

A Clean Church

Introduction. Paul uses the last half of Ephesians to encourage and admonish Christians in righteous living. The section of Ephesians 5:22-31 speaks to husbands and wives. To illustrate the principle, he compares the husband and wife relationship to that of Christ and the church in vv. 25-27.

I. God Desires It

- A. The saved are in the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:23-24).
- B. The saved are pure (1 Peter 1:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
 - 1. God loved us enough to give His dear Son (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
 - 2. Love wants only the best for the one it loves, and it cannot bear for a loved one to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful.
- C. The saved must remain pure (Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 1:7).
 - 1. The person who wants to go to Heaven and see the Lord will purify himself (1 John 3:1-3).
 - 2. When a young man says he loves a young woman, but wants her to compromise her sexual purity before they are married, his love is the world's lust, not God's love; and it is selfish, not serving. That sort of love defiles rather than purifies.

II. Sin Spots It

- A. We restore the erring (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-17).
 - 1. "Restore" is used as a surgical term of setting a bone or joint; or in other contexts of the strengthening or sustaining of a worn down people, of the mixing of medicine, of a sailor outfitting his boat, of fishermen mending nets, or of politicians appeasing factions and restoring unity.
 - 2. Divine love does not simply condemn wrong in those loved but seeks to cleanse them from it.
 - 3. Christ's great love for His church does not allow Him to be content with any sin, any moral or spiritual impurity in it (Isaiah 1:16-18; Micah 7:19).
- B. Some sin willfully (Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 2:21-22).
 - 1. Judas (Mark 14:10-11).
 - 2. Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).
- C. We must withdraw from them (2 Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17).

III. God Cleanses It

- A. The church is pure again (1 Corinthians 5:7; Psalm 139:23-24).
- B. It has a good reputation (Acts 2:46-47; 5:11, 14).
- C. God is glorified (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Timothy 3:15).

Conclusion. On the Style Channel's Clean House, experts sweep into a cluttered home with the purpose of leaving it more comfortable, attractive, and livable. The experts face the challenges of clothes strewn across the floor, bulging cabinets, closets filled from top to bottom, cluttered countertops, and overflowing kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, and living rooms — not a clean room in the house!

The experts' first step is to take an inventory of all the stuff. Then, decisions are made about what to sell at a yard sale and what to keep. The homeowners try to hold on to favorite clothes from years gone by, childhood keepsakes, and space-taking trivia, but then they yield. They have a yard sale, and the money they earn helps with the makeover. Then the family leaves, and the work begins.

Rooms are cleaned out, redone for more efficiency and attractiveness, and repainted. Curtains are hung, cabinets set in, and walls decorated. When the family returns, nervous anticipation quickly gives way to excitement and laughter. "Thank you, thank you," the family says amid smiles and tears.

In the spiritual realm, there comes a time for each of us to take inventory of what's in our hearts, get rid of some things, and do some repairing and remodeling. Like the families on Clean House, we have an expert in remodeling and renovation — Jesus Christ — who can make our makeover an astounding success.

Everyone who loves the church wants it to be as good as possible. In order for this to be a reality, the people who comprise it have to recognize sin and respond to it appropriately.