

This Sabbath we're going to continue in the series entitled; *From Curses to Blessings* with this being *Part 4*. I'm really excited that we're able to address this subject in the way we are and that we have been doing so for a time now, because the more we go into this the more we're able to see things that God is wanting us to see, that Jesus Christ is giving us the opportunity to see. And it's exciting because of the door that is opening up and a change that's taking place between a period of 6,000 years and the beginning of a new period of time, the next 1,000 years on this earth; when in context the whole world is going to have the opportunity to be a part of God's Church.

By going into this subject of a change that's taking place from the past 6,000 years and the next 1,000 years it's so important to realize that a lot of things have to be changed as well within the Church, because the Church has been unique in the sense that few through the past 2,000 years have been called out of the world; but they are still very much in the world and still under the sway and influence of the world in many things... as we continue through this we'll begin to see even more so. But that's all changing because with a new period of time that we're getting ready to go into all that's behind because everyone has the opportunity to be in God's Church. Everyone has the opportunity. The truth is going to be all over this world, there will be no 'churches'. There'll be *one* Church. There won't be different ideas and beliefs out here, let alone in traditional Christianity – let alone the rest of the kinds of religions that exist out there.

And this is an awesome thing because God is giving the opportunity to *everyone* to be in God's Church; and just because of that change alone we're addressing some of the things that are changing in family, because the family is the beginning of it all. The family is where everything starts as far as what is taught to children, what children then, as they grow up, pass along to their children, and these things that become a part of our being. And by right experiences that people begin to apply certain things that they're learning just like what has been done in the last 2,000 years in God's Church. We've *tried* to do those things in a world that very much is not God's. We strive to live God's way of life within the Church in a world that is not yet under God's Government. We understand there is a being that's called 'the god of this world', and that's about to end.

And so to me this is exciting because of what we're addressing, because it opens up a door of understanding, an ability to understand things because that's where God has brought us to – things that need to be addressed even within God's Church that have to do with order, that have to do with that which is spiritual and the ability to judge things in a better way. Within God's Church we strive, obviously all of us, whenever we're called to live God's way of life; but we're judged according to what we have at the time we have it. That's why I like the one scripture that talks about 'this present truth', because that's how we're judged, according to what we have at any given time.

We were judged in God's Church before 1974 with how we kept Pentecost in spirit and in truth though it was on the wrong day. Didn't matter! God had the power to give us the right day! We had everything else as far as the High Days were understood. God gave that to Mr. Armstrong. But the exact day for the Day of Pentecost being on a Sunday – we didn't have that. We were judged though according to how we observed it on that Monday. That's a hard thing for some people to grasp and comprehend. Somebody who would have been presumptuous to take it upon themselves because God didn't give it to

them but they felt like maybe they claimed to understand something in here and themselves began to do it...which happened...by some that later came out that did incredible damage in God's Church. Anyway, they were judged according to what God had given *to the Church through the leadership* that God had given to lead, guide and direct the Church at that particular time. And that's just the way it has always worked.

So going back to Abel; God judged him according to what was given. But you know, when you read the story in the Bible here it doesn't tell how much was given to Abel. But we understand because we see things that were written later on, things that were given to Abraham, things that were given to Moses; all the way through time, things that we've seen as God continues to give progressive revelation about His plan. He didn't give it all in the beginning to Abel. He didn't give it all to Noah. He didn't give it all to Abraham. He didn't give it all to Moses. But each one of those, as time went along, each one was given more. And that's an awesome thing to understand – how God has been revealing things over the past 6,000 years. But at any moment in time, each one of those individuals were judged according to what they understood.

And so it has been in God's Church. God has left some things the way they have been within family and within the structure of the family for expedience sake *because of the world we live in*, because of societies that exist in this world and for us to function in the best way possible with what God had given to us. However, this thing about a curse upon women now, and upon the family, and upon the man as well – because it's all a curse because it has to do with sin on *both* people's part, when you begin to live something wrong or against God's Word and God's way of life you're cursed! It is the result of taking away blessings that God would otherwise give. That's what we talked about in the beginning of these series – some people get all bent out of shape using the word *curse... going to cast a curse on...* it's not anything like that. The world has so polluted and distorted definitions of things in the Bible. It just has to do with something that just happens to us that makes life more difficult; that takes away the blessings of life because of sin. Sin brings about wrong results, it brings about pain and suffering and hurt.

Obedience on the other hand brings along blessings that God can give to us. And so we're at a stage of time where God is going to begin pouring out *far more* blessings upon this earth beginning with the family because that's the structure. And this is the *focal point* of it all; *this* is where it all begins – the relationship between a husband and wife! God is giving us better understanding of it as we enter into a new age! That in itself as Mr. Armstrong used to say, that's going to take 3 or 4 generations to begin really getting things cleared up – *because we all carry with us BAGGAGE. It is just the way it is because of the world, because of what we learned in schools, because of the way of society.* We carry these things with us and it takes time to get rid of them and it takes time to work out those things within the family so that by the time they're passed down to one generation and they grow up and begin having children and they begin making greater changes in their life – that as each generation comes along they have the opportunity of doing things better and better. It's an awesome thing to understand! It's an exciting process to go through.

This, what we're going through right now, is an exciting process. It may not be *comfortable* in all cases, it may not be *comfortable* for everyone, it may not be *comfortable* for all husbands. *But the reality is we've got to make some changes and it begins with the husbands! There's a greater responsibility there,* candidly, and there has been over the past 2,000 years *IF* they understand what God gave to them. The

problem is sometimes we haven't fully understood that; but God's going to help us understand it better as we go forward.

And so again, incredible things here. One particular area (I'll just throw out at you a little carrot – because it's not going to be fully in this sermon, but I'll throw out some other things for you to think about because it's coming...) ...but one area has bothered me for a time and I haven't fully grasped nor understood it and yet God has brought me back to a point of being able to see what He's always been giving to us through time... there are certain basic principles and if we stick close to the trunk of the tree in those principles then after a time it becomes quite obvious what the answer is. And again, that has to do with things within the family structure, with how things work within the family – husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, children and so forth – that I think you're going to find awesomely inspiring as we go forward because it opens up a greater door of understanding on a spiritual plane for us.

And when you understand those things it's a matter of really understanding *how God's spirit works*; and the more you're in tune to that, the more you're alert to that then the more awesome it becomes. We live in an awesome time right now because of this period of transition of things that have been given to us over the past few years, especially at this Feast of Tabernacles, where we have barely cracked the door on some of the things we covered – because there's so much more, where the doors are going to be opened up to us more and more of far greater understanding.

So let's go back to where we left off last Sabbath in **Ephesians 5:8** and pick up some of this context again. It says, **For in times past you were in darkness**, that's the way it is when God called us out of the world into the Church and begins to give us light, begins to give us that which is of His spirit, understanding, ability to see those things that are from Him. **In times past you were in darkness**, as the whole world is in darkness until God begins to draw them. It's like the expressions we use around Unleavened Bread - in Egypt, in sin; and have the opportunity to come out of Egypt, to become unleavened - a whole lifetime of becoming unleavened, of coming out of darkness. It doesn't happen overnight. You continually have a journey. You want to make sure the darkness is behind you and you're heading towards the light though, continually, always in your life.

For in times past you were in darkness, but now you are in the light of the Lord: it comes from God, it comes through Jesus Christ to the Church – that's how it comes – through the power of God's spirit, that's how God's spirit works. It comes from the Father, in the Son, through the Son to the Church, to the rest of the world in a very powerful way. And so it says here... **walk as children of light**: in other words, *live this way of life*, whatever God reveals to you – live it! Strive to apply it! Whenever sermons are given *seek to live* by those sermons that you're given – the present truth, whatever God reveals to you strive to live by it and apply it to your life. If you don't, you'll go to sleep spiritually. If you don't, you'll begin to become weak, and the power of God's spirit in your life begins to be weak and the love that could otherwise live through you, God's love, that comes from God, not out of us – you can't work it up – that which comes from God begins to wane. 'The love of many,' as we read about in Matthew 24 so many times in the past regarding what happened in God's Church, 'began to wax cold.' Because of sin! Because people weren't *living* the way they should be living. And when you sin you cut yourself off from the flow of that spirit.

And so it says...**walk as children of light**: we are *children, we're begotten children* and there's a lot of *difference* within the Church between that which is new; which we have a lot today now within the Church of God today that is new. The vast majority of people in the last two to three years are new;

making up far greater part of the Church now than was in times past, that which was a part of the Church going back to Worldwide.

So some great changes are taking place. Babies learning! And sometimes it's difficult to understand that! And then we have everything in between, to those who are close to a change in their life, from mortal to immortal; and those things continue on. Exciting process! But it's a *lifelong* process; but to always understand as long as you're in this flesh we're children of God, we truly are, in the *youngest* of ways – developing, if we understand that too – begotten and in a form not yet born.

