

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, but it is mostly out of focus. The background is a bright blue sky with some light clouds. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Heavenly Home

Scripture text: **Ephesians 5:18:33**

HEAVEN IN YOUR HOME

Ephesians 5:18–33

When home is ruled according to God’s Word,” said Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “angels might be asked to stay with us, and they would not find themselves out of their element.”

The trouble is that many homes are not governed by God’s Word—even homes where the members are professing Christians—and the consequences are tragic. Instead of angels being guests in some homes, it seems that demons are the masters.

Too many marriages end in the divorce court, and nobody knows how many husbands and wives are emotionally divorced even though they share the same address. The poet William Cowper called the home **“the only bliss of Paradise that hast surviv’d the Fall,”** but **too many homes are an outpost of hell instead of a parcel of paradise.**

The answer is the Holy Spirit of God! It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can walk in harmony as husbands and wives (Eph. 5:22–33), parents and children (Eph. 6:1–4), and employers and employees (Eph. 6:5–9).

The unity of the people of God that Paul described (Eph. 4:1–16) must be translated into daily living if we are to enjoy the harmony that is a foretaste of heaven on earth.

“Be filled with the Spirit” is God’s command, and **He expects us to obey**. The command is plural, so it applies to all Christians and not just to a select few.

The verb is in the present tense—**“keep on being filled”**—so it is an experience we should enjoy constantly and not just on special occasions. And the verb is passive. **We do not fill ourselves but permit the Spirit to fill us.**

The verb “fill” has nothing to do with contents or quantity, as though we are empty vessels that need a required amount of spiritual fuel to keep going. In the Bible, filled means “**controlled by.**” “They ... were filled with wrath” (Luke 4:28) means “**they were controlled by wrath**” and for that reason tried to kill Jesus. “The Jews were **filled with envy**” (Acts 13:45) means that the Jews were **controlled by envy** and opposed the ministry of Paul and Barnabas. **To be “filled with the Spirit” means to be constantly controlled by the Spirit in our mind, emotions, and will.**

When a person trusts Christ as his Savior, he is immediately baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Nowhere in the New Testament are we commanded to be baptized by the Spirit, because this is a once-for-all experience that takes place at conversion. When the Spirit came at Pentecost, the believers were baptized by the Spirit and thus the body of Christ was formed (Acts 1:4–5).

But they were also **“filled with the Spirit”** (Acts 2:4), and it was **this filling that gave them the power they needed to witness for Christ** (Acts 1:8).

In Acts 2, the Jewish believers were baptized by the Spirit, and in Acts 10 the Gentile believers had the same experience (Acts 10:44–48; 11:15–17).

Thus the body of Christ was made up of Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11–22).

That historic baptism, in two stages, has never been repeated any more than Calvary has been repeated.

But that baptism is made personal when the sinner trusts Christ and the Spirit enters in to make him a member of the body of Christ. The baptism of the Spirit means that I belong to Christ's body.

The filling of the Spirit means that my body belongs to Christ.

We usually think of the power of the Spirit as necessary for preaching and witnessing, and this is true. (See Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 13:9.

The Apostles experienced repeated fillings after that initial experience at Pentecost.) But **Paul wrote that the Spirit's fullness is also needed in the home.** If our homes are to be a heaven on earth, then **we must be controlled by the Holy Spirit.**

But how can a person tell whether or not he is filled with the Spirit?

Paul stated that there are **three evidences of the fullness of the Spirit** in the life of the believer:

he is joyful (Eph. 5:19),

thankful (Eph. 5:20),

and submissive (Eph. 5:21–33).

Paul said nothing about miracles or tongues, or other special manifestations. He stated that the home can be a heaven on earth **if each family member is controlled by the Spirit, and is joyful, thankful, and submissive.**

Joyful (Eph. 5:19)

Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Christian joy is not a shallow emotion that, like a thermometer, rises and falls with the changing atmosphere of the home. Rather, **Christian joy is a deep experience of adequacy and confidence in spite of the circumstances around us.**

The Christian can be joyful even in the midst of pain and suffering. This kind of joy is not a thermometer but **a thermostat**. Instead of rising and falling with the circumstances, it determines the spiritual temperature of the circumstances.

Paul put it beautifully when he wrote, “for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

To illustrate this joy, Paul used the familiar image of drunkenness: “Be not drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

When the believers at Pentecost were filled with the Spirit, **the crowd accused them** of being drunk with new wine (Acts 2:13–15). There was such a joyfulness about them that the unbelievers could think of no better comparison.

