

# Marriage in the family of God

Ephesians 3–5

## A) A brief theology of marriage

### 1. The design of marriage

A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 ESVUK)

### 2. The purpose of marriage

Marriage models and mirrors the relationship between Christ and his people

<sup>31</sup> “A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31–32 ESVUK)



### 3. How God uses marriage in the Bible to mirror the relationship between Christ and his church

**Question:** How does this picture of marriage describe the relationship between God and his people?

- a) Marriage and creation: Genesis 2:18–25 and Ephesians 5:22–33
- b) Marriage and the fall: Hosea 1:2
- c) Marriage and redemption: Isaiah 62:1–5
- d) Marriage and the new creation: Revelation 21:1–4

#### Implications:

- i) Marriage should neither be undervalued nor overvalued
- ii) Sex should neither be undervalued nor overvalued

#### Group breakout questions

From what you've understood, how would you explain to someone else about the way marriage is used in the Bible to display the relationship between God and his people?

How has this encouraged, challenged, or deepened your view on what the purpose of marriage is?

If you are married, what steps do you need to take in your relationships to display more faithfully the gospel to the world and the church family?

If you are single, in what ways do you feel you've been influenced by the world in evaluating your relationship status?

Whether you are married or single, how does what we've learnt from the Bible help us to battle feelings of discontentment in our relationships?

## B) Married couples are Christians...

5:2 Walk in **love**, **as Christ loved us** **and gave himself up** for us.  
5:25 Husbands, **love** your wives, **as Christ loved** the church **and gave himself up** for her.

...who...

...read their Bibles (Ephesians 4:11–16)

...say their prayers (Ephesians 3:14–19)

...go to church (Ephesians 4:11–16)

### Implications:

Ephesians 4:25–5:2 ESVUK

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.

a) Be truthful

<sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup> Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

b) Be in control of anger

<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

c) Build each other up

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

<sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

d) Forgive each other

<sup>1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

### Questions for married couples

Take time to talk about how you may be able to encourage each other to hear God's word taught to you, how you plan to speak the word of God to each other, and when you might pray together. What practical steps can you put in place today to facilitate these plans?

Do you both feel that you are spending enough time together to allow good communication to develop? What needs to change in order to make this easier?

What have you learnt about your spouse during the lockdown that has encouraged/challenged you, and what lockdown practices will you take into your marriage once we come out of lockdown?

Think back over situations where you've disagreed and conflict has arisen. How could you have done things differently? How can you pray for each other about attitudes that need to change?

Take some time to pray that God would keep working in your heart so that, out of love for Jesus, you would be able to reflect Christ-like characteristics towards one another.