



# Weekly Devotional

A large, solid red heart graphic that serves as a background for the ampersand in the main title.

# YOU & ME

Relationships in  
a Modern World

A photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, with fingers interlaced to form a heart shape. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

January 30 - February 3, 2012

# Questions & Prayers

## Questions on Ephesians 5:21-33

1. From God's point of view, what are the most important results that should come out of a marriage?
2. Look at the picture Paul gives of Christ and the church in verses 24-32. How do the following verses enhance your understanding of this image? Matthew 9:15, John 3:29, 1 Corinthians 6:15, 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Revelation 19:7-9 and 21:2?
3. What does Paul specifically ask of wives? Of husbands? In what ways are they the same? How are they different?
4. How did Christ prepare a bride for Himself?
5. How does the bond between Christ and the Church illustrate the love of a husband for his wife?
6. How is bond between husband and wife greater than the bond between parent and child?
7. If you are married, how can you treat your spouse with more respect and love this week?
8. If you are not married, how might you encourage someone in their marriage this week?

**Monday:** Pray for Adam as he moves on to a new church and for the leadership of Glenkirk as they make decisions about our future.

**Tuesday:** Pray for those who are suffering with long-term illnesses. Continue to pray for those out of work.

**Wednesday:** Pray for marriages—those in our congregation and those of your friends.

**Thursday:** Pray for those who are without significant relationships and those who are struggling through divorces, especially for the children of divorced parents.

**Friday:** Pray for the services this weekend, especially those who work



# Monday

Ephesians 5:21-33; Philipians 2:1-11



The church in Philippi was being torn apart because two women were fighting with each other. Paul's response is that rather than fight, they should have the same attitude that Jesus exhibited. What was that? Jesus' attitude that was lived out in very practical ways was one of valuing another over Himself. It was an attitude of being a servant, putting His comfort aside (painfully dying) in order to enable another to become all that he (she) could possibly become. The degree of this type of service is especially astounding when one considers that we were not even sure we wanted His help and that we were the ones who got ourselves in trouble in the first place. So if I am to be like Jesus with another, what do I give up in order to die to something so that another might become who God designed him (her) to be? Jesus gave up His life and God exalted Him, and the promise is that as we give up our lives, God will take care of us too. The question is: Do I practically believe this?

I once heard John Ortberg speak on this passage. John's comment was that Jesus had the same nature of God and that in Jesus we see what God is like. And what do we see? We see One who serves, One who comes doing that which is necessary so that the other might have life to the fullest. So, if we are to be Christ-like, should we not also seek to serve others, to become a slave to others, to die to our comforts for the best of another? I believe this is a little of what Paul is getting at when he writes, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Paul's final words in this passage are that he is not talking as much about marriage as he is talking about Christ and the Church, a profound mystery, a mystery of dying to self in service to others and dependence on God. Who are you called to serve today? How might you today display God's nature to another?

# Tuesday

Ephesians 5:21-33



Can 2 become 1? I'm not a math genius by any stretch, but I know that  $1 + 1 = 2$  and  $1 + 1$  does not equal 1. So, 2 cannot become 1. I'm pretty sure my math teacher of old would agree! Yet somehow, God has this design mystery where 2 become 1.

I think about the early days of my marriage—all of a sudden these two very different people were deciding to become one. That certainly did not go as smoothly as young love makes one believe! Not only did my husband and I come from very different backgrounds in regards to marriage and faith, but we came from two different backgrounds culturally, traditionally, emotionally, socially. (If I could think of other “ally’s,” I’d add them!) Everything was different—from the food we ate to the type of blanket we liked to sleep with!

Along the way, my husband and I have both grown. We have also laughed at the very timely opportunities we've both been given to teach on Ephesians 5. We are quite convinced that God has a great sense of humor! This passage has been used to try to make many points, but ultimately it's about an incredible type of intimacy. It's about putting the other person first!

Men, love your wives as Christ loved the Church. He died for the Church! That was definitely putting our needs ahead of His own! Women, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. That involves a type of trust in wisdom and character that is powerful. If someone were so loyal that they would die for you, would that not speak to character? It's a beautiful circle—one with respect, trust, care, and faith; one where two become one.

This idea of oneness comes by giving yourself up. By choosing not to make it about me and making it about the other, I am focused on *one*. When my husband does the same, there is only *one*. It is a mystery, a beautiful mystery. God designed marriage to be an incredible relationship. A relationship that would model the same beauty He intended for the Church and Christ to have. An incredible intimacy. Something profoundly different than your average relationship. Something where the math didn't work and  $1+1=1!$

# Wednesday



## Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

This whole section is under the idea that we are to act like God because we are His adopted (Ephesians 1) children. We are children who take on the family values only through the adoption process. Paul paints a picture of what this looks like for you as a Church and for you in a family. Verse 21 (“submit to one another”) explains like a title the family section that extends through Ephesians 6:9.

