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Ephesians 5

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Ephesians 5.

Topics.

- Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.
- Walk as children of the light.
- Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
- Do not be foolish, but understand the will of the Lord.
- Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord
- Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church.
- Christ might present the church to himself without spot or wrinkle.
- The two shall become one flesh.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke of one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, of grace that was given according to the measure of Christ's gift and of Christ descending to the lower parts of the earth and ascending on high leading a host of captives. He talked of Christ fulfilling all things, of giving no opportunity to the devil, not grieving the Holy Spirit of God and brothers and sisters in Christ being sealed for the day of redemption.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

Walk in Love, as Christ Loved us and Gave Himself up for Us.

- **Ephesians 5:1-2:** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Every brother and sister in Christ is called to be imitators of God in the sense He is perfect love and to walk in love as Christ who not only loved and showed compassion to all he came in contact with (with the exception of the religious hypocrites), but also laid his life down for us, loved us. These words of Paul clearly show that our highest aspiration should be to continually increase in love not only toward those in the Kingdom of God, but also toward those outside of it and in this way, we will always be a fragrant aroma to God.

EPHESIANS 5:3-5

The Sexually Immoral and Covetous have no Inheritance in God's Kingdom.

- **Ephesians 5:3-5:** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Covet: (covetousness) means; to set the heart upon, to desire, long for or lust after (rightfully or otherwise) it carries the idea of having a great desire or lust of or after a goodly, precious or pleasant thing, a beloved, a sweetheart or someone cherished it can refer to a strong desire for a

delicious and tasty thing or holding onto or desiring more than one has or needs (the practice of greediness). It embraces those who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies adulteries and sexual immorality, who use filthy language and enjoy crude jokes and to anyone who is a fanatical devotee and hero-worshiper, meaning their heart is not only craving after and worshipping and exalting another person as a god, but they are also one of their devoted followers (an Idolater).

By implication covert: can refer to anyone who deprives somebody of money or property by dishonest means, it can apply to a person who is not honest, true, or fair and intentionally deceives people because they are greedy and eager for gain or to those who to fulfil their own selfish need or ambition use pressure or coercion to force or entice others. It can refer to anyone who deprives somebody of money or property by dishonest means, to a person who is not honest, true, or fair and intentionally deceives people because they are greedy and eager for gain or to those who to fulfil their own selfish need or ambition use pressure or coercion to force or entice others.

The law, "You shall not covet." The law does not have mercy or compassion its demand on those that are under it is strictly official, formal and legal and enforced without compassion or any sense of sorrow toward its condemned victims. The demand of the law states; "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23) meaning if anyone fails to keep the law in any aspect, they are guilty of breaking the law it then without mercy rightfully and legally judges and sentences its guilty victims (all mankind) to eternal death. It is futile to attempt to attain to righteousness by keeping the law since the law states:

- You shall not covet your neighbour's house, his wife, his very successful business, his new car, beautiful boat or anything that belongs to him (Exod. 20:17).

And the Royal law states:

- You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Rom. 13:9).

Jesus says all the commandments regarding mankind are summed up in the words of the Royal law. The spirit underpinning the Royal law is, desiring the best for others contrasted to the spirit underlying coveting which is craving the best for self. The commandment "You shall not covet" exposes human selfishness, pride, lust, and greed etc. It reveals the dysfunctions and aberrations that are imbedded within our fallen corrupted human nature that hinder us from attaining to the perfection of God's Holy law, it exposes our self-centeredness in our desires for more than we need, our excessive avariciousness toward materialism, our overeating of tasty foods the craving to be important or esteemed, our sensual and lustful thoughts, the desire to be rich and have abundantly more than we need etc.

The commandment, "You shall not covet" shines a spotlight on our self-interest, it highlights our lack of willingness to give to those less fortunate and those in need, it exposes our degrading, resentful, bitter and jealous thoughts of others and the list goes on. In summary the command, "You shall not covet" embraces all those attitudes and thoughts that dwell within our members that are contrary to the law of love and the Holiness of God which means the entire human race is held guilty before the law and therefore it legally has the right and the power to condemn us all to both temporal and eternal death which it does without hesitation, compassion or mercy thus the abundant grace and majestic beauty and wonder of God's righteousness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by God's grace.

EPHESIANS 5:6-10

Let No-One Deceive you with Empty Words.

- **Ephesians 5:6-10:** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not associate with them ⁸for at one time you were in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. (KJV says proving what is acceptable to the Lord).

