Walk Worthy
Spirit-Led Marriage • Message 4
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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide our marriages and relationships.
- Ask God to help us put aside our own desires and consider the needs of our spouse.
- Thank Jesus for the example He gives us in loving and serving others.

Worship Psalm:
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.
Psalm 23:6 (KJV)

Scripture Reading:
Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.
Genesis 2:18-24 (NLT)

A. Introduction
(Ephesians 5:18b, 21)
Part 2 of our survey of Ephesians entitled *Walk Worthy.*
This section focuses on *living out* our identity in Christ when empowered by the Holy Spirit.
1. Today's message is entitled *Spirit-Led Marriage.*
2. The Spirit's guidance will be evident in our relationships, especially in our marriages.
3. Theme verses: **Ephesians 5:18b, 21 (NLT)**—*… let the Holy Spirit fill and control you. … And* [the result is that] *… you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

4. The word “submission” is often perceived negatively as referring to a wife being dominated and controlled by her husband - some think that is what the Bible prescribes.
5. *Submit* (Gk*. hupŏtassō*) is originally a military term meaning to arrange or rank under, subordinate; it came to mean to yield or to relinquish rights to another person.
6. A marriage cannot function smoothly if both spouses always demand having their way.
7. Biblical submission is not a matter of spiritual superiority; all believers of both genders are equal before God in every sense (Galatians 3:28). [Complementarian view of gender.]
8. The Scriptural distinctions are only in matters of role and function, not substance or value.
9. Let’s explore how to...

B. Creating a Christian Marriage

(Ephesians 5:22-33. C/R: Genesis 2:18-25)

1. Construct my marriage <u>SPIRITUALLY</u>.

(Ephesians 5:22-24. C/R: 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18)

1. God created men and women - He knows us - and He instituted marriage (Genesis 2:18-25), so He has a plan for how it will best function.
2. Since men and women were designed to be different, God gave each distinct direction.
3. **Ephesians 5:22 (NLT)**—*For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.* [NCV: *yield*; NASB: *be subject to*; GW: *place yourselves under your husbands’ authority*; CEV: *put others first;* MSG: *understand and support*]
4. A wife is expected to follow her husband’s leadership as she follows Jesus’ guidance.
5. This passage may irritate some of you; some may say it was written ***at*** a different time ***for*** a different time, or even, it was written by a man with a low view of women (not true).
6. Guided by God’s inspiration, Paul understood the spiritual equivalency of women; he elevated their cultural status and modeled marriage on the relationship between Jesus and His bride, the church - *but* he *also* instructed wives to yield to their husband’s leadership.
7. **Ephesians 5:23-24 (NLT)**— *For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.* [But not to *every* man!]
8. Jesus is the *head* and *Savior* of the church; He provides for her needs by delivering her from sin, redeeming her from judgment and protecting her against Satanic attacks.
9. Jesus submitted Himself to meet the needs of the church; now the church submits to Him.

10. The church submits to Jesus by obeying His Word, seeking His direction, asking for forgiveness when we are out of fellowship and representing His mission in this world.
11. Perhaps surprisingly, the Bible says a wife should relate similarly to her husband!
12. Submission is acceptance of a spiritual role, not identifying as spiritually or intellectually inferior; it's yielding leadership, letting your husband take initiative in the relationship.
13. I think many women might prefer that arrangement if husbands do act as leaders in the relationship as long as they are kind, patient, thoughtful and willing to listen.
14. Problems arise in a marriage when men are insensitive or harsh, which causes wives to withdraw, or on the other hand, they are passive and irresponsible, which forces wives to fill the leadership vacuum; neither of these behavior profiles reflects Jesus' character.
15. For a wife to willingly submit to her husband as her *head,* as the church submits to Jesus, the husband must treat her as Jesus treats the church.
16. A husband being the head of his wife means being attentive to her, in part by discovering her needs and providing those needs for her.
17. Theologian J.I. Packer said "masculinity" means responsibility, which includes responsibility for providing materially and leading spiritually in the relationship.
18. Would a wife resist following and supporting a husband who treated her like that?
19. APP.: To have a Spirit-led marriage, wives, you may have to willingly relinquish control and husbands, you must reassert yourself in humble, servant leadership. Will you?

