

YOU WERE MADE TO MARRY:
Marry Christ and only then a Spouse
EPHESIANS 5:21-33

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³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Eph 5:31-32^{ESV}

Introduction: Ephesians 5:15-21 *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,....be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another..., singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things..., and be[ing] subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Ephesians: Life in the Spirit, p.37 He says that such conduct is quite impossible without that essential preliminary condition. But people today do not believe in the Holy Spirit; they do not believe in the Person of the Holy Spirit. They talk about the "Christian Spirit" and the 'spirit of brotherhood and goodwill' and so on. That is not Christianity; that is morality, that is pagan teaching.

Jesus' instructions to love enemies, extend incredible grace, give to him who asks of you, and to be poor in spirit, gentle, merciful, peacemakers, do not end with the saying of marriage vows.

The one who calls us to such a life is our Creator and Redeemer, high and lifted up. He speaks and worlds are formed. He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Yet he is holy, holy, holy and his wrath is a consuming fire. Yet there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared.

ONE: 5:18-21 You Were Made to Marry Christ and only then a Spouse:

PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS NEVER MY HERO; HE WAS FULL OF A WEAK FAMILY SPIRIT.

Highly recommended: *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*, Timothy Keller with Kathy Keller, Dutton, 2011.

Seeking appropriate compatibility is proper, but no spouse will be who we need them to be. C.S. Lewis wisely says that as a result of the rebellion and fall the only choice you have if you chose to marry is to marry a sub-human. No complete humans as God intended now exist. Only Jesus is available as a fully-human spouse.

YOU WERE MADE TO MARRY: Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation.

C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves, New York: Harcourt, 1960, p. 123.

We proclaim new life in Christ: joyous new life, new reality that changes everything.

TWO: 5:21-25 You Were Made to Marry Christ and only then a Spouse:

ONLY THE LOVED KNOW HOW TO SERVE AND SUBMIT.

The gospel must be at the center: NO MORALISTIC HUMAN RELIGION (earn-the-right-to-be-loved/accepted—and the right to make demands!) AND NO LAWLESS FREEDOM (to demand my self-fulfillment and pleasure). Neither will provide a marital/relational garden for growth and fruitfulness.

Eve failed to respect/submit to Adam; Adam failed to serve/love Eve.

Husbands show submission in loving service; wives show submission in respect as a helper fit.

Christ is our life and our model: Ephesians 5:21; **Philippians 2:2-3, 4-8.**

The wife is a helper fit: Genesis 2:18, compare also Psalm 30:10 & Psalm 54:4.

While many have sought to make Galatians 3:28 (with Colossians 3:11) the interpretive key to all other New Testament texts on male/female roles, a fair reading of Ephesians 5 must include husbandly headship with authority. Paul is certainly not saying as many current attempts imply: *parents are to submit to children.* In the progress of redemption Paul (and we) are still in the time of the already & the not-yet. Headship/authority has not been done away, but Jesus transforms leadership into loving servanthood. Jesus defines Gospel/Kingdom-centered headship/leadership.

THREE: 5:26-31 You Made to Marry Christ and only then a Spouse:

ONLY THE LOVED KNOW HOW TO BE CORRECTED AND CORRECT.

We desire marriage in Christ to wash us because we know we are dirty.

We must keep in balance at least two-things: the gospel-centered/grace-centered nature of marriage
AND
the also-gospel-centered desire to see our spouses mature/be transformed into the image of Christ.

The washing with the water of the Word is not about baptism per se but about the cleansing and welcoming reality spelled out in the now-revealed mystery of the gospel. *Eph 1:3-4; Eze 16:8-14*

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we would be holy and blameless before Him.** (Eph 1:3-4 NAU)

- Godly spouses desire to change and see change because we love one another and love Christ.
- We are brothers and sisters as well as husbands and wives: Gal 6:1 and Matt 18 apply within marriage.
- We long to grow up that Christ our head might be seen ruling in his church and his families.
- We aid our spouse's being transformed by going about it in Christ's way: trusting Christ with the outcome whether we see quick change or *seem to be* (within biblical limits) being taken advantage of as was Jesus.

In Christ Jesus, we—his bride—have the husband we need, who can truly be our satisfaction.