

# (Through the Bible) Ephesians 5-6

by Chuck Smith

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*In this sermon, Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and walking in love as followers of God, while warning against unloving actions and the dangers of spiritual deception.*

**Duration:** 1:15:26

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:32 - 5:1, Ephesians 5:3, Ephesians 5:8, Ephesians 5:20, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 5:33

**Topics:** "Forgiveness", "Gods Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of forgiveness and walking in love as believers. He emphasizes that before instructing believers on how to live, the Bible first lays the foundation of God's love, grace, and blessings. The preacher highlights that God's forgiveness is our example, and we are called to be followers of God in forgiving others. He also mentions that holding bitterness and animosity in our hearts can harm our mental health, emphasizing the importance of having a forgiving spirit.

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## Transcript

So we turn in our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5. Be therefore followers of God as dear children. Now, the therefore immediately points you back, back to the last verse of chapter 4, where we are exhorted to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, forgave us. So Paul's topic here is God's forgiveness as our example of forgiveness.

So be ye followers of God, or follow the example that God has established for us in forgiveness. You know, really, the Bible does have the keys to good mental health. And a very important thing for mental health is a forgiving spirit.

If you are holding bitterness or animosity in your heart towards someone else, that bitterness is going to do you a lot more harm than it is them. It can just eat at you. The Bible constantly is emphasizing the importance of our forgiving and being forgiving, just to have a forgiving spirit.

When Jesus was giving to the disciples the model prayer, incorporated into that prayer was, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Asking for forgiveness, but also acknowledging the fact that I have received forgiveness. Or I must myself be forgiving.

Forgive us and help me to be forgiving as we forgive others. And then there was only one petition of that prayer that Jesus emphasized at the close of the prayer, and that was the petition on forgiveness. He said,

For if you will not forgive men their trespasses against you, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

Jesus taught so much on forgiveness, Peter one day felt he was getting the lesson and was looking for some extra strokes. And he said, Lord, how often should I forgive a brother the same offense? Seven times? And I'm certain that Peter felt that he was really growing in grace in that he could conceive of forgiving a man the same offense seven times. And imagine his chagrin when Jesus answered him, No, Peter.

Seventy times seven. 490. The Lord, I am certain, was demonstrating to Peter that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics.

Before you get to the 490, you would have forgotten. Count. And you just go on forgiving.

It isn't a matter of mathematics. It's a matter of spirit. And God wants us to have a forgiving spirit.

Yes, you have been wronged. Yes, you have a right to be angry. Yes, you have a right to be upset over this whole situation.

Go ahead. Eat yourself up. Or forgive and be freed from that.

So, be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. So you see how it ties to the previous verse in the previous chapter.

God is the example for us in forgiveness. We are to be followers of God who has forgiven us. And walk in love.

Now as we've pointed out in the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul has dealt with the spiritual blessings wherewith God has blessed us in Christ in heavenly places. Having seated us together in Christ. Made us heirs together with Him.

And having spent three chapters telling you all that God has done for you and all that God has promised to do for you and all that God is planning to do for you. Having thoroughly rehearsed the resources that God has made available to you, He finally starts to talk to you about your walk. Now, unfortunately, we don't follow that same example in our preaching today.

But we start immediately preaching to people how they ought to walk. How they ought to act. How they ought to respond.

But the Bible doesn't do that until it lays first the foundation of God's love, God's grace, God's goodness, God's blessings, God's provisions, and now walk in love. Because you've been so loved of God, so blessed of God, so taught of God to love, walk in love, as Christ also has loved us. So, forgiveness God is the example.

We are to forgive as God has forgiven us. Be ye followers of God. In walking in love, Jesus is our example who loved us and gave Himself for us.

So, that self-sacrificing love, that giving love. He has given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor. Now, in beginning now to list some of the unloving things whereby men

often relate to each other, it is interesting that He puts at the top of an unloving thing fornication.

And we see how Satan has so deceived and distorted things. Because the world equates fornication with love. In fact, they use the term, let's make love, when they are referring to the act of fornication quite often.

Calling it love-making. But here in the Scripture, it is the prime example of something that is lacking in love. That is, lacking in true love.

A person who entices someone else into the act of fornication is not really considering the other person, but only considering themselves and their own desire for some kind of fulfillment, emotional, sexual or otherwise. They are not really considering the other person, that they are leading them into a damning sin. Into one of those works of the flesh which Paul tells us that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

And so it is a very unloving thing to lead a person into an action that is so destructive to that person's spiritual walk and life. Which is total disobedience to the commands of God. And so it is not really loving and considering the other person.