(For the fruit of the spirit...) So God's spirit, the fruit of those things; in other words what you see as a result in your life by living with God's spirit in you, the fruit that's produced. You know if God's spirit goes out He says it produces. It can't help but produce. If we're yielding to God's spirit, that which is spiritual is going to come through our life and be produced. If we are in a weakened state, sleepy, falling asleep spiritually, then fruit isn't going to exist, it's going to come to a point in time where it becomes null and void, it just isn't around. And then that is a *horrifyingly dangerous* position to be in; and we in God's Church, all of us who were a part before '94, the apostasy, experienced that.

(For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness...) in other words, how you live toward others, that's what it's about. 'All goodness', what is good in your life? And what is important about that which is your life? It's how we live! That's what it's about! The *commandments* of God, the 10 Commandments are all about how we live! It's about our relationships toward God and our relationships toward one another. *How much SIMPLER can it be?* And one of the *greatest places on earth that you have to live this way of life, to produce fruit, to have fruit produced because of God's spirit working in you...* the ability as it goes on here talking about, this goodness that can be in your life is about *your relationships* with others and the greatest one of those, as a whole in life, is when you enter into a marriage relationship. And yet so many never understand that or come to understand it in only very slight way – sometimes *even within God's Church*. All that's changing.

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. As we talked about last Sabbath, proving, you go out and you put it to work. God says something so you begin to prove it by *doing it*; by doing it you come to understand. Just like tithing, if you don't do it you come, well hopefully in time you come to understand – curses – not blessings. God's not going to bless you, you're going to have horrible battles and trials and difficulties because you didn't prove Him. And you come to understand later on that the *greatest* of blessings is what He gives to you in the power of His spirit of understanding, of receiving the truth into your life. It's not about that which you *have physically* – because everything belongs to God and He can give you *everything*.

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works, how you live, how you treat others, how you talk to others, how you think about others, your interaction, your relationships. And we're, in this particular case, talking about marriage, husbands and wives... **and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,** of those things that we read earlier in Colossians, of those things we read even in part here in Ephesians that talk about things that should not exist in relationships. And if they exist in a marriage relationship they're going to exist in the rest of your life. If you're not faithful in the *little* that God has given to you, which is really *much*, *we won't be faithful in much*; and sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking we will be. God tries us and we're able to apply *smaller* things in our lives; the little things we do that sometimes we don't think are that important. The little things in life are *awesomely important to God*, because if you're faithful in how you

do the little things in your life – and what a better place in life to do them than in a family. That’s where it starts, because if you don’t do it well in the *family* that you’re with every day, every waking day of your life, do you think somehow something’s going to change all of a sudden when you’re in the Kingdom of God and it’s God’s Family? ...or in the Church, that somehow we’re always going to treat everybody else in a certain way? I’ll tell you what, the longer life goes on and you’re in God’s Church, and the larger congregations become, the more you’re tested in that area even in that way. Some of you understand that in a great way and others to a point by knowledge.

We’re always tried as to what we live and whether we’re faithful in it or not, whether we’re faithful in how we truly love each other within the Church, within the Body. If this congregation were a thousand people here and there were a lot of people in the community here it multiplies the ability, the opportunity (I don’t like to use that word, opportunity, but that’s what happens), the occasion whereby people sin; because the more you do things together, the more you’re together with others the more you’re tried as to how you’re going to treat them, or how you’re going to be treated by certain ones and how you respond to that. I’ve lived it! I lived it! Those of you who have been in God’s Church a long time before the apostasy – you lived what it was like to be in larger congregations and what happened in time when you got to know each other really, really well, and you see someone make a mistake or have sin in their life or do certain things and how we judge each other sometimes and those things that are carried along with us. Amazing! Relationships, relationships...! And the most important starts in the home because if it isn’t lived there right before God it will *not* be right within God’s Church and it will *not* be right in the Family of God throughout eternity. There are things we must learn now in our lives.

So, don’t have any **fellowship with the unfruitful works**, the works that we read about in Colossians and Ephesians here, of things that should *not be done* in relationships, should *not be done in marriage* because it destroys. ...**but rather reprove them**. I love this word. It’s a word in the Greek that means ‘to convict’ and ‘to expose’; in other words, when something isn’t being done right, rather than so often what people do in their life – they try to cover it up or hide it. They don’t want other people to see things that they see are wrong. We tend to try to cover up, to put on something different to hide certain things, to keep certain things hidden. But God says expose it, let it be exposed. Sometimes in families we try to protect.

I think of times when there are situations, just like with alcoholism as an example. What do they learn early on? You can enable someone and then you yourself become a part of someone else who might be an alcoholic by your enabling them, by some of those things having to do with trying to cover it up. I think of the example when they say if somebody comes home and they’re sprawled out drunk on the front... leave them there! If it’s really cold out maybe put a blanket on them. But it’s far better that they wake up and realize, “I wonder how many of my neighbours saw me?” Because that stirs people to change, to repentance, rather than trying to bring them in and trying to keep it quiet from the whole neighbourhood and so nobody sees it. No! It’s better to *expose* it so that someone will address it. Because if you enable someone by continuing in a certain bad behaviour that isn’t good! So often in families people do that. They put on certain airs when they go someplace else, when the home is really different than what it is in public; if you understand what I’m saying.

We have to change, we have to expose sin in our life. You *want* sin to be exposed in your life. If you continue to try to cover it up and try to hide things you’re hurting yourself spiritually. If there are things you’re doing wrong in your marriage... so often what husbands do is they forbid the wife to discuss

certain things, forbid them to talk about it. It's like it is rebellion if you start talking about something. "You're not subject to me if you're going to keep talking like that! I've said this is it! This is all we're going to talk about this!!" Because they don't want to hear it, they don't want to address something that's bad, that's wrong. It's better to get it out in the open and expose it so it can be addressed so that things can be made better! ...rather than people trying to hide things. It's better to get it out in the open, discuss it.

And the word 'convict' – become *convicted* of the wrong, of the harm that's being caused. If you don't discuss it, if it's not out in the open, how in the world can things ever change? How can a bad behaviour, how can bad things that are happening.... if they're just going to keep repeating themselves if some change doesn't take place? And so it's got to get out in the open and become exposed. Sometimes some things in the Church have to become *exposed within the Church* sadly. By that time usually someone's disfellowshipped.

So, **but rather reprove them.** And really, the reality is in yourself first and foremost. That's the place to begin – in yourself. *Want* things to be exposed in your life. Don't fight against it! Don't fight against things that you hear in sermons! Don't fight against certain things you hear that are said that are wrong – no, receive it from God because that's where change and repentance takes place then, and then you can get on with life to be blessed. Sin hurts! And become convicted of God's right way!

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. Because that's what we try to do oftentimes in life – hide things.

But all things that are reprov'd, exposed, are made manifest by the light: it just shows our human nature and how sometimes we don't want *too much light*. We don't want too much light on our family, we don't want too much light on our marriage...and that just multiplies then throughout our life. Why not? What are we afraid of? What is it we're trying...? What is it we're doing if we don't want more light and for the wrong things, the sins, to be exposed? **...but all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: and whatsoever makes manifest is light.** It comes from God because only God can reveal what is right and wrong. Only God can reveal to you the things that need to change in your life. And you know what? As we change them life becomes better. As you address certain sin and behaviour in your life, things that aren't being done right, things that aren't coming out of your mouth right...you get a hold of those things and you change those bad habits, that bad behaviour in your life and you start doing what is right...blessings, enjoyment of life. The riches and enjoyment of life come from obedience and living the right way.

Wherefore He says, Awake you who sleep... because if we're trying to keep sin from being exposed, if we're resisting what God is offering to us, if we don't like it, if we get *offended* by it, if we start whatever... we don't like it we're falling asleep spiritually. It's a spiritual matter in the Church, because this is talking to the Church, not talking to the world. The world can't understand all this; these are spiritual matters. **Wherefore He says, Awake you who sleep...** in other words if you're not living by the right things in your life; because that's sin. Because if you just continue *in sin*, you continue to allow sin, sin tends to get worse, sin tends to get magnified more and our being cut off from God's spirit makes us weaker, not stronger.

...and arise from the dead, so that's what God wants us to understand – where we're headed; to become spiritually dead is where we're headed if we resist God, if we resist sin being exposed in our life, if we want to protect a certain image we have of self or what we think is right or for ourselves.

...and Christ shall give you light. **See then that you walk;** in other words, how you live your life, what you do, your conduct, your behaviour – that's what we're talking about - **see then that you walk circumspectly.** In other words, more carefully, more exactly. God wants us to be careful how we walk, and what a better place to start than within the home? That's the place to begin, because all the little things that add up in a day, in a week...the way we think, the way we respond, is what we are. And just because we go out and we might deal differently with some in the world around us...if you were around them more you would be the same way toward them and sometimes we don't realize this; and that's the way we are to others even. We don't even see that! We don't understand ourselves, but God'll help us; He'll help us to understand what we're like.

