

Understanding Marriage - Spiritual Preparation for Marriage

by David Guzik

A person's spiritual preparation and understanding of the context of Ephesians 5:22 can greatly impact their marriage and help them live a life of submission to God and to one another.

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Scripture: Matthew 27:5, Luke 10:37, Ephesians 1:1, Ephesians 4:1, Ephesians 4:11, Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 5:13-14

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of humility and meekness as described in Ephesians chapter four. He emphasizes the importance of living new lives as new people in Jesus Christ, separate from the world. The preacher highlights the significance of receiving and understanding what God has done for us, and how it should influence our daily lives. He also discusses the concept of submission in three different areas and the transformation it can bring to relationships. The sermon concludes with the reminder that getting closer to Jesus is the key to a thriving marriage.

Transcript

This is the second message in the series, Understanding Marriage from Ephesians chapter 5. The title of this message is Spiritual Preparation for Marriage. Let's join our teacher, Pastor David Guzik, speaking at Calvary Chapel of Simi Valley. This morning we're speaking in the second of our series on Understanding Marriage from Ephesians chapter 5. Last week we went over some very basic principles.

I think they're so basic that a lot of times we forget them. They go right over our heads and they get put on the back burner. This morning I want to talk about some other things that are fairly basic, helping us to understand how to build a godly marriage, but not from the most famous passage on marriage in the Bible.

The most famous passage on marriage in the entire Bible is Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 through the end of the chapter, which is verse 33. I'm going to read that passage right now. I want you to follow along and look carefully as I read, starting at Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22.

Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you, in particular, so love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. It's for good reason that that's one of the most famous and beloved passages of Scripture on the topic of marriage in the entire Bible.

I believe that if we understand what God's word says in those passages, in those verses, understand the principles, understand the reasons, if we really grab a hold of it, I think it will revolutionize our marriages. But I also believe this, that we can only understand Ephesians chapter 5, beginning at verse 22, if we understand everything else that Paul wrote previously in the letter. In other words, he didn't begin writing this at verse 22.

What he writes in verse 22 flows from what he's been building upon from Ephesians chapter 1, verse 1. It's so important for us to grab a hold of context when we read and understand the Bible. Did you know that if you miss context, you can miss everything when it comes to understanding what the Scriptures are all about? Here's a person studying the Bible without context. They flip from section to section in their Bible, and then they stop and close their eyes and put their finger down, and they come to a place in the Gospels where it describes the death of Judas, and it says, he went and hung himself.

And they look at that and they say, wow, Lord, what do you want to say to me by that? Well, I don't know, I'll look for another word. And so they flip through the Scriptures again, and they stop, and they put their finger down, and they look at the verse where their finger is, and it says, Go thou and do likewise. Oh, you see the problem? They're ignoring context.

They're ignoring what it says and what the whole thing means. And, well, we get into a lot of trouble when we study the Bible without really understanding its context. Now, I believe that if we understand sort of an overview of what Paul's getting at as he gets to Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22, we're going to understand that whole merit section a lot better.

Matter of fact, this is the big point I want to get across to you this morning. If we would just ignore Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22 through 33, this great passage on marriage, if we were to ignore that and just do what's in the rest of the book of Ephesians, it would revolutionize our marriages. You wouldn't even need this most famous passage on marriage.

And you'll see what I'm talking about as we get through this. Go back in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 1. We take a look here, and Paul's writing a letter to the church in Ephesus, to the Christians in that area. And after preliminary greeting, Paul praises God for all that God has given us in Jesus Christ.

I mean, look at verse 3 of Ephesians chapter 1. He says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And Christ, just as

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He's made us accepted in the Beloved. That's high ground spiritually, isn't it? It's like I think this is the heart and the mind of God, and this is what He wants you to work on and to develop in your life.

This is what He wants to establish in your life, lifting you up to heavenly places, blessing you with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I've got a simple question for you this morning. If that's happening in your life, if you are experiencing Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 through 6, if you're living that, is that going to have an effect on your marriage? I certainly think it would.

I certainly think that that would make you a better husband, a better wife. It would affect your marriage. Take a look at verse 18 of Ephesians chapter 1. Here Paul is praying.

