

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Church in the City ⑪

INTRODUCTION | The Vision of Marriage①

When we think of marriage as singles, it is easy to overemphasize the ideals and dreams or the more ‘mysterious’ aspects of marriage. As result, there is often a struggle in knowing how to resolve misunderstanding and conflict as married people. Our passage for today teaches us of the wonder and reality of marriage. First, let us think about what the Bible says about marriage. What is marriage? In other words, let’s look a Christian view of marriage. Second, why is marriage difficult? Let’s look at the selfishness which hinders marriage. Finally, let’s think about the purpose and goal of marriage. It’s here that we’ll find God’s vision for marriage.

SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 5:21-33, Genesis 2:22-25

Ephesians 5:21-33

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Genesis 2:22-25

22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

QUESTIONS |

1: (Ephesians 5:31, Genesis 2:22-25) How does the Bible define marriage? With reference to the list below, what practical meaning can we derive?

- Instructions for marriage
- Contract for male-female unity
- Independence from parents
- Oneness (sex)
- Maturity in marriage relationship
- Children

2: Financial stability, a charming personality, and physical attraction are often considered the essential criteria when choosing an appropriate partner for your fulfilment. What do you think? What does the Bible teach on this topic?

3: (Ephesians 5:23-24, 26-27) What are the obstacles that hinder growth of mutual love and obedience in a marriage relationship? How can this obstacle be overcome?

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4: (Ephesians 5:32) Paul draws a parallel between the Christ and the church and the husband and wife, whereby the husband represents Christ and the wife represents the church. Why?

5: (Ephesians 5:27-30) How should we expect the relationship between a man and wife in marriage to look? To this end, how should a husband and wife act?

PRAYER |

- Give thanks to God for the great blessing that is marriage and for His instructions regarding marriage. As we reflect on the way in which Christ has shown us love and obedience, let us pray that as singles we would know how best to prepare for marriage and as married people how best to show love and respect to our spouse.
- Let us repent of our misunderstanding and incorrect thinking about marriage. Precisely because marriage is so important, we must recognize our own tendency to be selfish and ask God in pray for His help.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

Community Group Leader Training ⑤ (24)

Lunchtime Meetings (26@Kasumigaseki, 27@Otemachi)

Sunday Worship (30) Church in the City ⑫ (13:00 & 15:30@KDDI Hall)

Obento Project (8/5)

Sunday Worship (8/6) Church in the City ⑬ (14:00@TKP Garden City Takebashi)

* Community Groups will be on break for the month of August.