It's a very unloving act. And it is only Satan's deception and lies that would cause a person to even think of that as an act of love. It's an act of lust.

But true love is not really involved. If you really loved the person, you would be considerate of their conscience, of their feelings. You would not want to place them under that guilt that they would feel afterwards.

That shame and all that they would experience as the result of the relationship. And so it is interesting that Paul would place that at the top of the list of an unloving act. Walk in love.

The second is uncleanness, which of course is a sexual uncleanness or impurity. Covetousness, and of course that's at the heart of unloving actions. Self-love.

Covetous, but that isn't a real love or consideration for others. And let them not once be named among you. You are the children of God.

Walk in love. Not in these unloving ways. Neither filthiness, nor really foolish jesting, or foolish talking or jesting which are not convenient.

Really he's referring here to dirty jokes. Should never, never be done by a child of God. The passing on of a dirty story.

Because what you are doing is planting filth in that other person's mind. Filth that they will not be able to get rid of. It's tragic.

But I can remember dirty jokes that were told me when I was just a little kid. That filth was planted in my mind and I cannot get rid of it. It still lingers there.

Oh, I don't think on it all the time, thank God. But, you know how the dumb mind works. Every once in a while, one of those dirty little ditties that I learned as a kid.

Some kind of a sight, sound, word will trigger a DNA molecule and it will pop that thing out of the file. Flash it across my brain. Oh, God help me, that filth is still there.

But what a shame to plant filth in someone else's mind like that. Filth that they can't get rid of. Permanent stains.

That's not loving. Not loving at all. Rather than that kind of stuff, we should be giving thanks.

Plant stuff in their minds that will edify, that will bless, that will be good, that will build them up. For this you know. I hope you know it.

No whoremonger, nor unclean person, sexually impure, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Paul says, now you know this. The tragedy is a lot of people don't know that.

They think that they can get by with these things. They think that somehow God will smile at these things or God will excuse these things or pass over these things. God is a righteous judge.

And everything will be called into account that is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no man deceive you. And unfortunately, so many men have deceived in these areas.

But let them not deceive you with vain words as they get into their speculations and as they get into their rationales and into their philosophies. For because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. You see, in the early church, they had a heresy that was known as Gnosticism.

And according to the Gnostic heresy, basically, everything that was material was evil. The material world was not really created by God. God in the beginning sent forth emanations.

And one of these emanations got so far from God that it wasn't related to God anymore. And this emanation created the material universe. And thus, the whole material universe is just given over to evil.

It's just evil and you can't do anything about it. Only the spiritual is pure. Therefore, they taught that Jesus was not in a real body of flesh.

He was actually a phantom. Just an appearance. When He would walk along the beach, there wouldn't be any footprints.

And they created all of these fanciful stories to deny that Jesus had come in a body. And so that's why John, to counteract this Gnostic heresy, said, if any man denies that Jesus came in the flesh, he's the Antichrist. Now, going along with this teaching that the material is all evil, they said, inasmuch as the material is given over to evil, it doesn't matter what you do with your body because it's all wiped out anyhow.

It's just all evil. It's part of the material things, which is totally evil, so it doesn't count. God really doesn't count it.

It's what's in your spirit that counts. So, you can go ahead and commit fornication. You can go ahead and do all of these things and it really doesn't matter because, you see, that's all a part of the material body and God is so disassociated from the material world that anything done in the material world doesn't really count in the spiritual realm.

That was the teaching of the Gnostics. And so, Paul is saying, hey, don't let any man deceive you with vain words. And as you get into the Gnostic heresy, there was a lot of rationale and plausibilities and all.

But they were deceiving people with the vain words and telling them, hey, you can do what you want in your body. It really doesn't matter. It isn't wrong because the body is material and it's all going to be done away with.

It's what's spiritual that only counts with God. Don't be partakers, Paul said, with them. Actually, he said, don't you realize that these are the very things that are going to bring the wrath of God on man? These are the things for which God is going to judge the world.

And if you're guilty of doing these things, then you will be judged with the guilty world. You were one time in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Actually, not quite.

You were one time darkness. Not in darkness, you were darkness. Now you are not in the light, you are the light.