He's expressing a prayer for the people of Ephesus and praying for their spiritual enlightening and understanding. That's Ephesians chapter 1, verse 18. That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

I mean, if you knew that, if you knew the power of Jesus' resurrection and it was real in your life and flowing into your life and out of your life, would that make a difference in your marriage? I think it would. I think it would make a dramatic difference. I think you'd be living on a spiritual ground that's higher than most people live at and I think it would make a real difference in our marriages for us to live that way.

Well, into chapter 2, Paul is still talking about God's great work of salvation and all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. He begins on it here, I'll take a look here, starting at verse 4 of Ephesians chapter 2 where he says, but God who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. If your mind is filled with this, if you walk around thinking about the exceeding riches of the grace and the kindness that God has given to you in Jesus Christ, if you remember how you were dead in trespasses and sins, but now you're made alive in Jesus, is that going to make a difference in your marriage? I think so.

I think you're going to have a life of trust and faith and confidence and vitality in God that's just going to flow over into every area of your life, including your marriage. Ephesians chapter 3, Paul keeps on describing all this great work that God has done for us and all of the things that He's working in our lives. We begin here at Ephesians chapter 3, verse 16, where he says that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

If that's real in your life, you're going to be a better husband, aren't you? You're going to be a better wife. Let me tell you something that has never, ever happened to me in a counseling session and talking with

somebody about a troubled marriage. Never once have I had a husband come to me and say, Pastor, I am so in love with Jesus.

I am so in tune with what the Lord's doing in my life. I'm just praising God for all of His great work. I mean, He's strengthened me with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

I know that Christ dwells in my heart and through faith and I'm rooted and I'm grounded in His love and I'm walking out on my wife. That's never happened. It never will happen.

You see, the people who are having a great deal of trouble in their marriages, typically one or both of them is at a real time of spiritual crisis as well. And so the first piece of advice, Oh, Prince, there's a lot to work with on that couple. There's a lot to work with in communication, in understanding the role of the husband, the role of the wife, in understanding all the beautiful Ephesians chapter 5 things.

There's so many things to talk about. But shouldn't it begin with, Let's get our lives right with Jesus Christ. Let's have hearts that are burning on fire with a real relationship with Him.

I'm here to tell you this morning, that is the absolutely best thing you can do for your marriage. That's all there is to it. If you receive and live out what Jesus Christ has given you through His great work on the cross, it's going to revolutionize who you are as a husband, who you are as a wife, and it will make all the difference.

It's sort of a cliché illustration that pastors use, but it's really beautiful, and it very simply and powerfully expresses the truth. A marital relationship is like a triangle. You have the husband at one side of the bottom of the triangle.

You have the wife at the other side of the bottom of the triangle. At the top of the triangle, the apex of it, you have Jesus Christ. And as the two of them grow closer to Jesus, they're growing closer to one another as well.

That's how a triangle works. That's how it works in our marital relationships. For many people, they believe that the real problem has to do with some technical aspect of their marriage.

There's all beautiful things to work on in that regard. But the first question needs to be, are you living and experiencing the kind of life in Jesus Christ that the Lord wants you to live? Now, the other thing I love about Ephesians, and understand this about the whole letter, is that in the first three chapters, Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 2, Ephesians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul doesn't tell us to do a single thing. He doesn't tell us to do anything.

All he tells us about is what Jesus Christ has done for us. That's what it's all about. Jesus did this for you.

Jesus is this for you. This is what Jesus worked out for you on the cross. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

That's what it's all about. Now, after we've understood that, after we've received it, after that's been poured into our lives, then the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 says, look at it there, verse 1, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. In other words, don't live a walk, or don't live a life of obedience and honor to God so that He'll love you and give you the riches of Jesus Christ.

No. He has given it to you. Receive it.

Now go out and walk. And that's the whole key to godly living, as it's given to us here in the book of Ephesians. And so after those three chapters of describing all that God's done for us, now Paul tells us about how what God has done for us should influence the way we live every day.

So that's his theme all through chapter 4. He talks about the kind of humility and meekness we're supposed to have. He talks about spiritual gifts that God has given the church and how we receive through that. He talks about how we should live new lives as new people in Jesus Christ, living separately and differently from the world.

And then he goes on in chapter 5, and he goes on to carry on the same practical, this is how to live in light of all that Jesus has done for you instruction. He talks about in the first several verses of Ephesians chapter 5 how to live pure from sexual immorality. And then he goes on and he talks about how to live in the light and to walk in the light.

