Chapter 5 – The Life in the New Man

1. *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children*;

This is another command, and it is based on what has just come before (*therefore*). The Greek word for *followers* is *mimetes* (*mim-ay-tace'*), and simply means to imitate.[1] Elsewhere in Scripture we are told: "ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy" (Leviticus 11:45), and "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The understanding is that we are to mimic God, our Father. We often see this demonstrated in families where the children will try to be just like Mom or Dad – they try to walk like them, talk like them, and generally seek to be like them in all things. So we, as the children of God, are to seek to emulate God in our daily living: we are to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith [we] are called" (Ephesians 4:1). "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7), and therefore, as imitators of God, we are to live in holiness, clothed in the *new man* (Ephesians 4:24). There is no higher calling.

However, what we see far too often within Evangelical circles is the attitude that Jesus is our buddy; there is no longer an appropriate fear of the Lord, which is still the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). Too often, it seems, Jesus is Someone Whom we accept into our lives, and then we can carry on living as we always have, only now we've got Jesus along to make sure that we get to heaven – something like Jesus in a backpack, rather than Jesus as our Lord! What heresy! What delusion! This thinking finds its source in the idea that everyone is essentially good – all that we have to do is attach Jesus and everything will be okay. That is attempted syncretism! I say *attempted* because TRUTH (Jesus and the Word of God) is exclusive and objective and, therefore, it **cannot** be *syncretized* with

[1] Strong's Online.

anything! What did God command Israel before they went into the land of Canaan? "[13.] Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. [14.] Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you; [15.] … lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 6:13-15). From this, it is very clear that Jehovah makes **absolutely no** provision for syncretism! Yet today, we find that those who should know better are ignoring God's clear commands and the example of Israel – men like Don Richardson, who dealt with the pagan tribes of Indonesia. When commenting on the indigenous tribes of North America mixing their ancient spiritism with Christianity, he gloried in the "new emerging Native … Christian leaders," confident of seeing the "Holy Spirit bearing His witness thru them."[2] Explaining their ancient traditions of drumming, dancing, smudging, etc. in Christian terms does not suddenly make their pagan traditions honoring to the Lord. This is another example of where Evangelicals have lost, or are rapidly losing, their fear of the Lord; they mix the principles of life with the practices of death, and glory in their grand accomplishment. Don capped his acclaim of such compromise with this: "Harsh judgemental attitudes will only add to that hill of unwisdom," by which he means the "incredible amount of historical sin [that the *whites* have] to atone for".[3] "[22.] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools … [25.] who changed the truth of God into a lie …" (Romans 1:22, 25); how do you change God's truth into a lie? – by endeavoring to mix it with anything else. We are told that, in the last days, men will be "ever learning, and never able to come to the [full] knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). As much as we might like this to refer exclusively to the godless world, the modern religion of Evangelicalism is rapidly entering this sphere of condemnation as well. By stretching the truths of the Word of God in an effort to make the beliefs of pagans acceptable, professors of Christ have changed the truth of God into the lie of Satan. Job recognized that the fear of the Lord is wisdom (Job 28:28); yet what we see removed from the hearts of Evangelicals

[2] Don Richardson, personal correspondence, October 15, 2000.
[3] Ibid.

today is that foundation for wisdom – the fear of the Lord. They have raised the idol of their own intelligence (arrogance), and the reward for such is spiritual death.

We are to be followers of God, *as dear children*. The Greek root of the word *dear* is *agape*. This is translated as *beloved* when God spoke of His "beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). It is unique to the Bible, and not one that was in common use in the language of the day.[4] It is used to speak of God and of His attitude toward His Son and mankind, and is used to convey God's will to His children concerning their attitude toward God and one another, and mankind in general.[5] This is also one of the evidences of the Spirit of God in a life (Galatians 5:22). From our passage, we see that this is to characterize who we are; there is no room for syncretism here. We must set aside the "[1.] … sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and … run with patience [*endurance*] the race that is set before us, [2.] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith …" (Hebrews 12:1-2). God's warning to the children of Israel was: "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee …" (Exodus 34:12). His warning to us is: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). There is no room for compromise, no permission to mix God's eternal truths with the philosophies of men, and certainly no place to glory in the syncretistic practices of the religious heathen today (i.e., the Ecumenical movement). We must be vigilant lest we fall into the trap of rationalizing our compromises as times of fellowship, or as opportunities to share God's love; if we fail to obey the Word of God, it is sin (1 John 2:3-6). We can never experience true fellowship, nor extend God's love to anyone, while we are disobedient to His Word – it will not work.

[4] Vine's "love."
[5] Ibid.

2. *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

Walk, in this case, does not refer to placing one foot in front of the other, but rather to our living and conduct. This is in the imperative mood – it is a command, another of the many commands of Scripture to which we are to be obedient, since they are the commands of God. If we would walk worthy of the calling that we have of God, then we must *walk* in obedience to Him. The command, in this instance, is that our lives are to be characterized by *love* (again, the root of this word is *agape*). "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). However, the love in our passage is not qualified as that expressed to fellow disciples of Christ, but rather something that is to characterize our living in all respects. The qualifier for our walk of love is that it is to be after the pattern of Christ's love for us.

We can rest assured that Christ demonstrated this walk of love while here on earth; as the sinless Son of Man, He is the pattern for our lives. He did not stray from this walk of love even when He spoke to the Pharisees and pronounced eight "woes" against them (Matthew 23). His love was not diminished as He called them "hypocrites," "blind guides," "fools and blind," "serpents," and a "generation of vipers." This is strong language, yet, in love, Jesus identified where they erred in their walk with Jehovah. They had developed a religious system that placed them at the pinnacle, yet, in so doing, they had lost sight of the God Who had called them unto holiness of heart – their religion had become their focus; they had reduced God's calling to a set of their own rules and practices (idolatry). Professing themselves to be wise, they had become fools before God (Romans 1:22). This is not a flattering picture of the Jewish religious leaders, but modern Evangelicals differ little; even among those who might claim to be Fundamentalists, they have systematized their understanding of Scripture to the point where it has become cold and methodical – God's Word must bend to their theology, rather than the other way around. "We are Baptists," or "we are Presbyterians" becomes

a mantra that is used to declare our understanding of the Word of God; in Jesus' day, it would have been "we are Pharisees," or "we are Sadducees." There is no difference other than in the names used. When did we lose sight of the need to adhere to God's Word and seek out the hidden truths that elude modern-day theologians? When did we learn to rest on the laurels of those who have gone before us as though they had an infallible understanding of Scripture and the edge on God's desire for us? Jesus' condemnation of the religious of His day was not that they were doing wrong things, but that they had lost sight of the heart from which those deeds were to flow (Matthew 23:23); they had a veneer of righteousness, but had lost the heart that would have made them righteous before God. They were proud to be the descendants of Abraham, yet failed to understand the faith of Abraham that made him righteous before God. Today, we might take pride in our Baptist heritage, or in our understanding of Reformed theology – but have we lost sight of the faith of Abraham? Our righteous standing before God does not come through either a Baptist heritage or a Reformed theology, but through the Lord Jesus Christ!

How did Christ love us?

Christ demonstrated His love for us by bearing our sins on the cross, thereby fulfilling the sacrificial system that God gave to Israel. There are numerous times in the explanation of the sacrificial system that God referred to the sacrifice made as being a "sweet savor unto the Lord" (Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, etc.). This can only mean that it was sweet before God because it looked forward to the sacrifice that God would one day make for the payment of man's sin, and it showed that the one who made the sacrifice was walking in obedience to what He had commanded. Yet this did not begin with God's instruction to Israel, for in Genesis 8:20-21 God used the same phrase in speaking of Noah's sacrifice after he left the ark. If we go back even further to the sacrifice made by Abel, God's acceptance of it declares that it was a *sweet savor* to the Lord. From the time of man's sin, the only acceptable covering for sin has been shed blood (Hebrews 9:22), and this saw its final fulfillment in the sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God Who was slain

from the very foundation of the earth – part of God's eternal plan of redemption (Revelation 13:8). This was Christ's declaration of His love for us: He freely gave Himself in fulfillment of the sacrificial system, and became the Ultimate Sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

As you read through the OT passages that deal with the process of sacrifice, outlining which animals were to be slain for the various types of sacrifices to be made, the blood that was shed during these ceremonies, and the burning of flesh and hair, "sweet savor" would not be our description of the smell that hung over the altar. The Hebrew word translated as "sweet" in passages like Exodus 29:18 does not mean sweet flavored, as a flower would be described as smelling sweetly. Rather, the word means *soothing* or *quieting*, so the sacrifice was a quieting or soothing of God's anger against the sinner. The sacrifices were an expression of the faith of the repentant sinner, and led to a restoration of communion with God; sins had been dealt with according to God's prescribed order. Even though the sacrifices of the OT had to be carried out on a continual basis, through them there was an expression of faith in God, of man's need to receive atonement for his sins, and of his commitment to walk in obedience to Him. Even within the sacrificial system of Israel, it was a personal matter; when someone committed a sin, forgiveness came by means of a sacrifice that was brought to the priests – the shedding of blood was required. Then once each year, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people. When Christ fulfilled the foreshadowing of the sacrificial system, the continual cleansing sacrifices and the atoning work of the high priest were ended; He was the final Sacrifice made once for all time (Hebrews10:10), yet His sacrifice must also be applied personally for it to be effective. Christ died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), but that does not mean that everyone in the world is destined for heaven. The Calvinists contend that Christ did not die for the whole world, but only for the elect, which they define as those whom God has chosen to be saved. However, the Apostle John knew no such heresy, for the Spirit of God declared through him: "[1.] My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" [2.] *And He is the means of forgiveness for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world*" (1 John 2:1-2, literal in italics).[6] Christ's sacrifice was sufficient for the sins of all of humanity, and it is available to everyone; even as the sacrificial system was equally available to Israel and the stranger (Leviticus 24:22), so Christ's fulfillment leaves no one out. When Jesus cried, "It is finished," it meant that His sacrifice was completed so that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3 make it clear that there needs to be a believing heart in order for salvation to begin ("whosoever believeth"); the faith of Abel, Noah, and Abraham must be active in the individual for the work of Christ on the cross to be made effective. Jesus said, *"But the one who endures* [remains faithful to the Lord] *unto the end, this is the one who will be saved"* (Matthew 24:13, literal).[7] Notice two things from Jesus' words: 1) the need for remaining obedient to the Lord unto the very *end*, and 2) salvation is not a current possession but a future reality **if** we remain faithful to Him. The first (obedience) is our choice that will only be realized through the leading of the Spirit of God Who is abiding within us – the *new man* living out the Lord's righteousness and holiness. The second affirms that Jesus did not teach eternal security of salvation; salvation comes at the end of a life that has been lived in faithfulness to Him – whether that is eight minutes or eighty years, it matters not (Matthew 20:1-14). A life of willing obedience is a *sweet fragrance* to the Lord!

3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

In contrast to being followers of God and walking in love, here are some things that are not to describe how we live. Let's consider them carefully.

[6] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[7] Ibid.

Fornication (*porneia*) – from which we obviously get our word *pornography* and all related words – means any illicit, or unnatural, sexual intercourse: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, etc.[8]

Barack Obama

Metaphorically, this word is used to describe apostasy from the Lord through idolatry – spiritual unfaithfulness.[9] It is very interesting to note that Strong's includes sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman in its definition and cites Mark 10:11-12 in support of this. This is a much broader application of the term *fornication* than we typically use, particularly in this day when every effort is made to not offend anyone – the Lord being excepted, of course! Hence, this term includes the modern day shacking up, and all homosexuality, no matter how it is dressed, both of these are becoming increasingly acceptable to those within "Christian" circles. Even those within the upper echelon of Evangelicals are contravening Scripture in this area. On December 1, 2006, Rick Warren invited Barack Obama into the pulpit of Saddleback Community Church to address his congregation. At the time, Obama was a US senator who stood in contradiction to most of the Scriptural values that Christians are to be tenaciously holding onto. He still promotes the right to abortion through all nine months of pregnancy (including the controversial and cruel partial-birth abortion), is opposed to those who seek to provide aid to surviving babies of abortions, is strongly promoting the homosexual agenda and the redefinition of marriage, and is a supporter of the "hate crimes" legislation movement that will ultimately bite Christians who promote Biblical morality.[10] Why would Warren have anything to do with a man who openly supports fornication and murder? How could Warren permit such a godless man to address his congregation? Could it be for Obama's future political influence as he clearly had high political aspirations? Their feigned mutual concern for the AIDS epidemic in

[8] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Kevin McCullough, "Why is Obama's Evil in Rick Warren's Pulpit," http://www.townhall.com/columnists/KevinMcCullough/2006/11/19/why_is_obamas_evil_in_rick_warrens_pulpit

Africa was the public reason given, but the obvious compromise that Warren made is inexcusable before God. Warren is governed by expediency; pragmatism has become his guide, if not his god and his bible. However, he continues to experience wide acceptance and popularity within Evangelical circles, and goes shamelessly on in his compromise and heretical ways. It seems very evident that those who are Biblically discerning are becoming an extinct species among Evangelicals – the day has come when we must obey God's Word to "... come out from among them, and be ye separate ..." (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Uncleanness speaks of impurity, whether physically or morally. For the Jews, it included being ceremonially unclean. As believers, we are called to a life of holiness – so uncleanness would be those things that stain God's holiness in our lives. This has been emphasized with the word "all," signifying that every type of uncleanness is included.

Covetousness (*pleonexia*) is defined as a greedy desire to have more,[11] and the Greek word always carries the negative sense of its use. Paul told the Corinthians to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31), but the Greek word used here (*zeloo*) means to show zeal for, and is translated by the compound *covet earnestly*. The word that is in our text refers to an insatiable craving for more – there is no satisfying this desire.

Three things are named here: any kind of unlawful or unnatural sexual intercourse, all impurity, and greed. None of these is to be even *named* among us, who are the faithful in Christ Jesus; this is a command (imperative mood), and calls for our attention. We have been reminded, of late, as to how casually the Christian community regards such matters; Ted Haggard permitted these things into his life while he continued to maintain a high profile position among Evangelicals. He was forced to face his uncleanness when a homosexual prostitute named him as a client.[12] Satan takes great delight in the sins of Christians, especially those who are high profile. However, even as Ted Haggard went through the

[11] Strong's Online.

[12] https://religionnews.com/2022/07/26/disgraced-pastor-ted-haggard-faces-new-allegations/; despite going through a "spiritual restoration" process, he faced similar allegations in 2020. From founding a mega-church, he is now meeting in his home – he still has people who want to sit under his teaching?!

Ted Haggard

embarrassment of facing his immorality (twice), men like Rick Warren continue to flaunt their disdain for the commands of Scripture, and remain popular among those who should see his error. It is evident that Evangelicals have less tolerance for the more visible sexual failures than for major compromises with error and a wholesale disregard for Scripture; yet the latter is far more dangerous because it continues to wear the garment of spirituality and evades the attention of the average Evangelical. There is a growing level of comfort with sin – especially when we can see the "good" that results. Evangelicals are rapidly becoming first-class pragmatists who are following the world in calling good evil, and evil good (Isaiah 5:20), and also, like the world, they will become the recipients of Jehovah's woe!

Paul addressed his letter to the *holy ones* at Ephesus and the *faithful* in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1), and he now reminds them (and us) that there is conduct that is not acceptable for saints or those who remain faithful to the Lord. We have been reminded of things that are to have no part in our lives; this is a command that we are to obey, not an option to consider.

4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

Paul now goes on to identify a few more practices that are also not to be a part of the lives of saints, although these are more easily justified.

The Greek word used for *filthiness* (*aischrotes*) literally means ugliness, and so indecency or obscenity; its root, *aischros*, speaks of shame and baseness.[13] Now here is something that our modern generations are losing all sense of – shame. Most would probably agree that there is little shame left among moviemakers, yet Evangelicals will still flock to the movies in support of an industry that constantly

[13] Friberg Lexicon; Vine's "filthiness."

demonstrates its disregard for God's standards and, more often than not, flaunts its shamelessness. What is pure is more likely to be the butt of jokes than upheld as an ideal, and this is not altogether unexpected among the worldly. What is often surprising, and discouraging, is to find professing Christians as co-participants with the world in such entertainment and frivolity. There is nothing more grossly expressive of this than the modern Evangelical music industry. Most Evangelical recording musicians today do not understand Biblical purity (nor do they care to learn about it); they use the world's music as a means to promote an insipid and false form of Christianity.[14] The ever popular Bill Gaither and Mark Lowry posed with the "Christian" lesbian artist Marsha Stevens (although in his backpedaling, Bill called it a snapshot that someone took of them); yet it seems evident from the picture that Stevens was being endorsed, not corrected. However, the "Christian" music industry does not have the edge on compromise – it is everywhere that you look with Biblically discerning eyes. There is a growing softening of the general Evangelical attitude toward homosexuality – we've already noted Rick Warren's invitation of Senator Obama, a vocal supporter of the homosexual agenda, to his pulpit. For what purpose? The two of them agree that there needs to be a concerted effort in fighting AIDS, and that is evidently enough for Warren to ignore Obama's pro-homosexual and pro-abortion position. Second Corinthians 6:14-7:1 makes it abundantly clear that Warren (if he is a true Christian) is to have nothing to do with the workers of darkness, let alone inviting them to speak at his venue; yet it is equally clear that Warren has his own agenda that does not include obedience to the Word of God. The line between the world and the

Bill Gaither and Mark Lowry with Marsha Stevens (second from left) and her then "partner."

[14] David Cloud, "The Anti-Fundamentalism Rebellion of CCM," http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/antifundamentalismrebellion.htm

Evangelical is increasingly absent; this is definitely a move that is contrary to maintaining the purity, or holiness, to which Christ has called us (1 Peter 1:15-16), and, as such, it is described in our passage as *filthiness*.

Foolish talking and *jesting* – in the Greek, these two are connected more directly than they appear to be in the English translation. Both *neither* and the first *nor* are translated from a Greek conjunction that indicates an accumulated effect, making *foolish talking* a step-up from *filthiness*. However, the *nor* between *talking* and *jesting* is simply a connecting conjunction, which places these two terms on an equal basis. *Foolish talking* is translated from one Greek word (*morologia*), which is idle talk, useless or silly speech; the root (*moros*) means foolish or stupid.[15] This is more than simply being silly in conversation; there is an evident lack of knowledge or the ability to discern what is appropriate. *Jesting* (*eutrapelia*), on the other hand, can identify a lightness, wit, or facetiousness, but in a more negative light, it carries a vulgar connotation.[16] The Greek word literally means to turn well, or easily, and it came to refer to smooth and witty words that harbor a piercing barb (sin).[17] Psalm 55:21 describes this well: "*The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords." The equality of the terms used here (*foolish talking* and *jesting*) is evident, for both carry sin.

Which are not convenient sounds like an understatement, but it actually means that such things are not befitting the Christian; these are not to have any part in the saint's life.[18] Once again, as we have noted in our study of these qualities, they are increasingly becoming a part of the average Evangelical's life. There is a compromise rampant among Evangelical church-goers that sees the worldliness of yesterday lived out in the church of today; they continue to keep pace with the world, albeit a few steps behind. The Warrens and Gaithers of today will not heed the warnings of

[15] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[16] Friberg Lexicon; Vine's "jesting."
[17] Vincent's Word Studies, Vol. 3, p. 398.
[18] Friberg Lexicon.

Scripture, but will continue in their error, receiving the accolades of the world (which they love) and the condemnation of God (that they ignore).

In the place of these negative things, we are to demonstrate thankfulness – *rather giving of thanks*. We must have gratitude to God for what He has done for us; gratitude that we have been bought from being dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), and brought into a new life *in Christ*.

5. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Paul now goes on to describe a matter of which the Ephesian believers were aware (*for this ye know*), and, perhaps, of which the faithful in Christ Jesus need also to be made aware. Here is a listing of those who will have no part with Christ, not that any of these kinds of people cannot be saved, but rather that those who live a life characterized by these things will not have any part with Christ. To live according to what is described here, eliminates these individuals from being Christians. Within our modern thinking, that is being judgmental. Yet Paul shows no hesitation in describing these people, and, what's more, this is considered to be a common understanding (*this ye know*)! Modern Evangelicals have absorbed the world's fascination with political correctness, and it is unacceptable to suggest that anyone who professes to be a Christian will not find a place with Christ in eternity, no matter how he lives. The Scriptures are clear that we are to judge, and have no part with those who live contrary to the Word of God. Will we always be able to discern the godly from the wicked? Not likely, for it is equally clear that Satan loves to wear the disguise of the saintly, and wolves will seek to portray themselves as sheep – but nevertheless, we are to be on our guard; we are to be alert to the fact that deception and false teaching will be prolific.

This term *whoremonger* (*pornos*) is applied primarily to men who indulge in unlawful sex, frequent prostitutes, or are male prostitutes, but it came to apply to any sexually immoral person.[19] It is someone who engages in illicit sexual practices as a lifestyle.

The *unclean* person is someone who is ceremonially unclean (within the Jewish traditions), or whose thoughts and life are morally impure.

Covetous is applied to someone who is eager to have more than his share, or someone who is greedy for gain, particularly for material possessions.[20] This is someone whose mind is occupied with the things of this world and how to get ahead, and with an insatiable desire to accumulate great wealth. Perhaps a generous seasoning of jealousy also fits within this description – the motivation to stay ahead of the Joneses. Such a person is equated with being an idolater (*who is an idolater*), a worshipper of a false god (in this case, riches) in direct disobedience to the first Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The rich young ruler of Jesus' day was such a man whose heart was bound by his wealth. As Jesus observed him, He said to His disciples: "[23.] Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly [with difficulty] enter into the kingdom of heaven. [24.] And again I say unto you, It is [comparatively] easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:23-24).[21] From our passage, it is evident that someone like this rich young ruler is an idolater, whose wealth is his god.

