

have been explicitly (openly) set forth, all to the end of keeping “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3). But as Dale remarks, “The true Christian life is not an isolated life. To live always alone, among Divine and eternal things, is a false ideal of moral and religious perfection.” Outside the fellowship of believers there is a set of personal relationships or social institutions which existed long before the historical Church and which for every person are largely fixed. For example, each person lives within the framework of the family. In Paul’s days this primary social unit involved not only the parent-child and the husband-wife relationships, but also the master-servant associations . What did it mean, then, to live the new life in these common relationships? Would it make any difference when a person had become a Christian? It is to a discussion of Christian living in the family that the apostle now turns.

Two principles control Paul’s discourse (dialogue or sermon) on the Christian understanding of domestic relations. The first is “the far-reaching precept of mutual subjection,” which has already been stated in v. 21, and which in all likelihood led him to discuss these related matters at this point. While in each set of associations the “lesser” person is asked in one way or another to submit to the “greater” (5:22; 6:1, 5), there are exacting (tough) responsibilities for the “greater” too.

FIFTH STUDY

CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS

WALKING IN LOVE (Ephesians 5:1-7)

In our relationships as Christians, we find the understanding of our individual roles as we learn to be followers of God. This means we are to be imitators of God, just like dear children imitate their parents or care givers (Ephesians 5:1).

All relationships have to be guarded and grounded in the love walk *as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God* (Ephesians 5:2).

A sweet smelling savour. Ephesians 5:2. There was an odor, a fragrant aroma that ascended up to God in heaven when the sacrifices were offered on the alter. Jesus, our Sacrifice, pleased the Father when He offered up His life on the cross for our sins. It was a sweet smelling aroma.

We are, as believers, also are a sweet savor or fragrance of Christ (II Corinthians 2:15a). We manifest the fragrance of His knowledge by us in every place we go (II Corinthians 2:14).

1. (a) In Ephesians 5:3,4, we are commanded not to indulge in certain things that are not suitable or are inappropriate (sins). Name them. _____

(b) Instead, what are we commanded to practice? (Ephesians 5:4) _____

2. (a) In Ephesians 5:5, what should be already known? _____

(b) Do you believe that those who practice these things taught in Ephesians 5:5; and those who deceive others by saying, "These will not affect your personal relationship with God," are lost and are going to hell? (Ephesians 5:6) _____

(c) What phrase in Ephesians 5:6 makes you know your answer to (b) question is correct?

(d) What does Paul say in warning to all believers in Ephesians 5:7? _____

WALKING IN THE LIGHT (Ephesians 5:8-14)

1. There are 14 commands for Christian conduct in Ephesians 5:8-21. List them.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

(10) _____

(11) _____

(12) _____

(13) _____

(14) _____

(14) _____

DOMESTIC LIFE OF BELIEVERS (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Through most of this Epistle, Paul has occupied himself with a description of, and exhortations to, the Christians Church. Through Christ all barriers to admission into the divine society have been broken down, so that now both Jew and Gentile can worship and serve God together in covenant love. The duties which necessarily devolve upon (give to) each member as he enjoys the life of the Church