

Marriage is not a human arrangement but God's (read Mt. 19:3-9). The terms of the relationship are clearly stated. "God has brought the two of you to the point where you are willing to give yourself to the other for the rest of your lives!" This is what the Spirit-filled life & the walk of the new person IN Christ look like in a marriage. The walk of the new 'man' in Christ (4:24), filled with the Holy Spirit (5:18) and taking seriously the Lordship and presence of Jesus (5:21) looks like different roles and responsibilities, carried out by faith in the Lord who loves us. These roles and responsibilities have nothing to do with equality or identity, superiority or inferiority. Roles and responsibilities, not rights, are recorded! Nowhere is our walk with God better tested than in our relationship to our mates. Marriage doesn't make you the way you are; it reveals the way you are!

:22-24 The Spirit-filled Christian wife's role and responsibilities.

**:22-24 Wives, ~~being subject~~ to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the Head of the Church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Read Gen. 2:18.**

**:22** A supportive companion or submissive helper, you as a Christian wife are to willingly live for your husband. You are to be your husband's helper, complement, and companion. You care about what is best for him. You assist him to fulfill his potential. Being subject involves a Christian wife who willingly, intentionally submits to her husband, putting him and his interests ahead of her own (see Phil. 2:1-8). **As to the Lord Jesus**—with awe, great respect for the Lord. You submit because it is an expression of your submission to your Lord Jesus. The Lordship and presence of Jesus and being filled with the Spirit are the real issues! (Don't lessen either role by making him/her accountable to you!)

**:23** The Lord Jesus has made the **husband the 'head' of the wife**; this is His will. Headship is not inherent. Any position/responsibility—whether husband/parent/boss—is delegated by the Lord Jesus Himself, and it is always for the benefit of the other! The wife, child, slave is not the other's to order around. You as the husband have this responsibility for the care and understanding of your wife. Exercise it in love. Being Head, Jesus gave His own life for the good of the Church. And He did it being the 'Savior' (not 'Lord') of the Body. Husband, you do the same for your wife.

**:24** If you as a Christian wife have accepted before God the responsibility of marriage, you are to accept the role our Lord has given you. This must be your highest concern after your walk with the Lord Jesus. You were fashioned by God Himself to **be subject to your husband**. If sin isn't an issue, you're to submit. No Christian woman or man, whatever your gifts or abilities, has the right to even consider marrying the opposite sex unless you are prepared to willingly accept your role. Remember, you can only carry out your role as you are filled with the Spirit. He's the only One who can live this kind of life. A supportive companion, you are to willingly live for your husband, daily!

:25-30 The Spirit-filled Christian husband's role and responsibilities.

**:25-30 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her**

**by the washing of water with the word [rhēma, a definite word of God], that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory (glorious), having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the Church, because we are members of His Body.**

**:25** A loving head, you as a Christian husband are to **love your wife**, just as Christ loved the Church! Yes, God has made the husband the 'head' in a marriage, but you are to be a 'loving' head! This passage is about sacrificial love, seeking the highest good, God's will, for your wife. Our headship is defined not as the ability to control or dominate but as the ability to love, nourish, and cherish, live with her in an understanding and honoring way (read 1 Pet. 3:7). The Holy Spirit and His filling have made it possible for you to love your wife with the same love as Christ has for the Church! After all, 'love' is one of the Spirit's fruit. It is only as you understand and practice Christ's love for the Church that you can really function as a Christian husband. How far does this love go? Jesus gave Himself up for her. A loving head, you as a Christian husband are to willingly die for your wife, daily! We are to treat our mates as Jesus has treated us: forgiving, kind, tender-hearted, speaking truth, no unrighteous or prolonged anger, speaking building-up words, acting in grace, imitating God, walking in love & wisdom, giving thanks, filled with the Spirit.

**:26-27** Jesus loved "So that"! There are 3 "so that" phrases in **:26-27**: **So that** the Church reaches her intended use. **So that** the Church is glorious & beautiful. And, **so that** the Church will be set apart and faultless (remember 1:4, holy and without blame). His love will go on until it is finished. Nothing will stop Jesus' love for His bride. He does everything for her good! We are Mrs. Christ!

Jesus' unconditional, sacrificial, unselfish, willing love through you: it results in your wife reaching her intended use, glory and beauty (free from the spots and wrinkles which would mar her glory), and, wholeness and excellence. It's a work only our Lord can do, but somehow my loving her as He loves me has an impact! She needs to know what's happening in your life so she can fulfill her role as a helper and support (she gets frustrated when she can't 'do' the role Jesus has given her); you communicate with her! You don't do anything that would dishonor or humiliate her. She is YOUR bride! Husband, create an atmosphere where your wife thrives, is honored, and is understood.

**:28** Christ loves the Church, not simply as if we were His bride, but because we are in fact His Bride! It should be the same with husbands. A husband and wife are not two; they are one! Cultivate that mindset. "I love her who is part of me." We married couples must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one! Husband, your wife is "Mrs. You!" (Ish, Ishah!)

**:29** You would no more harm her than you would harm your own flesh. Nourish = feed, nurture, bring to maturity. Cherish = to warm (like a hen).

**:30** Christ made us part of Himself. We belong to Him. We are always on His mind. It should be the same for you as a Christian husband with your wife.