Take a look at it here, beginning Ephesians chapter 5, verse 8. He says, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable to the Lord.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light.

For whatever makes manifest is light. You get the theme, don't you here? Also, Jesus Christ has taken you out of the kingdom of darkness. He's put you into the kingdom of light.

Now live like it. Live like it. He's given you this call.

He's given you this destiny. Now go out and fulfill it. Now friends, you understand how this works in a very practical way in your lives, right? Jesus has taken you out of the kingdom of darkness.

He's put you into the kingdom of light. So that when you're out sort of walking around in the darkness, how does it feel? It doesn't feel the same as it used to, right? Matter of fact, you feel like you don't belong there. And so for your own good, for your own peace of mind, for just consistency with who you are in Jesus Christ, you need to stop walking around in the darkness and come back over and let's start walking in the light.

See, because we don't belong to the darkness anymore, do we? We belong to the light. That's where we're going to be comfortable. This is the sad fact of the matter here for those of us who have given our lives to Jesus Christ, who have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness and being put into God's kingdom of light.

May as well face it, we are never going to find fulfillment in the darkness anymore. Just give up on it. You used to find more fulfillment when you were in the kingdom of darkness.

Sin felt better then. Now it's just not as satisfying as it used to be. Well, you better understand it and just say that there's only one choice in front of you and that's to live and to walk in God's kingdom of light.

Now, as we do that, first of all, it means we're going to need to wake up. Take a look here, verse 14. Therefore, he says, awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, Christ will give you life.

Then he goes on, verse 15, telling us how to walk, how to live. He says, be filled with the Spirit there. As he goes on, he talks about it there in verse 18.

Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. So this is walking in the light and then walking in the Spirit and then an aspect of walking in the light and being filled with the Spirit is submission in various areas of life. That's at the end of verse 21 where he says, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Now, it's as if Paul takes a pause in his letter now. And he says, speaking about submission, let me talk to you about how submission applies in three different areas. Notice how he structures this.

Verse 21 says, submitting to one another in the fear of God. Now look at verse 22. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Now go to chapter 6, verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Now take a look at verse 5 of Ephesians chapter 6. Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling and sincerity of heart as to Christ. He's carrying on the same idea.

The broad topic of submission, and then he says, let me talk about, in a specific way, submission in three areas. In the marriage, in the parent-child relationship, and then in the workplace. That's the context.

And then Paul finishes up the letter with some notes about spiritual warfare and some requests for prayer for himself. So this is what's very important for us to understand. That this famous marriage passage is set in the broader idea of walking in the light and life in the Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit is one aspect of walking in the light. Mutual submission among Christians is one aspect of living life in the Spirit. And specific submission on the home and on the job, that's one aspect of this mutual submission among Christians.

Let's understand this. For Paul, what we do in marriage is simply part of what we're to do as Christians. This is part of the Christian life.

Do you understand that? Your marriage is part of your Christian life just as much as praying, or reading the Bible, or telling others about Jesus, or fellowship among Christians, or anything else. It's part of the Christian life. And so submission being such a broad topic, it's examined in these three specific areas, and in coming weeks we're going to talk about specifically this marriage passage, beginning at Ephesians 5, verse 22.

But it all flows out of appreciating what Jesus Christ has done for us. That's the groundwork of the whole passage. It goes back to the beginning of the entire letter to the Ephesians, because in the first three chapters it begins with what Jesus has done for us.

That's where it all has to begin. This is the critical point. Understanding the whole context leading into the Ephesians 5, verse 22 passage.

Now, in light of that, let's take a little closer look at the verses immediately preceding Ephesians 5, verse 22. Let's start at verse 13 of Ephesians 5. We have the flow, right? Here's three chapters of God telling us all that he's given us in Jesus, and all how he loves us. And then the challenge is, receive it.

Now, respond to it. And this is in the section where he's talking about responding to it. We begin here at verse 13 where he says, But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

Therefore, he says, awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. You see, all things will be exposed. Even the things that are done in secret will be exposed.

They will be made manifest or made visible by the light of God's searching judgment. That's an awesome thing, isn't it? You can keep aspects of your life secret from me, secret from your friends, secret perhaps even from your spouse. You can't keep it secret from God, can you? He knows it all.

