

STUDY NOTES

We Are Family

A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH (Summer/Fall 2016)

[WWW.NEWCITYPHX.COM/SERMONS](http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons) - BRIAN KRUCKENBERG

The following content is based on the message “The Sacrificial and Submissive Marriage” spoken on 08/14/16 by Brian & Gina Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 5:15-33

THE STATE OF MARRIAGE

While we all may have different experiences with marriage, whether that be our own, our parent's, or someone else close to us, we can probably all agree that marriages are hurting. The statistics bear this out:

- In 1950 there were fewer than 500 marriage and family therapists, around 2,500 clinical psychologists and 30,000 social workers.
- As of 2010, there were 50,000 marriage and family therapists, 77,000 clinical psychologists, 192,000 clinical social workers, 400,000 nonclinical social workers, 105,000 mental-health counselors, 220,000 substance-abuse counselors. (The Atlantic, May 2012)
- *Do you agree or disagree that the state of marriage has generally declined over the past 50 years?*
- *Why do you agree or disagree?*

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

One of the biggest dilemmas we face today is our misunderstanding of the purpose of marriage. In eastern or more traditional cultures marriage is seen more as a business proposition and is about family legacy. In our western cultures, romance and personal fulfillment are seen two primary purposes for marriage. In this context, marriage becomes about self.

However, the bible talks about marriage in terms of Christ's love for the church. Marriage involves *both husband and wife submitting* (see 5:21) to Christ first and is about helping someone else become all they can be in Christ. It isn't about finding the perfect completed person but rather realizing that as a spouse God will use you to help “sanctify” the other and they will in turn help sanctify you.

- *In the message, we talked about marriage being “gospel reenactment.” What does this mean to you?*
- *What does “sanctify” mean? Look up that word and discuss it.*
- *What does it mean that marriage is a covenantal relationship and not a contractual one?*

THE ROLE OF A WIFE

Paul defines the roles of both husband and wife by starting with the wife's role of “submitting to her own husband.” While many people can misunderstand the word “submission” God gives roles on the marriage team so that it can operate in the best possible way. We learned that submission is often misunderstood as weakness, but it is certainly not. Submission doesn't mean that husbands make all the decisions and that wives follow blindly. Wives bring something to the marriage that is desperately needed to make it function as it should. A marriage isn't all it could be without both a husband and a wife. Submission doesn't mean that wives condone sin and, finally, submission is only in the context of a husband/wife relationship. Submission isn't general to all women and men.

- *What feelings do you have when you hear the words, “wives, submit to your husbands”? Talk about those.*
- *How has submission been misunderstood in our culture or even the church?*
- *Do you have any good examples of what you believe is a strong marriage where you have seen this work well?*

THE SACRIFICIAL HUSBAND

It might be helpful to look at the two roles that God created when He created marriage by taking out the words “husband” and “wife.” If we did this, we’d see something like this:

One person in the marriage loves the other like Christ loves the church, dies to self and gives up their own life for the sake of the other.

One person in the marriage grants leadership to the one who dies to self for the sake of the other.

Doing this simple exercise might change our perspective on the roles of husbands and wives. The husband has a high calling to put the needs and interests of his wife first. He is called to love his wife as Christ does the church. Pretty simple but much like submission, sacrifice is hard! It is hard because we are selfish by nature and men tend to suffer from apathy. It is the curse of Adam in many ways. Yet, husbands are called to initiate love and pursue their wives like Christ did the church.

- *Compare the roles and calling of wives and husbands.*
- *How are these roles similar and different? (Try not to talk in terms of more or less difficult.)*
- *How did Christ love the church? Take those characteristics and now apply them to the husband’s role in marriage.*
- *What are some things that we can be doing as Community Group to help each other develop our own gifts?*
- *Pray for unity in our group and church. Pray that everyone feels like they can get involved and everyone feels important.*

THE SACRIFICE AND SUBMISSION OF JESUS

Ultimately we know and understand that the Holy Spirit has to be in marriage for it to work, because we cannot do this without the Holy Spirit. We cannot sacrifice and submit without God’s help. We must look to Jesus as our example. He submitted to the Father’s will and sacrificed His life when He went to the cross.