Some people have desired in this series of sermons for me to give more specific kinds of examples. I'm not going to. I might give a few here and there, but as a whole, it's not a matter of giving specific examples in things because God is giving us that which is foundational to begin to examine in our own lives, our own lives that are unique, and putting them to the test in how we are able to judge. And as we go through this hopefully we'll understand that just as we do with so many doctrines within the Church.

It's like Passover. A long time ago we began to address this with Passover. There is *no need* to go back into and try to understand all the ins and outs of *why* so many believe in a 14/15th Passover. It's just wrong. It's just perverted, distorted. It's off the wall! So if you're deeply grounded in what is right and you focus upon that you'll be able to see all those other things that are in error.

And the same thing in your life. If you strive to become grounded in what God is giving you here to focus upon and you work on those things and you pray about those things everything else will begin to fall into place, it truly will. Your ability to judge matters will become better.

...and rise from the dead and Christ shall give you light. And so much of this has to do with repentance, because our ability to no longer be sluggish spiritually, to be heading to where we're spiritually dead like what happened to Sardis or spiritually asleep has to do with repentance, it has to do with sin. And so as you're repenting and as you seek to repent and change that's what it's all about. It doesn't say those things here, but that's the prod, that's what's involved that takes place.

See then that you walk circumspectly, in other words, more carefully, more exactly. **...not as fools;** God says if you just continue on in your life without making changes... *if any of us in God's Church* after hearing these series of sermons don't make changes in our lives – men, women; married or unmarried – because it has to do with behaviour, it has to do with how we think and how we talk and attitudes of mind that we have; men toward men, men toward women, women toward men, and women toward women. It has to do with how we think! And that's what God is having us address! If *any of us* go through this entire process without repentance, without making changes, we're fools, absolute fools spiritually. That's what God is showing us here; spiritually asleep, we don't want to be awakened, we don't want things to be exposed, we don't want to shake up our life the way it is. We kind of like it the way it is. No! You should *never* like your life the way it is, you can always change! It can always become better! That's what God wants, that's what He gives us in the Church – our life can become better.

...not as fools, but as wise; you know, when I read through something like this I can't help but think about what we went through before the Feast and after the Feast in talking about the different things that God gives us to understand Him – especially during the Feast when we talked about *Proverbs* – wisdom that comes from God, the Word, the Logos that is God, that comes from the very being that is exactly what is everything that God is and all of His thinking process, His purpose and plan, His will; the different ways that this is expressed! And to ignore that, to ignore the wisdom that God offers us is to be an absolutely stark raving mad fool. What are we here for if we don't want to change? If we're not striving to make some change? If you're not repenting in your life in certain things that are being done wrong? *Not a one of us* is doing things perfectly! No matter how long we've been in God's Church we can always improve. I'm seeking ways to improve, to do it better. That's what we should all do, that should be our attitude all the way through life. And if you think you're doing everything right... Oh...that's frustrating for me.

Wherefore don't be unwise but understanding; I love the way these things are expressed. I need to back up here to where it says; **don't be as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil**. In other words, making the most of the time you have; and how much more for us of all times? Of all times, especially for us? We have a little bit more of time in this world where Satan is the god of this world; it's winding down quickly. His time is just about over; his influence upon society is just about over. I am so looking forward to the time it's fully over, when he's put away, when the demonic world is put away and no longer can they broadcast, no longer can they interfere in life and *hurt* people and sway people and try to influence people in a wrong way. That perverted, distorted, sick being is about to come to an end for a thousand years, and then later on a final end; and he knows it full well.

...redeeming the time because the days are evil. So *use* what time you have now to apply what God is giving to us now. These are exciting times in God's Church! He continues to give us more and more and more. And He's giving more to us for the *purpose* of greater change – more so that we can have greater change in our life because of the light; because it's about His spirit and about the light that's being given to us. The more light there is and the more we'll come out of darkness and receive that that God has for us the happier we are... *from curses to blessings!* To having *happier* lives and *happier* homes and *happier* marriages!

Wherefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. So seek with all of your being! I hope every one of you is praying about what you're hearing Sabbath by Sabbath! If you're not going through these sermons and digesting them by praying about what you're hearing – you're sleeping! If you're not praying about, from one Sabbath to another, about *exactly* what we're... If you think just by coming to Sabbath services and hearing this message that all of a sudden you're taking it away and you're a new person, a better person, you are missing the mark!

Change doesn't come without *applying* it! *Change* doesn't come in this fashion without *crying* out to God for what we said at the very beginning of this series! God knows your heart, God knows your mind and you have to cry out to God, "*Show me myself! Show me what's inside! I want to change! I want to do things better!*"

"I want to become a better wife..."

"...a better husband..."

“I want to become a better person so that when that time does come that I am married that I can be the *best I can be* at that moment in time, for whomever I marry and the family I have and the children that are brought into it so they don’t have to suffer as much!”

Each generation becomes better and better; so they don’t have as much to conquer and overcome; because that’s the way it is in life, it’s been that way for 6,000 years. Things are passed down from generation to generation to generation; it’s just the way it is in the world, in society.

Don’t be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. This is God’s will. These sermons of all that we’re going through – this is God’s will for the Church right now... that we focus upon these things and that we take them home and we pray about what we’re hearing about and ask God for help to see it! Because you don’t just automatically see everything in your life that you’re doing that needs to be addressed. You have to ask God for help to see it! And you know what? During the week there’ll be things happening that you’re going to be able to see and you’re either going to address them or ignore them. You’re either going to start seeking help to change and make changes in your life or it’s just going to be the status quo. And if it’s the status quo you’re missing the mark and the opportunity that God is granting!

Verse 18 - And do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess; there’s an analogy being given here. You can have too much alcohol and become drunk. He’s saying... **but be filled with the spirit.** *You can’t have too much of God’s spirit* – you should want more and more! Cry out to God for more of His help, more of His spirit to live and dwell within you. And you know what has to happen for that to take place? You know what happens as you grow spiritually? To become spiritually stronger you know what has to take place? You have to repent of sin that exists there that’s *hurting* that *growth*! And the more you *fight* against sin and the more you *conquer* certain sin in your life *the more that God can give you!* *That’s how it works!* Isn’t that an amazing thing?! And so those who’ve been around for a long time who seek to apply those things and have been for a long time *should* be spiritually stronger and farther than someone who’s freshly called; because of that very process that’s been in work in their life – hopefully and prayerfully (isn’t always true), hopefully, prayerfully.

So you want to grow more? You want to become much spiritually stronger? It’s by repenting of sin! And as you repent of sin and get certain sin out of your life and seek to draw closer to God – *then He can give you more of His spirit!* What an awesome thing! ...from curses to blessings – that’s *exactly* what we’re talking about; being able to be blessed more. God can *dwell* in you more. I want more of God dwelling in me, truly, and I know that’s what we all desire in the deepest part of our being. That’s why we’re here on the Sabbath.

So **...be filled with the spirit; speaking to yourselves,** again, it’s this expression we’ve talked about in the past, what this is talking about – how we are to think. It’s a way of thinking. It’s not that we are going around singing songs, although you can do that, but when you’re fighting certain things in your life it’s about that which is the response to living God’s way of life, that which happens in your being, that excitement.

I think about last night and this morning talking to different ones in the Church and hearing that excitement. This is what I saw, this is what I experienced from them – **speaking to [themselves] in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart;** it’s the response you have because of the excitement for what you’re learning and the changes that are taking place that come out of you in a spiritual way. That’s what it’s talking about here! So many people read these

things physically and they're not physical at all, they're spiritual. They have to do with your countenance; they have to do with your thinking and your excitement for God's way of life.

Verse 20 - Giving thanks always for all things... Giving thanks for *what*? Things that you should be thankful for that God has given to you, starting in the home, starting with this subject matter – husbands and wives. How do you think? How thankful *are you* for the one who's been with you for the time period that they've been with you? How *thankful* are you before God? Do you give God thanks? What do you say? What are you focused upon? Because if you don't think about those things you just live life and you rob yourself of blessings. **Giving thanks always for all things**, all things that God gives, and God gives us a lot. And we're talking about here marriage, the family, the Truths that God is giving. ...**unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;**

Verse 21 – this is a big verse, *incredible* verse! It's going to become more important as we go forward. We're going to come back to it later on. You need to pray about it and think about it a lot as we enter from one age to a new age, from 6,000 years to the next thousand years, because this is spiritual. This is very spiritual! This is what it's about! **Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.** Fear of God because it's an awe and a respect for God because God is giving us His Word, His way of life. So it's an awe of God that He's showing us His way of life and this is what it's talking about, that process. So we're *moved* to the point of realizing this is the mind, this is the will of God, of how we should live toward one another! *Submitting* ourselves one to another within the Church – it's an *attitude of mind*, and it's *very spiritual* in nature! It's how we think and it's an awesome thing the more you understand it.

