

Digging Deeper June 2, 2024  
Marriage – Love and Respect  
Ephesians 5:22 – 33  
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### **Introduction: Marriage – Whose idea was this anyway?**

We must answer this question to be able to fully understand Paul's injunction to the church at Ephesus and ultimately to Christians throughout history. The idea of marriage is God's from the beginning of time until the ultimate end of time. In Genesis 2:24 we read "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Both man and woman were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) with life breathed into them by God himself. God pronounced this creation of man and woman, as well as all of creation, very good! (Genesis 1:31)

That's the beginning! And the end is just as grand in God's plan. (Read Revelation 19:6-9) Wedding feasts are grand events! Can you image one that is put on by God himself for those who have been invited to attend? All eyes are on the couple – the groom who is beaming as he holds the hand of his new bride and the bride who is beautiful in her gown with eyes brimming with joy as she is about to begin the most intimate relationship she will ever have. We are told the groom is none other than the Lamb of God and the bride is his church.

It should come as no surprise that over and over in the scriptures the relationship between man and woman is used as a reminder to us of relationships – relationships not only between men and women but also between men and women and God.

One of the most striking encounters of Jesus is recorded in John 4. A Samaritan woman is met outside of the town of Sychar. It is of note that one of the reasons this woman began to believe is Jesus knew her relationship history (the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." John 4:39) Because of her testimony many from her town (all of them Samaritans who were enemies of the Jews) believed. They not only believed they asked Jesus to stay with them and he did for two more days.

Why do we note this? With Jesus it's all about relationships. And that is how Paul is going to approach the relationship between a husband and his wife. When the relationship is more important than anything else many differences need to be moved to the side so the relationship can not only survive but thrive! Let's jump into Paul's instructions to men and women.

### **Day One: The Character of a Believing Spouse Ephesians 5:22 - 24**

Read our passage for the week – Ephesians 5:22 – 33.

As you read the first two verses you immediately see a conflict with modern day culture. God's culture comes from a dramatically different place. In fact, to fully understand you need to go all the way back to Genesis. (Remember I told you the idea of marriage started all the way back in Genesis.) Pull out your Bible and turn to Genesis 3:16. As you can imagine this verse is not popular with modern day women, but we cannot overlook what God says. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

Submission is a difficult behavior. Yet God calls on believing wives to be submissive to their husbands. Guys don't overlook what Paul just said to men and women. "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Eph 5:21) Submission is an act of reverence to God in both key verses (21 and 23)

### **Day Two: It's Really Simple! (Oh Really?) Ephesians 5:25**

Read our passage for the week – Ephesians 5:22 – 33.

"A marriage is like a dance. No matter how careful you are, periodically you're going to step on your partner's feet." *Steve Stephens in 20 (Surprisingly Simple) Rules and Tools for a Great Marriage*

How do you like Paul's start? "Husbands, love you wife..." Sometimes as much as you want to do it right you "step on your partner's feet." Truth of the matter – it hurts her feet just as much when it's an accident! Dancing lessons are in order and that's what Paul is giving us.

How do you love your wife guys? Words? Actions? Paul gives us some ideas. Be willing to sacrifice for her! Ladies you get to read along now because Paul is going to really speak to husbands. (Use these ideas for your husband as your prayer calendar for the rest of the week.)

Sacrifice is not an easy thing to do. (That's why they call it *sacrifice*. Are you willing to give up your choices or options for her? When her favorite restaurant is Olive Garden and yours is Longhorn Steak House, where do you go? (Even if it's not Mother's Day!)

How about when you want to watch a football game and she has her heart on a Hallmark romance? Do you go to another room or maybe retire to your mancave? What would be her reaction be if you handed her the remote as you said, "I love you." And you really meant it.

Maybe the next time you step on her toes her reaction may shock you as she smiles at you and says, "It's ok. I love you anyway." Just maybe you could go the second step and buy her some steel-toed high heels knowing she will need them because she's only dancing with you.

Practice telling your spouse "I love you." And genuinely mean it!

### **Day Three: How Willing Are You to Take Responsibility for your Wife's Sanctification? (5:24)**

Read our passage for the week – Ephesians 5:22 – 33.

[There is no greater recommendation to ... the power of the Christian faith than a Christian husband and wife, a Christian marriage, and a Christian home. *Life in the Spirit in Marriage Home and Work*, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Are you taking responsibility for spiritual leadership in your home? Listen to Paul, "sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," Sanctification – a vital spiritual component in anyone's life. It looks like God, through Paul, is putting a great responsibility for our wife's sanctification on her husband. Two key words here – *cleansed* and *the word*.

