



MARRIAGE - A PICTURE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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Introduction:

In Genesis when God created people, he created a Garden in which we would thrive. The **garden is God's ordained boundaries for how we live our lives.** The fall caused us (people) to live outside of these boundaries. But Jesus, through the cross is calling us back to the Garden, to God's way of living.

THE GARDEN = GOD'S BOUNDARIES

Our marriages in the confines of God's boundaries are supposed to be awe-inspiring. Our relationships within marriage are supposed to glorify God.

Our Text: [Ephesians 5:21-33 NKJV](#)

(21) submitting to one another in the fear of God. (22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

(25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (26) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, (27) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (28) So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. (31) "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

(32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

According to Paul, in Ephesians 5:32, the marriage relationship between a husband and wife, should reflect the relationship between Jesus and the Church. In other words, our marriages are a living witness of the Gospel.

The mission of the Christian Marriage is to declare the Gospel; to demonstrate the love of Christ and His relationship with His bride.

How does this Marriage Relationship declare the gospel and show this picture of Christ and the church?

Our marriages reflect the picture of Christ and His **church, when we follow God's way.**

1. What does marriage God's way look like?

We will examine the Scriptures and give examples from our own lives to help illustrate this.

1.1 SUBMISSION

Ephesians 5:21-24

(21) submitting to one another in the fear of God. (22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

We cannot submit to our husbands if we are not first submitted to Christ.

- i) Submission means to respect your husband

Ephesians 5:33 NKJV ...*let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

1 Peter 3:2 ESV ... *respectful and pure conduct*

1 Peter 3:2 AMPC *When they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband; you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him—to honor, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband].*

It means not to belittle, constantly quarrel with and oppose your spouse, **but it doesn't mean you don't have a voice and are inferior to him. It is a choice to love him and place him above others, besides Jesus.**

Our decision to honour and respect our husbands is an act of worship to God.

- ii) Submission involves love

Titus 2:4 **says that older women are to train the younger women "to love their husbands."** And what is love?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant, or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

This is how wives are to treat their husbands. Is this different to how any of us should treat one another? The marriage is to be a picture, a reflection of Christ and the church.

1 Corinthians 7:34 **says that the married woman is "anxious [meaning careful] ... about how to please her husband."** Part of a wife loving her husband is about wanting to please him.

- iii) Submission involves obedience

1 Peter 3:5-6

For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good, and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Obey - to hear under (as a subordinate), that is, to listen attentively, to heed

Note: This does not mean the wife IS subordinate, but she has an attitude of submission. She looks up to him, respects his views and listens to him, which is an attitude we should all have towards one another.

But this obedience is never to be demanded or coerced by her husband. The Bible never tells husbands to make their wives obey them. That is unbiblical. Rather, the Bible tells wives to willingly obey their husbands as an attitude of heart, out of love for Christ.

This does not apply in matters that are contrary to the Word, in anything sinful or unbiblical. We are to obey God first.

It also does not apply to abusive situations. The context of submission is love, the kind of love Christ has for the church.

The kind of submission referred to in this Scripture is serving submission, which is freely given and can be reciprocal, that means it goes both ways.

Let's look at verse 21 and 22 of Ephesians 5. In the Greek language, there is no full stop between verse 21 and verse 22. In fact, the oldest Greek copies do not even have the word "submit" in verse 22. It does not have it because verse 22 borrows the verb from verse 21.

The Greek literally says, "**submitting** to one another in reverence for Christ, wives to your own **husbands...**" In other words, when Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands here, he refers to precisely the same kind of submitting all believers are to give one another.

This is an act of love and a response to the **husband's** love. Even in situations where husbands are not serving Christ, Peter says this is how wives can show their husbands the gospel, by showing them unconditional love.

1 Peter 3:1-2 ESV

(1) Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, (2) when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Example: Making coffee an act of loving service.

1.2 HEADSHIP

Ephesians 5:23-25

(23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Head - in the sense of seizing); the head (as the part most readily taken hold of), literally or figuratively.

He's first in line. The way I understand headship is it's about Order. God is a God of order and peace. The wife is not lesser in any way. We are all made in the image and likeness of God and equal in worth and value. We stand alongside each other, but he is in front. He takes the blows and has final responsibility for his family.

