

EPHESIANS

20. THE LAYING DOWN OF A LIFE EPHESIANS 5:22-33

Today in Ephesians we walk through some verses that people often read out of context. When we do not read the Scriptures in context, it leads to many misunderstandings of the text. Looking more closely, we can find great encouragement and wisdom in Paul's words. Today we will talk about husbands, wives, and the word submission.

Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

- What does the word “submission” bring to mind?
- How is the idea of submission central to the heart of the Gospel?
- Are there people or things you submit to in your life?
- Are there people in your life who you expect to submit to you?

The Purpose of Marriage - What makes Biblical marriage different is the purpose of it. What a person thinks marriage is *for* will determine how they understand the words “head” and “submit.” The Bible says we are to marry for love and commitment (*Eph 5:31 a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh*). **Leave** means lifelong commitment; **hold fast** refers to passion.

- What would you define as the purpose of a marriage?
- What are the arguments people often make against marriage (in lieu of either cohabitating or being sexually active)?
- How can we encourage a Biblical understanding of both singleness and marriage?

Tim Keller says that in marriage, we are to love and serve our spouse with a vision for their future glory. We do not only look at the person as they are; we look at the person as they are *going* to be.

- How do we see who someone is “going to be”?

Submit to Each Other's Needs. Submit is a military word that means you give up your individual rights for the common good. When Paul says “submit,” he is not saying the wife just serves her husband; he starts by saying they both are to serve the needs of the other before their own. Our service to others honors Jesus, who demonstrated the ultimate act of service.

DISCUSSION NOTES

Read Philippians 2:5-11.

- What is most striking about Jesus in this text?
- How does the Gospel motivate us to humble ourselves?
- How could you be a more willing servant to those around you?

Submit to Each Other's Differences. Husbands, love. Wives, respect. Husbands, give. Wives, submit. How did Christ love the Church? He died on the cross, gave Himself—naked and bleeding—to suffer for her. He put her needs above His own by sacrificing everything for her. In our culture we often lose sight of how we are called to love and serve one another! Men and women are different, and we should honor, respect, and love those differences because they are meant to complement one another and make us stronger.

- How do men and women's differences lead to strength?
- If you are married, what about you and your spouse makes your marriage unique?
- How have you seen other marriages display love, humility, partnership, and grace?
- Is there a way, right now, that you could work alongside the opposite sex for greater harmony, service, and strength?

We submit to each other's glory. Paul is really talking about Jesus, and therefore pointing to the model for us all. Why did Jesus get crucified? Why did He die? Why did He rise? Paul gives the answer: to present us as radiant, unblemished, spotless, and beautiful. Jesus sees us as we are and He sees us as we can/will be—as we were designed to be. If believers form a marriage on the basis of God's glory and what He wants to do in us, it changes us.

- How can seeing your spouse (and others) in light of how God sees them change your perspective?
- If you are married, how has God used your spouse to bring about transformation in your own life?

The reality of the meaning of marriage even helps those who are single, because it reminds us to look toward Jesus, the true groom who deserves our full submission. We submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, meaning we must see that the Spirit is generating an ability in us to serve in our relationships.

- How can you begin to serve your spouse, friends, and community this week?
- How are you being called to more deeply surrender to Jesus?