

EPHESIANS

Chapter 5

Walk in Love

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

5:1 *Be imitators.* One way of imitating God is to have a forgiving spirit (4:32). The way we imitate our Lord is to act "just as" (v. 2; 4:32) he did. The sacrificial way Jesus expressed his love for us is not only the means of salvation (as seen in ch. 2) but also an example of the way we are to live for the sake of others. (CSB)

The traditional chapter division is unfortunate. The chief way to imitate God is to forgive and to love in a sacrificial way (v. 2). These acts flow from being re-created in God's image (4:24). (TLSB)

Kretzmann: The first verses of this chapter really conclude the thought at the close of the previous chapter. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Now Paul gathers, as it were, all these virtues which he has mentioned and others of a similar nature together and calls the sum of them love, 5:1-2. (Buls)

This is the conclusion and summary of 4:17-31. As in Galatians 5:14, Paul summarizes all Christian virtues in one, love. Again the word "be" means "constantly be." (Buls)

Stoekhardt: God is the archetype and model of love. God loved us and made us unworthy ones His own children; that should urge us, yes, that obliges us to imitate God, to love our fellow

Christians as our brethren, to walk in love so that all that we do and all that we leave undone is motivated by love.(Buls)

Luther: The outward life of the Christians shall be nothing but love. (Buls)

We've all been intrigued by the sight of a toddler trying to imitate his father – pounding a hammer, throwing a ball, raking leaves. Paul is suggesting something similar when he advocates kindness and compassion, love and forgiveness. (PBC)

mimētai, “imitators,” from which comes our word “mimic.” Children (including children of God) learn by mimicking their parents. God’s loving his children teaches them to love. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The believer is not breaking new ground in all this. We follow someone who has been this way before, and who was in all respects tempted as we are. And so St. Paul connects the preceding to what follows with *oun*, “therefore.” The model is God himself! Our goal is to imitate him as “beloved children.” Note well: we are not just God’s children—that is gracious and grand indeed—we are “dearly loved children.” “We know and rely on the love God has for us” (1 John 4:16). Lenski (p. 591) says the word *mimētai* refers to likeness and similarity, not to complete duplication. It means dependence on God in all our actions, not independent sameness.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Paul uses the Greek word *mimesis* which people understood to be a word associated with teaching and training. One learned by watching the one who knew how. What’s more, Paul in emphasizing the imitation of God, affirms again the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; that is, we were created to reflect God’s nature and works. We were made to be an image of the one who made us. That image has been flawed and blurred by sin. By the Spirit, though, when we seek to imitate God, we are reclaiming God’s original intent for us. (LL)

We ought to forgive men because God has forgiven us; but moreover, we ought to imitate our Father in his forgiveness and in his loving spirit because beloved children should always imitate, and will always strive to imitate, what is good in a beloved father. Forgiving love is one the great glories of our Father. (PC)

John 8:12 ‘When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”’

John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

beloved children - tekna agapēta, “beloved children.” When the New Testament speaks of children of God, it nearly always uses *tekna*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

“Children” are those who are begotten. The word reminds us of the fact that God was the cause of our spiritual birth. (Buls)

"Beloved" reminds us of the truth that we love because He first loved us. Children both consciously and subconsciously imitate their parents. Every time the Christian says "Our Father who art in heaven," he is reminded of the attributes of his heavenly Father. (Buls)

5:2 *walk in love* (AGAPE) – Let your ordinary life be spent in an atmosphere of love. Drink it in from heaven, as plants drink in the sunshine, radiate it forth from eyes and face, let hands and feet be active in the service of God and fellowman. (PC)

Not simply following Christ's example of love, but enabled to love because of what He did for us (1 John 4:7-19). (TLSB)

Verse two explains verse one. How do we imitate our heavenly Father? By doing what we are told in verse 2. (Buls)

The Greek word for "live a life" is something like "walk the walk," a metaphor for the Christian's way of life. This reminds us of the words of a hymn: "Let us ever walk with Jesus, Follow His example pure." *Lutheran Worship* #381.(Buls)

In 4:32 we had "God in Christ." In 5:1 we had God as model. And here in verse 2 we have Christ as standard. We should love as Christ loved us. What does this mean? We were miserable, wretched, helpless, hopeless and even resisted His help because we thought we could help ourselves. The words "Christ loved us" are explained in the sentence which follows. (Buls)

"Gave Himself up" is the very verb which is used of the betrayal of Judas. Judas turned Christ over to the Jewish authorities. But in actuality it was Christ who "gave Himself up." In the Garden of Gethsemane He willingly gave Himself up. He willingly laid down His own life. John 10:17; Hebrews 10:7. (Buls)

"For us" means "in stead of us." It denotes the vicarious atonement. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The joining of the two nouns serves to increase the emphasis upon the idea of sacrifice. (Buls)

Once more the emphasis is on *agapē* love, and if the requirement might seem too hard, the apostle simply points to Christ's greater love and asks for his readers to reflect that same kind of love to one another. Paul pictures our Savior's selfless sacrifice as "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." *Prosfora* and *thusia* both are sacrificial terms. The phrase *osmēn euōdias*, "fragrant offering," reflects the Hebrew *rē'ach nēcho'ach* in Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; and often in Leviticus and Numbers. Sacrifices offered in faith are said to be pleasant to the nostrils of the Creator. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

peripateite en agapēi, kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen ēmas, "walk in love, as Christ loved us." The initial reference is to imitating Christ *en agapēi*, "in love," meaning that we walk through life loving others as Christ did. However, Christ is not simply example. We also walk *en agapēi*, that is, in *his* love. As we are constantly being loved by him, our hearts are moved, enabled, empowered (not just shown how) to love others. Here is the Gospel motivation for our loving one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

fragrant offering. In the OT the offering of a sacrifice pleased the Lord so much that it was described as a "pleasing aroma" (Ge 8:21; Ex 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17). (CSB)

Christ fulfills the temple sacrifices (Ex. 29:41; Lev. 1), making forgiveness possible. (TLSB)

NKJV: "For a sweet smelling aroma." The point is that Christ's sacrifice pleased God. Christ gave Himself willingly for the undeserving. In doing so He pleased God. That is the way we should love, especially our fellow Christians. Look at Galatians 6:10. Instead of being angry at them we should love them. Instead of shouting at them we should speak kind words. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The unique, incomparable love of Christ in that He sacrificed Himself for us is the motive and power of our love. (Buls)

Lenski: It is not accidental that Paul writes about the supreme sweetness of the odor of Christ's sacrifice when he purposes to warn against filthiness on our part. (Buls)

The Bible constantly warns Christians against living in deliberate sin. The Bible also constantly nudges the new man in us to live as God wants us to live. All of this is a somber reminder that we are sinful people who can so easily be misled or can so easily fall away from the faith. (Buls)

And the Gospel is made explicit, even sensory: Christ "gave himself up for us, a fragrant (*osmēn euōdias*) offering and sacrifice to God." Paul recalls the smoke of the Old Testament sacrifices (Ex 29:18, 25) rising to heaven. Jesus' death on the cross is the sacrifice that pleases God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Not just the offering merely but the spirit in which it was offered (Cain & Abel). (PC)

The point here is the sacrificial giving of himself by Jesus was a "sweet smell" to God. In pagan worship it was believed that the god actually enjoyed the smell of the burnt offerings.

5:3-12 Sexual immorality a particular feature of Gentile life (1 Thess. 4:3-7), is connected to idol worship (v.5). (TLSB)

5:3 *must not even be named among saints*. See v. 12. (CSB)

Sin begins with words, which lead to deeds (v. 1; 4:29; Matthew 15:18-19; James 3:2-8). (TLSB)

They are not only to avoid doing evil, but they are to avoid even the appearance of doing evil. (PBC)

The practice of such sins was out of the question; but even speaking of them, as matters of ordinary conversation of Christians must be pure. (PC)

So earnestly should they maintain their honor and be concerned about purity, cleanliness, modesty, chastity and the life, that all evil rumors are silenced of themselves. Even the occasion for suspicion should be avoided. So pure should the Christian congregations be that not even the report dare come forth. This is becoming for saints, for Christians have been separated from the unclean world. (Stoekhardt)

Genesis 39:9 "...How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

covetousness must not even be named. Paul moves from specifically sexual sins to more general sins, such as greed. These include sexual lust but refer to other kinds of excessive desire as well. (CSB)

“Greedy” (4:19) for the neighbor’s wife” (Tenth Commandment). (TLSB)

In the mind of the apostle, sensuality was inseparable from greed, unnatural craving for more, dissatisfaction with what was enough, hence the neighborhood of the two vices. (PC)

among saints. We are also a “holy temple” (2:21; cf. 2Co 6:16; 1Pe 2:9). (CSB)

5:4 *foolish talk or crude joking.* The context and the word “obscenity” indicate that it is not humor as such but dirty jokes and the like that are out of place. (CSB)

Finer species of uncleanness are filthiness, shameful existence, unbecoming behavior and conduct; foolish talking, absurd speaking; jesting, essentially adroitness (skillful and adept under pressing conditions), urbanity (refinement and elegance of manner – polished courtesy), here in the evil sense of sly wit. The last two expressions, considered in their context, lead us to think of such salt-less and salty jokes which concern things that are forbidden in the sixth commandment, of filthy stories. Also these things, even though they do not lead to coarse gratification of carnal lust, are not convenient for Christians. These things should not occur among them. (Stoeckhardt)

C.S. Lewis is credited with having said something like this: In the absence of any other evidence, the essentials of natural theology could be argued from the human phenomenon of dirty jokes and attitudes toward death. (LL)

thanksgiving. By being grateful for all that God has given us, we can displace evil thoughts and words. (CSB)

In the context of marriage, sex is a blessed gift from God. Improper talk is sexual desire is displaced by thanksgiving for God’s gifts (1:16; 1 Tim. 4:3). (TLSB)

They should rather speak, and speak much about the great things and good things which God has done unto them. (Stoeckhardt)

5:5 *immoral, impure or greedy.* See v. 3. (CSB)

Together, these terms suggest temple prostitution, a common feature of pagan Gentile life. One who trusts God will be satisfied with the spouse He has given. (TLSB)

This is true simply because continually immoral, impure, and greedy people have declared their god – themselves. They are, as Paul describes them, idolaters. An episode of an old television series, *St Elsewhere*, depicts a chronic rapist at last in hell. The camera shows him alone in vast canyon, fishing, but never catching a thing – for-ever. The irony is sharp. Here was a man who for years had chased his own desires and greed. Now he was left with the one he has worshiped all along – himself. (LL)

These are twin brothers of the sin denounced as idolatry. It is worshiping the creature more than the Creator, depending on vast stores of earthly substance in place of the favor and blessing of God. (PC)

idolater. Cf. Col 3:5. The greedy person wants things more than he wants God, and puts things in place of God, thereby committing idolatry. (CSB)

inheritance. The person who persists in sexual and other kinds of greed has excluded God, who therefore excludes him from the kingdom. (CSB)

Such reference to certain destruction, the final damnation of adulterers, unclean, persons, covetous men, is the strongest warning and a warning which Christians, who still have flesh and blood need also. (Stoeckhardt)

1 Corinthians 6:9, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.”

Revelation 21:27, “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

5:6 empty words – Their Gentile contemporaries sought to convince the Christians – and such talk one still hears coming from the mouth of the children of this world – that the things mentioned in v.3 and 5 were adiaphora, innocent, harmless pleasures and enjoyments, permissible interests. Or even though they are faulty, one would not immediately go to hell just because he once gave to natural weakness. These are empty words, void of all truth. (Stoeckhardt)