Empty words in this context refer to three things:

1. To Jewish teachers who had accepted Christ and who by their teaching were having a great influence amongst the Ephesian church, but though they no-doubt where teaching many things correctly they denied grace and were enticing the Ephesians back under Moses laws of purification and Jewish religious rites, customs and traditions to be saved and thereby making everything they taught no-matter how correct it may have been totally worthless, since those who go back under the law separate themselves from Christ. We know this because Paul in his previous letters wrote, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." This means, when a brother or sister in Christ goes back under the law to justify themselves, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value.

Equally as horrific as this Paul states, "When we forsake grace, we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by grace that God made us alive in Christ. Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that; "It is only by grace that any brother or sister has been saved." Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God". This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. Thus; in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them (Gal. 2:21) (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5) (Eph. 2:8).

2. It refers to people who teach their followers one thing, but don't practice what they teach themselves, they quote Scripture and appear religious but their lifestyle does not match what they say (they are hypocrites and religious pretenders using their gifts, abilities and talents for their own gain).
3. It refers to those who are truly deceived themselves and teaching others, Jesus referred to this group as, 'the blind leading the blind.' Though they are deeply deceived and their teaching is false they speak with great authority and total confidence. This is because they are fully convinced that what they are teaching is the absolute truth. Many in this group often have brilliant oratory skill and because of these skills the naïve are easily led astray.

NOTE: since a teacher who denies the Lord could never led a brother and sister in Christ astray the words, "Let no one deceive you with empty words (v6) shows that Paul's focus in these verses is brothers and sisters in Christ and that the phrase, "The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (v6) does not refer to non-believers, but to hypocritical religious teachers who are either leading God's people away from Christ, away from grace or toward ungodly behaviour.

Do Not associate with them: when Paul told the Ephesian brothers and sisters, "Not to associate with them" (v7) he was not telling them to separate themselves from those in the secular world, but to separate themselves from the hypocritical religious teachers who were teaching another Gospel (i.e., leading people away from grace and back under the law and self-effort-to be saved or away from living a lifestyle that honours God and the name of Christ).

Walk as children of the light: the phrase, "Walk as children of the light (v8) does not mean study until you have every detail of the Bible perfectly interpreted, but rather to live a lifestyle that is faithful to Christ and to do what is right and good, meaning live in the fruits of the Spirit i.e., showing grace and mercy to others. It is by living in this manner that we are children of light and acceptable to the Lord. Simply put the phrase, "Children of Light" means reflect Christ in word and behaviour.

Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord: sometimes we may find ourselves wondering what the best action to take might be for a certain situation since not everything in life is clearly black and white (especially if we are emotionally involved) and the Bible does not give us detailed answers for every circumstance that we maybe faced with, i.e., how should Christian parents treat a son or daughter who is gay? How should a divorced parent treat the children of their new spouse? Or how should Christian parents treat a child who lives with their partner outside of marriage? Though the Bible does not give specific detail on how to cope with these kinds of circumstances it does present an overall principle that can be applied to them all. When we are faced with these kind of decisions (and many others like them) our best guide is to follow the advice Paul is giving to the Ephesians and try to, "Discern what is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord" (v10). To help discern this it is always good to ask ourselves the following two questions: -

- What is the loving action to take?
- What action will show kindness and grace toward those affected?"

When taking any action we should always remember that, "God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8) and that God is a God of love, compassion and mercy which means that though we do not want to compromise the standards of God whatever we do should always be done in love and with compassion and mercy.

EPHESIANS 5:11-16

Take no part in Unfruitful Works of Darkness.

- **Ephesians 5:11-16:** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Unfruitful Works of Darkness refer to the following three areas:

In behaviour: it embraces all things that have the potential to bring our life to ruin and that would dishonour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In speech: it embraces everything we would never say if we were in a conversation with the Lord (i.e., demeaning and mocking remarks about others, and bad language etc.).

In Scripture: it embraces any doctrine that leads away from Christ, away from Grace and toward ungodly behaviour.

Christ will shine on you: means his favour will be upon you.

Awake, O sleeper: in this context carries the idea of a person being unaware of the sin in their life or of the spiritual danger they are in amongst the ones they are associating with. It carries the idea of a person walking in darkness, meaning they are spiritually blind to the destructive power of sin and the harm, hurt and damage it can cause. The people in the following verse, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and

Christ will shine on you" (v14) are not only referred to as being asleep to sin, but spiritually dead to it. Paul is warning the Ephesian brothers and sisters and by extension everyone in Christ not to get involved with the sinful pleasures of this world or even socialise with those who do since it not only can led to physical or emotional hurt and harm and bring a person's life and reputation to ruin, but will also dishonour the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTICE: the glorious reward for "Waking from sleep and arising from the dead (v14) is the favour of Christ upon those who awake, when we not only lay aside our own behaviour and language that dishonours the Lord, but also our friends and social acquaintances whose behaviour and speech would offend Christ's heavenly Father then the Lord himself will favour us with his heartfelt love, joy and contentment and no-one can ever rob from the innermost being those who know Christ in this manner from his comfort and his love.

