

5:17-21¹

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Once again, we find phenomenal discord is not in keeping with the **will of the Lord**. If God in His kindness selected us to be “holy” (1:3) then this includes our marriage. Marriage, then, is an issue of doing **the will of the Lord**. **18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,** As we see this climaxing into the parent to child relationship of early chapter 6—and then the workplace of early chapter 6, we see that it climaxes through marriage. Marriage, if it is anything, is a **Spiritual** issue. Nobody should ever tell themselves “I am **spirit-filled** and simply cannot stand my spouse.” No, somewhere, in a moment, strife and contention came **19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20^d giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21^f submitting to one another in the fear of⁶ God.**

5:22-24

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For^h the husband is head of the wife, as alsoⁱ Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands^j in everything.

5:25-33

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and^l gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. All of the sudden, we see that **29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31^r “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the^s two shall become one flesh.”** All of the sudden, we find out how Paul uses the Old Testament. He sees them primarily as Gospel-related, these references from Moses’ law.² We find out that this marital relationship is that which concerns “Christ and the church” (5:32). When we go back to Genesis 2:23 we realize that its proximity to Genesis 3:15³ provides contextual proximity as to why marriage is a Gospel issue. We see that a number of topics show up in proximity to Genesis

¹See under 1:1, 1:2, 1:3-6, 1:7-12, 1:13-14 & 1:15-18 also.

^dPs. 34:1

^f[Phil. 2:3]; 1 Pet. 5:5

⁶NU *Christ*

^h1 Cor. 11:3

ⁱCol. 1:18

^jTitus 2:4, 5

^lActs 20:28

^rGen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7

^s1 Cor. 6:16

²More on this from my commentary on 1 Corinthians (9:9-10).

³This is usually seen as the first Gospel promise in the Bible.

3:15 thus making all kinds of timeless truths from deep within God's Creative dictates, and thus, showing us the first culture war is in Genesis 1-3, and it is Gospel-centric. We shall begin with seeming unrelated issues and build to the marriage issue.

1. The special creation of man as the image of God is a Gospel issue (1:26-27). There is no God-consciousness otherwise and therefore, no accountability. This doesn't even address the inability to define when a baby becomes the image of God. Societal ethics is pointless if we are not made in His image. Theologically, if Adam didn't sin for me; Christ did not die for me.
2. The inherent quality of good or evil: It seems almost ridiculous to say there is no such thing as objective "goodness" when God stood back and said "this is good" (1:31). To assume God does not have an opinion on an action is a Gospel offense. No evil=no redemption needed.
3. The sanctity of rest (2:1) seems like it is related, at least by the Hebrews author (Hebrews 4), to salvation. Christians should be counter-cultural from this normal rat-race where we run everywhere doing everything for everybody. If never feeling like you have done enough isn't works-based philosophy that can creek into one's soteriology...what is?
4. Work, according to Genesis 2:15, is holy. It is Gospel related to work, says Jesus (John 5:17). Holy work is related to the Gospel in that we take pleasure in our work just as God took pleasure in His Calvary work (Isaiah 53:10). Revelation 22:13 shows that there is labor taking place in the Holy City.
5. Mankind's raising children as responsible stewards is a Gospel issue: Genesis 2:17 shows us that allowing our children to have choices is a Gospel issue. The ability of Adam and Eve to fall is a Gospel issue. God could have "child-proofed" the garden or made the world nice and safe, but then...they would have never known they needed the Gospel and would have never shared God's glory (Hebrews 2:10).
6. Gender identity is a Gospel issue
 - a. Women were created separately from men (1:27), brought up in Genesis 3:15, and this gender is physiologically determined; not psychologically determined. That is, the command to reproduce in chapter 1, and the desire to be with one another in chapter 2—"naked and unashamed"/"leaving and cleaving" show that physiology is the issue that determines sex and gender. We don't maim a healthy body for a sick mind; we renew a sick mind to align with a healthy body.
 - b. Women are to be married to men and men to women (2:21-25). There can be no one-flesh union outside of heterosexual union, and this heterosexual union is called a marriage.
 - c. The role and purpose within this relationship is for there to be work/vision/mission in the home (2:15) that is aided by the woman (2:20). This is clouded and difficult in today's world for a number of reasons:
 - i. Leadership is hard.
 1. My job as a leader doesn't usually lend itself to domestic help.
 - a. Automation means I don't have to train.
 - b. Specialization means I don't have to speak.

- c. Secularization means that I don't have to feel anything.
 - 2. If I don't want to develop leaders in my home that aid me in our home's mission...I don't have to do so and nobody will say anything. I can be selfish and create a number of hobbies.
 - 3. Mission Casting is hard.
 - a. We have to decide if our work life, home life, and church life have any focus to them at all.
 - b. We have to decide if our family planning is God's business or not.
 - c. I will sometimes wonder if I will even be followed. I will wonder if my wife will respect my decisions (5:22-24). In a day where people do not love their leadership, regularly and publicly question their leadership, and actually ruin the reputations of their leadership, men are reticent to lead.
- ii. Followship is hard.
 - 1. Although this could go under #1, conversion is not guaranteed for our spouses. However, it sure would be nice if we looked for fruit before we decided to get married.
 - 2. Ladies don't always know how their giftings, skills, and responsibilities fit into their husbands ministries. They rightly read Proverbs 31 and get how the household-related things are viewed in the light of Ephesians 5, but don't always see how the entrepreneurially-related things fit the home-keeping, child-raising life.
 - 3. They know abusive leaders and are not sure:
 - a. If their husbands will abuse them with their so-called biblical authority or
 - b. If their husbands will leave them defenseless, moneyless, and with a house full of children.
 - 4. There are more opportunities than ever before for ladies to excel in the same way that men do.
- iii. We have elevated luxuries to "necessities" and
 - 1. place ourselves into positions where we need much more income than we would have needed in a different generation.
 - 2. This means we often have two missions in the home, and the lifestyles to support them (vehicles; wardrobes; childcare).

So what do we do, Christians?

- 1. We acknowledge God had the right design, and it scares us sometimes.
- 2. We acknowledge that going about it our own way leaves us with some measure of discontentment with how out of hand things have become.
- 3. We acknowledge that we may have the opportunity to creatively restore and redeem some of these God-ordained balances so that we can have homes that are ever-increasingly Husband-led, wife-aided, children-nurturing, parent-directed showcases of the Gospel realities of forgiveness, reconciliation, order, justice, love, sacrifice—all of these displayed by God in Christ at Calvary for the sins of His bride (5:2; 5:25).

Often I think, “Lord, don’t let me die for a non-Gospel issue,” thinking that in fact we can have our choice for things for which we may die as Gospel believers and Gospel couriers. Of course, the problem with this idea is the reality of sin. In order for the cross to matter sin must be gruesome to our souls. Sin must, therefore, be clearly identified. In other words, we might die for a stand on any of these issues as they are gospel issues at least in part.