Claims that such deeds will not be punished. (TLSB)

wrath of God...disobedience – While there are many sorts of deceiving, empty, or false words against which we need to stand and confess, “these things” of which Paul speaks are the sexual vices, filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking (5:3–4) that are so common in the world around us. The “wrath of God” predicted is not only that of the Last Day of judgment but also God’s withdrawing his presence in the way of Rom 1:24, 26, and 28 (“God gave them up”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

These things, adultery, un-chastity, covetousness, are a part of the Gentile’s daily life, are their daily bread, cause God’s wrath to come upon them. Paul calls the Gentiles the children of disobedience because they by their coarse infamies opposed the law in their hearts. They deceive themselves by excusing these things. Their own conscience bears witness against them. So it is a deserving, righteous wrath that will come upon them. And Christian, just because they are called Christians, will not escape future wrath if they take part in this abomination. (Stoeckhardt)

5:7 partners. Although Christians live in normal social relationships with others, as did the Lord Jesus (Lk 5:30–32; 15:1–2), they are not to participate in the sinful life-style of unbelievers. (CSB)

I.e., do not share in their sinful deed (v.11; 1 Cor. 10:20-21; 2 Cor. 6:14-18), which would contradict our fellowship in Christ. (TLSB)

Christians should not become companions of the unbelievers (Ps. 1:1), so that they sin with them, lest they be damned with them. In this world Christians live and do business with unchristians. They should, however, take heed lest they become implicated in their disorderly ways and shady business methods. (Stoeckhardt)

The best way not to be deceived or led astray is by not associating with those who would deceive. This is reminiscent of Rom 16:17. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Especially the young or weak in faith must be cautious of those who offer slick words and promises. Paul's readers moved in a world that would scoff at such cautions concerning immorality and greed. They would hear of God's abounding grace and wonder why they could not just sin and count on God's forgiveness. Such mixed messages would confuse and eventually deceive them. Paul knew the power of words and the appeal of smooth philosophy, especially that which spoke of license. (LL)

5:8-14 In this passage from Ephesians Paul draws on the motif of light and darkness to urge his listeners to be a God has already made them in Christ: "children of light" (5:8). We are reminded of Christ's own words in John 9, of John's words in his first Epistle regarding be "in the light" as Christ is in the light (1 John 1:5-7), and Peter's words in his first Epistle about being called "out of darkness into (God's) wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). Although light is not a predominant theme in Ephesians, Christ's election of people into his church by his grace through faith certainly is. Starting with Ephesians 1:4 Paul speaks eloquently of the mysterious working of God through Christ in setting him over "ll rule and authority" (1:21), calling people out of sin and slavery into a relationship with himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

5:8-9 "Darkness" and "Light" are treated as real powers at work. "Darkness" is, of course, the sinful, fallen nature, the world, and the devil. "Light" is the new life of faith begun in our Baptism in Christ and continued and strengthened by his abiding in us (Jn 6:56 from the Gospel). The "walk as children of light" is the Christian life of sanctification, the walking by faith, the carrying of the cross, to be salt and light in the world (Mt 5:13-14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:8 *darkness ... light.* This section emphasizes the contrast between light and darkness, showing that those who belong to him who is "light" (1Jn 1:5), i.e., pure and true, not only have their lives illumined by him but also are the means of introducing that light into the dark areas of human conduct (cf. Mt 5:14). (CSB)

Verses 3-7 warn Christians concerning six specific vices which were prevalent in the ancient world and still are much with us today. The Apostle warns his hearers that no Christian can make a habit of any of these vices and yet inherit eternal life. The unbelieving world believes that life owes them sinful pleasures. They often feel that sin and vice is their privilege. The Christian lives in a world in which the deceitfulness of sin is made to look so innocent. (Buls)

But Paul warns in verse 7: "Therefore do not be partakers with them." By "them" he means "the sons of disobedience" in verse 6.(Buls)

In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul began by reminding his hearers what they were before they came to faith in Christ and then he proceeded, in verses 4-10, to tell them what God had done for them.(Buls)

Similarly in our text Paul reminds his hearers of what they once were and what they have become. Then he warns them not to fall back into their old ways. In fact, they have a responsibility to wake impenitent sinners up lest they lose their souls. They should walk as Children of Light. (Buls)

This verse explains why he said what he did in verses 6-7.(Buls)

Formula of Concord (Tappert 522.10): [After listing 1 Corinthians 2:2-4; 1 :21; Ephesians 4:17-18; Matthew 13:11-13; and Romans 3:11-12, states:] In this way Scripture calls the natural man simply 'darkness' in spiritual and divine things, Ephesians 5:8 and Acts 26:18. (Buls)

Note the contrast. Christians are no longer darkness. They are now light. And that is qualified by the phrase "in the Lord." Because of what Jesus did I am now light in the Lord. Look at the Third Article. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Darkness and light in this connection do not mean misery and happiness, but here designate the contrast between sin, ungodliness, and holiness, purity. Through their conversion or regeneration Christians have been rescued from the ruination of sin, of the world, and have been transplanted into a new, holy, godly life and status. Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:5; Luke 16:8; John 12:36. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Darkness' and 'light' are really powers. They exist independently of us, and we are either darkness or light only as we are identified with the one or the other. (Buls)

The contrast in this verse is double: then-now and darkness-light. (Buls)

Paul seems to be speaking in this verse not of a situation in which Christians were before their call through the Gospel, but of their own interior condition. Christians were not in the darkness, but were darkness themselves. Now in Christ, the Christian has been made "light." The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord uses this verse along with others to show the depravity of humanity and its inability to transform itself from darkness into light on its own. "In this way Scripture calls the natural man simply 'darkness' in spiritual and divine things" (FC SG II 10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

walk as children of light – "Walk" is a Pauline word for "live." The "light" is the motivation. That is Gospel. But the Law gives direction. That is obligation. (Buls)

When Paul says, "(They) were once darkness," he is taking it a step farther. Not only were they misled and under the influence of wicked paganism, they themselves were a bad influence. They were the darkness that misled others to practice and even enjoy gross immorality and wickedness. (PBC)

Understanding Paul's metaphor about darkness makes the parallel metaphor regarding light all the more striking. The Ephesians were not only enlightened by knowing Christ; they themselves have become light. Not only were they influenced by his gospel, but they themselves are now the influence that builds up their brothers in the church and wins new converts. (PBC)

Remember Christ's declaration to His disciples: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13,14). He didn't say, "You really should be the salt of the earth" or "strive to become the light of the world." He said, "You are the light of the world." Because God's people are light, Paul can urge, live as children of light. (PBC)

5:9 *fruit of the light*. A mixed metaphor, but the meaning is clear. Light is productive (consider the effect of light on plant growth), and those who live in God's light produce the fruit of moral and ethical character (cf. Gal 5:22–23), while those who live in darkness do not (see v. 11). (CSB)

A common NT image for good works and deeds that flow naturally from one planted in Christ (John 15:1-8; Col. 1:10). (TLSB)

RSV has: "The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true." TEV: "For it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth." AAT: "Light produces everything good and righteous and true." (Buls)

By the way, when a person walks in constant repentance (confessing his sins and trusting in Jesus' blood) his sins are constantly forgiven and God sees nothing but his good works. Look at 1 John 1:7 and Ephesians 2:10. The Christian is at one and the same time saint and sinner. But read Galatians 2:20.(Buls)

Here Paul describes the nature of true "light." It consists of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Melancton in his Apology of the Augsburg Confession felt that these three characterized the very image of God, since God Himself "light" (1 John 1:5; Ap. II 20). Truth is specifically that which is "not concealed," but which represents a real "state of affairs" (TDNT, 37). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Many commentators make this verse a parenthesis. Verse 9 explains what Paul meant when he said: "Walk as children of light." Perhaps our text has been influenced by Galatians 5:22. What does the Light or the Spirit produce? Fruit. It is the very opposite of the sin mentioned in verse 3-4. (Buls)

Whereas in Galatians 5:22 we have nine, here we have only three items. And, as in Galatians 5:22, these nouns overlap in meaning. All of them denote sanctification. (Buls)

good– Stoeckhardt: 'Goodness' all that is morally good and proper. 'Righteousness' is moral uprightness. 'Truth' is moral truth and purity. (Buls)

right – Lenski: 'Goodness' means all genuine moral excellence . . . The righteous walk in all righteousness. The approval of this Judge rests upon them. Paul's circle is closed by 'truth' which is verity, reality, namely spiritual and moral reality, as opposed to all lying perversion, sham, deception, pretense. (Buls)

true – Kretzmann: Goodness in all its forms, moral soundness and propriety, combined with active beneficence; righteousness-moral rectitude, which takes care that nothing and nobody receives any injury; truth-moral purity, sincerity and integrity as opposed to hypocrisy and falsehood. (Buls)

5:10 *discern what is pleasing to the Lord* – dokimazo means to approve after examination. In every case Christians are to examine carefully, exactly, what is pleasing to the Lord to whom they

belong. It does not always appear at once what before God is good and right. A constant examination or investigation before the eyes of the Lord is necessary. Everything Christians come in contact with in life is to have the Christian standard of God's holy will be applied. The practical rule of the Christian life must be to please Christ. (PC)

It literally means to "test," by the standard of God's Word (Rom. 2:18; 12:2; Php. 1:9-10). (TLSB)

Stoekhardt: In every case Christians are to examine carefully, exactly, what is pleasing to the Lord to whom they belong . . . It does not always appear at once what before God is good and right . . . A constant examination or investigation before the eyes of the Lord is necessary.(Buls)

Lenski 'Test' or 'find out' is used of testing metals, whether they are genuine, of coins, whether they are of the real metal and of full weight . . . Endless deception offers what is morally rotten as though it were perfectly sound. Test every thought, word, and act.(Buls)

Well said. Satan, the father of lies, has filled the world with that which is rotten, untrue, unreal. The Christian needs constantly to be on his guard. (Buls)

Kretzmann: To everything that they come in contact with in life, the Christians apply the standard of God's holy will. For often the difference between right and wrong is not immediately obvious. (Buls)

Christians should never rush in where angels fear to tread. "Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." The point is that it often takes effort and careful deliberation to make mature decisions as to proper courses of action. (Buls)

The opposite of deception (v 6) is the "discerning" or testing out what is pleasing to the Lord. The apostle John encouraged this when he wrote, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 Jn 4:1). Such testing, of course, is in the light of God's revealed Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

To find out what is well-pleasing to the Lord is to examine what is acceptable and divinely approved. *Euaestotos*, well-pleasing, is not the same word used in the baptismal and transfiguration accounts of the Gospels. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

This could give the impression that there is considerable unclarity as to what pleases the Lord, and it is our task to discover it. Actually, the Greek verb in this phrase might better be translated "approve" or "put your stamp of approval on." The sense of the sentence would be: Live as children of the light and put your stamp of approval on what please God. What pleases God is the fruit that light produces, namely goodness, righteousness and truth. (PBC)

Matthew 3:17, "And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Romans 12:1-2 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Hebrews 13:16, “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

5:11 *take no part.* See v. 7. (CSB)

This verse contains a prohibition and a command. The negative forbids a continual and habitual act. Here it does not denote ceasing what they are already doing. It forbids constant association with fruitless works of darkness as a way of life. And note that the object of both prohibition and the command is "deeds" not "people." (Buls)

The verb "have nothing to do with" is used here and in Philippians 4:14 and Revelation 18:4. In no instance does it denote fellowship or association with people. Paul does not say that we should have no association at all with the unconverted. That is impossible. The world being what it is we must associate with all kinds of people. But, we should have nothing at all to do with the kinds of works here described. (Buls)

