

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 114 – Ephesians 4:25-5:33

Day 566: Ephesians 4:25-32

4:25 ff.

O'Brian argues that 4:25-5:2 is one unit of paranesis containing a series of exhortatory sentences providing rules for the conduct of daily life. Stott says that when prisoners are released from custody they throw off their prison clothes and must also abandon their former conduct. "So also with the Christian. Since by a new creation we have put off the old humanity and put on the new, we must also put away the old standards and adopt new ones. Our new role will mean new clothing, our new life a new ethical lifestyle."

Verse 25

Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη.

διο **therefore, for this reason**

ἀποθέμενοι Verb, 2 aor midd ptc, m nom pl
ἀποτιθημι see v.22

"There are conscious links with the preceding paragraph: the verb 'put off' has already been used in v.22 with reference to laying aside the old person, while the key notion of 'truth' is picked up from the concluding phrase of v.24 (cf. vv. 15,21). The readers had been taught to put aside the 'old person' which was being corrupted by deceitful desires (v.22). Let them now 'put off' all falsehood, which characterised their old manner of life with its harmful and deceitful ways." O'Brian

ψεῦδος, ους n **lie, untruth**
λαλεω **speak, talk**
ἀληθεια, ας f see v.24

"They have put on 'the new person' which has been created in God's likeness. Accordingly, *the truth*, which comes from God himself (v.24) and is found in Jesus (v.21), should be the distinguishing mark of their speech." O'Brian

ἕκαστος, η, ον **each, every**
πλησιον i) prep with gen **near**; ii) ὁ π.
neighbour, fellow man.

Cf. Zech 8:16. Picking up themes from the chapter regarding the community of God's people and the character of God's new city. "What is predicated of the eschatological future of God's people in terms of new Jerusalem language in the Old Testament passage is picked up by Paul in relation to the 'new person', God's new community in Christ, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. The salvation-historical and typological connections between the two communities, and thus the accompanying practical exhortations, are patent." O'Brian

ἀλλήλων, οισ, ους reciprocal pronoun **one another**
μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl **member, bodily part**

Verse 26

ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε· ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ [τῷ] παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν,

ὀργιζομαι **be furious, be angry**
ἁμαρτανω **sin, commit sin**

Cf. Ps. 4:4. The force is 'if you are angry do not sin' or 'in your anger do not sin'. Cf. Jas 1:19-20.

ἥλιος, ου m **the sun**
ἐπιδυω **set (of the sun)**
παροργισμος, ου m **anger**

A proverbial saying. Paul places this constraint on anger to prevent it degenerating into sin.

Verse 27

μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.

μηδε negative particle **nor, and not**
τοπος, ου m **place, opportunity**
διαβολος, ου m **the devil**

'Do not give the devil a chance to exert his influence.' Cf. Rom 19:19.

Verses 26-27 provide an example of the spiritual warfare that is to be waged by the Christian.

Verse 28

ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ιδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρεῖαν ἔχοντι.

κλεπτω **steal**

"Some have argued that stealing is mentioned here in Ephesians simply because it was a traditional topic in parenetic material. But it is likely that this exhortation informs us about the kind of people who became Christians in the first century, not least in Asia Minor, and indicates 'how difficult they found it to break away from the ethical norms of the society from which they had been converted.'" O'Brian

μηκετι no longer
μαλλον rather, instead
κοπιαω work, work
ἐργαζομαι work, do

"Paul supported his missionary activity through his work as an artisan, making tents from leather, and he exhorted his congregations to work with their hands as well (1 Thess 4:11,12; 2 Thess 3:6-12)." O'Brian

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

There are numerous textual variants for this brief clause ταῖς [ἰδίας] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθὸν involving both word order and the omission of ἰδίας (also replaced in a couple of MSS by αὐτου).

χειρ, χειρος f hand
ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting
μεταδιδόναι Verb, pres act infin
μεταδιδωμι share, give, impart
χρεια, ας f need, want

A transformed life: in place of taking from others, giving to others.

Verse 29

πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω, ἀλλὰ εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

"Believers are to achieve what is good with their mouths as well as with their hands, and this good is described in terms of what is beneficial to others." O'Brian

σαπρος, α, ον bad, rotten, harmful

Language that is 'harmful' or 'unwholesome'. "What is prohibited, then, is harmful speech of any kind (cf. Col 3:8; Eph 5:4), whether it be abusive language, vulgar speech, or slander and contemptuous talk. Lips given to this kind of utterance not only defile the speaker (Matt 15:11) but are also destructive of communal life. Our Lord had already warned that people would have to render account on the final day for every careless word they speak (Matt 12:36)." O'Brian

στομα, τος n mouth
ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful

οἰκοδομη, ης f upbuilding,
encouragement
χρεια, ας f need, want
δῶ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s διδωμι
χαρις, ιτος f grace

Verse 30

καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρωσεως.

