

**Mirror, Mirror**  
Ephesians 5:21  
Small Group Discussion Guide

**Opening Question** (get everyone involved in discussion):

- Name one thing in the Bible—a verse or concept—that rubs you the wrong way, and that could be a turnoff from reading Scripture.
- In this week’s sermon, Pastor Josh suggested that we would do well to sit with the tension caused by these passages, rather than discarding them right away, believing that God, in time, will reveal something rich for us through them. How easy or difficult is this concept for you to embrace, with the passages mentioned above?

**Read** Ephesians 5:18-21 and then discuss the following.

- As we learned on Sunday, the primary charge from Paul in these verses is to “be filled with the Spirit,” in an ongoing way.
  - What difference does it make in our interpretation of this passage to know that the verbs in vv. 19-21, in the original language, are participles (*-ing* verbs)? Leaders: the participial verbs are describing what our lives will look like when we allow the Holy Spirit to continually fill us. This insight makes a world of difference, especially to our interpretation of vv. 21ff.
- Do your best to ignore the heading between vv. 20 and 21, which says, “Instructions for Christian Households.” This heading is artificial—it is not part of Paul’s letter, but was added by modern publishers, and it gets in the way of interpreting the principles at hand. Pay close attention to the fact that v. 21 is a continuation of Paul’s thought from the preceding verses. The verb “submit” is another participle, describing what our lives will look like when we are filled with the Spirit. The original Greek literally reads, “Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ, ...”
- How do you feel the suggestion to ignore this heading? Will this suggestion make any difference in the way you read the Bible?
- V. 21 is our focal verse for this week. In your own words, what does it mean to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ?” How would you define the word “submit?”
  - What is your initial reaction to the idea that you are instructed to submit to other people?
  - How does “reverence for Christ” affect your willingness or ability to submit?
- Pastor Josh summarized this concept by saying, “Our relationships are to mirror the gospel.” In what way does mutual submission mirror the gospel?
  - How does the gospel give us motivation to submit to other people?
- Can you think of examples of real life scenarios, either in the past, present, or future, where you have to submit to someone else? Especially, are there areas where you are being challenged to do so presently?
- How can you cultivate reverence for Christ, in such a way that you will be more able to embody this principle of mutual submission?

**PRAYER**

- Share with one another any needs for which you want to pray.
- As you pray, spend some time, as a group, praising Jesus for the gospel.
- Pray for one another to find the means, through reverence for Christ, to practice submission.