

Ephesians

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- [0 : 00] If you will look at your scripture sheet, we are on page 5C, and the subject at the bottom right-hand corner has to do with the filling of the Spirit as opposed to being filled with wine.
- We're in his excess. And I don't want to get out my booze sermon here, but I do have one, and I just want to suffice it to say that I do not think there is any single thing that has been so utterly devastating to human lives and to families as alcohol.
- And this goes back a long, long ways, and it is one of the most devastating things that has ever come upon the scene, and it has taken its toll all over the globe for centuries.
- It is absolutely devastating when people get involved in this, especially when they become alcoholic, that is, dependent on it, so that they cannot ordinarily function without it.
- It has disastrous effects, and we've already talked about that a little bit, and it's right up there with the drugs, except it's a lot longer, a lot further back than what drugs and narcotics are.
- [1 : 17] But we all know what's happening in our country, and a lot of this is due to human pain and human misery seeking a temporary relief from it.
- So if you can create another world temporarily to get out of the pain of the one that you're in now, do so. And for some people, that's what alcohol does, and others, that's what drugs do.
- But it's short-lived. And when you come down, there is a crash, and then you're worse off than what you were before. But it's actually an effort on the part of many. Of course, there's social drinking, and there's the kind of drinking that teenagers get into, which means you have to drink in order to be cool, and you can't have a good time at a party if you don't have booze, and all the rest of that nonsense that they buy into.
- And that's part and parcel of it, too. But a lot of it has to do with attempting to create another world temporarily. And that's exactly what happens when they get zoned out with drugs or with alcohol because they cannot or will not cope with the world that they're living in.
- So you try to create another world. But it's very short-lived, and they don't call these mood-altering drugs for nothing because that's exactly what they do.
- [2 : 38] They alter the mood, and they leave you feeling, Man, I feel really good. And they do. But it's deceptive, and it is ultimately destructive.
- So unless you've got other comments or questions about that, we'll just leave that there. And look at the positive, which is designed to be that thing with which we should be intoxicated.
- And that is the Spirit of God. To be filled with the Spirit, believe it or not, is something that is within your control and your power.
- The buck stops with you. This, in the Greek, is an emphatic imperative. It does not indicate at all that being filled with the Spirit is optional.
- It is given as an imperative command from the Apostle Paul. It is something that you are to experience on a day-to-day basis. We are not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess.

[3 : 47] But be ye filled with the Spirit. That means it is within your control whether or not you will be. Now this is a truth that has been so distorted over the years that it has actually led some to believe that the filling of the Spirit is some super mysterious esoteric thing that you don't have anything to do with, that the Spirit of God just, for some reason, singles you out, and He saps you with His power and His ability, and you had nothing to do with it.

And that is complete nonsense. The filling of the Spirit is that which results in the surrender of your will to the will of God.

This goes back to the Ephesians 6 thing, which we will not revisit, but there it is, Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Who does the yielding?

You do. You do. It is an act of the will. It is the volition. It is something you do not have to do. And the proof that we do not have to do it is in the fact that so many Christians do not do it.

They do not choose to do it. When we are not filled with the Spirit, guess what we're filled with? We're filled with ourself. The self-centeredness is part of that Adamic fallenness.

[5 : 15] If we yield our members as instruments of righteousness, and as Paul said in Romans 12, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Now, most of the sacrifices, in fact, all of the sacrifices offered up in the Levitical sacrificial system were dead animals. But God wants us as living sacrifices.

Someone has said, the only problem with the living sacrifice is that when it is placed on the altar, it can crawl back down off the altar.

And that's true. And that's what we do. So sometimes we cycle between being filled with the Spirit, being filled with the flesh. One of two things is going to dominate our life.

Either we are yielded to God, or we are yielded to self and self-centeredness. And if we are yielded to God, and filled with the Spirit, then the automatic result, the fruit that comes therefrom, is Galatians 5, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, all of these things are the fruit, the natural outcome of the Spirit of God working in us.

[6 : 31] And everything that is needed is provided in that venue. So the option is there, fellas. We are either walking in the flesh, or walking in the Spirit.

