

## Message Discussion Guide THE GOSPEL AND MARRIAGE

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

May 25, 2008

Ephesians 5:22-23

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This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

### **Connect . . .**

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

#### **Option 1**

Explain that many single people are always searching for an elusive checklist that will give them definite ways to know if a person is "the one" or not. If you have any married or engaged couples, you may ask them to share how they "knew" to marry their spouse. Then ask the following questions:

How did you/would you know if a person is the right one for you to marry?

If someone asked you, what would you tell them would be your reason for getting married?

Take a look at the purpose of marriage and how it glorifies God. This just may help clear things up about who to marry.

#### **Option 2**

Explain to the group that many engaged couples indicate their desire to get married by saying something like "we love each other." If you have couples in your group, you may ask them to voluntarily share the reason they decided to get married to their specific spouse. Ask the following questions:

- Is love a good reason to get married?
- What are some "real" reasons that people get married?
- What is the best reason for getting married?

Take a look at the biblical purpose for marriage. This should be the primary reason for getting married.

### **Review the Message . . .**

#### **Foundations . . .**

- The **glory** of God is the ultimate aim of marriage.
  - Marriage exists for **God** more than it exists for **you**.
- The **grace** of God is the ultimate hope for marriage.
  - The major problem in every marriage: **sin**.
  - The major solution for any marriage: **a Savior**.

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- The **Gospel** of God is the ultimate picture in marriage.
  - Wives give a picture of the **church** to the world.
  - Husbands give a picture of **Christ** to the world.

### Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:22-33.
- Ask the group to count each time that the word “as” appears in this passage.
- What is Paul’s purpose in using this word to connect marriage to Christ and His church?
- According to verses 22-24 and 32, what does Paul indicate is the purpose for the husband and wife in the marriage?
- How would this purposeful relationship affect how the world views God? Jesus? The Church?

### Application . . .

- How does our view of marriage change when we look at it through the lens of God’s glory?
- How does the purpose of marriage (God’s glory) affect how we choose a spouse and interact with him or her?
- How does it change our motivations for getting / staying married?
- Emphasize that all marriages give a picture of Christ and the Church. Can a struggling marriage still give a picture of the gospel to the world?
- David stated that the reason that marriages struggle is because of sin. Can all problems within a marriage be connected to a core sin problem?
- If marital problems are all of a sin nature, how are these problems resolved?
- Is there anything wrong with looking to marital counselors or books for help or advice? When could it be come a negative pursuit?

### Instructions . . .

- The roles . . .
  - As Christ relates to the church, the husband is the **head** of his wife.
  - As the church relates to Christ, the wife is the **helper** for her husband.
    - Genesis 2 – God **designs** this picture.
    - Genesis 3 – Sin **distorts** this picture.

### Discussion Questions

- Read Ephesians 5:22-23. How does Paul describe the husband and wife’s roles in this passage?
- What does a husband’s role as the head indicate about his responsibility in the marriage relationship?
- Enlist two volunteers to read Ephesians 5:31 and Genesis 2:18-24.

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- Emphasize that Paul appeals to the creation account in Genesis as the framework for the marital relationship. What does Paul's use of the creation account indicate about God's design for a husband and wife's roles within marriage?
- Read Genesis 3:15-16. How did sin change God's design for marriage?

### **Application . . .**

- What are typical first reactions in North American culture to the statements that the husband is the head and the wife is the helper?
- How does our culture influence our emotional reactions to these principles?
- Do our presuppositions or personal preferences affect how we view these statements? How do we resolve any differences between our own ideas of marriage roles and those explained in Scripture?
- Do we attach varying degrees of importance to these differing roles? Why? Should we?
- **The wife's responsibilities . . .**
  - **Revere Christ through submission to your husband.**
  - **Respect your husband.**

### **Discussion Questions**

- Read verse 22 and 33. What are the only two instructions that Paul gives for wives?
- How does submission glorify God? Specifically, how does it glorify God when a husband doesn't "deserve" respect?
- Based on God's purpose for marriage, how does a wife's respect for her husband help fulfill that purpose?

### **Application . . .**

- What connotations does the word "submission" bring to our minds? Highlight that David indicated that the word "submit" actually means to yield to the loving leadership of another. How does that definition change our thoughts about submission?
- Many have never seen what loving leadership looks like. How can we submit in a relationship that doesn't have a loving leader? Does this command still apply?
- How much more difficult is it for a wife to show respect than love? Why?
- What are some practical ways that wives can show respect to their husbands?
- **The husband's responsibilities . . .**
  - **Reflect Christ through sacrifice for your wife.**
  - **Love your wife.**
    - **Love her unselfishly.**
    - **Love her effectively.**
    - **Love her carefully.**
      - **Nourish her.**
      - **Cherish her.**

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- Love her completely.

### Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:25, 28, and 33. What is the recurring command that Paul gives husbands? What does this repetition indicate?
- In Verse 23, Paul explains that a husband's love is to be like Christ's love for the Church. How far did Christ's love for the Church take Him?
- What does Christ's sacrifice indicate about a husband's love for his wife? a husband's love for God?
- Why would Paul command husbands to love their wives but command wives to respect their husbands?

### Application . . .

- What is the greatest love story that you can think of? What makes it so great? (*The answers may vary by gender, giving a good opportunity to discuss the varying needs of husbands and wives.*)
- What do you think of when you hear the command to "love your wife?" Does this idea match up to Scripture?
- Is it easier for a husband to show respect than love? Why? Is this an excuse not to work at showing love?
- What are some practical ways that husbands can show their wives love?

### Conclusions . . .

- Husbands, outserve your wife.
- Wives, observe your husband's leadership.
- Husbands and wives, let Christ serve you.

### Application . . .

- Is your role in your marriage bringing your spouse closer to Christ?
- How can husbands lead in a way that makes their wives desire to follow them?
- How can wives submit in a way that gives their husband the freedom and desire to lead?
- How can a marriage look when a husband leads in a way that makes his wife want to follow and a wife submits in a way that encourages her husband to lead?
- Does a healthy marriage require little or a lot of work? Is it easy? Is it worth it? Why?
- What is the only way that husbands and wives can have this kind of relationship?