In Ephesians 1:11 we learned that we have an inheritance in Christ. Here we are told of those who can be identified by their living as having no part in Christ's inheritance that is prepared for those who walk in His ways. Yet do any of these things characterize modern Evangelicals? Sadly, the answer must be, "Yes." How many leaders among Evangelicals have fallen in the last number of years due to sexual improprieties, only to have it come out that this had been their hidden practice for many years? We've already mentioned Ted Haggard, but he is only one in a long line

[19] Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Friberg Lexicon.

of such leaders. Satan does not care how sly, or deeply hidden, the practice is – just as long as it is there, he has gained control over that life. How many Evangelicals today attend the movie theatres and fill their minds with the best that Hollywood has to offer, and wonder why their lives begin to reflect the filth of this world? How many wealthy Evangelicals pay lip service to God's blessing on their lives, even while investing their whole beings into gaining wealth? The children of disobedience who practice these things are within the Evangelical community. We must take heed lest we be led astray by the great deceiver, the father of lies, and the spirit that now works among us to destroy and uproot all things Biblical. We must be vigilant lest we become ensnared by the seemingly "good things" that the devil offers (through disobedience to the Lord) in an effort to draw us away from the best that God has to offer (through obedience). The choice is often not between what is best and worst, but simply between what is best and what appears to be good; if the devil can lure us into accepting his good over God's best, then it won't be long before we are choosing fair over good, and the devil's claw-hold on our lives has become firmly established.

6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

Here is another command – *Let no one be deceiving you with empty words*![22] Within the context of our passage, the challenge that we are given is that we must not be deceived into thinking that these sins are not so bad. We are to be Bereans, weighing the words that we hear against the truths of Scripture in order to determine their accuracy. Within a time of great compromise (such as ours), it is easy to become enamored with words that are softer than oil, yet contain death (Psalm 55:21); we must be on guard against being caught by what sounds pleasant but is devoid of the truth and filled with lies (2 Timothy 4:4). Modern preachers may speak with an eloquence that falls gently upon our ears, and their message

[22] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

may even contain some truth, but we must guard against being deceived by their soft words and fair speeches (Romans 16:18), for it is through this that they deceive those who trust without examining (*simple*). The modern contemplative prayer movement, or Emergent Church, is just one example of what we are being warned against here. They cultivate a façade of spirituality that hides the barb of mysticism and heresy; yet we see many Evangelical leaders obliviously embracing these teachings without any qualms – they accept the façade without applying the light of the Word of God. The seeds of New Evangelicalism are producing a harvest: there has been a move from dialoguing with the enemy, to standing with them, and now, joining with them to propagate their errors as truth (Psalm 1:1). God had many warnings for Israel against bowing to the gods of the people in the land of promise – Israel refused to heed His warnings against idolatry, and they were destroyed as a nation. We may scoff at Israel's failure to heed God's warnings, yet are we any different? The enemy of our souls comes knocking at our door, dressed in the garb of a deeper spiritual experience, and we welcome him without a moment's hesitation. The prince of this world has no problem wearing the cloak of Evangelicalism, and, as he enters, there comes a reduced concern for the truth, a greater acceptance of those who practice error, and a general discomfort with anything that might be construed as the application of God's Word. The average Evangelical today has followed Israel in their example of disobedience and compromise; God's judgment will also follow!

The phrase, *these things*, refers to the sins that have just been delineated. God's wrath (*orge*) is aroused by such things, and is directed at those who practice them. Who practices these things? They are characteristic of the *children of disobedience*. Earlier, Paul mentioned that "in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). There was a time when we were numbered among the children of disobedience, but no more! If we are counted among the "faithful in Christ Jesus," then we are to walk worthy of the vocation to which God has called us (Ephesians 4:1), as obedient children, not as disobedient. If God's Word is clear about a

matter, why do we hesitate to do it? Biblical separation is one of those difficult things that Evangelicals refuse to practice. It makes them feel like they are being judgmental – a modern-day anathema.

Ecumenism and unity have become the practice of most Evangelicals, whether acknowledged verbally or not. Consider the Canadian Revival Fellowship whose focus is to bring spiritual renewal by "assisting God's people to restore their spiritual passion."[23] Yet we see them holding their meetings in churches that have departed from following the Word of God – the Alliance, Presbyterian, Evangelical Free, as well as holding "joint-church" meetings, bringing various denominations together in *unity*. This group embraces leaders such as Ted Rendall, who is Ecumenical, and features speakers like Henry Blackaby. Blackaby is a Southern Baptist who is quite popular and advocates such things as:

Henry Blackaby

1. "After spending time alone with God, reflect on your feelings."[24] Blackaby is telling us to use our feelings to evaluate our walk with God and our prayer life. *Feelings* have nothing to do with it; Scripture should always be the basis for such an evaluation.
2. In the first edition of his book *Experiencing God*, he wrote: "With God working through His servant, he or she can do anything God can do. Wow! Unlimited potential."[25] This is blatant heresy; we are human beings, not God! With the revised edition of this book, this has been toned down dramatically to appear more acceptable and less heretical: "When God works through His servant, that person can do anything God chooses to do through his or her life. The potential is unlimited."[26] It would appear that the first phrasing for this thought brought criticism, or unattainable desires and hence, failures.

[23] http://www.revivalfellowship.com/objecives.html
[24] Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby & Claude King, Experiencing God (Revised & Updated), p. 99.
[25] https://truthwithsnares.org/2012/02/22/a-mysticism-primer-henry-blackaby-and-experiencing-god/.
[26] Blackaby, p. 43.

3. "... when God prepares to do something in our world, He reveals to His people what He is about to do."[27] Not true! We are told that when the Son of Man will return, no one will know the day or the hour – and we never will (Matthew 25:13).

4. "You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing."[28] He speaks much of making "adjustments" for God – but nothing of repentance, confession of sin, or of obedience to God in all things.

How can the Canadian Revival Fellowship expect to cultivate a deeper passion for spiritual things when they harbor and promote teachings that are contrary to the Word of God? They cannot!

When we refuse to practice Biblical separation from the world, from doctrinal error and disobedient brethren, we are setting ourselves **above** God's Word. God has made it clear that we are to separate from all such things – yet how many times do we rationalize our activities? How often do we disobey this one command just so that we can be "a testimony" to those in error – what kind of a testimony is it to walk in disobedience to God's explicit teachings? That is New Evangelical thinking! Samuel's words to a disobedient Saul come ringing down through the ages: "Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices [that which appears to be Biblical], as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). We may fool some people some of the time, but we fool God none of the time – His desire is for our obedience. Jesus said that if we love Him, then we must be living in obedience to Him (John 14:15). Will we walk accordingly, and commit the results of obedience to Him? "…strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14); "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Do we find ourselves on a path that is lonely? Perhaps that is simply because there are only a few who will find that Narrow Road

[27] Blackaby, p. 52.
[28] Ibid, p. 60.

(Jesus) that leads to life. May God give us a heart of obedience to His Word, no matter the cost!

7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*.

The Greek word translated as *partakers* is used only twice in the NT, and both times in Ephesians. It first appears in 3:6, where it is used to indicate that we, as Gentiles, have been made partakers together with spiritual Israel in the promises of God that are made evident in Christ. This is a positive use of the word, and demonstrates the joint-participation that now exists – the middle wall of separation having been removed by God's mighty act of fulfillment in Christ. In our passage, we are told that we are not to join with the children of disobedience. Two things are evident from this: 1) this is a command that we are to obey, and 2) because Paul included it, it would seem clear that there is a possibility that we could be drawn into participation with the children of disobedience.

There is a deception that is active in the world that would seek to draw us into the ways of the evil one. Today, sin and error are frequently downplayed to the point that we no longer recognize them as disobedience to God's Word. Everything is positive; truth has been drawn and quartered in order to fit the mold of everyone individually; there is a desire for everyone to have the right to do what is right in his own eyes, and to feel justified in doing so. The acceptance of a truth to which we all have to submit is no longer a popular concept; God's truth has been replaced by "my" truth, which simply places man at the pinnacle of his own little world. The reality of Satan's lure to Eve is alive and well today; although it may not yet be popular among Evangelicals to call themselves gods, it is clearly demonstrated on every hand that this is exactly what is happening.

The new age of spirituality is that we must look within ourselves to find meaning, to discover the reality of who we are, and that we must feed what we find there in order to achieve ultimate fulfillment. This is nothing

less than the original lie of the devil: "then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5)! We are living in a day when man has a very high opinion of himself and his abilities; man is soaring intellectually and spiritually (in his own eyes), and there is little that is not within his reach. Men like Henry Blackaby do nothing to discourage this by declaring: "With God working through His servant, he or she can do anything God can do."[29] We may scoff at Shirley MacLaine standing on a beach facing the Pacific Ocean and crying out, "I am god,"[30] yet here we have a man who is openly accepted and promoted within Evangelical circles who is basically saying the same thing. This sounds much like another time in history when man said, "…let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). Babel stands as a monument in time to the high-mindedness of man and the sovereignty of God. We live in just such a day of arrogance among Evangelicals; unity is being acclaimed despite the warnings by God and His Word to separate from error; we may rest assured that God is still sovereign. The command in our passage is that we are not to be *partakers* with those who are disobedient to God.

Shirley Maclaine

8. *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now* are ye *light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

The first phrase is a simple statement of fact. We were formerly darkness – "without Christ … having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). By contrast, now we are light! However, there is a source for this light – it is **not** a light that we have within ourselves – we are light *in the Lord*. Here again is the theme of Ephesians: it is *in*

[29] https://truthwithsnares.org/2012/02/22/a-mysticism-primer-henry-blackaby-and-experiencing-god/.
[30] http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/bog_bogi_e.htm

Christ that all of these good things come to fruition. Jesus openly declared that we are to abide in Him (John 15:4); He is our source of life and light.

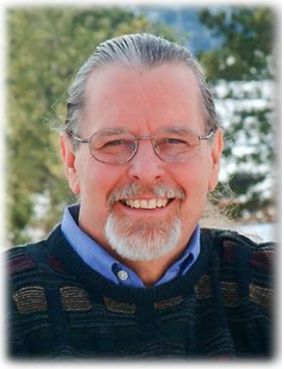
By contrast, the Eastern religions see the light as a part of who we are; they believe the lie that Satan first gave to Eve – *ye shall be as gods* (Genesis 3:5). Consider their teachings:

> If you prepare yourself to know the higher knowledge, then you will deserve. To deserve means to increase your capacity. You want to put the entire ocean in a bucket. The ocean is there. You can have it, but you do not have the capacity. When you deserve, you will have the capacity. The Lord, the Reality, the Truth, is always within you. You simply have to become aware. You can make sincere efforts to work with yourself.
>
> Don't be disappointed with failures. When you start to make sincere efforts and start to practice, you will find light on the path. The light itself will guide you. **The light of consciousness is within you.** If you ignore that light, the guide outside you, the external teacher, will be of no use to you. He will make you a slave (bold added).[31]

Within their convoluted impression of reality, they advocate to first follow the guide within, thereby making everything else subject to that inner guide. They speak of "the Lord, the Reality, the Truth," but these are all within the unregenerate man; these are terms with which we are familiar, but their meaning is not the same. Our passage says that we were in darkness before – **that** is the "light" of the inner guide of mankind. Consider Jesus' words: "But if thine eye [a metaphor for knowing and understanding] be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).[32] We just read of the knowledge and wisdom of Eastern religious thought; how tremendously dark is the light of the Eastern gurus. They see light in the heart of man, yet Paul openly declared: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing …" (Romans

[31] http://www.swamij.com/swami-rama-guru.htm
[32] Friberg Lexicon.

7:18). As the message of God comes to the one who has bought into the inner-light concept, the light of God is made subject to the darkness of their "inner light," thereby rendering it of no effect. This is like the seed that fell by the wayside, and the birds came and snatched it away; the Word of God comes to the heart of such an individual, but the messengers of Satan (the prince of the power of the air [Ephesians 2:2]) snatch it away, and that person remains in his darkness.



Richard Foster

Yet what do we find today? We have the spiritual formation movement (or the Emergent Church) sweeping through Evangelicalism, even though it draws on the mysticism of the ancient Catholics and from the techniques of Eastern religions to demonstrate its spirituality. Appropriately, we are asked: "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). Today the answer to this rhetorical question needs to be stated openly in order to be understood: NOTHING!! However, we see men like Richard Foster and Dallas Willard doing their utmost to draw darkness and light together, and to promote it as a new spirituality; Evangelicals, in their spiritual apathy, are embracing it, and seminaries are promoting it. On every hand, this error is flourishing and creating a whole new concept of unity.

Dallas Willard

Even prominent Evangelical Max Lucado writes of the *divine spark* that everyone has, and then quotes mystical heretics and Emergent Church promoters in an effort to support his heresy.[33] Through this new emphasis, whether you call it spiritual formation, contemplative or centering prayer, or the Emergent Church, a new bond is formed with all who practice its techniques – and they will be professing Christians, Catholic mystics, Buddhists, and anyone in the world today who speaks of being spiritual. Satan has devised a doctrine that will reach around the world and draw

[33] https://www.lighthousetrailsresearch.com/blog/max-lucado-hops-into-the-contemplative-camp/.

anyone and everyone into its fold; we must be alert and forewarned to be on our guard, for this error is being presented within Christian circles with great success. Despite how we might make them appear, yoga techniques (often a part of this new spirituality) still have their roots in Eastern religion, and such darkness is to have no place in the lives of the saints of God. Yet we find a Southern Baptist preacher (Jim Hammacher[34]) who rationalized that "bringing relaxation and meditation techniques into the church might help to revive a strain of spirituality that had been filtered out of Christianity over the years."[35] At the same time, a professor of Hinduism at the University of Virginia says that "he has seen many Christians whose faith has been strengthened by their yoga practice."[36] This same Hindu goes on to say, "Yoga means joining together. It's the joining of the individual spirit with the Universal spirit, … No matter what religion you practice, you become a better person if you follow the principals of yoga."[37] So we have those who should know better, openly practicing syncretism (seeking to merge darkness and light, and trying to call it *light*), and those who are pagan who are encouraging the practice. There is truly something wrong with this picture.

Jim Hammacher

We now have another command – *walk as children of light*. Since we have moved from darkness to light in the Lord, we are to live as children of light. What could be simpler? The concept is quite straightforward indeed, but the working out of this reality is much more complex. Paul understood the conflict that wages within us, the spirit against the flesh (Romans 7), yet that does not provide us with license to live as children of darkness. This is a command from God, and the Spirit of God will provide enablement for us to live as we have been commanded. Christianized yoga has no place in the walk of a child of the Light, so we

[34] It was while leading Parkwood Baptist Church of Annandale, VA that Hammacher introduced yoga to his group. Parkwood Baptist is a functioning member of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Hammacher has since gone on to be the Executive Director of Middle District Baptist Association, still a part of the SBC.

[35] Alexandra Alter, "Yoga Stretches Traditional Christian Boundaries," http://www.veda.harekrsna.cz/connections/Christianity.php

[36] http://www.letusreason.org/current81.htm.

[37] Ibid.

must guard against those who promote the compromises of spiritual formation.

9. *(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*

Here is that phrase *fruit of the Spirit*; exactly what is the fruit of the Spirit? The Greek word for *fruit* is singular and means, "that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result."[38] So, very simply, the fruit of the Spirit is that which comes from the Spirit of God – such things as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23). In other words, the fruit of the Spirit is a holy life.

While we are on the subject of *fruit,* permit me to digress just a little. I have heard it said, and perhaps you have, too, that the fruit that Christians are to bear is other Christians; in other words, souls saved are to be the fruit that **we** bear – Galatians 5 refers only to the fruit of the Spirit. Let's consider this for a moment in the light of Scripture. You will recall that one of the difficulties in the Corinthian assembly was their divisiveness along the lines of who was instrumental in leading them into the Christian faith: "… I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:12). They were condemned for this attitude, and Paul instructed them very clearly: "[5.] Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? [6.] I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7.] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). What does this tell us? Our role is to be servants as the Lord has gifted us, for it is God Who gives the increase, or will save the soul. If our role in the saving of a soul is watering, then so be it, if it is reaping, then so be it – either way, we are only ministers of the Lord, and we cannot claim the honor of "saving the

[38] Strong's Online.

soul." Saved souls are a tribute to the working of the Spirit of God, both as the Deposit and promoting endurance in faithful living; there is nothing for us to claim as a trophy of our own acumen, for in doing so would require violating meekness – an evidence of the Spirit of God.

Jesus taught His disciples about the Vine, the branches and fruit. He said: "[1.] I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. [2.] Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:1-2). What kind of fruit would we expect a branch to bear? Within the context of a vine, we would expect that it would bear grapes, and not another branch. The branch that does not bear grapes is purged – it is cut off and cast aside. If a branch only produced more branches, then it would be deemed to be of no value, and would be removed. The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit in accordance with the vine in which it is abiding. Therefore, we, as branches abiding in Christ, are to bear fruit that is in keeping with abiding in Christ – namely, the evidence of the Spirit of God: love, joy, peace, etc. Jesus goes on to say, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). The test for discipleship: is it souls whom we can claim as trophies (to the glory of God, of course), or evidence of the Spirit of God working in and through us so that we might be effective ministers of God as He has gifted us? Within the context of this passage, the test is clearly the fruit of the Spirit; we are to show forth *goodness*, *righteousness* and *truth* (our verse in Ephesians).

Jesus went on to tell His disciples: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain …" (John 15:16). As we consider the vine and the branches (the context of this verse), it can only mean that His intent is that the branches are to bear the fruit of the Spirit – He's already said that if they do not bear fruit, then they will be removed (John 15:2). Jesus is telling His disciples that He has ordained them, or set them aside, for a specific purpose: in order that *ye are going and ye are bearing fruit*

and your fruit is remaining (literal).[39] As you may have already guessed, this is another purpose clause where the verbs *go*, *bring* and *remain* are in the subjunctive mood (normally indicating what is a possibility) but are understood to present the factual expectation of what Jesus has done (*chosen* and *ordained*).[40] Within the context of abiding in the Vine, we understand that the life is in the Vine (Christ), and we must pay particular heed that we do not permit this life-giving relationship to falter; we are to guard against a heart that is prone to deceitfulness, and we are to strive for a life that will bring glory to God. Paul exhorted the Philippians: "[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; [10] That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; [11] Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11). This is exactly that of which we have been speaking; this is Christ living through us; this is abiding in the Vine so that we will produce the fruit of the Spirit of God working in us. Paul's prayer was that these Philippian Christians would show forth the righteousness of Christ, that by their fruits they would be recognized as being *in Christ* (Matthew 7:15-20) – the fruit-test is used to reveal the false prophet, but, by the same token, it will also reveal the true child of God. As we walk faithfully with God through life, He will use our words and our actions to accomplish His purposes in the lives of those about us. Yes, our hearts should be burdened for the lost, but they should be even more burdened with our need to walk worthy of our calling in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:1), a walk that we will only accomplish through the Spirit of God working in us.

Goodness is "uprightness of heart and life";[41] the Greek word used in our passage is exactly the same as that used in the listing of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. *Righteousness* is a "state of him who is as he ought to be, the condition acceptable to God."[42] Clearly, this requires the work of God, for it is only God Who can make a man righteous. Ephesians

[39] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[40] https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.
[41] Strong's Online.
[42] Ibid.

4:24 describes the *new man*, whom we are to put on, as being "created [by God] in righteousness and true holiness." Here we are directed to walk as children of light that will produce the fruit of righteousness from the Spirit of God. *Truth* refers to that which never changes; Jesus (as being the Truth) declared the Scriptures, the Word of God, to be Truth (John 17:17). Unlike today when truth has been given a subjective twist (which really makes it an untruth), there is a timelessness to truth that makes it equally applicable in all situations, and at all times. I am reminded of Paul's words in Romans 1:18: "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness …."[43] Paul is beginning his discourse on God being revealed to all of mankind through the evidences that are everywhere to be seen, yet it seems that there is growing evidence of many within organized churches who are suppressing the Truth of God as revealed in His Word under the unrighteousness of their preferred theology. How many professing Christians hold in their hands the very Word of God (Truth), yet they fail to heed it because they do not believe it. A "pastor" of the Center Street Church in Calgary has said that Christians today differ little on interpretation, but more on inspiration (meaning that if the Scriptures are not held to be the Word of God, then interpretation holds little influence).[44] However, I would contend that they differ most on application (rationalization has even rendered a right interpretation based upon God's inspiration to be of no effect). Despite holding the Truth of God in their hands, they do not permit it to enter their hearts and minds in order to see it lived out in reality, but continue to bury the Truth (out of sight, out of mind) under their self-justified unrighteousness (the teachings of their favored theologian). It is clear that the truth will not accomplish anything in the lives of those who refuse to live by it.

We are told that the fruit of the Spirit is in all of these things (*goodness*, *righteousness* and *truth*); indeed, all of these things, in their truest sense, can only come from God. Jesus said, "there is none good but one, *that is*, God" (Matthew 19:17); therefore, all true goodness can only come from

[43] Friberg Lexicon.
[44] Taken from a taped message by Henry Schorr.

God. Romans 3:10 reminds us that "there is none righteous, no, not one," but this is followed by: "[21.] … the righteousness of God … is manifested … [22.] *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe [*who are believing*] …" (Romans 3:21-22).[45] It is clear that we have no righteousness in ourselves, but it is equally apparent that God's righteousness is available to us through faith in Christ. As we have already seen, both the Lord Jesus and God's Word are called Truth (John 14:6, 17:17). *Goodness, righteousness* and *truth* all find their source in God; anything that might appear to be good, right and true (but is not of God) will fail. That is why we are told to be fruit watchers (i.e., fruit-of-the-Spirit watchers), for thereby comes our first means of identifying the wolves who seek to portray themselves as sheep (Matthew 7:15-20). As we rest in the guidance of the abiding Spirit of God, He will give us the discernment needed to discover the wolves – as long as we are actively weighing them against the Standard of the Word of God (1 John 4:1).