And all of this ties in together. So the Spirit is something that we are to be filled with. That simply means that we are to be dominated or controlled by the Spirit of God, as opposed to being dominated and controlled by drugs, or alcohol, which is a very dependent creative thing.

Roger, you had a comment or question? Yeah, that's the way it reads in the Greek, too.

Be ye being filled. Actually, it's kind of an awkward way of saying it in English, but that's the way it comes across in the Greek. It is, be ye being filled, so that it is an ongoing, constant thing, whereby the power of the Spirit of God is poured into you.

And as a result, speaking, let's flip the page here to 5D, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Now, it isn't talking about, I don't think it's talking about self-talk, although that may be involved, too.

[7 : 45] But it's talking about situations just like this. It's whenever believers gather together, there is this kind of cross-talk.

It is a spiritual conversation. It is centered on the person of Christ and on spiritual things. And some of the other translations, 20th century New Testament says, and speak to one another in psalms and hymns and sacred psalms.

And keep in mind that for the Jew, the book of psalms was their hymnal. And they had virtually all 150 psalms in there set the music.

And they would sing these when they would gather together. We, of course, have a hymnal with a lot of hymns that Charles Wesley wrote or Fanny Crosby or whatever, and that's all well and good.

But it is the content that makes it Christian. And Knox says, By the way, we haven't done that for quite a while.

[8 : 57] Maybe we ought to resurrect that. We used to sing a hymn, remember? Yes. I don't remember how we got out of that. Did you get clearance from out there?

I don't know. Did you check with ASCAP? Well, we could try to imitate the original 16 singing men.

You know, I mean, they sound pretty good. And maybe we'll do that. We'll just... After all, this is what the text is asking us to do or telling us to do.

And giving thanks always for all things. This doesn't mean that everything is good. Because into all of our lives, there often comes some really difficult, hard things.

But we are to give thanks in everything because we are committed to the idea that God knows the way that we take and He really does know what we need, even though we think at times He does not.

[10 : 03] But God is committed to working all things together for our good. And as I pointed out before, it is working all things together for our ultimate good.

We want it to be working all things together for our immediate good. We want it right now. Or day after tomorrow at the latest. But fellas, God has a timetable and He is orchestrating behind the scenes, pulling all the ingredients together.

He knows exactly what you need and when you need it. And He's never late. The best illustration I've thought of regarding this has to do with baking that proverbial cake.

Now, I suppose there are too many guys here who bake cakes, but you know that into a cake there goes some shortening and there goes some sugar and baking powder and flour and all of this stuff and the butter.

And none of those things, none of them, are tasty in themselves. And nobody's going to eat a big spoonful of shortening or a quarter pound of butter.

[11 : 12] But when those things are put together in the right amounts, and blend it in at the right time by somebody who knows what they're doing and you put it in the oven and bake it, it comes out a delicious cake.

None of the ingredients by themselves are desirable. So I want you to think in terms of your own life and God being the ultimate baker, the one who is conducting that orchestra, if you will, with every part and every instrument.

He knows when to bring in this instrument and when to bring in that instrument and how long it is to play and what notes it is to play and all of the rest of it. And he is fashioning us unto the image of Jesus Christ.

And it is very often a painful process. Someone has likened it to God taking his mallet and his chisel to a precious stone and he starts chipping away in order to make that a fine finished product of a beautiful gem.

But in order to do that, he has to chip away and knock off the rough corners that keep that gem from being as perfect as he wants it to be.

[12 : 38] And every time the hammer blow comes down on that chisel and knocks off another chunk, it hurts! It's painful! But we are being molded and shaped.

And someone has said, saints always grow best in the shadows, not in the sunshine. But we would prefer the sunshine all the time.

Shadows, we associate with pain and disappointment and heartache. But into every life, some rain falls and it's part of living in a fallen world. And we ought to just take comfort in the fact, despite what is happening in my life, God really does know what he's doing.

And he knows the way that I take. And like Job said, when I am tried, I will come forth as precious gold. He is refining us.

And the refining requires heat. Heat put to the object. And it is never pleasant. But it is always profitable.

[13 : 49] Okay? Giving thanks always for all things. Submitting yourself. And hey, here is that getting away from the self-centeredness that plagues all of us.