A motivation for the preceding exhortations.

λυπεω pain, grieve

Cf. Is 63:10. "In Isaiah 63, which looks back to the exodus, Yahweh is presented as the Saviour of Israel, who *redeemed* his people from Egypt, brought them into a covenant relationship with himself, led them by his own personal presence (i.e., his Holy Spirit) through the wilderness, and gave them rest. For its part, Israel the covenant people had rebelled against the Lord 'and grieved his Holy Spirit' (v.10). In Ephesians Paul addresses the new covenant community, 'the one new man' (2:15) comprising Jews and Gentiles who have been *redeemed* (1:7) and reconciled to God through the cross of Christ (2:14-18). They have become a holy temple in the Lord, the place where *God himself* dwells by his Spirit (2:21,22). Using the language of Isaiah 63:10, Paul issues a warning to this new community not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, 'as Israel had done' in the wilderness (cf. 1 Cor 10:1-11), the more so since they have been sealed by that same Holy Spirit until the day of *redemption* (4:30)... Anything incompatible with the unity or purity of the church is inconsistent with the Spirit's own nature and therefore grieves him." O'Brian

ἐσφραγίσθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal;
mark with a seal
ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption,
deliverance

"By sealing believers with his Spirit, whether Gentile or Jewish, God has stamped them with his own character and guaranteed to protect them (see on 1:13) until he takes final possession of them on 'the day of redemption'. How ungrateful would they be if they now behave in a manner which grieves the very Spirit by whom they have been marked as God's own." O'Brian

Verse 31

πάσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ
κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ' ὑμῶν
σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ.

πικρία, ας f bitterness, spite, bitter
feeling

θυμὸς, ου m anger, rage, fury

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

κραυγη, ης f shout, cry

βλασφημία, ας f slander, blasphemy

"Paul's list appears to be climactic, progressing from an inner resentful attitude, through its indignant outburst and seething rage, to public shouting and abusive language or cursing. Although v.26 recognises that in exceptional circumstances one may be angry without sinning, so great are the dangers of this passion that on all other occasions it is to be rooted out comprehensively." O'Brian

ἀρθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s αἶρω

take away, set aside, raise

κακία, ας evil, wickedness

Verse 32

γίνεσθε [δὲ] εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί,
εὐσπλαγχοὶ, χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς καθὼς
καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν.

Cf. Col 3:12-13.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

χρηστος, η, ον kind, loving, good,
merciful

εὐσπλαγχνος, ον tender-hearted, kind

Sympathetic to the needs of others.

χαρίζομαι give, be gracious to, forgive
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"This statement is part of the New Testament's 'conformity' pattern, in which God or Christ's saving activity, especially Christ's sacrifice on the cross, is set forth as a paradigm of the lifestyle to which believers are to 'conform'.

The introductory 'just as also' has both comparative and causal force (cf. 5:2, 25, 29): what God has done 'in Christ' for believers, which has been so fully set forth in chapters 1-3, provides both the paradigm of and the grounds for their behaviour. Here God's forgiveness of them is the model of their forgiveness of one another." O'Brian

Day 567: Ephesians 5:1-5**Verse 1**

γίνεσθε οὖν μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς τέκνα
ἀγαπητά,

Summarises the preceding admonitions of
4:25-32.

μιμητης, ου m imitator

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

The basis on which the demand to be imitators is made – they should reproduce the family likeness.

This is the only NT reference to being imitators of God, though cf. Lk 6:35-36; Matt 5:44-48.

Verse 2

καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ
Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν
ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν
τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας.

The particular aspect of imitation is now
defined more specifically.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Cf. 4:1,17 also 5:8,15.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up

Cf. Gal 2:20. "The model and ground for their living a *life of love* is Christ's love and sacrificial offering of himself... Costly, sacrificial love, then, is to characterise believers in their relationships with one another." O'Brian

προσφορα, ας f offering, sacrifice

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim

ὁσμη, ης f fragrance

εὐωδια, ας f sweet smell, fragrant aroma

Cf. Ps 40:6 (LXX 39:7). The phrase indicates that the offering is well pleasing to God – as is our service when following Christ.

