potential at the disposal of their husbands – Ephesians 5:22-24

Husbands place their full potential at the disposal of their wives – Ephesians 5:25-33

Children place their full potential at the disposal of their parents – Ephesians 6:1-3

Fathers place their full potential at the disposal of their children – Ephesians 6:4

Servants place their full potential at the disposal of their masters – Ephesians 6:5-8

Masters place their full potential at the disposal of their servants – Ephesians 6:9

Ephesians 5:22-24 says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.” Although the word “submit” is not in the original manuscripts, it is implied here and in each of the following relationships that we will study in our next two topics.

One key thing to notice here is that wives are to place their full potential at the disposal of their own husband rather than someone else’s husband. What we learn in our next topic will show that husbands are to do the same and place their full potential at the disposal of their own wife rather than someone else’s wife. Colossians 3:18-19 says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.” Wives show their submission because it is fitting in the Lord. Husbands show their submission by loving and not becoming bitter toward their wives. We also see that a wife is to submit to her husband in the same way that she submits to the Lord. Christ gave His life for us and so our desire is to submit to Him in love.

We also see that the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, we read, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.” Here, we see that headship talks about leadership. Christ and the Father are equal. However, the Father is the head of Christ because He is the One who wills all things. John 6:38-39 says, “‘For I have come down from heaven, not to

do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.” Christ chose to place His full potential at the disposal of the Father and carry out the will of the Father by His death. Although the wife and husband are equal, the wife is to choose to recognize her husband as the head of the family so that the family can function effectively.

We also saw another thing that the headship of Christ meant in an earlier topic. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” In these verses, we see that when we recognize Christ as the head, we will speak the truth. We will also speak in love. This is what makes it possible for every part to work effectively for the Lord. Here, we see that as the wife recognizes the headship (leadership) of her husband, the home will be a place where each member of the family will learn to speak the truth in love and each member of the family will learn to serve the Lord.

We see why the husband is given the leadership in the second half of the verse. The reason God gave this leadership to the husband is due to the fact that he has the responsibility to provide spiritual and physical protection to the wife. That was the very thing that Adam failed to do for Eve in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:5-6 says, “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” Here, we see that Adam failed to provide spiritual protection to his wife. Notice the place where Adam was located while Satan was tempting Eve. Verses six says that he was with her.

We see that just as the church is to be in submission to Christ in everything, the wife is to be in submission to her husband in everything. In a home where both the wife and the husband are Christians, the husband has the opportunity to model what submission means by his submission to Christ. In a home where the husband is not a Christian, 1 Peter 3:1 and 4 say, “Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives...rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” In these verses, we see that the submissive attitude of the wife shown by a gentle and quiet spirit will often win the husband to Christ. As we show our physical and spiritual children the attitudes that are the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit, we will also be showing them how to develop a submissive attitude both toward the Lord and in the family. Our example gives our children an example to follow. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand the foundation for submission.