Crossroads International Church Matthew Lyle

Series: Ephesians: Inconceivable Blessings, Incredible Purpose 2025-09-14

***Ephesians 5:22-33***

**Not Just Fine Print—but God’s Blueprint.**

**What looks like fine print in the Christian life**

**is actually God’s blueprint for how love, sacrifice, and unity reflect Christ and His church.**

**Topic**: Marriage as God’s Blueprint

**Question**: Why does Paul apply the gospel so specifically to the marriage relationship?

**Answer**: Because marriage is not merely a private arrangement but God’s blueprint to display Christ’s sacrificial love and the church’s trusting response.

**Purpose**: To see that Christian marriage is not just about practical harmony but about embodying the mystery of Christ and the church—so that husbands and wives together display the gospel in everyday life.

**Context**: Paul has just called believers to Spirit-filled living (5:1–21), capped with the general principle of mutual submission (5:21). From there he applies that principle to specific relationships—beginning with marriage (5:22–32) and then children and slaves in chapter 6. This section explains how the gospel shapes even the most intimate bonds.

**Reason**: This passage shows that the gospel is not abstract; it governs the most practical and personal parts of life. By grounding marriage in the mystery of Christ and the church, Paul elevates it beyond social custom and reveals its role in God’s eternal plan.

**Background:** In Greco-Roman culture, household codes (rules for husbands, wives, children, slaves) were common, but they generally reinforced the authority of the male head. Paul reshapes this cultural form by rooting it in Christ’s self-giving love, making marriage a theological picture rather than merely a social contract.

**Big Idea:** Marriage is not just fine print in the Christian life—it is God’s blueprint for showing the gospel, where wives submit willingly and husbands love sacrificially, reflecting the church’s trust in Christ and Christ’s love for His church.

**Response**: To embrace marriage (whether our own or others’ in the community) as a living parable of the gospel, supporting patterns of sacrificial love and willing trust that point beyond ourselves to Christ.

1. **A Wife’s Calling** (vv. 22–24)

Submission is not fine print—it’s a gospel picture.

A. The Call to Submission (vv. 22–23)

* Wives are called to submit as to the Lord.
* Submission here is not about inferiority, but about order and devotion.
* Just as the church joyfully follows Christ, wives are called to trust their husbands’ leadership.

B. The Pattern of the Church (v. 24)

* The church submits to Christ as Head.
* Marriage is meant to reflect that trusting relationship.

2. **The Husband’s Command** (vv. 25–30)

Love is not fine print—it’s Christlike sacrifice.

A. The Command to Love (v. 25)

* Husbands are called to love as Christ loved the church.
* This is not casual affection—it’s self-giving sacrifice.
* Christ gave Himself up, even to death, for His bride.

B. The Goal of Love (vv. 26–27)

* Christ’s love had a purpose: to sanctify, cleanse, and present the church in splendor.
* A husband’s love is meant to nurture his wife’s growth and flourishing.

C. The Picture of Love (vv. 28–30)

* Husbands love their wives as their own bodies.
* No one hates his own flesh; he nourishes and cherishes it.
* Marriage is a one-flesh union that demands care, tenderness, and loyalty.

3. **The Marriage Mystery** (vv. 31–33)

Marriage is not fine print—it’s God’s gospel blueprint.

A. The Creation Pattern (v. 31)

* Paul quotes Genesis 2:24: the two become one flesh.
* Marriage was God’s design from the beginning.

B. The Gospel Mystery (v. 32)

* Marriage points beyond itself—it reveals the mystery of Christ and the church.
* Every marriage tells a gospel story—for better or worse.

C. The Summary Command (v. 33)

* Husbands: love your wives.
* Wives: respect your husbands.
* Together: reflect Christ and the church.

**Response: Living the Blueprint**

For Married Couples

* See your marriage as more than companionship — it’s a living parable of the gospel.
* Wives: your trusting respect reflects the church’s trust in Christ.
* Husbands: your sacrificial love reflects Christ’s love for the church.
* Together: embrace your marriage as both a blessing and a purpose.

For Singles, Widows, and Youth

* Even if you’re not married, these verses still matter.
* Support and pray for the marriages in our church — they are gospel billboards to the watching world.
* Learn from the pattern: all of us are called to submit to Christ as Head and to love one another sacrificially.
* Every believer is part of the bride of Christ, and every one of us reflects His gospel in our relationships.

For the Whole Church

* Marriage is not just fine print — it’s God’s blueprint.
* As a community, let’s encourage, protect, and uphold marriage as a sacred witness to Christ.
* And let’s remember: whether married or single, we all display the gospel by living lives of love, trust, and self-giving sacrifice.