

## EPHESIANS 5:25-33

As the previous passage is foreign to the culture pertaining to wives, this passage is also foreign to the culture pertaining to the husband. Society is trying to make everyone the same, same roles, same responsibilities, even to the point of removing the idea of gender entirely. That runs 100% counter to the way God designed humanity and it is clear in passages like the last one and this one – the word of God is clear, husbands and wives, though equal in value and both equal image bearers of God, have different roles in a marriage.

A good compliment to Ephesians 5:22-33 is 1 Peter 3:1-7...

**1 Peter 3:1–7 (1)** Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, **(2)** when they see your respectful and pure conduct. **(3)** Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— **(4)** but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. **(5)** For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **(6)** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. **(7)** Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. **(ESV)**

These two passages show us beyond a shadow of a doubt that husbands and wives, though they compliment each other, and are of equal worth and value, have different roles in a marriage. So before we get started, let’s talk about some practical ways Paul’s handling of the role of “wife” plays out...read Ephesians 5:22-24 again and write down some expectations of wives.

- For the wives:
  - What are some practical things you can do to begin to live up to these expectations and the calling that God has put on you as a wife?
  - What are some expectations you have of your husband in your pursuit of these things?
  - How can you pray for him in this?

But as you can expect, Paul does not just lay out God’s expectations for wives. He now turns his attention to husbands.

And though what God says about husbands is clear, society has its own definition of and expectations for what husbands should be, what men should be, what masculinity is or isn’t, and given the moral revolution of the past 40 years, it is increasingly evident that not an ounce of it comes from God’s word. As Christians, we need to let God speak into this, and let God define it because He created us as male and female, and purposed husbands and wives to have specific roles and responsibilities.

Read the article at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/twelve-gospel-passages-to-soak-in>.

As a backdrop to looking at God’s definition of and expectations of husbands, we should look at society and see how it treats this subject. We live in this world after all, and we need to see its influences.

1. Society and masculinity
  - a. What are some of the ways you have seen or heard society define “manhood” or “masculinity”?
  - b. From what you have read during this study (or personal bible reading) and what you have heard (sermons, podcasts, etc.) give some thoughts as to how God would respond to that and why.

## 2. Society and marriage

- a. Write down some ways that society treats marriage
- b. Write down some ways that society treats gender roles
- c. What are some side effects of these treatments?
- d. If you were to address society, what would you tell them to expect given their view of marriage?

And with that, let's dig into what God has to say on this topic!

1. Paul has laid out some expectations on the wives in verses 22-24, now he turns his attention to the husbands. Let's summarize some of it.
  - a. Read Ephesians 5:25-31
    - i. Summarize each of the commands/expectations to husbands into one or two words each
    - ii. How many did you count? (this may be different depending on how you break up the commands)
  - b. However many you counted, in what ways are they all related?
  - c. As you read this passage, always keep in mind that Paul is using Jesus and His work as a model for husbands to follow
  - d. The expectation on you as a husband is "be Jesus for your wife"
    - i. You are "being Jesus" for your wife. What Jesus are you being for her?
    - ii. Do you know who Jesus is well enough to "be Him" for your wife?
    - iii. Wives – do you know Jesus well enough to know what Jesus to expect your husband to show you?
2. In verse 25, what is the first command that God gives to husbands?
  - a. Before looking it up, each of you write down your thoughts on love as husbands and wives, as a couple, what love looks like, how you demonstrate it, etc. (do this without talking to each other before or during). When you are done, compare your answers.
  - b. Were you surprised at some of your spouse's answers?
  - c. Read 1 Corinthians 13. Is your definition of love consistent with this? Is the way you demonstrate love consistent with this?
3. In verse 25, Paul describes the foundation for the way that husbands are to love their wives
  - a. What is this foundation?
  - b. What is the church?
    - i. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
  - c. What is the first way that Paul describes Jesus "loving the church"?
    - i. Romans 5:6-8
    - ii. Isaiah 53:4-6
    - iii. John 10:7-18
  - d. What does Paul mean by "gave Himself up"?
  - e. Who were we when Jesus "gave Himself up" for us?
  - f. What excuses are there for a husband to not love their wife? How does this help you in those times when she may not be so loveable?
  - g. How can we as husbands do this practically?
  - h. Husbands, remember that your love for your wife will be measured against the standard of "love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." You can't do that without Jesus, so be seeking Him daily for forgiveness, for strength, for endurance, and for wisdom.

