

MADE FOR RELATIONSHIP: MARRIAGE



Ephesians 5:21-33

KEY TRUTHS

- Marriage is a life-long union of difference between one man and one woman.
- Marriage is no better than singleness. Some are called to marriage, some to singleness, both situations have real benefits and real limitations, one is no 'better' than the other.
- Marriage is not a disposable commodity. As a life-long bond, we should seek to uphold and preserve a marriage wherever possible, marriage has real value and our attitude towards it should show this.
- Marriage isn't just about the people within it, but rather it should enrich society and strengthen community, in the words of the Anglican Marriage Service. A Christian marriage serves those around it.
- Sex is a good gift from God that's intended for the context of marriage.
- Marriage is a covenant not a contract, it's about what each partner can give to one another, not what each will get. It's about how the marriage will give to the Church and community around it, not about separating off from it.
- Jesus will marry the Church, this is the pattern in which human marriage is set. Marriage should be a picture pointing us towards Jesus, an echo of how much we are loved by God.

CULTURAL FALSEHOODS

- Marriage is unnecessary, but a useful financial choice.
- Marriage is just a formalised version of living together.
- Marriage should chiefly serve your own needs.
- You can marry and divorce for any reason, so don't worry about the commitment.

START THE CONVERSATION

- What's the best example of marriage you can think of?
- How has your opinion or awareness of marriage changed over your lifetime?
- Have you got any funny wedding stories?
- Is marriage even relevant to the majority of people you live your life with?

GOING DEEPER

Pray. Ask God to be present with you as you explore this topic together. Invite the Holy Spirit to open your hearts to God's word, then...

Read Ephesians 5:21-33 together. Talk together about what is probably a familiar passage to many.

- What brings you real hope in the message of this passage?
- What do you find most difficult or confusing about this passage?

As Christians, we're called to be counter-cultural in everything we do. In the culture of the time was even more common than now to have multiple partners and view marriage in a somewhat disposable way.

- What can you see in this passage that counters the dominant culture of today?

There's a sacramental flavour to the covenant of marriage. Something that's sacramental is a visible sign of an invisible reality, when we act out something that points to a deeper spiritual truth. We know that covenant focuses on what we can give, not what we get, but it is also an agreement made in the sight of God, with God. When God makes covenants with his people in the Bible, he makes a promise and in exchange he asks the other party to fulfil certain commitments, but the whole thing is underwritten by God. In Jesus, our inability to stick to our side of a covenant is taken care of. Jesus bridges the gap and underwrites our inadequacies and inability.

Christ submitted himself to us, the Church, in willingly dying on the cross. That is core to his love for us. Bearing this in mind, chat together about how this passage should impact the way husbands and wives relate to each other.

- How do our marriages, our future marriages, or the marriages we speak into as friends and family display this love well?
- Are there ways we could do it better?

How do we see God in this picture of marriage? Take some time to explore the way God's love for us is painted by a Christian picture of marriage.

How can we be a bigger part of the marriages we come into contact with in our lives? And, in doing so, how can we help them and ourselves to become more like Jesus?

FURTHER READING

[On Marriage | Timothy and Kathy Keller](#)

[The Marriage Book | Nicky and Sila Lee](#)

[The Five Love Languages | Gary Chapman](#)

VIDEOS, PODCASTS & BLOGS

[Marriage in Gospel Focus | Timothy and Kathy Keller \(Video\)](#)

[Covenant in the Bible | The Bible Project \(Blog\)](#)