10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

This continues the thought from verse eight: we are to walk as children of light *proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*. *Prove* comes from a Greek word (*dokimazo*) that means to test, or examine, carefully in order to determine if something is genuine, with the anticipation of approval.[46] This tells us that even if we expect something to be right and good, we are to test it anyway; if we know that it is not good, then there is no call to test it – simply abandon it. Paul uses this same word (in its imperative form) to describe the self-testing that we must do to ensure that we are living in accordance with what God requires (2 Corinthians 13:5). In our day of compromise and feel-good preaching, we need to exercise genuine discernment in accordance with God's Word (our Standard for conducting the examination). Even if something, or someone, appears to be good, we must examine all things according to Scripture, and then determine our

[45] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[46] Strong's Online; Vine's "prove."

position. It is **not enough** to listen to what is said and look at the Scriptures that they might quote; our examination needs to include all of God's Word, and we need to pay careful attention to their associations and the things that they approve. Our associations are very important, for Scripture makes it clear that we are not to join ourselves with those who are not walking in the way of the Lord; associations will more frequently expose the heart than the carefully selected words that are spoken.

Accepting things at face value is not to be our lot as Christians. Ours is not to be a life of ease, of relaxing and accepting the teaching that we receive without another thought about it. We are to be diligent students of the Word; we are to take what we hear and read back to the Word of God. The better a teaching sounds, the more carefully we need to examine it, lest we be snared by the deceitfulness of the devil. The end **never** justifies the means; we must carefully examine the means. It is often said that the devil is in the details – so true; as much as we might like to be enthralled with the good end of something, we must never ignore the path taken to get there. As believers, our lot in life is to walk in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord, and, to do so, requires diligence on our part and attention to the details of life.

11. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove* them.

This is another of Scripture's commands – actually two of them!

Here is that word *fellowship*, again. As we noted before, this is a term that has fallen into some misuse, for it has come to be known as simply visiting with someone. The root of the Greek word so translated is *koinonia,* which speaks of communion, partnership, and association, and this Greek word (*sugkoinoneo*) includes a prefix that means *with* – so it is a close *fellowship* ***with*** the *works of darkness*.[47] This goes well beyond what our present-day understanding of *fellowship* would indicate. In our

[47] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

passage, such fellowship is given a negative emphasis – we are **not** to have communion, partnership or any association with *the unfruitful works of darkness*. What would these be?

Works speaks of those things that occupy our time, the things that we do; *unfruitful* works are those things that are morally barren and without true value.[48] We have just looked at "the fruit of the Spirit" that is in "all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9); now we are faced with unfruitfulness. Being a spiritual exhortation, the unfruitfulness spoken of here bears a spiritual application, not a physical one. Therefore, these *unfruitful works* are activities that do not bring forth the *goodness*, *righteousness* and *truth* of God, even though they may well bear wealth, prestige, power, influence, and worldly recognition. Unfortunately, these works are not limited to the unregenerate, but are, as often as not, found within many areas of Christianity as well. Consider Joel Osteen, who preaches a feel-good message of encouragement to have a more positive attitude and things will be better for you, because God wants you to be healthy and wealthy. He uses the Scriptures very sparingly, and then only when a proof-text can be used to support his feel-good philosophy of life – Osteen does not demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, but rather the unfruitful, barren works of spiritual darkness. Think about God's instruction to Israel: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak [this would be someone who is speaking in the name of the Lord, but whose message is not Biblically accurate], or that shall speak in the name of other gods [perhaps the message exalts wealth or personal achievement – popular gods of this age], even that prophet shall die" (Deuteronomy 18:20). Anyone with a message that was not from God, died; yet we must realize that it was the Israelites who were called upon to carry this execution out – they were called to make the judgment. We do not live under the Law of Moses, or most televangelists today would have died

Joel Osteen

[48] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

long ago; they have departed from the clear message of God's Word into vain ramblings of a philosophy of their own design – God is not pleased, yet we too often demonstrate acceptance when we should be testing them by the text of Scripture. Even though these works are being carried out under the guise of Christianity, and supposedly, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are called upon to judge them. First John 4:1 says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"; this is an imperative – we are commanded to put them to the test! Jesus' words to the Pharisees are equally appropriate for men like Joel Osteen: "… woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in … " (Matthew 23:13). This is a serious charge, for Jesus is saying that the Pharisees were obstructing the entrance to heaven. How were they doing this? They were proclaiming a message that was not from God, yet holding it forth as being from Him – in other words, if people believed their message, then they would be steered away from access to heaven rather than being drawn into a relationship with God. This is precisely what Joel and a myriad of other televangelists are doing today – they propagate a gospel that would receive an "anathema" from the Apostle Paul (Galatians 1:8-9). Through barren preaching, Joel is showing thousands how to be comfortable on the broad way that leads to hell. Because they spread a gospel message that is not of God, we can say, "Woe unto you, [Joel Osteen, Bill Hybels, Franklin Graham, and Rick Warren], hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Jesus told us plainly that we would know the false prophets by their fruits, and we are called upon to judge the fruit of men like Joel Osteen who preach a gospel that is not the Gospel, but rather a lie from the devil to blind the eyes of multitudes. Our local newspaper has again openly exposed the error of our local ministerial: the Catholics, the Charismatics, the Evangelicals of all stripes (Evangelical Free, Missionary, Alliance, and independents like the Manor Gospel and the Prairie Tabernacle) all came together to celebrate *Easter*

(that pagan holiday that has been extended to include Christ's death and resurrection). These have all chosen to ignore the life of holiness and purity in exchange for unity; they have abandoned the clear commands of Scripture for a message that is not pleasing to God – one that is a generous mixture of error and truth. As such, it is no longer the message of life from God, but rather a message of error that can often appear tantalizingly like the truth. These are far more dangerous than the Muslim, the Hindu or even the Satanist, because they speak of God, Jesus, and a love for the Word of God, and thereby mix a deadly potion of Biblical terms and Scripture with their own poisonous, vain philosophies. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

However, in the day in which we live, we must also take note that we are to avoid the workers of darkness who do not profess any vestige of Christianity. There is a worldwide movement to unite all religions, and the battle to accomplish this is being waged on many fronts. It has been incredible to watch the change in attitude toward Muslims, for example, since September of 2001. The December 27, 2003 issue of *Christian Century* carried this clip: "To encourage cordial contacts between Evangelicals and Muslims, Fuller Theological Seminary has received a federal grant for a $1 million project to craft an ethics code rejecting unfair accusations, to recognize a mutual belief in one God and to share like-minded peacemaking goals."[49] Fuller Seminary seems bent on plowing new ground in the area of heresy, yet they retain their status among Evangelicals as a respectable Seminary. How can this be? It happens when Christians, who know better, fail to raise their voices in protest so that, at the very least, those who are close by will hear and be aware. Unfortunately, they have opted for a religious system that places all of the authority into the hands of the educated, and there is great hesitation to question the actions of those who bear the title of "Doctor." There is no common ground to be found between the religions of the world and God's message to us in the Scriptures (and that includes Islam and the Gospel);

[49] http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_26_120/ai_112131080

when Evangelicals hail the discovery of common ground, rest assured that they have only exposed their own compromise of God's Word.

Command one, in our passage, tells us that we are to have no fellowship with such; we are to have no part with them – whether the workers are bearing the name of Christ, or not. The second command tells us to *reprove* them. This word, in this context, means "by conviction to bring to the light, to expose."[50] Now this is something that today's Evangelical finds very, very difficult, if not completely abhorrent. We have seen Fuller Seminary's stance when it comes to the Muslim faith; they will not condemn anyone – they will always look for that common ground. However, it is one thing to avoid someone, particularly when they are high profile people like Rick Warren and Joel Osteen – but to actually expose their error for all to see, that's another story altogether. Yet, here we have Scripture commanding us to do just that. It is not enough to shun those who are propagating error; rather, we are to actively expose them, to show forth the error of their teachings. This is not a smear campaign against them personally; we need to do our part in making others aware of the hypocrisy and heresy of these men in order to prevent them from being drawn into their schemes. Naming names is not a popular thing today, not only in the world at large, but even less so within the broad spectrum of Christianity. When you quietly avoid someone, that does little to draw attention to yourself; however, when you name those against whom we need to be on guard, then you immediately expose yourself to the ridicule and criticism of those who are more Ecumenically minded. Yet this is not optional; we have here the direct command of God to expose the workers of darkness, and, as we have seen, that includes those who are flying the banner of Christianity.

12. *For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*

[50] Vine's "reprove."

The focus here is on the activities, whether physical or mental, of those who work the *unfruitful works of darkness*. Is there a contradiction here? First, we are told to reprove the *unfruitful works of darkness*, and now we're told that it's a *shame* even to speak of what is done in secret by those who do such. The word *shame* (*aischron*) literally means ugly or deformed, and speaks of that which stands opposed to purity.[51] We are to expose (*reprove*) these works of darkness to the light of the Word of God; what we must not do is delve into the lives of those who are doing these dark works – for therein is that which is shameful. Jesus openly declared that we would come to know them *by their fruits* (Matthew 7:20) – the fruits being the evidence of their heart's condition. Since Joel Osteen promotes a message that is contrary to the Word of God, then we are to accept that as evidence that his heart is not right with God; our task is to openly reprove his message of health, wealth and feel-good psychobabble, but not to dig into the hidden philosophies of his mind that produce this false gospel. Our responsibility is to expose the evident fruits for what they really are – heresy. We must not try to understand the hidden ramblings of his heart – our focus must be on God's Word and where he violates what God has said.

Clearly, these hidden aspects are contrary to purity (they are a *shame*); God has called us to purity and holiness; therefore, anything that results in a message that is contrary to the Word of God does not flow out of God's holiness. The Spirit of God will **never** oppose the Word of God – therefore, if there is a contradiction to the Scriptures, then the Spirit of God has not revealed that message. Consequently, when we see the leaders of our local Evangelical Free Church and the Prairie Tabernacle joining with the Catholics and Charismatics to celebrate *Easter*, then we can rest assured that we have just seen the unfruitfulness of a message that is not in accordance with God's Word. Do we call them unbelievers? No, for God alone knows their hearts, but we do know that they are, at the very least, grieving the Spirit of God by their flagrant disobedience of Scripture – namely, their fellowship with the *unfruitful works of darkness* (those who are unbelievers). "Now we command you, brethren, in the

[51] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon; Vine's "shame."

name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). These men, who fellowship with the *unfruitful works of darkness*, may yet be our brothers, but they are brothers with whom we are not to have close communion because of their disobedience to the clear instruction of God's Word – they are living irresponsibly (*disorderly*) before God. Romans 8:9 says that "… if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." We must shine the light of God's Word on their teachings and activities in order to expose their error for what it is; we must warn others of the heresy and danger that is present, and then permit God to attend to the shameful things in their lives that produce such disobedience. It is enough that we uncover their teachings and activities.

13. *But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*

Here is a tie to verse 11 where we are commanded to reprove the *unfruitful works of darkness*. As we accept the responsibility to expose the works of darkness to the light of Scripture, Paul now clarifies what is to take place. We are told that everything that is reproved is *made manifest*. This verb means to uncover, to lay bare, and to reveal.[52] As we saw earlier, the action of reproof is not without its consequences – for, by exposing the works of darkness, we identify ourselves as being opposed to such. This is acceptable within Evangelical circles if the subject of scrutiny is generally considered to be abhorrent, but alas, such targets of reproof are becoming increasingly few in number. However, to address the error of men like Rick Warren, Billy Graham, Joel Osteen, et al, is considered to be nigh unto sacrilege.

What is the error of Rick Warren?

[52] Vine's "manifest."

Barack Obama at Warren's Saddleback Church

His entire focus is on worldly success, and he promotes the pragmatism of "the end justifies the means," or "if it works, then it's right." Scripture says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Furthermore, he ignores God's call to separation from the world (2 Corinthians 6:14), from error (Romans 16:17-18) and from brethren who accommodate error (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Even on the very first count (separation from the world) he is found wanting. On December 1, 2006, Warren had Barack Obama in his pulpit – a man who openly and actively supports abortion in all nine months of pregnancy, and the radical homosexual activists' agenda.

What was the error of Billy Graham?

He, too, neglected God's call to separation. From his earliest crusades, he worked with the Roman Catholics and Liberals who are **not** Christian – only religious pagans. Those who would come forward at a crusade who had a Catholic background, were sent back to the Roman Catholic Church. Billy is quoted as saying: "I've found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics … We only differ on some matters of later church tradition."[53] Romans 16:17-18 says that we are to withdraw from those who are alongside of the doctrine of Scripture – Graham violated the Scriptures all through his ministry. Even though he is no longer living, Evangelicals are still in awe of him and hold him in high esteem.

What is the error of Joel Osteen?

Joel preaches a health/wealth message – you hear nothing of "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The command of Romans 16:17-18 is clear; the charge in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 is equally clear.

[53] David Cloud, Evangelicals and Rome, p. 84.

Using the light of Scripture to identify those who transgress the Lord's commands, is not popular; the result is that you become the target of criticism and/or shunning – the reward for obedience to the Word of God. We must ask ourselves, are we prepared to accept criticism for obedience to God's instruction?

Notice though, it is as we reprove the works of darkness that their reality is laid bare by the light. Our reproof is the means by which the light of God exposes these works for what they really are. This will lead to a couple of things: 1) the exposure by the light of God will bring sharper criticism of us, the reprovers, and 2) the Lord may use our reproof to prick the heart of a hearer and possibly restore him to a proper understanding of Scripture. Obviously, we cannot choose the response; we must faithfully reprove with the light of Scripture so that the Spirit of God is able to use the reproof to restore hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The latter part of the verse uses some of the same words as the first part, but *light*, in this case, is used in a figurative sense as describing the function of the *light*.[54] In the Greek, *all things* and *whatsoever* are from the same root (*pas*), but the first is plural and the second singular.[55] *And all things are being reproved; by the light it is being made known, for everything that is being revealed is open* (literal).[56]

Many modern Evangelicals will contend that they are *light*; in their minds, they are explaining the Scriptures so that others will better understand what is being said. However, are they presenting God's explanation as it is revealed in His Word, or are they simply elaborating on their accepted theologies? Herein is our responsibility – we must take all that we hear and read back to the *light* of the Word of God and let His Word expose the truth or error. It is in this simple (yet time consuming) task that modern Evangelicals have been abysmal failures, so that today we see a hurried approval of the latest teachings of men of higher learning – the only criteria being that they are on the list of accepted teachers. Having set God's Word aside, there is a broad acceptance of men's

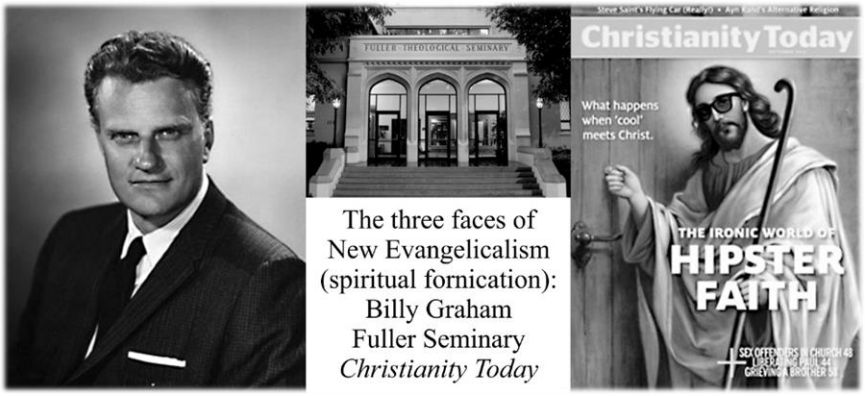
[54] Gingrich Lexicon.
[55] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[56] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

doctrine, for the Scriptures are deemed to be far too difficult to understand without much learning. However, the Spirit of God is promised to all who actively believe, and is with us to guide in the ways of truth. Three times Jesus referred to the Spirit of God as the *Spirit of truth* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), and He assured us that the Spirit would guide us into all truth. Therefore, that which is contrary to Scripture cannot be of the Spirit of God, for it is a departure from Truth (John 17:17). Yet there are those who will say that the Spirit of God may lead one person to this understanding and someone else to that. Consider this from the late J. Vernon McGee, who is looked upon as being a conservative Evangelical: he recommended that we check "anything that I have to say by the Word of God and to make sure that the Spirit of God is leading you in that direction [to agree with him] – [He] may give you a different interpretation than He gives to me."[57] This is absolute heresy because the Spirit of God is **not** divided concerning the Truth – He will **never** lead anyone to anything but the Truth! Paul wrote: "[9.] …as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. [10.] But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. … [12.] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God [*will know*; yes, *know* is in the subjunctive mood (normally showing possibility) but, as part of a purpose clause, it identifies the reason that we have received the Spirit of God].[58] [13.] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [14.] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). Clearly, the guidance of the Spirit of God is precise and certainly not double-minded, as McGee suggests (James 1:8). Herein is the difficulty with modern theologians: they have succumbed to their own learning without the guidance of God's

[57] https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/thru-the-bible-questions-and-answers/player/questions-answers-3145-1013685.html?type=branded#now-playing.
[58] https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.

Spirit, and consequently have become heralds of error. Although they would profess to dispense light, in reality they mete out confusion and heresy.

The Evangelical climate of today grew out of the teachings of men like Harold Ockenga and Donald McGavran who sought to change the focus of Christianity from purity before God, to unity with the educated scholars of this world and liberal Christianity – from a desire for right teaching to an emphasis on numerical growth. By means of schools like Fuller Seminary, publications like *Christianity Today*, and evangelists like Billy Graham, this emphasis spread around the world. Evangelical concern became focused on scholarship (with the re-examination of Biblical doctrines), on social projects (with a de-emphasis of the message of Scripture), and on dialoguing with men of other belief systems. Their emphasis on scholarship has led to many of the doctrines of Scripture being either completely re-worked, or set aside altogether. Out of this grew an increased embracing of their apostate heritage, a lighter gospel (which is no Gospel) that makes no demands and ensures a place on the broad road that leads to destruction, and a whole new generation of religious pagans. The focus on social projects has resulted in much talk about redeeming our culture, with these lightly-Christianized pagans endeavoring to influence all areas of society. Consequently, there has come a renewal of the movement to establish the kingdom of God on earth through the efforts of man (this is often referred to as reconstructionism, or kingdom-now theology); establishing His kingdom on earth is something that the Lord Jesus will do when He returns. Their desire for meaningful dialogue with the intellectuals of the world has become a means to Ecumenical activities – seeking to join with all faiths in order to "save the world." Out of this has come the false teaching that unity is God's top priority; we see



The three faces of New Evangelicalism (spiritual fornication): Billy Graham Fuller Seminary *Christianity Today*

Evangelicals seeking to form ties with the Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, and the world. A product of this has seen Briercrest Biblical Seminary negotiating an educational agreement with the University of Saskatoon,[59] and Prairie Bible Institute doing the same with Bow Valley College, Olds College, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and Lethbridge Community College.[60] In clear contravention of the Word of God, these "Christian" schools have collaborated with the world in an effort to make their educational offerings more compatible with the world's standards, or to open the doors for programs that they would otherwise not be able to offer. Is this pleasing to the Lord? Clearly, not (2 Corinthians 6:14)!

Ralph Winter

Through their pursuit of scholarship, social projects and continuous dialogue with infidels, modern Evangelicals have reduced the message of the Bible to an anemic gospel that has permitted them to proclaim that massive revivals are taking place all around the world, but because their message is no longer the Gospel of Christ, the revivals are not Biblically based and are a smokescreen. The US Center for World Mission, founded by Ralph Winter, a faculty member of Fuller Seminary at the time, was established to function as a watchdog of world missions with an eye to improving the effectiveness of the worldwide project. Winter, editor of *Mission Frontiers*, a magazine put out by the US Center for World Mission (in 2015, USCWM merged with Frontier Mission Fellowship to be known as Frontier Ventures), stated in the May-June 1998 issue: "… missions is essentially the restoration of God's kingdom and rule and power on this earth. It involves the restablishment of His glory, of His honor of His control of things. When anyone 'becomes a Christian' he yields his life to that new Kingdom, and Jesus Christ becomes his LORD as well as Savior (not just Savior)" (all errors are a part of the original).[61] Notice that Winter has redefined what it means to

[59] http://announcements.usask.ca/news/archive/2007/04/university_of_s_27.html; while I was a student at Briercrest, this was proclaimed as a proud moment in the School's history.
[60] http://www.prairie.edu/pcaat/pcaat.htm
[61] https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment57.

become a Christian – it is now yielding to that *new Kingdom,* the one that men are endeavoring to establish on this earth for God, and by joining the "kingdom," Jesus becomes your Lord and Savior. Does this mean that Paul and Silas had it wrong? When the Philippian jailor cried out, "[30] Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" they responded, "[31] Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved …" (Acts 16:30-31). Ralph Winter would have them say, "Yield to the kingdom that we're working on for God and be saved!" With this twist, it becomes evident that Winter, and everyone like him, MUST be convinced that God will be bringing about great revivals in our day. If they actually believed the Scriptures that tell us that there will be a great falling away before Christ returns (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3), then they might see the futility of their efforts. Through their re-evaluation of many of the doctrines of Scripture, they have developed their own theology quite apart from God's Word, and have managed to spread that word far and wide among people who are largely ignorant of the Bible.

Is the Frontier Ventures a source of light? Clearly, not! Do they consider themselves to be light? Of course they do! The USCWM stated that it "is a place dedicated to making the glory of God known, and to bringing all the people groups on the earth to obedience and worship of Him (as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ)."[62] There is no mention of salvation, only obedience and worship of God – two things that they deemed necessary for their kingdom to be successful. "If we think that church planting is about saving individuals, we're thinking too small … Church plants are God's kingdom infiltrating the world."[63] There has been a subtle shift from God dealing with individual souls, to the establishment of monuments to the success of spreading the *kingdom* of God. After all, if these people are attending the churches, then they must be bringing glory to God – right? Wrong!! The churches in North America may be full, but most of them do not bring glory to God, so why should it be any different in a foreign country? Beware of what you hear, and always look for the source – find out who it is and what they believe; we must not relax

[62] http://www.uscwm.org/, under "Frequently Asked Questions"; with the merger, this quote is gone.
[63] https://ministryadvice.com/church-planters/.

our guard for a moment! Peter understood this very well and warned us: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Peter 3:17). As *children of light* we are challenged to be alert, lest we succumb to the wiles of the devil and *fall away from* our place *in Christ*!

