

LEADER OVERVIEW - JANUARY

WEEK 1 – Young Married

Text: Ephesians 5:28-32

Objective: For Young Married couples to understand what it means to be one with Christ and with one another.

Text Overview: This is the famous Ephesians passage on marriage where Paul talks about wives submitting to their husbands and husbands loving their wives. We pick up in the section where Paul focuses on the heart of marriage: A reflection of Christ and the Church. In the same way we are part of Christ's body, a husband and wife belong to one-another. When a husband loves his wife, Paul says it is like he is loving himself because she is part of him and he is part of her. This plays out in marriage through serving and loving one another the way Christ has loved them.

Text Explanation: Christ gave up his life for all of us. Our marriages are called to reflect that sacrificial love in order to point the world to Jesus. God created marriage as a vessel to display the love He has for the Church. In the same way Jesus is one with God the Father, He also calls us to be one with him and one in marriage. The passage commands husbands to love their wives "as their own bodies" or "as himself" or as "his own flesh. In the same way that a husband is aware of his own needs, he is to be equally aware of what his wife needs. Husbands and wives should be out for the other's best. This is a process of leaving behind personal selfishness, pride, fear, etc. in order to pursue this calling both in marriage and in our relationships with Christ.

Discussion Instructions: Use this as a time to share about marriage and to love one another in the struggles that each individual couple may face in marriage and reflecting Christ. If time is running short, skip to question five.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - JANUARY WEEK 1

Check-In

Read Ephesians 5:28-32

1. Why did God create marriage?

God created marriage for two major reasons: 1. To reflect Christ's relationship with the church and 2. To fill the earth (procreation). The major part this study is focused on is reflecting Christ's relationship with the church, mainly that Christ's sacrificial love and oneness with the church (and with his Father) is intended to be reflected in marriage. There could be other answers besides these, but these are the two major reasons.

2. What does it mean for two to become one?

Look at the different examples and commands in this passage to answer the question. The passage commands husbands to love their wives "as their own bodies" or "as himself" or as "his own flesh." In the same way that a husband is aware of his own needs, he is to be equally aware of what his wife needs. Husbands and wives should be out for the other's best. This is a process of leaving behind personal selfishness, pride, fear, etc. in order to pursue this calling both in marriage and in our relationships with Christ.

3. What steps did Jesus take to become one with us? What motivated him? What did he leave behind?

To live a godly marriage, every believer must first look to the original relationship that defines what marriage is supposed to be. Jesus left his Father, he left heaven, he came to earth, he lived among us, he loved us, he served us, he worked miracles for our good (and he still does so to this day), he gave his life up for us that we could know God. He forgave us. He showed the woman caught in the act of adultery mercy. He gave Peter grace when he denied that he even knew Jesus. He loved us in our shame. His motivation was and is love.

4. What does it look like for you to become one with Christ?

Becoming one with Christ means leaving behind sinful areas of ourselves and embracing who Jesus is. In every situation, Christ calls us to have the same mind as he does. He calls us to look for the broken, to include the excluded, to love the poor, to show grace to the sinners, to tell others about him and his Father. This is a process of depending on the Holy Spirit who lives in the believer by faith to transform us from the inside out. See Philippians 2:1-10 for an example of what this oneness looks like.

5. What prevents you from experiencing oneness in marriage like God intended? *(Consider having couples discuss this among themselves before sharing, so that one person doesn't share something the other is not comfortable with)*

This is a chance for your group members to share what challenges they have or currently are experiencing in marriage, with direction. **This time is not about complaining about your marriage. Rather, it is a time to confess struggles to a group of believers in light of Jesus' grace and his vision for our marriages.** This is an opportunity to walk with one-another through these struggles and reflect Christ.