

Ephesians Chapter 5
Week 12, v. 31-33

Last week, in verse 30, we were reminded that we are members of Christ's body. When we become believers, we are united to Him. Our union with Christ has a direct affect on our marriage.

Eph 5:31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

In this verse, is Paul revealing something new about marriage? Where does this quote come from? (see Gen 2:24) Paul's teaching on the marriage relationship is based on the truth in the OT.

Shall cleave or shall be joined (KJV) <proskollao> to glue to, to adhere

Have you ever used super glue or a hot glue gun? What happens when you get the glue on your fingers?

The idea here is that nothing but death will separate a husband and wife. This is the design that God intended for marriage.

In the home our kids grew up in, we decided to pull up a floor that had been glued to the cement slab. It took days and a lot of hard work. We finally finished but the cement slab was pitted and scarred from the process of separating what had been meant to be permanent. Marriages all around us have separated. People are left scarred. This is not God's design.

Mt 19:6 "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

Marriage is a serious covenant entered into between a man and a woman and God. It is designed to be permanent. Obedience to God is the glue that holds it together – even when one partner is disobedient. **Who or what do you trust for your marriage?** If our trust is placed in our spouse, ourselves, our feelings, circumstances, even the best counseling, our trust has been misplaced. God is the only One who can take two imperfect people and cause them to glorify Him through their relationship together.

"...Paul did not make his commands contingent upon the response of someone else, as if he had said: 'Wives, submit to your husbands *if they are worth submitting to* in your judgment; and husbands, love your wives *if they are worthy of love* in your opinion.' **His commands are absolute: 'submit...love...care for... respect.'** **And the reason given is not the corresponding response of the other person but rather the pattern of the**

Lord Jesus Christ who acted in this way toward us." James M Boice, Ephesians, An Expository Commentary (emphasis mine)

What things are you committed to? Think of your schedule, events that are coming up on your calendar, if you have children, their schedule, ministry, work expectations, the multitude of things that need to be done in your household, etc. In order to get things done, you are committed to giving a certain amount of time and effort to the things that are important to you. Marriage is a commitment. **How much time and effort do you put into it?**

What union besides marriage has God designed to be permanent?

Joh 10:28-29 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given [them] to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand.

Eph 5:32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Mystery in this sense is something that is kept secret. Only God can reveal to His children the way of salvation through His Son. Only through salvation in Christ alone can we begin to understand the close relationship Christ has with His church, with his children.

Col 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and [attaining] to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, [resulting] in a true knowledge of God's mystery, [that is,] Christ [Himself],

Look at verses 23-32 in Ephesians 5. Notice how Paul continues to go back and forth referencing Christ's relationship to the church while he is speaking of a husband and wife relationship. **Why do you think he does this? Can you see similar illustrations in both relationships?**

In Hosea chapters 2 and 3 is the story of Hosea and Gomer. Gomer was Hosea's wife but had her affections elsewhere and finally left. Hosea continued to care for her even when she was unfaithful to him. Eventually, Gomer ended up with nothing, being sold into slavery. Hosea purchased her back as a slave and rightfully could have killed her but instead he chose to love her as his own. This is an incredible picture of love – a love we can only begin to comprehend even at our best efforts. It is an illustration of the love that Christ has for us.

Is it possible for a husband to try to love the way Christ loves if he doesn't know Christ personally? Is it possible for a wife to submit to her husband if she has not first submitted to Christ in her own life?

Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and [let] the wife [see to it] that she respect her husband.

Nevertheless, or considering God's design for marriage, here is the overall conclusion from Paul regarding the husband's relationship towards his wife and the wife's relationship towards her husband.

The husband is to love his wife. The wife is to respect her husband.

Why? Because that is the way God ordained it!

respect (reverence KJV) < phobeo> revere, fear, reverence

revere – to treat somebody with admiring respect; to regard somebody with admiration and deep respect

fear – in this context, respect or awe for someone/something

respect – a feeling or attitude of admiration toward somebody; consideration and thoughtfulness; to pay due attention and refrain from violating something; to have a high opinion of; to value; to appreciate; to recognize as opposed to disregard; to follow and comply with.

