

Be More Like Christ

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- [0 : 0 0] Now as we continue then through this fifth chapter in Ephesians, we saw how in the first half of the chapter that the apostle is contrasting the worldly kind of slightly perhaps unclean humour, talk, conversation, lifestyle of the heathens, the unbelievers, with those who are called to be followers of Christ.
- Or occasion all uncleanness, verse be of covetous, covetousness let it not be once named among you as it becometh saints. And it's a shame, verse 12, even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever does make manifest is light. And the clear desire is that that which is unclean, that which is impure, should be kept from the believer.
- They shouldn't seek not to import it into their lives. Now sometimes, of course, you can't avoid contact with that which is impure or unclean or dishonouring to the Lord or worldly or whatever.
- We can't help that. We can't be taken out of the world while we're still in it. So we are going to inevitably come into contact with it. But that's a different thing from owning it and welcoming it and letting it be part of our life or our conversation or our witness.
- [1 : 1 9] And so this is why it says, wherefore, verse 17, be not unwise by understanding what the will of the Lord is. And as 1 Thessalonians tells us, chapter 4, verse 3, this is the will of God, even your sanctification, to be made more and more holy.
- So to desire to know what the will of the Lord is, that is for us to be made more like Him. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.
- Now notice that what is not prohibiting is use of wine at all, but rather to guard against the ease with which a little can become a lot.
- Whereby one very much prefers two drinks to one, and then three to two, and so on. To be so careful in the right use of what the Lord has given to be used and enjoyed, but to guard it so carefully.
- Be not drunk with wine, wherein success, but be filled with the Spirit. Now what are people seeking to do when they consume too much in the way of alcohol?
- [2 : 2 4] They're seeking to dull out the rest of the world. To dull down the senses. To kind of shut out some of the pain or difficulty or stress of the world.
- That's their way of enjoying themselves. Their way of unwinding is to shut out as much of the world as possible. To dull down the senses. That is the effect that it has.
- Now, some people say, oh, we don't drink for effect. Just drink for, you know, to be social and so on. Everybody drinks for effect if they drink. Because otherwise, you would just drink a soft drink.
- If you didn't drink for some kind of loosening up or use of the alcohol that's in there, you would just take something soft. You'd eat tea or coffee or take a soft drink or whatever.
- So everybody drinks for a wee bit of effect. But the danger is not, as the Lord has given this gift, is not to say, oh, no, that's an evil thing.

[3 : 17] God doesn't say it's evil. But rather, the use of it must be moderate. Must be wise. Be not unwise. And be not drunk with white women's excess.

But rather, if you want to have a high, if you want to be filled with something, it's going to make you just so full of joy and excitement, rather be filled with the Spirit.

Now, we think, well, there's no comparison between these two things. Well, yes, there is. Because in the Acts of the Apostles, remember, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and people said, Acts chapter 2, verse 13, these men are full of new wine.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third out of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. It shall come to pass in the last day, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

[4 : 23] And on my servants and on my handings, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. If you really want to know the blessing and the joy and the fulfillment that some people seek in the excess of this world, then seek to be filled with God's Spirit, which doesn't dull down your senses.

It heightens them. It enables you to see, you know, everything with greater clarity and the greater beauty of all that the Lord has done.

It's that old song, you know, that heaven above is softer blue, earth beneath the sweeter green. Something lives in every hue, Christless eyes have never seen. Birds with gladder songs overflow.

You know, stars with brighter beauty shine. And since I know us, now I know I am his and he is mine. Everything has greater clarity and beauty and heightening of the senses when we are filled with the Spirit of Christ.

And that, the apostle says, if you really want a high, that's what to go for. Be not drunk with wine when it is in excess. Be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit of Christ.

[6 : 03] Now, in the context, the desire of the apostle is to say, if you want to be filled with something, be filled with the Spirit. When you think of people being drunk and eating of their raucous kind of drinking songs, all worldly and so on.