Verse 3

πορνεία δὲ καὶ ἀκαθαρσία πάντα ἢ
πλεονεξία μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω ἐν ὑμῖν,
καθὼς πρέπει ἀγίοις,

"Paul begins a fresh series of warnings against behaviour that is completely alien to a Christian lifestyle, returning to the contrast between the Christian community and outsiders found in the earlier exhortatory material of 4:17-24." O'Brian

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

"The term denotes any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse, especially adultery and sexual relations with prostitutes. One who surrenders to sexual immorality indicates ultimately that he or she has broken from God. In contrast to the loose living that prevailed in the Hellenistic world, New Testament (and in particular Pauline) teaching required unconditional obedience to the prohibition against 'fornication' (note Paul's warnings to the Corinthians: 1 Cor 5:1; 6:12-20; 7:2; 10:8; 2 Cor 12:21)." O'Brian

ἀκαθαρσία, ας f impurity, immorality
ἢ ἢ ορ
πλεονεξία, ας f greed, covetousness
μηδε see 4:27

Here has the force, 'not even'.

ὀνομαζω name, call; pass be known
πρέπειε impers verb it is fitting, it is proper

They are called to be a holy people.

Verse 4

καὶ αἰσχροῦτης καὶ μωρολογία ἢ
εὐτραπελία, ἃ οὐκ ἀνήκεν, ἀλλὰ μάλλον
εὐχαριστία.

αἰσχροτης, ητος f indecent behaviour

In context here means disgraceful speech, obscenity.

μωρολογία, ας f foolish talk

The root meaning is wittiness or jesting. The meaning here is therefore something like 'coarse joking'

εὐτραπελία, ας f vulgar or dirty talk

All three of these terms appear here only in the New Testament. "All three terms refer to a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation. This kind of language must be avoided as utterly inappropriate among those whom God has set apart as holy." O'Brian

ἀνήκεν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s
ἀνηκει impers. verb it is proper, right
μαλλον see 4:28

εὐχαριστία, ας f thanksgiving

"Whereas sexual impurity and covetousness both express self-centred acquisitiveness, thanksgiving is the exact opposite, and so the antidote required; it is the recognition of God's generosity' (Houlden). Thanksgiving is almost a synonym for the Christian life. It is the response of gratitude to God's saving activity in creation and redemption, and thus a recognition that he is the ultimate source of every blessing." O'Brian

Verse 5

τοῦτο γὰρ ἵστε γινωσκοντες ὅτι πάς
πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης, ὃ
ἐστὶν εἰδωλόατρος, οὐκ ἔχει
κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
καὶ θεοῦ.

ἵστε Verb, indic or imperat 2 pl οἶδα (verb
perf in form but with present meaning)
know, understand

"The opening words of the Greek are an unusual periphrastic construction, though the general sense is clear enough. They may be taken as an imperative and rendered, 'be sure of this' (NRSV; lit. 'know, knowing'), or as an indicative and interpreted as an affirmation, *For of this you can be sure* (lit. 'you know, knowing'). Either way Paul is drawing attention to a certainty: persistent sinners are excluded from God's kingdom." O'Brian

πορνος, ου m man who practices sexual
immorality

ἀκάθαρτος, ον unclean

πλεονεκτης, ου m one who is grasping or
greedy

εἰδωλόατρος, ου m idolater

"Along with greed for riches and power, sexual lust is an idolatrous obsession; it places self-gratification or another person at the centre of one's existence, and thus is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom 1:25)." O'Brian

κληρονομία, ας f inheritance, what is
promised

"There is a tendency in Paul's letters to distinguish two phases of the heavenly kingdom, reserving the expression 'the kingdom of God' for its future and eternal aspect (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21), while 'the kingdom of Christ' denotes the present phase of God's rule (1 Cor 15:24; Col 1:13; cf also Eph 2:6; 2 Tim 4:1,18), which is destined to merge with the future. So in 1 Corinthians 15:24 Christ, after reigning until all things are put under his feet, delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. Thus the double formulation, *the kingdom of Christ and of God* signifies the divine kingdom in both its present and future aspects, from which those who have given themselves over to immorality, impurity and greed are excluded." O'Brian

Day 568: Ephesians 5:6-14**Verse 6**

Μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς ἀπατάτω κενοῖς λόγοις, διὰ ταῦτα γὰρ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
ἀπαταω deceive, lead astray

"It is all too easy for believers to be influenced by the surrounding world and to succumb to its ways of thinking and behaving. The result is that what is acceptable to the culture of the day becomes acceptable to the church. This is particularly true in contemporary Western society in the area of sexual morality."
O'Brian

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose,
senseless

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας people whose lives are characterised by disobedience.

