

OUTLINE & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MARRIAGE THROUGH THE CROSS

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EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Symbolism

Submission

Sacrifice

Surrender

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & GROUPS

ICEBREAKER: If you could only eat one condiment for the rest of your life, which one do you choose?

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33 out loud. Give everyone 2-3 minutes in silence to jot down their observations. Go around the group and share observations, discussing them.
2. Verse 21 says to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” before any other instruction is given. Why do you think Paul begins here, before he ever addresses wives or husbands specifically?
3. Verses 26-27 describe what Christ is working to accomplish in and for the church: to make her holy, cleansing her, presenting her as radiant and blameless. What does this tell us about the goal of the husband’s headship?
4. Paul says marriage is a “profound mystery” that points to Christ and the church. If that’s true, what does a healthy marriage actually communicate to the world about Jesus? What does an unhealthy one communicate?
5. The sermon introduced three models of marriage: traditional (one will on top), modern (two wills side by side), and biblical (two wills kneeling). Which model most closely matches what you grew up watching—and how has that shaped your assumptions about marriage?
6. The sermon pointed out that Paul commands husbands to love—and never commands them to rule or assert authority. Why do you think that distinction gets lost so often in conversations about this passage?
7. Paul’s vision of the church in Ephesians is remarkably exalted—seated with Christ, equipped to flourish, becoming radiant. The sermon said this is the standard for how a husband should view and treat his wife. What would it practically look like to treat your spouse with that kind of vision for who they could become?
8. The sermon focused on married couples, but the underlying dynamic—two people surrendering their wills to Jesus in order to serve each other—has implications beyond marriage. Where else might that same posture need to show up in your relationships or community?
9. If you are married: what is one concrete way you could pursue your spouse’s flourishing this week—not their happiness, but their genuine growth?
10. The sermon gave two specific headship responsibilities: set the spiritual tone, and keep the marriage on mission. Which of those feels more underdeveloped in your own marriage right now?
11. If your marriage were the only picture someone had about how Christ relates to the church, what would they conclude about Jesus after observing your home?
12. Where do you most need to experience the paradox of surrender—the idea that dying to your own agenda is the way to find life? What would laying that down actually look like?
13. Pray for the spiritual atmosphere of your home: that it would be a place where people are drawn closer to Jesus, focused on his mission, and becoming more who he is calling them to be.