



INTRODUCTION

Part 3 - Marriage

There are a lot of opinions these days about marriage, family and singleness—opinions that are often contradictory and unhelpful.

In this series, *Family Matters*, we will be looking at various Bible passages to help us understand God's design and plan for some of the most significant relationships we will ever have.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think are some of the main challenges facing marriages these days?
2. How would you define the word, "submission?" Do you think our culture views submission as a positive or a negative quality? Explain your answer.
3. Read Ephesians 5:18-21. Why is it important that we have a submissive attitude toward one another? How might submissiveness help with other relationships?
4. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. How does the picture of Christ and the church provide a good illustration of how marriage should work?
5. Why do you think verses 22-24 are so offensive in our culture? What do you believe these verses mean? How practically should they be applied?
6. Do you think submission means we need to allow others to mistreat or abuse us? Explain your answer.
7. Read Ephesians 5:25-29. What do we learn from these verses about what it means for a husband to love his wife well? How might this be fleshed out in a marriage?
8. Do you feel husbands and wives should fulfill their roles within the marriage context regardless of what their spouse does? Why or why not?
9. Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. What similarities do you see between this passage and the Ephesians 5 passage? What differences do you notice?
10. How practically can we love and serve one another better in our marriage (or in relationships in general)?

APPLICATION

There are plenty of challenges facing marriages today. Husbands and wives can disagree on important topics, not communicate as well as they should, or think their way of doing things is always better. More specifically, an increasing number of relationships see a struggle for power over the marriage and the household. But a marriage shouldn't be about who's in charge—it should be about working together, respecting one another, and putting your spouse before yourself.

Often times, husbands or wives may find difficulty in sacrificing what they want for the sake of their spouse. However, it's not about letting others take advantage of you, or someone else forcing you to always do what they want—it's choosing to set aside what you want for the sake of someone else. While a husband doesn't need to make all decisions, and a wife doesn't need to challenge everything, spouses do need to feel mutually respected and loved.

Having the ability to put our spouse's wants and needs before our own, and not always insisting on getting our own way can lead to more happiness in a marriage, because marriage is very much about give and take. When we choose to yield to—or give preference to—our spouse, we can begin to model our marriages after Christ and the church.

KEY VERSES

Ephesians 5:21-33
1 Peter 3:1-7