Expose the works of darkness: the words, "Expose unfruitful works of darkness" (v11) is one of life's great principles and a key to having a peaceful mind this is because as long as anything sinful is kept in darkness (i.e., in secret) it holds us prisoner to it, but once it is exposed (though their maybe consequences), there is mental and emotional freedom, it carries the following two ideas:

1. Exposing everything that others are teaching or maybe doing that are against God's will and have the potential to led brothers and sisters away from Christ or bring their lives and reputations to ruin.
2. It means be honest not only to others, but to God never attempt to hide or keep secret sin from God (an impossibility anyway) always be honest and open when before the LORD'S throne in prayer. God's love will never flow out to a self-righteous, hypocritical heart, thus the reason it is so important to always "Expose unfruitful works of darkness" in our own lives in honesty and openness of heart when in prayer.

It is only then that we can receive God's love and God's forgiveness. This is why when a brother or sister in Christ is praying with an honest heart of sorrow before God the following words of John are not only overwhelming humbling but majestically and gloriously comforting, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

It is important to understand: that neither God the Father, Christ or Paul are warning us to forsake any association with friends who enjoy living an ungodly lifestyle simply so we have some legal rules and laws to follow, rather their motivation is love and concern. The reason God warns us to lay aside people who have no conscience toward wrong doing and corrupt behaviour is to protect (i.e., from physical, emotional, mental and spiritual harm), even the Spirit behind the Ten Commandments is love since each law regarding mankind protects the innocent from harm and hurt. The statement, "The days are evil," shine a floodlight on the fact that we should not be surprised when we see rampant wickedness not only in our immediate areas of life, but also in those who have great national and global authority and hold high places of power in government since Paul clearly shows that it is an evil world and not a righteous world that we live in. This is because of the fallen and corrupted nature of mankind (i.e., self, ego, pride, lust and greed etc.) and their denial of God. This fallen nature will continue to reign as king over the world until the Lord Jesus Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

NOTE: this does not mean that every secular person is driven by wickedness (there are thousands who do an enormous amount of good toward the less fortunate and the poor), nor does it mean that we should treat those outside of the Kingdom of God as enemies, remember Jesus himself said:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

But it does mean we should be wise in who we chose to connect our hearts to in friendship and who we chose to socialise with.

EPHESIANS 5:17-21

Do not be Foolish, but Understand the Will of the Lord.

- **Ephesians 5:17-21:** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul warns the Ephesians brothers and sisters to be wise and understand what the will of the Lord is for all those in the family of Christ. This is not about God's specific will regarding an individual's calling in life, but the general will of God for every brother and sister in the Lord. Putting everything together that Paul has mentioned so far in this chapter the following list unfolds and clearly shows God's will for those who are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

All brothers and sisters in Christ are called not to:

- Walk in darkness (i.e. live a lifestyle of wickedness).
- Take part in unlawful sex, adultery, orgies and sexual immorality.
- Be selfish and greedy for gain or hold onto or desire more than one needs.
- Enter into crude jokes or unseemly language or get drunk with alcohol.
- Let anyone deceive them with empty words (false teachings and promises).
- Associate with religious people whose lifestyle is contrary to fruits of the Spirit.
- Join in with unfruitful works of darkness (behaviour that can lead to ruin).

All brothers and sisters in Christ are called to:

- Walk as children of light (do-good to others).
- Be imitators of God (who is pure love) and treat others with compassion.
- Always be thankful and grateful and speak will of others.
- Do what is good, right and true always discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.
- Expose unfruitful works of darkness.
- Walk carefully and wisely making the best use of the time.
- Be filled with the Spirit speaking to one another about God and of Christ.
- Sing and make melody to the Lord with all the mind and heart.

- Give thanks always and be grateful for everything to God the Father.
- Willingly submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:22-24

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

- **Ephesians 5:22-24:** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Submit: in this context means to willingly submit oneself unto another.