One time your life was darkness. Now your life is light if Christ is dwelling in you. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. When Paul was writing to the Corinthians, he said, what fellowship hath light with darkness? Now think about that for a moment. Light and darkness are mutually exclusive.

They cannot co-exist. When you turn on the light, the darkness goes. But they don't co-exist.

They're not one. They're separate, mutually exclusive entities. So spiritually, you cannot walk in darkness and walk in light.

If a man says that he has fellowship with God, who is light, and he is walking in darkness, he lies. He's not telling the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we do have fellowship with God as the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, is continually cleansing us from all sin.

So again, don't be deceived. If you are walking in darkness, then you cannot have fellowship with God. So, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Now we are to take more than just a passive attitude towards darkness. When someone comes and starts to tell a dirty story and it's obvious from the look in their eye and the sinister smile that it's going to be one of the dirty ones, stop them. Reprove them.

Don't just listen and then smile politely and chuckle and say, hmm. Let's say that's filthy. There are some men whose minds are like racehorses.

They run best in a dirt track. But don't let them pour out their filth on you. Don't have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Reprove them. Speak up. Tell them that that's wrong.

You don't appreciate it. And that way you'll keep them from coming back with more filth later. It's a shame, Paul said, even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

And of course, a lot of times they want to come along and tell you the weekend that they just had and all of their exploits. It's a shame to talk about those things. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.

For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Jesus said, I didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Me might be saved. And he that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, inasmuch as he has not believed on the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation. Light came into the world, but they would not come to the light because their deeds were evil. And if they would come into the light, their deeds would be manifested.

So they will not come to Christ because of their evil deeds. Christ is the light, and they don't want to come into that light because it will reveal the truth about them. They love to stay in the darkness.

They stay away from the light. Wherefore He said, Awake thou that sleepest. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you life.

To those that are sleeping in darkness, the call of the Gospel, arise from that death, that spiritual death, and Jesus Christ will give you spiritual life. See then, that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. So here we are told, walk in love.

In verse 8, walk as children of light. And here, walk circumspectly. Redeeming the time because the days are evil.

How much time is wasted even by the most careful planner? In a sense, I consider all time that is not spent in spiritual development of some kind is really, in a sense, wasted time. Now, I am not saying that I feel that a person should never do anything for just recreational purposes. I think you have to.

But I think that even our recreation can be centered around a spiritual base. I think that God gave us all things to really enjoy. I think that God gave us the surf to enjoy.

I believe that God gave us the mountains to enjoy, the rivers, the streams. And how can you have dominion over the fish of the sea if you don't get a hook and go after them? But you know, when I am engaged in these recreational activities, when I'm sitting out there waiting for a set to come, my heart is in the things of the Spirit. I look at the ocean.

I look at the surf. I look at the beauty of God's creation. And I'm just there in fellowship with the Lord.

In fact, I think that I enjoy it probably a lot more than a lot of those people because of the fact that I do have such neat times of fellowship with the Lord while I'm there. I like what Jim Elliott said concerning his going out for the wrestling team at Wheaton College when he won the national AAU championship in his weight division. He wrote home to his parents in Washington and he said, you'll probably hear of certain honors that I've received recently in wrestling in the national AAU championship.

He said, but I want you to know that it wasn't for this purpose that I went out for wrestling. My purpose in wrestling was to develop a stronger, more coordinated body that I might offer to God for Him to use in whatever way He might see fit. The motive behind physical fitness.

Do I want to walk down the street and have everybody say, ooh, wow, look at that build? Or am I seeking to give to God a more qualified instrument for Him to do His work through? It makes a big difference.

Redeeming the time. We waste so much.

Wherefore, be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. So many people are confused as far as God's will for their life. The purpose and the plan of God for their life.

And they go on just sort of continuing wasting time. Still doing their own things. Never really seeking God.

Never really searching for the will of God for their lives. God, why did You put me here? What do You have in mind for me? What work is it, Lord, that You want me to accomplish for You? Why have You placed me on this planet? And God placed each of us here with a purpose. Paul the Apostle in writing to the Philippians said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended by Jesus Christ.

In other words, when the Lord stopped me on the road to Damascus, He had a definite plan for my life. I have not yet accomplished that which God has planned for me. But, I'm on my way.

I forget those things which are behind. And I'm pressing towards those things which are before. Reaching for it.

Pressing towards the mark. Now, that should be the story of every one of us. Pressing towards the purpose of God and fulfillment of that purpose of God and plan of God for my life.