Submitting yourselves. And how do you do that? You do that willingly. You do that with your will. If you and I will humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

Now, fellas, this is Peter talking now. And Peter didn't say, Peter didn't say, ask God to humble you. He didn't say that. He said, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you in due time.

Again, that due time is His time. He will exalt you in His time. Provided you humble yourself. What does it mean to humble yourself?

It simply means to put yourself in the position of a willing servant. It's the bond slave idea. Paul was personally acquainted with this and he referred to himself repeatedly as a bond servant of Jesus Christ.

[15 : 09] And a bond servant in this setting had to do with one who had been a slave. And by the way, biblical slavery had nothing to do with skin color.

Most of the slaves, most of the slaves in biblical days were the same color as their master. But they had a different economic status. And usually they became slaves because they had debts they couldn't pay.

So they handed themselves over to the one that they owed to work it off. Slave it off. And then, once the obligation was fulfilled, slave was free to go.

He was a free man. However, if he really loved his master, he could voluntarily subject himself to be a bond servant.

And they would have a public ceremony in the town and the bond servant or the slave would walk up to the door post there that was erected for that purpose, put the lobe of his ear there, and his master would come over and they would make a little ceremony and he would say, I am a servant of so and so and this day I am submitting myself as his bond servant.

[16 : 34] Which means I am going to continue on serving him voluntarily, willingly, even though I have earned my freedom and can walk away.

I choose not to. I want to remain under his protection and control and serve him. That was a bond servant and that's what the apostle Paul was.

He was a willing love slave of Jesus Christ and frankly this is what all of us are called to be and fellas you cannot find a higher privilege or a higher calling than to be a bond servant of Jesus Christ.

When you consider the nasty alternative which is serving herself it's a no brainer. Wasn't it who was it can't think of the name of the songwriter now the Jewish fellow wrote a number of songs and one of them was everybody's got to serve somebody.

so it just depends on who it is you want to serve. Giving thanks to the Lord submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

[17 : 54] And the ASV the authorized standard version says subjecting yourselves in the fear of Christ in reverence of Christ. Montgomery says out of reverence for Christ.

Knox says and as you stand in awe of Christ submit to each other's rights. Honor Christ by submitting to each other. And all this means is fellas is that we develop the fine art of putting others first.

And let me tell you there is nothing that is so unnatural to the human being than that. Because what's natural is you look out for number one.

because if you don't take care of yourself in your own interests nobody else will. So after me you come first. And that's the typical attitude that is out there.

And it's a dog eat dog world and everybody is in it for themselves. And what Jesus Christ has provided for us is the example that we should follow in his steps.

[19 : 02] I mean he who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. And he of course is our ultimate example.

And he's going to continue in this theme of submission which by the way is just one of the toughest things to do. Is to submit yourself to another.

Fellas we all have a problem in our fallenness with that self-centeredness. We all have a problem of submitting to authority.

And for a lot of people that authority is God himself. We don't want anybody to tell us what to do. We want to do our own thing.

We want to be able to pursue our own course without any interference from anybody, even God. And that's the way some people feel. And it's just a natural inborn thing to be that way.

[20 : 11] And when you recognize that that's the bolt of cloth that we're all cut from, then you can at least have a heads up against yourself and be able to defend against it.

But you'd be surprised how many people don't even know that they are the problem. My wife's my problem.

My boss is my problem. My neighbor is my problem. Everybody is my problem. But I'm not the problem. I'm the solution. No. We are all our own worst enemy.

And not knowing that makes you a pushover for the flesh. Because you don't have any mechanism to stand against it. So, remember the comic strip?

One of my favorite quotes. Remember comic strips of, was it Pogo? The little possum that lived in the Florida Everglades in the swamp.

[21 : 14] And Pogo, one of his greatest lines was, we have met the enemy and they is us. Yeah, they is us. We are all our own worst enemy.

And a refusal to recognize that means you are a sitting duck for the flesh and you'll never be able to commit, submit against it. And then, now he's going to get really personal because he's talking about submission and the need to do that.

And we begin by submitting to Christ. And what Paul is going to say now, and folks, let me tell you something. This submission thing, it is even to extend to the area where a wife is submissive to her husband.

