

## Men and Women

**Opener:** Describe the most happily married couple you've ever known.

**Scripture:** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body. Ephesians 5:21-30

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Colossians 3:18-19

### Discussion Questions

1. Paul tells us to “submit to one another out of reverence to Christ.” Give examples that illustrate how we submit to one another within the church and how that demonstrates reverence for Christ. Describe situations in the church where this mutual submission did not happen. Ephesians 5:21
2. Paul then instructs wives to submit to their husbands. How has this verse been misunderstood to the detriment of wives and marriages? How should it be understood? How is submission different from simply following orders or being subservient? Ephesians 5:22-24
3. What are some practical ways husbands can “give themselves up for their wives” and “love their wives as their own bodies?” How does love help a husband and wife submit to one another in a way that honors God? Ephesians 5:25-29
4. Why are the commands to wives and husbands different and how do they complement one another? How can husbands and wives use their unique roles and responsibilities in marriage to help one another grow closer to the Lord? Ephesians 5:22-27; Colossians 3:18-19
5. To what extent do examples of mutual submission within the church foster the kinds of marriages Paul describes? Ephesians 5:21-30
6. Sadly, many marriages fail. What were some reasons they fail? How do those reasons have their root in the failure of what Paul describes here as God's plan for marriage?
7. How can the relationship between a husband and wife reflect Christ's relationship with the Church? Ephesians 5:29-30

**Wrap Up:** Let's begin with the obvious. The head and body are profoundly interdependent. You can't have one without the other. No one wants a bodiless head or a headless body. And in these verses, Paul compares the relationship between a husband and wife to the relationship between Jesus and the church, which tells us that the body as a whole does not exist for its own sake, but shines as a witness to the life changing love Jesus has for the church. So contrary to popular wisdom, marriage is not about finding your soul mate as the secret to a meaningful life. It's about something much bigger.