14. *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

The first phrase, *wherefore he saith*, indicates that Paul is going to quote someone or something, yet the words that follow cannot be found elsewhere in the Scriptures. However, they are similar to Isaiah 60:1-3 that reads: "[1] Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. [2] For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. [3] And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah had just spoken of the Messiah coming to Israel, and it is clear that the light of God will be evident to all, including the Gentiles. The word *wherefore* links this verse with what just preceded it; there is a connection here that must not be forgotten, *on account of* (*wherefore*) what has just been stated, the Spirit now goes on.[64]

Awake is in the imperative mood, is a command, and means to rouse or to pay attention.[65] The command is given to the one who is not alert. Now, clearly, this is not physical sleep that is being spoken of here, for we have been looking at those things that should, and should not, be a part of the believer's life. *Sleepest* is from the Greek word that is used for natural sleep, but, in this case, it is used in a metaphorical sense to describe an indifference, a laziness, or a general lack of attentiveness toward spiritual

[64] Strong's Online.
[65] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

things.[66] The Spirit of God is commanding the believer who is indifferent to the things of God, or who is permitting sin to creep into his life, to rouse himself and shake the grogginess of sleep off. In Romans 13:11-12 we are told: "[11.] … now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. [12.] The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." If the first century believers needed to be called to awaken out of sleep because the day of their salvation was closer than when they first believed, how much more appropriate is this for us today, nearly two thousand years later! Notice that Paul encourages the Roman believers to "cast off the works of darkness" (the *old man*) and to "put on the armor of light" (the *new man*), the very thing that Paul is telling the Ephesians about – the light that reveals and lays bare whatever it shines upon (v. 13). We are to wear this light as a garment of protection (Ephesians 4:20-24).

There are two aspects to this *sleep* that we need to consider: 1) the indifference to spiritual things, and 2) the entrance of sin and sloth into our lives. Let us look at the first of these – the *indifference*. Of the two, this is perhaps the most subtle, but, if left unchecked, it will undoubtedly lead to the second. It is interesting to realize that believers can be asleep and unaware of the reality of what is surrounding them. When we are sound asleep (physically), we are largely oblivious to what is happening around us, and this is a good thing because it permits the body to rest and rejuvenate. However, in the spiritual realm, sleep takes place while our eyes and ears are wide open – a numbness enters into our hearts and we fail to comprehend what should be evident to us. The Spirit's command here is to awaken from this spiritual slumber!

Jesus told us that the access to life is *strait* (*stenos*, narrow), that it opens onto a pathway that has always been *narrow* (*thlibo*, restricted or compressed), and that ***few*** (*oligos*) will ever find it (Matthew 7:13-14).[67] Paul told the Thessalonians that before the Lord returned there would first be an apostasy and the revealing of the Antichrist, the *son of perdition* (2

[66] Vine's "sleep," Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[67] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

Thessalonians 2:1-3). Why do I bring these two thoughts together here? Simply because they are very appropriate within today's Evangelical scene. We find professing Christians strenuously working to broaden the way to life (Chuck Colson, Billy Graham, and Rick Warren have all contributed), and there are many who are advocating that a massive revival is taking place around the world. These are not two separate things, but are actually two parts of the same Evangelical thinking. What does this do? It does two things: 1) most significantly, it sets aside the clear instruction of Scripture that Jesus is the only way to life (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5); 2) the qualifications for salvation that are established by the Lord (Galatians 3:26, James 2:23) are modified so that Evangelicals feel justified in ascribing salvation to many more people than God does. It is upon this sand that Billy Graham felt free to state to Robert Schuller in 1997: "I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ. ... They may not even know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something they don't have, and they turn to the only light they have, and I think they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven."[68] There is a tremendous indifference to the truth of the Word of God and to the things of the Spirit. Jesus' words to the Pharisees are so appropriate for the efforts of many Evangelicals today: "…ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell [*Gehenna*, a reference to the eternal Lake of Fire] than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15).[69] Does this seem to be a bit harsh? Consider that today's Evangelicals skew the Gospel message to their own desires and philosophies, and then gather multitudes to that false message – can those multitudes possibly come to salvation when the message is **not** true? Truthfully, Evangelicals have never accepted the narrow truth of God's Word, but they have diligently propagated their vain philosophies as God's truth – can eternal salvation come from this? NO!!

[68] https://www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1141.cfm.
[69] Strong's Online.

The fables that are being promoted today as Christian teaching can only result in spiritual sleep, complete apathy, and death. This spiritual sleep, from which many will never awaken, can only lead to a deeper deception for the professing Christian, and spiritual death for everyone who is caught in its snare. When we looked at the definition of *sleep*, we saw that it spoke metaphorically of an indifference to spiritual things; the Spirit of God tells us that "… to be carnally minded *is* death" (Romans 8:6). *Carnal* (*sarx*) is literally the flesh of a body (whether human or animal), and is used within a broader context to refer to human nature – that *old man* that functions without the guidance of the Spirit of God. On this basis, we can understand that someone whose way of thinking is *carnal*, limited to the *old man* of sin, cannot be *in Christ*, and is, therefore, subject to *death* – "For the wages of sin *is* death" (Romans 6:23a). There is *death* in this sleep that we have been looking at – a present spiritual death, which then yields to a resurrection to eternal condemnation – the second death (Revelation 20:12-15). Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to vigilance: "… let us not sleep [because we are *children of the day*], as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6). By using *us*, Paul included himself among those who must *watch*; we must all be alert lest we be deceived and drawn into error. Romans 16:17-18 says: "[17.] Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. [18.] For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly [*desire*]; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."[70] The *simple*, as it is used here, does not refer to the simple-minded, but rather to those who are blindly, or willfully, trusting of what others say, who fear nothing from other people. I am reminded of someone who, after changing churches again, said that she was so happy to be able to relax and absorb the messages without having to be on guard. **That** is the identification of the *simple* as used here – someone whose heart is no longer on guard against those deceivingly "good words and fair speeches." Spiritual sleep comes not from exhaustion, but from

[70] Friberg Lexicon.

carelessness or deliberate neglect. We are called to be awake, to be alert, to watch, and to ***avoid*** what does not pass the test of Scripture!

The second aspect of *sleep* is the entrance of sin and sloth into our lives. James tells us: "[14.] … every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15.] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15). He follows this with the command: "Do not err …," and then goes on to elaborate that "every good gift … cometh down from the Father of lights …," Who does not change (James 1:16-17; Malachi 3:6). There is spiritual strength to be gained by studying the Word of God – God does not change, and His Word does not change! People change their minds about many things, and philosophies change to fit the day, but if God said something in His Word, then it is forever!! How many find themselves entrapped by sin because it all began with something that they thought was good, or at least acceptable; there may have been a doubt or two at first, but everyone was doing it – and so it was justified. God does not change, and His Word is ever the same! God's Word states: "… to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17); "for if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge [a full knowledge] of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins…" (Hebrews 10:26); "…the wages of sin *is* death …" (Romans 6:23); "… death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:14). Carelessness can lead to death! We are called to "exhort one another daily … lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). We must hold fast the confidence that we have in Christ's salvation (Hebrews 3:6); we must watch and stand fast in the faith (1 Corinthians 16:13). There is no room for inattentiveness within the Christian walk; we are in a spiritual battle and must be ever vigilant.

Arise (*anistemi*) comes from a Greek word that means to stand up.[71] *Arise* carries the imperative mood – we are commanded to stand up! *From* (*ek*) also translates as *out of*, or *away from*.[72] Therefore, the command is for us to *stand up out of*, or *stand up away from – the dead*. The Greek

[71] Vine's "arise."
[72] Friberg Lexicon.

word used here is *nekros*, which means dead, lifeless; it is preceded by a definite article, hence our translation of *the dead*. Once again, this is not physical but spiritual. There is a similarity between spiritually sleeping and being spiritually dead; like the dead, the sleeping are unaware of their surroundings. If we consider the context of this command that follows on the heels of being commanded to awaken from sleep, then it seems appropriate to say that we are to stand up out of, or away from, *the dead*; if we do not deal with our spiritual sleep, then we will soon become like the dead who surround us. There is a relationship between the sleeping and the dead – the sleep, if permitted to continue, will lead to death. This is a call to action, lest we succumb to sleep and never awaken. We have already noted that the spiritual indifference and sin that creeps in will lead to spiritual sleep, and ultimately, if left unchecked, to apostasy – death! The Scriptures are clear that if we, who have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, willfully sin (it is the pattern of our lives), then there is **no more sacrifice** for our sins (Hebrews 10:26-29); apostasy, falling away from faith in the Lord, is final – there is no recovery!

We come now to the last phrase of our verse – *Christ shall give thee light*. This promise is subject to the fulfillment of the first two conditions being met. IF we awaken from spiritual sleep, and IF we arise out of the dead, THEN Christ, our Savior, will give us light – literally, *Christ will cause thee to understand*.[73] We learned in verses 11 and 13 that the unfruitful works of darkness are to be exposed, and it is light that will cause them to be known. The *light*, or the ability to comprehend, is identified as coming from Christ. It is as we grow in Christ that our understanding will be sharpened so that we are able to discern *good and evil* (Hebrews 5:14, literal) – it is as our comprehension of Christ and His Word increases (learning to discern *good*) that we will be able to recognize with greater surety the works of darkness (*evil*). There are two reasons for this enlightenment: 1) if there are things in our lives that need to be corrected, our growing understanding of Christ will reveal them so that we can then settle the matter with the Lord, and 2) it is the light of Christ that will provide us with the needed clarity (discernment) to expose

[73] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

the evil that comes across our pathway. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). The light of Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1-5), will enlighten us so that we will know where we stand, **and** it will illumine the path ahead so that we are able to walk in truth and not be drawn away from the Narrow Way that leads to life. Herein is the difficulty in which the majority of Evangelicals find themselves today. The Word of God has largely been set aside, either because of a general neglect, the development of theologies that have sprung up because of this neglect, or the multitude of translations that take God's Word away from them. Because of these things, the enlightenment that comes from Christ alone has been abandoned for the darkness of man – philosophies and deceptions that are devoid of truth, built according to the traditions of men (Colossians 2:8). Without the Word of God, we have no access to the Light to ensure that we are standing on the Rock of our salvation (2 Samuel 22:47), and there is no light to illumine the path upon which we are walking. How great is the darkness that has descended upon many who claim to hold the Word of God yet fail to respond to its clear teachings. Those who seek to broaden the way to life (which is everyone involved in promoting the Ecumenical-unity message of New Evangelicalism) have turned their backs on God's Word. "Awake thou that sleepest" is God's word to them today!

15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

The Greek word translated here as *see* (*blepo*) appears elsewhere as *take heed*, *beware*, or *discern* – it is in the imperative mood: this is a command.[74] *Then* draws what has come before as the reason for the command; the groundwork for this command has been laid by what Paul has just covered. *Walk*, as we have seen before, has to do with our living, our conduct. *Circumspectly* is a word that we don't use much anymore, but it is from the old English that means to be "cautious, prudent, or

[74] Strong's Online.

watchful on all sides."[75] The Greek *akribos*, from which it is translated, means carefully, diligently, or accurately.[76] As you can see, there is some difference; the Greek meaning demands an attention to details that the English translation does not include – *circumspectly* provides the big picture but fails to include the precision on which the Greek focuses. So what do we have here? Because we have just been given the promise that Christ will give us understanding, we are to take heed that we live with diligence lest we become careless and succumb to sleep, or, even worse, spiritual death.

This is so unlike what we see about us today. Consider Rick Warren. While speaking at the 2005 congress of the Baptist World Alliance, he is quoted as saying: "I see absolutely zero reason in separating my fellowship from anybody."[77] So what is the Baptist World Alliance that Warren would feel so free to make this declaration? In their own words: "One important BWA ministry involves theological conversations with other world Christian bodies. It is important to meet and talk with Christian communities to better understand the similarities and differences and to explore areas where Christians can agree to be in fellowship and to cooperate together."[78] Lest we be left in the dark about whom they are speaking, they have identified what they mean by *other world Christian bodies*: "Over the last 20 years the BWA has had conversations with the Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Mennonite Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian unity [a Roman Catholic product of the Second Vatican Council]. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul."[79] Each one of these either is an active participant with the World Council of Churches, has members who are in the WCC, is Roman Catholic, or is in active conversation with the Roman Catholics to discover common

[75] American Dictionary of the English Language (1828), "circumspect."
[76] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[77] http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/006/pd-deception.htm
[78] http://www.bwanet.org/default.aspx?pid=400
[79] Ibid.

ground. Two things show up immediately: 1) Rick Warren, if he adhered at all to the Scriptures, had no right to speak at a BWA congress, and 2) by making this statement to a congress of Ecumenical zealots, he is affirming that he will not separate from those who are Ecumenical. Warren has demonstrated the exact opposite of the command of our verse – rather than exercising caution and endeavoring to follow the Word of God with great precision in matters relating to heresy and heretics, he has chosen to raise his voice against God and arrogantly declare his allegiance with the enemies of our faith. Rick Warren is presently riding a wave of popularity; his message and materials are being heard and read around the world by Christian leaders in third world countries where there are few resources to expose his errors. In addition, thousands of congregations are being led through his materials by those who have been duped into believing what he says, or are too lazy to check him out according to Scripture. It is evident that Warren is a key player in the movement of the Evangelical community today – ever deeper into religious paganism. The Lord told us in His Word that this would take place, for Christ will not return "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). I do not see Warren as being that prophesied *son of perdition*, but he is contributing to the apostasy that began in the 4th-century AD, and so doing his part to prepare the way for that puppet of Satan (the Antichrist).

If we are to heed the warning and command of our text, then we must be alert to men like Warren who propagate a soft message of lies and deceit, interwoven with a thin thread of Biblical truth. We are to walk with precision in the commands of the Word of God. We have no excuse for compromise; it is to have no place in the life of the believer: in the word of our text, *beware*!!

Then, we are to beware lest we walk as fools and not in the accuracy that this text demands (*akribos, circumspectly*). Rick Warren and all who follow his lead are walking as fools; they are not regarding the Word of God, nor are they attending carefully to its instruction. We, on the other

hand, are to walk as those who are wise, giving heed to the Lord's instructions in His Word. The Greek word translated as *fools* is the word for *unwise*; the parallel that is created here is that we are not to be *unwise* (*asophos*), but *wise* (*sophos*) – a word that means skilled with the ability to apply knowledge to life (for us, it means to live in obedience to the Lord).[80] This fits so well with the admonition to walk *circumspectly*. It is often very discouraging to look out over the multitudes who fall under the umbrella of Evangelicalism – there is little heed given to the Lord's instructions – there is a tremendous neglect of His Word and a growing zeal for Ecumenical unity. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3); "for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous [or burdensome]" (1 John 5:3).[81] Separation from the world, from error, and from those who profess faith in Christ but are living in error, are all commands of God. Despite the best efforts of Evangelicals today to dismiss them, these commands are still in the Word of God and we are still warned to follow them with great accuracy and diligence – as those who are *wise*.

16. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

Simply put, this tells us to take advantage of every opportunity that comes our way, because the times in which we live *are evil*.[82] The purpose of this alertness is to shine the light of Christ on the works of darkness – a natural outcome of walking *circumspectly*. The Word of God is the light that shows us where we stand, and illuminates the path upon which we walk (Psalm 119:105); however, if we do not walk carefully in the light of God's Word, then we do not have light for our pathway. When Rick Warren, who neglects the Word of God, says, "Here is a path; walk in it," he is shining the darkness of his own philosophical thinking onto that path

[80] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[81] Strong's Online.
[82] Ibid.

– a *darkness* that he calls *light*; yet he bears no light to show the way that leads to life. "[22] The light [*luchnos*, lamp] of the body is the eye [the eye admits light, and enables understanding]: if therefore thine eye be single [healthy, clear], thy whole body shall be full of light. [23] But if thine eye be evil [*poneros*, unhealthy, in poor condition], thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light [*phos*, not the source] that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness" (Matthew 6:22-23).[83] What a picture of modern Evangelicalism! Today, Evangelical leaders have become very learned (in the eyes of men); they excel in philosophical thinking and developing great and marvelous theologies, yet they have failed to cultivate the fear of the Lord that is "the beginning [foundational condition] of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).[84] They have stripped the Word of God of its inerrancy, and subjected it to the same analysis that they would ascribe to any piece of ancient literature; they have reduced the commands of God to culturally sensitive suggestions that have little or no bearing on our lives today. Yet they claim to hold to the Truth, they still quote from the Scriptures (however bent they might be from the hands of modern translators), and they still call themselves Christians and claim to walk in the ways of God. In reality, they have perverted the Gospel of Christ, their understanding is evil, and they are full of darkness! "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship [partaking together] hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion [intimacy] hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14).[85] The answer to both of these questions is, absolutely nothing!

Despite this, modern Evangelicals seek to circumvent the truth of God's Word through Ecumenical cooperation, whether on the larger scale of Billy Graham commending the pope, or on the smaller, seemingly more insignificant front of participation in local church cooperation. The scale of involvement makes no difference – both are a violation of the Word of God! When an organization says that they are Christian, and cultivates

[83] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[84] TWOT #2097.
[85] Strong's Online.

associations with those who are not, or propagates doctrine that is not Biblical, they are in violation of the Word of God – they are unrighteous! If we desire to walk circumspectly before God, then we must not support them in any way; we are to reprove their deeds and separate from them. The teaching of Scripture is clear; all that we need is the will to make it a reality in our own lives.

Billy Graham with Pope John Paul II

The one who walks wisely will seize the opportunities that the Lord sends his way. There have been times when it is clear that the Lord has given me the right words for the moment, but I fear that there have been many more times when my mind has gone blank and I have missed those opportunities – when they are missed, they are gone. We must take every occasion that we have to shine the light of Christ; He has promised to give us discernment – but we must be spiritually awake in order to be used by Him to expose the darkness to His light.

17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord* is.

This is a small commandment – simple, yet with far reaching implications. The Greek word translated as *unwise* is not the same as that translated as *fools* in v. 15 (which we noted as being *unwise*). There, *wise* meant those who are skilled in applying knowledge to life.[86] However, here the Greek word translated as *unwise* (*aphron*) means without reason, senseless, foolish, or silly.[87] Based upon what has come before, we are commanded to not be foolish but to understand the will of the Lord. Today, His will has become a mysterious unknown to many, and to others it is whatever they want – both are problematic. Some appear to be stalled in life because they are unable to determine the Lord's will; others

[86] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.
[87] Ibid.

accomplish many things and say that the Lord gave it to them, or that the Lord showed them what to do – when many times their accomplishments are contrary to the Scriptures. Can we know the will of God? "… be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). It seems clear that the will of God can be known, but that it comes through a renewed mind, and being conformed to this world stands in opposition to the will of God and a renewed mind.

When we drive down the highway and see a sign that says, "Maximum 100," we rarely debate the meaning of the sign. The message is clear and concise – the maximum speed on that highway is 100 kilometers per hour; the will of the law of the land is that everyone who drives that highway is not to exceed that speed. However, when we look into the Word of God, and read: "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17), we struggle to understand the will of the Lord in this matter. Perhaps our struggle is less with knowing what the Lord wants, and more with our unwillingness to obey what He has commanded. God's desire is for us to be a holy people unto Him, and this will only come to pass through our obedience to the commands of Scripture, which is the expression of God's will to us, His people. Another prerequisite is that we must be His people, born again by His Spirit (John 15:1-5). If we set the clear teachings of Scripture aside, then we do so to our own peril. Jesus' words are as true today as they were the day that He spoke them: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth [*is doing*, present tense] the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).[88] Evangelicals today have focused their attention on many things, but what they have set aside is God's call to separation and holiness – yet, above all else, we are to be holy before Him (Hebrews 12:14). This will only find fulfillment through the working of the Spirit of God within us, and our obedience to His commandments.

[88] Strong's Online.

18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*;

The first part of this verse states simply: *and not being made drunk by wine in which is debauchery*.[89] Elsewhere, the Greek word for *excess* (*asotia*) is translated as "riot," and brings to mind the life of the prodigal son before he came to his senses (Luke 15:13; a different form of the same Greek word is used), or the life lived "according to the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2).[90] The Greek word used to describe drunkenness, specifically marks the process of becoming drunk (it is in the present tense), rather than pointing solely to the final state;[91] so the admonition here is not to enter onto the pathway that leads to intoxication. This might seem to be an odd thing to say at this juncture (after the charge to understand the *will of the Lord*), but consider what wine does. Someone who has had too much to drink no longer has full control of his thinking, speaking, or his motor skills (he has become *unwise*); the drink has gained control, which is really an overall lack of control. This is not to take place within the believer, but, by contrast, he is to be filled with the Spirit of God: "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5-8; cp. Colossians 2:8-9).

Rodney Howard-Browne

Incredibly, the Charismatic movement calls being "drunk" in the Spirit a "sign gift" of His filling. Rodney Howard-Browne, from Tampa, Florida, calls himself a "'Holy Ghost bartender' who dispenses the 'new wine' of charismatic fervor."[92] It seems absurd that Charismatics would use drunkenness to characterize what they believe to be the filling of the Holy Spirit. What is even more inconceivable, is that they will use Ephesians

[89] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.
[90] Strong's Online.
[91] Vine's "drunk."
[92] https://jesus-is-savior.com/False%20Doctrines/Charismatic%20Movement/unholy_laughter.htm.

5:18 to justify their actions – claiming that this verse indicates that there is a correlation between appearing to be drunk and being Spirit-filled. They also go to Acts 2 for support for their drunken behavior, claiming that when the apostles were filled with the Spirit of God at Pentecost, they appeared to be drunk. The Charismatics expose their lack of Biblical discernment by not reading the passage carefully: it was the mockers who called the apostles drunk; the rest of the people heard the message that God had for them, each in his own language, and were convicted.