That is not a one-way submission, by the way, and it's too bad that so many men read it that way. But here in the context, and we've already established this in the previous verse, what Paul is talking about is having a spirit of submission to one another.

To one another. And that is to extend to and include the marriage relationship. And most men are familiar with the verse that says that our wives are to submit to us.

[22 : 40] But most guys, even Christian guys, lose sight of the fact that we are to be mutually submissive to our wife.

What? How is that? This submission thing is a mutuality proposition. It isn't one way.

It doesn't mean the husband does not submit to the wife, but the wife has to submit to the husband. No, no, no, no, no, no. When the husband, when the husband loves the wife as he is supposed to, which is the way Christ loved the church, you can't do that without having a submissive attitude to your wife and her needs and her safety and her concerns and everything else.

This is all part of the package. This submission thing, fellas, is not one way. And that's the way so many Christian men read it. So many Christian men say, hey, I'm the boss.

I'm in charge. And submission means she has to do what I say. Fellas, you got it all wrong. That's not what the text is teaching at all.

[23 : 58] The text is teaching that we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. And the way he did that was he put her needs ahead of his needs.

Christ put the needs of the church, which was what? Redemption. He put the church's need for redemption ahead of his own need, which was for extricating himself from that situation.

And that's why he prayed as he did the night he was betrayed. Father, if there is any way that this cup can pass from me, this cup of suffering and death and separation from his father, let it be so.

But nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And there was no way that that could be realized apart from Christ drinking that cup to its bitter dregs.

And that's what he did. That was the supreme act of submission on the part of the Son of God. And that attitude is to be passed on to us.

[25 : 11] And when Paul said that husbands are to love their wives sacrificially as Christ loved the church, that simply means as husbands, we put her first.

She comes first. You want to put Christ first? You put your wife first. That's putting Christ first. That's what this dictum is all about. Yes.

You want to put yourself first, love your wife. There you go. Then she'll put you first automatically. She'll come back. That's the reciprocation because someone has said if a husband loves his wife sacrificially, she will know that.

And she will go to hell and back for a man who loves her in that way. She will do so in a willing act of cooperation, and submission to her husband, not grudgingly, but joyfully.

And she will find security and comfort in knowing that her guy cares for her like he cares for nobody else, that he puts her first.

[26 : 29] This is the stuff that a marriage on a rock is built of. And you know, every time I read this passage, I just marvel at a number of things. And one of them that I marvel at, I can never get away from this and I have to bring it out, but years ago when the women's lib movement really got cranked up, back when they were burning their bras and everything in the 60s and 70s and all that, and the women's lib thing was coming into full fruition.

And just let me inject here because this is something I firmly believe, I will always believe this, that a lot of men complain about the women's lib movement and fellas masculinity has no one to blame for women's liberation than themselves because it had been the shabby, the shabby discrimination treatment that men had heaped upon women for a long time that caused them to finally raise up and say we're mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore.

And the women's lib movement was created and it was needed. Unfortunately, it went three miles past the moon in overcorrection and it got kind of ridiculous and it's still ridiculous to this day.

But if you want to know what's responsible for the women's lib movement, just take a good look in the mirror. And we are responsible for that. And yet, these same women look at the apostle Paul and they label him a sexist and a woman hater because he had the audacity to say something to the effect that women should be quiet in the churches and not speak, which needs to be addressed in a separate venue and that is primarily a cultural thing more than it is a doctrinal thing.

But these same women who think the apostle Paul was a woman hater have never dealt with this passage because when Paul said what he did here in Ephesians 5, that comment, that idea, that concept hit like a bombshell in the whole Mediterranean world.

[28 : 46] Husbands, love your wives sacrificially? Are you crazy? Are you kidding? That a husband is supposed to put his wife first? That's the dumbest thing I ever heard of.

And that's exactly how a lot of men responded to it. And you know something? That's how a lot of men respond to it today. But make no mistake about it, the scriptures make this very, very clear, fellas.