Redeeming the time. Knowing what God wants me to do and being about my Father's business. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit.

And in the Greek, it's present perfect tense which would indicate a continual filling of the Spirit. Be ye being filled, but that isn't good English grammar. But that's Greek.

We don't have a present perfect tense really in English as such. Now, these are two interesting things that he would couple together and relate. Here's a man staggering down the street.

He's had too much wine. And Paul would equate that to a man being filled with the Spirit. Now, they seem like opposite things.

Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit. They are closer than a person would expect on the surface. What is a person searching for who turns to wine? The man who turns to alcohol.

What's he seeking? What's he searching for? There's an emptiness deep inside. I'm trying to find something that will fill that void in my life. I'm reaching out for something that will satisfy.

I'm looking. I'm searching. And some people search in alcohol to find a peace, a contentment, a relaxation or whatever.

What does the person experience who is filled with the Spirit? Peace, a relaxation, a contentment, a fulfillment. So, the one man is looking in the wrong place. He's looking in a place where he will never discover it.

The other man has come to the answer. Being filled with the Spirit, that spiritual void in my life is now complete and full. And I'm no longer searching and seeking after something to satisfy.

I am satisfied through my relationship with God in the Spirit. So, rather than being entirely separate things, there's a real tie-in behind the injunction. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye continually filled with the Spirit.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. When you sing for recreation, what do you sing about? When you're just unconsciously sort of humming a tune, what is it all about? Now, I love to observe my grandchildren when they're not aware even that Grandpa is watching and listening.

I like to watch them at play. I like to watch their inventiveness and the interest that they take in different things. And oh, how I love it as they're going around the yard riding the trike or engaged in some activity and they're singing about Jesus.

Singing about the Lord. I think, oh, how beautiful, how beautiful. That should be true of all of us.

Singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, making melody in your heart to the Lord. Let it just be a part of the subconscious. I do it when I'm not even aware of doing it.

Now, that will be the case if that's the kind of music you're listening to. But if you're listening to some of these other stations all the time, who knows what you'll be whistling about. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Giving thanks always for all things. Now, that's impossible to do unless I realize that all things are working together for good to those who love God. If I don't have that confidence, then I can't give thanks for all things.

I can't give thanks for all things if I don't fully believe that God loves me supremely and that God is wiser than I, so that those things that God has allowed to come into my life, He has a wise plan and purpose motivated by love, which caused Him to allow them to come to me. And thus, I can give thanks for all things. But if I don't realize that, I can't.

Because some things that happen to me on the surface look to be so adverse and so horrible that I'm prone to really cry out to God against these things. But, if I know that God is in control of my life, that nothing can happen to me except the Father allow it to happen, and that the Father loves me supremely so that all things that happen can happen for His purpose, because He loves me, I love Him, and He's called me according to His purposes, then I can give thanks even for those things that I do not understand yet what the purpose is. That takes faith.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Now, He's been talking about a lot of fleshly characteristics. Covetousness and these other things.

The characteristic of the flesh is actually selfishness or self-centeredness from which comes the covetousness and all these other things. The greed. All of it comes and stems from my self-centeredness and my selfishness.

I want my way. I want people to yield to my desires. I want people to play by my rules.

I want them to yield to me. But here we are told that we are to submit one to another. Yielding to each other.

Now, the insistence on our own way is what brings all of the strife and all of the problems. I remember when I was a kid, there used to be along the highway these Burma Shave signs. Now, I'm not going to ask you how many remember that because I would date you back to my tintype flash powder days.

But I remember as a kid reading one of those signs along the road between Los Angeles and Ventura up in the area of Thousand Oaks when the Goebbels Lion Farm used to be out that way and that old dirigible that they were building along the side of the road. And the sign said famous last words of lights that shine. If he doesn't dim his, I won't dim mine.

I won't yield first. I won't give in. You've got to yield to me.

And that's the basis of so much striving and so much fighting. How much strife could be avoided if we would just submit to one another in love? Yield the point. And so, wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife. The word head meaning authority there. Even as Christ is the authority of the head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything. Now, this is the one rule for marriage that God has given to the wife. Only one.

Should be simple enough for her to keep the one rule. Why would you suppose God would make such a rule? Because God understands men. And God knows that in man there is that male, macho image that somehow a man needs to feel that he's in control.

That he is able. That he can handle the situation. That he is boss.

