

Men, what does it mean for husbands to love their wives in the same way Jesus loves the church, and in the same way you love yourself? (v. 25-30, 33) Is that standard too high?

If Paul were writing to married American Christians today, do you think he might have chosen two different traits to focus on? What other significant challenges do husbands and wives face today?

If you are married, share a way your spouse has carried out his or her obligation to love or respect you that you appreciate.

Describe a marriage you have observed that fulfills the mutual obligation to love and respect one another.

REFLECT

Paul says that Jesus' love for the church has made it perfect and beautiful. How has Jesus' love for you made you beautiful? Can our love for each other do the same?

RESPOND

Pray for the marriages in our church family to be protected from stress and temptation, to become strong and beautiful and bring glory to the Lord. Consider a way you can encourage a married couple you know.



Instructions for



:marriage and relationships (pt.2)

Only when we see marriage for what it truly is can our marriages become all we hope for them to be.

Marriage is a God-designed gift.

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God created the genders, each uniquely, each to be a fitting complement to the other.

Genesis 2:18

The LORD God said, "It isn't good for the man to live alone. I need to make a suitable partner for him."

We all do ourselves a favor when we stop and accept the fact that the opposite gender is a package deal, the stuff that attracts us and the stuff that can be a challenge to us. Our differences can be a problem or a blessing, depending on how we're submitting our characters to Christ.

Marriage Reflects Jesus' Sacrificial Love

LIFE GROUP STUDY

Marriage is a sacred promise.

Hebrews 13:4

Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

Francis de Sales, 17th Century Christian writer
"The state of marriage is one that requires more virtue and constancy than any other. It is a perpetual exercise in mortification."

Marriage is a holy partnership.

Ephesians 5:21-33

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one,

because they have a good return for their labor:

If they fall down,

they can help each other up...

Though one may be overpowered,

two can defend themselves.

What if marriage was designed to make us holy more than to make us happy?
What if it is about what we can give and how we can serve rather than what we can receive?

RELATE

What's the funniest or strangest wedding experience you have heard about?

What advice did you get from your mother and father on marriage?

What principle, insight, or quote from the sermon was most meaningful to you?

READ

Ephesians 5:21-33

Paul's instruction to husbands and wives draws on the beautiful power of Jesus' love for the church.

How do you explain the fact that the divorce rate among Christians is the same as it is in the general population?

How would you explain to a young person the purpose of a Christian marriage?

How does our society at large benefit from healthy Christian marriages? Would most of the Christian marriages you know attract people to the Lord?

Women, what do you think about the requirement that wives respect and submit to husbands as to the Lord? (v. 21-24, 33) What does that look like?