

MAIN POINT

Finding our identity in Christ changes the way we view marriage.

INTRODUCTION

What characteristics would you say define a healthy marriage?

What do you think people outside of the church would say is the purpose of marriage?

If you surveyed 100 people asking what is important in marriage and what is the purpose of marriage, it is possible you would receive a different answer from every person. There are many ideas on what makes a marriage successful. However, what truly matters is how God defines marriage. In Ephesians 5, Paul made it clear that marriage is meant to be a picture of the gospel, displaying to the world the love of Christ for His bride, the church. Finding our identity in Christ means we view marriage the way He does.

DISCUSSION

> READ EPHESIANS 5:22-33.

How would you define “submission”? Why does the word tend to stir up controversy?

How does the church submit to Christ? How has Christ loved the church?

How is Jesus’ work on the cross an example of submission for us?

What value does a passage like this have for you if you aren’t married?

How might a wife respond to a husband who loves her like Jesus? How does this type of love benefit her spiritually?

How does a relationship centered on sacrificial love and submission reflect the gospel? How can you and your spouse keep these ideas as a common part of your marriage?

How can embracing our roles as God designed them help create a strong and healthy friendship in marriage?

How can living out God’s marriage ideals be difficult? In what ways can it be rewarding?

APPLICATION

How does a proper view of marriage affect our relationship with God? How does it affect the lives of those of us who are single?