The *summetochoi* (“partnership” or “association”) of v 7 is interpreted as *sungkoinōneite* (“fellowship”) in v 11. This is similar to 2 Cor 6:14, where Paul memorably says, “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship (*koinōnia*) has light with darkness?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”

works of darkness – Sexual immorality. (TLSB)

The power of darkness causes and produces the fruitless works. We think here of John 3:19-21. We think also of Matthew 7:22-23, a remarkable passage. If works are not done by faith in Jesus, He will pronounce them wickedness on judgement day. They are like the chaff which the wind drives away. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The darkness, the unconverted state, the condition of unbelief, can bring forth real fruit as little as weeds are able to; the works of darkness are unfruitful, they are destructive, wicked, dead, Hebrews 6:1; 9:14; Colossians 1:2. (Buls)

expose. Light, by nature, exposes what is in darkness, and the contrast shows sin for what it really is. (CSB)

Discern and condemn them with God’s Law (v. 13; Ps. 119:105; John 3:20; 16:8). (TLSB)

μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἐλέγγετε—The verb ἐλέγγω, “to bring to light, expose,” draws on the metaphor of light. Because Christians “are light” (5:8; “enlightened,” 1:18), they have the ability to shine into the darkness to disclose the evil that lurks there. Central to the light/darkness metaphor is the fact that light always triumphs over darkness; darkness has no ability to extinguish light (cf. Jn 1:5). Nothing can remain hidden in the dark (Is 29:15; Dan 2:22). The connection of light with the

Word of God (Ps 119:105; cf. Is 9:7 [ET 9:8]) implies an objective standard for this process, the “real life” application of the image. The process of δοκιμάζοντες, “testing,” to see what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph 5:10) takes place by comparing the words and deeds of the world around us with the teachings of Holy Scripture. ἐλέγχω (5:11) not only means to show these deeds for what they are (Jn 3:20; Eph 5:13) but also implies “reproving” or “convicting” the perpetrators on the basis of God’s Law. Thus, the Christian is enabled to flee evil and at the same time to serve as God’s instrument in unveiling his eschatological judgment and calling the world to repentance. (CC)

"Expose" is to bring to light, to reveal hidden things, to convict or convince, to reprove, to correct, to punish, to discipline. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Not only should any participation in this sin be avoided, one is not only to beware of taking part in these sins, but the Christian is to oppose them aggressively and, in fact, so energetically is he to oppose them that he actually conquers this sin. It is the duty of Christians, the children of light, to reprove the works of darkness, refute the talk of the children of darkness, and prove to them that their works are evil. According to 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9-13, and 2:15 this is the duty of the Christian and bishop. However, it is also a part of the duty and calling of all Christians. (Buls)

Lenski: As far as others are concerned, two things are mentioned, no fellowship with their evil works, reproof exposing their shamefulness. . . Look at 2 Corinthians 6:14: 'What fellowship is there for light with darkness?' Here 'the darkness' is the direct opposite of 'the light.' Both are definite, both are powers The one has fruit, the other is unfruitful . . . Who wants to spend a life working a field which produces no fruit at all? (Buls)

It is not enough to abstain. The Christians does more than merely to abstain. RSV: "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." NEB: "Take no part in the barren deeds of darkness, but show them up for what they are." NASB: "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them." (Buls)

Paul states that the works of darkness are akarpos, unfruitful. They ultimately lead not to the edification and strengthening of people in themselves and in their relationships, but in a loss of goodness, righteousness, and truth. These unfruitful deeds must be exposed, a difficult task in the live-and-let-live culture of North America. How difficult is it for us to take in the words of Prov. 27:5-6: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Matthew 10:26 “So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.”

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

5:12-13 The light exposes shameful deeds that are done in secret. Wrapped up in this verse are the three characteristics of light: goodness, righteousness, and truth. Nothing good can be shameful, nothing done in secret can be righteous, and lies cannot stand to be made visible. Perhaps the chief sin is the lie; light and truth are so intimately related in the Gospels, especially John, and Paul reinforces this connection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

It is one thing to avoid falsehood, deception, and evil. It is another thing to expose it (*elenchō*). As in Luther's theology of the cross, this is to call things what they are with the resulting shame (*aischron*) of those who do the evil. This is the result of our living as "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14). It is, of course, our hope and prayer that the light of God's Word will bring about repentance and faith in others. But that is God's activity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Actually, verses 12 and 13 go together as a unit. Verse 12 tells us why we have the prohibition and the command stated in verse 11. Verse 13 tells us how Christians deal with such a situation. Two things must be mentioned which Paul is *not* saying: (Buls)

He is not saying that to mention these sins or even to describe them is wrong in itself, for Paul did that very thing, for example, in Romans 1:18-32; (Buls)

He is not saying that everything which is done in private is sinful. For example, the God-pleasing intimacies of husband and wife in private are certainly not sinful. (Buls)

5:12 *shameful even to speak*. Christians should not dwell on the evils that their lives are exposing in others. (CSB)

The stress in verse 12 lies on the word "shameful." The deeds done in private are shameful because they are the opposite of the God-pleasing deeds mentioned in verse 9. We translate literally: "For it is a shameful thing even to dwell upon what goes on among them in secret." People hide such things because they are a disgrace to themselves. Paul is speaking of a constant way of life. And "to dwell upon our speaking thereof." "In secret" is "avoiding the light." (Buls)

do in secret –The stress in verse 12 lies on the word "shameful." The deeds done in private are shameful because they are the opposite of the God-pleasing deeds mentioned in verse 9. We translate literally: "For it is a shameful thing even to dwell upon what goes on among them in secret." People hide such things because they are a disgrace to themselves. Paul is speaking of a constant way of life. And "to dwell upon our speaking thereof." "In secret" is "avoiding the light." (Buls)

5:13–14 *exposed by the light* – *phaneroutai* can refer to fact that, in consequence of the reproof of sin, both their public and their secret sins are made manifest and revealed to the servants of sin themselves, which amount to bringing about in them a consciousness of sin. Paul does not mean that the Christian publishes the secret sins of people. He is talking about making the perpetrators see the true nature of their sins, whether they admit it or not. – The idea seems to be that when light (Christian truth) exposes the evil, there is a possibility that the person caught in darkness might repent and come to the light.

God's Word not only exposes evil but can transform evil persons into good. (TLSB)

In this verse we are told how Christians carry out what is commanded in the last part of verse 11. NASB translates: "But all things become visible when they are exposed to light." TEV: "And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed." (Buls)

Paul does not mean that the Christian publishes the secret sins of people. He is taking about making the perpetrators see the true nature of their sins, whether they admit it or not. (Buls)

What is meant by "the light" here? The testimony of the Christian, the Word of God, the second use of the Law. (Buls)

5:13 *becomes visible*. By the repetition of these words, Paul seems to be stressing the all-pervasive nature of the light of God and its inevitable effect. (CSB)

Stoekhardt: This reproof forces, as it were, the sinners to face their own iniquity and shame. For 'exposed' can refer only to the fact that, in consequence of the reproof of sin, both their public and their secret sins are made manifest and revealed to the servants of sin themselves, which amounts to bringing about in them a consciousness of sin.(Buls)

Lenski: Paul is not speaking of the saving effect of 'the light' and of our reproof of secret sins. So far he insists only on our steady reproof. We as children of light **MUST** reprove sins and vice, our very nature requires no less.(Buls)

Bengel: That their vileness may be known whether those who have done them scorn reproof, or repent. (Buls)

5:14 *light, it becomes visible* – And now Paul buttresses verse 13 with an axiom, a principle in nature which is readily understood by everyone: "For what is brought into the open is light." The secrecy can no longer benefit or hide what has been done. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: If he becomes conscious of his sin and misery in sin, he may in this way be brought to enter upon the path which leads away from sin and leads to God, so that he now lives and walks to please God in all things, that he becomes light as Christians are light. We find the same combination of things in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25. Prophecy (teaching), within the Christian Church, has the effect of reproofing an unbeliever who is present and to reveal his secret sins to himself, and in this way, in this manner, he may come to give glory to the God of the Christians and be converted to Him. (Buls)

By the way, that's what 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 is all about. The people were not using Law and Gospel properly. They were not edifying people. They were using their God-given gifts for self-glorification. (Buls)

The effect of our witness is to call people to repentance and faith. Paul quotes a Christian hymn of the time. It is similar to quoting st 2 of *LSB* 684, "Come unto Me, ye wand'ers, And I will give you light," or other hymns of invitation that speak of rising from unbelief to faith. Speaking to one another by quoting hymns is precisely what Paul urges in the verses that follow! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Isaiah 26:19 "But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead."

it says. What follows may well be a hymn used by the early Christians (see note on Col 3:16). (CSB)

And now we come to the final three lines of this verse which are introduced by the words "it is said." In Ephesians 4:8 these words introduce a quotation from the Old Testament, but here the source is in question. Some suggest a possible reference to an Apocryphal book or to Isaiah 26:19 or Isaiah 60:1. However, the New Testament does not quote Apocryphal books and most scholars doubt a reference to either of the Isaiah passages. Stoekhardt does not rule out a reference to a Christian hymn. (Buls)

Lenski: The hesitation about regarding this as a couplet taken from a Christian hymn used in Ephesus in Paul's time ought to disappear.(Buls)

Kretzmann: This quotation is not taken from Scriptures, but may have been a verse adapted from synagogue or Christian liturgy of Paul's day or Paul applied a common greeting of the Jewish New Year to the situation.(Buls)

It is considered poetry by the majority of the English translations. We leave it at that. (Buls)

It must be admitted that the three lines are poetic. Perhaps Paul is using an existing hymn. But the true Lutheran exegete ought to be careful when it comes to the whole matter of "early Christian hymns." The higher critics call Luke 1:67-79 (the Benedictus) an "early Christian hymn." But that can't be because we are plainly told in verse 67 that the Holy Spirit filled Zacharias with the result that he spoke forth. The Holy Spirit is the author of these words. (Buls)

For decades Philippians 2:6-11 has been called a hymn, either pagan or Christian. But the authorities cannot agree on the Greek metrics and, what is worst of all, they completely destroy the meaning of this passage which is so important for the doctrine of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. (Buls)

But, back to Ephesians 5:14. The first two lines are a command, the third a promise. For his own good, the Christian is trying to shake the unconverted sinner out of his dull sloth. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Christian is to call to his unbelieving, ungodly neighbor: 'You are asleep in your sins, you are slumbering in the midst of death and destruction. But awake from this sleep, arise from the dead, repent, be converted!' . . . Recognition of sin is a prerequisite of this arising from the sleep of sin and death, and precedes conversion . . . Christ is here presented as a rising Light, a shining Constellation or Star, as the Sun of grace . . . It is exactly this promise of grace which awakens the sinner from his sleep of sin and of death, gives him spiritual power, and makes him willing to obey the call. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The sinner, having arisen from the sleep of sin and death, is surrounded and flooded with Christ, the Sun of Salvation, and thus becomes blessed and happy in this illumination. (Buls)

Lenski: This is the Gospel call of grace, of the *gratia sufficiens*, ever filled with quickening power (2:5) to raise up those whom it bids to arise . . . Beside the negative appears the positive: 'and there shall shine forth upon thee Christ' . . . Here is the same gracious and efficacious call as in Matthew 11:28-30. Subject and verb are transposed, both are thus made emphatic . . . We have had 'the light.' Here we see that this is Christ. As in John 1:4 life and light are combined in Christ. (Buls)

awake - The verb for arise, *anistmui*, is the verb for resurrection. Here it would seem that Paul is jumping from the present life to the life to come. This may be in part because we have failed to see how the new life in us now is the life that will come into full view in the next world. It is sin, the great deception, that continues to hide our true nature as saints not only from the world but sometimes even from us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Death, even sinners' spiritual, death is like sleep to God (cf. Mk. 5:39-42; John 11:11; 1 Thess. 4:14). Through Baptism, Christ resurrected us (Eph. 2:1-6; Romans 6:4).