I mean, that's just a part of the male ego. And God, understanding the male ego and man's needs, gave to the wife the one rule by which her husband can feel that he is really the man of the house and in control and thus be very compatible and loving towards her. And so, he gave the women just one simple rule which if she would follow would make her husband a very responsible, loving person.

Easy to get along. Now, God gave one rule to the husbands. Just one.

God knows we're prone to forget, so just one rule for each. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Now, why would God command the husbands to love their wives so totally and supremely? Because God understands women.

And He understands the needs in women. And He understands that one of the greatest needs that a woman has is to feel the security that she is loved supremely by her husband. That there is no one else that can attract his eye or attract his attention that she is queen and that she is loved supremely.

She needs that. And so God commanded the husbands to fulfill that need in the woman so that she could feel the security of her husband's love knowing, I am number one in his life. Now, all marital problems stem out of the disobedience of these two rules.

There are only two rules for a happy marriage. One for the husband, one for the wife. But marriages get in trouble because these rules are broken.

And when they are broken, they begin to compound. When the husband fails to show his wife that kind of love that Christ had for the church, and she begins to feel insecure, and I don't know if he really loves me or not, she then feels the necessity of beginning to protect herself because I don't know if he is going to protect me or not. And so she begins to challenge the decisions that he makes.

Are you sure you're doing the right thing? But as she begins to challenge the decisions that he makes, that upsets him because that means he's not the boss and supreme. You ought to know. And so as she begins to challenge his decision-making processes, he begins to feel that he is being challenged and I must now show that I am boss by becoming tough and hard and cold and unresponsive.

And as he becomes tough and unresponsive, she gets all the more insecure, so she challenges him all the more. You know, I don't know if this character really loves me or not. And I don't think what he is planning to do is that smart.

And if we lose everything, he's probably going to walk out himself because I'm not really assured that he really loves me. And so she's challenging. But this challenging has a reverse effect upon him, causing him to become cold and aloof and I'll show you I'm boss.

And so the marriage is torn apart. On the other hand, as the wife is submitting unto him and to his decisions, Honey, well, you know, I just leave that with you. You're the one that takes care of that.

I'm just trusting you. He gets the feeling, oh, this precious little doll, I don't know what I'm doing right or not, but oh boy, she trusts me. And he begins to feel that.

Oh, you're a sweetheart. Come here, honey. And he hugs her.

You're just a doll. I love you, angel. And he feels the freedom of expressing and showing his love to her.

And the more he expresses and shows that love to her, the more secure she feels. She doesn't feel that she has to challenge his decisions. Well, it's probably dumb.

We'll lose everything, but I still got him and he loves me, you know, and after all, we can get by. We've got love. And she feels that security of love and thus she feels the freedom of submitting to him.

And because she does submit, he feels that total freedom of expressing that love that he has for her. And it just gets gooder and gooder as we are following the rules. But you see, it has a way of compounding.

You start going one way and it starts building up to drive you further and further apart. And so, if you find yourself way out here in your marriage, you know, where every decision is challenged, why are you wearing that shirt this morning? You sure want to wear that tie? If I were you, I'd wear a different pair of shoes. And you know, you may even agree with what he wants to do, but still you're going to challenge it.

Think I'll take you out for dinner tonight, honey? Oh, I don't know if I want to go for dinner or not. Challenge it. Don't let it get by making a decision.

Now, somewhere, someone has to give. You have to break this routine that is driving you and tearing you apart. You've got to break the routine.

And someone has to give in. The husband has to begin to show more love to his wife. He has to cause her to really feel secure in that love.

He's got to go ahead and just express his love. Let her know that there's no one else and there will never be anyone else. That she is it for life till death do us part.

And he has no intention or desire for anybody else. She is it. And as she begins to feel that security, then she'll be able to be free or to allow Him to do those things that He feels that He ought to do or wants to do.

And you can get the thing going the other direction until it becomes heaven on earth. As we are following now God's rules, which takes into consideration the basic need of the husband as a man and the basic need of the wife as a woman. God's so smart.

You know, He has it all set out. And He puts it so simply. Rather than, here are the, you know, 55 rules for a happy marriage.

He knows you'd forget them. So He gives you one. But even we have difficulty with a one, don't we? We forget so readily.

Well, she ought to know I love her. I come home for dinner after all. You know, there's something interesting about women.

