

## **BIBLICAL MANHOOD & WOMANHOOD GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE**

### **Ephesians 5: 15-33**

*Be sure to review this week's catechism question.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. What are some reasons people get married?
2. What do the following passages give as purposes of marriage?
  - Malachi 2: 15 *For producing godly children*
  - 1 Corinthians 7: 2 *For avoiding sexual immorality*
  - Proverbs 5: 15-19 *For enjoying sexual relations and romantic love*
  - Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12 *There are economic advantages to marriage and mutual support and encouragement*

There are many good reasons to get married. There are a variety of purposes for which God made marriage. However, there is one ultimate purpose for which God made marriage. The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5: 28-32, gives God's ultimate purpose for marriage.

3. Have someone read Ephesians 5: 31 and then Genesis 2:24. Notice, that Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 in his letter. What is Genesis 2:24 describing?

*Genesis 2:24 is describing God's definition of marriage. A marriage has occurred when three things have taken place, in this order. First, a new social unit is formed that is recognized as marriage by the particular culture in which the couple lives ("a man will leave his father and mother"). In our culture this means a couple must obtain a marriage license and then have either a civil or religious ceremony and then the signing of the marriage certificate. Second, a permanent, lifelong covenant is entered into ("be united to his wife). Third, there is the consummation of the marriage in sexual intercourse. If these three conditions are not met, there is no marriage.*

4. Notice that the quote begins with the phrase, "for this reason." In Ephesians 5:31 what is the reason that marriage exists? Look at vv. 28-30. In verse 32, what does the "this" refer to in, "this is a profound mystery"?

*Marriage exists because Jesus is the head of the church. Or another way to say it, marriage exists because the church is his body, which he feeds and cares for. Or another way to say it, marriage exists because Jesus is united to his church and therefore what happens to the church is what happens to Jesus and what happens to Jesus is what happens to the church.*

The ultimate purpose of marriage is the glory of God in loving and relating to the church. Marriage is a parable, a picture of that glorious relationship. Marriage is not just simply a human institution that fulfills human needs and aspirations. Marriage is not simply a fundamental building block of a stable society. Marriage is a divine institution with a divine purpose.

**God's ultimate purpose for marriage is to display the greatness of his love for his church therefore...**

#### **STUDY**

5. In verses 15-18 Paul contrasts several ways of living life. What are the contrasts?
  - *Careful vs. careless*
  - *Wise vs. foolish*
  - *Understanding the Lord's will vs. foolish*
  - *Filled with wine, i.e., drunk vs. filled with the Holy Spirit*
6. In verse 16, why should we be careful, wise and Spirit-filled people? What does he mean by this? Read 4: 14, 17-19, 22, 26, 5:5-6, 6: 10-16.

*We should live like this because the days are evil. When he says the days are evil he means that if we do not consciously and aggressively live filled with the Spirit we will naturally be overcome by the evil that is in this world. We will end up being overcome by evil and doing evil and so suffer the consequences that evil people suffer, the wrath of God. There is no coasting in the Christian life; there is no neutral ground.*

*You are either aggressively pursuing Christ or you are being overcome by evil.*

7. Why does Paul compare living a careless, foolish, “not understanding the Lord’s will” life to drunkenness?

*Drunken people are not fully aware of reality. They cannot deal with danger or be alert to trouble. They cannot cope with the world as it really exists but are seeking to escape the world as it really is. They are seeking a false happiness; a happiness that is not true or based upon reality. They live lives of dissipation; lives that are a waste and accomplish nothing of any good to themselves or anyone else. I am convinced that Paul is using drunkenness as a symbol. The point Paul is making is this. Don’t seek to find your happiness in the things of this world. Don’t be under the control of food or money or sex or drugs or a successful career or the respect of others or the love of your spouse. When you are controlled by anyone or anything other than the Spirit of God you are not living in the real world.*

8. What does it mean to “be being filled with the Spirit,” in light of the contrast with drunkenness and the connection with careful, wise, knowing the Lord’s will living?

*We are alert to God and the things of God. We are eager to apply all of God’s truth to our lives. We are in submission to God and his ways. We depend upon the Spirit to enable us to love God and to obey God. Our lives are full of God (see 3:14-21 & 4:13), full of Christ. Just as a drunk person is under the control of an external substance that has become internal; so the Christian is under the control of One who is external to himself but who becomes an internal influence over all of his life. Drunkenness influences all of life and so being filled with the Spirit influences all of life.*

9. According to vv. 19-21, what are the chief results or evidences of a Spirit-filled life?

*You become a part of a community who joyfully worships God together. You seek to encourage one another by recounting the greatness of God to one another in song. Your heart is full of joy in God and sings to him. You are a grateful person, always thanking God for everything*

*that he is and does for you. You relate to God as your Father but only through the person and work of Jesus. You delight to put the needs of other believers ahead of your own needs. You are submissive to other Christians needs and wants and seek to do all you can to meet the needs of others. You do this because you are so in awe of Jesus and so aware of his coming in judgment and salvation and you do not want there to be any question as to which side you are on.*

10. As you look at your life, which of these contrasted ways of living best describes your way of life? What must you do to live a more careful, wise and Spirit-filled life?

**God’s ultimate purpose for marriage is to display the greatness of his love for his church therefore only Christians can fulfill the ultimate purpose of marriage**

11. Paul presumes that the wives and husbands to whom he speaks in vv. 22-33 are living as he commands in vv. 15-21. In v. 22 he commands wives to submit to their own husbands.

12. Why does he tell wives to do this?

*He tells wives to submit to their husbands because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.*

13. He uses an analogy to describe the relationship of the husband to the wife. In light of the analogy, what does it mean for the husband to be the head of the wife? Why does Paul add the phrase, “his body, of which he is the Savior”?

