

Study Guide: "Submission through Sacrifice"

Carter Sanger, Sep-09

Introduction

All of you know couples that have struggled in their marriage or been divorced. Many of you may know these struggles firsthand. What did the love look like that brought these couples together? When did it start fading away? How does a broken relationship scar a person as he or she tries to move forward?

Read Ephesians 5:21, 25-33a.

I. As Christ loved the Church

Read verses 25-27. Christ is described as loving the church in specific ways.

- What are they?
- What is the result of Christ's love for the church?
- As you think about the implications of this for your marriage (present or future), is this a desirable result?

Pastor Carter talked about three different Greek words used for love: Eros – romantic, physical love; phileo – love of a close companion; agapao – love for the long haul, commitment.

- Which of these is important for marriage? Which one does Paul use in his instruction for husbands? Why do you think this is the one that is commanded (and not the other two)?

II. As you love your own bodies

Read verses 28-30

- How does Paul describe our love for our own bodies?
- Why do you think Paul uses this analogy after the one above?

III. What makes a husband's love possible?

Read verses 31-32

- As Paul has described what a husband's love for his wife should look like, he's been laying the groundwork for our understanding of God's love for us. What is the mystery that he speaks of?
- When Paul writes that a man shall "leave his father and mother and be united to his wife," how does this describe what Jesus did? Discuss the magnitude of this statement as a demonstration of Christ's love.
- Does this encourage you?
- Is Christ's commitment to you conditional upon your personal righteousness? Do your failures cause Christ to divorce you? How does this motivate you to live?

Wrap-up

- Husbands, what do you need to change to love your wife as Paul instructs?
- Others, how does the picture of marriage encourage your commitment to Christ?