



# UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Fully Alive: Ephesians

May 25-31

Ephesians 5:22-33

## Things to Know

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## Sermon Recap

Ephesians 5:22-33 teaches that Christian marriage is a living picture of the gospel. It begins with submission, not selfishness, and is marked by sacrificial love and deep unity. As husbands and wives live out their roles in Christ, their marriage becomes a reflection of Jesus and His church—building one another up and displaying the beauty of the gospel to the world.

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# Read

## Read Ephesians 5:22-33 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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# Scripture

## Ephesians 5:22-33

### Wives and Husbands

[22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (ESV)

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 5:22-33.

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# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means recognizing that our relationships are one of our greatest witnesses. Ephesians 5 shows that Christian marriage is missional. When marriages are marked

by sacrificial love, humility, and unity, they put the gospel on display for others to see. As a group, this means we support, encourage, and pray for one another's marriages, helping each other grow in Christlikeness. We also model these same values in all relationships, showing the world a different way to live. A way that is shaped not by selfishness, but by the love of Jesus.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources - May 25-31*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 5:22-33**

### **1. Session Overview**

In Ephesians 5:22–33, Paul applies the gospel directly to marriage, showing that the relationship between husband and wife is meant to reflect something far greater than itself. Rooted in the broader call to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (5:21), this passage reveals that Christian marriage is not built on selfishness, but on sacrificial love and mutual submission under the authority of Jesus.

Paul gives distinct yet complementary instructions to wives and husbands, not to create hierarchy for power’s sake, but to display the beauty of the gospel. Wives are called to respect and willingly submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, while husbands are called to love their wives with a self-giving, sanctifying love that mirrors Christ’s love for the church. This is not about control or dominance, but about laying down one’s life for the good of another.

Ultimately, Paul points to the deeper reality: marriage is about oneness. Just as Christ and the church are one, so husband and wife are united as one flesh. Christian marriage is meant to build, strengthen, and sanctify, serving as a living picture of the gospel to the world.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Prayer:**

Father, help us to submit our lives fully to You. Teach us to lay down our pride and live with humility in our relationships. In Jesus’ name, amen.

#### **Ask:**

What are some things that make a relationship healthy over time?

When you hear the word “submission,” what comes to mind and why?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 5:22-33 out loud.

### **4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)**

#### **Ephesians 5:22-24**

In verses 22–24, Paul addresses wives, calling them to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. This instruction flows directly from verse 21, where all believers are called to mutual submission under Christ. Biblical submission is not about inferiority, but about order, trust, and alignment under God’s design. Just as the church joyfully submits to Christ, wives are called to reflect that posture in marriage. This challenges the natural tendency toward independence and self-centeredness, reminding us that Christian marriage begins with submission, not selfishness.

#### **Ephesians 5:25-30**

In verses 25–30, Paul turns to husbands with an even weightier command: to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. This is a sacrificial, initiating, and sanctifying love. Husbands are not called to lead through authority alone, but through self-denial and service, seeking the spiritual good of their wives. Paul describes this love as one that nourishes, cherishes, and cares deeply, reflecting how Christ treats His church. Marriage, then, is not about getting what you want—it is about giving yourself for the good of another. It is meant to build and sanctify, not tear down and tarnish.

#### **Ephesians 5:31-33**

In verses 31–33, Paul points back to creation, reminding us that marriage is about oneness—“the two shall become one flesh.” This unity is both physical and spiritual, a profound bond that reflects the union between Christ and the church. Paul calls this a “mystery,” meaning that marriage ultimately points beyond itself to the gospel. When a husband loves sacrificially, and a wife responds with respect and trust, their relationship becomes a living picture of Christ’s love for His people. Christian marriage is not just about companionship; it is about displaying the beauty of the gospel through a life of unity, love, and devotion.

### **5. Discussion Questions**

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 5:22-33?
2. Why do you think Paul connects marriage so closely to the relationship between Christ and the church?

3. How does understanding submission through the lens of the gospel change the way we view it?
4. What stands out to you about the way husbands are called to love in this passage?
5. How can marriage become a place of growth and sanctification rather than frustration?
6. What does it look like practically to pursue “oneness” in marriage?

## 6. Application

Whether married or not, take time this week to reflect on how the gospel shapes your relationships. If you are married, identify one way you can intentionally serve your spouse in a Christlike way. If you are single, consider how you can practice selflessness and Christlike love in your current relationships.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, let our lives and our marriages clearly reflect the gospel. Use us to show the world what Your love looks like. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

“However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Ephesians 5:33

