

NOTES



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I long to walk the godly path in Christ Jesus and be filled with the Spirit, moment by moment. Lord, I want to do this for the right reasons so that my life may praise and glorify You, for You alone are worthy. I pray that my life may be one of self-sacrifice and humble praise, for the benefit of my brothers and sisters in Christ and to the praise and glory of Your holy name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

When you hear the word “marriage,” what comes to mind for you?



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WORD

Ephesians 5:21-33 (ESV)

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stands out to you about Paul's view of marriage from Ephesians 5:21-33?
2. What does it look like to submit to one another in love?
3. What does the idea of missional marriage mean to you, and how is it different from what the world presents?
4. How can your marriage or singlehood serve others missionally?

REFLECTION

This passage is considered one of the most important teachings on marriage in the Bible, addressing themes of mutual submission, love, and sacrifice. It also discusses several aspects of marriage including the roles of wives and husbands. It emphasizes that wives should submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, while husbands are called to love their wives sacrificially, mirroring Christ's love for the church. This hierarchical relationship is not meant to be oppressive but rather a reflection of Christ's relationship with the church. The text uses the analogy of Christ as the head and the church as the body to illustrate this union. The passage also touches on the concept of two becoming one flesh in marriage, which is described as a "great mystery" referring to the union between Christ and the church.

1. Missional marriages start with mutual submission, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."(V21) We naturally resist submission. Our flesh wants control, comfort, or to be right. This model of mutual submission is the Kingdom ethic of servant leadership, pointing the world to a different way of living in relationships.
2. Missional marriages are giving and responding, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord..." "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."(V22-24; 25-27) Paul gives distinct roles, but they are not for personal gain—they are meant to reflect the self-giving love of Christ and the responsive love of the Church. A missional marriage lived this way becomes a living parable of the gospel. The world sees in a husband's sacrificial love and a wife's honouring response a glimpse of Jesus' love for His people.
3. Missional Marriages reflect sacrificial Love (v.25-30) "...to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word..." A husband's leadership is not about power but purifying, protecting, and nurturing his wife, just as Christ does the Church. Marriage becomes missional when spouses pursue each other's spiritual flourishing—their love leads each other closer to Jesus and shows others what that transformation looks like.

Closing Prayer

Thank You for the gift of relationships and for calling us to reflect Your love. Whether we are single or married, help us to live with purpose to love like Christ and honour one another, so that those around us can see and experience Your great love. May our homes, our lives, and our relationships point others to Jesus and to the hope of the Gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.

KINGDOM CHALLENGE

Married couples: Schedule a time this week to pray together.

Singles: Spend some time with a married couple and ask them how they keep Christ central in their relationship.