

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments as you feel necessary to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

Ephesians – “The depth of God’s grace lived out in love.”

Ephesians 5:25-33

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

3 – Points of Sunday’s Sermon

- **The Command**
- **The Example**
- **The Application**

Read Eph. 5:21-33

I. The Command

- What is one challenge to harmony that you face in your relationships?
- **Read verse 21** and discuss what it means to be “submitting to one another” within the Church? Read the following quote to help answer this question.
 - In this text a result of believers filled by the Spirit is submission to one another in the body of believers. Unbelievers tend to take great pride in individualism and independence, which leads to selfishness. However, believers are to act differently. Jesus instructed the disciples that the world would know that they are his disciples if they love one another. Also, in other context Paul instructs believers to love one another with brotherly love and to prefer one another by showing honor and humility to count the other better than themselves. - **Hoehner**
- Why is submission to one another important for harmony within the Church?
- Why is submission so hard for many people?

- What are some practical ways you could submit to other Christian?
- What statements in Eph. 5:22-24 spark controversy? How does a careful reading of this entire section (v 22-33) refute most, if not all, of what the modern feminist movement claims about Christianity's view of women?
- What is the God-given role of a Christian wife?
- What is the God-given role of a Christian husband?
- Why does a wife's submissive character bring glory to Christ in the world?
- Based on the analogy of Christ, what is the scope of the authority granted to a husband in a Christian marriage?
- Why do you think Paul spends so much time talking about the husband's role in marriage compared to the wife's?

II. The Example

- In what ways is verse 25 an impossible command?
- **Read** the following verses and discuss how Jesus loved the church.
 - John 10:11
 - John 10:17
 - John 15:13
 - Philippians 2:3-8
 - John 13:1-15
- How should the example of Jesus in the previous verses shape the role of the husband within marriage?
- **Read and discuss** the following quote.
 - Obviously, no sinful human being has the capability to love with the divine fullness and perfection with which Christ loved, and will forever love, the church. However, because a Christian has Christ's own nature and Holy Spirit within him, God thereby provides for husbands to love their wives with a measure of Christ's own kind of love. The husband who submits to the Lord by being filled with His Spirit is able to love his wife with the same kind of love Jesus has for His own bride, the church. – **John MacArthur**

- Paul calls husbands to love their wives in a way that is profoundly shaped by Christ’s love for the Church and his work on the cross – he “gave himself up for her.” (5:25)
 - What was Christ’s goal for the church when he died in her place? Read Eph. 5:26-27 to help answer this question.
 - How, then, might the commands given to the Christian husband make greater demands than the commands given to the Christian wife?
- **Read Eph. 5:28-30.** How should the body analogies of a man’s self-care inform the husband’s practice of love toward his wife?

III. The Application

- In verse 22 what do the words “nourishes” and “cherishes” mean? How should a husband “nourish” and “cherish” his wife?
- How might a husband display “sacrificial love” practically?
- How might a husband display “sanctifying love” practically?
- **Read and discuss** the following quote.
 - Now when the husband is called “the head of the wife,” and it goes on to say, “as Christ is head of the Church,” something of the divine splendor is reflected in our earthly relationships, and this reflection we should recognize and honor. The dignity that is here ascribed to the man lies, not in any capacities or qualities of his own, but in the office conferred on him by his marriage. The wife should see her husband clothed in this dignity. But for him it is he who is responsible for his wife, for their marriage, and for their home. On him falls the care and protection of the family; he represents it to the outside world; he is its mainstay and comfort; he is the master of the house, who exhorts, punishes, helps, and comforts, and stands for it before God. – **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Take some time to pray for the marriages at Country Oaks.