This love shows up in nourishing and cherishing her, living with her in an understanding way, and granting her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of God. He is to understand that he is one with her, she's a part of him, and he's to love her as Jesus loves him and he loves himself. Husband, study your wife so you know how to live with her in an honoring and understanding way (**1 Pet. 3:7**). What will help her grow and mature? What does she enjoy? What is best for her? What is 'her' love language (quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, and/or physical touch)? Talk with her, listen to her, consult her.

**:31-33** The Spirit-filled Christian couple's roles & responsibilities. The husband? Love sacrificially, voluntarily, daily. The wife? Submit & respect, continually!

**:31-33** FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH. **This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ & the Church [His Body]. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects (fears) her husband.**

**:31** **Gen. 2:24** says for the husband to leave, be joined to, and the two become one flesh. **Leave!** Why? He's entering into an even more intimate relationship. He's now become the 'head' of a new family. **Be joined to.** No one or no thing is to get in the way of the husband-wife relationship (parent, child, job, hobby). The husband should no more think of separating from his wife than of tearing his own body apart. There is only one **one-flesh** relationship. Remember, we must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one!

**:32** A mystery has been revealed by God: the unity of a husband and wife, and of Jesus and the Church. Two people so intimately united that they become one. Jesus and His Body are our models of what a Christian marriage should be. Paul doesn't give a 'human' successful marriage as an example to follow; no, he gives Christ and the Church as the example to follow.

**:33** Husband, walking in line with who you are now IN Christ (**4:24**), filled with the Spirit (**5:18**), and qualified by your reverence for and the presence of Jesus (**5:21**), love your wife as Christ loves you. Learn to love! You can begin today. As she IS part of yourself, love her that way!

Wife, walking in line with who you are now IN Christ (**4:24**), filled with the Spirit (**5:18**), and qualified by your reverence for and the presence of Jesus (**5:21**), respect, take seriously, your husband, and be his helper. Since he IS part of yourself, respect him that way! Show the kind of respect that comes from one who comprehends the one-flesh relationship. Go on respecting him.

And anything (another person, children, job, hobby, interest, sports) in either mate that disrupts or threatens this oneness should be immediately dealt with!

At the core of a Christian marriage, headship and submission and love and respect must be consistent with the pattern of Christ and His Body. These are roles and responsibilities that only new persons in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, can carry out. Filled with the Spirit (**5:18**), qualified by your reverence for Christ (**5:21**), and walking in line with the 'new man' God has made you (**4:22-24**), accept your role and responsibilities and live them out on a daily basis, whether wife, husband, child, parent, worker, or boss.

Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. Start with Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play. Husband: a loving head. Wife: a supportive companion. Parent: don't provoke your child to anger or exasperate him/her so they lose heart; do bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Child: obey and honor your parents.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, and serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (1 Pet. 4:7-11). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25). Do good to all (Gal. 6:10). Also see **Eph. 4:1-16** and **Rom. 12:3-13** which describe the 'walk' of the Church.
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.
6. **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).** Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).  
Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read and meditate on **Eph. 6:1-9**. What are the roles and responsibilities of the child? The parent? The worker? The boss? Remember, these are based on walking in line with the new person you are IN Christ, being filled with the Spirit, and taking seriously the Lordship of Jesus.

After addressing the walk of the Church and then individual Christians, now Paul addresses the Christian home and the Christian at work. Paul lifts up the Christian home, and teaches that the relationship between husband and wife is the most precious relationship on this earth, whose only parallel is the relationship between Christ and His Body. The Christian view of marriage is a unique view; it is a view that you only find in the Bible. 50% of U.S. adults are married; 8% live with an unmarried partner. The responsibilities for the household are given in **Eph. 5:22-6:4, Col. 3:18-21, 1 Pet. 2:21-3:7, Titus 2:1-8.**

“The slave, the child, and the wife are specifically addressed (very unusual in the ancient world); they are given their own calling to live before the Lord which is as responsible, honorable, and important as the calling to live as master, parent, and husband.” The Christian husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. The Christian wife is to be subject to her husband as to the Lord Jesus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present. Jesus is the issue: in every relationship!

:18-21 Every Christian is commanded to be being filled with the Spirit, with one of the results being subject to each other in reverence/awe of Jesus. The ‘subject’ Christian recognizes Jesus is the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present in every relationship. What does :21 look like in marriage, family, work? :21-33 The roles and responsibilities of Christian mates filled with the Spirit and taking the Lordship and presence of Jesus seriously.

:22 This verse is simply an extension of :21. The Greek: “**The wives to their own husbands as to the Lord.**” You as a wife are to submit to and ‘help’ your husband (**Gen. 2:18**). **Col. 3:18** “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **1 Pet. 3:1 & Titus 2:5** say the same. Subjection is for you to willingly and lovingly offer; it is not the husband’s to command. “Because it is the will of my Lord, I choose in the Spirit’s strength to willingly be subject to my husband.”

:23 At the core of a Christian marriage, headship and submission must be consistent with the pattern of Christ and the Church. **For the husband is the head of the wife: Gen. 2:18-25.** The wife is an equal for whom God has given the husband care and responsibility for understanding and honor, to be exercised in love (**1 Pet. 3:7**). This is the Lord’s decision, and it is best for both the wife and the husband. Paul defines the husband’s headship in relationship to the headship of Christ (**4:15, Col. 1:18**), *the Savior!* The husband’s headship, love, and care are to be like Christ’s! His Headship expresses care rather than control, responsibility rather than rule. Jesus gives direction and the Church responds.