Now, a lot of husbands in the Church and I think a lot of ministers in times past didn't like this verse too much. They liked the next verses, but not this one here. This one here was ... "Well, what do you mean..." and you read quickly back... "...and it's those other verses, those are the important ones, but this one here, I don't understand it fully." Well, we're at a point in time where God wants us to understand *this* verse very powerfully so. **Submitting yourselves one to another**, an attitude of placing yourself *under*... under what? Under the desires, the wishes, the ways of doing something, other's interests... submitting. It has to do with relationships, what you do, how you get along and the things you do in life. Because that's what we're talking about – the things you do in life.

I want to go to another verse here where Paul talks about this in some different way, with different words but explaining the exact same thing. And God does that over and over again throughout scripture – gives us something (as I mentioned last Sabbath), saying it a little bit differently with different words to drive the point home.

Philippians 2:1 – so this is an attitude that Paul addresses in another fashion as he does in another place. **If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love**, it comes from the truth, from what God has given to us, the calling that God has given to us and that which comes through Christ to each and every one of us; **comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit**; that's what makes life rich. Since the Feast I have seen more of this fellowship of the spirit than I ever have in God's Church. It's been exciting! It's inspiring! Because as we grow and as those who are new grow more we're able to experience more of that because it has to do with God dwelling in us! The more you can have God and the way of life of God dwelling in you the more you're able to fellowship together, there's something unique in that that we're able to share together.

I think about the Feast of Tabernacles and reports I've heard back and some of the different meetings in different areas – I still see the spinoff of the Feast of Tabernacles in people's lives –that excitement we have of being able to share what we're learning with one another that's definitely there in people's lives. There is an excitement and a level of growth and spirit, if you will, of God's spirit living and dwelling within the Body that's inspiring! And that's what we're talking about, a **fellowship of the spirit**, because we're talking about something made possible by God!

We're not talking about physical fellowship! We're not talking about 'philia' as in Philadelphia, brotherly love – we're talking about something that comes from God because of *His* love, because of His spirit. And so the more you have of God's spirit and the more you're able to mix with one another and share with one another and visit with one another – fellowship with one another – it's on a spiritual plane. The more of God in you! And there is something awesome and unique about that, there truly is, that's inspiring and exciting! That's why we love being able to see the growth every few months in visiting different areas and being able to have that back and forth fellowship, if you will. It's an awesome thing in God's Church, it truly is.

It's like when you're first brought here, when you first come into God's Church, the first time you're here...and we all go through this and people talk about this a lot. All of a sudden you're in an environment that you've never experienced before. It's just like when God gives you the truth – all of a sudden you just know it, you know about the Sabbath, you know the Holy Days – it's something He's given in your mind to experience that you'd love to be able to share with others, and generally make the mistake of trying to do so, because we're excited about what we have and we think everyone else can see this clearly. "If you could just read this!" you want to say to others. And not everybody responds in the same way. We find that out. Because there's something unique about God's spirit that opens up your mind.

And it is in fellowship as well. So someone walks through the door; for the first time they're a little apprehensive because they don't know what to expect. How many of you experienced that? You didn't know what to expect. You come into a group of people that you don't know who they are, and then all of a sudden by the time you leave there's something that you've experienced that's unique. It's a family! And you're treated as a Family member in a unique way that you know is true. How do you express/explain that? How do you explain the eight days you spent with different ones at the Feast of Tabernacles? How do you go back and tell someone...someone that's coming along new...about what you experienced? You can't. You can tell them, but they're not going to understand it until *they* have experienced it. And that's what we're talking about here.

If any fellowship of the spirit, that God gives to us that's awesome in itself, the Family we have that's unique that's on a spiritual plane. ...**if any bowels of mercies/bowels and mercies**, that which comes from deep inside about how you feel and how you think about things that has to do with the innermost part of your being; **fulfill you my joy, that you be like minded**; see, that's where it comes... these things grow and become stronger and stronger the more... And what Paul is expressing to the Philippians here; that confidence and boldness he had because he knew the mind that he had within him. His desire was that those whom he was teaching become of the same mind which is of that mind and unity that we desire to have with God! We want to be likeminded with our High Priest, Jesus Christ. We know that's a long process; that's what we want though. We look forward to the time our change comes so we can become more likeminded. But there's that process that works in our life that's exciting and inspiring; and we're able to share that with one another.

...fulfill you my joy, that you be likeminded, having the same agape, Godly love, that which comes from God, that which comes from God's spirit, the ability to be likeminded, the ability to live a certain way of life. Because what's the purpose of agape, God's love? It's in how you treat each other. It's how you talk to each other. It's how you think about each other; because how you think about each other is how you treat each other – see? And how much more important can that be than where you start right in the family? And where does that all begin? With husband and wife.

I have counselled with so many people over the years in God's Church – husbands and wives – where these things have not been lived. I have seen so much suffering in an environment where people had the opportunity to change things in their life; but because of certain resistance of one, or both, they couldn't experience the blessings. Instead they lived in curses upon their lives and upon their families – because they simply wouldn't repent and change of what they were doing wrong. And quite often, most generally in the worst cases, individuals just justified themselves. They were always right! It's the other one that was always wrong! That's where the problem came in. It's the other mate! If they *would just change* then everything would be better, we'd have a happy marriage and things would be better within God's Church!

It's always easier to justify. I'll tell you what, whenever I hear, "*But this is why I did it...*" Oh, that's really what I want to hear. Don't you see what you're doing? And what if you're 100% right, what you're doing right now is not right. To seek to justify self over someone else, or whatever...? It's just so hard to see the spiritual when we're that weak in life.

...fulfill you my joy, that you be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. That means in *everything you're given*; in the Truth that God gives and the way of life, how to live toward each other – that we be likeminded! Because if we're not going to be likeminded there's going to be some problems, there's going to be some contentions, there's going to be some difficulties because we want to do something different, because we think things should be different – or whatever it might be.

Heard something today that kind of blew my mind; about an individual who doesn't agree with the ministerial administrative decision I made one time not too many years back here – and still is in disagreement with it. And because of that *disagreement* they're suffering and they're not growing spiritually like they otherwise could be. *Blows my mind* sometimes the things that come out in people's lives because they don't agree with something I said that came from God! Incredible! And still with us to this day; at least in attendance - spiritually, I don't know. Dangerous ground to be on if we understand *how God works*.

...fulfill you my joy, that you be likeminded having the same love/agape, being of one accord, of one mind. Unity and oneness in what God gives to us. If we're not in unity and oneness in God's Church in *everything* He's giving to the Church what are we doing in *this* Body? If we don't agree with it we ought to go out and look for some other kind of body that teaches more what we think, if you're going to be happier there. I think of some who didn't like the fact that we started teaching at a certain point in time that, you're not going to be a part of 144,000. "Well, I'm going to go someplace where they teach you can still be a part of the 144,000 because that's what I believe, *I'm one of the 144,000*." Okay, fine. Doesn't make it true, doesn't mean it's going to happen in your life, but if you're happier out there because that's what they teach then sayonara, dos vedanya, auf wiedersehen.

Let nothing be done through strife; *nothing* in relationships. Everything here is about relationships! *Everything* that God gives to us in these things is about how we live our life. **Let nothing be done through strife;** meaning in the Greek here, 'selfish ambition' 'selfishness'. Does that exist in marriage? Can that exist in human relationships? Oh, all the time! If we can see it, if we can be truthful and honest with our self. What do you mean, 'selfish ambition'? Husbands can do that a lot if they're not careful. I've seen it a lot in God's Church; I still see it a lot in God's Church. 'Selfish ambitions'; selfishness between a husband and a wife. *Rivalry!* *Jealously!* Blows my mind that such things can exist, but I have counselled people for many, many years where these things have been rampant in people's lives. What kind of a relationship is it if someone is jealous of another, or if someone has a rivalry? That's what this word means in the Greek language; strife. Where does strife come from in life? 'Where do warring and fighting's come from among us?' God says in James. James is inspired to give it. It has to do with the way we think!

When we talk about family we talk about marriage and we talk about husbands and wives. What kind of a life do you have together? What is the *truth* about that from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed at night? How do you think toward each other? How do you talk toward each other? What kind of a life is it? Is it one that's pleasing to God because it's right? Or are you deceiving yourself and you really want things to be *your way*? Wives can be that way, husbands can be that way – but it's not the way it's supposed to be, is it? It's not God's way. It's not the kind of Family that God has called us to become a part of. It's not the kind of Family that God is working toward in all of us through a process of change and growth and overcoming and learning about selfishness and seeing these things that exist within us and just being honest about it saying, "Yes, this is my... I have this battle, I have that battle. I'm striving to change this. I see change that needs to take place."