If you want to be filled with the Spirit and sing something, sing that which is honoring to the Lord. That's what he means here in the context. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

As James says, if anyone is merry, let him sing psalms.

If you want to be joyful, if you want to be merry, sing something which is honoring to the Lord. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Now, that I would suggest to you is the original context. It's not really about the kind of nitpicking apart that we often do on this verse. We'll come to that in just a moment. But the context is, if you want to sing, sing to the Lord.

[7 : 09] If you want to sing something with your celebration and your times of joy, then let it be that which will be honoring to the Lord. But, of course, if I just left it at that, you don't think I was dodging the bullet and refusing to get into any kind of controversy or any kind of subject.

There is frequently a hot potato, of course, as well. So, let's just go there for a few minutes and a little while and look at this subject. First of all, as most of you will know, my own background from a hymn singing denomination.

I don't have a difficulty with singing hymns or using music or whatever. But, there is that which must also be looked at in terms of what God has actually revealed in his word.

There are those commentators, of course, who will say, not without justification, that the Greek terms that are used for psalm and hymn and songs of the Spirit, that these can be found in the Greek Old Testament, for example, as titles of the different psalms.

Now, you might think, well, that's not a great deal of use to us if we've got a Bible in English in front of us, or if you've got a Gaelic Bible or whatever in front of you if you're literally talking Greek.

[8 : 19] So, if we think in terms of what you find in the English Bible, think of the titles which in the original Hebrew would be part of the first verse of the psalm. There are 56 psalms in the Psalter which include in their title the word psalm in the translation.

There are various others which have it included in italics, which means it's not there in the original, so we've left that out. So, 56 of them use the term psalm as what we would now understand as psalms.

There are 30 psalms which use in their title the word song. Now, of these, a great many, fully half of that 30 almost, also are combined with the word psalm.

So, it's a psalm or song, and both words will be in the title. The ones that don't are what we call the songs of degrees, from Psalm 120 on to Psalm 134.

All of these 15 psalms are songs of degrees. So, song is there in the title. There are 44 psalms which have something else in the title, like, you know, Michtam of David or Mashal of David or Shagayan or A Prayer of Moses at Psalm 90.

[9 : 35] So, some other title that they have in their topmost verse. And there are 34 psalms which have no title at all. So, it is fair to say that, you know, songs, psalms, you know, a hymn which now, in the original, would simply have meant a song of praise to God, now in our culture and context tends to mean something that is not scriptural, something that has been of human composition.

But a hymn, as in, for example, where we've got, we read of the apostles in Matthew 26, verse 30, in Mark 14, 26, when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

We think, well, there you go, the disciples sang a hymn. So, that settles it. But, when it says they sang a hymn, a song of praise, does that mean they sang the kind of hymns that we sing today?

It was standard practice for the Jews at their Passover time to conclude their Passover meal with the singing of one of what was called the Hallel Psalms.

That means the Psalms of praise. And these were from Psalm 113 all the way through to Psalm 118. These Psalms were known as the Hallel Psalms, and it was almost always one of these that would be used at the conclusion of a Passover.

[11 : 00] So, whilst, of course, we do not know exactly what Jesus and the apostles sang before they went out to the Mount of Olives, it is extremely likely in the context that the hymn that they sang was, in fact, one of the Psalms.

It is almost certain that almost everything that was used in the synagogue and in the temple was Psalms. We leave that, for instance, on one side.

But, whether or not that means that we should never use anything of human composition at all, we should just stick to what the Lord has revealed in His Word. There are arguments, of course, for and against these things.

Some commentators have argued, of course, that the term spiritual songs, Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, a spiritual song is a song inspired by the Holy Spirit. If it is spiritual, it is of the Holy Spirit.

That means the Holy Spirit must have given it. That means the Holy Spirit must have revealed it. In other words, something which He has put in His Holy Scriptures. Of course, the Lord can inspire other people in different ways.

