



10.12.11

Ephesians chapter 5 begins by closing up the guidelines of chapter 4 in a simplistic plea to imitate God by following the sacrificial model of Jesus Christ. This chapter drives on to be a light of purity in the world by following Christ, and model of love in the world by living like Christ in submission.

With that call to imitate Christ in place, Paul contrasts the darkness of impurity in their culture with the light of living by the Holy Spirit. Living as Children of the Light will produce fruit that will be counter cultural and will work to expose the darkness that surrounds us.

Finally, Paul teaches about the central value of submission in Christian relationships. He looks at husbands and wives in chapter 5, and then he hits children and parents, and slaves and masters in the beginning of chapter 6.

## light & sacrifice

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**imitate.** (1-2)

**pure.** (3-7)

**light.** (8-20)

## love & submission

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**submit.** (21)

**marriage.** (22-33)

**children & parents, slaves & masters... 6.**

## Study & Discussion Questions:

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1. If you had to narrow it down to ONE thing... what has the Holy Spirit made most impacting for you in Ephesians so far? Or, even a verse that has stuck out?

2. Of the different pictures Paul has given about the Christian life - taking off, putting on, imitating God, and being light instead of darkness - which means the most to you? Why?

### 3. John 1... the Light came into the world...

Here's a table. In verses 1-20, write out some qualities of living in the light through the Spirit versus in the darkness:

Paul is contrasting those lives of secular culture to those that are marked by being imitations of God. These are characteristics of a Spirit-filled life as well.

light	dark

4. Talk: Discuss ways in which you see the Spirit working in your life NOW, and also ways in which you WANT to see fruits of the Spirit coming out in you. See that chart and do a little self-comparison time.

**5. When you hear the word ‘submit’... what is the first thing that comes to mind? Be honest :) Are you comfortable with the bible using this term (as you understand it) in marriage? if not, where? Don’t read the box until you answer this! :) Now read the box... comments?**

<b>SUBMIT:</b> vv.21,22
The command to “subordinate oneself” in this context was a command to a person with free choice to place him/herself in a position not ordained by nature. It meant “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”. It was usually a military term denoting the place in the ranks each division was to take. It was NOT common to use this term to describe marriage for Greeks nor Jews.
-Markus Barth, Anchor Bible Studies, Ephesians, pp.708-710

**6. How does the relationship between Christ and the Church help explain what Paul means by “submission”? vv.22-33**

### **7. Submission & Love:**

**This segment is from a commentary on Ephesians; read and discuss: Husband/Wife Relationships: Ephesians 5:22–33**

“Submission amongst equals?”

Nowhere is this concept seen more clearly than in marriage.

***The pagan view.*** In Paul’s time, pagans saw women as inferior beings, playthings for the dominant male. To be “head of the house” was to accept the common notion that authority was the male’s rightful providence. Children and wives were only responsible to obey. The wife was not equal to her husband as a person, or in any other way. His needs and concerns dominated the household, and the wife existed to fulfill those needs and to serve him.

Contemporary interpretations of Ephesians 5 that describe the wife as finding total fulfillment in her relationship with her husband and household reflect the pagan, not the Christian view. So does the notion that the wife is so “under” the authority umbrella of her husband that she is not to speak or act except at his direction.

***The Christian view.*** The Christian view is quite different. Women are seen as persons of equal worth and value. In the structure of society, men are given the role of head of the house, a role affirmed by God in this passage. But their headship is modeled on the way Christ loved the church, not on human systems of authority. Ephesians 5:27 portrays Christ as giving Himself up for the church “to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” In pursuit of this ministry, Christ nourishes and cares for the church. In the same way, husbands are to nurture their wives, seeking always to help the wife grow as a person and as a Christian.

What a contrast with the pagan view! Suddenly things are reversed. The wife is transformed from an unimportant adjunct, who exists only to meet her husband’s needs, to a person of intrinsic worth and value, becoming the focus of her husband’s concern. Instead of demanding that she live for him, he begins to live for her! Rather than keeping her under, he seeks to lift her up. Christian headship lifts the wife up as the rightful object of a husband’s loving concern.

In this context, the husband serves by being a Christlike head; the wife serves in responsive submission to one who lifts her up and holds her beside him.<sup>1</sup>

***How do you feel about the “trajectory hypothesis”?***

***Do you think Christians are known to model marriage like this***

***Ephesians idea in the world today? Is it working? How, or why not?***

**8. In light of all of this... we are called to imitate God, to follow Christ as model, to be pure, to be LIGHT. We are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to SUBMIT and LOVE as Christ did.**

**What challenges you the most tonight?**

**What changes do you need to ask God for help with?**

**How can we pray for each other in our lives and families?**

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<sup>1</sup> Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher's commentary* (930–931). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.