

Joyful Life Bible Studies

MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 5:21-33

Lesson 9

The overall theme of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is unity. Jesus Christ came into the world with the power to heal and unify our personal lives. Paul has just given us instruction on how to "walk" in Christ as *individuals*. Now, we will begin to learn how to function as a social unit - *the family*. Our generation is watching the disintegration of marriage and family as we know it. Unfortunately, divorce is as much a problem in the Christian community as it is in the world. However, . . . God has the divine standard that makes marriage what HE meant it to be!!

FIRST DAY

As you begin your study of God's plan for marriage, you must realize that married or single, you are betrothed to Christ. It is vital to keep this in mind as you study.

*"For thy Maker is thy Husband. The Lord of Hosts is His name."
Isaiah 54:5*

fear-literally "reverence". It includes trembling in the presence of the holy God and awareness of coming judgment.

It is important to know some historical background before you begin this study. During this time in history, Greek and Roman influences had distorted God's order in the home. The Roman law of Patria Potestas (father's power) put women under the total control of their fathers, then their husbands. A man had the authority to command death for anyone in his household, including his wife. The mutual love and respect that Paul spoke of was revolutionary to these Asian believers!

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

1. In verse 21, Paul describes the general attitude that Christians should have toward one another. Write down this attitude and its definition. (Use a dictionary or concordance).
2. What should be the motivation for this attitude?
3. How does the fear of God relate to submission?

4. In addition to our husbands, who are we called to submit to?

Hebrews 13:7

James 4:7

I Peter 2:13-14

I Peter 5:5

5. In the chart below, write down the attitudes that Paul taught husbands and wives to have toward one another.

<u>WIVES</u>	<u>HUSBANDS</u>
vs. 21-	vs. 21-
vs. 22-	vs. 25-27-
vs. 23-	vs. 28-29-
vs. 24-	vs. 33-
vs. 33-	

6. The mutual submission of husbands and wives is also spoken of in the following verses. Read them and write down the principles you learn.

I Corinthians 7:3-4

I Peter 3:1-9

SECOND DAY:

Although we are called to submit one to another, the submission of the wife to her husband's authority is necessary for a successful family unit. Today, we will begin to look at the responsibilities of wives in the marriage relationship.

The word "submit" does not appear in vs. 22 in the earliest Gk. texts. Literally, verses 21-22 read "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God: wives unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."

The words submit (v.22) and subject (v.24) are the Greek word "hupotasso" which means to rank beneath or under; to be obedient.

Read Ephesians 5:22-24

Total subjection was the social condition of Paul's married female readers. Here, he respectfully addresses them as equal members of Christ's body.

1. As wives, who are we to submit to? (vs. 22)
2. How do we submit? (vs. 22)
3. Why do we submit? (vs. 23)
4. How much do we submit? (vs. 24)

Slowly and carefully read Ephesians 5:22

5. Look up the following verses. What do they say about a wife's attitude toward her husband.
 - a. Genesis 3:16
 - b. I Peter 3:1-6
 - c. Titus 2:3-5
 - d. Colossians 3:18
6. What does it mean to submit "*as unto the Lord*"?
 - a. How can this change your outlook toward submission?

THIRD DAY:

Paul makes an analogy between the husband and wife and Christ and the church. Wives should understand that the husband's headship in the marriage should reflect Christ's role as Head with His body - the church.

To help you understand the matter of headship, try to visualize a physical body and its head. The head gives the orders. The body responds. When we see a body responding to the mind, the body is honored as well its head. If the body doesn't respond, it is uncoordinated and both are dishonored. Wives, you are the body and your husband is the head.

Read Ephesians 5:23-24

1. Now, read the following scriptures. They will strengthen your understanding of the headship of Christ over the church.
 - a. Ephesians 1:22-23
 - b. Colossians 1:18
 - c. Ephesians 4:15-16
2. How does the model of the church's submission to Christ apply to the wife's submission to her husband?
 - a. In what ways is the church (body of Christ) to be obedient to Jesus Christ as its head?
 - b. In what ways is the wife to be obedient to her husband. Give examples.
4. Note that Paul says wives are to submit to their husbands "in everything." The phrase "in everything" means that the wife must not selfishly hold back any part of herself.