Verse 7

μη οὖν γίνεσθε συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν·
συμμετοχος, ον sharer, participant

This is not prohibiting contact but rather partnership in their activities. To share in their lifestyle is to share in their fate.

Verse 8

ἦτε γὰρ ποτε σκότος, νῦν δὲ φῶς ἐν κυρίῳ· ὡς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε

ποτέ enclitic particle once, formerly, at
one time

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil
φως, φωτος n light

"In Ephesians darkness represents ignorance, error, and evil (cf. 4:18), and in particular comes to signify immorality as the way of life of those who are separated from God. Light, on the other hand, stands for truth, knowledge (cf. 1:18), and now holiness, all of which come from God.

"Surprisingly, the readers are not presented simply as having been in the realm of darkness and being now in the sphere of light, although this would have been true enough (cf. John 8:12; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9). It is not their environment or the surroundings in which they and the rest of humanity live that is in view. Rather, they themselves were once *darkness*, but now they are *light in the Lord*. Those ruled by the dominion of *darkness* or of *light* represent that dominion in their own persons. So, when they were converted, it was their lives, not their surroundings, that were changed from darkness to light. This radical transformation had taken place *in the Lord*. He is the one who has made the decisive difference, and it is through their union with him that they have entered a new dominion and become *light*." O'Brian

τεκνον, ου n child

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Verse 9

– ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτὸς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ –
καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

In contrast with the 'unfruitful works of darkness' v.11.

Several MSS (including p⁴⁶ D^c Ψ 88 104) read 'fruit of the Spirit', which appears to have been influenced by Gal 5:22.

ἀγαθωσυνη, ης f goodness

Can also carry the sense, 'generosity'.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness
ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Verse 10

δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστὶν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ·

δοκιμαζω test, prove, discern
εὐαρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

The Christians' overarching goal is to please Christ in all circumstances (cf. Rom 12:2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20).

Verse 11

καὶ μὴ συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάροις τοῦ σκοτους, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἐλέγχετε,

συγκοινωνεω take part in, participate in
ἀκαρπος, ον barren, unfruitful
σκοτος, ους see v.8

The people that carry out these actions are described as *darkness*, cf. v.8.

μᾶλλον adv more; rather, instead

ἐλεγχω show (someone his) fault, convince
(someone of his) error

"Since the object of this reproving activity, both here and in v.13, is the 'unfruitful works' rather than the people themselves, it is preferable to understand the verb in the sense of 'bringing to light or exposing' these deeds, rather than convincing or convicting those engaged in such activities. Both the flow of the argument and the context of darkness suggest that the fruitless deeds which are exposed are the sins of unbelievers. The conduct of the children of light will shine as a beacon to others, revealing evil deeds for what they are. To interpret the verb along these lines of exposing sin for what it is does not imply that Christians should remain silent or fail to speak out against evil. But the particular point being made here is that of living a godly lifestyle and showing evil to be evil." O'Brian

Verse 12

τὰ γὰρ κρυφῆ γινόμενα ὑπὸ αὐτῶν
αἰσχρόν ἐστὶν καὶ λέγειν·

κρυφῆ adv in secret, secretly
αἰσχρός, α, ον disgraceful, shameful

The καὶ has the force 'it is shameful even to speak of them' i.e. let alone do them.

Verse 13

τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐλεγχόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς
φανεροῦται,

φανεροῶ make evident

Verse 14

πάν γὰρ τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς ἐστίν. διὸ
λέγει, Ἔγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων, καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ
τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἐπιφάσει σοι ὁ
Χριστός.

"Paul's language is compressed, but the logic appears to be that the light not only exposes; it also transforms (cf. 2 Cor 4:6). The disclosure of people's sins effected through believers' lives enables men and women to see the nature of their deeds. Some abandon the darkness of sin and respond to the light so that they become light themselves. This understanding is confirmed by v.8, which speaks of the transformation that had taken place in the readers' experience, and by the confession of v.14b. Furthermore, it is in line with John 3:19-21, which refers, on the one hand, to the failure of a person in darkness to come to the light, lest his or her deeds be exposed, and, on the other hand, of the person who does the truth and comes to the light in order that his or her deeds might be revealed for what they are. J.B. Phillips's oft quoted rendering brings the force of v.14a out well: 'It is even possible (after all it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also'. The light thus has a threefold effect on the prevailing darkness: it makes visible and transforms."

