

Week 25: "Our Marriages: A Reflection"

Day One: "Love as Your Own Body"

Read: Ephesians 5:28-33

Reflect: What daily actions do we take to care for our own body?

Dig: The basis for verses 27-28 is the teaching of Genesis 2:24 ("Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.") According to these verses (from Ephesians 5:27-28 and Genesis 2:24), how is loving his wife like loving (caring for) his own body?

A husband is supposed to "feed and care for" his wife. How might this text have application to the everyday tasks of a household?

Apply: Our marriages are supposed to be mirrors or reflections of Christ's love for the bride (church). Ask God to bless the marriages close to you and pray for these couples by name.

Week Twenty-Five: "Our Marriages: A Reflection"

Day Two: "Members of His Body"

Read: Ephesians 5:28-33

Reflect: How does Christ nourish (feed and care for) his church?

Dig: How is verse 30 connected to verse 29? (Clue: pay attention to the connecting word "for.")

Read Romans 12:3-5. How does this passage help you understand Ephesians 5:30?

According to Ephesians 4:11-16, how does Christ feed, care for and build up his bride (the church)?

Apply: How must your culturally conditioned (what you are used to and think normal from your own experience) thinking change regarding how husbands should act so that it is more in line with God's word?

Week Twenty-Five: "Our Marriages: A Reflection"

Day Three: "A Profound Mystery"

Read: Ephesians 5:28-33

Reflect: In thinking about your own or other marriage relationships, how have you learned about

Christ's love for his bride?

Dig: Verse 31 is a quote of Genesis 2:24 and has three parts:

Leave father and mother (choosing)

Be united to wife (committing)

Become one flesh (sexual intimacy)

How might each of these parts be reflected in Christ's relationship to his church (bride)?

Read Malachi 2:13-16. What is the reason that God gives for hating divorce?

According to Ephesians 5:29-33 and Malachi 2:13-16, how could divorce damage our children's trust in God's commitment to us, his bride?

Apply: By name, pray for those you know who are affected negatively by the divorce of their parents.

Week Twenty-Five: "Our Marriages: A Reflection"

Day Four: "Love and Respect"

Read: Ephesians 5:28-33

Reflect: How are most men and women wired differently from each other emotionally?

Dig: How is verse 33 a summary of Ephesians 5:21-33?

What is the difference between the instruction to wives and that given to husbands?

Why might God call husbands to love instead of choosing the word respect?

Apply: Since loss of respect (name-calling, harshness, tone of disrespect) is a sign of a marriage in trouble, pray for the marriages close to you so that respect may rise.

Week Twenty-Five: "Our Marriages: A Reflection"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 5:28-33 "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church- for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and

the wife must respect her husband."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

-- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

-- **meditation:** you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.

-- **prayer:** you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.