

**COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE****Marriage as a Mirror**

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

**PRAYER**

Spend time praying for other DC churches that the gospel might advance in and through them:

- Mercy of Christ Fellowship – Jeremy McClain
- Anacostia River Church – Thabiti Anyabwile
- Capitol Hill Baptist – Mark Dever
- Del Ray Baptist – Garrett Kell
- Redeemer City Church – Kenneth Jones
- Grace DC – Glen Hoburg
- *Others...*

**OVERVIEW**

Everything—literally everything—in heaven and on earth is being united in Christ (1:10). Only when we understand who Christ is can we begin to understand who we are. We often read Paul’s letters thinking about all Scripture calls us to do. But before Ephesians calls us to do anything, it reminds us what God has done in Christ.

Our identity is not based on what we do, but who we are. Our identity is not earned and achieved but declared and received. Our identity, as Christians, is found “in Christ.” We are united to Christ—and that changes everything about us! Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus explains what we were (apart from Christ), who we are (in Christ), and then how we should live as followers of Christ, all for the glory of Christ.

**APPLY // EPHESIANS 5:15-21**

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-21.
2. What happens if we skip 5:1-2 and run straight to verses and begin saying “Do this and don’t do that”?
3. When Paul says to make the most of our time, what does he have in view? How can we strive to honor the Lord will all our time?
4. What is Paul talking about when he references the “will of the Lord”? How can we make sure we understand what the will of the Lord is and live in light of it?
5. Why is it important to realize the command is “be filled with the Spirit” (i.e. passive, happening to us) and not “go fill yourself with the Spirit”? How can we be filled with the Spirit?
6. Note that all the evidences of a Spirit-filled life are oriented toward God and others, not to self. Why is this the case? What does this assume about living in gospel community?
7. According to this passage, what are some practical ways we should strive to live a Spirit-filled life at Restoration Church?

**STUDY // EPHESIANS 5:22-33**

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God's word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Ephesians 5:22-33
  2. In these verses Paul describes the foundation for Christian marriage, as well as the specific roles for the husband and wife.
    - a. In verse 31, where does Paul ground the pattern of marriage?
    - b. In verse 32, what does Paul say marriage points to?
    - c. Why is it critical to keep these foundational aspects of marriage in view as we begin to talk about specific roles inside of marriage?
      - i. The foundational aspects inform the why and how of the roles.
      - ii. The fact that marriage points to a greater reality – Christ and the church – help us from making marriage an idol. Some of us will skip the shadow (i.e. marriage on earth) and go straight to the substance.
    - d. What are some common “distortions” of marriage that we see in the world?
  3. According to verse 22, to whom are wives called to submit? What does it mean for a wife to submit to her own husband? (NOTE: This passage calls a wife to submit to her husband, not women to men!)
  4. The wife is called to submit “as to the Lord.” What does this mean and how does this inform the way a wife submits to her husband? What are some things that biblical submission is not?
  5. Why is it significant that the wife's submission is to mirror her submission to Christ?
  6. In verse 23-24, what reasoning does Paul give for the wife to submit to her husband? What does it mean that the husband is the “head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church”?
  7. How does submission reflect the gospel?
  8. Re-read verses 25-33. What command is repeatedly given to the husband?
  9. The husband is called to love his wife “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” What does this mean and how does it inform the way a husband loves his wife? What are some things this means biblical headship/leadership is not?
    - a. Since Christ is the model husband, discuss the phrases that show how he treats his bride, the Church, and correspondingly how a man should treat his wife.
  10. According to the text, what is the goal of the husband's love for his wife?
  11. What does loving a wife as his (the husband's) own body (v. 28) mean?
  12. How does servant leadership reflect the gospel?
  13. Remember what verse 32 says – earthly marriage points to the eternal marriage of Jesus and his bride. Why is it important that everyone inside the church remember this truth?
- General Bible study questions:
    - **God:** What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
    - **Humanity:** What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
    - **Christ:** How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
    - **Response:** How should I respond with my affections and my actions?
    - **God:** How does this passage help me hope in heaven?

### Notes from ESV Study Bible

Verse 22 // Paul's first example of general submission from v. 21 is the right ordering of the marriage relationship (see also Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1–7). The submission of wives is not like the obedience children owe parents, nor does this text command all women to submit to all men (to your own husbands, not to all husbands!). Both genders are equally created in God's image (Gen. 1:26–28) and heirs together of eternal life (Gal. 3:28–29). This submission is in deference to the ultimate leadership

of the husband for the health and harmonious working of the marriage relationship.

Verse 23-24 // “Head” (Gk. kephalē) here clearly refers to a husband’s authority over his wife and cannot mean “source,” as some have argued. In fact, there is no sense in which husbands are the source of their wives either physically or spiritually.

Verse 31-32 // By mystery Paul means the hidden plan of God that has come to fulfillment in Christ Jesus (see 1:9; 3:3–4, 9; and 6:19), thus his quotation about marriage from Genesis 2 (in Eph. 5:31) ties in to the relationship between Christ and his church. Paul’s meaning is profound: he interprets the original creation of the husband-and-wife union as itself modeled on Christ’s forthcoming union with the church as his “body” (see v. 23). Therefore, marriage from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1) was created by God to be a reflection of and patterned after Christ’s relation to the church. Thus Paul’s commands regarding the roles of husbands and wives do not merely reflect the culture of his day but present God’s ideal for all marriages at all times, as exemplified by the relationship between the bride of Christ (the church) and Christ himself, the Son of God.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

**QUESTION:** How are you doing walking in Spirit-filled humility and wisdom?