You’d think Paul would say “Christ is the Head of the Church, He Himself being the LORD of the Body,” but instead it’s the SAVIOR of the Body. Jesus gave His own life to save the Body. We as His Body have every reason to trust such a Head. That’s what :25 says for the husband to do: love and give yourself up for the good of your wife, as Christ gave Himself.

:24 As the Body is not to act independently of the Head, so the wife should not be guilty of independent action. She may fulfill any function and responsibility in society, but if married, her role must be her first concern after our Lord Jesus.

The wife was prepared by God Himself to submit to her husband’s headship and trust in the Lord Jesus who is the Head and Savior of both. These are special roles and responsibilities that only each mate can perform: as new persons in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, taking Jesus’ Lordship and presence seriously.

**In everything:** it’s a willing submission, filled with the Spirit, walking in light

of the fact that she’s a new person in Christ. (However, she should never allow her husband to interfere with her walk with the Lord Jesus.) As a wife, you may be more gifted to lead, yet our Lord says you are to submit. **Gen. 3:16.** Wives, give your input when decisions must be made and pray for the Lord’s will in your husband’s choice. Man asked secret of marriage at 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary: “When we first got married, we decided that I would make all the major decisions and my wife would make all the minor ones. In 50 years of marriage, we have never had to make a major decision!”

The Christian wife is told to be subject to her husband because the Lord Jesus has given the Christian husband headship in the family (Jesus as Lord is the issue). You can trust the Lord Jesus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present in every relationship.

Also realize, if considering marrying a non-Christian, he can’t possibly fulfill his God-given role and responsibilities because he doesn’t know Jesus as Lord and the Holy Spirit (who’s the only one capable of living the Christian life) doesn’t dwell in him. He can’t be a loving head, as God intended the husband to be.

If you find yourself making wrong choices, bitter and complaining and nagging and angry or morally impure, it’s not the fault of your mate or your marriage; as a Christian, nobody makes you sin. If you’re counting on your mate to change or you want both of you to think and operate the same, you’re counting on the wrong thing. If you’re hoping your mate will make you secure and valuable, or loved and significant, or accepted and worthwhile, you’re asking him/her to do something that he/she wasn’t made to do. Only God can meet those needs.

The best thing for you as a Christian wife to do for your husband is to continue growing in the Lord, sharing with him how the Lord is dealing with you.

If you are not married and would like to be, God is preparing you for your role and responsibilities. He’s also preparing your future mate. Be sure you know how to walk in the Spirit. Continue to mature in the Lord, and ask yourself if you willingly and sincerely accept His role for you as a Christian wife.

:25-33 There are twice as many verses devoted to the husband: perhaps he is slower to learn and needs it explained more! **Husbands, love** (present imperative) **your wives, just as Christ also loved** (aorist) **the Church and gave** (aorist) **Himself up for her.** **Read Gen. 2:18-25.** Yahweh made the man a helper corresponding to him. God took part of the man and fashioned that part into a woman. She shall be called Ishshah (woman) because she was taken out of Ish (man).

The emphasis of :25-33 is not on the husband’s headship (which was explained in :23 as serving & giving) but on his responsibility to be subject to his wife in the fear of Christ by loving her as Christ loves him! Paul tells the husband to be filled with the Spirit and relate to his wife as Christ relates to him: IN LOVE! A command, “**Continue agapē loving your wife!**” It looks like understanding, honor (see **1 Pet. 3:7**), praise to our Lord, thankfulness, subjection, nourishing, cherishing (:18-21).

:25,28,33. Put your name there! God makes possible a love for your wife that is the same as Christ’s love for you! We husbands can and should love our wives with God’s agapē love!! God’s kind of love isn’t conditional; it doesn’t depend on the wife or her responses. It isn’t a ‘feeling’ or ‘romantic’ kind of love or even a ‘liking’ or ‘friendship’ kind of love. It’s a ‘commitment’ kind of love. It is only possible as one is filled with the Spirit. Agapē love is a choice, practiced in the Spirit’s strength. It is God’s love, demonstrated at the cross and through us!

We husbands are commanded to love our wives, which means it's a choice.

No husband is entitled to say he's being a Biblical head of his wife unless it's demonstrated by his love for her. "The occasions when I have acted like Jesus to her are not when I tried to fix her, but just loved her."

**Just as Christ also loved** (aorist) **the Church**: no higher standard is possible! It is only as we understand Christ's love for the Church that we can really function as Christian husbands. **Jesus gave** (aorist) **Himself up for her**. Whether the love is received or rejected, agapē love continues. Love is a commitment of the will for someone's best regardless of what it costs or how you feel. Jesus willingly served, and He chose to give up all rights, even the right to His life, when they conflicted with another's best. A loving Head.

Because our need for love is met completely by our Lord Jesus, God calls husbands to serve and love, unconditionally, willingly, sacrificially.

Words at a wedding: "Wife: To be a companion to him and be subject to him as to the Lord. 'I pledge to continue submitting to you as the head of our home!' Husband: 'A head is not a dictator but a servant. A head doesn't make all the decisions nor are the ones he makes always right. He just has final responsibility. Don't abuse that delegated responsibility.' We pray you two experience the love that God is and gives."

**:26-27** It is only as we comprehend and experience Christ's love for us (**3:17b-19a**). Note the results of the Spirit's filling & Christ's love & the implications for us.

Christ loved the Church, not so the Church could do things for Him, but so He could do things for the Church! **So that** (the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 hina clauses) **He might sanctify** (aorist) **her**. To set her apart for her intended use, to bring glory to Him. One result of Christ's love: sanctify means to put to the proper use. The Christian wife's role and responsibility: to be a helper, support, complement to her husband.

