

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

FUTURE *in* FOCUS

Future in Focus | Week 5 | October 5, 2025

Text: ²Ephesians 5:21–33

READ

Read the Scripture of the week: Ephesians 5:21–33

DISCUSS

- Share a time when you saw a marriage (your own or someone else's) display Christ's love in a powerful way.
- Share one or two "nuggets" that stood out from Sunday's sermon.

COME AND SEE

Paul applies the "new walk" of chapters 4–5 to marriage, taking a counter-cultural posture of mutual service in the home.

1. The Controlling Idea (v. 21): Paul says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." The Greek "hypotasso" means to "arrange under" for the sake of another, usually a military term with the mission in mind.
 - How does understanding submission as mutual alignment for Christ's mission change the way you view marriage or close relationships? (Compare Philippians 2:3–5.)

2. Wives & Husbands in Context (vv. 22–24): In Paul's world, wives were treated as property and husbands had few obligations. Into this he speaks of wives "submitting as to the Lord" and husbands loving as Christ loves the church.

- How is Paul's teaching radically different from his culture? How might it be different from ours? (Cross-reference Genesis 2:24 and 1 Peter 3:1–7.)

3. Husbands' Love (vv. 25–30): Paul commands husbands to love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

- What would it look like for husbands (or future husbands) to take "selfless initiative" to nurture their wives' flourishing? For wives to encourage that? (See John 13:1–15 for Christ's example of servanthood.)

4. Marriage as a Picture of the Gospel (vv. 31–33): Paul calls marriage a "profound mystery"—a living illustration of Christ and the church.

- In what ways does your current or future marriage, or the marriages you influence, reflect a covenant ("I'm committed to meet your needs") rather than a contract ("I'm committed as long as you meet my needs")?
- How does this vision of marriage challenge your assumptions? (Cross-reference Malachi 2:14–16.)

FOLLOW ME

This passage is not only about marriage mechanics; it's about living out the gospel in our closest relationships.

- For all: How can you practice "hypotasso" — deploying yourself in support of someone else — in your friendships, family, workplace, or church?

- For wives: In what specific ways can you "deploy yourself" this week on behalf of your husband's (or future husband's) spiritual growth and mission?

- For husbands: What is one act of selfless initiative you can take this week to create an environment where your wife flourishes?
- For singles, widows, and mentors: How can you model and teach covenantal love — not consumer love — to younger generations?
- For everyone: Where are you tempted to approach relationships contractually rather than covenantally? What would it look like to shift to a covenantal mindset?

Write down one concrete step you will take this week in your closest relationship (spouse, family member, or friend) to reflect Christ's self-giving love.

GO AND BE

- Pray for Christ to be the center of your relationships. Ask Him to help you serve "the Christ in them" and "submit to the Christ in you."
- Ask the Spirit to show you any "unspoken rules" or expectations that are undermining covenantal love, and to replace them with grace-filled habits.
- Commit to practicing at least one of your "personal marriage commandments" this week as a way of living out this passage.