O'Brian

διὸ therefore, for this reason

ἐγειρω raise

καθεύδω sleep, be dead

ἀνίστημι rise, stand up, come back to life

νεκρός, α, ον dead

ἐπιφάσει Verb, fut act indic, 3s

ἐπιθασκω shine (on), give light (to)

These words could reflect Is 60:1,2 and perhaps also Is 26:19. However, "Most recent scholars reject the notion that v. 14b is an altered quotation from the Old Testament, and prefer to understand it as a fragment of an early Christian hymn that was originally associated with baptism. The readers would be reminded of the summons to awake and of the promise they received at their baptism. As a result, they are now urged to live in the light of that life-changing experience." O'Brian. O'Brian follows Maritz in thinking that this is an early Christian hymn (perhaps even of Paul's own composition) but that it is influenced by, or based on the Isaiah passages – not just the bare verses themselves but their contexts.

"Paul adopts no defeatist attitude towards the society around him. Christ is the light who has summoned the readers to wake up and rise from the dead. He has shone upon them so that they have become light in the Lord. As children of light their lives are to shine as a beacon, exposing the darkness around for what it really is. Some who sit in darkness may be attracted to the light and even choose to enter it." O'Brian

Day 569: Ephesians 5:15-21

Verses 15-21

A summary climax of the parenthesis of chapters 4-6. "The passage further explains what it means to *live a life worthy of the calling you have received* (4:1), the opening admonition and 'topic sentence' of the lengthy exhortatory material that extends from 4:1 to 6:9... The first exhortation, *Be careful, then, how you live* (v. 15), which stands like a heading, is explained by three antitheses, 'not ... but', in the following clauses: (i) not as unwise, but as wise (v.15b); (ii) not foolish, but understanding the Lord's will (v.17); (iii) not drunk with wine, but filled by the Spirit (v.18)." O'Brian

Verse 15

Βλέπετε οὖν ἀκριβῶς πῶς περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ' ὡς σοφοί,

βλεπω see, beware of, see that
ἀκριβῶς accurately, with care

"Although some texts read πῶς ἀκριβῶς, so associating 'carefully' with 'walking' rather than 'watching', the external evidence favours ἀκριβῶς πῶς, with the adverb modifying the watching." O'Brian

περιπατεω see v.8

ἄσοφος, ον senseless, foolish

On wisdom, cf. 1:8-9, 17-19; 3:10. To be 'wise' is to understand God's plan of salvation in Christ and to live in conformity with it.

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

Verse 16

ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσιν.

ἐξαγοραζω redeem; midd make the most of

καιρος, ου m time

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"The notion that 'the days are evil' appears to be similar to the idea of 'this present evil age' in Galatians 1:4 (cf. 'the *evil* day', Eph 6:13). These 'evil' days are under the control of the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), who is opposed to God and his purposes. He exercises effective and compelling authority over men and women outside of Christ, keeping them in terrible bondage (2:1-3). But the Ephesian Christians have already participated in the world to come, the powers of the new age have broken in upon them, and they have become 'light in the Lord' (5:8). Although they live in the midst of these evil days as they await their final redemption, they are neither to avoid them nor to fear them. Rather, they are to live wisely, taking advantage of every opportunity in this fallen world to conduct themselves in a manner that is pleasing to God." O'Brian

Verse 17

διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου.

ἄφρων, ον gen ονος fool, foolish,
senseless, ignorant

Like the call to be wise (v.15), this term also has its roots in the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament.

συνιημι and συνιω understand,
comprehend

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"In our contemporary context, the 'Lord's will' is frequently understood by Christians to refer to matters of personal guidance, and thus to God's immediate plans for their future. But the divine will in the Pauline letters, particularly in Ephesians, has a different focus, without neglecting the personal dimension. The 'will of God' is closely related to, even identified with, God's gracious saving plan and, as a significant element of this, the formation of a people into the likeness of Christ who will be pure and blameless on the final day. These priorities are presupposed in the apostolic injunction of v.17. The contemporary preoccupation with personal guidance is wrongly directed if it is not understood first of all within this framework of God's gracious saving purposes for his world. Personalised concerns about 'guidance' may, in fact, be evidence of a *folly* which stands in contrast to, and needs to be corrected by, a true understanding of the Lord's will." O'Brian

Verse 18

καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν
ἀσωτία, ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,
μεθυσκομαι get drunk
οἶνος, ου m wine

Cf. Prov 23:31. Drunkenness epitomises the ways of darkness (cf. 1 Thess 5:6-8; Rom 13:12,13) and may also have formed part of pagan religious practices at Ephesus. It leads to sexual excess and debauchery.

