

## Family Worship Guide – Week 21

### READ

This week we are studying the topic of biblical marriage. Why did God ordain marriage in the first place and what does the Bible say it is supposed to look like?

Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

This passage is the most complete passage in the entire Bible on God's plan for marriage. What we find as we read this passage is that God did not merely design marriage for our happiness, although that is often a wonderful benefit of marriage. This passage shows us that God's great purpose in marriage is to display the gospel of Jesus Christ. God created marriage between one man and one woman to reflect the union between Christ and His church.

God has given husbands and wives specific roles to play as they reflect the gospel in their marriage. God has designed it so that husbands reflect Christ's love for the church as they love their wives, and wives reflect the church's submission to Christ as they respect their husbands.

Go back and read Ephesians 5:22-24 again.

Notice that wives are to submit to their own husbands as unto the Lord (5:22). Now, obviously this does not mean that wives are to follow their husbands into sin, because then they would not be submitting to the Lord. But it does mean that as a Christian wife, obeying Christ means submitting to your husband.

The reason that God commands wives to submit to husbands is not that husbands are somehow smarter than wives. It is because the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church (5:23). The headship-submission relationship between a husband and wife reflects the headship-submission relationship between Christ and the church. Wives who gladly submit to their husbands are helping to paint a glorious picture of the relationship between Christ and His church.

Read Ephesians 5:25-33.

While God commands wives to submit to their husbands, He commands husbands to love their wives. It is important that we pay attention to the kind of love that is commanded here. While husbands feel love for their wives, biblical love is not primarily about warm emotions. God commands husbands to love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." (5:25) A husband's love must be a sacrificial love. Husbands, you are called to lay down your life for your wife. You are called to die to your own rights, your prerogatives, your comforts, your desires – to live and die for the good of your wife. This is the pattern of our Lord Jesus, who laid aside His heavenly glory, made Himself nothing, gave up the riches of heaven, and took our sin and suffering upon Himself, so that He might give us eternal life. That is the kind of love that the Bible commands you to have for your wife.

The reason that Jesus gave Himself up for the church was to make her holy, to beautify her by washing her with water and the Word (5:26-27). In the same way, husbands are to take responsibility for the spiritual beauty of their wives, to see them grow more and more in godliness. This is why husbands need to be able to lead and why wives need to submit – because it is the husband's responsibility to lead his wife by nourishing and cherishing her and helping her grow in godliness.

Paul closes this section by quoting from Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh." (5:31) He then explains that this "mystery" refers to Christ and the church. In other words, he is saying that human marriage, as amazing as it is, points to something more amazing and more glorious. It points to the gospel. It points us to the "one-flesh" union between Christ and His church. God intends marriage, your marriage, to be a display of something bigger than your marriage. He wants your marriage to be a picture of the gospel!

In verse 33, Paul sums up his instructions to couples with two simple commands: love and respect. As husbands love their wives, they reflect Christ's sacrificial love for the church. As wives respect their husbands, they reflect the church's

glad submission to Christ.

Please note that Paul does not qualify his commands in any way. He does not say, “Husbands, love your wife *if* she deserves it.” He does not say, “Wives, respect your husband *if* he deserves it.” We are simply commanded to make sure we are seeking to display the gospel in our marriages, even if our spouse is not.

Remember, marriage is not ultimately about you. It is about Christ and his church. It is about the gospel!

#### Questions:

How does marriage reflect the gospel?

The world tells us that marriage is all about our happiness, and if we are not happy, we are free to divorce. The Bible tells us that marriage is a reflection of Christ’s relationship with His church. What does this tell you about God’s view of marriage and divorce? For additional insight into this issue, check out Matthew 19:1-9 and 1 Corinthians 7.

Husbands, how do you need to die to yourself and start loving your wife as Christ loved the church? How have you put your own interests above those of your wife? Spend some time in prayer and confession. Accept the forgiveness of Christ. Confess these failures to your wife and seek God’s help to display the sacrificial love of Christ in your marriage.

Wives, how have you rebelled against Christ by refusing to submit to your husband? Spend some time in prayer and confession. Accept the forgiveness of Christ. Confess these failures to your husband and seek God’s help to display the church’s glad submission to Christ in your marriage.

Parents, how will you teach your children to develop these attributes now so they are ready to be biblical husbands and wives when they get married?

