

Submission: A Gift And An Opportunity!

Earlier today, we strolled through the airport in Boston, stepped onto an airplane bound for Amsterdam, found a comfortable seat, and traveled across the Atlantic to our first stop on our way to Germany. Sounds quite leisurely and romantic doesn't it? In actuality, any airline travel demands careful planning and attention to detail. Krista and I needed to provide identification, present our tickets, have our luggage weighed, follow the directions to our gate, sit in assigned seats, wear fastened seat belts, and so on. For our safety and to avoid possible chaos, the airport authorities established certain rules and regulations.

In Ephesians 5 and 6, Paul introduces God's perspective on authority. He establishes the rules; what is right and what is wrong. As the Creator and creation's sovereign King, He has the authority to instruct us on how to interact with one another in the public sector, in our families, and in our church. He does this for our good, to establish order, and for His glory.

Before launching into the aforementioned examples of everyday authority structures (the church, husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants), Paul shares a very important series of statements that distinguish the life of a believer from the world in which they live. Among these distinguishing marks believers are to "live as children of light" (5:8), live wisely (5:15), and make "the most of every opportunity" (5:16). The advice culminates in a call to live a Spirit-filled life that is demonstrated in corporate worship and mutual submission to one another (5:18-21).

Did you catch that? Paul connects believers' worship and relationship to one another to their submission to God, the Holy Spirit! To put it another way, as believers, you are not surrendered or filled with the Holy Spirit if you are not mutually submitting to other believers. Mutual submission demonstrates a reverence for Christ (5:21) and stands in stark contrast to a world that clamors for power and is surprised by humility. We are living in evil days which demand wisdom and virtue. Consequently, relationships are a gift, because they provide an outlet for wisdom and virtue, and allow the beauty and humility of Jesus to be seen.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (ESV) - "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."