And of course, that's why we're attracted to them. But I really don't think that you can tell your wife enough times that you love her. You know, when she first opens her eyes in the morning, you look over and you see her in bed.

And you say, Oh, darling, you're beautiful. I love you. Then as you're sitting across from her at the breakfast table, and you just look into her eyes and say, Sweetheart, I love you so much.

And then as you kiss her goodbye and head off for work, and you say, Love you, honey. See you later. And if two or three times during the day you call up and she says, Hi, what do you want? Oh, I just wanted to tell you, honey, I love you.

And I think you're great. Believe me, when you go to bed at night, you're going to hear the question, Honey, do you love me? Take a hint, fellas. They need assurance of love.

And not just verbal. Love is demonstrated in its actions and love is demonstrated in its giving. Love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

Giving of yourself to her. Showing your love in your giving yourself to her. The rules for a happy home.

Paul goes on and draws on this illustration of Christ and the church as an illustration really of the perfect marital kind of a relationship. He gave himself for the church that he might set it apart and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the Word. That he might present it to himself.

A glorious church. You know, the wife who is smothered with love will just blossom forth so beautifully. As we blossom forth in the love of Jesus, the purpose is that he might present to himself a glorious church without spot or blemish or wrinkle or any such thing.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. And he that loves his wife is really doing himself a favor. He's loving himself.

You're the one that's going to benefit from your showing your love to your wife. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. And for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife and they too shall become one flesh.

It's a great mystery. But I am speaking, Paul said, concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you, in particular, so love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

So, relationships. Submitting ourselves to one another. Wives submitting to their husbands.

Husbands loving their wives supremely. Now, parent-child relationships. Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

That in the Lord, I think, is important. If your parents are not godly and if your parents are demanding you to do things or requiring you to do things that are improper from a spiritual base, then I do not believe that obedience is required. But obey your parents in the Lord.

There is the higher conscience to God where we must obey God rather than man. If what is being required of me would violate my conscience towards God, then that has to be the guiding standard of my life. Even in wives submitting to their husbands.

Again, there is the guiding standard of your conscience towards God. If your husband is requiring something that would affect your conscience before God, then I do not believe that you have to submit. Your husband isn't really loving you as Christ loved the church, or he wouldn't require you to do that.

So in all of these issues, there is that higher authority of God in our lives and our conscience towards Him. So children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother which is the first commandment with promise.

Now, a lot of commandments, this is the first one that had a promise attached to it. Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the earth. That it might be well with you in your days long upon the earth.

Now you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. I think one of the cruelest things that I have observed fathers doing sometimes is teasing their children to the point of distraction, getting a kick out of the frenzied little child. You know, holding out a piece of candy or a cookie and then as they're reaching out, pull it back.

Then holding it out and pulling it back. And just creating frustration until the child can't handle itself. Provoke not your children to wrath.

That's a cruel thing to do. It's cruel to derive humor or whatever from this kind of teasing of a child. It isn't right.

It's mentally abusing the child. But some people get sort of a kick out of seeing the little child just scream in a frenzy by frustration and can't do anything about it. Provoke not your children to wrath.

I think that we can provoke our children to wrath by demanding unreasonable achievements from them. After all, it's my child. They've got to be a genius.

They're so smart. They're talking before anybody else. They're walking.

My child just has to be super smart and special. And so, we sometimes are trying to push them beyond their capacities. And thus, that creates frustration.

We need to be careful that we don't push them to the point of frustration. Provoke not your children to wrath. But bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.

Teach them about God. Teach them the things of God and the ways of God. Servants, employees, be obedient to your bosses according to the flesh with fear and trembling and singleness of heart as unto Christ.

Not with eye service as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. Now, we're told in the Scriptures that whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of Christ. Or do what you do as unto Christ.

No matter what kind of a job I am doing, I am a witness for Jesus Christ and therefore, I want to do it good for His sake so that people will think well of Christianity because the job that I am doing is super special. I'm giving an extra effort. I'm not complaining.

I'm going an extra mile. I'm doing more than what is required of me. That my life might be a good witness for Jesus Christ.

We have many young people that have gone from Calvary Chapel on these kibbutz programs over in Israel and they have left a good witness because of the way that they work without complaining. They're good attitudes. Why? Because they go over and they are working as unto the Lord.

They've taken the right attitude with them. Doing their work as unto the Lord and it leaves a powerful witness as these in the kibbutzim observe their work. Some of the first groups that went over, those in the kibbutzim were determined to really break them.