[12 : 09] Some people have said, oh, somebody made that beautiful painting, Rubens or whatever, that's inspired. Or I've heard people say the person that wrote Amazing Grace was inspired. And we might say that a sermon by Robert Murray McChin or Charles Spurgeon was inspired, but they're not inspired in the same way as a piece of Holy Scripture is inspired.

It's a different level of inspiration. The one is God has inspired somebody to do a great work themselves. In the other, God has given Himself a particular piece of His revelation, whether to be sung or to be read or to be spoken.

Now, the biggest danger with using that which God has not Himself given is not dissimilar to the danger that we read of a moment or two ago with, you know, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

The Bible does not say, so you should all be teetotalers. Teetotalism is a perfectly respectable, honorable, good, safe, and healthy thing for a Christian to be. But it is not scripturally commanded.

If we were to say, for example, that the church now, because it's not scripturally forbidden, now the church wants to encourage opening more licensed premises throughout the country, throughout Scotland, I would be concerned.

[13 : 30] Even though it's not forbidden in scripture, I would be concerned if the church was seeking to do that which, you know, to our eyes would seem like increasing the forces of the world. I would be concerned if the church was encouraging in church fellowships and after church meetings and so on that the wine should freely fall instead of cups of tea or something else like that.

Not because it's forbidden in scripture, just because it would be of concern. Now, once the G is out of the bottle, which of course now, as of 2010, of course it is, in our own branch of the church, it is very much harder to control that which is credited with being a hymn as opposed to just a song or a piece of doggerel that might be, you know, vaguely religious.

Let me give you an example. Obviously, from my own background, the hymn singing church for hundreds of years, the church has gotten this big. The first hymns that were produced, nobody could question the God-honoring doctrinal orthodoxy of some of them.

You know, think of something like Rock of Ages. He does, you know, not the labour of my hands can fulfil thy law's demands. Could my zeal no respite know? Could my tears forever flow?

All for sin could not atone. Thou must save, and thou alone. Now, this is pure orthodox Calvinism, and with these sentiments of which none could disagree.

[14 : 59] And it's only fair to say that when the national church, the church of Calvin, produced its first hymn book in 1898, there was a little line of scripture at the top of every hymn, every single hymn in the book, so that people could identify which piece of scripture the song was referring to.

Scroll forward 29 years, the second edition, 1929, no little piece of scripture anymore. But still reasonably conservative content and so on. Another 38 years or whatever further on, and the third edition was reviled for its destruction of many a popular hymn tune, but it was published before the politicisation of the church really kind of took hold.

By the time the fourth edition of the church hymnry was published in 2005, the politicisation of the church was all but complete. And alongside some wonderful majestic hymns, you would get something like the following.

This is a quotation from Church Henry, volume 4, number 360. And it reads as follows, and I read it only with hesitation.

And it says, And that goes on to say, Now, I'm not quite clear where any kind of scriptural basis for much of that comes from, but once you allow something to be, or call, or describe as a hymn, how do you define what goes on and what stays at?

[16:57] If something like that can have official church approval, then you see what I mean about the comparative danger of moving away from that which the Lord himself has simply revealed.

Now, I've already said, I am not against the singing of hymns in principle, nor the use of music. And I do not honestly believe that a reverent God honouring him devoutly sung is dishonouring to the Lord.

Any more than I believe that a temperate use of alcohol is a sin of forbidden scripture. And I may argue further, that the use of scripture, for example, in paraphrases to be sung, keeps us within the parameters of God's word, even though it exceeds the bounds of the Psalter.

But, as with the issue, for example, of alcohol, there is that which is permitted and that which is of concern.

And we should be concerned not so much at what has happened so far in the church, but as to where it might lead. And the biggest single danger of departing from the exclusive use of what God himself has revealed is that it tends, historically it is proven to tend, towards doctrinal liberalism.

[18:16] That means to becoming indifferent about other things of the Lord. In 1872, when the old free church approved its first hymn book and allowed for the use of musical instruments, instruments, 20 years later, they had what was known as the Declaratory Act, which allowed for those taking their ordination vows to understand the Westminster Confession of Faith, you know, with, you know, a bit of reservation here, I don't want to believe that bit, don't want to believe in the next bit.

