

PT. 2: A BRIDE

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 5:25–33, ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* ²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,* ²⁷ *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* ²⁸ *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—* ³⁰ *for we are members of his body.* ³¹ *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”* ³² *This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.* ³³ *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- The church is not a _____. It is the _____ of Christ.
- You can’t love _____ and not love His _____.

WHY THE BIBLE CALLS THE CHURCH A BRIDE

1. _____ (Ephesians 5:31-32)
 - Out of all the metaphors, God chose a marriage picture.
 - Intimacy = “_____”
 - Observations: _____
2. _____
 - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church...* (Ephesians 5:25)
 - Observations: _____

3. _____
 - *Just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* (Ephesians 5:25)
 - Observations: _____
4. _____
 - *To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church...* (Ephesians 5:26-27)
 - *The bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.* (Revelation 19:7-8)
 - Observations: _____
5. _____
 - *The two will become one flesh.* (Ephesians 5:31)
 - Marriage is a picture of Christ’s union with His bride, the Church.
 - Observations: _____

OTHER NOTES

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THEME:

The church isn't a place; it's a people deeply loved by Jesus. As His bride, the church is called to live in intimacy with Christ, to be made holy by Him, and to reflect His love in every part of life.

ICE-BREAKER

1. Weddings are full of memorable moments. What's one funny or touching moment you've seen at a wedding that you'll never forget?
2. If you had to describe the church as a "bride" in one word (adjective), what would it be and why?

REFLECT (Read Ephesians 5:25-33 together)

3. Paul compares the love of Christ for His church to a husband's sacrificial love for his wife. What does this reveal about the depth of Jesus' commitment to His people? (Ephesians 5:25)
4. Paul says Christ washes and presents the church as radiant, without blemish. What does this teach us about God's role in making us holy versus our role in pursuing holiness? (Eph. 5:26-27; Phil. 1:6)
5. How does understanding the church as Christ's bride—not a building—shape the way you think about your personal relationship with Jesus and your place in His family? (Ephesians 5:29-30; 2 Corinthians 11:2)

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 5:25-33

6. Intimacy in marriage is built on trust. What does it look like for Christians to live in intimate trust with Christ? How does this challenge the way we often "do church"? (Ephesians 5:31-32; John 15:4-5)

TAKE ACTION

7. Christ's love for His bride is sacrificial. What's one area of your life where you sense God calling you to lay something down so you can love Him more fully? (Ephesians 5:25; Luke 9:23)
8. Since you are part of Christ's bride, how should your identity as His beloved shape the way you approach everyday life—marriage, family, work, friendships, and beyond? (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 2:9-10)
9. A bride's devotion is meant to be undivided. What competes for your loyalty to Jesus, and how can you guard your heart against spiritual unfaithfulness? (James 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2-3)
10. Paul says husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the church. How can the church, as Christ's bride, reflect His love in a world that often misunderstands or rejects Him? (Eph. 5:28-29; John 13:34-35)

CLOSING CHALLENGES

- **Practice:** Each day this week, spend time in prayer reflecting on Christ's sacrificial love for His bride. Ask Him to show you one way you can reflect that love to others.
- **Prayer:** Pray that the church would live as Christ's radiant bride—holy, unified, and bold in showing His love to the world.