

**STUDY GUIDE 10**  
**EPHESIANS 5:21-33**



**CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS: MARRIAGE**

Starting in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 Paul addresses Christian Relationships

As you start this study, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what God has said through Paul.

**DAY 1**

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9. Note the different groups who have the responsibility of subjection and to whom.
2. Now Read Ephesians 5:21-33 three times. What is the main idea?
3. Many of us react to the words: “submit to” or “be subject to”. According to verse 21, who is to “submit to” or “be subject to”? To whom are they to “submit to” or “be subject to”? What is the basis for this submission as stated in verse 21?

TO DIG DEEPER: Read Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 5:5. What do these verses say is involved in submission? Read Philippians 2:10 – who is our role model? Use a Bible dictionary or a Concordance and then write a definition of submission.

**DAY 2**

1. The word “submit” or “be subject to” in verse 21 is a verb. Grammatically it is linked to verse 18 as the last of four present participles which describe being filled with the Holy Spirit. As we move forward we see how this looks in 3 relationships – wives and husbands, parents and children, masters and slaves (or employer and employee).
2. Read verse 22. Who is to “submit” or “be subject to”? To whom? In what attitude? Read verse 24, Colossians 3:18 and Titus 2:4-5. Note the word used for wives to do. Now read Ephesians 6:1,5; Colossians 3:20, 22. What word is used in these relationships? How are these two words different?

3. Read verses 23 and 24. What is the husband's role according to verse 24? What does it reflect? The Greek word "head" is used here in a metaphorical sense. It means "origin" as in the source (head) of a river. See Genesis 2:18-23. If Paul wanted to convey the idea that the husband "rules over" the wife, he would have used a different Greek word.  
Now read verse 25. What does the wife submitting to her husband reflect?

TO DIG DEEPER: Read Ephesians 4:15-16. Reflect on these verses and Ephesians 4:24. The role of the wife reflects the church and the role of the husband reflects Christ. What result, according to Ephesians 4:15-16, can result if the wife submits to her husband?

### DAY 3

NOTE: 3 verses are addressed to the wife, 8 verses are addressed to the husband, 1 verse to both.

1. In verse 25, what are husbands instructed to do? In what manner? Read verses 28 and 33. This is so important that it is repeated 3 times.
2. The Greek word used here for love is "Agape". In verses 25-27 Christ's love for the church is the example of this type of love. What 5 things did He do for the church as noted in these verses?
3. God instituted marriage with Adam and Eve – see Genesis 2:24-25. As Christians we believe marriage is holy and sacred. From Ephesians 5:24-27 describe why this is so.

### DAY 4

1. Verse 28 begins with "In this same way" or "So", referring to Christ's love for the church. According to this verse how is a husband to love his wife?
2. In verse 29 what does this love involve? Again, who is the model for the husband?
3. In verse 31 what is Paul emphasizing about the marriage relationship? This refers back to Genesis 2:24. The physical union in marriage brings a deeper oneness to the relationship – a mystery.

The mystery of Christ –who is God – uniting with humans in spiritual oneness is even harder to comprehend.

## DAY 5

1. Verse 33 summarizes the instructions. The husband is to \_\_\_\_\_. The wife is to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The historical context of Ephesians 5:21-33 is important. In Jewish law, a woman was a “thing”, not a person, she had no legal rights. In Greek culture women were for courtesan pleasures, prostitutes for daily use and wives for legitimate children. In Rome, divorce was easy and women were repressed. Paul’s view here is radical. Based on verse 21, submission is \_\_\_\_\_. In verse 22 wives are to defer only to \_\_\_\_\_. (not to all men).
3. According to verses 25-27, submission is defined and qualified by Christ. According to verse 25 wives are submitting to what kind of love?

## DAY 6

Paul addresses women on their own right as individuals able to make their own choices. He does not address them through their husbands. He speaks to wives and husbands on the same level. Both have major responsibilities in the marriage relationship. Each wife and husband are to willingly choose to fulfill those responsibilities.

If you are married, how has this passage helped you gain a better understanding of God’s intent for marriage? What one thing will you do this week for your spouse? For your marriage?

If you are not married, what have you learned about what God intends marriage to be? What qualities are important to you for a future spouse?

How can you use this passage with a friend, child or even a parent who is dissatisfied with their marriage?