

## MARRIAGE

### The Book of Ephesians

#### Introduction

- I. A Word to Wives – Ephesians 5:22-24
  - A. The Concept of Submission – Ephesians 5:21
  - B. The Center of Submission – Ephesians 5:22
  - C. The Context of Submission – Ephesians 5:22, Galatians 3:28
  - D. The Criterion of Submission – Ephesians 5:23-24, 1 Corinthians 11:3, John 10:30
  - E. The Consequences of Submission
  
- II. A Word to Husbands – Ephesians 5:25-33
  - A. Love Your Wife Unconditionally – Ephesians 5:25
  - B. Love Your Wife Sacrificially – Ephesians 5:25
  - C. Love Your Wife Purposefully – Ephesians 5:26-27
  - D. Love Your Wife Passionately – Ephesians 5:28-29
    1. Nourish Your Wife
    2. Cherish Your Wife – Ephesians 5:30-33

#### Conclusion

Ephesians 5:18

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

### Getting Started

1. When you think of the word “submission,” what thoughts or feelings come to mind? **If there is one word that causes many people to bristle, it is the word “submission.” The concept of submission in our culture is predominantly negative. To some, it conveys the idea of low value. To others, it paints a picture of oppression and even slavery. And to another cross-section of society, the word submission carries connotations of weakness.**
2. What is an example of submission that is positive? **This could be an example from your own life or one that you have observed.**

### Going Deeper

1. Read Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, and James 2:5. How does a Christian man or woman stand in privilege and position before God and in the church?
2. Read Ephesians 5:21 and Philippians 2:5-8. In what way can two people mutually submit “to one another?” When have you seen this portrayed? **There is a mutuality of submission not only in marriage but in all of the Christian life. In fact, all relationships are to model this type of submission: wives and husbands, children and parents, employees and managers.**

3. How does deferring to another person show that he/she is submitting to Jesus Christ as well? Using the marriage relationship as an example (specifically, the wife's responsibility to submit to her husband), we see that the primary relationship in a woman's life is not with her husband, but with her Lord. A woman's responsibility is to Jesus Christ first, her husband second, her children third, and her other responsibilities after that. Pastor Jeremiah said, "Obedience at the first level of priority will insure obedience at the remaining levels."
4. Read John 10:30 and 1 Corinthians 11:3. How do these passages help us understand how a husband and wife are to be *one*? When two individuals get married, they become something new that did not exist before. Therefore, when the wife identifies with the husband, she willingly submits in a spirit of unity, just as Christ submits to the Father.
5. What happens to a marriage that does not follow this format of biblical authority? When have you witnessed this in your own life? In the life of someone you know? When a husband fails to love and cherish his wife it makes it very difficult for her to submit to him. When a wife does not submit to her husband with respect, it makes it difficult for him to love her in the way he is called to. When we fail to follow biblical instructions, our marriages become a downward cycle of antagonism and contentiousness with no one willing to break the pattern.

## Applying the Message

1. As a married person, how would you grade your relationship with your spouse? If you are not married and would like to be, how would you rate yourself regarding your readiness to be a spouse? **A simple way to do this is to have each person rate themselves on a scale from 1 to 10 (1=low grade/rating; 10=high grade/rating). This question may meet some resistance as it asks overtly for some major vulnerability, and that's okay. The best way to help with that resistance is to model vulnerability first.**

**Leaders: for those in your group who are not married and are *not looking* to get married/remarried, another way to help move the conversation forward is to remind the entire group that marriage is simply a metaphor for how Jesus Christ loves us. Single people can view this entire lesson as a "How do I grow in my relationship with Jesus?" exercise.**

2. Whether married or single, what can you do today to move forward in following God's guidelines for marriage? What is one change can you make this week that will help you be more of the person God is calling you to be in marriage? **No husband or wife can love apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. And, there is no better place than marriage to test the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Asking for supernatural power from the Holy Spirit may be your next step of faith.**