







## A MYSTERIOUS MARRIAGE EPHESIANS 5:22-33

What are some reasons why people get married?

There have been many voices in recent time which speak against the institution of marriage (i.e. feminism), what do some people dislike about marriage?

Today's passage is a potentially sensitive passage. So remember to be serving, respectful and willing to listen. With this in mind, pray for God's guidance, read Ephesians 5:22-33 and get stuck into the questions below.

It's clear that the main characters in the passage are wives, husbands, Christ and the church. But what we need to do is understand the relationship between each of them. To do this lets start by looking at verses 22-24 first. Scanning through these verses, and using the table provided below write down what we learn about wives, husbands, Christ and the church in each of the respective boxes.

When you take a look at the relationship between a wife and her husband (verse 22) how do you think today's society generally responds to such a view and why does it respond that way?

When we take a look at verse 22 again who is the woman actually submitting to? (It is interesting to note Paul uses a similar way of explaining the idea of submitting in Eph 6:5 and Col 3:18.)

### WIVES

If you think you have time there is an interesting diversion to look at. When we take a look at Gen 3:8-16, especially Gen 3:16, we discover why the idea of wives submitting to husbands has been a constant struggle through out history. Have a read on Gen 3:8-16 and note what the struggle is between the woman and the man at the end of verse 16. The phrase, "Your desire will be for your husband ..." is commonly understood to mean the woman's desire will be to rule her husband. The Fall frustrated the man and woman relationship so that the woman no longer has the desire to submit, now it's a desire to rule her husband. We will take a look at how the fall frustrated the husbands relationship below.

At the end of verse 24 Paul makes the idea of submission even stronger by saying "...so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." Does Paul literally mean submit to the husband *in everything*? Is there ever a time when the wife should not submit to the husband?

How does Paul's analogy between the wife and the church shape or change your answer? Does the church literally submit to Christ *in everything*?

How can we tell when someone is submitting their lives to the Lord? What does it look like to submit your life to the Lord?

Now lets think through the husbands place in marriage. To do this lets look at vs 25-33. Scan these verses, and use the table above to write what we learn about wives, husbands, Christ and the church.

Given the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church (vs 23) and taking a look at vs 25-28, what responsibilities are associated with headship (both Christ's and the husbands)?

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In one or two sentences then what is the husband suppose to do for his wife? How is he, the head, supposed to treat the wife?

Given the husband is to do for his wife what Christ has done for the church there is a strong parallel between the husband / wife relationship and the Christ / church relationship. By looking at verses 29-32 what does the husband / wife relationship teach us about our relationship with Christ?

### HUSBANDS

The husband's relationship was frustrated at the fall just as the woman's was. God created man and women to relate to each other, and creation, in a particular manner, the husband was to rule and tend creation with care (Genesis 2:15) and women to help him (Genesis 2:18). But as we saw above the Fall frustrated that relationship so that the woman now tries to rule over man, while man now tends to rule harshly. Have a read of Genesis 3:17-19 if you have time and you will see this harsh rule. In Ephesians 5:25-33 Paul is reminding the man to rule his wife the way he was meant to rule creation, with love and care.]



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