4. Jesus' love for His church results in action, He *died* for His people!
  - a. Husbands, how does your love for your wife show itself?
  - b. Wives, how do you receive this display?
5. Read the following passages to see some of the things that Jesus accomplished by His death on the cross. From each verse, write down the thing (or things) that Jesus accomplished and some specific things that you are thankful for or that you have come to understand in reading them
  - a. John 15:12-17
  - b. Romans 5:6-11
  - c. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
  - d. John 19:30
  - e. Colossians 2:13-15
  - f. Hebrews 2:14
  - g. Hebrews 9:15-16
  - h. 1 Peter 1:18-19
  - i. 1 Peter 2:24
  - j. 1 Peter 3:18
6. Verse 26 gives the reason Jesus gave Himself up. What is that reason?
  - a. Define "sanctify"
  - b. How does Jesus accomplish this sanctification? (Read Titus 3:3-7 for more context)
  - c. Husbands, how can you do this "in the same way" for your wife?
  - d. Wives, how can you help your husband do this?
7. Verse 27 gives the goal of this sanctifying work.
  - a. What is the goal?
  - b. Husbands, is this your goal for your wife? How can we help each other in this?
  - c. Wives, what kinds of things would you like your husband to do/provide/set aside/take on in order to provide an environment where you can be washed by the word?
  - d. Husbands, what does "giving yourself up" look like in this context? What things do you need to "give up"?
8. Verse 28 tells husbands *how* they are to love their wives
  - a. This verse begins with the phrase "in the same way...". What is this referring to?
  - b. What would/should this "same way" look like in your marriage?
  - c. Does this encourage you? Frighten you? Make you feel unable?
  - d. The verse ends comparing a kind of love we must have for our wives. What is the comparison? Husbands, Is that true of you?
  - e. What is the result of loving your wife?
  - f. Wives, would you say that your husband loves you like this?
9. Verse 29 tells husbands what kind of environment they are to provide for their wives
  - a. What should this environment lead to in the wife?
  - b. Define *nourish*. How can your wife be nourished by you?
  - c. Define *cherish*. Does your marriage display a cherished wife?
  - d. Extra credit – find some passages that describe how Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church. You can use Google if you want)
10. Verse 30 uses the *body* analogy again to describe Christians. The reason Jesus cares for us is because we are members of His body.
11. Verse 31 makes it blatant – this is why the body analogy is used to describe love
  - a. There are two commands for the husband in verse 31, what are they?

- i. Why do you suppose it is important for a man to leave his father and mother? What would that involve in the ancient world? What does it involve now?
    - ii. Why would Paul tell men to hold fast to their wives?
  - b. Now, here is where the body analogy that Paul has been using becomes so important – what happens in a marriage relationship to the couple...what do they become?
    - i. Read Genesis 2:18-23
    - ii. What implications does this have for your marriage?
    - iii. Do you see yourselves as “one flesh?”
- 12. Now comes probably the most important and challenging part of this passage, the purpose for marriage
  - a. According to verse 32, what is the purpose of marriage?
  - b. Read the following:
    - i. Revelation 18:21-24
    - ii. Revelation 19:6-10
    - iii. Revelation 21:9-14
    - iv. 2 Corinthians 11:2
    - v. John 3:25-30
    - vi. Who is the bridegroom?
    - vii. Who is the bride?
  - c. Read the following
    - i. Ephesians 4:12
    - ii. 1 Corinthians 10:14-17
    - iii. 1 Corinthians 6:15-17
    - iv. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13
    - v. Colossians 1:24-28
    - vi. What is the body of Christ?
  - d. Describe the relationship between Jesus and the church in terms of this body/union language.
  - e. Given that the marriage relationship is ultimately a picture of Jesus and His church, husbands, how are you fulfilling the role of “Jesus” in your marriage? Wives, how are you filling the role of “the church” in your marriage?
  - f. Are people seeing the right picture of Jesus and His church in your marriage?
- 13. Finally, Paul closes this with a somewhat subdued call to action
  - a. What is his command for husbands?
  - b. What is his command for wives?
  - c. How does that fit into the body analogy he has been using?

Ephesians 5 is a fantastic chapter to see how a husband and wife are to see themselves – as one body, as one flesh, and ultimately, as a picture of the relationship between Jesus and His church. He is called the bridegroom, and we are called the bride all throughout the New Testament, and that has implications for our everyday.

Jesus left His Father to redeem His bride, the church. He has sealed Himself to her through His life, death, and resurrection. He has sent the Holy Spirit to live in us as a seal of His promise. And He is preparing a place for us even now, until He returns to present His bride, the church, to His Father, unstained, without spot or blemish.

How can seeing our marriages as a very real picture of this relationship help us fulfill our purpose for why God brought us together in the first place?

What kind of world would it be if every Christian marriage reflected Ephesians 5 well?