**Bottom Line:** Marriage is not about you; it is about the gospel of Jesus Christ!

## PRAY

God created marriage to be a display of His glory and His gospel. The one-flesh union between a husband and wife is intended to display the spiritual union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33). Ever since Fall in Genesis 3, Satan has been working to undermine God’s plan for marriage. Satan hates marriage because he hates the gospel. If we are to be a gospel people, we must be a people who are committed to displaying the gospel in our marriages. Husband, examine your life and repent of the ways you are not lovingly leading your wife. Wife, examine your life and repent of the ways you are not gladly submitting to your husband. In the world we live in, most of us have been hurt greatly and have hurt others by the tragedy of divorce in some way or another. Perhaps you have failed in your marriage and you feel a sense of despair. But remember what marriage points you to. It points you to the only perfect love, the love that Christ has for His church. It reminds us that He loves us despite our sin and our failures. Whether you have been married for 60 years or whether you have been divorced 6 times, Christ’s perfect love for you is your only hope. Spend some time this week examining your life and your marriage. Be honest with God about your failures. Accept His free forgiveness in Christ, and ask for His grace to live out the gospel in your marriage or your present state of singleness (1 Cor. 7), whichever the case may be.

## SING

The title ‘Man of Sorrows’ comes from Isaiah 53:3, where the prophet Isaiah describes the coming Savior. “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” This was not exactly the kind of messiah God’s people were expecting. He was not a political military ruler, but rather, He was a man rejected by men.

This hymn reminds us of our total depravity, or rather, our total lack of spiritual good and inability to do good before God. Apart from the work of Christ we are nothing. We are a sinful people and, yet He came to save us. His precious blood has provided full atonement. Just think of the day when our glorious King returns. We will stand in His presence and sing of His glory forever. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

## MEMORIZE

Ephesians 5:33 “However, let each one of you love your wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

## SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God's word and worship Him together.

### Preschool

- Before you begin: set up a few chairs or other objects around the room and create a maze or obstacle course. Find a piece of fabric you can use as a blindfold.
- Read Ephesians 5:22-25.
- Explain that when we are blindfolded and in a maze, we have a hard time knowing where to go and we must have someone who cares for us to guide us. Guide your child through the maze carefully making sure your child follows your directions.
- Explain that God can see our lives and he has a set plan. God has a plan for families too. He guides us through our lives and gives us directions in the Bible. God's plan is for Mommy and Daddy to love each other in their marriage just as much as we love you. God wants us to love and respect each other just as God says in Ephesians.

### Children

- Read Ephesians 5:31.
- Object lesson
  - Supplies: 2 wooden clothespins, one broken apart without the spring, the other intact with "LOVE" and "RESPECT" written on opposite sides
  - Show the children the two wooden sides of the broken clothespin and explain that apart they are just two marred pieces of wood. Then show the intact clothespin. Explain that when bound together by Christ (the metal spring) the two parts have a purpose and power they did not have alone. Husbands and wives each have a unique but important role in the union of marriage.
- Read Ephesians 5:32-33.
- Explain that a husband's love for his wife and a wife's grateful acceptance of his care can display the gospel to the world.
- Discuss examples of love and respect. Ask the children about ways they can practice love and respect now in relationships with family and others.

### Students

- After reading Ephesians 5:22-33, ask your students if they can define the terms "submit" and "love" that are found in this passage. Follow up with the question, "Are either one of these things easy to do?"
- Refer to a movie or TV show your family has seen that has dealt with war (*Glory* and *We Were Soldiers* are great examples though not appropriate for all ages). Ask your students if they see the need for love and submission in this context. Help them understand the need for those in leadership positions to love those they lead, and that those who are under that leadership must submit, even for their own good. Follow up with the question, "What is at stake if those in these leading and submitting roles do not fully commit to love and submission?" They may mention injury, the lives of the soldiers, the mission at hand, or the war itself. Affirm their answers and lead them to understand that the very war is at stake when a leader does not deeply love those they lead and those under that leadership do not submit.
- **Connection:** Ask them if they see any similarities to battle and the Christian life (*be sure to give time for them to answer*). Ask one of your students to read Ephesians 6:12. Ask them what is at stake in this battle to which Paul refers. Again, the purpose is to lead them to think in terms of the gospel and people's lives. Explain that what God has designed is a picture of what His relationship with His followers should look like through marriage. We, as His Bride, submit to His leadership, as He unconditionally loves us. Ask them what is at stake if a husband does not love his wife the way he should, or if a wife does not submit. They may discuss things like arguments, tension in the home, or even divorce. Be sure to emphasize that all of these things are negative outcomes, but that ultimately a lack of love and submission results in a false picture of God's love and the necessity of our submission to Him. When a person does not understand God's love or see their need to submit to Him, they cannot understand or respond to the gospel. People's very lives depend on Christian marriages being strong and accurate pictures of love and submission.
- End with a time of prayer. Ask your students to pray for you as a father and/or mother to live out a clear and accurate picture of love and submission in your marriage. Then pray for your students that they would have a marriage, if God wills them to be married, where they would clearly communicate the gospel through their relationship with their spouse.