What does it look like to submit to one another? I was recently talking with a newly married couple who was considering a move because of a job. I shared about one of the hardest decisions that I ever made in my marriage. I had an incredible job offer, but it was all the way across the country. As my wife and I prayed, she struggled with the move and I wanted to move. Even after asking for an extension to make the decision, I realized that we were not any closer to agreeing on the decision. I finally came back to her after two weeks and told her that if it wasn't going to work for her, then I would keep looking for another job. I called to let the search committee know that we liked them, but we were struggling with the move and that they could move onto their second candidate; however, we would still be wrestling with the decision. Another two weeks passed, my wife came back to me and surprised me by saying “yes”; she was willing to move.

I then told the couple that while it was one of the hardest decisions I ever made, it was also the best decision I ever made for my marriage. It communicated to my wife that she was more important than a job.

However, I also realize that submitting to one another happens in the everyday decisions of rallying to help with the kids when I am tired after a long day and washing dishes late at night after friends leave. Submission is the Christ-like decision to sacrifice my own desires for the genuine benefit of someone else.

How in this next week can you find one way to submit to someone you love?

# Thursday

Ephesians 5:21-33

I recently had the honor of attending my best friend's wedding. As his bride entered the room to begin her slow walk down the aisle, I couldn't help but think about the Church.

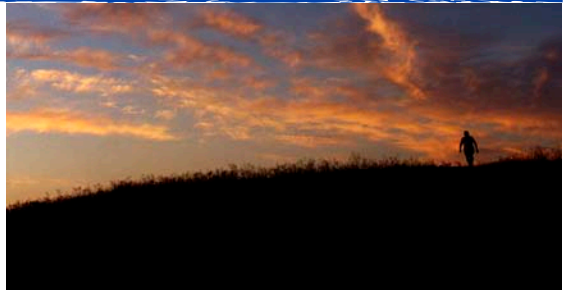
I've always appreciated the understanding of Christ's sacrificial love for us. Much like a husband should live a life that is marked by his devotion, care, and sacrifice for his wife, Christ shows us that same unending love. But as I watched this new bride approach the front of the room, I felt a little guilty. You see, I'm not sure when I last looked at the Church with as much excitement as I felt watching this bride enter the room.

When was the last time that you walked into a worship service on Sunday and felt your heart leap as it would to see a bride walk down the aisle? I'm as guilty on this one as the next person. On a wedding day, we look at the new bride and groom with hope for their future together, and we should look at the Church much in the same way.

Have you ever imagined yourself as that bride? Maybe not in a dress, or holding a bouquet of flowers, but as someone whom Christ looks at in the same way that a groom watches his bride enter the room on their wedding day? Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, not just to give instructions to those in Christ-honoring marriages, but also to give the Church a new understanding for Christ's relationship with them. We are His bride—and He went to the cross to show His love and devotion for us.

Some will read this and wonder if they are worthy to be called the Bride of Christ. The sins of our past can often sneak up on us and can be used to attack our understanding of Christ's love for us. A wedding ceremony represents a new covenant—a husband and wife are called to leave their fathers and mothers and form a new body, washing away the old and giving hope for the future. In the same way, Jesus has washed our past away, that He might make us a new creation.

Today stand high and smile as a bride would as she walks toward the one whom she loves. You are Christ's beloved—and He gave up His life that He might join you in yours.



# Friday

Ephesians 5:21-33, Philippians 2:1-11



Paul ends the discussion by asking husbands and wives to do that which is the hardest for each of them individually to do. For men respect comes easily, but love? For women love comes easily, but they can be very catty. Women easily lose respect, and men easily lose love. Paul begins by calling us to submit to each other and ends by calling us individually to that which we particularly find hard. He calls us to a standard that calls for more than we can give without the help of the Holy Spirit, and we find our hope in God's provision alone.

I remember first hearing this passage taught while I was in my first year of college. Our college pastor asked, "Men, are you willing to give your all so that your wives might become the very person God created them to be? Men, what does this look like? What are her desires and her dreams? How might she make the most of her God-given intelligence and gifts?" And to the women he asked, "If your husbands had as their number one desire that you become your very best self, what would you not do for him? Would you not joyfully submit to him?" What a challenge. All of this made sense to me because this is the type of love I saw displayed in my parents. Is this the type of love we are displaying to others?

But again Paul is going beyond the relationship of husbands and wives to the Church. Am I helping others become all they can be? And maybe even more profound, if Jesus has given His all so that I might become all God created me to be, am I submitting to Him; or do I put limits on my relationship with Jesus in the same way I put limits on all my other relationships? Often in marriage counseling I find women saying, "I don't want the part about submission and obedience." I wonder if I often say this to Jesus: "Jesus, I want your love, but I don't want to be obedient." Maybe I am really saying, "Jesus, I am not sure you really want what's best for me. After all, you allow me to go through some tough things. You call me to make some hard sacrifices?" Scripture sounds great in theory, but putting it into practice can be hard. Is Jesus calling you to submit something to Him, to be obedient in some way?



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