ἀσωτία, ας f dissipation, reckless living
πληρωω fill, make full

Note the continuous present tense – 'go on being filled'.

"There is no greater secret of holiness than the infilling of him whose very nature and name are 'holy' ... Excessive alcohol dehumanises, turning a human into a beast, the fulness of the Spirit makes us more human, for he makes us like Christ." Stott

O'Brian argues that syntactically the phrase means 'be filled *by* the Spirit' rather than *with* the Spirit; "the content of the filling is not specifically mentioned." However, in the light of earlier references to 'fulness' in Ephesians 1:23; 3:19 and 4:13 he concludes "that the *content* with which believers have been (are now being) filled is the fulness of (the triune) God or of Christ... To be admonished, 'Be filled by the Spirit', then, means that Paul's readers are urged to let the Spirit change them more and more into the image of God and Christ."

Verse 19

λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ
ᾠμοῖς καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες
καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,

Verses 18-21 form one long sentence with five participals modifying the imperative 'be filled with the Spirit.' "Spirit-filled Christians are people whose lives are characterised by singing, thanksgiving, and mutual submission... These divinely inspired expressions of joy and gratitude are reminiscent of the opening doxology (1:3-14), where Christians are encouraged to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for having blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (v.3). Now, those who are being filled by God's Spirit are able to join the apostle in offering appropriate praise to the triune God for all that he has done in Christ." O'Brian

λαλεω speak, talk
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,
him/her/itself

Here used in a reciprocal sense. Cf. Col 3:16. "The apostle has in view mutual instruction, edification, and exhortation which take place in a range of songs prompted by the Spirit." O'Brian

ψαλμος, ου m psalm, song
ᾠμος, ου m hymn
ᾠδη, ης f song, song of praise
πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to
the spirit

The sense here is 'with all kinds of spiritual song' – it is unwise to try to discern clear distinctions between the different terms used. O'Brian argues that "While the adjective πνευματικαῖς ('prompted by the Spirit'), consistent with Greek usage, agrees grammatically with the last term ᾠδαῖς ('songs'), it refers to all three nouns." He adds, "Although firm distinctions cannot be drawn between the terms, nor can an exact classification of New Testament hymns be made on the basis of the different words, taken together 'psalms', 'hymns' and 'songs' describe 'the full range of singing which the Spirit prompts (Lohse)."

ᾄδω sing
ψαλλω sing, sing a hymn of praise, sing
praises

τῇ καρδίᾳ signifies the whole of one's being.

τῷ κυρίῳ the singing has both a horizontal and vertical dimension.

Verse 20

εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν
ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί,

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks
παντοτε always

'regularly' or 'constantly' rather than 'always' or 'continuously'.

ὑπὲρ πάντων "Believers are to be thankful during times of trial and suffering as we endure them patiently, not because we have lost all feelings of moral sensitivity or because we can no longer distinguish between good and evil. Rather, we humbly and gratefully submit to his sovereignty, knowing that he works *in everything* for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28). This is not to claim that God is the author of evil or that we are praising him for what he abominates. But we recognise that he uses even the suffering which comes upon us to produce character, perseverance, and hope (Rom 5:3-5). And a life filled with thanksgiving will find spontaneous expression in psalms, hymns and songs." O'Brian

ὄνομα, τος η name, title, person, authority, reputation

"Christians filled with the Holy Spirit give thanks to God the Father on the basis of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished for his people by his death and resurrection. The 'unconscious' trinitarian focus of the passage is very powerful indeed." O'Brian

Verse 21

ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ.

"V.21 is a hinge verse: the verb 'submitting' is the fifth and final participle that is dependent on the imperative 'be filled' (v.18), and it concludes the list of responses that should characterise the Spirit-filled-living of those in Christ (vv. 18-21). At the same time, v.21 introduces a new topic of 'submission', which is then developed throughout the household table (5:22-6:9), particularly in 5:22-33, which presents the longest statement in the New Testament on the relationship of husbands and wives." O'Brian

ὑποτασσω put in subjection; pass. be subject, submit to

The verb carries an overtone of authority and of subjection or of submission to it. O'Brian argues that due weight must be given to the use of this term in the New Testament and that it should not be given a meaning here which is outside of its semantic range. He concludes, "The apostle is not speaking of *mutual* submission in the sense of a reciprocal subordination, but submission to those who are in authority over them." Specific instances of such a general requirement for submission are then given in the verses that follow.