Personal: Do you feel that you are submitting to your husband "in everything"? In what ways are you holding back?

5. Since we are all equal in God's eyes (Galatians 3:28), why do you think God has set up these standards of authority and submission?

FOURTH DAY:

This next section is directed to the husbands. Perhaps more verses are addressed to husbands because society gave them so much opportunity to abuse their responsibilities as leaders.

Read Ephesians 5:25-29

1. What responsibilities does a husband have to his wife? List as many as you can find in these verses.

2. What type of love is Paul telling husbands to have for their wives in verse 25? (See side notes and use a concordance).

3. Paul compares the husband's love for his wife with Christ's love for the Church.
 - a. Explain how Christ loved the church. (vs. 25).

 - b. What was the purpose of Christ's sacrifice for us? (vs. 26-27).

 - c. Look up the following verses. What has Christ done for you?

John 15:3

John 17:17

Titus 3:5-7

4. Write down some practical ways that the husband can fulfill his responsibilities mentioned in verses 25-26.

There are three words for love in the Greek language:
agape'-
sacrificial love
philéo-
friendship love
éros-
physical love

Love-

sanctify-to separate from the world and consecrate unto God. To sanctify anything is to declare that it belongs to God.

Sacrifice-

Sanctify-

Cleanse through the Word-

5. If you are single or married to an unbelieving husband, who can fulfill these responsibilities in your life?

6. What will be the outcome of the husband obeying these commands ? (verse 27).

*nourish-
ektrepho (Grk.)
means "to feed".
Primarily it is
used in refer-
ence to nur-
turing or
bringing up
children. It
means "to
mature."*

Personal: If your husband is not living up to Paul's commands, are you free to stop submitting? What effects can submissiveness have on him? (See I Peter 3:1-4).

7. Read Ephesians 5:28-29. How do we show that our bodies are important to us? How does that relate to a husband loving his wife?

*cherish-
literally means
"to soften or
warm with body
heat"-to provide
security.*

FIFTH DAY:

Today, we will study how man and woman are one with Him and with each other.

Read Ephesians 5:30-31.

1. Read Genesis 2:18-25

- a. Why did God make woman? What does the phrase "helpmeet" (vs. 20) imply about woman's purpose?

- b. How did God make woman? (vs. 21-23)

2. Ephesians 5:31 is a direct quote from Genesis 2:24. Read this verse carefully.

a. What two instructions is the man given?

b. What will the result be?

3. Can you see a parallel between the marriage relationship (specifically, Ephesians 5:31) and your relationship with the Lord?

a. What do you need to leave?

b. To whom do you cleave? How?

c. What is the result?

*leave-to
abandon
completely.*

*cleave-or
"to be joined"-
to glue something
together.*

SIXTH DAY:

In God's eyes marriage mystically binds the two partners into "one flesh". His goal at Creation for marriage was the total union of two people - emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Earthly marriage can only dimly mirror the profound mystery of the union between Christ and His church.

Read Ephesians 5:32-33.

1. Review Ephesians 5:22-33. How many times does Paul compare the relationship between Christ and the church to the marriage relationship? Write down the scripture references.

2. The special relationship that exists between Christ and the church was initiated by Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for it. (Ephesians 5:25). How is this relationship figuratively described in each of the following verses?

John 10:1-18

John 15:1-8

I Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19-22

I Corinthians 12:12,13,27; Colossians 1:18

Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 19:7,8

Hebrews 5:1-10; I Peter 2:9

3. How does Ephesians 5:33 summarize the section that you have just studied?

Personal: What personal insights have you discovered in your study of Ephesians 5:21-33? In what areas of thoughts, attitudes or behavior is God prompting you to change?

***Paul tells us that "nothing can separate us from the Love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:39).
If an infinitely Holy God keeps His promises to His children,
who are undeserving of His Love, we should be
faithful to the one we have promised to love and care for until death.
If you sense a growing distance in your marital relationship
(or your relationship with God),
pray that God would help you determine its cause
and empower you to build your marriage into one that
honors and pleases Him!***