But some **practical lessons can be learned from the contrasts.** To begin with, **the drunk is under the control of another force, since alcohol is actually a depressant.** He feels a great sense of release—all his troubles are gone. He can “lick anybody in the house!” The drunk is not ashamed to express himself (though what he says and does is shameful), nor can he hide what is going on in his life.

Transfer this picture to the believer **who is filled with the Spirit. God controls his life, and he experiences a deep joy he is not afraid to express to the glory of God.**

Of course, **the drunk is really out of control**, since the alcohol affects his brain, **while the believer experiences a beautiful self-control that is really God in control**. Self-control is among the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

“The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Cor. 14:32).

The drunk makes a fool of himself, but the **Spirit-filled Christian glorifies God and is willing to be a “fool for Christ’s sake”** (1 Cor. 4:10). The drunk calls attention to himself, while **the Spirit-filled believer is a witness for Christ**.

It is certainly not difficult to live or work with someone who is filled with the Spirit and joyful. He has a song in his heart and on his lips. **The drunk often sings, but his songs only reveal the corruption in his heart.** The Spirit-filled Christian's song comes from God, **a song he could never sing apart from the Spirit's power.** God even gives us songs in the night (Ps. 42:8). In spite of pain and shame, Paul and Silas were able to sing praises to God in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:25), and the result was the conversion of the jailer and his family. What a happy time they all had that midnight hour—and they did not need to get drunk to enjoy it!

“Your neighborhood tavern is the friendliest place in town!” That slogan appeared in a headline of a special newspaper insert during “National Tavern Month,” so I decided to test its veracity. I watched the newspapers for several weeks and cut out items that related to taverns—and **all of them were connected with brawls and murders.** The friendliest place in town! But this headline reminded me that people who drink together often experience a sympathy and conviviality. This fact is no argument for alcohol, but it does illustrate a point: **Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit enjoy being together and experience a sense of joyful oneness in the Lord.**

They do not need the false stimulants of the world..
They have the Spirit of God—and He is all they need.

Thankful (Eph. 5:20)

Someone defined the home as **“the place where we are treated the best—and complain the most!”**

How true this is!

“My father never talks to me unless he wants to bawl me out or ask about my grades,” a teenager once told me. **“After all, a guy needs some encouragement once in a while!”**

Marriage counselors tell us that “**taking each other for granted**” is one of the chief causes of marital problems. **Being thankful to God for each other is a secret of a happy home, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the grace of thankfulness.**

How does a grateful heart promote harmony in the home?

For one thing, **the sincerely grateful person realizes that he is enriched because of others**, which is a mark of humility. **The person who thinks the world owes him a living is never thankful for anything.**

He thinks he is doing others a favor by permitting them to serve him. The thankful heart is usually humble, a heart that gladly acknowledges God as the **“Giver of every good and perfect gift”** (James 1:17). Like Mary’s gift to Jesus in John 12, **gratitude fills the house with fragrance.**

To be sure, all of us are grateful for some things at some special occasions; but **Paul commanded his readers to be thankful for all things at all times.** This exhortation in itself **proves our need of the Spirit of God, because in our own strength we could never obey this commandment.**

Can we really be thankful in times of suffering, disappointment, and even bereavement?

Keep in mind that Paul was a prisoner when he wrote those words, yet he was thankful for what God was doing in him and for him (Eph. 1:16; 5:4, 20; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:17; 4:2).

When a Christian finds himself in a difficult situation, he should immediately give thanks to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit, to keep his heart from complaining and fretting.

The devil moves in when a Christian starts to complain, but thanksgiving in the Spirit defeats the devil and glorifies the Lord. “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thes. 5:18).

The word gratitude comes from the same root word as grace. If we have experienced the grace of God, then we ought to be grateful for what God brings to us.

Thank and think also come from the same root word.

If we would think more, we would thank more.

Submissive (Eph. 5:21–33)

Paul applied the principle of harmony to husbands and wives (Eph. 5:21–33), parents and children (Eph. 6:1–4), and masters and servants (Eph. 6:5–9); and he **began with the admonition that each submit to the other** (Eph. 5:21).

Does this suggest that the children tell the parents what to do, or that the masters obey the servants?

Of course not!