**Having cleansed** (aorist participle) **her by the washing of water with the word** (rhēma). By Jesus' giving Himself for us, He cleansed us, washed us (**1 Cor. 6:11 read**). He did this by the washing of water with the word. God's truth cleans us up.

The husband loves: the wife is cleansed as we talk and listen. Cleansed her with the word: talk with your wife, discuss with her what's going on in her life and your life; share with her how God is working in your life. Communicate!

**:27 That** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> hina) **He might present** (aorist) **to Himself the Church in all her glory**. Christ Himself will present her, and it is to Himself that He will present her. A Church, His Body, characterized by glory, God's glory/radiance/splendor. The Church is HIS bride! She hasn't yet been revealed *in all her glory* but she will be; why? Because of Christ's love and giving Himself for us. As a husband, your primary concern is for your wife—her beauty, her holiness, her completeness.

**Having** (present participle) **no spot or wrinkle or any such thing**. The husband loves: what an impact my love and giving myself for Marylee has! She's beautiful, glorious! **1 Pet. 3:3-4** is the best explanation of her glory.

**But that** (the 3<sup>rd</sup> hina) **she would be** (present) **holy and blameless**. Christ's giving love was so the Church would become what it was intended to be: holy, set apart, sacred, and faultless (an absence of defects). Herself in all her glory. **Read Jude 24-25**. As a husband, learn to love your wife so that as you give yourself up for her, you'll see her living as God intended her to live.

**:28a So husbands ought** (present) **also to love** (present) **their own wives**. Just

as Christ loved the Church, so also husbands are to love their wives. She should blossom and flourish under your loving headship.

Dealing with 2 halves of 1. Therefore, the husband must no longer think of 2 but 1. In **:33** it's love his own wife even as himself. I nourish and cherish my wife as my own body, because she is! It is natural to love, nurture, and protect oneself.

**:28b He who loves** (present participle) **his own wife loves** (present active) **himself**. He loves himself; he loves her who is part of him. **:29 For no one ever hated** (aorist) **his own flesh**: It is unnatural for a person to hate his own flesh. If someone does (for example, suicide), you realize something is terribly wrong! **But nourishes** (present) **and cherishes** (present) **it**: present, there is active thought about the development of the marriage. Nourish (same word in **6:4**). Cherish, how a mother cares for her child. **Just as Christ also does the Church**: The Lord does the same with us. Everything is designed to that end. It's the natural thing for Christ to nourish and cherish His Body, the Church, His Bride.

**:30 because we are** (present) **members of His body**. "Because members we are of His Body." We are not something apart from Christ; we are truly parts of Him (**1:23**); we belong to Him. We are intimately and inseparably connected to Him. We become sharers of His life. He has put His name upon us. He listens. He has time for us. It is our greatest privilege to be subject to Him. He is our Head.

In the same way, the wife becomes part of the very life of her husband, and he nourishes and cherishes her, even as the Lord does with us as members of Himself.

**:25-30** where the Christian husband is told to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, giving Himself for her. There are wonderful results of such sacrificial, unconditional, voluntary love. Agapē love, a love that can only be expressed in the power of the Spirit. Husband, share your life with her so she can better be the companion and support that God fashioned her to be. Give her eye contact, physical touch, and focused attention.

**:31-33** It is the relationship between Christ and the Church that defines for us how Christian husbands and wives are to relate to one another.

**:31 Gen. 2:24** emphasizes: **for this reason**—Paul uses this OT verse as the conclusion to **:18-30**. In the OT because God fashioned the woman from the man for the man ("flesh of my flesh"). In the NT because God has brought the two together to become one. **Because of this**...and now God tells the husband what to do! **A man shall leave** (active) **his father and mother**. The future husband is to leave his parents. No longer a child of his parents but the husband of his wife, who is part of him. Neither the parents nor children are to get in the way of the husband-wife relationship. Yes, parents are to be loved, cared for, and honored, yet the marriage bond takes precedence over every other human relationship.

**And shall be joined** (passive) **to his wife**. Means glued to or cemented together. The marriage bond is permanent. Though God has given permission for divorce in the case of adultery or the departure of an unbelieving spouse, death is God's only desired end for marriage. **Be joined together**: you truly become one. What God has joined together, let no man separate (**Mt. 19:3-10**)!

**And the two shall become (be) one flesh**. If you have children, they will leave. Since you have parents, you must leave them. We must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one. **Shall become one flesh**: physical relations are to indicate you are one. **1 Cor. 7:2-5**. We must be secure in our marriages

before we can abandon ourselves to our mates in physical relations (spirit, soul, body, in that order). How the physical relations have been cheapened by sexual immorality and impurity! This also teaches why polygamy, adultery, and any sex outside of marriage is wrong!

**:32 This mystery is (present) great.** Hidden in the past, it's now been revealed by God for all believers to understand. This union is to be an example of the union between Christ and His Church. A sacred reflection. "God uses our marriages as a stage to share with the world how believers relate to Jesus and how Jesus gave up His life for us." Such intimacy in a marriage relationship that no earthly symbol can do it justice.

**But I am speaking (present active) with reference to Christ and the Church.** Jesus is the Groom and Christians are His Bride (**Rev. 21:9** Come here, I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb). "No longer is the relationship between husband and wife based only on the creation model, but now also on Christ's personal love for His own."