What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit?" First of all, we need to note that this is a command to be obeyed; the word *filled* is in the imperative mood, and means to be made full.[93] *Filled* is also in the present tense and passive voice – it is to be a continual filling, and we cannot do the filling, but God will do it – after all, it is His Spirit. The command is that we must be willing for the Lord to accomplish this *filling* in us – if we are not willing, then He will not fill us against our wills. In Galatians 5:16-21, Paul lists many works of the flesh and then follows it with the fruit of the Spirit (vs. 22-23): love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This fruit stands in contrast to the works of the flesh, and we read further: "… they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). So then, if we are *in Christ*, then we are to have crucified the flesh, and if we "walk in the Spirit, … [then we] shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Jesus said, "Abide in me … as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). It is through this abiding relationship that the fruit will come, not the fruit of the flesh, but the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said, "[15.] If ye love me, keep my commandments. [16.] And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17.] *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:15-17). Notice that there is both a command and a promise here. The command: *keep my commandments*; the promise: God will give a Comforter Who is prepared to be with us

[93] Strong's Online.

forever. What is the contingency? – our obedience. We can again use Israel as an example: as we have seen before, the positive promises of God to them were sure, but they were dependent upon their obedience to His commands. Nothing has changed; God is still the same – He has promised the Spirit Who is committed to abiding with us forever, **if** we will live in obedience to His Word. The filling by the Spirit of God is sure, but we must walk in submission to His commands – which Jesus says that we will do if we love Him.

So what is the correlation between not being drunk with wine, and being filled with the Spirit? We are NOT to permit wine to gain control over our minds, words and actions, but we ARE to be filled to the brim with the Spirit of God so that we will produce words and works in accordance with righteousness. "…put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24); "… O man of God … follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Timothy 6:11; Romans 6:19).

Is Rodney Howard-Browne filled with the Spirit of God when he dispenses "drunkenness," laughter, and animal noises on his listeners? To be filled with the Spirit of God requires obedience to God's Word – is Rodney Howard-Browne obedient to the Word of God? The short answer is: "No." First of all, we read that "God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace …" (1 Corinthians 14:33), which is an admonition given to the Corinthian believers who were failing in the area of spiritual gifts. It is clear from a brief observation of Rodney at work that he promotes confusion and bedlam wherever he goes; he has the same problem as the Corinthians regarding the gifts of the Spirit of God. Secondly, his church (called The River) is led by eleven couples, two women and one man, and all of them, including the wives, carry the title of "pastor."[94] Setting aside the misuse of the term "pastor" these days, and simply equating this term with the Biblical bishop or elder, places the Howard-Browne ministry in sharp violation of Scripture without even looking at their aberrant doctrine of being filled with the Spirit. Unfortunately, this sacrilege is not limited

[94] https://www.revival.com/river/pastoralteam.

to Rodney, but is characteristic of the Charismatic movement to varying degrees – a movement that is long on compromise and accommodation, but very short on obedience to the Word of God; they emphasize love to the sacrifice of holiness. God is not pleased!

19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*;

This is a continuation from the previous verse that ended with the admonition to be filled with the Spirit; therefore, it is reasonable to consider that what follows here is illustrating what will flow out of a Spirit-filled life. *Psalms* comes from a Greek word (*psalmos*, a noun) that primarily means a striking or twanging, as in to play a musical instrument, and later came to mean a sacred song sung to a musical instrument.[95] The Greek word *humnos*, translated as *hymns*, speaks of a song of praise addressed to God.[96] Lastly, we have *spiritual songs*: the Greek word for *songs* is a generic term, hence the qualification of them being *spiritual* songs. Therefore, Paul mentions songs that are played, or sung and accompanied, specifically songs of praise to God, and then general songs of spiritual value, probably of encouragement, or challenge, in the Christian life. Our verse says that we are to use these in *speaking to yourselves*. This is not saying that we are to talk to ourselves – the word *speaking* means to give voice to, or to utter.[97] *Psalms*, *hymns* and *spiritual songs* are used to communicate with one another about the spiritual life that we have in God, and an expression of our gratitude to Him. All of these will characterize a life that is lived in conformity with the Spirit of God (obedience to Him); there is variety here, but it is also clear that there is a focus on God and our living.

You will notice that there is no provision here for including the songs of the world. All of the Scriptures that call us to separation, make it clear

[95] Vine's "psalm."
[96] Vine's "hymn."
[97] Strong's Online.

that we are to separate from the world, and this must include their music as well. The excuse used by Christians today for filling their minds with the dregs of worldly music is that music is neutral. Keith Green, a well-known name in Christian music circles from yesteryear, said, "I believe music, in itself, is a neutral force."[98] In *Worship Leader*, Barry Liesch wrote: "I contend … that music without words is morally neutral … Music style is neutral, ethically and morally."[99] However, those who are deeply involved in writing and performing the world's music openly admit that they know that their music is of the flesh and that it is used to promote a sinful lifestyle. A rock musician openly confessed: "Rock is the total celebration of the physical," and another said that "rock music is sex. The big beat matches the body's rhythms."[100] So we have Evangelicals desperately hanging onto the badly frayed thread of "music is neutral," while those musicians to whom they like to listen, openly declare that their music is rebellious and anti-church. The world sees their music for what it is, yet professing Christians will ignore this reality and vainly cling to their empty philosophy in an effort to justify their fleshly habits. We cannot profess separation from the world while embracing its music; many "Christian" musicians today, however, have no qualms about confessing their love of worldly music and its musicians. For example, Michael W. Smith, in an interview with *Inside Magazine*, openly admitted that his music is influenced by Alan Parsons, probably "one of the most occultic rock musicians."[101] "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?" (James 3:11); the understood answer is, "No!" If professing Christian musicians feed on the dregs of worldly music, can the Lord then be honored by their

Alan Parsons

Michael W. Smith

[98] "The Heresy of Claiming that Music is Neutral," http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/heresyofclaiming.htm
[99] https://worshipleader.com/leadership/is-music-morally-neutral/.
[100] "The Heresy of Claiming that Music is Neutral," http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/heresyofclaiming.htm.
[101] http://www.scribd.com/doc/81730171/Replacing-Hymns-With-Contemporary-Praise-Music

music, which is patterned after the world? No! In the selection of types of music, from our verse, there is no place for the songs of the world, which is fitting since our songs are tied to being filled with the Spirit of God.

The Greek word translated as *singing* (*ado*), describes a song of praise, which in the Scriptures is always directed toward God.[102] *Making melody* (*psallo*, a verb form of *psalmos*) strictly means to pluck, or to strike the strings of an instrument with the fingers, then it came to mean to sing to a stringed instrument, and finally, in the NT to sing praises.[103] The correlation of this to the word *psalms* is evident, and the understood application of the term again draws our attention to praise of the Lord. The focus of this phrase is that these songs of praise find their place in our hearts; we might hum or sing them to ourselves, or have them in our heads throughout the day. Once again, there is no room here for the ditties of the world; our minds are to be filled with those things that edify, that draw our thinking to the Lord – those things that support the renewing of our minds by the Spirit of God (Romans 12:2).

We have here the songs that we share with one another, and the songs that we take with us through the day: both are to be spiritual in nature and uplifting in praise to God. There is no provision for the godless music of the world that is filled with debauchery and excess. Today's "Christian" musicians do not exercise discernment as to that with which they fill their minds. Popular artists like Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith admit to enjoying the rock music of the world, and being influenced by it;[104] their lack of discernment is evident in the shallow, compromising presentation of their faith. I say "their faith" because it is not the faith that we find described in Scripture. Unfortunately, this spiritually-anemic music has flowed into the lives of Evangelicals like a flood, and has become another avenue for Ecumenical ties. The Catholic Church has become a big promoter of the so-called contemporary music style, and there are numerous cases of Evangelical and Catholic singers coming together to

[102] Vine's "sing."
[103] Vine's "melody"; Friberg Lexicon.
[104] We've already seen Smith's failure in this area; Grant has said that she enjoys "Billy Joel [a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame], Kenny Loggins [a twice-divorced soft-rocker] and the Doobie Brothers [an American rock band]" (http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Evils%20in%20America/CCM/amy_grant-exposed.htm)

produce music albums, do concerts, or simply promote the growing theme of Ecumenism.[105] Evangelicals have become so mentally and spiritually lethargic that no one ever takes the time to look at who is singing, what he believes, and to examine the lyrics of the songs in order to discover how shallow and unbiblical they really are. Rather, they have bought into the whole "worship" music fad that has become nothing more than a promotion of shallow theology in the form of what has been kindly termed "7-11" choruses (the repetition of 7 words 11 times). The Evangelical youth of today have no desire for the hymns and spiritual songs of years gone by. They have no regard for the Scriptures, and fill their hearts and minds with ditties and rock music of all flavors to their own spiritual undoing. Such music has no place in the heart and mind of the obedient saint of God.

20. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*;

Here is something else that is to characterize those who are filled with the Spirit of God – they are to be thankful. Ingratitude has become a common trait of our world today (2 Timothy 3:2); the attitude is that society owes us something, and thankfulness has been forced into the back seat. Yet the life that has been impacted by the Spirit of God is to exemplify gratitude *for all things – for all things*? "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose" (Romans 8:28) – for the purpose of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, the One Who suffered for us (Hebrews 12:5-6). This is a gratitude that is founded upon faith in God – faith that God will orchestrate the trials that we are going through, for our good. We are often shortsighted; we have a perspective on life that is bound by the restraints of time. God, on the other hand, views time from

[105] "Smith ... became good friends with U2's Bono [the principle writer for this rock band]. The two have joined forces in a number of performances for Bono's DATA Organization" (http://voices.yahoo.com/michael-w-smith-one-christian-musics-legends-124630.html)

timelessness and can see the end from the beginning – He knows our frame, and He knows exactly what we need in order to bring about His purposes in our lives. Do we understand this all of the time? Clearly not. However, our faith in God must be sufficient so as to permit Him to work in us that which will ultimately bring Him glory and accomplish our *good*.

For all things sounds like we are to be thankful ***for*** *all things* that come our way. If we remove this phrase and consider what is left, then we will begin to understand what is being said: *giving thanks always … unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. *Huper* (*for*) literally means above or over;[106] therefore, we understand that our gratitude to the Lord stands **above** the difficulty of *all things* that we face. It is not that we are to be thankful **for** the trials and troubles, but our gratitude in their midst is to the Lord Who is over all and in control of what is permitted to come into our lives. Will we always understand why we are facing such trials? No! But we can be assured that God is using them for our greater good – if we will be so exercised (Hebrews 5:14).

Will this be easy? Not at all, as a matter of fact, it can be extremely difficult. For example, my wife has struggled with physical illness for many years with no diagnosis that could lead to a restoration of health. This has taken its toll on us; are we to be thankful in this? This is one of the "all things" in which we can be thankful that it is under God's control. Our faith in God must be such that we trust Him to use this in our lives to accomplish what He could not do any other way. Peter speaks of "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory **at the appearing of Jesus Christ**" (1 Peter 1:7); we may be with the Lord before we begin to see the glory-side of our trials. Our faith is tried so that we will bring praise and honor to God; do we always understand this eternal perspective? No, but we must trust the One Who holds our future in His hands. Another example is our son who has disowned us and cut us off from seeing three of our grandchildren. Does this verse mean that we are to give thanks to God in the name of the Lord

[106] Friberg Lexicon.

Jesus Christ in this? It can mean nothing else. How can we be grateful in the midst of something so hurtful and baseless? Our gratitude must come from our belief that God knows about this experience, and that He can use it to bring about good in us. Do we understand this? No, but it is not our place to understand the ways of God, for His ways are so much higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9); it is our place to accept this as being permitted by a loving God Who desires His purposes to be accomplished in our lives.

This attitude of thankfulness is to characterize those within whom the Spirit of God abides. We may not be able to rejoice and be grateful for the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but we can express joy and thanks that we still rest in the hands of God and can commit our trials to Him. Our gratitude to God is to be proclaimed in the *name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. As we focus on the Lord Jesus, it will reinstate a proper understanding of this life for us. It is Jesus Who left the splendors of heaven to take on the body of a man, and it is Jesus, the pure, sinless Son of God, Who died a brutal death for my sins. "[2] My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [or trials]; [3] Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience [*hupomone* – endurance]" (James 1:2-3).[107] "[12] Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: [13] But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13). "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19). What is the will of God? It is that we obey His commands; if we suffer through our obedience to His Word, then we must remain committed to Him in the midst of the trial (2 Timothy 3:12) – as we do so, we will be given the strength to endure. Jesus assured us that "in the world ye shall have tribulation [*thlipsis*, oppression, affliction, distress]: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).[108] He also said: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"

[107] Strong's Online.
[108] Ibid.

(Mark13:13). It is only as we gain an eternal perspective on our lives and the troubles therein, that we will discover the patience to endure in the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:22 – "longsuffering").

21. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God*.

We have now a third evidence of being filled with the Spirit – subjecting (*submitting*) ourselves to one another.[109] Herein is accountability within the Body of Christ. Keeping in mind the *fear of God*, we make ourselves subject to one another. This is a glaring failure within the independent Baptist churches, and is downplayed within all churches that hold to a clergy/laity form of functioning. Within the independent Baptist economy, the "pastor" is the undisputed authority in all matters; if he says it, then it must be right. There is a passing acknowledgment of the need to examine all leaders according to Scripture to determine their faithfulness, but the broader understanding is that you are to submit to the *pastor* and walk in obedience to him (and they will abuse Hebrews 13:7 and 17 to support their position[110]). However, this is contrary to our verse that requires a submission among all of the saints to one another. Rather than living humbly *among* the saints (1 Peter 5:1-3), independent Baptist *pastors* assume sufficient authority to simply disregard those with whom they do not agree until they leave the congregation (or, as we have seen, he will have them excommunicated). If we believe the thrust of this verse (and we must), then to do other than submit to one another is to demonstrate pride, which is sin and contrary to being filled with the Spirit of God. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). In many cases, I think that it is easier for the *elder* to submit to the *younger*, whether because of a growing weariness with striving, or intimidation by the youth's greater learning and/or energy. However, the exhortation is

[109] Strong's Online.

[110] The word *rule*, in these verses, means *to lead*; the word *obey* does not signify a blind submission, but rather the result of being persuaded to follow, after examination. There is no Biblical concept of submission to someone based solely on their "position"; rather, this *obey* comes after obedience to God's call to test all spirits (1 John 4:1).

that the younger is to submit to the elder (the novice in life to the veteran), and then the admonition for mutual submission is given. "*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3). If we truly believed that we are a part of the Body of Christ, and that "… whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26), we would have less difficulty humbling ourselves and submitting to one another ***in Christ***. As one independent Baptist constitution puts it, the pastor will "carefully use the advice of the deacons and church leaders …";[111] however, this is not even close to what the Spirit of God is instructing here. The Holy Spirit says that where He is active, there will be submission one to another, without regard for MANufactured positions.

First Peter 2:9 reads: "But ye [*who are believing* (from verse 7)] *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people …." This is the basis for NOT falling into the clergy/laity distinction: we, who are born again by the Spirit of God, are ALL priests before God, and we each bear responsibility to Him. We cannot hide behind the pastor when we stand before God; if he propagates error, then we must hold him accountable now so that he can change, or we must leave. When we stand before God to give an account, "the pastor said it" will not suffice as a reason for believing, or doing, anything. We love to proclaim that we can individually come to God with our needs (as priests), but we too often fail to recognize the fact that we are also individually accountable to Him. We criticize the Catholic Church for their practice of placing the priests between God and the people, but, within Evangelicalism, it is evident that the clergy often fills that very same role for the laity. Evangelicals may not go to confession, but neither do they spend time in the Word of God, studying it for themselves to learn what God has for them – they depend on a twenty-minute pep talk on Sunday mornings to bring them to spiritual maturity. The failure of this is evident in the deplorable state of modern Evangelicalism: the so-called saints of God looking, by all accounts,

[111] Constitution and Guidelines of the Emmanuel Baptist Church (1998 edition), p. 10.

identical to the world that abides under the rule of Satan. These things ought not to be.

Before the Lord gave Moses His instructions on Mt. Sinai, He asked him to proclaim to the children of Israel: "… if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6). This was **never** accomplished, for the foundation of obedience never took place. Now we, who are born-again by the Spirit of God through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, are called a "royal priesthood," and a "holy nation." However, once again, the contingency upon which this will be made a reality is our obedience to the Word of God. Romans 11 makes it clear that we have been grafted into the Root of spiritual Israel (the Lord Jesus Christ) by faith, and it is the faith-works of obedience that ensures that we remain *in Him*. The promise of God is still the same, and the basis for its fulfillment is still obedience.

Note, from our verse, that this is not a blind mutual submission; it is a submission that is done "in the fear of God." Herein is the key that keeps this from becoming anarchy; if everyone blindly submitted to everyone else, then nothing would be done. We are told that "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*…" (Psalm 111:10). We do not blindly submit to someone because they have an opinion of what we are doing, or should do; rather, we measure their comments by the Word of God and evaluate their teaching according to God's instructions to us. Neither do we blindly submit to someone because of a position that they might seem to hold; therein is the massive error that is being perpetuated among Evangelicals today – they have capitulated their responsibility of measuring what they hear against the Word of God in favor of simply heeding the words of their "pastors" and "learned theologians." Although one independent Baptist church rightly acknowledges that, "every believer today is a priest of God and may enter into His presence …. We all have equal access to

God – whether we are a preacher or not,"[112] another independent Baptist church has openly declared the more common practice: "The Pastor shall be the executive head of the church and the president of the corporation. He shall have the general oversight of the entire church and shall perform all necessary duties relating to such oversight."[113] Once again, it seems that practice has departed from doctrine – the "pastor," as they so love to be called, is still held in excessively high regard and given almost unlimited authority.

In the message of Jesus to the failing elder of the assembly in Ephesus, He noted: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (Revelation 2:6); to the elder in Pergamos, He said: "[14] But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. [15] So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:14-15). In both of these, mention is made of the Nicolaitanes, and it is clear that this group was to be avoided. Names are always of interest in the Word of God – consider Balaam, whose name in the Greek means "perhaps," and in Hebrew, "not of the people."[114] What an appropriate description of Balaam: his commitment to Balak was always "perhaps I can curse them," and even though he spoke the words of God, he was not of God's people. "Balac," on the other hand, means "devastator or spoiler" in both languages,[115] and this is an apt description of his action against Israel.

Then we come to the name "Nicolaitanes." There are those who claim that the Nicolaitanes were followers of Nicolas, one of the seven who were appointed to oversee the needs of the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 6:5), however, this is largely in dispute; it is also claimed that they were those who were lovers of pleasure, and were indifferent to immorality and

[112] Extract from "Baptist Distinctives" of Bethel Baptist Church, http://www.bethelbaptist.ca/baptist_distinct.htm .
[113] Extract from the "Constitution" of Foundation Baptist Church, http://www.foundationbaptistchurch.com/constitution.html .
[114] Strong's Online.
[115] Ibid.

things sacrificed to idols.[116] However, if you read Revelation 2:14-15 carefully, it is clear that those who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes were **in addition to** those who ate things sacrificed to idols and committed fornication. Therefore, we come back to the meaning of the name for insight. It is made up of two words in Greek: *nikos*, which means "victory," or "to utterly vanquish," and *laos*, which means "people."[117] When these are brought together (as they are in this name) it means, the defeat of the people,[118] and speaks of those who lorded it over, or had gained the victory over, the common people. Jesus said unto His disciples: "[25.] … Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26.] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [*diakonos* – servant]; [27.] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [*doulos* – slave]: [28.] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many [*pollon* – *all*[119]]" (Matthew 20:25-28).[120] The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was in direct contravention of both the words and example of the Lord. Yet what do we find today in most churches? We have the clergy and the laity, the professional religious leaders and the average pew-warmer who is taught to look to the clergy for direction and spiritual understanding. We live in a day when the sin of the Nicolaitanes is rampant throughout Baptist and Evangelical traditions – an inheritance from the Roman Catholic Church, which has perfected the clergy-laity separation through their layers of hierarchy from their pastors (or parish priests) all the way to the Pope. In Jesus' words, "… it shall not be so among you"; yet it is so among us!

Our verse is a warning to those "pastors" who set themselves (or permit themselves to be set) above those in their assembly simply because of their assumed position, thereby opening themselves to failure through

[116] These were put forward by Iranæus in his "Against Heresies," Chapter 26.
[117] Strong's Online; http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/nicoltn.html
[118] Strong's Online.
[119] This Greek word can be used in an exclusive sense (many) or inclusive (all), with context being the deciding factor. In this case, passages such as 1 John 2:2 supports this as being *all* (inclusive). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, "polloi."
[120] Friberg Lexicon.

pride – something that God says that He will resist or oppose (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).[121] If someone has proven to be careless in their handling of the Word of God in the past, we must take extra care in examining their words against the Scriptures. However, if they have proven to have a heart for God and a sincerity of faith, then we would do well to give particular attention to their words while still weighing them carefully against God's Word. This is what precedes the obedience referred to in Hebrews 13:17, something that must never be overlooked. We must continually test all things and everyone, against the principles of Scripture (1 John 4:1).

22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

Having just cited the need for mutual submission, Paul now goes into a section explaining that there are differing roles within marriage, as there are differing roles within the Body of Christ. This does not negate what has just been said about mutual submission, but rather places it within a particular context – again, to prevent what could deteriorate into anarchy, or at least confusion. We have already noted that the first context is to be the fear of God, and we must not lose sight of that as we look further into what lies ahead.

The first earthly relationship with which Paul deals is that of husband and wife, and he begins with the wife. *Submit,* in this case, is from the same Greek word as used in verse 21 when speaking of *submitting* to one another. However, there is a change in the mood of the term – this time it is in the imperative mood (a command). The wife is to be under submission to **her** husband, not anyone else's husband, and this is to be a submission like unto the Lord. There are two qualifiers to this submission. Within the context of the mutual submission just discussed (from v. 21), a man cannot tell another man's wife how she is to conduct herself (he might tell her, but her obligation for submission is to her own husband,

[121] Friberg Lexicon.

not to another man). Ultimately, as in any case of submission, it cannot be beyond what is required of her by the Lord; the guiding rule, even with her own husband, is that her submission must be *as unto the Lord*. Nothing that her husband might require of her can be outside of the guidelines of what the Lord would require.