There is awesome power in God's word. In our homes the Word needs to have a place of importance. Not a book that has a beautiful cover and sits in a prominent place but a book that is well thumbed, well read and well followed. Do you see what Paul says the word has the

power to do? Cleanse. And further Paul tells us husbands are to lead in this just as Christ lead in his relationship to the church. Pretty high calling guys.

God's Word has the power to make your home an example of God's community to your neighbors. How? It all happens when the Word has a prominent influence in the home. It first works on the husband and as he follows its precepts and instructions the influence cleanses the wife. It's really on us guys. Don't be afraid of it, embrace it. Let God's Word work in you and through you. It can change your home.

Pray today that God will make his Word powerful in your life and in the life of your family.

#### **Day Four: Love Makes the World Go Right Ephesians 5:28**

Read our passage for the week – Ephesians 5:22 – 33.

Brides are beautiful. No argument from any groom I ever met. Dressed in splendor, holy and blameless within and without, she is presented to the world but more importantly to her husband. How is to respond? To love her just as he loves his own body. We go all the way back to Genesis once again. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Genesis 2:24. Christ reaffirms this in Matthew <sup>4</sup>"Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Matthew 19:4–6

Loving your wife just as you love yourself should not be hard to do. After all, each is an extension of the other. We rightly recognize that when someone harms themselves there is something seriously wrong. Emotional or mental imbalance is generally suspected. Why do we not have the same response to a couple in a marriage? If there is abuse of either spouse, they are in reality harming themselves. Too often when we read Christ's word in Matthew 19:4-6 we are thinking of a third person separating a couple. In actuality the third person is not needed. A man can do this all by himself. That is a major reason God has made a couple one flesh, that they might not harm themselves or each other.

That is why Paul would emphasize this. "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church." (Ephesians 5:29) Vance Havner said, "The cause of broken marriages is selfishness in one form or another." Also, note these words, "Marriages may be made in heaven, but man is responsible for the maintenance work." Unfortunately, we don't know who said them or to whom credit should be given, but whoever said it knew what they were talking about. Marriage is not a part-time endeavor. It takes all we have to give to make marriage what God intended it to be, and we wanted it to be as we stood at the altar waiting for the words, "You may kiss your bride" It's the start of being one. Our task is to keep it one.

As you pray today thank God for your spouse (or your prospective spouse) asking Him to bless them with all spiritual blessings.

#### **Day Five: The Mystery Keeps Being Revealed Ephesians 5:32**

Read our passage for the week – Ephesians 5:22 – 33.

It seems like Paul loves to reveal mysteries. In some ways he is the Agatha Christie of spiritual mysteries. He reveals to us seven *mysteries* in Ephesians alone. (See 1:9, 3:3, 3:4, 3:6, 3:9, 5:32, and 6:19) A few other mysteries Paul reveals are the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16); the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:7); the mystery of faith (1 Timothy 3:9); mystery of Christ (Colossians 2:2, 4:1); the mystery of Christ in you (Colossians 1:27).

Here's a profound mystery revealed to us. "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:32) Christ loves his church. It's his bride. A marriage is God's example to the world of his relationship to the church and by extension to the world. If you think marriage is a matter of convenience or merely your happiness, you miss the whole part. Christ wants you to enjoy your marriage. He wants your marriage to be fulfilling in every way. He wants **your** marriage to be a message to the world. And this is that message, Christ loves his church!

Big task in front of us, being Christ's ambassador to the world through our marriages. Marriages within the church are the greatest testimony of the power of God to heal, mold, fulfill, encourage, excite, complete and so much more. Perhaps we should make a checklist to see how well we are doing. Are you willing to be that ambassador?

Today why not make that checklist of what the power of God can do in your marriage and then put him to the test. He won't fail you!

### **A Few Additional Thoughts From Profound Minds for Your Thinking**

Those that would enjoy the dignities and privileges of Christ's family must submit to the discipline of it. Matthew Henry

Marriage is a covenant consecrated by God. John Calvin

All the troubles men find in marriage they ought to impute to sin. John Calvin

There is no estate to which Satan is more opposed as to marriage. Martin Luther

Married life is a marathon.... It is not enough to make a great start toward long-term marriage. You will need the determination to keep plugging.... Only then will you make it to the end. James C. Dobson

The marriage relation lies at the very root of the social system of nations. J. C. Ryle

Marriage is more than finding the right person; it is being the right person. Anonymous

Love is the master key to a happy home. Anonymous