Let nothing be done through strife, selfish ambition, selfishness; **or vain glory;** 'empty conceit', that's what this word means in the Greek – empty conceit, which is from pride and arrogance. I've seen that within the *ministry* in God's Church let alone within the marriages! And I've seen it in *marriages* in the ministry in God's Church! And so if it's been there and existed in a *great way*, in a *big way* within those who are *trained* at Ambassador College in how to live life and given instruction about family in a way that *most people* in God's Church weren't and had all those opportunities and focus on this way of life more than most do because this is where they were supposed to spend their time learning these things... then what does that say about the rest of the Body? Do you think that there are any of those kinds of problems that have existed in the rest of the Body? Do you think that maybe it didn't happen in the rest of the Body just because it happened within some in the ministry? YES! God wants us to change and be different in how we do things and each one of us is judged according to what we're given at any moment.

See, I'm speaking this way in very clear terms because we lived through something in God's Church that was wrong in such a big way that God Almighty vomited out. That's the word that's used. Spewed out is a word for vomit. Vomit is not a nice thing. If you've ever been around somebody that's vomited...if you've ever had to clean it up... I have. It's not fun! It kind of gets up in your sinuses and it's like...argh! You want to get away from it, it's just *repulsive!* And that's why God vomited out the Church – because it became repulsive! There wasn't anything to be saved at that moment in time without being vomited out. And *the purpose of vomiting it out was with the desire to bring it to repentance!* And how much of it repented? And how long did that repentance last? Not a whole lot! So it hasn't been a pretty thing of what we've experienced.

So I am speaking plainly about things that I've witnessed and seen within the environment of the Church of God, not trying to tear it down, not trying to tear those things down in any fashion or form – it's just what it became in time, especially after Mr. Armstrong died; some of the rumblings of things that began to happen before that, but *especially* after he died. And I'll tell you what, when I think back about Loma and Mr. Armstrong and I think about all the witnesses of things I've seen written and things that people have talked about in times past who knew them. We've had some in the Church who knew them personally, who spent time around them – and I think, the awesome things they had to say because they saw a team that worked together in an incredible way. They had a great abiding love for each other in a *profound way*, the way it should be in God's Church when you're filled with God's spirit.

And through time some learned some of those things and lived some of those things and some of those who went through college learned some of those things and lived those things as they went out. But as time went along and we got to a time where we went through what we did in the eighties and then finally Mr. Armstrong died – those things began to wane and go by the wayside and became weaker and weaker through time. Things happened and there are sad things that have happened. You don't want to make the same mistakes! It's so important that you live life the way God desires it to be lived.

So he talks about **fulfilling you my joy**, a certain way of life that we're to be living with God's spirit, with Godly love toward one another; repenting, changing, one accord, one mind. And where we're not in one accord or of one mind then we seek to repent of those things and to live our lives better.

So again, **Let nothing be done through strife...** There isn't a week that goes by that I don't hear of strife in some people's marriages in life within the Church in different regions of the country. It hurts me. It's painful because I can't give them the solution. I've preached it from Sabbath to Sabbath; but I can't give you that within the mind, within your heart, within your being, within your bowels, and within your mercies and so forth in life. I can't give those to you – and God doesn't give them to you either just because you come to Sabbath services, just because you've been begotten with His spirit. You've got to cry out for them, you've got to want them; you've got to ask God for them, you've got to repent of the wrong He shows you then in your life.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, Ephesians 5:21 is about this; **but in lowliness of mind**, it's how you think about yourself. *Who are you? Why do you treat people a certain way? Why do you sometimes treat the one who is supposed to be the very closest to you in a certain way? Why do you talk to them in a certain way, in a certain tone? Why? Why? Why... when it's not right do you still do it? What is it in your mind and in your life that you're going through that you do those things? You have to look and ask God for help to see so that you can repent of them, **but in lowliness of mind.***

So many things have to do with how we think about ourselves. Someone who seeks to justify themselves, that they are right and somebody else is the one causing the problems, the source of the problems, the source of the trouble... is lacking this, this humility, this **lowliness of mind**; humility - true humility before God.

I think of David. I think of David when this man came along and starting throwing rocks at him. He's the king and a man comes along and starts throwing rocks at him! His soldiers were there beside him and one just kind of wants to take a sword and lop off his head. "This is the king and look at the things

you're saying and look at what you're doing!! You can't do this!" Whooom, you know, just take his head right off – that'll teach him! Anybody else watching? You just don't do that to the king!" And David said, "NO! Don't do it!" He wasn't afraid to hear criticism! He wasn't afraid to hear this man is upset – why is he so upset? Is it all true? Is some of it bent out of shape? Yes, undoubtedly some has gone so far because you go that far to do something...but what is the root of all this, what is he saying? Let's see if there's value in it! Perhaps there's something in here from God to me that I can learn from.

You afraid of correction? You afraid of your wife talking to you and telling you, "I don't think that's right?" Are you afraid of your husband telling you, "This isn't really right. This isn't how we should be living in the Church." Because it's a two-way street – submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. It's how we think toward each other. It's how we think in life. *This* is where it all *begins*, in the family! Because you see, everything that takes place in family will happen in society. The same spirit that's there will happen in society, on the job, wherever it might be it'll happen out there too. Sometimes not as ugly and as bad because it's really ugly when it happens in what is *supposed to be* a close, meaningful, lifetime relationship!

I think of God's creation out there – geese or something else, they mate for life. What a beautiful thing! We sometimes see them out there in the area we live in and I never see two that are paired off chewing each other out; and one flying off and leaving the other behind. On the contrary, one can get run over and the other one is sitting there on the side of the road.

And how do we as human beings sometimes respond to the ones we're supposed to be the closest to. I'll tell you sometimes we can really be sick as human beings, we truly can be! And some of those sick things should never, never, never exist in God's Church; but they have and they do. And where they do you need to cry out to God to get rid of them because the Church is changing. You can be a part of it or not; a part of a new age in a new world or not – that's the choice that God's giving us.

...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. I've known of many people, even within the ministry, who haven't understood what this verse means. It's one that people struggle with sometimes. It's like the Protestant world reads something like this and it's this fake thing of esteeming others and you're going around with your kind of self-righteous Protestant type of false humility and say things to esteem others better than yourself. Some of these things make you want to puke! To **let each other esteem others better than themselves**; the meaning is on others desires. When it says, **to esteem others/each other**, it's about someone else's desires, their interests, their wishes, their ways of doing something. In other words, don't be so bent on doing everything the way you want it done! Don't be so bent on everything having to be done *your way*, the way *you* think it should be done! Maybe you can learn, maybe there's value, and maybe there's just that that can be enjoyed in the giving. Can you give that much? How much can you give to make someone else's life happier and better? We don't tend to think that way toward others around us, we really don't as human beings, but we should because this is what it's talking about.

...to esteem... to want to, actually to even *want* to strive to do something the way someone else would like something done or addressed or whatever.

I remember a time when (to give you an example of something, I don't want to embarrass her...), but when we lived back up in Erie, PA and it snowed over a hundred inches ever year, so might as well enjoy it. You live in an area like that, better enjoy the winters or they're going to become something that

really is going to start grating on you. So we learned to enjoy the snow. We started going out and skiing on occasion. I remember this ski pass we got on Monday nights; it was like \$80 for the *whole* season and it started snowing before Thanksgiving. And we were able to go out on these slopes where they had lights out there; you could ski at night, every one of these slopes out there. About 20 some miles out of Erie, PA over to New York and we were able to go out there and ski from like 6:00 until 10:30 at night and get all the skiing you want in in a week's time – enjoy the snow. Looked forward to the next Monday night, it was a special type of thing they ran on different nights of the week and we chose a particular Monday night. Laura isn't one who really likes the snow that much and she really didn't like the idea of skiing, but you know she did it because of family. She did it because we wanted to do it.

And that's just one example of many, but I remember that one there keenly so because after a while we realized we don't want you to go through this torture; because it was tough. There are certain things that some people pick up and some people like and some people don't; and she didn't like skiing too much. But they did have a Chalet down below at the bottom with great big glass windows where you could see everybody else ski out there. Sit inside, drink some hot cocoa and watch the other fools out there going down the slopes. ☺ But you know, what I'm talking about is the attitude of mind, a willingness to try something, to do something someone else wants to do within the family, or maybe that just one does.

What about for your wife or your husband? What are you willing to do? If they have a desire to do something together with you...the sharing. And maybe in time you come to find out no, you don't both like doing the same thing, and how do you respond to that when they don't? What if you don't like doing something that your mate does, how do you respond to that? Do you make them feel guilty because of that? How do you treat people? Because you see, I've seen every imaginable thing within people's lives of how people react in a wrong way to these kinds of things that happen in life. Choices about home, food, whatever it is; it can be small, little things, because generally our days are made up of a lot of small things, they really are. But how you live that day is *so awesomely important to God*, truly is; and it's so important to your family relationship.