**:33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love (present active imperative) his own wife even as himself:** in the singular, emphasizing individual responsibility, regardless of what the other does. No husband is exempt from this command: love your wife! Filled with the Spirit (**:18**) and qualified by your reverence for Jesus and His presence (**:21**), love your wife as Christ loves you. Love her with Christ's love, be her head (giving yourself for her in your actions and decision-making), nourish, cherish her; live with her in an understanding way and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life. Her lack of submission or respect makes no difference in you carrying out your role! I have seen unilateral obedience work wonders in a marriage relationship.

**And the wife must see to it that she respects (present middle or passive, the word translated fear in :21) her husband.** The respect that comes from one who comprehends the one-flesh relationship and the Lordship of Jesus. Go on doing it because it is right. Your submission and respect are not dependent on your husband's response. Yes, the wife is to submit and respect, but because the Lord is meeting your needs, you can trust Him as you live out your role and responsibilities with your husband. Do people see Jesus and His Body through your marriage?

**CONCL** Filled with the Spirit, willingly subjecting ourselves to one another in reverence for the Lord Jesus. If Jesus is recognized as the third Person present in your marriage relationship, your fellowship with each other will continue to mature. When Jesus talks with us, He won't ask about the performance or response of your mate, but He will ask, "Did you trust Me? Did you willingly accept and practice your role and responsibilities? Were you faithful?"

A Christian husband and wife, a Christian marriage, and Christian home: great witnesses to our Lord and Savior Jesus.

**:18-33** This is GOD's plan for marriage. Remember the context: as a new, holy, righteous man/woman, walking wisely (making the most of our time), understanding what the will of the Lord is, and being filled with the Spirit.

Marriage is not a human arrangement but God's (**read Mt. 19:3-9**). The terms of the relationship are clearly stated. "God has brought the two of you to the point where you are willing to give yourself to the other for the rest of your lives!" This is what the Spirit-filled life & the walk of the new person IN Christ look like in a marriage. The walk of the new 'man' in Christ (**4:24**), filled with the Holy Spirit (**5:18**) and taking seriously the Lordship and presence of Jesus (**5:21**) looks like different roles and responsibilities, carried out by faith in the Lord who loves us. These roles and responsibilities have nothing to do with equality or identity, superiority or inferiority. Roles and responsibilities, not rights, are recorded! Nowhere is our walk with God better tested than in our relationship to our mates. Marriage doesn't make you the way you are; it reveals the way you are!  
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**:25-30 The Spirit-filled Christian husband's role and responsibilities.**

**:25-30 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her**

by the washing of water with the word [rhēma, a definite word of God], **that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory (glorious), having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the Church, because we are members of His Body.**

**:25** A loving head, you as a Christian husband are to **love your wife**, just as Christ loved the Church! Yes, God has made the husband the ‘head’ in a marriage, but you are to be a ‘loving’ head! This passage is about sacrificial love, seeking the highest good, God’s will, for your wife. Our headship is defined not as the ability to control or dominate but as the ability to love, nourish, and cherish, live with her in an understanding and honoring way (read 1 Pet. 3:7). The Holy Spirit and His filling have made it possible for you to love your wife with the same love as Christ has for the Church! After all, ‘love’ is one of the Spirit’s fruit. It is only as you understand and practice Christ’s love for the Church that you can really function as a Christian husband. How far does this love go? Jesus gave Himself up for her. A loving head, you as a Christian husband are to willingly die for your wife, daily! We are to treat our mates as Jesus has treated us: forgiving, kind, tender-hearted, speaking truth, no unrighteous or prolonged anger, speaking building-up words, acting in grace, imitating God, walking in love & wisdom, giving thanks, filled with the Spirit.

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Jesus’ unconditional, sacrificial, unselfish, willing love through you: it results in your wife reaching her intended use, glory and beauty (free from the spots and wrinkles which would mar her glory), and, wholeness and excellence. It’s a work only our Lord can do, but somehow my loving her as He loves me has an impact! She needs to know what’s happening in your life so she can fulfill her role as a helper and support (she gets frustrated when she can’t ‘do’ the role Jesus has given her); you communicate with her! You don’t do anything that would dishonor or humiliate her. She is YOUR bride! Husband, create an atmosphere where your wife thrives, is honored, and is understood.

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**:30** Christ made us part of Himself. We belong to Him. We are always on His mind. It should be the same for you as a Christian husband with your wife.

This love shows up in nourishing and cherishing her, living with her in an understanding way, and granting her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of God. He is to understand that he is one with her, she's a part of him, and he's to love her as Jesus loves him and he loves himself. Husband, study your wife so you know how to live with her in an honoring and understanding way (**1 Pet. 3:7**). What will help her grow and mature? What does she enjoy? What is best for her? What is 'her' love language (quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, and/or physical touch)? Talk with her, listen to her, consult her.

**:31-33** The Spirit-filled Christian couple's roles & responsibilities. The husband? Love sacrificially, voluntarily, daily. The wife? Submit & respect, continually!

**:31-33** **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ & the Church [His Body]. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects (fears) her husband.**

**:31 Gen. 2:24** says for the husband to leave, be joined to, and the two become one flesh. **Leave!** Why? He's entering into an even more intimate relationship. He's now become the 'head' of a new family. **Be joined to.** No one or no thing is to get in the way of the husband-wife relationship (parent, child, job, hobby). The husband should no more think of separating from his wife than of tearing his own body apart. There is only one **one-flesh** relationship. Remember, we must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one!

