

WARM-UP

- Whose wedding has been very memorable for you? Why?
- Think of a married couple whom you look up to. What do you admire about their marriage?
- What do you think makes a marriage challenging? How do you think couples overcome this?

WORD ²¹. . . *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*
²²*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. . . .*
²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . .* **EPHESIANS 5:21-22, 25**

(Read also **EPHESIANS 5:23-24, 26-33.**)

The first half of the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians articulates the gospel. In the second half of the letter, he explains that this gospel and our relationship with Christ is to be evident in every area of our lives. This includes every relationship. We can walk in love, be united, and be at peace with others because of God's great love for us and our identity in Christ. In this lesson, we will look specifically at marriage, a covenant relationship between a man and a woman. A biblical marriage is founded on Christ's love for the Church. This love enables us to reflect Him in our lives, marriages, and relationships.

1 | We are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

20. . . giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. EPHESIANS 5:20-21

The apostle Paul wrote that every relationship we have is to exhibit humility, respect, and love because we understand who Christ is and what He has done for us. To submit to one another means to yield, give way, and defer. This is not easy and is certainly not expected today. In popular culture and society, people are focused on what they can get out of marriage and in protecting their own rights and privileges. However, the Bible says that we are to mutually submit to one another because of Christ. This is an attitude of humility, serving, and putting others' needs ahead of our own. What is reverence? What do you think it means to do things out of reverence for Christ? How are we to relate with one another if we obeyed this passage?

2 | Husbands are to love their wives, following Christ's example.

25Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27so that he might present the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

EPHESIANS 5:25-27

Paul made clear connections in this passage: Christ's love for the Church is the basis for love in a marriage, and a husband is to follow Christ's example in loving his wife. Since Christ loved the Church to the point of death, how is this reflected in the way a husband leads and loves his wife?

3 | **Wives are to submit to their husbands in reverence to Christ.**

*²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **EPHESIANS 5:22-24***

God's original design for marriage is a reflection of His great love for the world. As a husband loves his wife, a wife respects and submits to her husband *as to the Lord*. This does not mean she doesn't have a voice or say. A wife helps her husband accomplish God's purpose for their family. However, if her husband's decision is sinful, she is not obligated to obey him. The truth is, love and unity are only possible because of Christ's example and His love. How is a wife's decision to submit to her husband a reflection of her trust in God?

APPLICATION

- In your own life, what does it mean to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ? How will you apply this in your life this week?
- If you are married, would you say your marriage is centered on Christ? What are you and your spouse willing to do so your marriage will reflect Christ?
- What is God's design for marriage? How can a marriage lead others to know and follow Christ?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His word that gives us instruction on godly living and relationships.
- If you are married, pray for your spouse. Ask God to bless your union, and pray that your marriage would be centered on Christ.
- Pray that in your relationships, you would submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. Pray for wisdom, patience, and grace so that your relationships would lead people to Christ.



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