He sees it all. Can I tell you the amazing truth about it? Because even though God sees it all in your life, and even knows all the secrets, He still loves you. That's almost amazing, isn't it? He knows you better than you know yourself.

And He loves you. He loves you immensely. And He loves you so much that He says, Come, let's go.

Let's walk in the light. And He says, Wake up, you who sleep. Arise from the dead.

Identify yourself with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You were asleep, but now rise up and Christ will give you light. By the way, I don't know how it's printed in your Bible, but in my Bible the words, Awake, you who sleep.

Arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. They're set sort of as if it's in a verse form. And that's appropriate, because in the ancient Greek language that Paul wrote in, those are written sort of with a rhythm, with a meter.

He's probably quoting from an ancient worship song. That's probably one of the worship songs that they sang at church meetings. And Paul's saying, Well, like it says in that song.

And then he lists some of the lines or text from the song. Then he goes on here, verse 15, and he says, See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

If you're going to walk in the light, it means walking in wisdom. This right here would revolutionize our marriages. Look at it there, verse 15.

See then that you walk circumspectly. That's a word that we don't use today, is it? Circumspectly. Do you know what it means? It means to live a life that is watchful, discreet, prudent.

Can I sort of translate it in the modern? It means living like a grown-up. You know, you're just aware of things, you're prudent, you're making good, mature decisions. He says, See then that you walk circumspectly.

Now, he puts the same idea in the negative, in the second half of the verse, where he says, Not as fools, but as wise. If you're not living circumspectly, you're living like a fool, not as a wise person. Wouldn't that change our marriages? It's almost frightening to think just how foolish we can think and act sometimes.

Think about it in your married life. Have you ever known somebody to make of themselves a complete fool in their marriage? I know such a person. I look at them in the mirror from time to time.

And that, it's just, it's amazing sometimes. Just how foolish. Maybe you've seen it in your own life, maybe you've seen the life of somebody else.

You just look at their conduct in their marriage. You look at what they're doing. You know, some older, mature man running off with a young woman.

It's just crazy. It's just foolishness. And he's just sitting there and he goes, Doesn't this guy realize how foolish he is and how everybody can see what a fool he is? You understand that if he would just follow this passage of Scripture, it would change his life.

Maybe he would say, Don't live as a foolish person, but as wise. Okay, I'll stop being a fool. I'll stop living in this situation that is so foolish.

And you see, it's very practical. If you just apply it to your marriage, it would make a radical difference. Or even verse 16.

Look at it there. He says, Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Now, I don't have to go on and on about how the days are evil.

That's self-evident, isn't it? I could list news reports and anecdotes and stories and we could go on and on and have a wonderful time discussing how the days are evil. Can't we just agree together on the fact that the days are evil? Well, if the days are evil, then what should we be doing? It says, Redeeming the time. Do you understand what that means? Now, in the ancient Greek language, there were two different words that you could translate time.

One of them was very much like the word we use for time. It simply meant minute upon minute, hour upon hour, day upon day. It just meant time.

The other word is translated more by the idea of saying the time. It doesn't just mean time as it flows on. It means a strategic chunk of time.

A time of opportunity. A time when something could and should be done. That's the kind of time Paul's talking about.

When he says redeeming the time, he does not mean make the most of every moment of your life. Although that's good advice, that's not what Paul's saying. He's saying God has put strategic opportunities in front of you.

Take advantage of them. Seize the time. Redeem the time.

Literally, it means buy up the strategic opportunities right in front of your face. Again, it has great application to our daily Christian life, but how about to our marriages? Husbands, are you redeeming the time in your marriage? You see, a strategic opportunity to bless your wife, to honor her, to build her up. Do you take it? Do you buy up the opportunity? If you did, it would make a tremendous difference.

A tremendous difference in your marriage. You see how this very practical instruction, if we just follow this and let this flow in our Christian lives, it'll change our marriages. You see, he gives that command and then he says verse 17, therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Then he goes on to verse 18, and do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. That's simply saying that we shouldn't live our lives in drunkenness and wastefulness. Instead, what should we do? We should be filled with the Spirit.

Actually, what Paul is saying here in the technical grammar of what he originally wrote is saying plainly, be continually being filled with the Spirit. It's not a one-time thing. It's not a once-and-for-all experience.

