

Living in a Healthy Marriage
Study 12 – Ephesians – Living In Christ and the World
Ephesians 5:21-33

Message Mate

- A healthy godly marriage is based in Christ, for Christ's glory and is exemplified by Christ's love for us, the church. As we read Ephesians 5:21-33 we need to see the big picture of God's intention for marriage as well as the details of what God is asking of husbands and wives.
- In the earliest manuscripts of Ephesians 5, verses 18 to 22 were all one sentence based on the call to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. One element of being continually filled with the Spirit is submitting (voluntarily yielding in love) to one another. This mutual submission is to the Christ-centred and Spirit-led **words** and actions of a person and the church. From mutual submission (v21) flows wives submitting to their husbands (v22), by the continual filling of the Holy Spirit (v18) and her voluntary yielding in love out of reverence for Christ (v22) and her respect for her husband (v33). The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church, and like Christ, at times husbands will lead with directions and at times like a servant (like Jesus who washed his disciples' feet), always for the well-being of his wife and their marriage.
- Husbands are to love their wives sacrificially as Christ loved the church. God uses marriage to reveal his salvation plan for humanity and the mystery in verse 32 refers to a long-range prophetic revelation based on Genesis 2:24 that Jesus, the Son of God, would leave his Father's home in heaven and come to earth. He would find his bride, those who would put their faith in Him and become one with them. So too, a husband leaves his father's house to be united with his wife and the two shall become one. Jesus lived sacrificially for the church so she would flourish. So too a husband is to live sacrificially for his wife so that she will flourish. Jesus sent his Spirit and gave his Word the Scriptures to sanctify the church. So too a husband is to foster a relationship where the Holy Spirit and the Word of God fills the marriage causing it to become all that God desires it to be. Jesus is head of the church giving authority and servant leadership so that it is protected and blessed. So too the husband is to be head of his wife, giving authority and servant leadership so that his wife and their marriage is protected and blessed. And because the church sees how Christ loves the church and husbands are to love their wives the same way, then as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit, voluntarily yielding in love, to their husbands in everything.
- This is the model of marriage that God intended. It is a model that reveals the redemptive love of Jesus that causes the oneness of Christ and the church to flourish and grow. It is to be a witness to the world of the love of God and the good news of Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Let us pray for marriages, asking God to lead and empower husbands and wives by the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God, to discover how they can flourish together physically, emotionally and spiritually so that marriage helps each person become a better person and our world a better place.

Some Questions to Consider

1. In your group, consider the different versions of the Bible and look at whether your Bible starts the marriage passage at verse 21 or 22. Discuss why starting at v21 is significant for marriages given this is more grammatically and biblically correct (since both verses 21 and 22 flow from being continually filled with the Spirit).
2. The word “submit” in the context of Ephesians 5 means “to voluntarily yield in love”. How does this interpretation, as compared to a more superior:inferior interpretation change the way that we understand submitting to one another and wives submitting to their husbands?
3. Verse 23 says that the “husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church”. Discuss how Jesus modelled leadership that gave directions and served, such as washing his disciples feet. How might this apply to a marriage becoming more like God desires it to be?
4. Jesus cleansed the church by spiritual cleaning through the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, the good news of Jesus Christ. What might it look like to foster a relationship where the Holy Spirit and the Word of God fills the marriage causing it to become all that God desires it to be?
5. Read Genesis 2:24 and discuss how you can see it as a long-range prophecy about Jesus and the church. What do you learn from Jesus’s love for the church that applies to a godly healthy marriage.
6. God’s intention for marriage is that it reveals the redemptive love of Jesus that causes oneness of Christ and the church. Discuss how marriage can be witness to the world of the love of God and the good news of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Pray –

Pray with thanks for Jesus’s love for the church as a model of godly marriage between a husband and wife.

Pray for Christ to be glorified in marriages between godly men and women, so that God’s intention for marriage will be fulfilled and be a witness to the world.

Overview of verses 21-33

Jesus Christ:Church	Husband:Wife
	Leave his home
	Live sacrificially
	Spirit and Word to sanctify
	Head – authority, servant leadership
Church:Jesus Christ	Wife:Husband
	Submit