Head: from Strong's Concordance carries the idea of the part most readily taken hold of, figuratively it denotes two ideas:

1. It refers to the first to take the responsibility and the blame.
2. It carries the idea of protecting.

This is why the man is seen as the first in authority (i.e., the head), because he is called not only to be the one who carries the responsibility and the blame, but also the one who is expected to protect his wife and family from harm. Paul says "The husband is called to act as Christ who is the head of the church and the Saviour of it" (v23), which means that the husband is head in the sense that he should care for his wife's well-being as Christ cares for the church. The relationship is one of mutual love and respect i.e., the husband caring for and protecting his wife and the wife submitting to husband's love in the same manner as brothers and sisters submit to Christ's love.

NOTE: this does not mean that a wife should never have authority in areas she is better qualified in. If a husband is wise, he will give the authority of those duties over to her, but this does not advocate him from his responsibility to protect. It is very much like the C.E.O. of a company who though he delegates out certain tasks, he still remains the one carrying the responsibility for the success and well-being of the company and remains its overall protector.

A practical example: a wife maybe highly skilled in finance, numbers and mathematics while the husband is not, obviously common sense would say that it would be far better for the wife to handle the family budget than the husband. Being the head is not about taking the control of all duties even Christ who is the head of the church has given his authority to apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds and teachers to build the church up in love and unity thus the husbands role as the head of the family is to do likewise.

Being the head, is not dominating: though the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Church he does not rule it by dominating those who belong to his Kingdom, rather he guides, nourishes and protects it for eternal life by love. The church submits to Christ because of Christ's love for the church it is in this manner wives are called to submit to their husbands.

EPHESIANS 5:25-33

Husbands, love your Wives, as Christ Loved the Church.

- **Ephesians 5:25-33:** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves

his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The global church (faithful brothers and sisters in Christ from all nations) is likened to the wife of Christ as a woman is the wife of a man. Paul here states that Christ; to prepare the church for himself washes, cleanses, and sanctifies it. This washing immediately transcends the mind of the ardent Bible student to two washings.

1. To all the laws of Moses regarding ceremonial washings for purification as recorded in the book of Leviticus and to the basin of bronze in the tabernacle of Moses that was used for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and their feet in before they ministered at the altar of the LORD (Exod. 30:18-20).
2. To the ancient custom of purifying women, who were appointed to be consorts to kings of which some it appears took twelve months i.e., six months bathing with oil of myrrh and six months bathing with sweet odours and other things for the purifying of women (Esther 2:12) (Psalm 45:13-14) (Ezekiel 16:7-14). Clearly the idea of washing for purification was well ingrained in the Jewish mind.

Without spot or wrinkle: the purpose Christ gave himself up for the church was so that a repentant sinner could be purified from all unrighteousness and cleansed from all guilt by the washing of water in baptism through the inward work of God's grace on the heart so that he might sanctify them in this world and shower on all those in the church righteousness by faith and deliver them from the guilt and pollution of sin by the influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart of which water baptism is an outward sign. The church and the faithful in this present mortal world though being counted by God as being, "Without spot or wrinkle" because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will not literally be without spot or wrinkle till they come to eternal glory.

Washing of the word and the high calling of a husband: it is not by keeping religious external ceremonies, customs or traditions, nor by any miraculous miracle that a faithful brother or sister is being sanctified (i.e., being changed), but by the influence of the Holy Spirit through the word of God on the heart. The great purpose of Christ was to purify and save the church thus the meaning in these verses is, that a husband is to manifest similar love toward his wife. If ever a married man was in doubt as to what his highest calling in Christ is, Paul in these verses is shining a floodlight on it with the words, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (v25) this is a tremendously high calling since it calls the husband to lay aside self, pride and ego for the well-being of his wife and for her protection even unto death.

The washing of water with the word: sanctify in the following verse, "That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (v26) means to make holy and to purify. Though every faithful brother and sister in Christ are by faith and God's grace counted by God as being righteous for salvation to eternal life, they are nevertheless while dwelling in this mortal body still influenced by the flesh (i.e., self, ego and pride), but through reading the words of Christ and applying them to their lives they are being made holy.

NOTE: the word holy in this context does not mean, being made more religious, meaning attending more religious classes, Bible meetings or reading much more of the Bible etc. Being made holy in this context refers to growing in love, humility kindness, mercy grace and forgiveness etc. This is what biblical holiness is about when it is applied to brothers and sisters in Christ.