arise from the dead. Two images that describe a sinner (cf. 2:1). (CSB)

Christ will shine on you. With his life-giving light. (CSB)

He will be enveloped by the rays of Christ, the Sun of salvation. In this splendor he will be joyful and blessed as in the day. And this promise of grace it is that awakens the sinner from sleep and death, that grants him power, that makes him willing to obey the call. (Stoekhardt)

5:15-20 The word *oun*, “then,” alerts us that our text logically follows the previous discussion. Verses 3–14 are loaded with more of God’s guidelines on the Christian life-style: what the believer is to battle and avoid, and what he is to pursue. He is aggressively to seek this life-style because (vv 1–2) he is a dearly loved child of God, enfolded in the redeeming love of the Savior. Having thus again graphically depicted the Christian walk, the inspired apostle now challenges and enjoins the believer to live accordingly. As always, the motivation flows from God’s love. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

5:15-16 Here the subject of wisdom, addressed in the *Introit and Old Testament Reading* for this day, is introduced. “Making the best use of the time” (*kairon*) means using the current situation and/or opportunity for our confession or witness. The increase of evil decreases the opportunities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:15 *look carefully then how you walk* – NKJV: “See then that you walk circumspectly.” RSV: “Look carefully then how you walk.” (Buls)

In order that those without may be won, Christians should be very particular in their conduct, in all that they do. They should walk carefully and prudently. They should turn away from everything that could give offense to Christians and to unbelievers. (Stoekhardt)

“Be very careful!” Brandt (*Meditations on a Loving God* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1983] p.237): “When we are blessed with a new friend . . . we are generally very careful about how we treat this individual . . . We ‘walk’ carefully, for they are of great value to us. It may be that we are not nearly so concerned about that ‘pearl of great price,’ that divine gift and eternal relationship which is of infinitely greater value than anything of which we can conceive. We tend to take God for granted, and therefore become careless and irresponsible in . . . our relationship to him. This has to do, as well, with our responsibility . . . to our relationships with our fellow beings . . . if we truly love our Lord, and our brothers and sisters in the family of God, we will ‘look carefully . . . how [we] walk.’” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Romans 6:4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Galatians 5:16 “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Ephesians 4:1 “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

unwise . . . wise. Having emphasized the contrast between light and darkness, Paul now turns to the contrast between wisdom and foolishness. (CSB)

Lenski (p. 613) says, “The summary of this admonition is the exercise of Christian wisdom.” Lenski further points out (p. 614) that the Ephesian Christians are walking the Christian life, but Paul wants them to examine the degree of their carefulness. To walk with some care is not enough in days that are so wicked. Being wise means more than simply knowing; it includes the idea of getting the most out of one’s knowledge. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Lenski: To be wise is more than to know; it means to use, apply, and thus to get the most out of knowledge in our walking or in the management of our life. (Buls)

The word "wisdom" here implies that they know what Paul has said about Law and Gospel, about sin and grace, in the chapters and verses preceding our text. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: They are not to drift along without forethought and plan, but to give serious thought upon the way and means by which they may accomplish their purpose, they are to study how they may help to build the Kingdom of God and advance the cause of Christ. (Buls)

The Christian is like the wise man described in Matthew 7:24-25. The non-Christian is like the foolish man described in Matthew 7:26-27. Our text is speaking about spiritual wisdom, not mere intellectual knowledge. (Buls)

5:16 *but as wise.* The foolish person has no strategy for life and misses opportunities to live for God in an evil environment. (CSB)

"Opportunity" reminds us of the old Roman proverb: *Carpe diem*, which means "seize the day," or "seize the opportunity." True. Common sense tells us to grasp opportunities. Wise parents constantly tell their children: "Make the most of your opportunities." (Buls)

Our text is speaking about making use of opportunities in the interest of the Kingdom of God, whatever that opportunity may be. Unbelievers make use of opportunities to further their own material gain. It is not wrong for Christians to do that. They should do that. But, in addition to that, they must wisely seize opportunities which are in the interest of God's Kingdom. (Buls)

make the best use of the time – Stoekhardt: Take advantage of the right moment, grasp the opportunity to approach opportunely those who despise God and Christ, to get a hearing for the divine Word, to get in some good work and accomplish something for the Lord. (Buls)

Reinecker (*A Linguistic Key to the New Testament*) notes that *ezagoraō* has a dual meaning here —“seizing the opportunity” and “buying back” at the cost of self-denial, at least at times. Barnes (*Notes on the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949] p. 103) comments: “it means to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes . . . They redeem their time who employ it (1) in gaining useful knowledge; (2) in doing good to others; (3) in employing it for the purpose of an honest livelihood . . . ; (4) in prayer and self-examination to make the heart better, (5) in seeking salvation and endeavoring to do the will of God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Psalm 90:12 “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Colossians 4:5 “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”

1 Peter 3:15 “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”

days are evil - Why should we do this? "Because the days are evil." The word here means "actively evil." The world and all that is in it opposes the Kingdom of God. There is so very much immorality, sin and wickedness all around us. But there are opportunities nonetheless. (Buls)

Lenski: These seasons of opportunity are brief, they soon slip away . . . Pay the necessary price in effort and exertion. . . Our lives are brief and present only so much opportunity . . . Opportunity itself is always a positive invitation and incentive. . . Wickedness reduces the opportunities.(Buls)

Kretzmann: The general opposition of the world against the Gospel of Christ is a hindering factor. Opportune moments are rare and should be grasped immediately. (Buls)

In these end times, evil forces battle against God’s children, who have been rescued from evil. (TLSB)

5:17-18 It is God’s will, first, that all people come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (justification). Here, Paul adds that it is also God’s will that all people be filled with the Spirit (sanctification). This is contrasted with being filled with wine. The wine results in *asōtia*: debauchery, dissoluteness, sensuality, immorality (Gal 5:19–21). The Spirit results in his fruit (Gal 5:22–23): “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:17 *foolish . . . understand*. The contrast continues. The foolish person not only misses opportunities to make wise use of time; he has a more fundamental problem: He does not understand what are God’s purposes for mankind and for Christians. God’s purposes are a basic theme in Ephesians (see ch. 1). (CSB)

In these end times, it is foolish to act as if Christ is not returning soon (Mt. 25:1-13). (TLSB)

They should let nothing cause them to lose true understanding, consciousness and comprehension. But they should be prudent. (Stockhardt)

"For this reason" What reason? Because the days are wicked. Here we have a prohibition. The word "foolish" means either not to have good judgment or to fail to use it when the opportunity presents itself. (Buls)

How do we combat foolishness? By doing what follows the "but." This adversative conjunction, following a negative, is very strong. According to Rienecker, "understand" means "the ability to

bring things together and see them in relation to one another." Remarkably enough in our time people speak about "getting it all together." That gets at the meaning here. It takes effort to do that. We have to sift, test and think about what the will of the Lord is, what pleases Him. (Buls)

the will of the Lord – The will of the Lord is the divine measure and blueprint of our use of time. Under his will we prioritize the activities we have to choose from. The danger is that the evil of the present days may confuse our priorities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Bengel: The will of the Lord not only generally, but specifically. (Buls)

Correct. The text is speaking not only of general knowledge, for example that all men are sinners but that all are saved by grace in Christ. The text is speaking about what we should do in specific cases for the good of people as prospects for the Kingdom of God. That takes true Christian wisdom. The text forthrightly tells us to do it. Christians should be careful to think about each time, place and circumstance to apply the will of the Lord. What was Paul's first question when he was converted? "Lord, what would you have me do?" That is our question too at all times. (Buls)

They should give heed to and ever better learn to understand what just now, in this place, under given circumstances God's will is for them. We read a similar exhortation in verse 10. Christians should always in every individual case prove what is pleasing to the Lord. This applies generally and also particularly to the Christian's conduct towards the unbelievers of their environment, of whom our context speaks. (Stoekhardt)

Psalm 40:8 "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

Psalm 143:10 "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground."

Matthew 26:42 "He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

John 7:17 "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."

5:18 *Do not get drunk* ... This means an "excess" or extreme indulgence in sensual pleasures. (CSB)

One waits for Christ in soberness (1 Th. 5:1-8). Drunkenness a feature of pagan worship, should certainly not occur in Christian worship (1 Cor. 11:20-22). (TLSB)

The Apostle does not warn against the enjoyment of wine in general but against excessive enjoyment of wine and strong drinks, against drunkenness, intoxication. (Stoekhardt)

Verse 18 is explanatory of verse 17, and at the same time particularizes the verse. Both verse begin with a prohibition, followed by a "but" and an imperative. The verse is evidently an allusion to Proverbs 23:31.(Buls)

This verse is not warning against the use of intoxicating beverages, but against the abuse of the same. It is a warning against the loss of sanity and sobriety. To lose one's sense of good judgment is great foolishness. One cannot grasp opportunities, one cannot determine what the will of the Lord is, when intoxicated. (Buls)

Very likely the sense is "Do not allow yourself to become drunk on wine." Drunkenness is a tool of the Old Adam in every generation. It was prevalent in Paul's day. It is prevalent today. It is a sin, not a disease. The word "wine" here includes all other alcoholic beverages, drugs, etc. (Buls)

that is debauchery – KJV translates *asōtia* as “excess”; NKJV has “dissipation.” Compare the much stronger and more descriptive “debauchery” of NIV and RSV. Phillips translates: “Don’t get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls.” NEB: “Do not give way to drunkenness and the dissipation that goes with it, but let the Holy Spirit fill you.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Reckless behavior, unrestrained by good sense. (TLSB)

"Debauchery" literally means "unsavingness." The translations are interesting: "excess, debauchery, dissipation, wild living." (Buls)

Drunkenness leads to a wretched, careless existence. Intoxication leads to a loose licentious, dissolute existence and life, that ruins and shatters powers of body and soul, that makes man incapable of thinking, desiring doing something good and honest. (Stoeckhardt)

Barnes (p. 104) says that “do not get drunk on wine” refers to “a vice to which those around them were much addicted . . . It is not improbable that in this verse there is an allusion to the orgies of Bacchus . . . He was ‘the god of wine’ and during these festivals men and women regarded it as an acceptable act of worship to become intoxicated, and with wild songs and cries to run through the streets, and fields, and vineyards. To these things the apostle opposes psalms and hymns and spiritual songs as much more appropriate modes of devotion, and would have the Christian worship stand out in strong contrast to the wild and dissolute habits of the heathen.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Proverbs 28:7 “He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”

Luke 15:13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.”

Galatians 5:21 “and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

be filled with the Spirit. The Greek present tense is used to indicate that the filling of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience. Repeatedly, as the occasion requires, the Spirit empowers for worship, service and testimony. The contrast between being filled with wine and filled with the Spirit is obvious. But there is something in common that enables Paul to make the contrast, namely, that one can be under an influence that affects him, whether of wine or of the Spirit. Since Col 3:15–4:1 is very similar to Eph 5:18–6:9, we may assume that Paul intends to convey a basically similar thought in the introductory sentences to each passage. When he speaks here of being filled with the Spirit and when he speaks in Colossians of being under the rule of the peace of Christ and indwelt by the “word” of Christ, he means to be under God’s control. The effect of this control is essentially the same in both passages: a happy, mutual encouragement to praise God and a healthy, mutual relationship with people. (CSB)

As the Spirit is poured out on us, we are under His influence, as if “drunk” on the Spirit (Acts 2:4, 13-15). The result is threefold: heartfelt worship, thanksgiving, and mutual submission (Eph. 5:19-21). (TLSB)

"Be filled" might mean "be controlled." Phillips translates: "Let the Spirit stimulate your souls." (Buls)

The three participles in verses 19-20 are explanatory to this imperative. The parallel passage Colossians 3:16 is very helpful: "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. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Buls)

People are filled with the Holy Spirit when they hear the Word of God and keep it. (Buls).