It is of interest to note that the Scriptures here do not contradict, in any way, God's pronouncement to Eve: "… thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). In fact, it is further reinforcement that God does not change. What society finds fashionable may change, but God and His Word do not. Feminism, in general, has sought to undo the decree of God, and to set women and men on an equal basis concerning their roles in society and marriage. Although God's mandate contains nothing that indicates that women are inferior to men (both are made in the image of God – Genesis 1:27), within many cultures, that has happened; God's desire is that there be equality, but within differing roles. Yet the feminist movement has sought to turn the tables, and, in many cases, has endeavored to make women superior to men, undoubtedly to the joy of Satan. What is sad to note is the infiltration that this thinking has had into the Evangelical mind; the differing roles that God designed for the man and woman have been set aside in an effort to pursue what is expedient, or perhaps what is deemed to be a personal dream. God is not pleased with this, for it shows a failure on the part of both the man and the woman to understand what God's intent is for each of them.

23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*.

Just in case we missed the significance of the wife being submissive to her husband, the thought is restated in terms that are even more offensive to today's feminist: "the husband is the head of the wife." Once again, this has **nothing** to do with equality or value, and everything to do with the roles that God intends for the man and the woman within the context of

marriage. Feminism is defined as "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes."[122] The outworking of this theory has taken many forms, but one thing that has remained consistent is its focus on making the man and the woman equal in all situations, with total disregard to any distinction of roles. The fact that there is a thing today called "Christian Feminism" tells us that the thrust of feminist thinking has entered the Christian arena. How do "Christians" get around God's words to Eve that her husband would rule over her? Pope John Paul II said that the "disorder caused by sin has now been overcome in Christ,"[123] thereby casting God's prescribed roles within marriage into the *disorder caused by sin*, and thereby placing the feminist agenda within the reach of all Roman Catholics. Within Evangelicalism, we have the "Christians for Biblical Equality" (CBE) movement that declares their belief in the "equality and essential dignity of men and women."[124]

Pope John Paul II

However, "CBE members are extraordinary advocates for Christ's liberation from human limitations imposed by gender, ethnicity or class,"[125] and therein we see the tentacles of the devil's philosophy. The roles that God, as our Creator, has placed upon men and women for their own good and His glory, are deemed to be *limitations* that have been imposed by generations of men in leadership. Therefore, although the CBE presents itself as being *Christian*, they also advocate that the Bible, when it is "properly interpreted," will yield the fruit of Christian feminism.[126]

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[122] Merriam-Webster Online, "feminism."

[123] As quoted in "True Christian Feminism," Richard John Neuhaus, National Review, (April 2, 2005), http://www.nationalreview.com/flashback/flashback200504021648.asp

[124] http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/about/who_we_are.shtml#statement

[125] http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/membership/ind_family.shtml

[126] CBE has been endorsed by such men as Tony Campolo (general heretic at large), Gordon Fee (Regent College, Vancouver), Richard Foster (Renovaré – spiritual formation guru), as well as professors at Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Seminary (Walter Kaiser), and those with the Salvation Army, YWAM, and InterVarsity.

Earlier (in Ephesians 4:15-16) we saw the use of the metaphor of the body to illustrate Christ's relationship with His own; Christ is the head and we are His body. Elsewhere in Scripture, we see the same language – both Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18 underscore that Christ is the Head of the assembly of the faithful. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 we read: "…the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God." There is an order to what God has designed, and we need to give attention to it. After the pattern of Christ being the Head of the assembly, so the husband is to be the head of the wife. Perhaps if the women who object to this delineation of roles could get past the husband being head of the wife, and realize that this is to be in accordance with Christ as Head of the assembly, they would object less to what God has ordained. On the other hand, perhaps it is because they are unwilling to submit to Christ as the Head of the assembly that they cannot, or refuse to, see the delineation of roles that has been established by God.

However, the verse goes on to add the reminder that Christ is the *Savior of the body*. The Greek word used for *savior* (*soter*) identifies the means of deliverance as a savior, deliverer, or rescuer.[127] We are reminded of Christ's relationship to the assembly of all of the saints: namely, He is the Savior of all who are the faithful ones, those who make up His Body. We have here another clear declaration of Christ being the Head of the Body, His *ekklesia*, and, within this context, it is particularly interesting.

In the previous verse (22), wives are exhorted to live in submission to their husbands as unto the Lord, and now it is declared that the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the Head of the assembly, with the additional reminder that Christ is also its Savior. Therefore, for the husband to fulfill his God-given role to his wife, he must be willing to sacrifice of himself for the preservation of his wife. Listen to God's pronouncement of punishment upon the man: "[17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou

[127] Vine's "Savior"; Friberg Lexicon.

eat *of* it all the days of thy life; [18.] Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19.] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17-19). The man now had to labor in order to provide food for his helpmeet; it was going to cost him dearly to make provision for his wife – she, who was now to desire, or stretch out after, her husband,[128] who was to have the rule over her (Genesis 3:16). God's order for the roles of man and woman within marriage is really quite clear from the very beginning, and that order immediately became the target of Satan's attack. In the sin that took place in the Garden of Eden, Eve was deceived by the smooth talk of Satan, but Adam submitted to his wife and took the forbidden fruit that she offered to him. Today, the roles of husband and wife have become so blended that the authority in the home is often assumed by the wife (and, just as frequently, relinquished to the children), provision for the family is most often shared, and then we stand back in amazement at the failure of today's "Christian" family. The amazement should be that we did not realize that failure was inevitable because we neglected the roles that God has prescribed for the man and the woman. The thrust of Christians for Biblical Equality is not to return to the God-intended roles for the man and woman, but to provide a "Christian" veneer for the worldly elimination of the difference in roles; more plainly, they are there to promote Satan's agenda within the Christian community.

24. *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so* let *the wives* be *to their own husbands in every thing.*

Now we have arrived at a verse that the CBE, and all of those who would support its agenda, will not spend a whole lot of time on, because it runs contrary to their philosophy. Since this is so diametrically opposed

[128] Strong's Online.

to modern thinking, permit me to illustrate how it is presented in several modern translations:

> New International Version: "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives **should** submit to their husbands in everything."
>
> New Century Version: "As the church yields to Christ, so you wives **should** yield to your husbands in everything."
>
> The Message: "So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives **should** likewise submit to their husbands."
>
> New American Standard Bible (NASB): "But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives **ought to be** to their husbands in everything."
>
> Contemporary English Version: "Wives **should** always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first."

There is a theme of variance here; consider carefully the words in bold. The correct translation of the Greek leaves no doubt as to what is to take place between the wives and their husbands: *"So, even as the ekklesia is subject to Christ, thus also the wives* [are to be] *to their own husbands in everything"*(literal).[129] Clearly, there is to be a submission like unto the Body's submission to Christ as its Head; however, each modern translation considered, reduces the certainty of this by introducing words such as "should," or "ought to." Even the NASB, which is generally considered to be a good translation, though based upon a corrupt Greek text, reduces the thrust of this text to something that appears to be optional. This is evidence that the devil has his finger in the many translations that are hitting the market today – if a passage bothers you, wait a moment, for there will soon be a translation to fix that. It is no longer a matter of submitting to the authority of God's Word; the Word of God has been subjected to the ravages of modern man and twisted, cut, and enhanced to fit with any philosophy. Two tools that the devil has used to accomplish this are the philosophy of modern textual criticism, and

[129] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

modern dynamic equivalency translation techniques. The former has resulted in a compromised Greek text that is used by all modern translations of the Scriptures; although the NASB, for example, uses a literal method of translation, the final product is also corrupt because it is based upon a corrupted Greek text. Virtually all other modern translations use the dynamic equivalency method of translation, which simply means that they translate thoughts rather than words (thereby introducing a substantially greater degree of interpretation into the final product), as well as using the corrupted texts for translation (in essence, a double whammy for a significantly compromised result). Among translation committees, there is no longer any regard for the words of the Word of God.

The first word of our verse has been translated as *therefore*, however, the Greek word, in this case, is better understood as *so*;[130] *therefore* does not fit with the Greek *alla*. *Therefore* implies that what follows is a result of what has come before, whereas *so* is an extension, or another application, of what has been taught. What came before? The wives have been called on to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord (v. 22), because the relationship of the husband to the wife is likened to that of Christ to His assembly. Paul has just explained the spiritual reality upon which the marriage relationship is based, and he takes this opportunity to once again express the wife-to-husband relationship. Within God's order, the husband **is** the head of the wife (this is a statement of fact in v. 23); when God pronounced His judgment on Eve, one aspect of that pronouncement was that her husband would *rule over* her (Genesis 3:16). Satan has worked in the minds of women to make that appear to be as oppressive as possible, for if he is able to get the wife to ignore this admonition, and the husband complies, then he has successfully destroyed the home that God desires. As we have seen, all of the primary modern translations soften the requirement at this point.

That is not to say that women have not been oppressed by men through the years, for they have. However, what has taken place with the rise of

[130] Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

feminist thinking is not a correction of the errors of the past but a general tossing aside of the roles that God has ordained for men and women. Women looked at society and its oppression, and decided that it was due to the patriarchal system; consequently, their corrective action was to throw the mantel of male domination off. In essence, the error of the men is now replaced by the error of the women – yet, neither is correct! Men neglected the value and equality of women before God, and women have now failed to recognize their role as ordained by God – a role that was designed by the Creator for their own good. When we refuse the role restrictions that God has ordained, we do so to our own peril. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly common for women to occupy roles of leadership within churches today – roles that, according to God's Word, are set apart for men only (keeping in mind that the clergy/laity distinction is unbiblical as well). This is all justified by the deliberate misinterpretation of some Scriptures, and the avoidance of others. Once again, the difficult, but required task is to remain true to God's Word.

How is the assembly subject to Christ? Perhaps if we understood this, then we would have less difficulty with this admonition, which most modern translations endeavor to downplay. Let's begin with Who Christ is, for if we have a firm understanding of this, then our relationship with Him will find its proper perspective. First of all, Jesus Christ is eternal God. In His discussions with the Jews, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Because the Jews immediately sought to stone Him, it is clear that they understood the full implications of what He had said. He not only clarified that He preceded Abraham, but He also used the name of God in reference to Himself. When Moses met God at the burning bush, he asked God what name he should use for Him when he went to the children of Israel. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). The literal translation of this phrase from John 8:58 is: *"before Abraham did come, I AM."*[131] Jesus clearly identified

[131] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

Himself as being eternal God, and the Jews were prepared to stone Him for doing so.

In Jesus' prayer in John 17, He declared: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (v. 5). This is further evidence that He is eternally God, and was in the presence of God the Father in eternity past. As John began his record of Jesus' ministry, it is no mistake that he wrote: "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Jesus is the eternal Word, the *Logos*, Who took on the form of man. John goes on to say, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). The repeated phrase from the Genesis account of creation is: "and God said"; this is none other than the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus, the eternal *Logos*, bringing all things into existence. The Creator of all things left the glory of heaven to take on the form of man ("the Word was made flesh" John 1:14) so that He could fulfill the promise in Genesis 3:15 and the Law of Moses, so as to bring the hope of eternal redemption to mankind (Hebrews 9:12). The Creator of the universe subjected Himself to death on a cross so that He could purchase humanity out of the grasp of sin, all in accordance with the plan that had been laid down before He began creation itself (Ephesians 1:4; 3:9, 11; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8).

We have looked briefly at Who Jesus is; now, who makes up the assembly (the *ekklesia*)? These are none other than the faithful ones, the saints from all ages, who, while on earth, were/are actively believing in, and obeying, the Savior (either promised or come) to cover their sin. There are no unbelievers in this assembly; all unbelievers are condemned, and remain condemned unless they repent and believe. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). Notice that I have placed the faith of the saints in the present tense; this is not something that we can look back on and say, "On this date I accepted Jesus, and now all is okay." That is not our lot! Hebrews 3:6 says that we are of the house of Christ "if we hold fast the confidence

and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"; clearly, if we do not hold fast to our hope, then we will no longer be of the house of Christ. A few short verses later, we are warned: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). Lest we missed verse six, we are then reminded, "…we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end …" (Hebrews 3:14). The *saint* is required to persevere in faithfulness in order to remain as part of the assembly (*ekklesia*) – unlike modern Evangelicals who promote a pray-a-quick-prayer-for-eternity concept. So, who makes up the assembly? It is made up of the saints of God who have persevered, and **are** persevering in their walk of faith. Today, the devil's phrase, "Yea, hath God said?" continues to find its mark, just as it did on Eve (Genesis 3:1). Herein lies the great deception of Satan: modern churches are filled with those who think that they are on their way to heaven, when, in reality, they have simply swallowed the lie of Satan that heaven is secured by being able to point back to a day when they prayed a little prayer. Unless we hold fast to the faith of Christ, we are fallen away. Today's churches are filled with four kinds of people: 1) those who are living an active faith in Christ and are grieved by the disobedience around them (a very small remnant), 2) those who once held a living faith but no longer hold it, and are apostate, 3) those who have prayed a little prayer and think that they're on their way to heaven (the religious pagan), and 4) those who make no pretense of faith in Christ but attend because it is expedient or expected of them. To the first group the Lord commands: "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). The second group has fallen prey to the deception, with only a small glimmer of hope remaining for their repentance (Revelation 3:2-3); the latter two are unbelievers: some deceived by a smooth, modern theology (3), and others aware of their destiny, while remaining unconcerned (4).

Let us return to our question: how is the assembly subject to Christ? Based on what we have just considered, if we expand the question, then perhaps the answer will become obvious. How are those who are living an active faith in our eternal Creator and Savior subject to Him? The

obvious answer is that we are subject to Christ in all things because He is the Object of our faith, and our desire is to walk in accordance with His words of life to us. He is our provider of all things that we need, our Head; we are completely dependent upon Him to meet all of our needs (Philippians 4:19). As we have learned so far in Ephesians, we, as saints of God, are *in Christ*. We have been called to holiness of life (1 Peter 1:15-16), and we are charged to "walk worthy of the vocation" to which we are called (Ephesians 4:1). We are to have put off our former ways, and "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24), therefore, it is only fitting that our lives are permanently changed. "…if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The saints of God are completely dependent upon Him, for it is only as we are *in Christ* that all things are new. It is only as we remain in Him that we have the life-giving supply that we need (John 15:4-5). It is after this manner that wives are to be subject to their own husbands. However, lest some among us panic at this, the Spirit of God did not stop here.

25. *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

The focus now shifts to the responsibility of the husband. Whereas the wives are told that their submission to their husbands is to be **like unto** the assembly's submission to Christ (a command), the husbands receive a direct command of a very different nature. What we cannot miss, if we are open to the Spirit of God, is that the roles of men and women are not the same, nor are they mirror images of one another; no matter what logic, or rationalization, that the feminists use, God does not deal with the roles of men and women interchangeably. The feminists see red when they hear the admonition to submit to their husbands, yet if they would permit the Spirit of God to open their understanding to what follows for the husbands, perhaps their ire would abate.

One might think that after reading of the command to the wives to submit to their husbands after the pattern of the assembly submitting to Christ, that now we would read of how the husbands are to rule over their wives, but that is not the case. The relationship that God planned for the husband and wife is not simply rule-and-be-ruled. After God created Adam, He said, "*It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). From the moment of creation, woman was made to be a help to man, to be alongside of man – not as one who is inferior, but someone who is a companion and helper. Even within the perfection of the Garden of Eden, the man and the woman filled differing roles; however, with the advent of sin, there came new tensions within these roles. To Eve, God said, "thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). What does this mean? Consider a similar phrasing: "6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Genesis 4:6-7). The word *desire* means "longing, craving," and expresses a very strong feeling; *rule* means "to have dominion, to reign." [132] God personifies sin so that Cain will understand his situation: *sin lieth at the door*, *sin* shall desire you, and you are to *rule over* sin. God had already made provision for sin to be covered (Abel recognized this and prepared his sacrifice accordingly), but it required submission to the authority of God. Cain refused, and his sin of anger at his brother's righteousness led him to murder – Cain did not rule over sin, but rather, sin had dominion over him. It is interesting to consider the "Christian" feminist movement whose goal is to raise the lot of women within Christianity generally (through ordination and positions of leadership), within marriage (by removing any role differences, to make room for the pursuit of personal goals and a career), and within the local assembly (through removing all restrictions on a woman's involvement). Their goals stand in stark contrast to the Word of God, and, like Cain, they are refusing to submit to the instructions of God (let alone submitting to their husbands). These feminists seek to

[132] Strong's Online.

work within Christian circles to accomplish the overthrow of what God has ordained as the roles for women and men, and they are making great strides in attaining their goals.

The woman was created as a helper to the man, yet, in the transgression, she took the lead, and man submitted to her; sin entered the world through a **reversal of the roles** that God had established. In giving His judgment for sin, God reiterates, clarifies, and pronounces the woman's role for all to hear: her husband is to rule over her. However, God's judgment on man says nothing about his rule over the woman. What is clear is that, because he submitted to the woman in the transgression, the ground would no longer yield its produce in abundance, but, by toil and sweat, he would have to labor in order to sustain life for himself and his helper (man is the provider within God's economy – Genesis 3:17-19). Man was never told that he was to rule over the woman – she was to continue to be his helpmeet; the woman, because of the role that she took in the transgression, was to submit to the man. The general perception of God's desire for the husband and wife has become very blurred through the ages; there have been times when men regarded women as mere chattel – slaves to do their bidding, and other times, like today, when men are often regarded by women as being unnecessary. Both of these are a desecration of what God desires for us – cases where the pendulum has swung too far in either direction.

The command of God to the husbands is very simple, yet incredibly profound: *the husbands are to be loving their own wives* (literal)![133] It would have been weighty if the Spirit of God had stopped there, but, without pause, the admonition goes on to cite the example of Christ and the *ekklesia* once again. However, this time the perspective is a closer look at what Christ has done for this assembly of faithful ones. The husband is to love his wife just as Christ loves the *ekklesia*, and *did give Himself for her* (literal).[134] Again, we see the role of provider placed upon the husband, but that is minor when compared to the sacrifice that Christ

[133] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[134] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon; *ekklesia* is a feminine noun in Greek, and so *her* is the proper pronoun, rather than *it*.

made for the assembly – a pattern for the husbands to follow in their love for their wives.

How did Christ love (*agape*) the *ekklesia*? Our verse tells us that He gave Himself for her; He gave Himself in order to pay the price for sin. Jesus said, "…No man taketh it [My life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). When Jesus was on the cross, He said, "'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit': and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46); He did not succumb to the natural progression of death on the cross (which could take up to several days[135]) – **He laid His life down**. In this illustration, Christ (as the Husband) **gave His life** for the *ekklesia* (His wife).

Lest the Calvinists take this phrase as proof that Jesus died only for the elect, and not for the sins of the whole world, we must briefly look at the bigger picture. Before the world was created, it was established that the eternal Word would come into His creation as Jesus, born of woman by God, in order to make a perfect and final payment for the sins of lost mankind (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:18-20). When Adam and Eve sinned, God immediately covered their sin with coats made of animal skin; through shed blood, He made provision for them to be reconciled to Himself – a foreshadowing of the ultimate payment for reconciliation that was made by Christ on the cross. The ability to choose is an inherent part of man being created in the image of God; even as a sinless man, Adam chose to sin, likewise, sinful man has always had the ability to choose God's provision to cover his sin. The first two children of Adam and Eve understood this clearly, and Abel's obedience to God's requirements cost him his life at the hands of his jealous and angry brother, Cain. God's desire was not for a people who would love Him because they had no other choice, but rather a people who would choose to love Him because of the cleansing that He has made available for them, realizing that they were created to have fellowship with Him. Abel chose to accept God's provision (through the example of the shedding of blood), and his sacrifice

[135] Wikipedia, "crucifixion."

was accepted by God; Cain likewise chose, but determined to do things his way (after the pattern of the coverings of fig leaves), and experienced rejection by God. God's provision for the covering of sin was open to both Cain and Abel (the choice was theirs), and God held Cain responsible for making the wrong choice. We read in John 3:16 that *God so loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of this fallen world. From Adam and Eve, through to the death of Christ on the cross, God's promise for the covering of sin was open and available to anyone who would choose to accept it; from Christ's sacrifice forward, the payment for the sins of the world is complete, and it, too, remains open to anyone who chooses to accept it.

The reason that the focus of this verse is on the assembly of faithful ones (the *ekklesia*, the elect), is that Paul is providing instruction on the relationship that the husband is to have with his wife, his chosen one. The full infusion of Christ's blessings are not rained down upon all of mankind, but are available only to His faithful ones, to those who are the chosen *in Him* (Ephesians 1:3); likewise, the relationship of the husband to his wife is exemplified in Christ's relationship with the assembly, and **not** with the world. Therefore, within this illustration of the marriage relationship, it can be said that Christ gave His life for the *ekklesia* – that in no way diminishes from the fact that He gave His life in payment for the sins of the *whole world* (1 John 2:2).

From the very beginning, it was established that "a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This instruction comes on the heels of the description of how God created the woman for the man, and Adam's declaration: "This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). There is a leaving and a cleaving involved in the marriage relationship, and both are the responsibility of the husband. To cleave means to "cling closely, steadfastly, or faithfully to … someone."[136] The husband is to provide security for the wife in their relationship; the wife is to have no reason for

[136] Encarta Dictionary, "cleave."

doubting her husband's enduring commitment to her as his wife. Husbands are commanded to love their wives, and the wives are admonished to submit to their husbands – as these two commands come together, there will be a strong bond that will hold the relationship steady through life's storms. After the pattern of Christ loving the faithful and giving Himself for them, so the husband is to love his wife and give himself to her. The toil and sweat required to provide for his wife will seem as nothing to the man – for he loves her. We see this in the life of Jacob: "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him *but* a few days, for the love he had to her" (Genesis 29:20). There are God-established roles within the marriage relationship; as we begin to understand the significance of the parallel to Christ's relationship with His faithful ones, it becomes increasingly evident that we must not mess with what God has ordained. Today, the almost understood obligation of the wife to have a job and work to help the husband support the family undermines all of this. The husband no longer has to give himself to provide for his wife – she has her own job and is quite independent. This subtle shift in thinking is the work of the devil; what better way to destroy the family than to confuse the roles that God has ordained. We have seen God's desire for the husband-wife bond, and we need to be very careful of the excuses that we use in tampering with it. The feminist agenda, whether "Christian" or not, strikes at the very foundation of this relationship.

