

LIVING UNDER THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL

Ephesians 5:18-21

Our age characterized by adversarial relationships.

Stepping into hole in a handicap ramp => Sue them!

Strike & labor disputes—we struggle with appropriate response for God's people

We've become accustomed to **thinking adversarially**.

Wives encouraged to resist their husbands!

Children learn to resist parents!

Students resist teachers!

Workers resist employers!

Citizens resist government!

Our society is *marked* by **adversarial thinking**!

In contrast to that way of thinking, Paul teaches us that **Christian thinking is SUBMISSIVE thinking**!

We don't like this message—we don't *understand* it!

It's not "politically correct" to teach submission!

Well, we all like to hear it for the other guy—especially if HE's supposed to submit to ME!

—but we don't like to hear it for ourselves.

Seminary experience teaching: "You can't live that way!"

Ephesians <= divisions within the churches.

-conflict between Jews & Gentiles.

Hymn of praise: we, who used to be sepa-rated, are members of God's family.

∴, We ought to act like family; live worthy of our family!

If God accepts all of us without distinction, we ought to accept one another!

4-6 Logical implications of the doctrine

When church fully comprehends greatness of God's plan, we'll glorify Him & live in unity

5 times he repeats the phrase "**therefore walk**"

How we ought to walk in light of what God has done for us:

1) Walk in unity 4:1-16

When we understand what God's done for us, we'll quit criticizing others & accept one another (4:1).

2) Don't walk like pagans 4:17-32

We should no longer walk same as we used to walk.

3) Walk in love 5:1-2 If God so loved us, we ought to imitate Him and love one another.

4) Walk in holiness 3-14 Walk as children of light 8

We should walk in the light (as HE is in the light).

Be light in midst of darkness 5:8-14

5) Don't walk as foolish but as wise 5:15-6:9

Contrast between people who let life “*slip through fin-gers*” wasting it in meaningless frenzy, as opposed to people who understand purpose; live to glorify God.

3 PAIRS OF CONTRASTS: 15-18

1. Live as wise rather than foolish 15-16 *Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making best use of the time, because the days are evil.*

Wise people make most of our time

We understand priorities for our life.

We know character of times we live in.

Aren't here to fritter away time & let life pass us by.

PA Dutch: “*We grow too soon old; too late smart!*”

[2nd: Understand the master plan (the *Master's* plan!)]

2. Live understanding God's will rather than foolishly 17 “*Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*”

Wise understand what God wants us to do & do it.

3. Live under control of God's Spirit

rather than controlled by wine 5:18-6:9

“*Be filled with Spirit*” contrasted to drunkenness

We talk about being drunk as being “under the influ-ence.” –Not bad way to refer to filling with the Spirit.

It's being “**under the influence**” of the Holy Spirit.

We don't control ourselves — H.S.'s in control.

4 characteristics demonstrate his control:

When Spirit of God controls our life, He demonstrates His presence by **4 evidences:**

1. Praising God in fellowship 5:18b-19a “*Be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms,*

hymns & spiritual songs.” => **Corporate praise**

Doesn't mean communicate only in song!

But the Spirit *does* produce a song in our hearts.

Like fountain springing up in us; overflows with praise.

Praise God **together**, rather than complain & criticize.

–impossible to praise God & complain at same time!

3 words for music: sacred songs, poetic songs, songs from the heart.

All indicate our worship should be authentic expression, overflow of heart, with praise.

Someone suggested I mention need to show the joy of the Lord. *Are people really as glum as they look?* Some people look like they're going to a funeral, or wood shed.” When we're controlled by God's Spirit, our heart should be filled with praise; our face reflect joy of the Lord.

When we come together, there's verbal, musical communication—vertical & horizontal!

Spirit-filled people overflow in song!

Woman with grandson in church. As soloist was singing, he tugged on her sleeve & whispered, "She can't sing very well, can she?" Knowing the woman's love for the Lord, she said, "She sings from her heart. That's what makes it good." Several days later they were singing along with car radio, he stopped & said, "Nana, you sing from your heart, don't you?"
=>

2. Praising God in the heart 19b *"Singing & making melody to the Lord with your heart,"*
=> Internal, **personal** praise

1st part of verse speaks of outward public expression;

2nd part speaks of personal expression of praise—our attitude before God.

Vance Havner: We frequently meet people with music playing from transistor radios [iPods].
Lacking music in our hearts, we carry it in our pockets!

H.S. produces a song in our heart!

3. Giving thanks for everything 20 *"Giving thanks always & for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"*

Control by Spirit=>we give thanks always for all things

This isn't thanksgiving for some things sometimes, or most things, most of the time.

It's praise for *all* things, *all* the time.

4. Submitting to one another 5:21-6:9

"Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Significant for church marked by divisions, when the Spirit controls our lives, we submit to one another.

Spirit-controlled life doesn't consist of getting our way. It's giving up our rights; submitting to one another.

Mutual submission is evident in our relationships:

wives & husbands (22-33); children & parents (6:1-4); slaves & masters (6:5-9).

Authority's recognized in each sphere but attitude of submission is shown by way we use that authority.

2 KINDS OF SUBMISSION:

1) **Submission to one another**

2) **Submission to authority**

4 SPHERES OF AUTHORITY:

1) Home 1 Pet 3:1-7; Eph 5-6; Col 3

2) Work 1 Pet 2:18-20; Eph. 6; Col 3

3) Government 1 Pet. 2:13; Rom 13

4) Church 1 Pet 5:5; Heb 13:17

Biblical teaching on submission to each other

5:18 Submission flows from Spirit's control.

Power for biblical submission comes from God—NOT from us!

Biblical submission to authority is submission to GOD'S authority.

Biblical submission to authority comes in context of mutual submission

Biblical concept *consistently* teaches: those who have authority are also submissive to those over whom they exercise that authority.

Practical application to our life today:

Be filled with Spirit—controlled by Him.

How can we tell if He's in control of our life?

Spirit of God produces impressive results in our life:

1. Speech characterized by song of authentic praise
in unison with other believers.
2. Thoughts filled with personal praise overflowing from our lips.
3. Response to circumstances, good **or** bad:
attitude of gratitude, continuously expressing thanks
4. Response to each other: attitude of submission

What can we do if we lack these attitudes?

James suggests: Ask God—“*the giving God*”—Who delights to give liberally—to take control of our life & produce these attitudes in you]

**=> Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me
melt me, mold me, fill me, use me**

Is that the cry of our heart this a.m.?