He says, come back again and again. You need to be filled again and again with the power of the Holy Spirit. Many people have a wonderful and a significant first experience of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Oftentimes this is thought of as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that's a valid and important experience for every believer. But when believers are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit, it leads to weak, defeated, and lethargic spiritual lives. Friends, would it make a difference in your marriage if you were constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit? Of course it would.

What a difference it would make. What a resource for power and patience there would be in your life. Or take a look at the next thing, what spirit-filled people do.

Verse 19, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. That's what we do when we're filled with the Spirit. We want to worship God.

I love how he puts it there in verse 19. It's so beautiful. Take a look at each phrase there.

First of all, he says, speaking to one another. Our praise isn't just to be silent unto ourselves. We're to speak it to one another.

We're to sing it to one another. He says, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. That means variety, doesn't it? I love it when we have a variety of worship on a Sunday morning.

When we have a hymn and a more contemporary song and something of one musical style and something of another musical style. I think that's the effect of what he's getting at here. He says, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

And then he says, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. This verse can save some of you this morning in your time of worship. Because he didn't say singing and making melody in your voice to the Lord.

Some of us can't sing and make much melody with our voice to the Lord, can we? But you know what? You can make melody with your heart. That's what he says there. Look at it there in verse 19.

Making melody in your heart. Every one of us can do that. Every one of us can have glorious worship before God as we make melody in our hearts before the Lord.

And that's what the Lord really wants to see from you. Is to have that heart filled with a beautiful melody from Him. That's what Spirit-filled people do.

So we speak to one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs. We make melody in our hearts to the Lord. Then look at verse 20.

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That means a heart full of gratitude. Don't you love being around people whose hearts are filled with gratitude? They're thankful for everything.

And isn't it a downer to be around people who are filled with ingratitude and just see something wrong with everything? Boy, that gets old, doesn't it? I mean, for those folks, it's not whether or not the water's half-full or the glass is half-full or half-empty. They look at it and they say, that water's poison. That's how they feel about it.

Now, here's the simple application. Would it make a difference in your life, in your marriage, if your heart was filled with praise to God and your heart was filled with gratitude to God? The husband comes home and instead of being annoyed, instead of being angry, instead of being frustrated and mad with everybody, including himself, for just sort of the pointless emptiness in his life, he comes home and his heart is filled with praise to God and thanksgiving to God. I think that changes the spiritual atmosphere of the home, don't you? Or the wife, instead of feeling just burdened by all the pressure that kids are fighting and there's trouble at the job and there's all this difficulty in her life and everything just seems so troubled, instead of sinking down into that quicksand, she praises God in the midst of it because she knows that God is greater than all of her circumstances and no matter how difficult things are, God is worthy to be thanked and praised.

I think that changes the spiritual atmosphere of that home. I think if we fulfill this, you've got changed marriages right in front of you. And this is what it all means.

Drawing closer to the Lord. Getting closer to Jesus Christ. Living all of Ephesians before you get to chapter 5, verse 22.

It'll change your life. It'll change your marriage. On occasion, in counseling, usually it's when counseling is going bad with a couple.

They're just always fighting with each other and snapping back and forth in the midst of counseling. And it just seems to be going nowhere. Sometimes in desperation, what I or my wife and I have done is sort of stop the counseling session and we said, okay, listen, this is what we're going to do.

You guys go off and you go to this room and you go to that room and you guys just spend about 20 minutes of reading the Word and prayer with one another, just by yourselves. Just draw close to the Lord by yourself. 20 minutes in the Word and in prayer.

Go. Go do it. And then when they're done with that, you say, great, now go spend another 20 minutes reading the Word together and praying together.

Go. Go do that. And after 40 minutes, they come back and they sit down and you should see their face.

Before they were angry. Before they were bitter to one another. Now they're smiling and there's a glow there.

You say, alright, now we're going to talk about these problems. They say, what problems? Well, of course, problems are still there, aren't they? There's still things that need to be addressed and there's still things that need to be worked through. But what a difference! What a difference! Because now they're walking in the light.

Now they're walking in the Spirit. What an amazing revolution has happened in their lives. This is the key to all of this.

Change lives. People on fire with Jesus Christ. That's the best thing you can do for your marriage.

