Ephesians 5:21-33 : **Marriage in Christ**

Marriage: 1) What it is, 2) What it does, 3) What it Needs, 4) What it shows

1. **What it is**

In v31 Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 – marriage is a covenant – not a contract. Nor is marriage a declaration of present love, but a promise of future love. It is not a promise to always feel warm and loving (who can do that), but to be loving, and cherishing and serving and faithful (regardless of the emotional ups and downs). This is in complete contrast with our present culture, which does not see the most important thing in a marriage relationship to be the covenant but the chemistry. ~~There is a problem with monogamy. Marriage is a matter of duty and not passion and spontaneity.~~

1. **What is does (purpose of marriage)**
2. It Cleanses, and 2) it Meshes
3. **Cleanses:**

What is Christ’s purpose? To bring about change.

Spiritually we are twisted and bent and Christ wants to make us straight and beautiful.

Your spouse is supposed to help you be the person Christ wants you to be.

Culture says the purpose of marriage is finding someone who will not change me but accept me as I am. Marriage is to supplement me, and enhance my life, not to change me.

You need to admit you are not fine as you are! You are nowhere close to being the person that God created you to be.

Philippians 1:6 – “the good work he began in you …”. You are a shadow of who you are supposed to be.

Like visiting Danali. It is mostly covered in clouds but sometimes the clouds part and you can see the beauty of the mountain. That is what a Christian relationship should be. You get a glimpse of who that person can be in Christ.

Christian marriage is an intense form of Christian relationship. When we get to heaven will we turn to our brother and sister and say – “I always knew you could be like this!”

1. Expect to clash and have confrontations:

You are trying to change one another. You will be speaking the truth in love to each other. If you are in a good healthy marriage it will bring you to confront things that are wrong in your character. (A gem tumbler knocks off rough edges)

1. Who do you choose to marry?

What are your primary interests and secondary interests in a relationship?

Shouldn’t you marry a person based on something that will get stronger as you get older, not weaker? Don’t choose based on looks, money, connections – but find someone who can be your friend and counselor.

1. Chemistry is important:

But nothing is as attractive as having the love of someone you greatly admire and respect.

1. **Meshes**:

Bridge the gap between the genders. The husband and wife’s roles are not identical. The Bible takes our gender differences seriously and it gives us a way to comllement and mesh our genders. One, only one principle – “wives let your husband be your head.” Leadership and Final say. When you can’t agree the husband has the final say. The Bible then says 2 things:

1. Don’t use leadership to serve yourself. Husband’s should always put wife’s needs above his own. Example – buy a red or blue car. Husband should pick car color his wife likes.

Husbands should only overrule your wife and make the final call to seek the good of your wife, never to please yourself.

1. Bible gives no cultural detail on this principle.

The Bible does not give details on who controls the checkbook, or who is the main breadwinner, or who takes care of the kids. The Bible gives a principle for all times, places, and cultures – so no details.

* Liberals do not like the principle of male headship
* Conservatives want to bring in all their cultural details.

1. **What it Needs:**

A Holy Spirit powered ability to do “love philanthropy”. Holy Spirit’s job is to take things you know in your head and make it alive in your heart. This will allow you to submit to and serve one another. Love Philanthropy: You get so much money from one source you can give it away somewhere else.

You cannot be a good spouse or Christian brother unless you can love your spouse when they are not being the spouse they should be. If your spouse is the main thing in your life and they criticize you, you will break down. If you love God more than your spouse you will love your spouse well. If you are filled with love from God you have enough love to share.

How can you do love philanthropy? The Gospel – Jesus is the perfect spouse. We rebelled and turned away from God and what did Christ do? The ultimate spousal love.

1. **What it shows:**

Christ is husband and church is the bride. This is not a metaphor but reality.

Human marriage points to heavenly marriage. Marriage helps us understand what the Gospel is about, and the Gospel gives us the power to love well married or unmarried.