Grace and forgiveness must flow in every marriage: grace and forgiveness must flow in every marriage, without them the relationship is headed for doom, this is because no husband or wife attains in absolute perfection to the high calling that is expressed in these verses. It should always be remembered that the Bible is God's word and as such always teaches the perfect standard (thus the Bible's high focus on grace) since God our heavenly Father knows we will all fall short of its glory, nevertheless the call is to set our minds on its high calling and hold fast to the outstanding and extraordinary attitude Paul expressed in the following words he wrote to the Philippians:

- Not that I have already obtained this *or am already perfect*, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. "Brothers and sisters I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philip. 3:12-14).

Christ might present the church to himself without spot or wrinkle: the words, "That Christ might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle that she might be holy and without blemish" (v27) does not mean that we can attain to such a state of perfection this side of Christ's return. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ at this present time stands before God the Father as being without spot, blemish or wrinkle not because of any religious rites, customs or traditions they may be upholding or because of their own self effort to attain to righteousness, but because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace. God has designed the way of salvation to eternal life this way so that He could promise it to Abraham with a guarantee. Had the LORD made salvation dependent on us attaining to the perfection of His Holy Law there is no-way God could have promised it since not one of us can stand before God and boast we are without sin, thus the reason God has before the foundation of the world purposed that salvation to eternal life would be based on the following three things:

1. Faith.
2. God's grace.
3. Love (i.e. love for God's Son).

Nevertheless, Paul in his letter to the Corinthians tells us:

- Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable (corruption inherit incorruption in KJV), but in a twinkling of an eye when the last trumpet sounds the dead will be raised imperishable (incorruptible in KJV) and we shall be *changed* and this perishable (corruptible in KJV) body will put on the imperishable (incorruption in KJV) and this mortal body will put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

Then will the righteousness that the faithful have now by faith in Christ literally shine like a radiant diamond throughout all eternity.

Husbands love your wives as your own bodies: husbands are called "To love their wives as their own bodies" (v28) no sane person deliberately inflicts harm on themselves, but will instead do whatever they can to avoid being harmed or hurt in any manner it is in this sense that Paul is saying husbands should, "Love their wives as themselves." It means do not hurt your wife physically, verbally, sexually, emotionally or spiritually, but it's meaning goes even further since we all, not only try to avoid things that will cause us harm or hurt, but also will do whatever we are able to enhance our lives, thus the words, "Love your wife as your own bodies" also embraces the idea of a husband doing whatever he can to enhance the life of his wife and to protect it even at the expense of his own well-being or his own life.

No-one ever hated their-own flesh: the words, "No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church (v29) means that no sane person deliberately inflicts pain on their own

body, but rather will do all they can to avoid it and protect the body from harm. Christ to protect his body (the global and worldwide church made up of peoples from all nations) gave his life to serve the body it at the expense of his own well-being, i.e., he went without sleep, food, leisure time and not only endured mocking but suffered cruel and brutal beatings even unto death so that the body could be lifted from the lowest depths of sin and raised up to the highest state of glory. This is how husbands are to love their wives.

The two shall become one flesh: the words, "The two shall become one flesh (v31) carries the idea that two people will:

- Become one in love, mind, plans and purpose.
- Produce children (physical or spiritual) and thereby become one in them.
- Have an intimacy and inner bond with each other that far surpasses in love any other relationship they have with family, friends and even their brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is for these reasons that the words, "A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (v31) in relationship to Christ mean that whoever leaves the things of this world and the worldly attachments of their heart and submit their life, mind, will and heart in love to Christ and hold fast to him will become one in mind, unity, plans and purposes with the Lord in love.

The mystery: the mystery in the following verse, "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (v32) refers to the Husband and wife becoming one flesh. The mystery is how this union of love develops through moments of glory, wonder and happiness and moments of tragedy, sadness and sorrow and how through these moments being shared together the 'two' become bonded as one in love, mind, unity and purpose that is so powerfully united in love that no-one can destroy it. This hidden and steady growth of enduring love is the mystery it cannot be measured or seen, but develops through the joys and sorrows of life. Paul is applying this mystery to our relationship with Christ. Being in love is both glory and sorrow, no flower grows to its full beauty without rain and sunshine so it is with the mystery of love, it is through the joys and sorrows that love is strengthened and blossoms into a flower that everyone who sees it not only admires but, deeply desires.

The practical lesson for today: no-matter how much you may love your partner or even the Lord Jesus Christ never expect that there will not be times when that love is tested not only by the trials and troubles of this life, but also because of our own selfishness, ego and pride, but if we can humble ourselves before each other and before Christ and acknowledge our faults to Christ and to each other and allow forgiveness to always reign as a king in our hearts love will blossom into a flower that surpasses all the beauty of those growing alongside it.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