The love that Christ has for the assembly of saints is not without purpose, and that purpose is explained now (keeping in mind the application of the metaphor to the marriage relationship).

26. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

Here are two things that Christ purposes for His faithful ones: sanctification and cleansing. The root of the Greek word translated as *sanctify* is *holy*. Therein is the essence of sanctification – it means to set

apart as holy, "to separate from profane things and dedicate to God."[137] In beginning this letter to the Ephesians, Paul referred to them as being "the **saints** which are at Ephesus." The word *saint* carries that same root of *holiness*, which, in turn, carries with it the thought of separation. Notice the quoted definition of sanctification: it involves a separation ***from*** sinful things, and a separation ***to*** God. Although the concept of sanctification may be spoken of within Evangelical circles today, it is not defined as precisely as it ought to be, despite the fact that we are called by God to walk *circumspectly*, or with precision (Ephesians 5:15). Yes, we are separated unto God, but that also requires us to be separated from the world, from heresy and error, and from fellow believers who refuse to separate from the world and/or error. Unless **both** separation **from** and **to** take place, there has been no separation at all! The call to separation is just as clear as the call to holiness, for they are really one: we cannot be holy unless we are Biblically separated. Those who refuse separation are already living in disobedience to God, and are numbered among those who are falling away, unless they awaken from their sleep (Ephesians 5:14). As we have seen, the founders of New Evangelicalism deliberately set Biblical separation aside at their inception, and that exclusion (which is disobedience to the Lord – i.e., sin) is very deeply entrenched in today's Evangelical mind.

As we know, Christ gave His life for the sins of humanity, and so He is the only Savior for all of mankind. However, even though He is the only means of cleansing from sin for the whole world (1 John 2:2), for those who are His through faith, He has a much more specific vision – cleansing from sin is not the end, but the beginning. His reason for saving us is not only for salvation from sins one day, but so that we will become *holy* (*sanctified*) by Him. The word *sanctify* (*hagiazo*), although it is in the subjunctive mood (which normally indicates a possibility), in this case, it provides the **reason** that Christ *gave Himself* for the *ekklesia*; as part of a purpose clause, it no longer presents only a possibility, but an actuality (like the indicative mood, a statement of fact).[138] We must be careful to

[137] Strong's Online.
[138] https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.

understand this correctly: Christ did not give Himself so that the *ekklesia* ***might*** be separated unto Him, He gave Himself so that His *ekklesia* **will** be holy (Ephesians 4:24); His *ekklesia* **is** holy (separated from the world and evil) – this is without question! Therefore, if our pattern for living is not in holiness and separation from all that is not of Christ, then we must understand that we are **not** a part of His *ekklesia*. "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love [*is loving*] the world, the love of the Father **is not** in him" (1 John 2:15);[139] if someone has a love for the world (that which is not *of Christ*), then God's love is not present in him. Jesus said that if we do not bear fruit in keeping with abiding in Him (the Vine), then we will be removed (John 15:2). As we bring all of this together, we must recognize two things: 1) Christ gave Himself so that we will be holy before Him, and 2) He will not force us to accept His holiness. We must understand that to refuse His sanctifying work in us is to isolate ourselves from Him! He has commanded us to separate ourselves from the world (2 Corinthians 6:14ff), from error (Romans 16:17-18) and from those who refuse to separate from error (2 Thessalonians 3:6), yet we are able to refuse to do so – we **can** choose to live in disobedience to God's commands! The proof of this is rampant among Evangelicals who claim to be destined for heaven even as they cling to the world's ways: its music, entertainment, philosophies, and its learning – they refuse to separate themselves from any of it. However, by doing so, they find themselves outside of the Father's love, and are a part of the world; that is not sanctification, but desecration. Many seek to build bridges to those who propagate error, only to find themselves becoming party to the same error; that is not sanctification, but capitulation. Others refuse to part company with those who call themselves Christians and participate in Ecumenical activities; this is not sanctification, but disobedience. They profess to be Christians, yet remain ensnared in the devil's web of deception. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools …" (Romans 1:22). Christ's love for His assembly (*ekklesia*), and the fact that He died so that holiness of life is available to them, does not

[139] Strong's Online.

make sanctification a certainty. The resources are in place to make it happen, but we, to our own spiritual peril, can refuse.

Cleanse is a word that is akin to *purge*, and means to make clean, or to purify, and, to that extent, there is a small overlap with being *holy*.[140] The order of the words in our KJV makes *sanctify* and *cleanse* appear to be of equal weight, but the Greek does not: *in order that He will sanctify her, He did cleanse* [her] *by the washing of water by the Word* (literal).[141] The last phrase is a little more difficult. *Word* (*rhema*) refers to the spoken or written word, with particular focus on the content; when used in the singular, as here, it draws the whole of God's teachings together on a matter – for example, the Gospel.[142] Our English *word* is most frequently derived from the Greek *logos*, which is also a name given to the Lord Jesus. There is a difference between *logos* and *rhema* – let us take a moment to consider these words more fully.[143] *Logos* is described as the expression of thought; the Scripture is God's Message (His *Logos*, His *thoughts*) for humanity – He is its Author, and it comes with His authority and power.[144] The Scriptures, in their entirety, are God's revelation of Jesus Christ (His promise, His heritage as the Son of Man, His coming as the Son of God, and the Gospel – the fulfillment of all), and Jesus is called *the Logos* (John 1:1) and *the Logos of the God* (Revelation 19:13).[145] On the other hand, *rhema* is that which has been spoken, whether uttered or written.[146] In essence, God's *Message* (*Logos*) to the world is made up of what He has *spoken* (*rhema*, both uttered and written). To help us further, consider this example from the life of Peter: "While Peter yet spake these words [*rhema* (plural form)], the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard [with understanding, not just with the ears] the word [*logos* (singular)]" (Acts 10:44).[147] Remember that Peter was very uncomfortable in his situation: he was speaking to Gentiles in the house of a Gentile, and he

[140] Strong's Online.
[141] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.
[142] Bauer Greek-English Lexicon; Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.
[143] Some try to make *logos* and *rhema* to be synonyms (https://www.truthchallenge.one/blog/2012/01/16/the-rhema-barb-and-its-poison-the-rhema-vs-logos-controversy/); from my research, they are not.
[144] Vine's "word."
[145] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[146] Vine's "word."
[147] Friberg Lexicon.

would not have been there except for the Lord specifically telling him to go. He was giving to his audience the *rhema* (the words) of God, but it was God Who used those *words* to bring understanding of His *Logos* (His Message) to Cornelius and those who were with him in the house. It seems that Peter could not quite bring himself to present God's Message to the Gentiles (he still viewed them through his biased, Jewish eyes), so he gave them a brief overview; God took his *words* (*rhema*) and gave the Gentiles understanding of His *Logos*.

There are some today, particularly among those of charismatic and word-of-faith persuasions, who have skewed *rhema* to fit their agendas. One writes: "Our God isn't silent … He continues to speak today, and **He wants to speak directly to us**. It's by the *rhema* word that **we can know God subjectively**, in our personal experience" (emphasis added).[148] This particular writer goes on to qualify this by saying that "God's living, instant speaking [*rhema*] **always corresponds with and never contradicts His written Word** [*logos*]" (emphasis added).[149] Knowing man's propensity to rationalize virtually anything, despite his caveat, he is stepping onto a very slippery slope. Consider Kenneth Copeland's view that takes this further onto that *slope*: "The Greek word *rhema* is a **quickened, specific word from the Holy Spirit directly to you**" (emphasis added).[150] He then goes on to provide a sample prayer that can be used to receive one's own *rhema word* from God, **if** you *pray in faith*. When such charismatic preachers declare, "God spoke to me," this is what they mean: they *received* a word from the Lord (a *rhema word*), and because it is a *rhema word* from the Lord, there is no need to look for support for it within the pages of Scripture. This becomes a means to an end; this (their *rhema word*) becomes the "support" for their heresies. This is an aberrant view of the word *rhema*, and one that finds no confirmation from God's Word (His Message) to us.

Washing is actually a noun, and comes from the Greek word for *a laver*, or *a bath*.[151] Exodus 30:17-21 outlines the significant use of the laver and

[148] https://blog.biblesforamerica.org/two-important-greek-words-in-the-bible-emlogosem-and-emrhemaem/.
[149] Ibid.
[150] https://www.kcm.org/real-help/faith/pray/prayer-receive-rhema-word-god?language_content_entity=en-US.
[151] Vine's "washing."

the water for purification by the priests of Israel. Perhaps Paul is using a word picture that harkens back to the ceremonial cleansing that the priests were required to go through each time they approached the tabernacle. First Peter 1:25a reads: "the word [*rhema*] of the Lord endureth forever;" that is the same Greek word as in our passage. Peter goes on to state: "And this is the word [*rhema*] which by the gospel is preached [or, which is the good news declared] unto you" (1 Peter 1:25b).[152] The words of Scripture are there for our cleansing; as we hear or read them, they become to us the purifying waters like unto that used by the priests as they entered the tabernacle. This is significant; the audible Word of God is not without impact: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). With the banishment of the Bible from the educational classroom, there has come a corresponding decline in the moral consciousness of society. As we have rationalized its removal under the banner of separation of church and state, perhaps we have also witnessed the removal of the cleansing influence of God's Word within society.

27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

Here is the purpose for Christ's sanctifying and cleansing work within His faithful ones, and He will accomplish what He desires to do! His goal is to present to Himself a *glorious* assembly (*ekklesia*). The word *present* means to "place beside,"[153] providing us with a glimpse of where the *ekklesia* is in relation to the Lord – we are beside Him. *Glorious* speaks of a splendor that is attributable to the majesty of God, and therefore, it refers to its Provider when it speaks of the gathered saints. If we permit the Lord to work in us, and to accomplish His sanctifying and cleansing

[152] Friberg Lexicon.
[153] Vine's "present."

work, then we will be clothed with the purity of the Lord (Revelation 3:5; 7:9). Even as Adam and Eve were clothed with garments from God (Genesis 3:21), so we must clothe ourselves in the Lord's purity and holiness – that "new man" of Ephesians 4:24.

These faithful ones will be without *spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*. The *ekklesia* of Christ will have no stain or wrinkle, nothing that could detract from the perfect purity that is *in Christ*; God's intent is that this assembly will be holy and without blemish. The lamb, within the sacrificial system of Israel, had to be perfect in order to be acceptable to God (*without blemish* was to characterize all animal sacrifices, e.g. Exodus 12:5). It had to be *without blemish* because it was to be identified with the sins of the people so that their sins could be covered by the sacrificial blood – a foreshadowing of Jesus, Who, as the sinless, perfect Lamb of God, bore the sins of the world, so that, through faith in His sacrifice, we are cleansed before God. Christ's desire is to sanctify and cleanse us so that we will be holy and pure, prepared for an eternity with Him. The purpose of the shed blood, both within the sacrificial system and in its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, is to bring forgiveness of sin by faith so that the subjects of salvation will be acceptable before God (Hebrews 9:22) – there is to be a cleansing from sin and a purification of life as the *new man* is donned. God has not changed – He still requires cleansing and purification that can only come through faith in the sacrifice for sins that was made by Jesus Christ.

Today there is a carelessness, even a recklessness, and an arrogantly casual attitude toward God and matters of spiritual concern. Israel was judged for their careless living, and even so will the judgment of God come upon modern Evangelicals – they proclaim a form of godliness, but there is no change of life. Psalm 111:10 reads: "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments* …." Proverbs 9:10 says: "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding." Look at these two verses. They both affirm (as do other passages) that the *fear of the Lord* is the foundation for wisdom, which is an understanding

of God's character, and its reflection in our lives.[154] Rather than learning a proper reverence, or fear, for the Lord, today we are taught that Jesus is our Buddy, our tolerant Friend Who is happy when we are happy – Someone Whom we can add into our lives, but Who would never deny us anything that we want. Yet here we see that a *good understanding* comes through obedience to the commands of the Lord (Psalm 111:10); and Proverbs tells us that that *understanding* comes through a knowledge of the Lord.[155] As we bring these two parallel verses together, we see that the common foundation for the fear of the Lord, and obedience to Him, will yield a knowledge of God. Israel's failure was that they had the rituals down pat, but personal obedience to the commandments of God based upon faith in Him, never entered into their thinking (Judges 2:7-19; Isaiah 1:10-15). Israel followed Jehovah as long as they had a godly leader, but, as individuals, they did not make Jehovah their Lord; consequently, when the leader was gone, they fell apart, because they (generally speaking) had no relationship with the Lord. We must recognize that God has always dealt with individuals. We've seen this with Cain and Abel; the sacrificial system, implemented by God through Moses, dealt with the individual (Deuteronomy 6:5). Today we love the routine of "church," but what most people fail to recognize is God's **personal** call to purity and sanctification through the working of His Spirit. We are individually accountable to God; the branches that abide in the Vine are individuals (John 15:6), and the crux of meeting God's approval rests upon individual obedience to His commands (Matthew 7:14 [the narrow way that is for the few] and 21 [only the obedient one will be admitted into the kingdom of heaven]).

It is worth noting that the first step that Christ takes with the faithful is toward our sanctification: our **separation from** the world, from error and from those who mix with error, and our **separation unto** God. When New Evangelicals determined to repudiate separation, they set their faces against God; by declaring their refusal to separate from error, they immediately ended any possibility of God working in their lives, and they deepened their immersion into the age-old apostasy.

[154] TWOT, #239
[155] BDB.

We must understand that *apostasy* means to turn away from the faith that we once held dear, and to embrace something that is entirely different. For someone who is *in Christ* to become apostate, requires them to have turned **from** the Lord **to** something, or someone, else. Therefore, should someone profess to be a "Christian," but has never committed himself to faith in the Lord, such a person cannot become apostate because they have never been *in Christ*. In other words, unless you have been a part of something, you can never fall away from it. We also understand by now that when we are *in Christ*, we are living in obedience to His commands (John 14:15); if not, then we are not *in Him*! As we consider "church" history, it will become very apparent that the greatest apostasy took place under the budding Roman Catholic Church at the time of the Roman emperor, Constantine. The evidence that we find in Scripture is that the early Christians lived in obedience to the Lord's Ten Commandments, but with Constantine, there came a shift away from anything that might hint at being Jewish, and so, by feigning conversion to Christianity, Constantine was able to quickly draw the bishops of his day away from God's truth – and with the bishops went the majority of the Christian community. God still had His remnant of faithful ones, but they were the minority, and became subject to tremendous persecution from the newly formed Roman Catholic Church. So, when we place Ockenga's 20th-century announcement to discard separation from error, within the broader landscape of apostasy, we know that his actions only deepened the apostasy of the modern Evangelical movement that grew out of a religion that had been apostate for millennia. The present-day state of Evangelicals (their worldliness, their compromises, and their accommodation of those who propagate error) is the legacy that dates to the 3rd-century AD. Biblical separation is the essence of purity before God, something that God's remnant through the centuries understood very well. However, without remaining faithful to the Lord, there can be no sanctification – faithfulness requires separation.

Christ's purpose for the assembly of the faithful is that He will make them holy, that they will be a Body of cleansed and spotless perfection; the husband's love for his wife is to follow this pattern. The husband must

give himself for his wife; he is called to leave and to cleave. Jesus left the glories of heaven in order to pay the price for sin once and for all time (Hebrews 10:10), and, for everyone who will heed His call, He is eternally committed to bringing them into His glory. The husband is to ever seek the best for his wife; he is to be the provider of all things necessary for her wellbeing, after the pattern of Christ Who is the Provider of all things necessary for the sanctification and purification of the saints. The prerequisite for the husband to fill the role adequately is to have a secure and living relationship with Christ, for as this spiritual relationship flourishes, he will then have the resources necessary to fulfill his responsibilities to his wife. If the husband fulfills his responsibility adequately, the wife will have little problem submitting to his leadership role within the marriage. Feminism, generally speaking, is the result of sin, where both men and women refuse to fulfill their roles as God ordained; when it rears its ugly head among Evangelicals, it is no different – it is still sin. Could it have begun with the rejection of separation and holiness before God? Perhaps, but one thing is sure: we will never grow in our understanding of the Lord without first embracing Biblical separation – the essence of which is our purity and holiness before God, our sanctification *in Christ*. God's call to separation flows out of His holiness; our obedience to His calling will lead to our sanctification.

28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

So is a connecting word that could also be translated as *thus* or *in this manner*,[156] and it ties what follows to what has just come before. Our modern use of the word *ought* seems to have largely reduced it to an equivalent of *should*, carrying the idea that it would be good, but certainly not obligatory, to do something. However, the Greek word that is used here (*opheilo*) and translated as *ought* means "to owe."[157] The Old English

[156] Strong's Online.
[157] Vine's "ought."

primary meaning of *ought* is "to be held or bound in duty or moral obligation" – *expediency* is ranked third;[158] surprisingly, even a modern dictionary shows its primary meaning as "a duty or obligation to do something (*advisability* is second)."[159] What is evident is that there is clearly more than a casual responsibility indicated by *ought* within our text – we, as husbands, are indebted to love our wives as our own bodies. To whom is this debt owed? To Christ! In Ephesians 4:12, the saints are referred to as the Body of Christ, and in 4:15-16 the metaphor of the body is used to illustrate Christ as our Head and our interconnectedness with Him. In 5:25, we are told that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves His faithful ones, His saints, His Body. Herein is our obligation as husbands – our pattern for loving our wives is Christ and His love for those who are His; therefore, we are under obligation to Christ, in obedience to the command of Scripture, to love our wives as our own bodies, even as Christ loves us, His Body.

Now, lest wives fear that their husbands will only love them because God has commanded it, there are a few additional things to keep in mind. If our pattern is Christ's love for His *ekklesia*, then this love flows from the very heart of God, and includes our desire for the best for our wives. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Our obedience to God places us in His love. Even as the husband loves his wife in obedience to the command of God, this command of God is not burdensome – it's not a heavy weight to bear; not only that, it also opens us to the love of God! Jacob served Laban an additional seven years for Rachel, yet they seemed to him to be but "a few days" (Genesis 29:20). Jacob served Laban out of obligation, or debt, but because of his love for Rachel, fulfilling that obligation was not grievous. As we (husbands) endeavor to love our wives after the pattern of Christ, we will find that Christ will infuse us with His love so that we **will** love our wives "as Christ also loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25).

[158] American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 ed.), "ought."
[159] Encarta Dictionary, "ought."

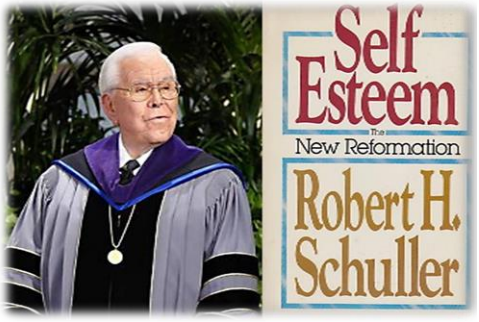
Now we come to this summarizing statement: *He that loveth his wife loveth himself.* "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This is the mystery of marriage that speaks of Christ and His Bride, the faithful saints of all ages; there is a mysterious individuality, yet a oneness. As we start to understand the depths of the spiritual picture of marriage, we can see why the Christian marriage bond is such a target for Satan. A Christian marriage is the expression of the relationship that Christ has with His saints (or it is supposed to be), which is a bane to Satan and a target worthy of his best efforts. Marriage will never be a perfect reflection of its divine model, for we are still sinful creatures, yet we live in a day when the rate of divorce among professing Christians has matched that of the world at large. Undoubtedly, this is due to refusing to recognize the roles that God has ordained within marriage, an unwillingness to cultivate a living, personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and failing to comprehend the spiritual significance of the marriage bond as being patterned after Christ's relationship with the assembly of saints. Along with the increasingly shallow spirituality held by Evangelicals, has come an increasingly worldly view of life; the example of the late Jack van Impe makes it clear that we are living in a day characterized by apostasy, and that of the late Robert Schuller shows us that professing Christians (religious pagans) are often totally ignorant of the Bible that they claim to uphold.

Jack van Impe

Jack van Impe: He once warned against Billy Graham, but then went on to acclaim him as the one who taught us how to love; similarly, he turned to embrace the Roman Catholic Church and called John Paul II a defender of the faith. "Much of his life was spent as a fierce proponent of the fundamentalist Biblical doctrine of Biblical separation. This teaching

is that we, as a church,[160] are to be removed from those individuals who promote doctrinal error. However, in the late 1970s, Van Impe made a shift towards the inclusiveness of Ecumenism and Evangelism. His break with the fundamental church came in 1984 with the publication of Heart Disease in Christ's Body. In it, he disapproves of the lack of love and unity among so many Christians. His remedy for this was for the relaxing of the fundamentalist definition of a Christian. He called for the acceptance as a 'true Christian' of anyone who believed in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Substitutionary atonement, and the physical resurrection of Christ and His personal, bodily return to earth. Furthermore, he sought to redefine the very concept of Biblical separation. In his new formulation, anyone who disagreed that the conditions above fully defined a 'true Christian' was himself in doctrinal error and thus subject to isolation." (all errors in the original).[161] Jack made a 180° turn to embrace that from which he had once separated himself. Did the Bible change? No, but Jack did, and he now applauded Catholicism with the same vigor that he once used to warn against it. Did he forget Paul's warnings in Galatians 1:6-7?