They gave them the dirtiest jobs around the kibbutzim and just pressed them all kinds of stuff and yet these kids would do it smiling and rejoicing and with good attitudes and what they did was break down the kibbutzim, kibbutzniks, you know. I mean, they said, wow, you know, can't believe the way these people respond and react. Why? Because I'm doing it as unto the Lord.

Now, there are a lot of times when we are required to do things that are galling to us. Sometimes the boss may ask you to do something that you think, hey, come on, I'm above that. Sweep the floor? Are you kidding? I used to work for Alpha Beta Markets.

In my work for Alpha Beta Markets, I was called on to do just about everything. I was going around at the various stores, substituting for managers and all kinds of work. Anything that would come up, they'd call me to hot shot for them.

And sometimes I'd go into a store and it would be filthy and so the janitor wouldn't be there, I'd go ahead and clean the restrooms and sweep the floors. I thought, hey, they want to pay me what they're paying me. I don't care what I do.

I'll sweep floors, do whatever. They're paying me. And I developed a reputation of a guy that will just go for it.

Because I was doing it as unto the Lord and I figured, hey, they're paying for my time and so I'll do what they require of me or ask of me when I'm here without complaining or murmuring. And that's exactly what we're told to do here. Do what you do as unto the Lord.

Not to please men, but to please the Lord as a good witness for Him. With good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be a slave or a free man.

I'm ultimately looking to the Lord for my rewards, for my life and for my work. And so you masters, if you're in the position of an employer, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven and neither is there respect of persons with him. In the early church, of course, when slavery was such a popular thing, it was quite interesting because many of those in the early church were slaves.

And many of those in the early church were masters who had many slaves. And the interesting thing was is that here's a fellow that all week long is taking orders from his master and he goes to church. And he's the elder in the church and his master is just one of the people in the church.

And so the whole order was reversed when they got to church. With God there is no respect of persons. We're all one before Him.

Now finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

Stand therefore. So, we now come to the final section of the book, the warfare of the believer. The first three chapters, Paul dealt with the wealth of the believer.

The next two and a half chapters, he dealt with the walk of the believer. And now he deals with the warfare. Or in the first three chapters, he dealt with the position seated with Christ.

In the next two and a half chapters, he dealt again with the walk. And now he deals with standing. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Know that you don't have the strength in yourself. It's the Lord who gives me strength. Apart from Him, I can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God. And so, Paul sees the Roman soldier dressing himself for war.

And we as Christians are in a warfare. It's a spiritual warfare. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers which are spirit entities.

They are captains and lieutenants of the demon ranks. They are called principalities, powers, authorities, dominions, and they have various rankings of evil spirits. And that's where the real warfare lies, in the realm of the spirit, fighting these spiritual battles.

And thus, the weapons of our warfare are spiritual weapons. It is a spiritual battle. It cannot be fought with physical weapons.

We must arm ourselves with spiritual weapons. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against these principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against the spiritual wickedness in the high places. So, you have to take the whole armor of God that you might be able to stand in that evil day.

And having done all, just stand. Therefore, as we arm ourselves, the first bit of armament that we put on is the truth, because the enemy is always coming with his lies. Jesus said that the devil is the father of all lies.

And he tries to lie to you about God, about the nature of God, about the character of God, about the attitude of God towards you. He tries to lie to you about God's attitude towards sin. Well, it really doesn't matter.

You can get by with it. God will, you know, judge you. God will forgive and so forth.

And he presses the point of causing you to use the grace of God as a cloak for lasciviousness, deceiving yourself. The truth. It's important that I be armed with the truth.

Secondly, the breastplate of righteousness. That commitment in my heart to do that which is right before God. I've got to have that as just a commitment of my life.

I want to do the right thing. Not to observe the situation and then determine, you know, which way I'll bounce. But just have that determination that I'm going to live a right kind of life.

Righteousness. Righteousness actually constitutes the right actions towards those around me. And unrighteousness is not doing the right thing toward my neighbor.

Godliness is doing the right thing towards God. The right relationship with God. Ungodliness is the wrong relationship with God.

So there is ungodliness, my relationship with God, and unrighteousness, my relationship with man. Now he's talking here about righteousness. I've got to have that just as a basic foundation.

The breastplate of righteousness. I'm going to do, as best as God enables me, the right thing. I want to live right.

Your feet chod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It is God's desire that we live in peace with each other and with Him. We live in a world that is filled with strife.

