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## Sermon Discussion Guide

### The Pathway of Marriage - Christian Lindbeck

2 - 12 - 23

#### Leader Preparation

1. Take some time to look over these questions ahead of time. Choose the ones that you want to make sure you cover with your group. We have highlighted what we think are **key ideas/questions by bolding them.**
2. Pray for your group and your time together as you prepare. This is so helpful!
3. When meeting online you as the leader will need to be more directive than in person. Don't be afraid to invite everyone to answer a question, invite them to share by name, and thank them when they finish. The online format requires a little more intentional orchestrating than an in-person group.
4. Try to start the gathering by getting everyone talking at least once to begin. The Hook section is great for this. When in doubt, have people share stories about their past. (How the week was, favorite memories about the topic for the day, etc). This is a great way to help your group continue to get to know one another.
5. Next, look at the Scripture and what it means. We believe Jesus is discipling people through this Word. Get people into the Scriptures and the Scriptures into people!
6. Finally, end with what God is saying to people and how God is inviting them to respond. These aren't just ideas to know but realities to live in!



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#### \*Leader note

- The goal of this study is to focus on how marriage is intended to be a living picture or image of God's love for his people. Some groups might get sidetracked on what is meant by "wives submit to your husbands" especially because this language has been misused at times in the church. A few keys to understand this:
  - 1: Verse 21 says believers should ALL submit to one another. Verse 22 is given as one example of how all believers should submit to one another.
  - 2: No Greco-Roman would have been surprised by reading that a wife should submit to her husband. The real counter cultural challenge of this passage is that husbands should sacrificially love their wives with the same humility and service that Jesus demonstrated.
- As much as possible let the focus be on the idea that marriage is meant to be a living image of God's love for his people.

#### Hook - Getting to know one another

- How is everyone doing this week?
- What is one of your favorite pictures or paintings in the world? What do you love about it? What does it bring up inside of you?

#### Book - Scripture

- Read the scripture passages and discuss to understand **what the text is saying**:
- READ Ephesians 5:21 - 33
- What is the image or metaphor that Paul (the author) uses to describe marriage?
- How does this parallel a similar image used in the Old Testament? (See for example Hosea 2:14 - 23)
- Name the characteristics or virtues Paul hopes are lived out in a marriage that are listed in Ephesians 5:21 - 33.



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#### Look - Connections to our world today

- This section focuses on implications about **what this text means** about what's wrong in the world, about trusting God, about who God is, etc.
- Who have you known that most closely lived out the kind of self-giving love in marriage that is described in Ephesians 5?
  - How did that relationship impact you?
  - How did it inspire you?
- What are the implications of approaching marriage not as a place to find happiness but rather as a place to put a picture of God's relationship with his people on display?
  - How does this give a different goal of marriage?
  - How does it give a different motivation of marriage?
  - How does it lead you to think differently of the marriages around you?
- What would a church look like that didn't just leave it up to individual couples to live out this Biblical vision of marriage but was a whole community of support helping couples live this out? What would that be like?

#### Took - Personal Application

- This application focuses on **how God is calling us to respond**. This could be personally, as a family, small group, or church. It could be something to believe, to meditate on, to say or do this week.
- What marriage relationships are central in your life? This could be your own marriage, friends, family members, etc.
- How might you remind, encourage, and support those marriages in their calling to put God's self-giving love between him and his people on display?
- If you are married, what do you feel God saying to you about your marriage through this passage?



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- What is your response?
- If you hope to be married someday, what do you feel God saying to you about how you think about marriage?
- What is one takeaway for you personally from this discussion on marriage?

Time of Prayer