The Formula of Concord (Tappert 623.42): In the same way many receive the Word with joy, but after that they fall away again, Luke 8:13. But the reason for this is not that God does not want to impart the grace of perseverance to those in whom he has begun the good work. This would contradict St. Paul in Philippians 1:6. The reason is that they willfully turn away from the holy commandment, grieve and embitter the Holy Spirit, become entangled again in the filth of the world, and decorate their hearts as a tabernacle for the devil so that their last state will be worse than the first, 2 Peter 2:10; Luke 11:24-25; Hebrews 10:26; Ephesians 5:3-11,18. (Buls)

Scripture sometimes speaks of Christians who had already received the Holy Spirit (at Pentecost or in Baptism) being “filled” with the Spirit (Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:31; 11:24; 13:9,52; etc.). This does not denote a “second baptism” or a “baptism in the Spirit” separate from Holy Baptism. Instead, it refers to the Spirit, who is already in the hearts of all baptized believers, equipping individuals for special acts of service. The *Concordia Self-Study Bible* notes on *plērousthe*, “The Greek present tense is used to indicate that the filling of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience. Repeatedly, as the occasion requires, the Spirit empowers for worship, service and testimony. The contrast between being filled with wine and filled with the Spirit is obvious. But there is something in common that enables Paul to make the contrast, namely, that one can be under an influence that affects him, whether of wine, or of the Spirit.” The preacher may make use of the similar-sounding words “spirits” and “Spirit.” If this is attempted, take special care that what results is more than merely a smile-producing digression. *The Life Application Bible* (Tyndale, 1988) notes: “What matters is not how much of the Holy Spirit we have, but how much of us the Holy Spirit has. We need to submit daily to his leading and draw on his power.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

playroom – To make full to the very top and even cram it in. This is a continuing experience. Verse 19 gives ideas on how this can be done.

John 15:11 “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

Ephesians 3:19 “and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

5:19 psalms ... songs. Every kind of appropriate song—whether psalms like those of the OT, or hymns directed to God or to others that Christians were accustomed to singing—could provide a means for praising and thanking God (v. 20). Actually, however, all three terms may refer to different types of psalms. – These songs belong to the mutual association of Christians with one another. By singing and praying together Christians encourage, inspire and edify one another. Spiritual songs are another form of using and applying the Word of God. (CSB)

λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ἄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ—The participle λαλοῦντες is dependent on the imperative πληροῦσθε in the previous verse: “*be filled with/by the Spirit ... in such a way that you speak to one another ...*” It is the Holy Spirit who gives rise to right worship. In line with Paul’s preference in this chapter for groups of three,⁴⁵ he contrasts the false worship of pagans (5:3–5) with a threefold description of the right use of words in the Christian liturgy. This patterning suggests there might be no clear distinction between the three nouns for Christian song, though the question is intriguing for students of early Christian worship. (CC)

The first of the three nouns is ψαλμός, which can mean “song of praise” and therefore might be just another word for a Christian hymn. But with few exceptions, in the Greek OT ψαλμός refers to the hymnal of the OT, the book of Psalms.⁴⁶ Since the NT follows this usage in the clearest examples,⁴⁷ it is likely that references to ψαλμοί in p 587 Christian worship refer to “psalms” (1 Cor 14:26 [where it occurs in the singular]; Col 3:16). The earliest patristic literature demonstrates that Christians sang the Psalms in their Divine Service. It is not clear, however, that the cognate verb ψάλλω (“psalming,” 5:19b) always refers specifically to psalm singing. Originally it referred to the “plucking” of the strings of an accompanying instrument (e.g., harp), but came to refer more broadly to music making, with or without instruments.⁵⁰ There are therefore three possibilities for the meaning of the two participles ἄδοντες and ψάλλοντες in the present verse: (1) they refer respectively to “singing” and “playing instrumental music (or accompanied singing)”; (2) they refer respectively to “singing [Christian] hymns” and “singing the OT psalms”; and (3) they are near synonyms with little distinction, “singing and making melody.” (CC)

The second noun, ὕμνος, *hymnos*, is a religious song, from which the English word “hymn” is derived. The present verse and its parallel (Col 3:16) contain its only NT occurrences, though it is frequent in the LXX, where it often refers to the psalms of David. The third noun, ᾠδή, is a near synonym with less explicitly religious p 588 associations, though it frequently appears coupled

with ὕμνος in the LXX.⁵³ The combination of the three nouns in LXX Ps 66:1 (ἐν ὕμνοις· ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς; MT 67:1; ET superscription)⁵⁴ further suggests that no significant distinction should be made. In fact, it may be historically accurate to view “psalms and hymns and songs” as a category referring first and foremost to the canonical psalms as the hymnal of the early church; second, to other biblical canticles; and third, to newly written Christian hymns, of which there is some evidence in Ephesians itself (5:14). Thus, Paul himself models the use of psalms (4:8) and hymns to edify the church in this very letter. (CC)

The adjective πνευματικῶς, “spiritual,” is not restrictive, implying that some Christian songs are “spiritual,” while others (such as the aforementioned biblical psalms) are not. Neither does “spiritual” imply unintelligible “speaking in tongues,” since they are addressed ἑαυτοῖς, “to one another,” which implies the corporate edification that this letter has so often stressed. Nor is there any reason to believe it means only songs that are uttered ecstatically or spontaneously. Inasmuch as the previous verse has spoken of the Holy Spirit as the one who fills all Christians (5:18) and thus enables them to sing, the adjective should best be understood as modifying all three nouns (ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς) and indicating that they are all songs inspired by the Holy Spirit: “psalms and hymns and songs that are [all] of the Spirit.” (CC)

This, then, informs the meaning of the phrase τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, “in/with your heart,” which refers not to internal, silent worship, but to the heart as the instrument of true worship inasmuch as the heart of the baptized is the dwelling place of the Spirit p 589 (1:18; 3:16–17). The Spirit’s role, furthermore, is always to direct the heart towards “the Lord” (τῷ κυρίῳ)—which, in view of the use of κύριος in the next verse (5:20), probably refers to Christ, the usual referent of κύριος in the NT. (CC)

Foul talk (v. 4) is replaced by wholesome words of worship. There is no clear distinction between these terms. OT psalms are certainly in view. “Hymns” and “songs” likely include OT canticles (Rev. 15:3) and Christian compositions (cf. Eph. 5:14b; Rev. 5:9-10). Spiritual probably applies to all three compositions. Addressed to “one another” as well as “to the Lord,” the songs include both teaching and adoration (Col. 3:16). (TL5B)

Probably meant here are Old Testament Psalms, worship hymns as we know them today, and popular Christian songs. Note that the third is qualified by the adjective "spiritual" which makes it clear that they were not secular songs. (Buls)

"In your heart" is used in the same sense as when we say of a person "It's not just a matter of the head, but also of the heart." It's not merely intellectual but of true faith and conviction. (Buls)

Such singing is done to the glory of the Lord and for His Kingdom. This kind of conversing and singing is done in church, in the home, at Christian gatherings. One can imagine a family, or a husband and wife, doing the things mentioned in verses 18-19. The Lord blesses such activities. There should be more of them. (Buls)

Although Paul does not specify where or how this activity is to occur, he does seem to imply that a public worship life with liturgical forms was being developed and used (1 Cor. 14:26. We should also note that Paul once more stresses the importance of the proper use of the tongue. At least three times in this letter Paul has touched directly on that subject (4:25, 29; 5:4), each time in the context of using speech to help build one another up to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (PBC)

The believers, being filled with the Spirit, are to minister to one another, speaking and singing to one another, with the Lord being the subject of this praise, which must have the heart, as well as voice, in it. Melody and music have their place when God's people gather. Lenski (p. 617): "Here is the way in which Paul wants us to go about doing the will of the Lord: with joyful, enthusiastic, grateful hearts. This is good sense, the right tone for wise Christians living in wicked days. Did not Luther also say that music drives the devil away?" Even tone-deaf monotones can make sweet "music" in their hearts to the Lord, and an occasional encouragement would seem to be in order for everyone to put their hearts into their hymns! In our public worship we are to interact with "one another." That can't be done by the absentee. Attendance at public worship is part of the Christian walk. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The Christian life is to be lived in such joy and thanksgiving that it needs the exalted forms of poetry and God's gift of music to express it fully. Praying the "psalms" gives us God's own Word to express our emotions and experience of walking in faith in this world. "Hymns" do this also but in addition express Christian hope, prayer, confession, and the like. "Spiritual songs" are *ōidais pneumatikais*, odes, any lyric poem, but spiritual and not secular. It should be noted that Christian or "church" music is never intended to *produce* a particular emotion but to proclaim Jesus Christ and faith in him. On the other hand, that a hymn or song can *trigger* an emotional response as a result is admitted and to be expected. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Deuteronomy 6:7 "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Psalm 145:11 "They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might"

5:20 *giving thanks always* – This means to have a thankful life-style. It is a good way to keep the heart in good tone. – The Christian will always find some cause for thanksgiving. Under the divine control even painful experiences, calamities etc. must bring us spiritual benefits such as driving us closer to God to seek his protection, making us search his Word more earnestly for comfort. (Lenski)

A description of public prayer. (TLSB)

On this verse compare Colossians 3:17. "Always" is an adverb of time meaning "all the time." "For everything" is an adverb phrase meaning "about everything" which excludes nothing. Look at Romans 8:28. (Buls)

If God makes all things work together for our good, and He does, than we ought thank Him for everything, even adversities and death. (Buls)

JB makes the participle "giving thanks" the result of verses 18-19. That is interesting. We are not necessarily recommending it but where there is constant study of Scripture and the singing of hymns and religious songs there will be thanksgiving. (Buls)

The simplest way to take the phrase "in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ," is "because He is my Savior and Mediator." God is our Father through Jesus Christ. (Buls)

Note that our text does not include verse 21. Grammatically it belongs to verses 18-20 because of the participle. Thus it is translated in NKJV. NEB made a separate paragraph of it, separate from verse 20 and separate from verse 22. But, so far as the thought is concerned, verse 21 goes with the following. This is the way it is translated in JB, RSV, AAT. TEV and NIV also make a separate paragraph of this verse, as does NEB. (Buls)

Paul urges that the Christian life be marked by "always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let's not forget that Paul himself acknowledged that "the days are evil." All kinds of things can discourage, irritate, and disappoint Christian, harried as they are by the devil and the world and hampered by their own sinful flesh. But filled with the Spirit, they know that "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Daily they can rise and confidently say, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). (PBC)

For what do Christians give thanks? Barnes (p. 107): "in heaven we shall see occasion to bless God for his dealings with us . . . We shall see that all our afflictions, as well as our mercies, were designed for our good, and were needful for us. Why then should we not bless God in the furnace as well as in the palace; on a bed of pain as well as on a bed of down; in want as well as when sitting down at the splendid banquet? God knows what is best for us; and the way in which he leads us, mysterious though it seem to be now, will yet be seen to have been full of goodness and mercy." *The Life Application Bible* notes: "When you feel down, you may find it difficult to give thanks. Take heart . . . Thank God, not for your problems, but for the strength he is building in you through the difficult experiences of your life. You can be sure that God's perfect love will see you through." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

