

Living by the Spirit's Power

KEY VERSES

Ephesians 5:15-6:4

KEY THEMES

Filled with the Spirit
Submit to one another

TEACHING NOTES

 **Blueprint for our lives (Ephesians 5:15-17)**

 **Filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)**

Incorrect views

Correct views

 **Evidence of being filled (Ephesians 5:19-20)**

 **Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)**

What submission is

“Submission leads to liberty, the liberty to be able to let go of the terrible weight and burden of always needing to get my own way.” – Richard Foster

**What submission isn't****Submitted relationships (Ephesians 5:22-31)**

Wives to husbands

Husbands to wives

Lesson objective: *To understand and experience what God intends for us in our relationship*

PERSONAL STUDY

Session 1

Prepare your heart and mind

Begin this time of study with prayer. Ask God to help you focus on Him and understand what He wants to teach you. Ask Him to guide you during this time by providing clarity and revealing truth.



Read Ephesians 5:15-20

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Living in the reality of the Holy Spirit

When we first put our trust in Jesus for our salvation, we were given a guarantee and a helper - the Holy Spirit living in us (2 Corinthians 1:22). God has done this to empower us so we can live a life that is pleasing to Him (Ephesians 1:13-14). However, we can ignore God's Spirit and live our lives doing what we want.

When loving parents bring a child into their lives, they have many hopes for them. They know that in order to help them grow and mature they will need to provide things like love, instruction, and discipline. Our Heavenly Father did not merely save us to keep us from hell, but to find a full life by allowing His Spirit to guide and help us.

What role does the Holy Spirit typically play in your life? Are you often aware of Him and seek His help?

What keeps you from paying more attention to the Holy Spirit?

It can be so easy for us to get distracted and consumed with creating the life we want. If our lives are not continually surrendered to God's Spirit, our natural tendency is to please our self-oriented sin nature. Let's take some time and apply this issue of running our own lives through the process of *know, consider, and surrender* to help us grow in this area.

Know, Consider, Surrender**Read Galatians 5:16-17**

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

Know

List the things we know about God's Holy Spirit. (*Here are some additional passages we have studied before: John 14:26; John 16:7-8, 12-15; Romans 8:26.*)

Consider

What are the potential consequences of not seeking to let the Holy Spirit guide our lives? What will we be lacking by not surrendering to the Holy Spirit?

What are some of the benefits we can hope to see in our lives by continually turning to the Holy Spirit and letting Him take the lead in our daily lives (Galatians 5:22-23)?

Surrender

This is what it really comes down to... will we surrender or not? It's not good enough to simply know the truth about what God has done for us. If we aren't willing to surrender our desires to what God prefers, we will never experience the life He intends us to live.

Ask God to show you what is holding you back from living a more surrendered life. Sit quietly and reflect on some recent times when you did what you wanted to do even though you knew you should respond differently. What did you desire deep down? Offer this to God and ask for His help to trust that His ways truly are best.

Key verse

Using the provided scripture card, put to memory Ephesians 5:21. Place the card somewhere you'll see it throughout the day.

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Prayer time

Close this time of study in prayer. Ask God to help you see what you have in Christ: love, hope, direction, and purpose. Ask Him to help you remember to depend on the Holy Spirit for the power to live differently as you surrender to Him.

Session 2**Prepare your heart and mind**

Take a moment to reflect on Ephesians 4:2-3. Read the verses slowly and consider the meaning of each word.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Spirit-led submission and service**Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9**

The Greek word *hypotasso* in Ephesians 5 is translated as 'submit'. The word literally means 'to place under'. The word for surrender is *epididomai* which literally translates 'to give over or away'. In both submission and surrender, there is a loss of control over something. There is also a sense in which we freely give, not reluctantly or under compulsion. The difference between the two ideas seems to be that our surrender to the Holy Spirit involves our self-will, whereas submission is focused on ordering and bringing harmony to our relationships. Surrendering to the Spirit frees us to submit. The second half of Ephesians (beginning in 4:1) is all about being Spirit-led. As believers, surrendered to the Spirit, Ephesians 5:21 calls us 'to place ourselves under' others out of reverence for our Lord.

Who are you submitted to?

How well do you do with submitting to others? Why do you think this is the case?

Based on your understanding, why are we called to submit in these relationships?

Our devotion to Christ should cause us to reconsider our roles in even the closest relationships. We should look more to the example of Christ than to culture. With ‘reverence for Christ’ as the focus, we can interpret the instructions in 5:21-6:9. The idea seems to be that by surrendering to the Spirit and fixing our eyes on Christ, we can gratefully submit and serve as wives and husbands, children and parents, and employees and employers. The end goal is that, by submitting, we will display to the world the unity and love only possible in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. This is portrayed in Ephesians 5 and 6 as something that will be attractive to the world. It is part of our Christian witness to the truth of the Gospel. All of the above brings glory to God the Father.

Who do you know that is a good example of submitting and serving in their family? What do see them doing?

Do you believe it can affect our Christian witness if we don’t submit and serve? Why or why not?

The home is the primary place where we are in relationships that help us mature. Of the household relationships, the husband and wife relationship is dealt with most extensively in 5:21-6:9. (Paul draws connections between marriage and the church five times in Ephesians.) This is because, as Eugene Petersen says, “*No other relation that we enter into is more complex and difficult and demanding, or more fulfilling and pleasurable and satisfying.*” Marriage takes a lot of humility and a lot of work. As we are led by the Spirit to submit to and serve our spouses, we grow to become more Christ-like. Like the church, marriage confronts us in our individualism. This is incredibly challenging when we live in a culture that celebrates personal independence.

Describe how an individualistic culture would call us to approach the husband-wife relationship.

What would a non-Christian say about this passage in Ephesians?

What are the similarities between the marriage relationship and the church's relationship with Christ?

From your perspective, what makes a marriage worth the effort? (Consider whether your answer is in line with what it says in this passage.)

Key verse

Continue working to memorize Ephesians 5:21. Attempt to write it out from memory below.

Prayer time

Thank God the Father for the example of servanthood we see in His Son. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to love, submit, and serve in your roles within your family and at work.

PARENT GUIDE

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. – Ephesians 5:21

These words are written to specific relationships: husbands and wives, parents and children, slaves and masters, but can be applied to every relationship. This verse speaks of mutual submission to each other.

Submission: the love language of family

Read Philippians 2:1-5 together as a family.

Talk about how we can apply these verses to our family. Here are some discussion prompts:
Submission lays aside my wants for the sake of others. What are some examples of how we can do this?

Submission is willing to put another's interest above my own. When have you seen someone in our family do this?

Submission is done with a good attitude. God is pleased when we treat each other with kindness and love. What's one thing you could do today to help another member of our family? Don't forget to do it with a good attitude.

Optional activity

Write the following statements on some cards:

When was a time our family had fun being together? What made it great?

How does our family show you that we love you?

Can you think of an example when someone submitted to someone else in the family?
Tell us about it.

Share about a time when someone in our family showed you kindness or forgiveness.
How did it make you feel?

Share one thing you appreciate about someone in our family.

Put the cards in a container. At the dinner table let each member randomly draw a card, read it out loud, and then share their response.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

As we studied Ephesians 5 this week we learned that we are to, “... *submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” (Ephesians 5:2) This theme is echoed in Paul’s teaching to the Philippians. Take some time to read Paul’s words on following Christ’s example of humility in Philippians 2. As you read, keep the truth you’ve learned from Ephesians 5 in mind.

**Read Philippians 2:1-18****Observation**

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

Interpretation

(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer’s intended meaning? What is the context? What questions do I have?)

Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)