*When Paul says that Christ is the head of the church he means that Christ is in charge of the church. He is using the metaphor of the relationship of the head to the body. The head controls all the functions of the body, so Christ directs the functions of his body, the church. It means that the husband is in the position of leader in the relationship. He is the one who is responsible for making sure that his wife and their family live to the glory of God. But he is a leader who has as his chief objective the well being of his wife. That is why Paul so quickly points out that Jesus’ headship is the headship of a Savior.*

14. Look at Eph. 1: 19b-23. How did Jesus become the head of the church? What does this mean about the headship of the husband?

*Jesus became head over the church by divine appointment. In the same way the husband is the head of the wife by God's design. He is not the head of the church because of who or what he is in himself. Men don't earn the position of head, nor do they deserve it because of who they are. Men are the head of the wife because God says so.*

15. How are wives to submit to their husbands (vv. 22b, 24 and 33)?

*First the wife submits to her husband as she submits to Jesus. In other words the way she submits to Jesus is by submitting to her husband. She views her submission to her husband as submission to Jesus. Again, Paul uses the analogy of the church to Jesus. The church submits to Jesus voluntarily. There is no place that the Bible commands husbands to make their wives submit. In fact, as we will see, husbands are commanded to do just the opposite. Any husband who tells his wife to submit is sinning. The church submits to Jesus cheerfully. The church submits to Jesus by faith, trusting him to provide for her and protect her. And, as Paul makes explicit, the church submits to Christ in everything. There is no part of life that the Christian isn't concerned with the will of Jesus. The church also submits to Jesus respectfully, conscious of his position over her as her head and Savior. A wife is to seek to encourage and welcome her husband's leadership. The wife looks for ways she can strengthen her husband's leadership. She does not resist or undermine his leadership.*

16. Does submission mean that wives are inferior to their husbands or less valuable and important in the marriage or to God? Why or why not?

*It does not mean that wives are less important or valuable. This is a false presumption that underlies most of feminist hostility to this entire concept. Feminist criticism of this command for wives to submit to their husbands is based upon this false assertion, that subordination automatically means the inferiority of the woman and oppression by the man. If submission means inferiority then the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is not fully God because he has eternally submitted to his Father. If headship means oppression then the Father has been oppressing the*

*Son for all of eternity. It's important that we remember that the husband is head of the wife like Jesus is head of the church. The husband is not Jesus. He is like Jesus in a very narrow sense. The relationship of leadership/submission is between equals.*

17. How does the relationship between a general contractor and the electrician he hires to wire the house illustrate the relationship between a husband and wife?

*Both are fully human. Both are necessary to the building of the house. The general contractor is in charge of how the house is built but he depends upon the electrician to wire the house. In fact, the electrician is way more competent in wiring than the contractor. The contractor depends upon the electrician using all his skills and abilities to help him build the house. He depends upon the electrician telling him when something he plans to do is not going to work. In fact, there is a sense in which the general contractor submits to the electrician when it comes to wiring the house. Yet the electrician is helping the contractor to fulfill his purpose of building the house. There is no question that the contractor is in charge.*

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18. In light of what Paul tells wives to do, how is his command to husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church in v. 25 surprising?

*It would seem that the more natural thing for Paul to say to husbands would be that they should "be head over their wives" or "lead their wives". It is surprising that he tells husbands to love their wives. Again, this reinforces the fact that husbands are never to command their wives submit but rather that they love.*

19. What are some ways in which Jesus loved the church by dying for her that husbands are to emulate?

➤ *"and gave himself up for her" The love of Jesus for the church required suffering. He laid aside all thoughts of his own comfort*

and gave himself for her. As C.S. Lewis says, "A man's marriage is most the way God would want it when it is most like a crucifixion. When he gives the most and gets the least."

➤ Romans 5: 8 *Jesus died for his church when each and every member of it was living in rebellion to him. He didn't die for the church when the church was respecting him and submitting to him. He died for the church when each member of it was acting as his enemy and despising him and his ways. In the same way, husbands don't wait for their wives to submit before they love them. Husbands always take the initiative to do good for their wives without any expectation of reward or demand that they treat them well.*

➤ Ephesians 5: 26-27 *Jesus died for the church in order to make her eternally happy in his presence. Jesus died to secure the infinite happiness of the church. Husbands cannot do anything to save their wives but the leadership they are providing has the eternal well being of their wives in view. Christian husbands love their wives in order that their wives will discover how great Jesus is and love and trust him above all other things. The Christian husband doesn't love his wife just so she can be happy on planet earth. He doesn't love her so that she'll do his bidding. He loves her with the hope and prayer that she will stand holy and blameless before Christ at the final judgment. The Christian husband has a very clear goal in mind, that his wife and children will love and trust Christ above all. That is the goal to which he leads his family and that is the goal he needs his wife help to attain.*

➤ Ephesians 5: 28-30 *Jesus nourishes and protects his church because it is his body. He does it joyfully and without regret. Just like humans take care of their own physical bodies and are sensitive to the needs of their bodies so Jesus is sensitive to the needs of his church. So husbands are sensitive to the needs of their wives and seek to meet their needs.*

20. Why should husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church?

*There are two things that motivate the Christian husband to love their wives as Christ loved the church when he died for her. First, he delights to see Christ honored in his love for his wife. He wants to fulfill God's purpose for his marriage. Second, it makes him happy when his wife is happy. The Christian husband delights to make his*

*wife happy just like he delights to make his own body happy. His happiness is bound up with her happiness. When you're body is hungry and you feed it, aren't you happy? When you're body is thirsty and you drink, doesn't that make you happy? In the same way, a Christian husband loves his wife because doing so makes him very happy.*

21. What do you think would happen to wives who were loved like this by their husbands?

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