All these activities are to be done in the name of our Lord ("King of Kings and Lord of Lords") Jesus ("He will save his people from their sins") Christ (our God-appointed and promised Messiah, the "anointed One," Immanuel)! In his name, which proclaims his matchless love for us, lies our motivation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Colossians 3:15, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

5:21 submitting – Taking one's proper role in God's order and laying aside one's selfish interests (Gal. 5:13). Described in detail in Eph. 5:22-6:9. Based on the Greek, verse 21 likely introduces the next section. (TLSB)

Reverence for Christ must be our motivating force. Otherwise we will find the responsibilities irksome and restrictive. (PBC)

The reading calls for taking verse 21 with what follows, not with what precedes. KJV, NKJV and NASB take it with the preceding. AAT, RSV and JB take it with the following. TEV, NIV and NEB make verse 21 a separate paragraph. Grammatically verse 21 goes with what precedes. (Buls)

"Submit" is the fifth of the participles. But, so far as the thought is concerned, verse 21 goes with what follows. Verse 22 gets its verbal thought from verse 21. (Buls)

Note carefully that the idea of subjection is limited to verses 21-24. Children are to obey their parents, compare 6:1. The same verb is used of the "slave" in 6:5. The verb "submit" is limited to the mutual relation in verse 21 and the attitude of wives to husbands in verse 22. Two of our versions indicate that the verbs in 21 and 22 have a light difference in meaning. AAT reads: "As you respect Christ, SUBMIT to one another. You married women, OBEY your husbands as you obey the Lord." JB has this: "GIVE WAY to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should REGARD their husbands as they regard the Lord." (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Christian's conduct toward God, which is expressed in song, praise, and thanksgiving, is placed beside their behavior toward one another, although the latter is here not described as mutual love, but as proper mutual submission. Christians are to submit themselves one to another, each is to consider the welfare of the other as his own welfare, each is to respect and give honor to the other, moved to do this by humble reverence for Christ, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others. See Romans 12:10; Galatians 5:13. (Buls)

Lenski: No rivalry, no self-exaltation, no divisive pride is to interfere . . . Each is to subject himself, voluntarily, freely.(Buls)

The phrase "out of reverence to Christ" is a rare one. It denotes manner, how they deal with each other mutually. "Christ" is both subjective and objective genitive. Christ is both author and object of this Christian reverence. Christ is simply everything to the believer, not only in justification but also in sanctification. (Buls)

Verse 21 contains no main verb; the last such verb is in v 18, "be filled with the Spirit." The participles which follow in vv 19–21 describe the result of the Spirit's work. A literal translation would then be: "Be filled with the Spirit . . . [v 19] speaking to one another . . . [v 20] giving thanks always . . . [v 21] submitting to one another in fear of Christ" It is the Spirit who empowers Christians to live in this manner. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Reinecker (*A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980] p. 192) says the participle *upotassomenoi*, "submitting," means "to line oneself up under . . . the word has primarily the idea of giving up one's own right or will, i.e. 'to subordinate one's self.'" (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The word and concept of "submitting" are central to this entire text. This word or concept is used in verses 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 31. – Paul uses five Greek commands in 5:15-18 and end with "but be filled with the Spirit." The five Greek participles in 19-21 describe how the Spirit-filled life lives out those five previous imperatives. Being Spirit filled is the only way this can be done. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 3)

Luke 14:10 "But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests."

Luke 22:26 "But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves."

Romans 12:3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

1 Corinthians 16:16 “to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it.”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

1 Peter 5:5 “Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

out of reverence – phobos -To be alarmed or even terrified. With God living in us there is nothing we have to fear. Even when we forget, we are forgiven and reminded of God’s love and his living in us in Baptism. Then our fear turns to reverence. The phrase “out of reverence for Christ” must be our motivating force. Otherwise we will find the responsibilities irksome and restrictive. This is inspiring because Christ came “not to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28) God knows how much help we need and so he doesn’t give us anything to do without the proper gifts and inducement. – Reverence for Christ is the essential foundation for all other relationship in which the Christian lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 3)

5:1–21 Like the Ephesians, we are confronted every day by a world rebelling against God’s way. In our struggle against its temptations, we can rely on Christ’s Word and Spirit to lead us. • Lord, strengthen me to speak and act as You desire. Replace all foul talk from my mouth with praise for You and encouragement for my brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

Wives and Husbands

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

5:21–6:9 In chs. 2–4 Paul showed the way God brought believing Jews and Gentiles together into a new relationship in Christ. In 4:1–6 he stressed the importance of unity. Now he shows how believers, filled with the Spirit, can live together in a practical way in various human

relationships. This list of mutual responsibilities is similar to the pattern found in Col 3:18–4:1; 1Pe 2:13–3:12; cf. Ro 13:1–10. (CSB)

5:21-33 St. Paul has been expounding the sanctified Christian life. He is now ready to apply these principles specifically to the relationships between spouses, between children and parents, and between slaves and masters. He puts all these under the umbrella of v 21. Our text focuses the divine spotlight on marriage and the blessed relationship that husbands and wives should and do have in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The apostle declares to the Ephesians in 2:14–16 that through the cross Christ has reconciled both circumcised and uncircumcised in his crucified body. In doing so, he has destroyed the enmity and the barrier between them in the sacrificial offering of his flesh. He admonishes them to live out this new unity in humility, meekness, patient endurance, and love. He summarizes his exhortation with three imperatives: to walk as wise, to understand the will of the Lord, and to be filled with the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

With that backdrop, our passage gives specific instructions for a Christian marriage. They are not culturally based, but have their foundation in the relationship between Christ and his Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

After this description of a godly marriage, which begins a section on relationships in the home, the final exhortation of Paul's letter gives directives for putting on the full armor of God. The family needs the spiritual weapons and the power of God (6:10–18) to resist the attacks of the evil one directed at the most foundational of human relationships. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:22 – 6:9 Paul modifies a traditional “household-code.” For the Christian, the Gospel does not overturn the order of life, but gives it new meaning. Each relationship is reinterpreted “in the Lord.” Wives, children, and servants look on their husbands, parents, and masters as representatives of the Lord and submit to them. Husbands, parents, and masters likewise view the one entrusted to them as Christ viewed the Church: with self-sacrificing love. (TLSB)

From verses 22 to 6:9 we have what is known as *The Table of Duties*. The duty or obligation of wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves and masters, is spelled out. Look at Colossians 3:18-24 and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7. (Buls)

5:22 *Wives, submit.* † An aspect of the mutual submission taught in v. 21. To submit meant to yield one's own rights. It is a relationship that grows out of Christian faith and encourages mutual love. (CSB)

Submission is not mutual, but appropriate to each relationship. Within the marriage relationship, the wife “summits,” taking the place God has given her (1 Peter 3:1-6). (TLSB)

Papyrus 46 and Codex Vaticanus have no verb for this verse. Many manuscripts have "submit" in the third person plural. The Majority text has "submit" in second plural imperative. The first variant reading makes "husbands" third plural. The second makes it vocative case. All our versions, except JB, make it vocative case. "Your" clearly indicates that the husbands belong to them. (Buls)

Lenski: A special self-subjection is referred to, something entirely different from that mentioned in verse 21 . . . Galatians 3:28 lies on the plane of verse 21, not at all on that of verse 22. . . Paul is not subjecting all women to all men, but all wives to their own husbands. This is not a text on the inferiority of women to men; it is a text on the Christian marriage relation. (Buls)

This rule holds even if the wife is more intelligent and more gifted than her husband. See Genesis 3:16. (Buls)

To be obedient for the sake of good order.

In English it is hard to reflect the more neutral tone of the Greek verb we translate as “submit.” All of our English verbs tend to convey some negative connotations like “Me, Tarzan; you, Jane.” The root meaning of the Greek verbs means simply “to rank people or things in order under some specific pattern.” (To be obedient for the sake of good order.) It does not imply inferiority or lesser value, as our English verbs too easily suggest. To “be subordinate” might come closest to reflecting the Greek. (PBC)

Christ-like leadership leaves absolutely no room for a husband to be a dictator or tyrant. As he looks to Christ’s example of headship over the Church, he will find no basis to be selfish or domineering. Nor will he be unconcerned about his wife’s needs or unappreciative of what she brings to the marriage team.

All human comparisons limp, but a situation from the sports world can perhaps bring us a step closer to grasping the meaning of “submit.” Take the case of a pitcher and catcher on a baseball team. It’s a matter of assigned roles, a designated order of things. That’s the essence of team play. Consider some of the following concepts:

- Both are on the same team and have the same objective.
- Both want to make their contribution to winning the game.
- The catcher calls the pitch. The pitcher “submits” to that decision. That doesn’t mean he can’t ever “shake off” a pitch or that there might not be an occasional conference at the mound, but in general, the catcher calls the pitches.
- The catcher has to know the pitcher well and calls pitches according to the strength of the pitcher so the pitcher can succeed.
- The catcher is not better than pitcher – Pitcher is given the number 1 when it comes to scoring and nothing happens until he/she throws the ball.
- The catcher sacrifices his/her body and calls for a curve or knuckle ball if it means that that pitch will get the batter out.
- The catcher sacrifices his/her own needs by calling for something other than a fastball when a runner may be attempting to steal a base because anything less than a fastball will make it harder for the catcher to throw out the runner.
- The catcher often takes the blame for a stolen base even the pitcher may not have done his part to keep the runner close to the base.
- The catcher knows the batter and gives a target for optimum effect.
- The catcher directs where to throw the ball on a bunt situation because he/she has the best view of the whole field.
- The catcher needs to go out and encourage the pitcher when things are not going well.
- The pitcher needs to throw the pitch called for by the catcher or risk injury to the catcher.

- The pitcher position is the most glamorous and the catcher is not glamorous at all, but both are necessary for success. (tools of ignorance)

By nature all of us are inclined to inject our notions of equality and our ideas of “fairness” and conclude God is imposing an unfair arrangement on women. But Paul is not talking to natural man or unregenerate people here. He is confident that his readers are filled with the Spirit and are people who understand when he urges them to submit “out of reverence for Christ.” (PBC)

The original of this verse has no verb. The words translate, “Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord.” The English translation takes its verb from v 21, where all believers are called to submit to one another. This connection strongly suggests that v 21 is specifically instructing both husbands and wives to submit to one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The verb in v 21 is a participle and is parallel to four others in vv 19–20: speaking, singing, making music, and giving thanks. These are construed with the imperative “Be filled with the Spirit.” The logic is, then, “Be filled with the Spirit . . . submitting yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ, wives to your husbands as to the Lord.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

As redeemed believers are filled with the Spirit through the hearing of the Gospel, they will be empowered and will demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives by submitting to one another in reverence for Christ. Specifically, husbands and wives will submit to each other, but they will show their submission in different ways. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The apostle begins with the submission of the wife. Clinton Arnold makes the following three points about *hupotassō*, the word translated “submit” in v 21:

1. The verb was commonly used for ordered relationships in a social structure.
2. It is to be distinguished from “obey” (*hupokouō*).
3. The middle voice suggests that Paul is appealing to the women to make a voluntary choice (Clinton E. Arnold, gen. ed., *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 380). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

“Paul instructs the women to consider how they respond to the leadership that the risen Christ provides to the Church. The way they respond to Christ should then inform the way they respond to their husbands” (ibid). The wife willingly acknowledges the responsibility God has given her husband to lead and to nurture and care for her. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

as to the Lord. Does not put a woman’s husband in the place of the Lord, but shows rather that a woman ought to submit to her husband as an act of submission to the Lord. (CSB)

She is to view her husband as an image and representative of Christ. (TLSB)

