



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

# Mega-Mystery of Marriage

Bible Reading: Ephesians 5:18b-33

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

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## Marriage in Ephesians— for whom was it written?

A. The exhortations of Eph. 5:22-33 apply:

1. Not to couples in general –non-believers, nor believer-unbeliever couples
2. To committed believers—married & perspective—both wife & husband
3. To couples participating in the Christian “one another” community (Eph. 5:19, 21)
4. To couples who are being filled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
5. To Christ-centered couples engaged with the triune God’s mission to secure a Bride for Christ (Eph. 5:25-27)

B. B. Spirit-filled Believers; Spirit-filled Church; Spirit-filled Marriage: (Eph. 5:18-24)

1. “The picture of marriage...here is *not of 2 needy people*, unsure of their own value & purpose, *finding their significance ...in each other’s arms*. If you add two vacuums to each other, you only get a bigger & stronger vacuum, a giant sucking sound.” –Tim Keller
2. “Paul assumes...each spouse *already has settled the big questions of life*—why they’re made by God & who they are in Christ...[They know how to get ‘fuel’ to] ‘be filled with the Spirit’...If we look to our spouses to ‘fill up our [fuel] tanks’ [as] only God can...we’re demanding the impossible.” –Tim Keller

## A Christ-Centered Literary Structure—the Chiasmus—what’s the Center?

- A. The Chiasmus—Ancient Literary Device—We are reading a 1st-century Mid-East document!
1. Example #1 “The Sabbath for man was made; not man for the Sabbath.” (Mk. 2:27; Gk. word order)
    1. A “The Sabbath
    1. B. for man
      1. X. was made—“X” marks the center/focus
    2. B’ not man
  2. A’ for the Sabbath.”
2. “Chiasmus...focus upon a thematic center or ‘pivot’ ...[e.g.] ABXB’A’. By revealing the conceptual center of the passage ...chiasmus [are] indispensable for...understanding of the...message [of] the biblical writer.”—John Beck
    1. ? Example #1 Concerning the wife [Eph. 5:22-24]
      - A. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord;
      - B. For the husband is the wife’s head, as Christ is head of the church;
      - X. (Central axis) Eph 5:23b, He is the Savior of the Body;
      - B’ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ;
      - A’ So let wives be [subject] to their own husbands in everything.
    2. “Don’t look at your spouse as your Savior”—Tim Keller
      1. What’s needed is “Spirit-generated selflessness...It means taking your mind off yourself & realizing that in Christ your needs are going to be met...Don’t look at your spouse as your Savior.”—Tim Keller
      2. “Stop looking to false forms of salvation, to pseudo-saviors. If you are building your life on your career or your spouse ...& it [he/she] fails, there’s no hope....Why?...Jesus is the only savior who, if you gain him will satisfy you &, if you fail him will [always] forgive you.” —Tim Keller ?
  3. Example #2—Concerning Husbands (Part 1)
    1. Eph 5:25-28 Central Chiasmus
      - A. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church & gave Himself for her;
      - B. That He might sanctify & cleanse her with the washing of water by the word;
      - X. (Axis) That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, without spot, wrinkle...
      - B’ But that she should be holy and without blemish;
      - A’ Husbands ought to love their wives as their bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.
    4. Example #3— Concerning Husbands (Part 2) Eph 5:28-33a
      - A Husbands ought to love their wives as their bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself;
      - B. No one hates his flesh, but nourishes & cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church;
      - C. Because we are members of His body;
      - X. (Central axis)
        - “A man shall leave his father & mother and be joined to his wife,”
        - C’ The two shall become one flesh;
        - B’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ & the church;
        - A’ Nevertheless let each one of you [husbands] so love his own wife as himself.
        - Z’ & the wife see that she respect her husband. [Eph. 5:33b—‘Bookend’ matching A/Z: Eph. 5:22a]
  5. Christ’s Love & Sacrifice—Personal & Corporate aspects (Eph. 5:25; Gal. 2:20)
    1. In Eph. 5:25 “the specific object of Christ’s love is the church...This is the only time the NT specifically mentions Christ’s love for the church.” —Harold Hoehner

### III. Implications: “Christ & Church” intersects with “Husband & Wife”

- A. The Text’s Two Levels: Christ & Church and Husband & Wife
1. Eph. 5:21–33: “moves back and forth between the two levels. The mutual self-giving love of husband & wife images the union of Christ & the Church.” —Kevin McMahon
- B. Our Dual Status—Human Spouses & Members of Christ’s Body & Bride
1. “The text does say...every woman/wife should be in submission to her husband, every *male/husband is also [to be] in subjection to his Heavenly Spouse [Christ].*” —Joseph Spoelstra
- C. “We [both husbands & wives] are members of his body.” (Eph. 5:30 cf. Gal. 3:28)
1. In Eph. 5:30...*husbands...[are] members of Christ’s body...Yet...wives too...are members...The ‘body’ ...in Eph. 5:30 must include both husbands & wives...This is an important point.*” —Gregory Dawes
  2. In the “body...there’s no distinction...between...wives & husbands...[They] have [membership] in common...[Eph. 5:30] *cuts through the equations: Husband = Christ = Authority and Wife = Church = Subordination...Husbands stand alongside their wives [as members] in relation to Christ.*” —Gregory Dawes