And nobody ever nailed down how much they had to believe or how much they didn't have to believe. The Declaratory Act allowed you to believe all of it or none of it. And obviously that had implications for your understanding of the Bible as well.

That was within 20 years of the hymn book being approved. Now, of course, as we know, in 2010, the free church took the decision, the plenary assembly to allow the use of hymns and music and so on in the church.

Fine. And if people would say, well, this helps us with outreach and with planting churches, and, you know, it takes away a barrier. Fine. I'm not going to disagree with that. I perfectly, I'm okay with that.

But 2010, you've got the plenary assembly. In 2017, the moderator of the general assembly in his moderatorial sermon called publicly for revision of the Confession of Faith.

[19:42] In 2018, this year, a consultation on revision of the ordination vows and their relation to the Confession of Faith is underway across the presbyteries.

Now, that is within eight years of the plenary assembly. There ought not to be, in my mind, there ought not to be a direct correlation between the introduction of non-inspired materials and music on the one hand and doctrinal liberalism on the other hand, but it is happening now twice over.

And that cannot be a coincidence. That ought to be a matter of concern for all who love the Lord and all who love the truth of his word.

Now, don't understand me wrongly. I'm not saying all hymns and music are to blame for all the ills of the church, but it is an undeniable correlation that where the one comes in, the other soon becomes sought.

It is desired by people. It is looked for by people. It follows on. That is the evidence of both the 19th and the 21st century.

[20 : 57] And it should be a matter of concern. If I were to give, again, a view on, you know, sounds or were against including hymns and music, then I would always, perhaps being an unadventurous person, seek to go for that which we know to be safe.

That which we know to be safely and definitely of God. And for that, I would just like to use a little illustration, a story that an American minister told some years ago.

And it reads like this. This is Reverend W.D. Rolstone. It is talks on Samaday related to the following story. And I'll just read it to you. As I trudged homeward, I stopped at an uncle's and spent the night there.

In the evening, I brought out my hymn book and had some singing with my cousins. After I laid it down, my uncle took it up, put on his glasses, and spent some time in looking through it.

He was a firm believer in the exclusive use of Sam's, and my book was the hymn book of another denomination. It gave the hymns and the music with the names of the composers of each, his father's known. Uncle read a hymn, and naming the author said, I know nothing of him.

[22 : 06] He read another. He said, I've read about the author of this one. He was a Roman Catholic priest. He read another and said, I've often read of this author. He was a good man and an earliest Christian minister.

He then said, now John, if I were going to use one of these hymns in the worship of God tonight, which do you think I'd best choose? The one about his author, I know nothing? The one by the Roman Catholic priest?

Or the one by the earnest Christian minister? I replied, well, the one by the earnest Christian minister? True, said he. We should select the one written by the best man. And I see by looking through your book that it contains many hymns written by good men.

But if I should find that one composed by God himself, would it not be better to sing that one than one composed by any good man? I replied, it surely would.

After a little he said, I now carefully looked through your book, and I did not find one hymn in it, Mark, composed by God. But I have here a little hymn book, and God by his Holy Spirit has composed every hymn in it.

[23 : 10] For Peter says, holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And as he spoke, he handed me one of our psalm books. And the manner in which he presented his argument made an impression upon my mind that I never forgot.

Unquote. That which is of God, you cannot go wrong with. That which is the design or composition of men may be perfectly honouring to the Lord, and I do not decry it.

But if there is a question of safety, then it is always safer to go with that which is definitely of God than that which is not necessarily so.

All of that said, the context here is not really about picking apart whether we're talking about hymns of human composition or about psalms or whatever.

Almost certainly, the early church used psalms in their worship. Well, we know that they did. Almost certainly as well, they would have begun to put certain elements of Christian doctrine into rhyme and into song.

