

Ephesians Chapter 5
Week 9, v. 21

Eph 5:21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

What have we learned in vs. 18-20?

- we are to be filled with the Spirit.
- we are to talk in a way that edifies others and praises God,
- we are to give thanks continually for all things

Verse 21 will add another instruction for us to follow.

- we are to be subject to one another

Note that Paul's instructions follow being filled with the Spirit. We are unable to live in a way that honors God unless we are filled with the Spirit.

What does being subject mean?

<hupotasso> to subordinate; to obey, to be under obedience, KJV – submit
This is a voluntary submitting of oneself to another.

To subordinate means to consider yourself of lesser rank or status or of less importance than another.

To be under obedience means to follow instruction, comply with rules or submit to authority.

What is one of the overriding themes in chapter 4 of Ephesians?

What does it mean to be one body in the church? How do we preserve the unity of the church?

Php 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

1Pe 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; **and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

God's word says I am to consider others to be more important than myself. **When my will is placed above God's will for me, who is it about?** Placing myself, my desires and my expectations above others, fuels hostility and conflict. This attitude is the opposite of being subject to one another.

We are to serve one another to the glory of God. **Is my opinion important enough to disturb the peace of the church? Do I cheerfully follow and obey those in authority? Do I put others before myself?** (even if I don't agree, or their decisions make it more difficult for me, or I think there is a better way to do something, or my expectations are not met, etc.)

Do we have to agree with someone in order to submit to them?

Think – we are told to submit to governing authorities; do we agree with all their decisions? **Ro 13:1; 1 Pet 2:13**

- children are told to submit to their parents – do they need to agree with their decisions, are they even capable of understanding?

- we are to submit to those in leadership at the workplace; does that mean we will always agree?

Why are we to place ourselves into subjection with each other?

First, it was Christ's example to submit to His Father's will. We are followers of Christ.

Joh 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Lu 22:42 saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

Second, Eph 5:21 says to submit to one another *in the fear of Christ*.

Fear <phobos> from a primary phobomai (to be put in fear); alarm or fright:--be afraid, + exceedingly, fear, terror.

Eph 5:21 (NIV) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Having reverence for someone is having a deep respect for them. A reverent fear of displeasing God will lead us to obeying Him.

It can be difficult to submit to another person because we think differently and act differently. We have different strengths. In addition, no one is perfect. When we remember that it is God we are obeying, submission becomes easier. We are able to place ourselves in subjection to each other because our motivation is to please God. My sinful nature wants to promote my own success. Yet, through the Holy Spirit, I can promote others above myself and submit.

Who are we to serve ultimately? To whose glory should our lives reflect?

Our motivation to fear the Lord, to obey Him out of reverence, comes from Who He Is.

He is holy:

Re 15:4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed."

He is great and mighty:

De 10:17 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe.

He is good towards His children:

1Sa 12:24 "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

He is forgiving:

Ps 130:4 But there is forgiveness with Thee, That Thou mayest be feared.

He displays wondrous works:

Jos 4:23-24 "For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

He is our Judge:

Re 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

The fear of the Lord is commanded.

De 13:4 "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Ec 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, [is:] fear God and keep His commandments, because this [applies to] every person.

2Ch 19:7 "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or partiality, or the taking of a bribe."

2Co 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1Pe 2:17 Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Isa 8:13 "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread.

Jer 32:39-40 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for [the good of] their children after them. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

We can understand the fear of God through the Holy Spirit and scripture.

Ps 86:11 Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; Unite my heart to fear Thy name.

Pr 2:3-5 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God.

How does scripture explain the fear of God?

Pr 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do [His commandments]; His praise endures forever.

Isa 33:6 And He shall be the stability of your times, A wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; The fear of the LORD is his treasure.

Pr 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.

Ps 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

The fear of the Lord is characteristic of His children.

Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard [it,] and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.

Col 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who [merely] please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is continuous.

Deut 14:23b in order that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

Jos 4:24 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Prov 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but [live] in the fear of the LORD always.

The fear of the Lord is part of our worship and service.

Ps 5:7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. (KJV)

Ps 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. (KJV)

Ps 2:11 Worship the LORD with reverence [KJV – fear], And rejoice with trembling.

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence [KJV – godly fear] and awe;

The fear of God keeps us from sin.

Ex 20:20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

2Co 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Pr 16:6 By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

When we fear God, He is pleased.

Ps 147:11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

Through the fear of God, we receive His compassion, mercy and blessings.

Ps 103:13 Just as a father has compassion on [his] children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

Ps 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

Ps 103:17 But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,

Pr 19:23 The fear of the LORD [leads] to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

Lu 1:50 "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

Ps 112:1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

Ps 115:13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.

Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

Pr 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

The fear of God gives us protection and strength.

Ps 115:11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

Pr 14:26 In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge.

This week: Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the "Apply It" bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. We will use these questions as a quick review next week. Review **memory** verses **Eph 5:1-2** in the NAS version and if you are trying the memory challenge, review Eph 5:15-19 and add Eph 5:20 to your memory verses.

To be subject means to voluntarily submit to another. In what relationships do you do this well? In what relationships do you struggle with submission?

Being subject to another requires an attitude of humility. Christ is our perfect example of humility. Read Phil 2:1-8. Are there areas in your life where you need to let go of your "rights" and follow Christ's example? According to this section of scripture, how does your thinking need to change?

Think of the areas God has placed you in serving the church. To what extent do you regard your opinion important? Are you able to follow with a cheerful heart? When things change, are you more concerned with how *you* will be affected or how *others* will be affected?

Is it possible to submit to someone else even when we have differing opinions? Read Col 3:17-24. Whom are we ultimately serving? Who is truly in charge?

What does it mean to fear God? How has God shown His love towards you? How has He forgiven you? How does the fear of God motivate us to obey His commands?

The fear of God keeps us from sin. Read Ex 20:20 and Pr 16:6. The fear of God also brings blessing through God's protection. Look up Ps 115:11 and Pr 14:26.

How would God have you apply the truth in Eph 5:21 to your circumstances right now?