So, **to esteem others better than themselves**. In other words, above themselves, above their own desires, their own interests, their own wishes. And as time goes along you know what? A lot of times you learn from that the joy of giving. There's a joy of watching someone else enjoy life; and if you don't enjoy doing that then something's wrong. Isn't that amazing? That people could get to a point in life, or be at a point in life that they really didn't enjoy watching others have their desire, their wishes in something in the way something is handled or something they might want to do that's important to them? Why would you want to keep something like that away if you're able to *give* it to them? What about parents? You know, God gives the example of parents toward children; 'if you know how to give good things to your children how much more does God know to give to us and desire to give to us?'

And what about husbands and wives; a wife toward a husband and a husband toward a wife? Where is the love? It isn't enough to say, "I love you." It's easy to say, "I love you...if you'll do what I want." That's what sometimes is hidden in people's lives. "But if you go against what I want...look out!" That's not love! That's not love at all; but so often that's the way a person's love in life is, isn't it?

Verse 4 - Look not every person on his own things, it means your own desires, your own interests, your own wishes. I've given this example at different times: if you have three or four people... sometimes you'll be in a car – Where are you going to go eat? Different people have different ideas. Are you

willing to give in because somebody else has a different desire of something they want to have on a particular evening? I've known people get into things like this – okay? And what they discuss and what they do and things that don't always turn out too well – little things in life. Life is made up of a lot of little things. How faithful are you to live God's way of life in the little things that you experience day by day by day in your marriage? How *faithful* are you to God? How *faithful* are you to the Word of God?

Look not every person on his own things/his own interests/his own wishes, because that's generally what we are focused on because we're selfish by nature. We, human beings, are *so filled* with selfishness. We want things our way! Then we think if it goes our way we'll be happier! You make someone else do something *your* way. You think things are going to be happier? What planet are you on? You force someone to do something they don't want to do and they yield to that and they do it – because I've known many wives do that. It hasn't been necessarily happy times; but they strive to do it and sometimes because they've been told that's the right thing to do.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ. There so much said there! That's a sermon in itself! But let's go back to the one we're in...

Ephesians 5:21 – Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Then it says...**Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.** As you would unto the Lord, as you do unto God. Here's an order of something that God has established. It's a matter of government and how God has established government within the Church and how it's to function within the family. That's why I said *in THAT family*...that's why I mentioned that wives are not to be subject to *other husbands*. Some men think that every woman is beneath them or below them or subject to them. *That is so sick!* It's truly *sick!* *Sick* thinking in a *sick* mind because it doesn't come from God, it comes from another being out there that wants to destroy, has tried to destroy, has done well in destroying families for the past 6,000 years.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. In other words, as you would. So here is an order of things that has existed, as an example, in the Church for the past 2,000 years that's right before God that has to do with how things are dealt with and handled. And yet it's so misunderstood of what this entails. I've known of so many people who've had so many guilty feelings of striving to do things right in different kinds of situations and marriages and they've torn themselves up. And candidly in times past I didn't always understand all this as I do now.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. As you would unto the Lord. So again, why is this stated this way? Because there has to be order and order in a world that's so out of order; and so God is giving to the Church a process whereby this is to be done and done in the best way possible; two people in God's Church...because this is talking about people in God's Church with God's spirit. So there's a way then to do this within God's Church that is unique, but still very orderly. And it has to do with decisions and choices that are made, but not as it's taken in so many cases, and not as has been taken by the Protestant world that has rubbed off mightily on the Church – because it's been totally upside down in the Protestant world in what this is about. Let's go on to see the rest...

Because, or as it says here, **For**, in other words, **Because**, as God has established it in essence. **For the husband is the head of the wife**, in the structure of God's Government within the Church and that's to work with individual families at home. ...**the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church: this is Government**, it is God's Government and order of things within family. ...**and He is**

the Saviour of the Body. And if you understand what that means it says a lot about structure within the family and what it will be like when it's done God's way – okay?

Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Oh, I've known so many men who have *loved those verses* and have read them totally wrong...*totally wrong*, not in spirit and in truth in any fashion or form but as a matter *of authority*. That's not what God is saying! It's not a *matter* of how so many have taken it in a very *selfish way* of being *over women*; it has to do with the family, husband and wife, mother and father and so forth here. And it has to do with everything which is a given that is *true* and *right* within God's Church.

It's not a matter of servitude. It's not a matter of every whim, every desire and everything that you want to be done a certain way and somehow you're to command and tell a wife everything in life that she's to do and how she's to do it. *That's not what this is about! That's not what it's about at all! That's not how Christ teaches us, that's not how the Church is!* It's not to be that way at all when it comes to government. How often does government ever have to be practiced in the first place? Some people see it as something that's done all the time – you regulate other people's lives. No you don't! Each one of us has our own life to work at to regulate. We have our hands full with that as far as responding to God and living by God's way of life and God's laws and so forth.

But some people have taken this in a wrong way, that there is that which is a God given right to *dominate*, to be over a wife. I've known of so many marriages like that, where that's what the husband has thought within the family. And so many wives have been treated that way as a matter of dominance, not a matter of Godly order and how things are done – not at all...but almost like a servant. Like some ministers I've mentioned in times past began to be of a mindset that the Church was there to serve them rather than the attitude of mind they were to have toward God's Church.

I do want to go into this little bit here to talk about some of this that is unique, because again, it has to do with things that come up in life, decisions that are made that some people take too far. It's like you've got to be thinking for the other person all the time and telling them what to do and how to do it. What a *sick* life! You're sitting here and somehow you have to go and tell everybody everything they have to do and how to do it?

I've known of people that have to have the cabinets done a certain way and the laundry done a certain way and soap to be used and food to buy. There's no end to it! It's got to be done his way all the way down the line, everything, morning to night! That's not what this is about! This is not about servitude; this is not about being a slave. This is about order; when something is not in order, in unity, in harmony and oneness with the way God says the family is supposed to function in decisions that have to be made sometimes that have to do with how a family is going to function and certain plans and decision that have to be made at times.

And so husbands, men – *please* focus on this one in a big way in your life and *see* if this is in any *fashion or form* anything in your thinking that has existed or been there. Is she a part with you or below you? How do you think toward her? How do you treat her? Is everything she's supposed to do in the home? Are you supposed to map everything out for how it's done, when it's done, the time it's to be done – everything else? Do you think that's what this is about? Do you think that's what this '*everything*' is about? Because it isn't!

A marriage is a team effort, its togetherness, it's a unity, it's a bond that is unique and beautiful in life; and if you can understand the Church and understand things about Government and understand how God's spirit works – these things won't even be an issue as a whole. There'll be things that you will talk out and share and learn from each other in and sometimes, very rare...*very rare* a choice and a decision has to be made and said, "This is the way we're going to do this particular thing."

But there is an attitude of mind that God's looking at in a wife as well because of these things; and He's saying and showing here that this should be an attitude of mind. Just like verse 21 – that should be there because of this order that God has established. It has to do with the way of thinking. And I think about some of the reasons why it's told; that this is not an easy thing for a wife to be told, but that is what God has said is the way it should be. Because the reality is there are going to be certain decisions in life that aren't going to be the best decision – and yet the wife is to strive to support it when there's a need, of a disagreement about a matter, to do something in a certain way.

But again, we're talking about within the Church and I'm going to go along and give some more basic things here as we go along and these are things you're going to have to judge in your own life. But please understand within the Church even, because as in the world, these things have not been done well; and this thing of an attitude of service or being subject to or that somehow this is a kind of an authority that everything that's done within the family, the way things are done, the time they're done...that somehow the man *always* has a say and this is the way it's to be is a bunch of garbage. There are things that people have been told to do in times past from the ministry in the Church that women have been told they have to do because this is the way it's supposed to be done. I might give some examples as we go along.

The first situation I want to look at is if the wife is in the Church and the husband is not. How do you deal with something like this, because you see, the world gears toward the way I've described a moment ago of men being over women. This is the mentality in the world. Not all people live by that, but as a whole that's the way the world society is, that somehow there's this thing of the thinking of the male mind; that there's a superiority over women. Look at the workforce out here. Look at people and how they're paid; is it a part of society or isn't it? It absolutely is and how people are treated. And there's not that equality of production and how something is done; that a person can produce and be paid for the same amount as a whole. It's not been the same because of how *men think* in society; and sadly that's the way they think in their marriages. That's why so many marriages just don't work in this world; that's why so many things take off in the direction they do – because they're not done God's way – okay?

And so when you have a situation of a wife who's in the Church and the husband isn't how do you judge matters of being subject? To all things that are *right*; subject in things that are right, things that are according to God's Word, things according to the way of life God says to be lived. If you're asked to do something that's not right, that has sin in it, you should have your obvious answer: you have to stand up for what you believe and what is right. Because you know what comes first? God. In your life God comes first.

I have heard of some who have even in recent time, were advised (whether it be true or not I don't know fully because I didn't follow up on that particular point because so much time had passed I thought I would wait...and here's an opportunity to discuss some of that), but supposedly it came through counsel that an individual, a woman, was told that she shouldn't attend Sabbath service if her

husband was threatening repercussions. I don't remember in this case – was it divorce? Would have led to divorce or whatever if you go to Sabbath services, if you do this. Hey, you know what? Obedience to God is first! You are not subject to unrighteousness; you're subject to righteousness, the things that are a matter of God's way of life.