Deon: If husband feels the need to impose dominance, he's doing it wrong.

Jen: In our home, we make decisions together, but I honour Deon as the head of our home and I submit to him. That does not mean I just go along with everything he says. We discuss matters and decide on things together.

The environment this operates in is love. It is a picture of Christ and the church.

1.3 LOVE

Ephesians 5:25, 28-30

(25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (28) So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Men look after their own bodies. They need to so take care of their wives.

Give preference to your wife, choosing what she wants.

1.4 ONE FLESH

Ephesians 5:31 ***“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”***

Paul is referring back to God’s original design for marriage - see Genesis 2:18, 21-24.

In the Bible, ONE FLESH means a UNION of LOVE, DEVOTION & COMPANIONSHIP!

In Song of Solomon there is a series of Hebrew love poems that describe the love relationship between a man and woman. The book is originally written in Hebrew, which has three different expressions of our one English word for love.

1. *RA-YAW – 7474 | rah-yaw'
 - Friendship/companionship | Somebody you like to spend time with...
 - Have you ever heard someone say:
 - “She’s my best friend.”
 - Or: “I can tell him anything” ?
 - These are expressions of RAH-YAW | The core of a marriage relationship should be friendship.
2. A-HAB-AW – 160/157 | a-hab-aw'/ aw-habe'
 - Deep affection
 - When you want to be with someone so much, that your heart aches
 - When your heart and mind are bent toward the one you love so intensely that **you can’t think of anything else.**
 - Have you ever thought like this:
 - I would rather be here with her, right now, than anywhere else?
 - The lovers in Song of Sol. Say that (A-hab-aw) is as strong as death.
 - Many rivers cannot quench (A-hab-aw).
 - It is much more profound than fleeting romantic feelings or temporary urges.
 - It is a decision to join your life to someone else, that leads to commitment.
3. DODE – 1730 | dode
 - Carous/rock/fondle or boil
 - Dode is the sexual element of a relationship
 - The lover in Song of Solomon says:
 - “Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your DODE is more delightful than wine.”

Ecclesiastes 4:12c - ...a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

THINK OF THESE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE AS THIS 3 FOLD CORD.

- (1) Rah-yaw' | FRIENDSHIP/COMPANIONSHIP
- (2) Aw-habe' | COMMITTEMENT
- (3) Dode | SEXUAL UNION

When a man and **woman come together** God's intention is that all these elements are combined. When Jesus talks about the love relationship between husband and wife he describes it with the term, ONE FLESH.

ONE FLESH is much more than just a physical act. It is the coming together **of two peoples'** emotions, hearts, minds, and experiences. We become ONE.

Jen: We are one and live like that. We share everything - bed, bank account, raising children (who are grown now), household chores, etc. We are a unit - we stand together. If under pressure, we cling to one another - turn to one another not against one another. If we have a disagreement, humble selves. Ask forgiveness, talk! Be honest. Pray.

When we live are in harmony, our marriage is a Safe Harbour. If we are out of sorts, in disunity, we are on stormy seas. It is **more important to be in unity than to be right. If we're in disunity, we're both in the wrong** and we can give the devil an opportunity in our lives. Make it your goal to make up quickly! Be the first to say sorry.

Conclusion:

Ephesians 5:32-33

(32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Our marriages are meant to reflect Christ and the church.

The mission of our marriage, in loving one another, is the Gospel.

What about those who are struggling in their marriage, or have been divorced?

- God is a healer and restorer.
- We **can't change the past, but we can begin with a commitment to Christ now.**
- A solid marriage is built on the premise that Christ is first in our relationship.
 - Which means we follow Christ with respect to our spouse for their greatest good.

What about those who are single?

- Married to the Lord / one with Him
- Serve Him wholeheartedly
- Trust Him for a godly spouse

REMEMBER THE GARDEN: Jesus' cross invites us back into the GARDEN to live within the boundaries God has set. Let us commit to live in this ONE FLESH relationship the way God intended.

Discussion questions:

1. What was/is your picture of marriage from your life experience?
2. How does your picture differ from the sacred union of love and devotion presented in Ephesians 5:21-33?
3. What impact has this Biblical picture made on your marriage or on your view of your future marriage, if single? Will you commit your marriage to God's way?