

Making Love Bloom Again

The Key to Marriage: Love and Respect

Ephesians 5:21-33

April 30, 2006

Warm-Up: Reflect for a moment on your parents' marriage. What did you appreciate about their marriage? How did they struggle in their marriage?

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. Many people do not like this passage. Just at first glance, what do you think turns them off? (Maybe you're one of the people who don't like this passage).
2. Read verse 33. This is Paul's personal summary of the entire passage. What is the essence of the message here
3. Recall or read about "The Crazy Cycle" (see the bottom of page 1 and the top of page top in the sermon notes). Do you think this is an accurate portrayal of what happens in many marriages? If not, how would you define the "crazy cycle"?
4. Before we look at the roles for men and women in a marriage, read chapter 5:18-21. What are the things that apply to every believer in every marriage or to every single person?
5. Let's look at the role of the husband in verses 25-30. How would you describe his calling in a Christ-centered marriage? Husbands or men, what do you find challenging in this passage?
6. Now let's look at the role for wives in verses 22-24. What are the negative, damaging ways that women (and men) have defined submission?

A suggestion: perhaps you could split into separate groups for a few minutes and the men could brainstorm question #8 and the women could brainstorm question #7. Then you could come back together and share your answer. (It may be less threatening that way).

7. Wives or women, if your husband asked you, "What is one specific way that I can love you as Christ loved the church," what would you say?
8. Men or husbands, if your wife was to ask you, "What are one or two specific ways that I can show more respect," what would you say?
9. Matt claimed that marriage forces us to rely on a power outside of ourselves. Assuming you agree with that, how does the message of the Gospel (Christ lived for us, died for our sins, rose again, intercedes for us, pours out his Spirit upon us and lives within us) help us in our marriage or future marriage?