Submission has nothing to do with the order of authority, but **rather governs the operation of authority, how it is given and how it is received.**

Often Jesus tried to teach His disciples not to throw their weight around, or seek to become great at somebody else's expense. Unfortunately, they failed to learn the lesson, and even at the Last Supper they were arguing over who was the greatest (Luke 22:24–27).

When Jesus washed their feet, He taught them that **the greatest is the person who uses his authority to build up people** and not, like the Pharisees, to build up his authority and make himself important. **We are to esteem others “more important than ourselves”** (Rom 12:10; Phil. 2:1–4).

By nature, we want to promote ourselves, but **the Holy Spirit enables us to submit ourselves.**

As you study Paul's words to husbands and wives, remember that **he was writing to believers.**

He was nowhere suggesting that women are inferior to men, or that all women must be in subjection to all men in every situation.

The fact that he uses Christ and the church as his illustration **is evidence that he has the Christian home in mind.**

Wives, submit yourselves (vv. 22–24).

He gives two reasons for this command: **the lordship of Christ** (Eph. 5:22) and **the headship of the man in Christ** (Eph. 5:23).

When the Christian wife submits herself to Christ and lets Him be the Lord of her life, **she will have no difficulty submitting to her husband. This does not mean that she becomes a slave, for the husband is also to submit to Christ.** And if **both are living under the lordship of Christ**, there can be only harmony.

Headship is not dictatorship. “Each for the other, both for the Lord.”

The Christian husband and wife should pray together and spend time in the Word, so that they might know God's will for their individual lives and for their home.

Most of the marital conflicts I have dealt with as a pastor have stemmed from failure of the husband and or wife to submit to Christ, spend time in His Word, and seek to do His will each day.

This explains **why a Christian should marry a Christian** and not become “unequally yoked together” with an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14–18). If the Christian is submitted to Christ, **he will not try to establish a home that disobeys the Word of God.**

Such a home invites civil war from the beginning. But something else is important. **The Christian couple must be careful to submit to Christ's lordship even before they are married.** Unless the couple prays together and sincerely seeks God's will in His Word, **their marriage begins on a weak foundation.**

Sins committed before marriage ("We're Christians—we can get away with this!") **have a way of causing problems after marriage.**

Certainly God is able to forgive, **but something very precious is lost just the same.**

Dr. William Culbertson, former president of Moody Bible Institute, used to warn about **“the sad consequences of forgiven sins,”** and engaged Christian couples need to take that warning to heart.

Husbands, love your wives (vv. 25–33).

Paul had much more to say to the Christian husbands than to the wives. He set for them a very high standard: Love your wives “even as Christ also loved the church.” Paul was lifting married love to the highest level possible, for **he saw in the Christian home an illustration of the relationship between Christ and the church.**

God established marriage for many reasons. For one thing, it meets man's **emotional needs**. **“It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18).**

Marriage also has a social purpose **in the bearing of children to continue the race (Gen. 1:28).**

Paul indicated a physical purpose for marriage—to help man and woman **fulfill the normal desires given them by God (1 Cor. 7:1–3).**

But in Ephesians 5, Paul indicated also a spiritual purpose in marriage, **as the husband and wife experience with each other the submission and the love of Christ (Eph. 5:22–33).**

If the husband makes Christ's love for the church the pattern for loving his wife, **then he will love her sacrificially** (Eph. 5:25).

Christ gave Himself for the church; so the husband, in love, **gives himself for his wife**. Jacob so loved Rachel that he sacrificially worked fourteen years to win her.

True Christian love “seeketh not her own” (1 Cor. 13:5)—it is not selfish.

If a husband is submitted to Christ and filled with the Spirit, his sacrificial love will **willingly pay a price that she might be able to serve Christ in the home and glorify Him**.

The husband's love will also be a sanctifying love (Eph. 5:26–27).

The word sanctify means “to set apart.” In the marriage ceremony, the husband is set apart to belong to the wife, and the wife is set apart to belong to the husband. **Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin.**

Today, Christ is cleansing His church through the ministry of His Word (John 15:3; 17:17). The love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her (and him) **so that both are becoming more like Christ.**

Even their physical relationship **should be so controlled by God** that it becomes a means of spiritual enrichment as well as personal enjoyment (1 Cor. 7:3–5).

The husband is not to “use” his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is **to show the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying.**

The marriage experience is one of constant growth when Christ is the Lord of the home. Love always enlarges and enriches, while selfishness does just the opposite.