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**:33** Husband, walking in line with who you are now IN Christ (**4:24**), filled with the Spirit (**5:18**), and qualified by your reverence for and the presence of Jesus (**5:21**), love your wife as Christ loves you. Learn to love! You can begin today. As she IS part of yourself, love her that way!

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At the core of a Christian marriage, headship and submission and love and respect must be consistent with the pattern of Christ and His Body. These are roles and responsibilities that only new persons in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, can carry out. Filled with the Spirit (**5:18**), qualified by your reverence for Christ (**5:21**), and walking in line with the 'new man' God has made you (**4:22-24**), accept your role and responsibilities and live them out on a daily basis, whether wife, husband, child, parent, worker, or boss.

Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. Start with Jesus (**Mt. 11:28-30**) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play. Husband: a loving head. Wife: a supportive companion. Parent: don't provoke your child to anger or exasperate him/her so they lose heart; do bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Child: obey and honor your parents.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, and serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (**Heb. 10:24-25**). Do good to all (**Gal. 6:10**). Also see **Eph. 4:1-16** and **Rom. 12:3-13** which describe the 'walk' of the Church.
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.
6. **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).** Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).  
Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read and meditate on **Eph. 6:1-9**. What are the roles and responsibilities of the child? The parent? The worker? The boss? Remember, these are based on walking in line with the new person you are IN Christ, being filled with the Spirit, and taking seriously the Lordship of Jesus.

Marriage is not a human arrangement but God's (**read Mt. 19:3-9**). The terms of the relationship are clearly stated. "God has brought the two of you to the point where you are willing to give yourself to the other for the rest of your lives!" This is what the Spirit-filled life & the walk of the new person IN Christ look like in a marriage. The walk of the new 'man' in Christ (**4:24**), filled with the Holy Spirit (**5:18**) and taking seriously the Lordship and presence of Jesus (**5:21**) looks like different roles and responsibilities, carried out by faith in the Lord who loves us. These roles and responsibilities have nothing to do with equality or identity, superiority or inferiority. Roles and responsibilities, not rights, are recorded! Nowhere is our walk with God better tested than in our relationship to our mates. Marriage doesn't make you the way you are; it reveals the way you are!  
**:22-24 The Spirit-filled Christian wife's role and responsibilities.**

**:22-24 Wives, ~~being subject~~ to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the Head of the Church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the Body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. Read Gen. 2:18.**

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6. **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13)**. Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).  
Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read and meditate on **Eph. 6:1-9**. What are the roles and responsibilities of the child? The parent? The worker? The boss? Remember, these are based on walking in line with the new person you are IN Christ, being filled with the Spirit, and taking seriously the Lordship of Jesus.

Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. Start with Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play. Husband: a loving head. Wife: a supportive companion. Parent: don't provoke your child to anger or exasperate him/her so they lose heart; do bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Child: obey and honor your parents.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, and serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25). Do good to all (Gal. 6:10). Also see **Eph. 4:1-16** and **Rom. 12:3-13** which describe the 'walk' of the Church.
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After addressing the walk of the Church and then individual Christians, now Paul addresses the Christian home and the Christian at work. Paul lifts up the Christian home, and teaches that the relationship between husband and wife is the most precious relationship on this earth, whose only parallel is the relationship between Christ and His Body. The Christian view of marriage is a unique view; it is a view that you only find in the Bible. 50% of U.S. adults are married; 8% live with an unmarried partner. The responsibilities for the household are given in **Eph. 5:22-6:4, Col. 3:18-21, 1 Pet. 2:21-3:7, Titus 2:1-8.**

“The slave, the child, and the wife are specifically addressed (very unusual in the ancient world); they are given their own calling to live before the Lord which is as responsible, honorable, and important as the calling to live as master, parent, and husband.” The Christian husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. The Christian wife is to be subject to her husband as to the Lord Jesus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present. Jesus is the issue: in every relationship!

:18-21 Every Christian is commanded to be being filled with the Spirit, with one of the results being subject to each other in reverence/awe of Jesus. The ‘subject’ Christian recognizes Jesus is the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present in every relationship. What does :21 look like in marriage, family, work? :21-33 The roles and responsibilities of Christian mates filled with the Spirit and taking the Lordship and presence of Jesus seriously.

:22 This verse is simply an extension of :21. The Greek: “**The wives to their own husbands as to the Lord.**” You as a wife are to submit to and ‘help’ your husband (**Gen. 2:18**). **Col. 3:18** “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **1 Pet. 3:1 & Titus 2:5** say the same. Subjection is for you to willingly and lovingly offer; it is not the husband’s to command. “Because it is the will of my Lord, I choose in the Spirit’s strength to willingly be subject to my husband.”

:23 At the core of a Christian marriage, headship and submission must be consistent with the pattern of Christ and the Church. **For the husband is the head of the wife: Gen. 2:18-25.** The wife is an equal for whom God has given the husband care and responsibility for understanding and honor, to be exercised in love (**1 Pet. 3:7**). This is the Lord’s decision, and it is best for both the wife and the husband. Paul defines the husband’s headship in relationship to the headship of Christ (**4:15, Col. 1:18**), *the Savior!* The husband’s headship, love, and care are to be like Christ’s! His Headship expresses care rather than control, responsibility rather than rule. Jesus gives direction and the Church responds.