[24 : 26] Simply because it's easier for people to remember things when they are put into song. They might put, for example, the Lord's Prayer or the Apostles' Creed or whatever into rhyme and into song so that people who were, by and large, illiterate could remember it, could have the rhyme, could have the song, could have the music, and so it is likely that from a very early stage there was that which was used in song and in worship which was not exclusively the song.

But we don't know that. But we presume it. We think it. But again, if it's a question of safety, then you will never go wrong using what God has given.

And you may or may not go wrong using that which men have devoutly sought to compose. But in the context here, what Paul is talking about is that if you're going to sing, if you want to, if you're filled with a party spirit, sing that which will glorify God, sing that which will honour the Lord, and whatever you use, let it be that which will make melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the thing. Let Christ be the centre and soul of all that you do, of all your worship. Of all your enjoyment. Of all your pleasures. Submitting yourselves one to another in the feet of God.

Now this verse 21 is sometimes taken as being the sort of conclusion of the preceding verses. You know, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 07] Submitting yourselves one to another in the feet of God. Sometimes it is used as the opening for the succeeding verses. And in either case it is not wrong. Because whether it is as believers one with another we ought to be humble before each other.

We ought to submit one to another in the feet of the Lord. But also in our domestic relationships we ought to likewise be ready to submit one to another.

And of course whatever the headship might lie everybody knows that there is if there is going to be two people living in close proximity in relationship with each other. They will need to accommodate one another.

There will need to be a measure of give and take. It cannot be all one person ruling the roost whoever is given the supposed headship. So submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. 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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ so let wives be unto their own husbands in everything.

[27 : 20] Now notice again it is their own husbands in everything. It's not all women to be subject to all men. All men are not the head of all women but in the marital relationship the husband is the head of the wife.

That is simply what God has himself specified. Just as Christ is the head of the church. Now where we find Christ as the head of the church what kind of headship do we find Christ exercising?

Do we find Christ sort of sitting in mighty pomp and splendor ruling over his disciples and sending them here and there and so on and giving orders and being almighty and high? Oh we don't find that.

Christ may be enthroned in glory hereafter but I laugh the example that he sets is of foot washing humility. He sends his disciples out two by two but he sends them with nothing because he himself has nothing.

He cannot endow them with large S because he doesn't have anything. How he survived and how the disciples survived was of the charity and the care and the ministrations often of women who were kind and generous in their dealings with them and they would have been as aware of that as anyone else.

[28 : 30] Christ's headship Christ's leadership is a leadership of service. Now where the marital bond is concerned that whilst we have this pattern of Christ and the church if you want to think in political terms it's almost like a constitutional monarchy.

The head of the state is not in God. Whose head is on the coins? Whose name is on the acts of parliament? But in real terms the power is wielded somewhere else. And whilst of course those wielding the real power would never go against the head of state you wouldn't get a prime minister so politically suicidal as to say and why would that think we're going to do away with the queen and abolish the royal family?

Because even if other people agreed with him his political opponents would pounce on it and would decry him as a traitor and so on so nobody's going to do that. So likewise the headship that is given by Christ is a headship of service and that headship will have stronger and greater authority the more humble and faithful and determined is the servant leadership that is exhibited.

As the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. And then what do we have? Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

Now you'll notice that this requirement isn't actually there with the wife or the husband. It doesn't say wives love your husbands. It doesn't say that does it? It says wives submit to your husbands.

[30 : 08] You might not be able to stand out but submit to your husband because that's what God requires. Husbands it's not rule over your wives it's love your wives. Love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

That's the servant leadership again. It is for Christ to give himself for the church because they can't do it. It is for the husband to give himself for the wife or to the wife to extend himself for her because that's how he shows his headship.

That's how he shows his leadership. That he might sanctify his headship. That he might love Christ now. That is make pure and cleanse it the church with the washing of water by the word.

Now this is a high view of baptism because every single person who actually belongs to the outward church will have been baptized at some point somewhere along the line.