The greatest treasure that you have on this earth is that woman who stood beside you and said, I do, and took you to be her lawful wedded husband.

and those of us, those of us, and there are a number here, who have sent that treasure on ahead to heaven, we know better than anyone else what a treasure that was and how irreplaceable she is.

the old adage, you know, you never miss the water until the well runs dry. You never know what you have in that precious jewel called a wife until she is no longer available.

[30 : 05] And that's really something that God has put together in the marriage relationship, and it is far above and beyond anything else that this world has to offer. that relationship between a man and a woman is exceeded and excelled only by our relationship to Jesus Christ.

And that one is eternal. Our relationship to our wife, dearly as we love them, is only of this earth. And when one passes away, the relationship is dissolved.

Our relationship with Christ continues on. So this is really revolutionary material. in the first century. And unfortunately, it is misinterpreted by a lot of men today.

And for some men who claim to love Christ, the only thing they expect from their wives is, you've got to do what I say because I'm the boss. And I'm in charge.

And I'm the head of this relationship. And that means I give the orders and you carry them out. Well, I can assure you that is a far, far cry from anything the Apostle Paul or the Word of God had in mind when this passage came into being.

[31 : 17] It is a mutuality here. And is a man supposed to be dependent on a woman? Absolutely. Is a woman supposed to be dependent on a man?

Absolutely. There is a mutual interdependence. And it isn't a one-way street. It's a two-way street. And when each recognize the legitimacy of dependency on one another, you've got a beautiful thing going, and I call it a marriage on the rock.

And we all know, you look at the statistics, there are too many marriages today that are on the rocks. Plural.

Not on the rock, but on the rocks. And that is tragic because Christ died on the cross to provide a much, much better relationship for us.

And again, it is the act of the will as to whether or not these things will be realized. Well, yes, Dana. Two thoughts come to mind.

[32 : 21] One is with deer, the buck will stand guard as the doe and fawn eat. And then when they're done, the buck will eat. Again, give you the numbers. Okay.

And the other thing is, from my viewpoint, the definition of joy in proper order, Jesus, others, yourself.

Yeah. There is joy in serving Jesus. And as Dana's remarked, the key is, J-O-Y, Jesus, others, yourself. If you keep those in that order, everything will be great.

Jesus, others, yourself. Joy. That's the best formula. Joe. Because by serving all those others first, you are serving yourself. You know, you really are. You think you're putting yourself third, fourth, fifth, but you actually, by serving those others, are in a way putting yourself first.

That's how you do it. If you really, if you really, Joe, want to look out for number one, Yeah. Look out for that other person. Yeah. Look out for other people.

[33 : 23] Let not every man look only on his own things, but also on the things of others. Paul wrote in Philippians 2, and then he gave the example of how Christ did that. So, if you really want to look out for yourself as a husband, put your wife first.

Yeah. Yeah. That's the way it works. Yeah. And it seemed contrary to that, but that's actually the way it works. And, fellas, let me put it this way. Most of us are beyond us now because we're talking about grandkids.

Some of you have been talking about great-grandkids. But, if you really, really want to love your children, show them how much you love their mother.

Yes. And that will build security and stability into your children to see, as they witness these two people who mean more to them than anyone else in the world, see how they care for each other and love each other.

there's nothing that builds more stable lives into children than that. Dana? Caring for other people's needs first, that's the definition of leadership.

[34 : 33] It is. It is, absolutely. That's what, you know, leadership doesn't just mean you're in charge and you give the orders. It means you're responsible. It means you take the responsibility for the well-being of others.

And that's how we lead. That's how a commander leads militarily. I'll never forget the story about this bivouacking and it was a stormy night and lightning and everything and this company was trying to get bedded down for the night and this lieutenant was in charge and he of course had a nice larger tent with a desk in it and all the rest of it and he gave orders to the non-coms to see to it that all of the men under them had their tents up and everybody was ready and bedded down for the night and his hadn't even been touched yet.

And one of the sergeants came over and said well sir he said shouldn't we do your tent first and he said we'll worry about my tent when we get everybody else settled.

And there was somebody who knew how to care for his men. And let me tell you something when men have to go into battle and face an enemy that's the kind of leader they want.

Somebody that looks out for them and knows what leadership is really all about. People who can't have to specific people.