You’d think Paul would say “Christ is the Head of the Church, He Himself being the LORD of the Body,” but instead it’s the SAVIOR of the Body. Jesus gave His own life to save the Body. We as His Body have every reason to trust such a Head. That’s what :25 says for the husband to do: love and give yourself up for the good of your wife, as Christ gave Himself.

:24 As the Body is not to act independently of the Head, so the wife should not be guilty of independent action. She may fulfill any function and responsibility in society, but if married, her role must be her first concern after our Lord Jesus.

The wife was prepared by God Himself to submit to her husband’s headship and trust in the Lord Jesus who is the Head and Savior of both. These are special roles and responsibilities that only each mate can perform: as new persons in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, taking Jesus’ Lordship and presence seriously.

**In everything:** it’s a willing submission, filled with the Spirit, walking in light

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The Christian wife is told to be subject to her husband because the Lord Jesus has given the Christian husband headship in the family (Jesus as Lord is the issue). You can trust the Lord Jesus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party present in every relationship.

Also realize, if considering marrying a non-Christian, he can't possibly fulfill his God-given role and responsibilities because he doesn't know Jesus as Lord and the Holy Spirit (who's the only one capable of living the Christian life) doesn't dwell in him. He can't be a loving head, as God intended the husband to be.

If you find yourself making wrong choices, bitter and complaining and nagging and angry or morally impure, it's not the fault of your mate or your marriage; as a Christian, nobody makes you sin. If you're counting on your mate to change or you want both of you to think and operate the same, you're counting on the wrong thing. If you're hoping your mate will make you secure and valuable, or loved and significant, or accepted and worthwhile, you're asking him/her to do something that he/she wasn't made to do. Only God can meet those needs.

The best thing for you as a Christian wife to do for your husband is to continue growing in the Lord, sharing with him how the Lord is dealing with you.

If you are not married and would like to be, God is preparing you for your role and responsibilities. He's also preparing your future mate. Be sure you know how to walk in the Spirit. Continue to mature in the Lord, and ask yourself if you willingly and sincerely accept His role for you as a Christian wife.

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The emphasis of **:25-33** is not on the husband's headship (which was explained in **:23** as serving & giving) but on his responsibility to be subject to his wife in the fear of Christ by loving her as Christ loves him! Paul tells the husband to be filled with the Spirit and relate to his wife as Christ relates to him: IN LOVE! A command, "**Continue agapē loving your wife!**" It looks like understanding, honor (see **1 Pet. 3:7**), praise to our Lord, thankfulness, subjection, nourishing, cherishing (**:18-21**).

**:25,28,33.** Put your name there! God makes possible a love for your wife that is the same as Christ's love for you! We husbands can and should love our wives with God's agapē love!! God's kind of love isn't conditional; it doesn't depend on the wife or her responses. It isn't a 'feeling' or 'romantic' kind of love or even a 'liking' or 'friendship' kind of love. It's a 'commitment' kind of love. It is only possible as one is filled with the Spirit. Agapē love is a choice, practiced in the Spirit's strength. It is God's love, demonstrated at the cross and through us!

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No husband is entitled to say he's being a Biblical head of his wife unless it's demonstrated by his love for her. "The occasions when I have acted like Jesus to her are not when I tried to fix her, but just loved her."

**Just as Christ also loved (aorist) the Church:** no higher standard is possible! It is only as we understand Christ's love for the Church that we can really function as Christian husbands. **Jesus gave (aorist) Himself up for her.** Whether the love is received or rejected, agapē love continues. Love is a commitment of the will for someone's best regardless of what it costs or how you feel. Jesus willingly served, and He chose to give up all rights, even the right to His life, when they conflicted with another's best. A loving Head.

Because our need for love is met completely by our Lord Jesus, God calls husbands to serve and love, unconditionally, willingly, sacrificially.

Words at a wedding: "Wife: To be a companion to him and be subject to him as to the Lord. 'I pledge to continue submitting to you as the head of our home!'" Husband: "A head is not a dictator but a servant. A head doesn't make all the decisions nor are the ones he makes always right. He just has final responsibility. Don't abuse that delegated responsibility." We pray you two experience the love that God is and gives."

**:26-27** It is only as we comprehend and experience Christ's love for us (**3:17b-19a**). Note the results of the Spirit's filling & Christ's love & the implications for us.

Christ loved the Church, not so the Church could do things for Him, but so He could do things for the Church! **So that** (the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 hina clauses) **He might sanctify (aorist) her.** To set her apart for her intended use, to bring glory to Him. One result of Christ's love: sanctify means to put to the proper use. The Christian wife's role and responsibility: to be a helper, support, complement to her husband.

**Having cleansed (aorist participle) her by the washing of water with the word (rhēma).** By Jesus' giving Himself for us, He cleansed us, washed us (**1 Cor. 6:11 read**). He did this by the washing of water with the word. God's truth cleans us up.

The husband loves: the wife is cleansed as we talk and listen. Cleansed her with the word: talk with your wife, discuss with her what's going on in her life and your life; share with her how God is working in your life. Communicate!

**:27 That** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> hina) **He might present (aorist) to Himself the Church in all her glory.** Christ Himself will present her, and it is to Himself that He will present her. A Church, His Body, characterized by glory, God's glory/radiance/splendor. The Church is HIS bride! She hasn't yet been revealed *in all her glory* but she will be; why? Because of Christ's love and giving Himself for us. As a husband, your primary concern is for your wife—her beauty, her holiness, her completeness.

