

Mirror, Mirror, part 2
Ephesians 5:22-33
Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- If you are married, how long have you been married? How is your view of marriage different now from when you first got married?
- If you are single, how do you feel about discussing this week's sermon and discussion topic? "Not for me?", or, "I like it because I hope to get married in the future?" Other?
- **Open** your Bibles to Ephesians 5. Before you read today's passage on mutual submission in Christian marriage, be reminded of two things:
 - First, the command hanging over this whole section is in v. 18, "Be filled with the Spirit!"
 - Secondly, the specific application of this heading which governs our passage today is in v. 21, "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."
 - **Discuss:** why is it so important to keep these facts in mind as we launch into today's passage?

Read Ephesians 5:22-33 and then discuss the following.

- Recall that v. 22, in the Greek language, literally says, "Wives, to your own husbands, as to the Lord."
 - Why does it matter that Paul does not repeat the verb, "submit," in this sentence?
 - Why is it significant that Paul limits this principle to "your *own* husbands?"
 - What is the implication of the phrase, "as to the Lord?"
- Why do you think it was necessary for Paul to reiterate that wives are to submit to their husbands, in a 1st-Century, patriarchal culture?
- In v. 23, what is the connection between Christ as the "head" and husbands as the "head?" Or, what is the parallel?
 - Pastor Josh quoted author Bryan Chapell in defining the concept this way: headship "involves taking responsibility—even to the point of personal sacrifice—for the well-being of another." How does this definition bring clarity to the concept?
- In v. 33, when Paul summarizes these instructions, he address wives with the verb "respect" instead of "submit." What light does this wording shed on the principle at hand?
- On Sunday, Pastor Josh re-stated Paul's instructions for wives as, "**willingly supporting their husband's leadership as they would that of Jesus.**"
 - How do you feel about this concept?
 - Do you think it is an accurate statement of the biblical principle? Why or why not?
 - What do you think this support looks like practically? Have you seen it play out well in your experience?
- In vv. 25-33a, Paul addresses husbands. Why do you think he spends more time speaking to men about this concept of mutual submission than to women?
- Remember, Paul is addressing what it looks like for married couples to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." What specific application does Paul give husbands in these verses?
 - In this week's sermon, Pastor Josh summarized this application as, "**Loving your bride the way that Jesus loved his.**"
 - Who is the "bride" of Christ? In what way did Jesus love his bride?
 - What implications does this description have for Christian husbands?

- What are some ways that a husband can take up Jesus' model for the sake of his wife becoming all that God intends? What does this look like in practice? If any of you feel that you and your spouse have found a good, workable way to do this in your marriage, please share with the group.
- In v. 32, Paul declares that marriage is intended to be a picture of the relationship between Jesus and his church.
 - What does marriage teach us about Jesus' love for us?
 - What does Jesus' love for us teach us about marriage?
 - What does it mean, that "**Marriage is a mirror of the gospel?**"
 - How does the gospel enable us to lay down our personal agendas in marriage?
- If you are single, how do you feel about this topic? Can you see any application of these principles to your life, now or in the future?
- Note: At the end of this discussion, there is an optional section on what "headship" does and does not mean for men, as well as what "submission" does and does not mean for women. Only discuss this section if your group has the extra time and interest in doing so.

PRAYER

- Share with one another any needs for which you want to pray.
- Pray in response to what God has revealed to you through his word and your discussion.

For further discussion

These statements have been influenced by two books in particular: Marriage Made in Eden, by Alice Mathews and Gay Hubbard, and Each for the Other, by Bryan Chapell.

What headship does not mean for husbands:

1. Headship is not a right to privilege or dominance.
2. Headship is not the right to be passive in the tasks of caring for the home or the children.
3. Headship does not mean that you are the owner of your wife.
4. Headship is not an indicator of male superiority or female inferiority.
5. Headship is not the right to independently make every major decision.
6. Headship is not a proscribed set of tasks.

What submission does not mean for wives:

1. Submission does not mean that women are prohibited from taking initiative.
2. Submission is not permission or a requirement to be passive in using your abilities or contributing to decision-making.
3. Submission is not a sign of inequality or inferiority.
4. Submission is not a requirement to submit to all men at all times.
5. Submission is not a proscription of household roles.