See, just because the husband says to do it gives no right to disobey God; and somehow it's ok because you can listen to it at home on your computer. No, if you have the ability to be together in fellowship and its close enough in that respect to do that – that's where you should strive to be. To be advised other than that is wrong; 'because he is the head of the house' is wrong. And on and on it goes. I have known of so many people in God's Church... you know, in God's Church whether it be a man or a woman – if you are married and your mate is not in God's Church you know what comes first? God! That'll help you in judging a lot of things. God comes first. And within that sometimes, certain things within fellowship – certain things you can try to work with but there are certain things that you should strive to go ahead and do and have in your life because God has given you another Family in addition to the one you have.

You have a physical family you started at some point: one was called into the Church. But you know what? In all cases in those situations the other individual has been sanctified and set apart. Do you know what that means? When they've been sanctified and set apart? It means that in a very unique way within the realm of God's Church that an individual has the ability, children as an example, within a family as they grow up, have an ability to learn and see certain things that others can't. But so often what happens is that the opportunity for that is rejected; and the one coming in oftentimes has a great enough struggle as it is to make certain decision in their life because they're the one being drawn by God's spirit, and they have battles on their own to address and face as they begin to make certain choices and changes in their life. But as time goes along and you've made those choices and decisions, oftentimes what happens is that there is a time when individuals turn against what you believe. And some of you have to make some pretty tough decisions in cases like that because why? God is first. Whether you be a man or a woman, God is first. And sometimes women have a more difficult time making certain choices and decisions because of what the husband says. You better stand for God first; because when it's all said and done the rest isn't going to matter if you don't do what you're supposed to do. That's the bottom line.

So sometimes life is filled with some tough decisions and sometimes we're tried in different ways as to God being first and what that means in our life and things that are right and just and so forth. And so there are times you just have to stand up for what is right. And you know what it says in different places when Paul talks about it? 'If they're pleased to dwell with you.' What a beautiful thing if someone, though they're sanctified, they don't necessarily, obviously, choose this way of life, but they don't turn against it either – that's a choice. They have the choice of turning against it or not to turn against it. They have a choice because of their love toward you – husbands or wives – to continue on the course that they have in a physical plane in that family because they understand they love you and they understand this is an important thing to you and this way of life and what you're holding onto, that it's important to you – and they understand this Family's important to you and your beliefs are important to you and they're pleased to dwell with you in that. And sometimes it can be a little rocky here and there; and you have to work through some of those things. God is always first. Choices and decisions.

I have known of so many people when they've come to a point and they make a compromise; things don't go well. And from that point on... when you stand your ground and the other party knows, they

have a choice to make to love you and to continue to love you or to begin not loving you in the same way they did before, what they thought they did before. Sorry, that's just the way it is. And some of those things are difficult things to live through, but you know what? Every one of us is called by God to have something unique moulded and fashioned within us; but always, always, always God comes first and you make your stand for what is right before God. Because if you don't, things won't go well with you and you won't be able to grow in the way that God desires you to grow. Is it hard? Is it difficult? Every course every one of us follows is going to be a tough course in life, in this time that we have left anyway until Jesus Christ returns. We don't have much more of that to go through thankfully, thank God; but it's not meant to be easy in this age. It never was. And so things are difficult sometimes because God is moulding and fashioning something different within each and every one of us that by the things you go through that's where you're tried and tested, moulded and fashioned that's unique to you.

And so the question is sometimes of being subject to husbands; we taught both, being in the Church. Again the same judgement is there – *God is first*. Anything that keeps you from the Church...that should never exist. Anything that should keep you from fellowship within the Church should not exist within the Church. Are there times that tough decisions have to be made, maybe because of distance and finances? Absolutely! And you strive to make those together; and there are times that if there's a disagreement the husband may make a choice and the decision that, No, because this time here it's so far and our finances are such and such – we just don't have it right now; then you support that and back that because that's what's best at that moment in time. But you're both desiring to do and to be in fellowship. If both aren't desiring to be in fellowship and together in certain things then...

God is first. You have a Family. It very highly comes first within the Church and you have to weigh those things out. Thankfully this is all getting ready to change not too many months up the road; but there's still some things you're going to have to address that is good for you, those of you out here listening today, of being tried in various areas of your life that are difficult; and those things help to mould and fashion you. You're learning how to judge.

Sometimes it becomes difficult too when it's a matter of order and things within the Church. I think of some things that happen on both sides, when it comes to wives being of a spirit and an attitude of mind of being subject to, of submissive to a husband – it's an attitude of mind that should be there all the time. But you know what? If you understand verse 21 it's the other side too. It's the other side too! But the wife is told to do that as a matter of absolute order and the way things have been in the last 2,000 years in God's Church.

Verse 25 - Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; So if you can get out of your minds this thing of what's carried around society about 'lording it over', or about this word 'everything'. It has to do with everything that is a matter of what is right before God; and how often do those things come up within a marriage when both are in the Church? Because this is talking about both as a whole, it's in the context of both being in God's Church. God is always first; the Church, the *Family* of God. Those are the things – and that which we're taught.

And sometimes it becomes very difficult when certain things aren't handled in a certain way or done in a certain way when it comes to some kinds of decisions made within a family and sometimes the wife has to stand up and say, "Wait a minute, this isn't what we're being taught in God's Church." Those are

awkward situations, but a wife has a responsibility if something isn't being done right within the family, to address those things and to say, "This really isn't right."

And some decisions, husbands, understand as time goes along here we're going to learn this more and more – if certain decisions aren't right as far as what the Church teaches, indeed, a wife should question you about that. She has that responsibility before God and if your attitude isn't right because you think you are 'over' and you don't have to listen to her – that a decision may have to be made in a particular case like that that a wife has to go to the ministry.

I've had that happen in the Church of God so many times through the years; and it's always been a rocky road because husbands haven't liked a wife who would step out and go to a ministry and say, "This is what I'm being told." or, "This is what has happened and I don't think this is right." And with an attitude as a whole, and a desire to know what is the right thing here. It can be tough with male egos sometimes, but you should humble yourselves in your mind and your attitude and apply verse 21, and apply this verse here as well.

There's a greater responsibility, just like as I mentioned earlier, upon God's Church, upon the ministry for what is taught and how things are done. And if we'd understood those things in times past...that's why things written in Ezekiel 28; some of you ought to know those well of what happened within the Church and the ministry and so forth. The condemnation that came there was upon the ministry above and beyond all because God held a greater responsibility there.

And because of the order that God has within the family there's a greater responsibility upon the husband because it isn't about every whim you have, it isn't about every desire you have, it isn't about when you think that things should be done at a certain time of the day or that you have the right or the way of God behind you that somehow you're to regulate everything that's done in your family a certain way. That isn't what this is about! Those are to be worked out as a husband and a wife and more of a team attitude in spirit.

Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church; we've gone through this so many times about a husband that's willing to sacrifice for the wife. So we're talking about a sacrificing love – what kind of a husband isn't willing to sacrifice for the wife? What kind of a love is it in the family if a husband isn't willing to sacrifice his will, his way, his desire in order to see the wife happier. Who doesn't want to give their wife fullness and happiness in life? I don't understand that, and yet I do in the world. I don't get it sometimes, especially in God's Church, why we can't all see the same thing – that should be your desire, to see your children happy and prosper, to see your wife happy and prosper. Why want anything different?

And yet so often, I haven't seen that as a whole in the way it should be; and there are *changes* that need to be made in people's lives because of this. And this has so much to do with what we're talking about from curses to blessings. If you want the kind of blessings that God says you're to have in your life and in your family, the things that can be there in a fuller and greater way... it comes through doing things the right way, the way that God says to do it here, by yielding yourself to the right way.

So to have your own way, to be over someone, to exercise lordship because you think that's what's right before God... *Get a life!* You're up the creek and you're wrong! That's not the way God established it. Within the ministry... it's not about lording it over, it's not about the position of authority, that

somehow it's demanded you respect that and bow down to that! How sick can that be? But it existed in the Church in the ministry and it *exists still to this day* too much between husbands and wives. It's got to be repented of and gotten rid of so we can get on with things and live happier lives and have the kind of blessings in our life; because God wants us to have those blessings from doing things the right way.

Husbands, you are not the 'lord' of your house! If you think that it's a matter of lording it over; every decision, every little thing that comes along, you're wrong. On the contrary, your desire should be to *want* to do the things according to *her* desires. Why wouldn't you want that? *Why wouldn't* you want that? I don't get it.

Every minister that's ever been out there should have always desired, like Paul talks about, his joy. His joy is what the Church is able to receive that's a matter of that which is spiritual, to live life better, to be blessed by what they go through, to be happier in life. Isn't that what God wants for us? To be happier in life? Who doesn't want that in their families? Who doesn't want to see that in marriage? Why do something that's contentious, or that causes strife. Do you become angry? Why do you become angry? Why are you angry? Why are you upset about anything? And yet it happens in God's Church over and over and over again; *still* is happening in God's Church. And that isn't of God! It isn't God's way of life!