ἀλλήλων, οἱ, οὗς reciprocal pronoun one another

"Sometimes a person who claims to be filled with the Spirit becomes aggressive, self-assertive and brash. But the Holy Spirit, and those who are truly filled with him always display the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Stott

φοβος, ου m fear

"In the light of Christ's power and holiness believers will be subordinate to those who are in authority over them." O'Brian

Day 570: Ephesians 5:22-33

Verses 22-33

"The question has been raised as to why Paul has placed such a heavy emphasis on the marriage relationship here in the Ephesians household table. As with the rest of the letter, so here we have few specifics to go on regarding the life-setting of the readers. Perhaps some married members of the churches addressed were not living out the distinctives of their faith in their marriages, but were behaving like their non-Christian neighbours. More specifically it has been suggested that sexual immorality was a real threat (cf. 4:19; 5:3-6, 12, 18), and so Paul wants to stress the special status of Christian marriage in God's purposes in order to combat the danger. On the other hand, ascetic tendencies had to be combatted in Colossians 2:16-23, and this may have been a danger in Western Asia Minor to which Paul's circular letter was sent. But finally, there may have been no specific difficulties in this area that caused him to expand on Christian marriage here. In the light of God's intention to sum up all things in Christ (1:9-10), and this includes the unity of his people within that eschatological vision, the harmony of the Christian family is an essential element of this oneness, and Paul expands on the vital unity of husband and wife within the divine purposes. The 'marriage relationship is transparent to God's purposes on a larger scale ... no other relationship within the family so fully mirrors God's purposes in the universe' (Sampley)." O'Brian

Verse 22

Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ,

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

The best Greek text does not include the verb ὑποτασσω – the theme of submission is carried over from v.21. O'Brian argues that the heart of the idea of submission is 'order' – here a God established order.

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own
ἀνὴρ, ἄνδρος m man, husband

James Hurley points out that Jesus and the Apostles taught that women should be included among the people of God in a way which set the church apart from the Jewish community. Women learned, joined in worship and served in the church. Nevertheless, women are called to submit to their husbands. Hurley continues, "The women were not asked to submit for the sake of the superior wisdom of their husbands, but for the sake of Christ. The matter thus becomes one of theology rather than sociology." It is part of the way in which the wife serves the Lord. O'Brian comments, "Having described the single new humanity which God is creating in his Son, with its focus on the oneness in Christ of all, especially Jew and Gentile (cf. Col 3:11; Gal 3:28), the apostle 'does not now destroy his own thesis by erecting new barriers of sex, age and rank in God's new society in which they have been abolished' (Stott). That the verb 'submit, be subordinate' can be used of Christ's submission to the authority of the Father (1 Cor 15:28) shows that it can denote a functional subordination without implying inferiority, or less honour and glory." O'Brian

Verse 23

ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος.

κεφαλὴ, ης f head

"The origin of this headship is not elaborated here, although in the fuller treatments of 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 and 1 Timothy 2:11-13 it is grounded in the order of creation, especially the narrative of Genesis 2 (cf. 1 Cor 11:8,9)." O'Brian

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church
σωτὴρ, ηρος m saviour
σῶμα, τος n body

Headship in the marriage relationship is to be modelled after Christ's giving of himself for the sake of his people.

Verse 24

ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ, οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.

ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection;
pass. be subject, submit to, obey

Implies willing submission.

οὕτως and οὕτω thus, in this way

ἐν παντί 'in every area of life'

Verse 25

Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,

The husband is not urged to 'exercise rule over your wife' but to 'love her'

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

"Elsewhere in both Old and New Testaments the command to love demands the total response of those addressed (cf. Lev 19:18; Matt 5:43; 19:19). Here, too, husbands are to respond wholeheartedly to the apostolic injunction. Their love, as a result, will involve an act of the will, and is not simply an emotional or physical response." O'Brian

ἑαυτός, ἑαυτή, ἑαυτόν him/her/itself
παραδίδωμι give over, deliver up

"The church's head is the church's bridegroom. He does not crush the church. Rather, he sacrificed himself to serve her, in order that she might become everything he longs for her to be, namely herself in the fulness of her glory. Just so a husband should never use his headship to crush or stifle his wife, or frustrate her from being herself. His love for her will lead him to an exactly opposite path. He will give himself for her, in order that she may develop her full potential under God, and so become more completely herself." Stott

Verse 26

ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,

"The imagery from the Old Testament about God's relationship to Israel stands behind this use of the marriage analogy. In particular, the background to Ephesians 5:26-27 is probably Ezekiel 16:1-14, which describes God as caring for, washing, marrying, and adorning his people with splendour." O'Brian

ἀγιάσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀγιαζω
sanctify, make holy
καθαρίζω cleanse, make clean, purify

This aorist participle is coincident with the preceding aorist subjunctive.

