

Life Together: Marriage Part 1

Reflect

1. Who are the best models of marriage that you have ever seen?
2. What do you think tears marriages apart?
3. What's your personal experience or inexperience with marriage?

Read Your Bible

- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Matthew 19:4-6

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. Re-read Ephesians 5 verse 21. In marriage, who is to submit? (If you did not answer both the husband and the wife, you got this question wrong.)
2. What might happen if only one person practices submission?
3. Why did Paul write three verses of instruction for women and nine verses for men?
4. The Greek word for "submit" can also be translated as "respect." Does that change how you hear the lesson?
5. What is the context of Jesus' teaching regarding marriage? (read vs. 1-12)

6. Describe a perfect marriage according to Jesus' teaching here?

7. Why does Jesus remind us that God made us "male and female?"

8. What does "one flesh" mean?

9. Why is it important for the man to leave his father and mother?

Conclusion

A comedian once delivered the following joke about marriage. "The secret to a happy marriage is going out twice per week. She goes out on Tuesdays, and I go out on Thursdays." The joke humorously points out the pain that exists in marriage. Unfortunately, the truth is that marriages hurt husbands and wives. The hurt is often exacerbated when one spouse inappropriately uses scripture like a club, and tells the other to submit, all the while forgetting that submission is for both the husband and the wife. In Matthew, Jesus points us to the ideal marriage. Man and woman were both created in the image of God; equal, wonderful, and yet different from one another. They were meant to walk hand in hand with one another in the presence of God. When we realize that this vision is the one to which husbands and wives were called it helps couples live with humility, forgiveness, love, trust, and respect.

Pray

Jesus, we pray for Your blessing upon those who are married. Help them walk with love for one another. Where there is hurt may there be healing. Where there is trespass, forgiveness. Where there is love, strength. For those who are not married Lord, we pray for Your blessing upon all those who are single. Whether married or not, may we all be a shining light that points to Your life-giving love. Amen.