

“Profound Mystery”

Series: *Man vs. Wife*
(Part 1 of 4 Revision)

Open: Share your definition of marriage.

Explore: Read Ephesians 5:21-33.

In Ephesians 5, Paul outlines God’s plan for Christian behavior in the home. To do so, Paul compares the relationship between husband and wife to the relationship Christ has with the church.

1. How has God called married couples to interact with one another (vs. 21)? What is the connection between our relationships at home and our relationship with God?
2. How are wives to treat their husbands (vs. 22-23)? How are husbands to treat their wives (vs. 25, 28)?
3. In what ways, does the example of Christ help to paint a picture of what the marriage relationship should look like for husbands and wives (vs. 26, 29-32)?
4. Why do you think love and respect are the two most important things a husband and wife can give to one another (vs. 32)?

Reflect: Review key points from the lesson before discussing the questions.

1. List some of the influences shaping people’s view of marriage today (positive and negative). Who or what has had the biggest impact on your view of marriage?
2. Briefly summarize the difference between the three kinds of marriage described in the lesson. What type of marriage would you say most people have with one another?
3. What happens to the marriage commitment when love is defined as a noun rather than a verb?
4. Pastor Tim said, “The best marriages are best friends.” If that is the case, why do we sometimes treat our family members worse than our friends? List the top three things couples can do to make one another better.
5. Read the excerpt from Max Lucado. What stood out to you about the connection between busyness and relationships? If married - What are some things you once did, that you know you need to do again? If single – How will this lesson shape your preparation for marriage in the future?

Apply: Next steps.

As a group: There may be several married couples in your group or someone in your group considering getting married. Why not lift them up to God in prayer? Take time to pray for each couple / individual using the first two letters in the acronym “friends” to guide your thoughts.

With your spouse: Read Ephesians 2:21-33 together or read the excerpt from Max Lucado. Discuss where you are as a couple today (Back to Back / Shoulder to Shoulder / Face to Face). Take some time to share ways you can encourage one another. Finally, plan a date and ask God to give you a “face to face” marriage.

Listening Guide Notes

^[21] “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ^[22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ^[23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ^[24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ^[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ^[26] to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ^[27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ^[28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ^[29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ^[30] for we are members of his body. ^[31] ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ ^[32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ^[33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” —**Ephesians 5:21-33 (p. 816)**

Three kinds of marriage...

1. Back to Back.
2. Shoulder to Shoulder.
3. Face to Face.

The best marriages are...

F – Fruitful.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.”
—**Ecclesiastes 4:9 (p. 463)**

R – Reciprocal.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” —**John 13:34 (p. 751)**

“Busyness” by Max Lucado (a revised reading):

“Busyness is an expert in robbing the sparkle and replacing it with the drab. Busyness invented the yawn and put the hum in the humdrum. The strategy of busyness is deceptive. With the passing of time, he’ll infiltrate your heart with fatigue and cover the cross with dust so you’ll be safely out of reach of change. Busyness won’t steal your marriage from you. He’ll do something far worse. He’ll paint it with the familiar coat of drabness. He’ll replace evening gowns with bathrobes, nights on the town with evenings in the recliner and romance with routine. He’ll scatter the dust of yesterday over the wedding pictures in the hallway until they become a memory of another couple in another time. Hence, walks won’t be taken, games will go unplayed, hearts will go unnurtured, opportunities for intimacy will go ignored, all because the poison of busyness has blinded your eyesight to the wonder of your spouse.”