"It is positional or definitive sanctification that is in view here, not progressive sanctification." O'Brian

λουτρον, ου n washing, cleansing
 ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Stott suggests that there may be an allusion to the bridal bath which took place before both Jewish and Greek weddings."

O'Brian comments, "v.26 is more likely to have been influenced by the marital imagery of Ezekiel 16:8-14 and the prenuptial bath in the Jewish marital customs than by baptismal considerations."

ῥημα, ατος n word

It is the word, the message of the gospel, which is the powerful agent in conversion (cf. 1 Peter 1:23,25 also Jn 15:3; 17:7).

"In the light of Christ's complete giving of himself to make the church holy and cleanse her, husbands should be utterly committed to the total well-being, especially the spiritual welfare, of their wives." O'Brian

Verse 27

ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἔνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ ἅγια καὶ ἄμωμος.

παραστήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
 παριστήμι and παριστανῶ present,
 bring into one's presence

"The 'sanctification' [v.26] appears to refer to the present process of making her holy in character and conduct by the power of the indwelling Spirit, while the 'presentation' is eschatological, and will take place when Christ returns to take her to himself." Stott

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.25
 ἔνδοξος, ον glorious, splendid

This word may hint at the bride's beautiful wedding dress, but here it refers to being decked with a glory that comes from God himself: δόξα is the radiance of God. O'Brian says that the expression here "probably reflects the imagery of Ezekiel 16:10-14, where Yahweh clothes his bride in magnificent apparel and jewelry, so that her beauty is 'perfect because of my splendour that I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God' (v.14; NRSV)."

σπίλος, ου m spot, blemish, stain
 ἢ ο
 ῥυτις, ιδος f wrinkle
 τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun
 and adjective such, of such kind,
 similar, like

ἡ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἶμι
 ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated
 ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Verse 28

οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καὶ] οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ,

οὕτως see v.24

ὀφειλω owe, ought, must

σωμα, τος n see v.23

As Christ loved his 'body', the church.

Verse 29

οὐδεὶς γὰρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,

The picture reflects Gen 2:24: husband and wife as one flesh.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
 ποτέ enclitic particle once, at any time
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body
 μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to
 ἐκτρεφω feed; raise (children)

Cf. 6:4 also 1 Thess 2:7.

θαλπω cherish, take care of

Verse 30

ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, ος n
 member, bodily part

The majority of MSS add ἐκ τῆς σαρκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ. The shorter reading is adequately supported by p⁴⁶ κ* A B *et al.* The longer reading appears to be a scribal expansion from Gen 2:24.

Verse 31

ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

ἀντι prep with gen for, because of

Paul cites Gen 2:24 in order to provide warrant for the assertion that we are members of his body (v.30). Paul refers 'the two are one flesh' to our union with Christ.

καταλείπει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s
 καταλειπω leave, leave behind
 προσκολληθήσεται Verb, fut pass dep
 indic, 3 s προσκολλομαι be united in
 marriage

ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἶμι

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two
 είς, μια, έν gen ένος, μιας, ένος one

Verse 32

τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

I.e. the union of Christ with his people (so the second half of the verse). However, O'Brian thinks that the 'mystery' refers to the relationship between Christ and the church *as a typology of marriage*. "A Christian marriage, as envisaged in this paragraph, is 'to reveal the mystery of Christ loving his responsive church. Such a marriage bears living witness to the meaning of "two becoming one". It reproduces in miniature the beauty shared between the Bridegroom and the Bride. And, through it all, the mystery of the gospel is unveiled. Further, within the wider context of Ephesians as a whole the union between Christian husband and wife which is part of the unity between Christ and the church is thus a pledge of God's purposes of unity for the cosmos."

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

Verse 33

πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἢ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

πλην nevertheless, however, moreover

Introduces the concluding summary.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every; καθ ἓνα ἕκαστος each and every one

The emphasis is now upon the demand for *each* husband and *each* wife to live in accordance with this pattern.

φοβῆται Verb, pres midd/pass dep subj, 3 s
 φοβεομαι fear, reverence