

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Marriage: A Call to Love and Lead

"Marriage is the greatest test in the world...but now I welcome the test instead of dreading it. It is much more than a test of sweetness of temper, as people sometimes think; it is a test of the whole character and affects every action."

-T.S. Elliot

"Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ...The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man."

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

-Genesis 2:18-24

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 5:18-33

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

Gen 2-3; Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Cor 11:3; 1 Pet 3:7; Titus 3:5; Song of Songs;

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - The relationship between the instructions in v. 21 and v.18
 - The imagery used in v. 22-24. Where else in the NT is that imagery used?
 - The verbs Paul uses in instructing husbands
 - The Jewish theology that this instruction to husbands and wives is rooted in (see v. 31)
 - The symbiosis implied in this passage
 - The stated motive for submission
- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Ephesus then, what do they mean for us now?**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- After hearing the farewell speech by Robert McQuilken (the man who resigned his presidency of Colombia Bible College to care for his sick wife), what thoughts/reactions did you have? How does that story inform your understanding of "cherishing"? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6pX1phlqug>
- Do you agree that husbands are ultimately accountable for the entire health of a marriage? (Remember the RACI Matrix illustration) If so, what does that mean for your life? If not, why & where in the text do you base your disagreement?
- Men: What must you do in response to these truths? Women: What must you do?

"Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave."

–Martin Luther

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 6: 24

This Week: Eph 5: 25

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (September):

Apostles Church wants to be a people who intentionally connect others to Jesus. We will authentically, compassionately, and intelligently dialogue with the culture about the Gospel of Jesus.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for giving His people His Spirit
- Praising God for making Christ head of the Church
- Confessing our selfishness instead of submission
- Confessing our failure to love others as sons and daughters of God
- Thanking Jesus for giving us a radical model of sacrificial, servant leadership
- Thanking Jesus for washing, cleansing and sanctifying us
- Asking God to make us people who live with this radically gospel-centered love
- Asking God to enable us to treasure Christ above all things

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *The Four Loves* – C.S. Lewis
 - *Wild at Heart*– John Eldridge
 - *Disciplines of a Godly Man* – R. Kent Hughes
 - *Love & Respect* – Emerson Eggerichs
 - *Sacred Marriage* – Gary Thomas
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6pX1phlqug>

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 5:18-33