We talked about marriage relationships. But how many homes are so filled with strife, the atmosphere is continually tense as we are failing to obey the Scriptures in submitting one to another in love. But we're trying to dominate over each other.

We're trying to rule over each other. And there is no love involved. We get to arguing over the most ridiculous things, and we won't give in.

We won't yield the point. We will press our point. Get the last word in.

Leave a sour taste. And yet, as the Scripture says, that yielding will pacify great offenses. How many times in a tense situation where there's just the drawn sword and the clash taking place, can the whole issue be diffused by just one person saying, I think you're right.

I just, you know, stupid to go on arguing like that. You're probably right. And it just diffuses the whole thing.

Suddenly, the strife is gone. Why do we find that so hard to do? To admit to being wrong or to admit to the other person possibly being right even when we know they're wrong. Help us, Lord.

Above all, taking the shield of faith. That faith and confidence in God is what is being talked about here. Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Satan is constantly attacking us. My faith in God, God's ability, God's power, God's working in me, I can stand against these attacks of the enemy. Take the helmet of salvation.

Thank God I've been saved through Jesus Christ from that tyranny of a life mastered by the flesh. I have been saved in order that I might walk in fellowship with God through the Spirit. And finally, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Not finally, but next, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. God's Word, a tremendous defense against sin. John said, I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, because ye have overcome the wicked one, because His Word abides in you.

The power of God's Word within my heart against sin. It's the greatest defense that I can have in this spiritual battle that I am in. God's Word hidden in my heart.

And then finally, praying. What a powerful spiritual weapon prayer is. In the spiritual warfare, prayer is often the deciding factor in the spiritual battle.

Praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Watching with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. And, pray for me, Paul says, that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Interesting that so often in the early church, their prayer was for boldness in proclaiming the truth of God. The reason for that being the heavy persecution against those who were proclaiming the Gospel. Imprisonment, often.

Oftentimes killed. There are some estimates that range as many as six million people were put to death for their faith in Christ in the first 270 years of the church's existence. Some six million people martyred.

And that is why, no doubt, they needed boldness because my witness may cost me my life. You can be intimidated by that kind of pressure into silence in the early church after one of the first persecutions when the disciples were beaten and told not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. Warned severely not to preach anymore.

They came to their own company having been beaten. And they shared with them the experience that they had before the magistrates. And they said, let's pray that God might give us boldness to continue to speak the truth.

And so they prayed. And the place was shaken. And the Holy Spirit came upon them.

And they went forth boldly proclaiming the truth. Paul is praying, asking for prayers that God will give me boldness in utterance. Opening my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel for which he said, I'm an ambassador in bonds, for which I've been placed in prison.

And that I might speak boldly as I ought to speak. That I will not be intimidated by this imprisonment, by the persecution, by the beatings. But that I will continue to speak boldly for Jesus Christ as I ought to speak.

I think so many times of our attitudes when someone has given us a dirty look or someone has put us down because we testified of Jesus. Oh, are you one of those Jesus freaks? And we, you know, keep quiet. We've been intimidated by someone's remark.

Imagine what they went through in the early days. Here's Paul in prison because he's been proclaiming the Gospel and he's saying, hey, please pray that God will give me boldness to speak as I ought to speak. That I won't be intimidated by the fact that I've been thrown in prison.

That my life has been threatened. That Nero is going to take my head. What we need is the grit of those early apostles.

But that you may also know my affairs and how I'm doing. Then Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to you all of these personal things about me. Whom I have sent to you for the same purpose that he might let you know our affairs and that he might comfort your hearts.

Peace be to the brethren and love with faith from God the Father in our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace and love. These glorious gifts of God.

And then finally, grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. Next week we go into the Philippian Epistle.

It is called the Prison Epistle because Paul wrote it from prison. Now, if you had a friend thrown into prison with an indeterminate sentence, what kind of a letter would you expect to get from him? It is interesting that the Epistle of Philippians is the most joyful epistle in the New Testament in which he is continually urging them to rejoice in the Lord. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians next week, you'll find it very rich, very blessed, very full.

And now may the Word of God abide in your hearts richly through faith that you might comprehend the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of God's love for you. And that you might live in fellowship with God as light in a dark place. So may your life give forth of the beauty and the radiance of Jesus Christ that it might bring hope unto others.

May God use you as his instrument this week. In Jesus' name.

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