And all this goes back to verse 1 and 2 - **Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.** You should be willing to lay down your life for your mate. That's love. So how much are you willing to lay down? How much of *your will*, how much of *your way* of doing things or way *you think* something should be done? Is your life going to be all of a sudden happier if towels are a certain way? ...if laundry's done with a certain detergent? ...if you something is cooked a certain way? What's more important? What you're putting in your *gut*, or what you're putting in your *mind* toward someone else? How do you feel toward your mate? How much do you really love them?

I'm dumbfounded by the things that happen sometimes, by the things I've sat in on counsel over the years and listened to these things – and my mind is reeling and I'm thinking... "You've got to be *kidding!* You've got to be *kidding me!* *This is what you're concerned with? This what you get upset about?* Where is the sacrifice? Where is the love? Where is the desire to see someone else happy and joyful?" I'll tell you what, you work to make someone else's life happier and better and joyful – your life is always going to be happier and more joyful because there's happiness and joy in giving. That's God's way – giving; to the point of being willing to sacrifice your way, your will to give. That's the way life should be and there really is the joy and the fullness and happiness in doing so. To do otherwise we just simply rob ourselves of it and we become more selfish. Incredible!

Ephesians 5:25 - Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that's God's desire for us, to give us that which makes us better, makes us more fulfilled and happier. And why wouldn't we want to give that to our family? ...if we can? *If we can...? ...that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.* Whole, beautiful, adorned – His Bride adorned, the Church – throughout life. That's what God wants for us! That's what Jesus Christ wants for each and every one of us – that our lives can be *full*, productive, happy, prosperous, adorned in beauty.

I'm dumbfounded sometimes by things I've seen in times past where husbands wouldn't want to do more or give more, sacrifice more so that the wife can have more – maybe even better clothes, maybe even a permanent more often, or once in their life, or something done at a beauty salon to help them out, to give them something that makes them feel nice. Why wouldn't a husband want that? Why wouldn't he want to sacrifice for those things? ...and himself have less if that be the case? Isn't that the mind of Christ toward the Church? I'll tell you it is! *It is!* That's His mind, a willingness to sacrifice to the point of death for it, in order to *adorn* the Church!

So, *where do contentions and disputes and anger... where do they come from?* Can't you see it in your heart and your mind? Do you know where your thinking is? Do you know where your thinking is off, not right before God in such things?

I'll tell you what. If I had what I have now in understanding and knowledge and went back 15-20 years, there'd be a lot of husbands put out of God's Church – disfellowshipped. *Shame* on them for not obeying God! Shame on them for causing such havoc and frustration and sorrow in their own families – shame on them! Just as much as God spewed the whole Church out of His mouth; it would have been done without blinking once. Like to have gone back and even do it if it was possible, but it's not possible...to bring them to repentance, that's the desire. If there's any way of changing a family, to bring them to repentance – that that would be done.

...present to Himself a glorious Church...So ought men to love their wives as their own body. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man yet ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it...that's why things have to be their way sometimes in life. It's the way we think. And I'm speaking in terms that I hope we can understand this is how men and women are different in life. This is how men have generally thought in the world, and within the Protestant world; and too much of that has crept in the Church. That's why this is being hit so hard; because God wants a great change to take place and great repentance to take place in our lives.

We can't redo the past; but we can change to make the future better, more beautiful...and that's what we're focusing on.

Verse 4 – For we are members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. That which is beautiful in life, that is unique to be shared that God says is only to be shared between a husband and a wife that is unique to them; that goes on and teaches something far, far greater on a spiritual plane – one Body, the Church – unity and harmony and oneness of spirit.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. There are things that God has given in a physical plane that are beautiful when done the way God says they're to be done. And there are those things that God has given everything in a physical family in life that's there to teach us things that have to do with the spirit and with the Family, with the Family of God.

And so it goes on to say; **Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she show respect to her husband.** Because God has given order within the family, that there's a certain structure there for when there are times where decisions have to be made that have to do with the family *that are very RARE*. If you understand this, this is very rare; it truly is because most everything is a matter of the sharing. And it's very rare that a decision has to be made

that's a matter of government. Too many see it as government all the time, every day, every moment of the day and subject to it and, "If you don't talk to me in a right way *you're not subject to GOVERNMENT!*" That's the way some men think! You think... "Get your mind clean man! Put it in a big ole washing machine, something, please, let it roll around for a while. Maybe a little banging around..." We're tough! Our heads truly are! But what a beautiful thing when it's done right, if we see things the way God says they are supposed to be in life.

I want to go back to this verse here again, this matter of showing respect. I want to read this: Respect is to show consideration and thoughtfulness toward decisions, desires for the family as an attitude of deference toward another, meaning to put another person's interests first, submitting to the opinion and wishes of another when it comes to a decision, a choice that's made to do something in a certain way.

And so, wives, that's a tough task in life because you're doing it to that which is very imperfect. We're very imperfect, human beings, we truly are. And if we understand that then we're going to be very careful how we administer then government when it has to be administered.

Going back here and continuing on in some of this in **Ephesians 5:21**. Before we continue into the next section (I guess even before that here I'll maybe mention this and put this in a part of another sermon), but even before we go on to another series, if it'll be a series, or at least another sermon that we're going to have on the subject as a follow-up – something I want you to think about and consider here.

Some things, again, are changing with the structure of family. It's really unique what God is doing and what He's showing to us. And if we can understand this verse 21, again, **submitting yourselves one to another**; it's an attitude of mind, truly, that God says to the Church has to be this way because of the world and become of a need to have an order within family, within *all* the ramifications of things that are so unique to the Church through time. Some cases because people are so far away from different areas and so there has to be an order of things, there has to be a way things are done and this is the way God has said it to be for reasons that we can go into later on as well, but for 6,000 years because of the way men and women are created and made, because of some things having to do with our physical frame of and by itself and things that I'll go into in another series later on.

But this attitude of mind here of something that God desires us to see with all of our being – this attitude of a willingness to submit to one another, to someone else's desires, wishes, ways of doing something as long as it doesn't disagree with God's way of life, as long as it's within the law, within God's way of life and so forth (understandably without being said)...someone else's interests, their desires. Why wouldn't you have that desire? A wife toward a husband or a husband toward a wife? Why wouldn't that exist within the Church? ...within the environment of the Church? Do we have that desire to each other? I think, as a whole, if we look at things like that we'd say, "Yes, we have that desire toward each other. We have a desire to yield to someone else's desire." Perhaps where to go to eat, perhaps what to do at a certain time, perhaps something we can do together at a certain time, perhaps a certain kind of fellowship, a certain time to be spent together and what we do during that time, what we might do here at the Feast of Tabernacles, something that people might agree to do that people get together and have a desire. And why wouldn't we have that desire for people to enjoy life to its fullest and be a part of that and support it and back it up? Because that's what we're talking about here; an attitude of mind toward others.

But this spirit, this attitude must become greater than what it has been within the Church, something that we need to see - this attitude of mind. Husbands, toward your wives... the wife is told this is the way it's to be. And husbands you're to love your wife. And if you understand what that means you'll have this spirit too, *submitting yourself to your wife with a right spirit, with a right attitude because you understand what this means*. And we'll talk about that in the next sermon, but, something is changing within the Church and something is brought back to light – an order of things that God wants us to grasp and how He intends for order to exist and how He wants us to grasp and understand how His spirit flows and how His spirit works in our lives and how it works within the family, how it works in a husband and how it works in a wife, and how it works within the structure of the Church.

We're getting ready to see a huge change in the world where everyone has the opportunity of being a part of God's Church and we can go on to some changes now that haven't been possible in the past. So as you think about the sermon coming up (whether it be next week or a few weeks from now, because this particular series may be interrupted), something is starting to change within the Family of God, within the begotten Family of God. And the question is – What is it? Do we really see what's taking place? Do we understand what God is showing to us?

What factors determine the structure of God's Family? What factors determine the structure we have? What is one of the most important factors? There being harmony and unity of spirit with God, within the Church, within the Family – what factors are involved there between a husband and a wife within a marriage? ...becoming of one mind with God and doing things in an orderly unified manner. How's it done?

Well brethren, to me it's an exciting thing because you see; it has to do with ordinations. It has to do with understanding what's taking place, something that's *unique* within the Church of God that has never happened in the last 2,000 years, and that is women being ordained in the Church. And these things involve Family. And if you come to understand the spirit of what God is doing and how God is doing it it's going to help families, it's going to help husbands and it's going to help wives in families learn to apply on a spiritual plane, with a bit of prodding from God on a spiritual plane, this attitude of mind of being submissive one to another and having the kind of love that God desires that we truly experience within a marriage.

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