The church today is not perfect; it has spots and wrinkles. Spots are **caused by defilement** on the outside, while wrinkles are **caused by decay** on the inside. Because the church becomes defiled by the world, **it needs constant cleansing, and the Word of God is the cleansing agent.** “Keep yourselves unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

Strictly speaking, there should be no wrinkles in the church, **because wrinkles are evidence of old age and internal decay.**

As the church is nourished by the Word, **these wrinkles ought to disappear.**

Like a beautiful bride, the church ought to be clean and youthful, **which is possible through the Spirit of God using the Word of God.** One day the church will be presented in heaven “**a glorious church**” at the coming of Jesus Christ (Jude 24).

The husband’s love for his wife should be sacrificial and sanctifying, but it should **also be satisfying** (Eph. 5:28–30).

In the marriage relationship, the husband and wife become “one flesh.” Therefore, whatever each does to the other, he does to himself or herself. It is a mutually satisfying experience.

The man who loves his wife is actually loving his own body, since he and his wife are one flesh. As he loves her, **he is nourishing her.** Just as love is the circulatory system of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16), **so love is the nourishment of the home.**

How many people have confessed, **“I am starved for love.”** There should be no starvation for love in the Christian home, for the husband and wife should so love each other **that their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are met.** If both are **submitted to the Lord, and to each other,** they will be so satisfied that they will not be tempted to look anywhere else for fulfillment.

Our Christian homes are to be pictures of Christ's relationship to His church. Each believer is a member of Christ's body, and each believer is to help nourish the body **in love** (Eph. 4:16). We are one with Christ. The church is His body and His bride, and **the Christian home is a divinely ordained illustration of this relationship.**

This certainly makes marriage a serious matter.

Paul referred to the creation of Eve and the forming of the first home (Gen. 2:18–24). **Adam had to give part of himself in order to get a bride, but Christ gave all of Himself to purchase His bride at the cross.**

God opened Adam's side, but sinful men pierced Christ's side.

So united are a husband and wife **that they are "one flesh."** Their union is even closer than that of parents and children. **The believer's union with Christ is even closer** and, unlike human marriage, will last for all eternity.

Paul closed with a final admonition **that the husband love his wife and that the wife reverence (respect) her husband**, all of which require the power of the Holy Spirit.

If Christian husbands and wives have the power of the Spirit to enable them, and the example of Christ to encourage them, **why do too many Christian marriages fail?**

Somebody is out of the will of God. Just because two Christians know each other and get along together does not mean they are supposed to get married. In fact, **not every believer is supposed to marry.**

It is sometimes God's will for a Christian to remain single (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7–9). **It is wrong for a believer to marry an unbeliever, but it is also wrong for two Christians to marry out of the will of God.**

But even if two Christians marry in the will of God, **they must stay in God's will if their home is to be the creative fellowship God wants it to be.** "The fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal. 5:22), and **unless both husband and wife are walking in the Spirit they cannot share the love of Christ,** the love that is so beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13. **The root of most marital problems is sin, and the root of all sin is selfishness.** Submission to Christ and to one another is the only way to overcome selfishness, for **when we submit, the Holy Spirit can fill us and enable us to love one another in a sacrificial, sanctifying, satisfying way—the way Christ loves the church.**

To experience the fullness of the Spirit **a person must first possess the Spirit—be a Christian.**

Then there must be a sincere desire to glorify Christ, since this is why the Holy Spirit was given (John 16:14). **We do not use the Holy Spirit; He uses us.**

There must be a deep thirst for God's fullness, a confession **that we cannot do His will apart from His power.** We must claim the promise of John 7:37–39: **“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!”**

By faith yield yourself to Christ; by faith ask Him for the fullness of the Spirit. **By faith receive.**

When you find yourself joyful, thankful, and submissive, **you will know that God has answered.**

One more important factor should be considered. **The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to work in our lives.**

Read Colossians 3:16–4:1 and you will see a parallel to our Ephesians passage. And **you will note that to be filled with the Word of God produces joy, thanksgiving, and submission.**

In other words, when you are controlled by the Word of God, **you are filled with the Spirit of God.**

Colossians 3:16-20 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And **whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Colossians 3:21-25 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. **You are serving the Lord Christ.** For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

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Colossians 4:1 Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Not only husbands and wives, but **all Christians** need to spend time daily **letting the Word of Christ dwell in them richly**, for then the Spirit of God can work in our lives to make us joyful, thankful, and submissive.

And this means **heaven in the home—or wherever God may put us.**