Robert Schuller: This man vigorously promoted church growth thinking and exercised tremendous influence on the works of Bill Hybels and Rick Warren. "What do I mean by sin? Answer: Any human condition or act that robs God of glory by stripping one of his children of their right to divine dignity. I could offer another complementing answer, 'Sin is that deep lack of trust that separates me from God and leaves me with a sense of shame and unworthiness.' I can offer still another answer, 'Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem'" (all



Robert H. Schuller

[160] This is the error of so many and is patterned after the failure of Israel: that we do not stand for the Lord as individuals, only as a community. This is something that is **not** taught in the Scriptures! God has always dealt with individuals (Exodus 32:33).

[161] https://chrisapproved.com/biblicist/bible/vanimpe.html.

grammatical errors are in the original).[162] He openly declared: "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition."[163] Could there be anything further from Biblical truth? Although now departed from this life, Schuller continues to remain popular among Evangelicals even though he held to doctrine that was a total departure from the Scriptures.

This part of our verse might seem to be a bit of an anomaly in our day of increasing self-focus; we might recall Paul's words to Timothy concerning the end of the age when men would be "lovers of their own selves" (2 Timothy 3:2). You will notice that the husband loves himself by loving his wife, which is very different from someone who is self-absorbed – so characteristic of today and the last days.

29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

We read here that no one, to this point in time, has ever hated his own body. Perhaps the Ascetics come close, but even they deny their bodies for a purpose, and unless they preserve life, their lives of self-denial would cease. The Greek root of the word *nourish* is to feed, or to bring up to maturity, and *cherish* is to warm – both normal activities that we do every day to maintain our bodies, and this is only right and proper.[164] In keeping with the Lord looking after His Body by providing spiritual sustenance and protection from the cold blasts of evil, so we attend to the needs of our bodies.

Within the context of this passage, it is clear that the husband is to be the provider for his helpmeet – nothing has changed from the creation of

[162] Robert Schuller, Self-Esteem: the New Reformation, p. 14.
[163] http://letusreason.org/Curren13.htm.
[164] Strong's Online.

Adam and Eve through to this day. Once again, we are reminded that God is the same yesterday, today and forever – He is without change (Hebrews 13:8). The husband is to provide the food, clothing and shelter necessary to meet the needs of his wife. Unfortunately, in our day of personal independence, this relationship, as designed by our Creator, has been virtually discarded. We even hear of cases where the roles are completely reversed, not of necessity, but by choice – the woman becomes the provider, and the man the nurturer and, in essence, the helpmeet to the woman. We hear of this most often when the wife can bring in a larger income than the husband, and rather than making do with the husband's income, they reverse the roles for a more affluent lifestyle. Rationalism, pragmatism, and expediency are the by-words of today's citizen, and professing Christians are not far behind. The truth is that the marriage relationship is to be a picture of Christ and His faithful ones; yet, without hesitation, the roles within marriage are often reversed with no consideration given to God's design. The husband is to provide for his wife (his body) in the same way that Christ provides for His called-out ones, His Body.

30. *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

As living saints of God, we are members of Christ's Body – we have seen this in Ephesians 1:22-23 and 4:12-16, where Christ is called the Head, and we, His Body. First Corinthians 12:12-27 goes into detail on how we are all a part of the Body. There are various metaphors used throughout Scripture to describe this vital relationship. Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye *are* the branches" (John 15:5), again, a description of an intimate, individual connection. Our verse includes "of his flesh, and of his bones," harkening back to Adam's declaration when he saw Eve: "This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh …" (Genesis 2:23). There is an emphasis here on the vital relationship between Christ and His faithful saints.

31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

We have here a reiteration of Genesis 2:24, except now there is a much more significant context for this instruction. In Genesis, God created a helpmeet for Adam, and declared that the husband/wife bond was to be unique. Our passage says that they will be "joined" – the word, in Greek (*proskollao*), is in an intensive form meaning to "glue or cement together,"[165] and it is in the passive voice: *man* does not do the *gluing*, that is done by the Lord! Being cemented together by the Lord expresses a permanency that is not given much consideration today; divorce, even among Christians, has become an accepted part of life, and the rationalism for it knows no bounds. However, Jesus made it very clear that this is not the way that it is supposed to be. When the Pharisees queried Him: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" – Jesus had a response that inevitably cut through their traditions, even as it does ours today (Matthew 19:3-9). Notice that the Pharisees' question is not unlike the "no fault divorce" of today, where just cause is no longer required. Jesus' response included this bold statement: "What therefore God hath joined together [*suzeugnumi* (literally, *yoked together*) two who are intimately connected], let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).[166] Truly, marriage is not to be entered into lightly, for it is God Who unites the man and woman, and no man is to separate those who are so united (this is a command!). The Pharisees misrepresented Moses by saying that he **commanded** that a divorce be written and the woman put away; clearly, their traditions had gone well beyond the original instruction. Jesus clarified for them that it was due to the hardness of the hearts of Israel that **permission** had been given for a bill of divorcement, but this was not how it was from the beginning – in other words, this was not how God had designed marriage. The original intent of marriage did not include provision for breaking the bond that God had ordained.

[165] Vine's "join."
[166] Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

If we grasp the God-designed intent for the marriage relationship, then it is easier to see that divorce is a desecration of this model. Out of two, God makes one. In Romans 11:17, Paul explains the grafting that God does to bring us into the righteousness and holiness of the Root, so that we are then branches that are abiding in the Vine, Jesus Christ (John 15:4). The reality is that as we remain in the Vine, we are in unity, or oneness, with Christ and God, the Father, through the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us (John 17:21). Therefore, Christ and His *ekklesia* are *joined* (*proskollao*) and intimately yoked together (*suzeugnumi*) so that there will be **no separation**; to remain part of the *ekklesia* of Christ, we must live in obedience to Him. We (individually), in this life, are not glued to Christ with an everlasting bond; Jesus said that it was the one who remains faithful to Him unto the *end* who *will be saved* (Matthew 24:13; yes, *saved* is in the future tense). The Lord has done everything to protect us from any external attack (John 10:28), but we must guard against a heart of *unbelief* that will turn us away from Him (Hebrews 3:12). Interestingly, it was the hardness of heart of the people of Israel that led Moses to provide them with guidelines for divorce, and for the same reason (a hard heart) we can depart from the living God. From the beginning, there was no provision for divorce, because that is not God's intent for mankind; likewise, it is God's desire that we hold our confidence fast unto the end so that we will not depart from Him (Hebrews 3:6). However, because man was created with a will to choose (a part of being in the image of God), divorce was permitted; in the same way that Adam chose to sin, so those who are *in Christ* are able to make the choice to exercise *unbelief* and nullify everything that God has done to protect the Vine-branch relationship.

Recognizing the God-designed relationship within marriage, and that it was through the hardness of man's heart that divorce was permitted, let's take a brief look at the Biblical attitude toward divorce. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." We have a clause with the modifying phrase "except *it be* for fornication." If we remove

that phrase, we have this: if someone divorces his wife and marries another, he commits adultery. If we now reinsert the noted phrase, it **appears** to say that if the wife commits fornication (any sexual sin), then this is the circumstance when it is permitted to divorce and remarry without bearing the guilt of adultery – and there are many who choose to stop there. However, we must look at the full scope of what Scripture has to say on this matter.

First of all, if we consider Deuteronomy 24:1 (where the principle of divorce is laid down), it is clear that the permission for divorce is given when a man takes his wife to himself and finds in her some "uncleanness" (of a sexual nature); this is a preexisting condition, something with which she came into the marriage. Keep in mind that during the betrothal period in the Jewish custom, the man and woman were considered to be married, and the betrothal could only be broken by divorce. There is nothing here to say that after 10 years of marriage, he's now tired of her and decides to divorce her because she was unfaithful before they were married; nor does it mean that he can divorce her for any petty excuse when they come together, as the Pharisees had come to practice and as we see today. Additionally, we must keep in mind that the Hebrew does not have Deuteronomy 24:1 as a complete thought, but rather the sentence continues through verse four. The more complete thought is that if a husband finds some "uncleanness" in his new wife, he may immediately divorce her; however, if another marries her and then divorces her, or even if her second husband dies, her first husband is not permitted to take her again as his wife. There is a warning here against being hasty in drawing a divorce up, lest, afterwards, regret sets in.

So, adding the context and warning of Deuteronomy 24:1 to Jesus' words, it would seem that the exception of divorce for fornication must be for something that was preexistent to the marriage, and this divorce would not be permitted to take place years after the marriage. In other words, the husband cannot use his wife's previous sexual failures as a threat over her until he is finally tired of her, and then use that as the

basis for divorce years later; nor is he to use any failure during their marriage to justify divorce.

Another approach to this "exception" clause in Matthew 19:9 is found in 1 Corinthians 6:16. If the wife was guilty of fornication before marriage, then, based upon this text, she was already *one* with the other man. Therefore, the husband, who takes a wife who has already been made one with another man, is already guilty of adultery before God; in which case, he would not have to remarry in order to bear this guilt.

The last statement (of Matthew 19:9) makes it clear that anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. The word *adultery* means "to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife," or, more generally, another's spouse.[167] In this case, we might question how this could be considered as unlawful, since they are married to each other. It is clear that when God said that a man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they will be one flesh, He meant just that – they are one flesh. Divorce does not nullify what God declares to have taken place. Mark's Gospel carries a further comment by Jesus on this subject: "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:8-9; repeated in Matthew 19:6). It is absolutely clear that the two are made one, and Jesus ends with a command that what God has yoked together, let no one divide. Therefore, in God's eyes, marriage is for life – only death can sever the obligation to the other person. Romans 7:2-3: "[2.] For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. [3.] So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Death is the only release from marriage.

Just in case we missed it, or rationalization has set in, Jesus explained the matter further to His disciples: "[11.] … Whosoever shall put away his

[167] Strong's Online.

wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. [12.] And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12). The principle is the same for both men and women: marriage is for life. God's intent is to preserve the marriage relationship, but just as clearly, we realize that Christians today are destroying their marriages.

If we hold in our minds, for a moment, that the marriage relationship is a metaphor for Christ's relationship with us, His faithful ones, and realize that marriage within God's economy is not to be broken, then we have a picture of the security that we have in Christ. However, even as we recognize the reality that divorce can touch a marriage (despite God's design), so we must realize the possibility of turning our backs on Christ and being spiritually joined to another (i.e., committing spiritual adultery). A falling away is possible; we are fully protected from outside attack (John 10:28), but we must guard against an "evil heart of unbelief" that will be expressed through disobedience to the Lord's commands (Hebrews 3:12; John 14:15). We read in Hebrews 6:4-6: "[4.] For *it is* impossible [this means that it is **not possible**, not that it is merely difficult] for those who were once enlightened [infused with saving knowledge], and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, [5.] And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, [6.] If they shall fall away [literal: *having fallen away*], to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."[168] This is in keeping with the principle of divorce that is laid out in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 – after falling away and being joined to another, there is **no returning**. Second Peter 2:20-21 reiterates this thought; Romans 11:20-21 warns the grafted branches against becoming "high-minded" lest they be cut off as well – the branch that is no longer a part of the Vine is cast forth and burned (John 15:6).

[168] Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online; Stephanus 1550 NT.

32. *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

Indeed, there is great mystery in the relationship that Christ has with His assembly of saints, even as there is much mystery in the marriage bond. The Creator of marriage has made it much more than we will know on this earth – it has been patterned after the greatest relationship of all time. We have seen God's design for marriage, the unbreakable bond that He has determined for it, and its life-long endurance.

Genesis 2:24 states that the man "shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"; what mystery is contained in this eternal statement! Jesus reiterated this by declaring that "a man [shall] leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). There is no room here for polygamy, as practiced in OT times and in some cultures today; the word is *wife* (singular), and it is of the **two** that God makes **one**. Jesus is not preparing numerous brides – only one. Neither is there room for polyandry (having more than one husband); again, there are only two whom God makes into one. Spiritually, we see much polyandry taking place among Evangelicals; by simply adding Jesus to their lives without any repentance, Evangelicals are in essence saying that they can be married to the world and to Jesus at the same time. Through a careless handling of the Word of God and a failure to obey God's instructions, Evangelicals have created a message that no longer supports the metaphor described in our passage. God is not duped by their arrogance, nor is He impressed with their intelligence; in fact, He plainly warns us about being deceived by those who create seemingly great and wonderful philosophies (Colossians 2:8).

We read in Ephesians 5:27 that Christ is preparing for Himself a "glorious church" without spot, "holy and without blemish." If we, with faith (which must include obedience to His commandments – James 2:26, 1 John 3:24) and repentance, claim His sacrifice as payment for our debt

of sin, then we are part of that glorious, holy assembly of saints – His *ekklesia*, His Body! What greater reason can there be than this to separate from all things that are contrary to God's commands? Biblical separation flows out of the holiness of God, and since we are to be holy and without blemish before Him, it is clearly necessary that we separate ourselves from anything that would stain, and, thereby, to walk worthy of the calling that we have from God. Discernment and Biblical separation (from the world, from error of all sorts, and from those who profess Christianity but walk in error) is to be common fare for the true believer. There is no provision for a day-off from diligence, because "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about [present tense – a continuous action], seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8)[169] – and you may be sure that the moment that you relax, he will be there to destroy. Evangelicals today are so comfortable with their Ecumenical philosophy of Christianity that the devil doesn't need to bother with them anymore; they are so deceived and so under the spell of their illustrious leaders that they no longer examine anything against the standard of God's Word. They have exchanged purity for unity; God's truth has been replaced by myths – the message of the wolf wearing the façade of a sheep and using the words of the Shepherd to confuse, deceive and destroy! Jesus warned us: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24) – our judgment of others must be based upon God's Word (1 John 4:1).

Our text reminds us that the basis for this whole discussion on marriage, and the importance of having the roles within marriage properly defined, is because the pattern is none other than Christ and His assembly of saints. We understand that Christ is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to Satan (in the serpent) in the Garden of Eden, that there would come One Who would bruise, or crush, his head (Genesis 3:15). We see that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law of Moses, with its numerous sacrifices and rituals that pointed forward to One Who would come to

[169] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

make that ultimate sacrifice – once, for all time, providing cleansing for the sinner to be reconciled to God (Matthew 5:17). We recognize Christ as the One Who is the Provider of all that is necessary for the saints (John 15), and Who is the example for the husband in all things as the provider for his helpmeet. We acknowledge that the wife is to pattern her marriage relationship after the assembly of saints' submission to their Head, even to Christ – recognizing that this role requirement is contrary to all that the world is pressing upon us (Ephesians 5:24). We have seen the mystery of marriage where God takes two and makes one, after the pattern of Christ and His assembly of saints from all ages. We understand the destruction that divorce is to the mystery of marriage and its holy pattern, and that, in God's view, marriage is for life (Romans 7:2-3). We acknowledge and submit to the realization that, within marriage, God has ordained differing roles after the pattern of Christ and His saints, and, further, within the Body of Christ, we are all on equal footing before the Savior. There is no hierarchy among the Body of believers; there are only differing roles and different giftings as determined by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Let me explain the reason that I do not like to use the word *church* in reference to the Body of Christ. In my mind, and I would expect that it is the same for most, the word *church* conjures up a picture of the local gathering of professing Christians with their structure, their hierarchy of authority: pastor → deacons → laity, or pastor → elders → deacons → laity, depending on your persuasion. Jesus said: "[25.] Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26.] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; [27.] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: [28.] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28). First Timothy 3 defines for us the only two roles of responsibility within the assembly of believers: bishop, or elder, and deacon; from Jesus' words, we have seen

that this does not mean a hierarchy of authority – no one is superior to another. The elders carry the oversight of the assembly to ensure that it adheres to the doctrines of the Word of God ("teach no other doctrine," 1 Timothy 1:3). Acts 14:23 tells us that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders (plural) in every assembly that they established, and Paul's assignment for Titus was that he ordain elders (plural) in every city (Titus 1:5). However, there are many giftings within the assembly: we read of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds (*pastors*), and teachers (Ephesians 4:11), and those who have the gift of miracles, healings, helps, governments, and languages (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Consider how far modern churches have departed from the Biblical mandate. There is no doubt that they have a clergy-laity separation of importance and entitlement; it is everywhere, and accepted without question. There is a failure to understand Scripture by equating the Biblical term *elder* with *pastor*, when they are not the same. The former is a role prescribed by Scripture for those who have the spiritual oversight of the local assembly of saints (Titus 1:5-7); the latter (*shepherd*) is a specific gifting that the Spirit of God bestows on certain people for the express purpose of "perfecting the saints" (Ephesians 4:12). Within today's context, the *pastor* is, for the most part, the chief, the professional spiritual leader, the one to whom is given the ultimate spiritual authority (and often, complete authority) within the assembly, and if there is more than one pastor, then this is given to the senior, or lead, pastor. This is error. The one who is gifted as a *pastor* or *shepherd* (and he may or may not be an elder) should be permitted to exercise his gift, but he is in no way superior to anyone else within the assembly. Furthermore, the pastoral gift is one of shepherding (NOT oversight), caring for those who have needs, and coming alongside of those who are struggling – in order to draw them ever upward in their walk with God. The preacher (a herald or declarer of God's Word) is someone who is gifted as a teacher, or an evangelist. Yet these have somehow become wrapped together (elder, shepherd, preacher), given a special job description, and then elevated to

a position that is above the average person who is to sit in submission to this individual.

From Scripture we see Paul, Barnabas and Titus ordaining or appointing elders within the assemblies; yet today we depend upon the majority vote of the people. This error has been exacerbated by the common clergy-laity separation. With a growing dependence upon the spiritual *elites* to provide teaching that is easily "understood," the average churchgoer has succumbed to an ever decreasing understanding of Scripture to the point that most churches are depending upon the spiritually anemic (the laity) to provide spiritual direction for their leadership (the clergy) – therein lies the flaw of congregational government. The elders are to be appointed by those who have spiritual understanding (other elders?), and they are not appointed for three-year terms, but for life – as long as they remain spiritually pure and physically able.

We have observed the Lord's condemnation of the Nicolaitanes (Revelation 2:6, 15), who elevated the position of leadership over those who were deemed to be followers; in essence, they promoted the clergy-laity definition within the assembly contrary to Jesus' words that this was not to be. Yet despite the clear condemnation of this activity, both from the words of Jesus to His disciples and from Jesus' words to the elders of the seven assemblies of Revelation, this is exactly what is found in virtually every church today. The church growth movement thrives on this very thing – without a strong hierarchical form of government, these massive gatherings of people would never be able to function. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that those within these very large gatherings are, for the most part, the most spiritually duped. We looked at the leadership of men like Robert Schuller and Rick Warren and immediately recognized their departure from the faith; yet, for the majority within the

realm of Evangelicalism, these men are the giants of their feel-good, non-judgmental faith.[170]

We must not forget Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-23. It is evident from Scripture that God has always dealt with a remnant, never a majority. Noah and his family survived the flood that destroyed the world – that was eight out of probably millions. Abraham was the only one called out of Ur to follow the Lord. Lot and his two daughters were the sole survivors of God's judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Out of all of the Israelites at the time of Elijah, there were only about seven thousand who remained true to God (which was seven thousand more than Elijah realized – 1 Kings 19:18). Likewise today, there is a remnant whose desire is to follow the instructions of God, while the vast majority of those who profess His name walk in their own ways. It is common practice for Evangelicals (and most professing Christians) to embrace tradition more than the Word of God; unfortunately, our traditions are laced with the influence of the apostate Roman Catholic Church. We would do well to be greater students of the Scriptures than of church history, for then we will learn more about our Head, Christ, and of His expectations for His Body, the assembly of saints from all ages.

The mystery of the marriage relationship is indeed great; it is a metaphor, an imperfect picture of the relationship that Christ has with His faithful ones. What a challenge it is to live in holiness within our marriages! What a challenge it is to live as true saints of God, pure and holy before Christ – abiding in the Vine so that we will have spiritual life and grow in our walk with the Lord.

33. *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife* see *that she reverence* her *husband.*

[170] For an expanded study on the *ekklesia* (the church), see http://www.thenarrowtruth.com/the-ekklesia-of-christ.html

Lest we be prone to say that all of this is really about Christ and His assembly of saints, Paul summarizes here the principles for the husband and wife: the husband is to love his wife, and the wife is to revere her husband. Considering what has come before, we might accept that as an adequate synopsis and move on, but there is a greater significance here than might first appear to us in the English. The admonition to the husband is that he is to be loving his wife – a present-tense command (imperative mood) that requires a continual obedience; *love* is from the root *agape*, a love that is a product of the will, not the emotions – the husband is to be loving his wife all of the time, regardless of the situation.[171] The result of this unending love from the husband is the respect of the wife: *and the wife so that she is respecting the husband* (literal).[172] The center of this *purpose clause* is *respecting* (*reverence*); even though *reverence* is in the subjunctive mood, being part of a purpose clause makes it a statement of the result of the preceding situation – i.e., the husband's continual love for his wife. Yet there is more: *phobeo* (*respecting*, *reverence*) is also in the middle voice, which means that the wife is not only performing the action (in this case, *respecting*) but she is also the recipient of the benefits of that action.[173] The reality is that with the husband loving his wife and the wife respecting her husband, together they provide a proper illustration of the relationship between Christ and His Bride: the wife showing respect to her loving husband places her where the Lord is pleased with her – what a marvelous benefit! Our reverence for the Lord must be much more than simply a fear of His awesome power: a fear of bringing displeasure to the One Who has bought us at great price. Likewise, the wife's *reverence* (*respect*) is not to be a dread, or terror, on the physical plane, but rather a fear of disappointing, or bringing displeasure to, someone who loves her so completely. What an overwhelming responsibility the husband has to love his wife even as Christ loves the assembly (without regard to his wife's response); it is a reality that can only come through the indwelling presence of the Lord. The increasingly blurred line between the male and

[171] Friberg Lexicon.
[172] Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.
[173] https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.

female roles within society (let alone within marriage) is making it extremely difficult for God's people to receive His blessing – we can no longer passively live according to the society around us, we must be prepared to live contrary to the dictates of our culture. We cannot change our culture, but we must seek to pattern our marriage relationships after what Paul has laid out to the Ephesians.