

Fall 2025 Marriage Study | Week 2

The Shape of Marriage

**Opening (5 minutes)**

**Icebreaker Question:**  
“Imagine for a second that you and your spouse had to switch roles for one week—every responsibility, every decision, every daily task. What’s the first disaster that would happen?”

**Leader Notes:**

* Expect humor here — let the group laugh and relax. After a few shares, transition:  
  *“Our differences aren’t mistakes. They’re part of God’s design. Tonight we’re looking at how husbands and wives are oriented differently on purpose — not for competition, but for completion.”*
* If singles are present, adjust by asking: “If you had to switch roles with your roommate/parent/friend for a week, what would be the first disaster?”

**Scripture Focus (5 minutes)**

Read aloud together:

* **Genesis 2:18–24** – God creates Eve as a helper fit for Adam; man called to hold fast to his wife.
* **Ephesians 5:22–28** – Wives submit as to the Lord; husbands love as Christ loves the church.

**Group Prompt:**  
Ask: *“What stands out to you about the different orientation God gives husbands and wives?”*

**Leader Notes:**

* Draw out contrasts: “helper” vs. “hold fast,” “submit” vs. “love.”
* Emphasize: These are equal in worth, distinct in calling, united in purpose.

**Discussion – The Wife’s Calling: Helper Fit for Him (10 minutes)**

**Key Principle:** A wife is called to be a *“helper fit for him”* — equal in dignity, distinct in orientation.

**Questions:**

* What comes to mind when people hear the word *helper*? How does the Bible’s use of this word (often applied to God Himself — Ps. 54:4; Ps. 121:1–2) change that?
* Why is it important to emphasize that *helper* is an identity, not just a task or part-time role?
* How does trusting Christ reshape the way a wife understands submission (Eph. 5:22–24) so that it’s not weakness but worship?
* For singles: How could cultivating humility and service now prepare you for supporting godly leadership later?

**Application Challenge:**

* **Wives:** Identify one way you can encourage your husband’s leadership this week — through prayer, affirmation, or partnership.
* **Singles:** Identify one way to practice the posture of helpfulness and encouragement in a friendship or ministry role.

**Leader Notes:**

* Anticipate resistance: “Helper” and “submission” may trigger negative associations. Gently reframe: *“This is not about inferiority — the Son submitted to the Father (Phil. 2:6–8). Biblical submission is strength under God’s authority.”*

**Discussion – The Husband’s Calling: Hold Fast and Love (10 minutes)**

**Key Principle:** A husband is called to sacrificial leadership — loving his wife as Christ loved the church.

**Questions:**

* How does the world define “headship” (e.g., domination, control)? How does Paul describe it (sacrifice, servanthood, dying to self)?
* What does it look like practically for a husband to “love his wife as himself” (Eph. 5:28–29)? Think: time, words, decisions, priorities.
* How does a husband’s leadership either encourage or discourage his wife’s trust in Christ’s authority?
* For singles: How could you begin practicing sacrificial love now in friendships, church service, or family responsibilities?

**Application Challenge:**

* **Husbands:** Choose one sacrificial act this week — putting her needs above yours in time, attention, or resources.
* **Singles:** Intentionally put another’s needs above your own this week as an act of Christlike love.

**Leader Notes:**

* If conversation gets abstract, press for specifics: *“What does this look like on a Tuesday night after work? Or when making decisions about money or schedules?”*
* Encourage balance: leadership is not control; it is costly love.

**Discussion – The Shape of Marriage Together (7 minutes)**

**Key Principle:** Marriage takes shape through God’s design — equal in worth, distinct in orientation, united in purpose.

**Questions:**

* How does seeing marriage as God’s *design* (rather than just a cultural contract) shift the way you approach marriage — or prepare for it if single?
* What happens when couples resist these God-given orientations? What fruit have you seen when they embrace them?
* How do these distinct callings — helping and leading — actually *complement* one another to produce unity?
* How does this picture of marriage point us back to Christ and His church?

**Application Challenge:**  
Take one step this week — as husband, wife, or single — to lean into God’s design rather than resist it. Share your plan with someone who can encourage and pray for you.

**Leader Notes:**

* *Transition tip:* “The beauty of marriage isn’t in erasing differences but in harmonizing them under God’s design — just like different instruments in a symphony.”

**Closing (3 minutes)**

Re-read **Psalm 119:68:**  
“You are good and you do good; teach me your statutes.”

**Prayer Points:**

* For husbands to love with Christlike sacrifice.
* For wives to trust Christ as they help and follow.
* For singles to embrace God’s good design now as preparation.
* For all of us to trust that God’s commands are not only correct but good.

**Leader Notes:**

* Consider ending with a responsive prayer: leader prays, group responds together, *“You are good and You do good.”* This reinforces Psalm 119:68 and unites the group’s voice.