Lives/Church

God created marriage to be a display of His glory and His gospel. The one-flesh union between a husband and wife is intended to display the spiritual union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33). If we are to be a gospel people, we must be a people who are committed to displaying the gospel in our marriages. Husband, examine your life and repent of the ways that you are not lovingly leading your wife. Wife, examine your life and repent of the ways that you are not gladly submitting to your husband. Spend some time this week examining your life and your marriage. Be honest with God about your failures. Accept His free forgiveness in Christ, and ask for His grace to live out the gospel in your marriage, or your present state of singleness (1 Cor. 7), whichever the case may be.

Local

**Local Church:** Center Crest Baptist Church - Tim Evans

**Focus:** Biblical Marriage Institute - a Christ-centered ministry to train experienced married couples to mentor/disciple less experienced couples and to educate teens about God's design for biblical marriage and relationships.

**Monday:** Pray that biblical marriage will be upheld and honored to the glory of God in Birmingham and our nation. Pray that the growing anti-marriage trend will be reversed.

**Tuesday:** Pray for strong committed husbands and wives who will remain faithful to their vows, starting in the local church.

**Wednesday:** Pray for BMI as they teach God's plan for relationships and marriage to teens at Restoration Academy and in other venues. Pray that more students will commit to follow Christ – their “first love.”

**Thursday:** Pray for the many mentors trained through BMI and those they are mentoring. Pray that God will raise up more godly couples who will commit to mentoring other couples. Pray that more couples will trust God for a mentor couple.

**Friday:** Pray that believers will guard their marriages against unfaithfulness and recognize that their marriages are a reflection of Christ and His love and devotion to His Bride – the Church. Pray for purity and restoration of struggling marriages.

**Saturday:** Pray for ministry partners who will pray faithfully for BMI and financially support the ministry. Pray for its founders and board members as they lead this much-needed ministry.

**Scripture Memory**

“However, let each one of you love your wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” Ephesians 5:33

Global

**Short Term Teams:** East Asia, India, and Southeast Asia

**Partner:** Tom - our field partner in East Asia

**Monday:** Pray that God would be glorified in East Asia and would open many doors for Tom and his family to share the gospel.

**Tuesday:** Pray for the young men Tom disciples. Pray for their salvation and for many to know Christ through their lives.

**Wednesday:** Tom is a physician and shares the gospel with those he cares for. Pray for open hearts for the patients he will encounter.

**Thursday:** Pray for Tom and his family as they live in an area that is hostile towards Christians. Pray for God to sustain them as they work, play and live out their lives for the sake of the gospel.

**Friday:** Pray for the elderly man Tom shared Christ with in a nursing home. Pray for his growth as a believer. Pray that his friends will come to know Christ as a result of his life.

**Saturday:** Pray for wisdom as Tom helps open up a noodle shop where many young people come to study. Pray for this shop to bring many opportunities to interact and share the gospel with the lost.

**Man of Sorrows**

by Philip Paul Bliss

Arrgt./Add'l Lyrics by Mandi Mapes

F2

Verse 1:

F Dm C

Man of sorrows, what a name

Bb F C

For the Son of God who came.

F Dm Bb

Ruined sinners to reclaim

F C Bb F

Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Dm Bb Am/C

Verse 2:

F Dm C

Bearing shame and scoffing rude

Bb F C

In my place condemned He stood

F Dm Bb

Sealed my pardon with His blood

F C Bb F

Hallelujah, what a Savior

Chorus:

F C Dm Bb

Hallelujah! He has saved me

F Bb Dm C

Sin and death shall reign no more

F C Dm Bb

Christ has made the way for sinners

F C Bb2

Hallelujah! What a savior

Verse 3:

F Dm C

Guilty, vile and helpless we

Bb F C

Spotless Lamb of God was He

F Dm Bb

Full atonement, can it be?

F C Bb F

Hallelujah, what a Savior

Dm Bb Am/C

Dm Bb Am7

Verse 4:

G Em D

Lifted up was he to die

C G D

It is finished was His cry

G Em C

Now in heaven exalted high

G D C2

Hallelujah, what a Savior

Verse 5:

G Em D

When He comes our glorious King

C G D

All His ransomed home to bring

G Em C

Then anew His song we'll sing

G D C2 G

Hallelujah, what a Savior

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Music