**Having (present participle) no spot or wrinkle or any such thing.** The husband loves: what an impact my love and giving myself for Marylee has! She's beautiful, glorious! **1 Pet. 3:3-4** is the best explanation of her glory.

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Dealing with 2 halves of 1. Therefore, the husband must no longer think of 2 but 1. In **:33** it's love his own wife even as himself. I nourish and cherish my wife as my own body, because she is! It is natural to love, nurture, and protect oneself.

**:28b He who loves** (present participle) **his own wife loves** (present active) **himself**. He loves himself; he loves her who is part of him. **:29 For no one ever hated** (aorist) **his own flesh**: It is unnatural for a person to hate his own flesh. If someone does (for example, suicide), you realize something is terribly wrong! **But nourishes** (present) **and cherishes** (present) **it**: present, there is active thought about the development of the marriage. Nourish (same word in **6:4**). Cherish, how a mother cares for her child. **Just as Christ also does the Church**: The Lord does the same with us. Everything is designed to that end. It's the natural thing for Christ to nourish and cherish His Body, the Church, His Bride.

**:30 because we are** (present) **members of His body**. "Because members we are of His Body." We are not something apart from Christ; we are truly parts of Him (**1:23**); we belong to Him. We are intimately and inseparably connected to Him. We become sharers of His life. He has put His name upon us. He listens. He has time for us. It is our greatest privilege to be subject to Him. He is our Head.

In the same way, the wife becomes part of the very life of her husband, and he nourishes and cherishes her, even as the Lord does with us as members of Himself.

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**:31-33** It is the relationship between Christ and the Church that defines for us how Christian husbands and wives are to relate to one another.

**:31 Gen. 2:24** emphasizes: **for this reason**—Paul uses this OT verse as the conclusion to **:18-30**. In the OT because God fashioned the woman from the man for the man ("flesh of my flesh"). In the NT because God has brought the two together to become one. **Because of this**...and now God tells the husband what to do! **A man shall leave** (active) **his father and mother**. The future husband is to leave his parents. No longer a child of his parents but the husband of his wife, who is part of him. Neither the parents nor children are to get in the way of the husband-wife relationship. Yes, parents are to be loved, cared for, and honored, yet the marriage bond takes precedence over every other human relationship.

**And shall be joined** (passive) **to his wife**. Means glued to or cemented together. The marriage bond is permanent. Though God has given permission for divorce in the case of adultery or the departure of an unbelieving spouse, death is God's only desired end for marriage. **Be joined together**: you truly become one. What God has joined together, let no man separate (**Mt. 19:3-10**)!

**And the two shall become (be) one flesh**. If you have children, they will leave. Since you have parents, you must leave them. We must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one. **Shall become one flesh**: physical relations are to indicate you are one. **1 Cor. 7:2-5**. We must be secure in our marriages

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**And the two shall become (be) one flesh**. If you have children, they will leave. Since you have parents, you must leave them. We must stop thinking of ourselves as two because we have become one. **Shall become one flesh**: physical relations are to indicate you are one. **1 Cor. 7:2-5**. We must be secure in our marriages

before we can abandon ourselves to our mates in physical relations (spirit, soul, body, in that order). How the physical relations have been cheapened by sexual immorality and impurity! This also teaches why polygamy, adultery, and any sex outside of marriage is wrong!

**:32 This mystery is (present) great.** Hidden in the past, it's now been revealed by God for all believers to understand. This union is to be an example of the union between Christ and His Church. A sacred reflection. "God uses our marriages as a stage to share with the world how believers relate to Jesus and how Jesus gave up His life for us." Such intimacy in a marriage relationship that no earthly symbol can do it justice.

**But I am speaking (present active) with reference to Christ and the Church.** Jesus is the Groom and Christians are His Bride (**Rev. 21:9** Come here, I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb). "No longer is the relationship between husband and wife based only on the creation model, but now also on Christ's personal love for His own."

**:33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love (present active imperative) his own wife even as himself:** in the singular, emphasizing individual responsibility, regardless of what the other does. No husband is exempt from this command: love your wife! Filled with the Spirit (**:18**) and qualified by your reverence for Jesus and His presence (**:21**), love your wife as Christ loves you. Love her with Christ's love, be her head (giving yourself for her in your actions and decision-making), nourish, cherish her; live with her in an understanding way and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life. Her lack of submission or respect makes no difference in you carrying out your role! I have seen unilateral obedience work wonders in a marriage relationship.

**And the wife must see to it that she respects (present middle or passive, the word translated fear in :21) her husband.** The respect that comes from one who comprehends the one-flesh relationship and the Lordship of Jesus. Go on doing it because it is right. Your submission and respect are not dependent on your husband's response. Yes, the wife is to submit and respect, but because the Lord is meeting your needs, you can trust Him as you live out your role and responsibilities with your husband. Do people see Jesus and His Body through your marriage?

**CONCL** Filled with the Spirit, willingly subjecting ourselves to one another in reverence for the Lord Jesus. If Jesus is recognized as the third Person present in your marriage relationship, your fellowship with each other will continue to mature. When Jesus talks with us, He won't ask about the performance or response of your mate, but He will ask, "Did you trust Me? Did you willingly accept and practice your role and responsibilities? Were you faithful?"

A Christian husband and wife, a Christian marriage, and Christian home: great witnesses to our Lord and Savior Jesus.

**:18-33** This is GOD's plan for marriage. Remember the context: as a new, holy, righteous man/woman, walking wisely (making the most of our time), understanding what the will of the Lord is, and being filled with the Spirit.

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