

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

COFFEEHOUSE FIVE CHURCH
COUNTER CULTURE
SEXUALITY
EPHESIANS 5:22-33
11/05/2017



MAIN POINT

God has designed the headship of men and the help of women to display the gospel of Christ to the culture around us.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What does the word “complementary” mean? How is God’s design of man and women complementary?

How have ideas about gender, sexuality, and marriage changed since you were younger?

Recently, there has been a massive shift in the way our society views issues like gender, marriage, and sexuality. These changes are evident in culture and in the church. But amidst the changing attitudes of culture, God’s Word is not silent on these issues. God designed men and women with equal value but differing roles. This idea may often be thought of as offensive or even dangerous today, but we do not have the option to abandon God’s revealed truth about gender. God’s Word compels us to action.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 1:26-31; 2:4-25.

How do we see men and women created with equal dignity in these verses?

While men and women have equal value, they also have different roles. How did God design men and women differently? How do these differences complement each other?

God designed man to be the head and women to be the helper, what does the Bible mean when it uses this language?

We live in a society that says to be equal in value means to be equal in every other way. This is an unbiblical assumption. Men and women were created in a loving act of God to complement each other and worship God. God designed man to be the head or leader in the home and woman to be a helper fit for Him. We were designed like this before the fall, and God said this was very good. As believers, we must get our view of sexuality from God’s Word.

How was God’s creation of man different than all other creatures? What does this suggest about man’s value?

Read Genesis 1:26 again. Men and women were created by the action of all three members of the Godhead. In what ways do men and women reflect the image of God in the way they have been made?

As discussed in the previous lesson, all human life has value. God does nothing by accident. Unlike every other created thing, God has made us in His image. With the rest of creation, He spoke. With men and women, God was physically involved. There was a Trinitarian council that resulted in the creation of man and woman. Just as each member of the Trinity is equal in value, they serve different roles. Jesus submits to the will of God the Father. We mirror this pattern of leadership and submission in our relationships.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 5:22-33.

What about these verses may be offensive in broader culture? Which part is most offensive?

What are men told to do in these verses? What are women told to do? How would you define the differences between these roles? Is it bad that they're different?

What is marriage ultimately supposed to demonstrate? Why is this crucial to understand in a culture that devalues traditional marriage?

Why did Paul quote Genesis 2:24 in these verses? What was he trying to illustrate?

How can embracing roles in marriage as God designed them help create a strong and healthy marriage?

Marriage is a picture of the gospel of Christ. Christ is the head of the church who died and gave Himself for her. Husbands die to themselves and live for the sake of their wives. Likewise, wives represent the church, the bride of Christ who lovingly submits to His leadership. Paul called this a mystery. Ultimately our marriages are not about us but about God. They reveal something deep and meaningful about the gospel. We counter culture by cultivating marriages that reflect God's glory and God's design.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do issues of sexuality open a door to conversations about the gospel? Give examples of statements that relate the gospel to sexuality, gender, and marriage?

If you are married, how can you make your marriage a clear picture of the gospel?

PRAY

Praise Jesus for the gift of marriage. Thank Him for His good design of human sexuality. Pray for your marriage and other you know of, that they would demonstrate God's good design and gospel driven purpose for marriage.

COMMENTARY

GENESIS 1:26-31; 2:4-25.

Primeval history describes the accounts of the creation, the fall, the flood, the tower of Babel, and the distribution of the human race. It embraces all those facets of human experience that led up to and necessitated the call of Abraham to covenant service to the Lord.

The two accounts of creation (1:1–2:3 and 2:4–25) are designed respectively to demonstrate the all-wise and all-powerful sovereignty of God (first account) and His special creation of humanity to rule for Him over all other created things (second account). Though the creation stories are fundamentally theological and not scientific, nothing in them is contradicted by modern scientific understanding. Genesis insists that all the forms of life were created “after their kind” (1:11–12, 21, 24–25); that is, they did not evolve across species lines. Most importantly, the man and the woman were created as “the image of God” (1:26). In other words, humanity was created to represent God on the earth and to rule over all things in His name (1:26–28). God’s desire was to bless humanity and to enjoy relationship with them.

EPHESIANS 5:22-33.

5:22 Wives submit directs wives to be submissive to their own (Gk idios; “one’s own”) husbands (cp. Col 3:18-4:1). The distinctive feature here is that the relationship between husband and wife is compared with that between Christ and the church. No verb is in the original language of verse 22. The imperative “submit” is understood from verse 21.

5:22-24 Paul addressed wives first. They were to be voluntarily submissive to their husbands. No external coercion should be involved, nor should submission imply that the wife is a lesser partner in the marital union. The submission is governed by the phrase as to the Lord. Christian wives’ submission to their husbands is one aspect of their obedience to Christ. Submission is a person’s yielding his or her own rights and losing self for another. Submission is patterned after Christ’s example (Php 2:5-8) and reflects the essence of the gospel. Submission distinguishes the lifestyle of all Christians.

5:25 Paul turned to the duties of husbands. The society in which Paul wrote recognized the duties of wives to husbands but not necessarily of husbands to wives. As in Col 3:19, Paul exhorted husbands to love their wives, but Ephesians presents Christ’s self-sacrificing love for the church as the pattern for the husband’s love for his wife.

Husbands are to love their wives continually as Christ loves the church. The tense of the Greek word translated “love” indicates a love that continues. Love is more than family affection or sexual passion. Rather it is a deliberate attitude leading to action that concerns itself with another’s well-being. A husband should love his wife: (1) as Christ loved the church (vv. 25-27); (2) as his own body (vv. 28-30); and (3) with a love transcending all other human relationships (vv. 31-33).

5:26-27 Cleansing her with the washing of water: Paul explains more fully the result of Christ’s atonement for the church: it makes the church holy and pure. The purpose of Christ’s giving himself up for the church is the church’s sanctification and cleansing.

5:28 Since husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, they give up their personal rights for the good of their wives. It is a solemn picture of covenant love.

5:29-30 On first sight, Paul seems to have descended from the lofty standard of Christ’s love to the low standard of self-love when he says no one ever hates his own flesh, but he reminded Christian couples of their oneness, their “one-flesh” relationship. For this reason a husband’s obligation to cherish his wife as he does his own body is more than a helpful guide. His sacrificial love is an expression of the sacred marital union. True love is evidenced when husbands and wives have this spiritual, emotional, and physical oneness.

5:31-32 Paul appealed to Gen 2:24, which is God’s initial statement in the Scriptures regarding marriage. The marriage commitment takes precedence over every other human relationship.

5:31 One flesh means closely joined. It hallows the biblical standard of covenantal heterosexual marital relations and excludes polygamy and adultery. What is primarily a divine ordinance graciously and lovingly is designed for mutual satisfaction and delight.

5:33 Love... respect concludes and restates this section’s theme. The husband’s ultimate responsibility is to love his wife with a Christlike love.