



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH

# EPHESIANS

## SESSION 10B: THE IDEAL FOR MARRIAGE

Ephesians 5:21-33

*“Exploring the new standards and new relationships God intends for us”*

*By Rev. Rick Dietzman, Minister of Adult Discipleship*

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the [spoken] word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- for we are members of his body.” - Ephesians 5:25-30*

1. How is the husband supposed to love his wife? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Ephesians 5:26 talks about the spoken word (*rhema*) being the way the wife is made holy. How does time spent in meaningful conversation tend to fill a woman up? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some actions that a loving husband can take to help bolster his wife’s value, trust and feeling of security? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A wife who feels cherished and a husband who feels respected usually have a happy marriage. When both partners are looking out for the other in these ways, they are in what looks like a dance. Although one is primarily leading, both are moving in harmony. You’ll notice that if a fight about leadership ensues or there is mistrust, then they stumble all over each other. One of the goals of marriage is to live out that dance together under the leadership of Jesus.

4. How can a couple ensure that they live out the dance in the right way? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What have you learned from those you know who have stumbled around? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." - Ephesians 5:31-33*

When a couple become one flesh, it means they care for each other as they care for themselves and help the other person be all that they can be. The Church is called the Bride of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7. One day we will be united with Christ in a way that resembles the ideal marriage. He loves, serves and lays down his life for us and we respond by praising, respecting, and expressing thankfulness. What a wedding party that will be!

## **Digging Deeper**

*For those who want to do more personal reflection on this topic.*

### **What happened to marriage at the fall of humanity?**

#### **The Man and Woman Sin**

*"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?'*

*'Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,' the woman replied. 'It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.' '*

*You won't die!' the serpent replied to the woman. 'God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.'*

*The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too."*

*- Genesis 3:1-6*

The woman decided to believe a lie, and both she and the man partook in order to be satisfied and to gain wisdom. Now look at the effects of their disobedience...

*"At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves." - Genesis 3:7*

#### **1. Self protection - a loss of trust and vulnerability**

*When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.' - Genesis 3:8-10*

#### **2. Separation and hiding from God**

*"Who told you that you were naked?' the Lord God asked. 'Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?'*

*The man replied, 'It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.'*

*Then the Lord God asked the woman, 'What have you done?'*

*'The serpent deceived me,' she replied. 'That's why I ate it.'"* - Genesis 3:11-13

### 3. Blame. It is now natural to shrug off responsibility and blame someone else.

**These three issues are the main cause of problems in marriage. A lack of intimacy, leaving God out of the picture, and blaming.**

In addition, both the man and the woman face new specific challenges.

#### FOR THE WOMAN

*"Then he said to the woman, 'I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.'"* - Genesis 3:16

The woman's primary focus often becomes the children - and she can tend to think about them more than her spouse. Her "desire" is now in terms of wanting to control her husband. Since there is now mistrust, a power struggle now ensues with the woman mistrusting that the man will make decisions in her own best interest.

#### FOR THE MAN

*"And to the man he said, 'Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.'"* - Genesis 3:17

The man's primary focus now involves provision - hard labor and pain. Subsequently, he often finds his value from what he does rather than from his role as husband and father. Therefore it is easier to spend time at work rather than spend time finding out his wife's real needs.

#### The natural inclination of marriage - when we leave God out of the picture:

- The husband does not feel respect from his wife.
- The husband tries to rule in ways God never intended in order to maintain control.
- The sense of not being honored or respected robs vulnerability and openness on the man's part, and fear does the same on the woman's part.
- The wife doesn't trust in her husband's ability to meet her needs of being loved and cherished.
- The wife is not assured that her husband's decisions will be made with her best interest in mind.
- Even right attempts to try and love a spouse protect a hidden agenda with twin goals of getting your spouse to meet your needs.

The instruction found in Ephesians 5 provides the way to counteract these tendencies with help from the Holy Spirit, because it enables the couple to give love and respect in effective ways.

If you are or have been married, have you seen these tendencies affect your relationship? These problems are what God wants to help us overcome.