Now comes the specific application to spouse relationships. Note the critical importance of studying the two prescribed sets of responsibilities for husbands and wives as one unit. Taken as a whole, the passage precludes both rabid feminism and male chauvinism. It may be helpful to note at the outset that the holy writer uses twice as many words to talk about the husband’s responsibilities as he does about the wife’s. Paul assigns to the husband a role that is harder and that involves far greater self-sacrifice! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Luther comments in his characteristically blunt manner: “A woman should either be subject to her husband or should not marry. If she does not want a master, then let her keep from taking a man; for this is the order God has ordained through his apostles and Scripture” (Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959] p. 906). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

5:23 *head of the wife*. Headship is not tyranny, but pictures one’s leader and source (1 Cor. 11:3-12). If we think of the husband as the head of a marriage and the wife as the heart of a marriage (Paul uses “body”), we see that one is not more important than the other – neither can survive alone. Paul demonstrates their vital yet distinct roles. (TLSB)

This verse gives the reason for verse 22. "Head" speaks of authority and direction. The relationship between husband and wife and Christ and the Church are not alike in all respects. Only Christ is the Savior of the body, that is, the Church. The husband is not the savior of the wife. But the similarity is applicable with reference to the idea of "head." (Buls)

Lenski: Paul brings forward his great comparison which lifts Christian marriage to a plane so high that we are astounded. It is like the marriage of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7, his Bride the Church, the Lamb's wife, Revelation 21:9; 22:17 . . . The married couple is a unity. It can have but one head . . . Two heads would produce a monstrosity. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The fact that He is the Savior does not remove the obligation of the congregation to obey Him, and in accordance with this the wives are to be obedient to their husbands. . . Of course, it is self-evident that the lordship of the husband and the subjection of the wife are confined to the natural realm, to which married life belongs. Galatians 3:28. (Buls)

Kretzmann: In the case of Christ it is a matter both of superiority and of headship, for He is both God and the Savior of the body In the case of the husband not all points of comparison can be stressed. It may not be a question of superiority, but it is always very distinctly a question of headship. It is God's will that the husband be the head of the wife; the provision made at the time of creation is thus confirmed for the time of the New Testament. (Buls)

This attitude describes submission for the woman because “the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church, his body.” Some argue that “head” means “source” rather than “leader.” It cannot mean “source” in this context because Paul is speaking of “head” in relationship to “body.” The head is never the source of the body. Rather, the head gives direction to the body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Head in Greek means “origin of.” What Paul is drawing on is the statement in Genesis 2 that woman was taken out of man. The sequence is God-man-woman. This in no way implies inferiority. It is a flow of oneness from God and is for our welfare in life. This is servility or male domination.

as Christ. The analogy between the relationship of Christ to the church and that of the husband to the wife is basic to the entire passage. (CSB)

The church’s submitting to Christ is not a demeaning thing but something that brings great blessing. Such is the case also in a marriage where the wife accepts the headship of her husband. (PBC)

Christ is described as the head over every authority in Col 2:10, and as the head of the church, his body, also in Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18. 1 Cor 11:3 describes God as the head of Christ, Christ as the head of the man, and man as the head of the woman. The Biblical metaphor of the head can be used as a clear and powerful sermon illustration: the head directs the body, having authority to lead and guide it, but also having the responsibility to care for the health, safety, and well-being of the whole body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

his body. See 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16. (CSB)

Savior. Christ earned, so to speak, the right to his special relationship to the church. (CSB)

5:24 now – "Now" means that though the husband is not his wife's savior, nevertheless with regard to headship the two relationships are exactly alike. (Buls)

as the church submits to Christ – The Church's primary relationship to Christ is define not as Law (Obedience), but as Gospel (receiving). As the Church does not try to save herself, but graciously receives salvation from Christ, so the wife cherishes her husband's self-sacrifice for her. Bed, the Venerable: "O truly blessed Mother Church! So illuminated by the honor of Divines condescension... Endeavour now beloved, each for yourselves, in each kind of honor, to obtain your own dignity – crowns, snow-white for chastity, or purple for passion (martyrdom)" (FSEP, p. 2). (TLSB)

Lenski: In all earthly matters the husband functions as the head. In this connection read Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, which are to the same effect. (Buls)

To summarize: In all earthly matters in marriage Ephesians 5:24 pertains but in all spiritual matters Galatians 3:28 pertains. The husband and wife who clearly understand this distinction will have a blessed, happy relationship which ends only at death. (Buls)

To make the instruction complete, Paul repeats the comparison between the Church submitting to Christ and wives to their husbands and ends with the phrase "in everything." In every area of the marriage, the wife is not to usurp the responsibility God has placed on the husband. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The Life Application Bible (Tyndale, 1988, p. 1816) notes appropriately, "Although some people have distorted Paul's teaching . . . by giving unlimited authority, to husbands, we cannot get around it—Paul told wives to submit to their husbands. The fact that a teaching is not popular is no reason to discard it . . . man is the spiritual head of the family and his wife goes along with his leadership. But real spiritual leadership is service. Just as Christ served the disciples, even to the point of washing their feet, so the husband is to serve his wife. A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his role, and a wise and Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband's leadership. Either approach causes disunity and friction in marriage." Note that the same verb used earlier for the wife submitting is used here of the church submitting to Christ. Note also the emphatic verse ending *en panti*, "in everything." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

in everything – pas – This word has the meaning that there is absolutely nothing that is excluded. (QV)

5:25-27 Husbands demonstrate mutual submission differently. Where the wives were directed with a participle, the Scriptures instruct husbands with an imperative. "Husbands, love your wives." They are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, even to the point of laying down their lives (v 25), and they are to love their wives as their own bodies, nurturing and caring for them just as Christ cares for the Church (v 28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The Word commands the husband to emulate Christ's sacrificial love. Besides actually laying down his life, he is called to put the needs of his wife before his own, even putting her need for emotional connection with him before his desire for physical gratification. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:25 Husbands. Paul now shows that this is not a one-sided submission, but a reciprocal relationship. (CSB)

"Husbands" is unmistakably vocative case. The present imperfect calls for a constant action and attitude. (Buls)

love. Explained by what follows. (CSB)

In contrast to the culture of the time, the husband is told not to rule his wife but to love her (cf. 3:19). (TLSB)

Husbands, whose most natural sin is domineering, are admonished to love their wives and to do so in every way. For love that is active is what the apostle wishes to have understood, as the entire context and above all the reference to Christ's conduct towards His Church indicate. (Stoeckhardt)

Note that the word for "love" is *agape*, not *fileo*. Ideally a husband should both love and like his wife. But, if need be, he can love her without liking her. And there will be such times. (Buls)

Lenski: The love now described is one that makes it a delight for the wife to subject herself to such a loving husband. . . No wife can cultivate the self-subjection intended by the Lord without this intelligent and purposeful love.(Buls)

The point is well taken. Christ's love for the Church causes the self-subjection of the Church to Christ. Likewise, the husband's love for his wife causes her to subject herself to him.(Buls)

Christ loved the church – Paul's word to the husband is far longer than to the wife, for it is an opportunity to rejoice in the Gospel. Christ's marriage to the Church is a major Gospel image in the NT (Mt. 9:15; 25:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:9). If the husband's love for his wife is Christ-like, he is willing to give up his very life for her (Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 John 3:16). (TLSB)

"Just as" means "precisely as." A marvelous comparison. How did Christ love the Church? By giving Himself in her stead. (Buls)

By the way, this verse is not maintaining a limited atonement. The thought of the Church as Christ's Bride necessitates the language of this verse. (Buls)

gave himself up for her. Not only the expression of our Lord's love, but also an example of how the husband ought to devote himself to his wife's good. To give oneself up to death for the beloved is a more extreme expression of devotion than the wife is called on to make. (CSB)

There are two incredible examples of love in the passages below: The Exodus test is about Moses love for Israel even if they are being very trying at the time. The Romans verse has to do with Paul's love for his fellow Jews.

Exodus 32:30-32: ³⁰The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ³¹So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³²But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

Romans 9:2-3 ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

Once again, the apostle is talking about *agapē* love for husbands to give their wives, as Christ did and does for his redeemed. Note also the present tense of the verb, denoting continual, habitual action. Phillips paraphrases, "But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave the church, when he sacrificed himself for her." Luther, exhorting and encouraging the use of sermon illustrations, cites this verse (Plass, p. 1129). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

There is much to be learned from the relationship between Jesus and his Church. First he had an "agape" love which expects nothing in return for any favor shown. The word "gave" (hehowtoo) suggests that Jesus gave himself up to God's will and emptied himself of all self-pride. In the same sense more is asked of the husband than of his wife.

5:26 *washing with water through the word.* † The Lord Jesus died not only to bring forgiveness, but also to effect a new life of holiness in the church, which is his "bride." Paul is speaking of the sanctification of believers, begun in the sacrament of baptism and to be perfected on the last day (see Tit 3:5; 1Pe 3:21 and notes). A study of the concepts of washing, of water and of the word should include reference to Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5; 1Pe 3:21. (CSB)

Baptism, by which Christ sanctified (made holy) His bride, the Church (John 3:3-6; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Peter 3:21). "The Church... should be cleansed in order to be holy. He adds the outward marks, the Word and Sacraments" (Ap VII and VIII 7). Augustine: "When the Word is joined to the element or natural substance, it becomes a Sacrament" (SA III V 1). The "word" is Christ's mandate, including the name of the Holy Trinity (Mt. 28:19). (TLSB)

In verses 26 and 27 we have three "so that" clauses. These two verses apply only to what Christ has done and is still doing for His Church. These verses show how deeply Christ has and still does love the Church. We have marvelous Gospel in the midst of the *Table of Duties*. (Buls)

"To make holy" means "to set aside for a specific purpose." Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann think that this refers to the sanctification of the Church. Lenski thinks it refers to the justification of the Church. Either is possible. The former think that the verse should read "after He cleansed her," but Lenski thinks it denotes simultaneous action "by cleansing, etc." (Buls)

Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann: The water of Baptism cleanses from the corruption of inherited sin, it has the power to regenerate, to renew heart and mind, the nature of man, see Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5.(Buls)

Lenski: By means of the "justitia imputata" cleansing us from all sin and guilt in justification. (Buls)

In any case, we take this to mean a "water washing." In fact, it is a "water with Word washing." (Buls)

Smalcald Articles (Tappert 310.1): Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water, commanded by the institution of Christ; or as Paul says, 'the washing of water with the word' Ephesians 5:26; or, again, as Augustine puts it 'the Word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament.' (Buls)

In v 26, Paul recounts the wonders of Christ's love for the Church. Christ gave himself to sanctify us and to cleanse us. "Both take place in Baptism, the only bath of which we know in which water and the spoken Word are combined" (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* [Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1946], 632). Christ is preparing the Church "in order that he might present to himself the Church in all its splendor" ("ἐνδοξος," Johannes P. Louw, Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1988], 696). His Bride will be perfect "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" and "holy and without blemish." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The word translated "wrinkle" literally means "lines or creases in the skin" ("ῥυτίς," *ibid*, 101). The Greek word for "without blemish" usually refers to believers as blameless or without fault, and twice refers to Christ, who offered himself to God unblemished (Heb 9:14) and as a lamb without blemish (1 Pet 1:19). "Christ's bride will be extraordinarily beautiful, with no wrinkles of age or blemishes of any kind" (Arnold, 390). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

That comparison with the Church should cause every Christian husband to reflect. Neither the memories of faults experienced nor the effects of aging should diminish the husband's love for his wife. Never will he hold the past against her or compare her to others. He should always see her in Christ as the beautiful, pure bride he married. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