When the water of baptism is administered it is never administered in silence or in a vacuum. it is administered with the pronouncement of the authority which Christ has given the scriptural authority and with the words likewise of consecration that are used.

[31 : 24] So it is the word of God and the sacraments of God that are put together that he might sanctify and cleanse it not by the washing of water but with the washing of water by the word.

Being baptized will not make you automatically one of the elect. Being baptized will not mean oh that's me in heaven that's okay. Some people have treated it that way in the past. Some people say well we'll get the baby done just in case because if it's ill and it might die and it's baptized oh that's okay it will go to heaven.

That's not actually how it works. But rather what we ought to be and what scripture teaches us to be doing is to be bringing our children within the covenant family of God's people.

That we are each one of us to be washed with the water by the word so that as we are brought in that symbol of washing away our sins that pronouncement of God's word of grace is something which he does with us long before we know anything about it perhaps because it is all of God's grace.

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 so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies he that loveth his wife loveth himself for no man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourisheth it and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church.

[32 : 52] Now let's just say for the sake of argument that you had let's say you're quite wealthy and you were quite wealthy and you had to go to maybe public events and maybe not parties but maybe public gatherings or whatever and you'd go accompanied by your wife.

Now if you didn't look after your wife let's say you turned out in a lovely big suit brand new pressed and clean cuffs and so on and there she was dressed like a dog's dinner because she didn't have any new clothes because you never gave her any new clothes you never gave her money for any new clothes you never provided for you didn't feed her properly and there she is looking all red draggled and all how is that girl they're not going to say wow what a great guy pretty about his wife they're going to say what's wrong why isn't he looking after her why is he mistreating her this way what's wrong with her why is he not taking his responsibility seriously in other words it reflects upon himself if he doesn't take care of her if he doesn't look after her she's not able to look after him so no man ever yet hated his own flesh but he nourisheth it and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church so unmental of their wives as their own bodies she's part of you you're part of her you look after her she looks after you you support one another it is mutual it is together made in the image of God that is what God says at the beginning isn't it let us make man in our image male and female he created that for we are members of his body of his flesh and of his bones now notice this use of the words it doesn't say of his blood it is with his blood that he purchased our redemption his resurrection body is a body of flesh and bones but no mention of blood

Luke 24 remember when Jesus appears to the disciples verse 39 he says behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself handle me and see for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as he see me have and when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet and while they yet believed not for joy he wondered he said had he here any meat anything to eat and he gave him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb he took it and they eat before them I'm not a ghost he says look I've got a body of flesh and bones a ghost doesn't have a body of flesh and bones as he see me have but we would tend to say flesh and blood Jesus doesn't mention blood his blood has been spilled his blood has been expended blood is for the earth bound body and at the end of the day it must be shed because the life is in the blood but the resurrection body is a body of flesh and bones and we are part of his body in the way that the church is his bride and the bride of

Christ is one with her husband Christ we are members of his body of his flesh and of his bones yes it's a great mystery but it's no greater a mystery than God first created at the outset Genesis 2 verse 43 and 24 Adam said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh he doesn't mention blood notice she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife for they shall be one flesh this is a great mystery Paul says but I speak concerning Christ and the church it is in a sense no more deep or difficult to grasp than it is that a husband and wife are two and yet are one they become one yes in a sense they become one physically at certain times but also they are one unit in a way that nobody else in the world is and so likewise when we are joined to Christ we are one with him in a way that we are not one with anybody else it would be wrong to say you know when you get married you love your wife or your husband but you don't love anybody else of course you do you still love your parents if they are still living you know that one of my father and that mother it is a commandment of God if you have children then you love your children and grandchildren or cousins or of course you love other people you may have very dear friends that you love it's not that you can stop loving everybody else but none of these loves is the same as this special and unique bond between the husband and wife and in earthly terms this is your highest love this is your first loyalty this is your unique next of kin no relationship ranks higher in earthly relationships and so in terms of