It's to get closer to Jesus. Now, do you see what is so often the problem with beginning your study in marriage at Ephesians 5, verse 22? Because you sort of feed into that attitude that is, ok, tell the wives what to do and tell the husbands what to do and let's just get right down to it and let's just go through all the rules and all the roles. Whoa! Stop! Stop! First! First! Let's get our lives on track with Jesus Christ.

First of all, have you given your life to Jesus? Are you born again by the Spirit of God? Have you trusted in what Jesus did to save you or are you trusting in what you can do to save yourself? You're trusting in what you can do to save yourself. That's never going to cut it before God. That's the first thing.

Second thing, is there unconfessed sin in your life? Maybe you're backslid. Maybe you've turned away from God and maybe just now you're kind of in the process of turning back. Well, great, good.

Let's continue on. Let's turn all the way back to the Lord. Let's get our focus square on Him.

The compass point of our life. The navigation, the ship. Let's set the rudder to where we're focused right on to the Lord.

Not even two or three degrees going the other way because two or three degrees, you follow that long enough and you're hundreds of miles off course, right? First of all, have I given my life to Jesus Christ? Second of all, is it there right now? Am I pointed in the right direction right now? Okay, now I want to draw close to the Lord. So I'm going to draw close to Him in the Word. I'm going to draw close to Him in prayer.

I'm going to draw close to Him with other people who love Him. That's what I'm going to do. Now, take care of those things.

Work in those things in your life and then you say, now, let's see what God has to say to us in these passages that speak about what wives should do, what husbands should do and how we should think and act in our marriages. You've got to begin at the beginning. And Ephesians chapter 5 verse 22 is not the beginning.

Matter of fact, it says there in verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. Now, in the course of writing about how to walk in the light, Paul has come to the topic of submission. And now, in the rest of this passage, he's going to talk about how submission plays out between husbands and wives, between parents and children, and between employers and employees.

But it all comes back to walking in the light. It all comes back to walking in the light as a response to what God has done for you. If you want to revolutionize your marriage, you don't even have to come to Ephesians chapter 5 verse 22.

Let it happen in the earlier part of Ephesians first. Then, understand what God has given you and what He's done for you. Then you need to respond to what He's done for you by walking in the light.

Friends, good marriages flow from this. Now, you think we're ready next week to dig into this and see what it means when He says, starting at verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God. And then wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

We're going to start tearing this apart piece by piece next week. Friends, don't lose the foundation. Don't fail to begin at the beginning.

And let Jesus Christ build that strong, beautiful work in you. Let's pray together right now about that exact thing. Father, we come before You now in Jesus' name.

And I pray, Lord Jesus, first of all, I pray for every marriage here. I pray for the people who are married. I pray for the people, Lord, who will be married.

And I pray for their marriage even before it happens. It might be weeks or months or years down the road, but Lord, I pray for their marriage as well. I pray that every one of us would know the strength and the beauty and the glory of living married life when two people love and are growing in Jesus Christ.

Father, I guess what I'm saying is that we need to get right with You if we want our marriages to be what they should be. Lord, won't You shine Your searchlight upon our hearts right now? Lord, this morning is a morning where some among us may need to give their lives to Jesus Christ because they haven't even begun there. This may be a morning, Lord, where some people really need to turn their direction.

They need to turn their back on sin and they need to repent and turn in the right direction towards You. But this is a morning where some lives can be revolutionized this morning simply by understanding and receiving Your love without trying to prove ourselves worthy of it, but just receiving it. It would help us to walk in that life.

To walk in that beauty and glory. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed in reverent prayer, I want to ask if there's anybody here this morning who wants to receive Jesus. If you do, this is what you need to do.

You need to talk to God in the quiet place of your heart, understanding what Jesus did for you on the cross. He took the guilt and the punishment you deserved. He took it on Himself because He loves you.

If you want to receive His goodness and give Him your badness, God wants to make that transaction with you right now. Do it in the quiet place of your heart. Say, Lord, I want to give You all my sin and I want You to give me the goodness of Jesus.

That's what Jesus died on the cross for. We hope you've been blessed by this teaching from God's Word, the Bible. For more tapes and Bible study resources from Calvary Chapel of Simi Valley, call us at 805-527-0199 or look us up on the internet at [calvarychapel.com slash simi valley](http://calvarychapel.com/simi_valley)

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