While many commentators fail to recognize the allusion to Holy Baptism in this verse, the reference is obvious. The text includes the word "water" to emphasize the point it is not just a figurative or symbolic washing, but a real, physical" washing *with water*." As in John 3:5, "water" comes before "the word" as if to prevent the reader from missing the allusion to Baptism. Unfortunately, the NIV translates *en rēmati* as if it is only a figurative washing "through the word," not through the water *with* the Word. A more accurate translation would be "the washing of water with the Word." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The object of Christ was to clean her with water and Word as the purifying agents. The difference between selfish and unselfish love is seen here: a selfish lover cares for his wife in his own interest – like Samson, desires to have her simply because she pleases him, and in contrast thinks not of her good, but of his own enjoyment. The love of an unselfish lover has him seeking her good, to do nothing that will hurt her and damage her in any manner, but to do everything that believes will advance her well-being, especially in the highest sense. (PC)

5:27 *splendor...without or wrinkle* – Without stain from the outside or wrinkle developed on the inside. (PBC)

"The Church is His bride which He will present to Himself." (Buls)

He will present the Church to Himself glorious. The word is explained by the words which follow it. "Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" is figurative, explained by the words which follow. These following words "holy and blameless" are literal. Here look at Ephesians 1:4. When a bride presents herself to her husband she is to be immaculate, spotless, clean. And on the last day when the flesh of all Christians will forever have been put away, the Church as one person will be presented to Jesus as His bride. Look at 1 John 3:2. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The sanctification of this present time will reach its climax in the final glorification. (Buls)

holy and without blemish. The white robe of Baptism is pictured as a wedding gown. Notably, the Bridegroom Himself prepares the Bride (Ezk. 16:8-14; Rev. 21:2, 9-11). (TLSB)

Christ has chosen it from the beginning of the world, has bought it with His blood, has sanctified it with his Spirit. So he himself will then present the church, this his chosen and beloved, in all its beauty and splendor. He will set it at his side as his bride, in order then to bring it home to his heavenly habitation to give it the joys of his kingdom, to enter with it into the closest and most blessed communion. (Stoeckhardt)

This verse portrays the blessed results of Christ's selfless sacrifice of love, whose benefits are conveyed in Baptism. The implication is that when the husband (and wife) exercise their roles guided by Christ's love, the wife (and husband) will be preserved in this glorious and holy state. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Christ's love will compel him daily to strive for the ideal illustrated by our Savior's love for the church. (PBC)

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 the word "compel is described by Greek word "sunechao." This has the concept of compressing something and doing so by an irresistible outside force. (QV)

As Christ's love cleanses and perfects the church, so the love of a husband is busy enhancing, beautifying, and caring for his wife. (LL)

5:28-30 The apostle repeats the command and adds the imperative "ought." Husbands are morally obligated as redeemed sinners to love their wives. Christ's nurturing and care for the Church provides the example. One could misunderstand Paul to be saying that a husband should care for

his wife just as he cares for his own physical needs. The point is rather that he and his wife are one body (v 31). Not to care for her would mean not caring for part of his body, and “no one ever hated his own flesh.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The words behind “feed” and “care” contain rich metaphors. In the Septuagint, the word *ektrephō*, “feed,” describes Joseph providing for his family in Egypt (Gen 45:7, 11) and God tending the vine that gave shade to Jonah (Jonah 4:10). The word *thalpō* originally meant to provide heat. It is used of a mother bird brooding over her nest in Deut 22:6 and of a nursing mother caring for her own children in 1 Thess 2:7. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:28–29 *as their own bodies . . . loves himself*. The basis for such expressions and for the teaching of these verses is the quotation from Ge 2:24 in v. 31. If the husband and wife become “one flesh,” then for the man to love his wife is to love one who has become part of himself. (CSB)

As Christians are one Body in Christ, so also husbands and wives are one flesh. (TLSB)

The wife is the husband’s body. The husband’s love for his wife is self-love. (Stoekhardt)

Christians are obligated to do God's will. Look at this same verb in Romans 13:8. We call it the *Table of Duties* not *Table of Privileges*. The relationship of a man to his wife is motivated by the renewed will, not mere feelings. He will love his wife whether he feels like it or not. It is his duty. First of all his great model is the love of Christ for the Church. Secondly, the rule is "as they love their own bodies." This implies that the body of the husband and that of the wife are really one. (Buls)

This is followed by a sentence in the singular number to individualize the idea. It is a startling sentence. A husband is not really taking good care of himself unless he is taking good care of his wife. A man who does not love his wife, who does not live for and sacrifice himself for his wife, is detrimental to himself. (Buls)

Only three verses, 22-24, are devoted to wives. But seven verses, 25-31, are devoted to husbands. Theirs is the greater burden. They must take the lead as Christ took the lead. (Buls)

Reinecker identifies *opheilousin* as to “owe someone a debt,” or have a “moral obligation.” The present tense denotes continuous action. Barnes (p. 111): “The doctrine here is, that a husband should have the same care for the comfort of his wife which he has for himself . . . as he protects his own body from cold and hunger, and, when sick and suffering, endeavors to restore it to health, so he should regard and treat her . . . If a man wishes to promote his own happiness in the most effective way, he had better begin by showing kindness to his wife.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Lenski (p. 638): “Remember how the Jews regarded marriage—any husband could dismiss his wife for the most trivial cause or for no cause at all, and she had no recourse. The pagan world . . . was worse. The church was composed of converts from both. Paul knows what he is doing when he especially expounds the obligation of the husband, as he does here. God knows, his exposition is still needed.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

nourishes and cherishes – By Christ's ministry (4:11-16) of Word (1 Tim. 4:6), and Supper (John 6:53-58). (TLSB)

Men constantly nourish and cherish their flesh, protecting it from hurt, seeking to heal it when hurt and generally to promote its welfare and comfort, so ought husbands to act towards their wives. (PC)

This is an explanation. It introduces an axiom. It is quite plain that Paul is comparing a man in his physical dealing with himself, and Christ Who deals with the Church in a spiritual way. The words stress the natural role, not the exception. The masochist would be an exception. There are people who enjoy harm to their own bodies. They are not natural. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: No normal person injures or gives pain to himself.(Buls)

A normal man takes good physical care of himself just as Christ takes care of the Church. It is implied that he should take just as good care of his wife. (Buls)

5:30 MEMBERS – TEV makes verses 29-30 parenthetical. No other English version does this. We, individually, are members of His body, the Church. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: We owe our spiritual life to Christ, that we have the spirit, mind and life of Christ. (Buls)

Bengel: The Church is propagated from Christ, as Eve was from Adam; and this propagation is the foundation of the spiritual marriage. (Buls)

Note that the words "of his flesh and of his bones," found in the Majority text, are not found in the Nestle Greek text. The following quotation from the *Formula of Concord (Tappert 607.78-79)* indicates that the Majority text was used at that time. (Buls)

Christ is present not only according to his deity, but also according to and with his assumed human nature, according to which he is our brother and we flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Ephesians 5:30. To make certainty and assurance doubly sure on this point, he instituted his Holy Supper that he might be present with us, dwell in us, work and be mighty in us according to that nature, too, according to which he has flesh and blood. (Buls)

5:31-32 Paul now demonstrates that we are members of Christ's Body by pointing back to the institution of marriage in creation. The mystery is not the one-flesh union of man and woman. Nor is the mystery an inscrutable thought. Rather, it was a mystery that has now been revealed in Christ. The mystery is that the union of a man and woman as one flesh in marriage actually reflects the relationship of Christ and the Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Genesis 2:24 describes the institution of marriage, which takes on added meaning when viewed in the light of Christ. This is the mystery, now revealed; from the beginning God designed marriage to be a Gospel picture of Christ and the Church. (TLSB)

5:31 hold fast - proskollayo – To glue or adhere in way that makes permanent. (QV)

There seems to be no connection between this verse and what precedes. The old *Concordia Bible with Notes* says: (Buls)

On account of the oneness which God has formed between a man and his wife, which represents the union between Christ and believers, and is somewhat like the union between the soul and body. (Buls)

Lenski: Paul does as Jesus did, Matthew 19:8;22:29, he goes back to the beginning, to Scriptures, to the institution of marriage itself.(Buls)

True. Married Christian couples should constantly remind themselves of the creation account. Husband and wife are one flesh. That is a mysterious statement. They are not one person. But they are a unit. They must treat each other as a unit. Units do not fight themselves.(Buls)

Cf. Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4–6. Reinecker says *proskollēthēsetai* means “to be glued to, to be joined to, hence here the complete separation of all former ties: a new relation.” *The Life Application Bible* notes, “The union of husband and wife merges two persons in such a way that little can affect one without affecting the other. Oneness in marriage does not mean losing your personality in the personality of the other. Instead it means caring for your spouse as you care for yourself, learning to anticipate the other person’s needs, helping the other person become all he or she can be.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

5:32 *mystery*. The profound truth of the union of Christ and his “bride,” the church, is beyond unaided human understanding. It is not that the relationship of husband and wife provides an illustration of the union of Christ and the church, but that the basic reality is the latter, with marriage a human echo of that relationship. (CSB)

According to the context this mystery can only refer to the marital relation. This lies exclusively in the sphere of creation and has nothing to do with the sphere of salvation, with the mysteries of the kingdom of God. But the apostle expressly adds that he say and mean this in reference to Christ and the Church. Marriage is a mystery of faith in as far as through it the relation of Christ to the Church and of the Church to Christ, therefore the great mystery about which he has dealt in his whole letter, 1:9ff; 3:4ff; 3:9ff., is typically sketched. (Stoekhardt)

5:33 *However each one love ... respect*. A rephrasing and summary of the whole passage. (CSB)

That love is one that loses itself in another, that sacrifices itself. It is a love that is willing to die for another. (LL)

Though the Gospel purpose of marriage is primary, Paul does not neglect the admonition with which he began (vv. 21-22, 25). “Everyone should live chaste in thought, word, and deed in his condition – that is, especially in the estate of marriage. But also everyone should love and value the spouse God gave to him” (LC I 219). (TLSB)

Although that ideal is not fully attainable in our sinful world, it is a goal all married people should diligently strive for. (PBC)

In this summary statement, Paul switches from plural commands to singular, personal imperatives directed to each individual. He also changes the verb for the wife’s responsibility from *hupotassō* to *phobeō*. This word is the cognate of the noun in v 21 translated “reverence.” Here it means “to

have a profound measure of respect for” (“φοβέω,” Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000], 1061). This change gives further support to the idea that one should include v 21 with the text. Having a profound measure of respect further interprets what it means to submit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

These redeemed attitudes of Christian couples demonstrate the undoing of the fall through the Gospel. In Gen 3:16, God pronounced this judgment to Eve: “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” The Hebrew of this verse is best understood as saying, “Your desire will be to rule over your husband, but you will find that he will rule over you.” At the core of each sinner is the desire to rule. But in the Gospel, redeemed sinners are empowered to serve one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Paul expresses this service as a mutual submission shown by the woman respecting her husband’s God-given responsibility to lead, even as she respects Christ and the husband obeying God’s command to love his wife. Considering how unnatural and countercultural this behavior is, no wonder the participle in v 21 connects to the main verb in v 18, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Only the power of the Gospel can enable such voluntary serving. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:22–33 If we say with Paul that the husband is the “head” in a marriage, then we may say the wife is the “heart.” Is one more important? No, both heart and head are necessary for life. We are inclined today to view our marriages selfishly: what can I get out of it? Instead, we should consider what we can offer to our spouse and see behind each action a picture of the Gospel itself.

- Father, may our marriages always be living pictures of Christ’s love and forgiveness. Amen.

TL5B)