2. Communicate <u>CHRIST-LIKE</u> love.

(Ephesians 5:25-27. C/R: Philippians 2:3-4)

1. **Ephesians 5:25a (NLT)** - *For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.*
2. Love in our culture begins with attraction - fascination with physical beauty, personality, character or other appealing traits; we pursue this person with these desirable qualities.
3. Marriages that last and deepen grow past superficial attractions and develop emotional, spiritual and physical intimacy (which occurs in that order).
4. Jesus' love for His church was displayed by His desire to discern and provide what people needed, not by determining whether they had something desirable to offer Him.
5. God loves because it is His nature to love those whom He has created because we need to be loved - not because we are attractive or deserve His love or have anything He needs.
6. God did not love the world and send His own Son to redeem it because it was worthy of that love; it was utterly unworthy of his love but desperately in need of it. (John 3:16-17)
7. Jesus is the model for how husbands are supposed to love their wives - by providing whatever is needed and doing whatever needs to be done to meet the loved one's need.

8. *But I can't love like God does!* God tells us, commands us, to love our spouses, other believers, our neighbors, even our enemies, so it must be something we can choose to do.
9. God has given those who belong to Him the capacity to love as He loves.
10. Love like this is an act of the will as well as the heart; it does seem that whomever we choose to love and practice loving becomes attractive to us and we feel love for them.
11. You can't feel your way into an action, but you can sincerely act your way into a feeling.
12. Loving as Jesus does doesn't depend on what others are, but on who you are in Christ.
13. A husband who loves his wife only because of her physical attractiveness or pleasing temperament does not love her as Christ loved the church. [APP.: How do you love?]
14. A husband communicating Christ-like love dies to self in order to love and serve his wife because that is what Christ's kind of love demands; that is his submission to her.
15. **Ephesians 5:25b-27 (NLT)** - *He* [Jesus] *gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.*
16. Jesus gave His life to cleanse Christians of sin so that the church which they composed could be flawless, faultless, impeccable, perfect.
17. A loving husband should also cover flaws, overlook failures and help the loved one grow in areas of weakness—including spiritual areas - wanting only what is best for his wife.
18. APP.: Husbands, will you forgive mistakes and weaknesses to help your wife flourish?

3. Consider my spouse <u>INSEPARABLE</u>.

(Ephesians 5:28-32. C/R: Genesis 2:23-24; Song of Songs 2:16; Philippians 2:2; Colossians 3:19)

[Accept my wife as inseparable part of me.]

1. **Ephesians 5:28–30 (NLT)** - *In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body.*
2. You love and care for yourself; do you care for your spouse in the same way?
3. We are actually part of each other - not mere roommates- soulmates- because we share physically, emotionally, and spiritually. [Not same ice cream, music, sharing Spirit.]
4. When we show love to someone we are that close to, we share in the experience of love.
5. God views a husband and wife as becoming *one* person…as living *one* life.
6. **Ephesians 5:31 (NLT)** - *As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."* [*one flesh* Genesis 2:24]
7. *Joined* (Gk. *prŏskŏllaō*) means to *glue or cement together,* to *adhere*, to *cleave or join*.

8. A husband and wife leave their respective families and become cemented together in a connection more binding and more permanent than their relationship with their parents.
9. If we see our marriage partners as being *one* with us, the way God sees us, we will try to make their lives pleasant, joyful, happy, fulfilled, hopeful, by expressing affection and offering encouragement - and we will experience the love we express. [Not fighting!]
10. When you achieve a measure of the oneness the Bible ascribes to a married couple, you will avoid harshness, unkindness and criticism because you feel the pain you cause.
11. As we are part of Jesus's body, so are we connected to each other in a marriage.
12. That's why divorce is so painful - because it is a ripping, a tearing apart, of one body.
13. **Ephesians 5:32 (NLT)** - *This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.* [The mystery is not that marriage forms one life from two people, but that the formation foreshadows the spiritual union a believer has with Jesus.]
14. APP.: Couples, does your marriage function as one - unified and harmonious?

4. Concern myself with my spouse's <u>NEEDS</u>.

(Ephesians 5:33. C/R: 1 Peter 3:7)

1. **Ephesians 5:33 (NLT)** - *So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself,* [!] *and the wife must respect her husband.* [Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, <u>Love and Respect</u>, '04]
2. This verse is unusual. You expect it to say a man and wife must *love* each other; it doesn't.
3. Spouses have different primary emotional needs; when these are not met, conflict results.
4. Women need to feel loved, which provides them security.
5. Men need to be respected, which provides them significance.
6. Without love, a wife reacts without respect; without respect, a husband reacts without love.
7. This creates a continuing cycle of conflict and distance that descends on the relationship.
8. Any hope? If spouses are willing to be led and enabled by the Spirit to sacrificially love each other by discovering and seeking to meet each other's needs. (That's mutual submission!)

<u>Extra:</u> I take you to be my spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we part in death, according to God's Holy Word.