She is to fear, i.e., to honour, respect, obey the will of her husband. It is, of course, not implied that it is not also her duty to love her husband, but that ***there should be no usurping of authority; no disregard of the arrangement which God has made***; and that order and peace should be secured in a family by regarding the husband as the source of law. Albert Barnes' NT Commentary (emphasis mine)

That this is difficult should be of no surprise to us! We 'naturally' want to be in control of things. However, let's go back to Genesis 3:16. The last part of this verse says "he (the husband) shall rule over you". Women were put in the place of subjection to man. We need to make a concerted effort to follow – not lead.

Does your husband have confidence in you to support his leadership given to him by God?

What comes to mind when you think of supporting someone? It means to give active help and encouragement. This is more than just tolerating someone it is an attitude that desires to see them succeed. Think of the support you might give to a child's sport team. You encourage them to do their best, cheering them on to victory.

Eph 5:22 Wives, [be subject] to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Do you encourage his love for you or alienate him by being irritable, finding fault, taking no interest in his plans or what he does?

Do you care for your home and provisions carefully or haphazardly? Do you smile or complain? Do you take offense quickly or are you patient and gentle with your actions and words?

When he looks in your eyes does he see admiration or condemnation?

What is your speech like towards your husband? What does he hear, what do others' hear?

Eph 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such [a word] as is good for edification according to the need [of the moment,] that it may give grace to those who hear.

God has redeemed us from the ugliness of sin to righteousness in Christ. He paid the ultimate sacrifice in the death of His only Son to purchase us for Himself because He loves us. We owe Him our love and obedience in all areas.

Marriage is a gift. It is an opportunity to serve another selflessly. It is a relationship designed by God to glorify Himself. Does your marriage testify to your relationship with Christ?

...when there is discord in marriage, when there is disunity in marriage, when there is a lack of love from a husband to a wife, and a lack of respect and regard from a wife to a husband, it isn't just a tragedy at a human level—though it is. It's a tragedy so deep that if you've been close to it before, you could cry a river of tears to see dear friends tearing themselves apart. But for the Apostle Paul, for the Christian, you see, it's a more profound tragedy than that. It's not just a tragedy at the human level; it's a tragedy at the divine level, because in marriage we're supposed to be displaying that glorious, incomprehensible mystery of our union with Christ. And if in marriage, of all places, Christians do not display that love of Christ for the church, and that respect and regard of the church for Christ, where else can we possibly display it?

You see how the Apostle Paul wants to keep our whole lives together. He wants our discipleship to be of one piece, so that we don't just come to church and act like Christians, or we don't just go to conferences and act like Christians, but we act like Christians in our families, in our marriages, with our children, around our neighbors, as well as when we gather together to worship the living God. The Apostle Paul...reminds us that [in] our marriages...we have... the staggering privileges and responsibility of bearing witness to [the] believers' union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Duncan, J. Ligon, An Exposition of Ephesians

Eph 1:18-19a [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Php 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that

are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which [comes] through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This week: Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the “Apply It” bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. Review **memory** verses **Eph 5:1-2** in the NAS version and if you worked on the memory challenge, review Eph 5:15-22.

Read Eph 5:31, Gen 2:24 and Mat 19:6. **What does God say about the closeness of a marriage relationship? Does your husband come first – before your children, your parents, your friends, your career, your interests, even your ministries?**

“If our trust is placed in our spouse, ourselves, our feelings, circumstances, even the best counseling, our trust has been misplaced. God is the only One who can take two imperfect people and cause them to glorify Him through their relationship together.” **What do you think of this statement? Where do you place your trust for your marriage? How can you tell when your trust is not being placed in God?**

Read Hosea chapters 2-3. **How is this an illustration of Christ’s love for us? Marriage is a small scale picture of Christ’s love for the church. Does your marriage point others towards God? Does it testify to Christ’s sacrificial love? Do your choices as a wife reflect your relationship with the Lord?**

Read Eph 5:33. **What does it mean to respect your husband? If you’re not sure, use a dictionary and look up the word. Do you show consideration to your husband? Do you value him, appreciate him and follow him?** Pay attention to your thoughts, speech and actions towards your husband when you are with others and when you are alone.

Spend some time thanking God for marriage and specifically for your husband. Pray for his leadership. Pray for his spiritual growth. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to become the wife that will be a blessing to him all the days of his life.

Read through Ephesians Chapter 5 and highlight or write out the specific verses that have stood out to you during this study. Commit to working on direct application of God’s word to your life.