Christ who is to be our highest relationship of all it doesn't mean if you love Christ oh yeah it says you're going to hate your wife and your husband and your kids and your family and your mother and father that's what it says now we've got to understand that when the bible in its english translation uses the word hate it does not mean loathe and despise it means love less Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated God didn't loathe and despise and detest Esau he gave him manseer he prevented the Israelites from taking it over he preserved Esau's heritage because of his relationship to Isaac and Abraham Esau had his place Esau was given his special due but he was not of the covenant line he was not the one through whom the covenant seed would pass he was special but he was not the same as Jacob Jacob have I loved for all his faults Esau have I loved less it says of Leah Jacob's first wife when God saw that Leah was hated he opened her womb now obviously Jacob did not hate Leah and said oh I can't stand her I loathe her I detest her he had seven children with her it's very difficult to have seven children with somebody you really can't stand to be next to so it means love less and when the Lord

[39 : 05] Jesus says you know unless a man will hate his father and mother and wife and children he in his own life also he cannot be my disciple he doesn't mean really hate can't stand these people he means love them less than me and it is not that their love is to be reduced or diluted or diminished it is that Christ's love is to be supreme over all these things just as in earthly human relationships there is to be no higher love no more unique and special bond than that between spouses so in ultimate terms in spiritual terms there is no higher love than Christ for anyone we must love Christ first and foremost and doing that does not mean that oh we forget about the loves of the other ones no it means that they all fit perfectly into place they all find and have and are accounted their unique place in the scheme of loves but if

Christ be first and at the top as he ought to be then all else fits into place now inevitably without Christ in his place all these other human relationships likewise sit loosely they do not fit together and are not cemented together as they ought to be there is not that glue and that sort of divine initiative holding them together where Christ is not in a household where he is not in a family all these human relationships will not necessarily fall apart of course they won't there are people who follow other religions who are perfectly faithful to their wives and husbands and their families may be strong and so on but they are weakened by the absence of Christ from their family unit and whatever may be the strengths that bind them together it is in a sense mere human strength as opposed to the divine bond where Christ is at the head of each family and relationship this is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church nevertheless that every one of you in particular soul of his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband now where

Christ is at the heart of a relationship this is not a hardship it is not a difficulty it is not abnormal it is not unnatural where Christ is at the heart of our relationship all these other things will fall into place it's not a problem to submit to somebody who loves you and you love them it's not a problem to expend yourself perhaps even to be prepared to give your life for somebody as Christ gave his life for the church if you love them as Christ loved the church it's not a problem to outlay yourself and expend yourself to the other extremity to make sure they are provided for kept and okay and looked after for as Christ did for the church if you love somebody if the love of Christ is at the heart of all these things then everything else will fall into place why are these sections and these verses so much reviled by those of so-called modern thought why is it well nobody in the right mind would work this way and nobody in the right mind would say this is how human relationships would be why because Christ is not in their lives

Christ is not in their heart Christ is not in their society Christ has been banished from all of these human and societal relationships and we see the result it's not exactly a shining example of triumphant humanism is it but where Christ is in the heart then the entirety of this chapter falls into place cleanliness in thought in speech in life in behavior purity in heart within and outwardly faithfulness in relationships desire and love to honor the Lord that when we sing for joy we sing that which will honor the Lord that when we use the good gifts God gives then we do it with temperance and with respect but better still is to be filled with his spirit you see what Paul is wiping here the message of the gospel is never about simply tinkering around the edges of human existence it is about transforming human life and turning it into that which God reigns at the center of and Christ is the king and head of and when that is the case all other human frailties fall into place they may be withered and perished because there's no more place for them in the holiness of Christ they may be renewed and revitalized because these relationships are now transformed by the love and power of Christ but above all having turned this fallen world upside down the power of

Christ sets it the right way up the way it was meant to be the way it was designed of the first with Christ as king and head of all and his people the church fitting into him and being one with him as the bride of Christ your husband get Christ as the Lord of your life and all these other things will find their place and will reach their fulfillment with him you will have all the things without him all else will wither and perish in his trial