

DISCUSSION GUIDE

God's Formula for a Happy Marriage Stand-Alone Sermon

ICEBREAKER: If you could go back in time, what year would you visit? Why?

OVERVIEW: Marriage is one of God's greatest gifts to mankind. But if you ignore God's wisdom, marriage can make you miserable. Fortunately God has not left us in the dark when it comes to the principles that make a marriage work. In Ephesians 5:33 we can find the formula for a happy, fulfilling, and prevailing marriage. In this discussion we will talk more about building a happy marriage to the glory of God.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Read Ephesians 5:22-33.
 - a. What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? Does this command benefit wives, or only husbands, or neither? Explain.
 - b. Verse 23 says that the husband is the head of the wife. What responsibilities does a husband have as the head of the marriage and family?
 - c. What does it mean for a husband to love his wife as his own body (v. 28)?
3. The sermon cited studies that show that marriage makes people happier, wealthier, healthier, and is the best context for raising children? Why do you think that is?

4. What makes marriage so difficult?
5. What have you learned from your own marriage or from observing others about building a healthy marriage?
6. Studies show that Christian couples who don't attend church or only sometimes attend church together have about the same divorce rate as non-Christians — 50%. However, for those Christian couples who attend church together on a weekly basis, the divorce rate drops down to 14%. Why do you think that is?
7. Studies also show that couples who cohabit before getting married have a 50-80% higher likelihood of divorce than non-cohabiting couples. Why do you think that is?
8. God's formula for a happy marriage is Love + Respect = A happy, fulfilling, and prevailing marriage. One important way to show love to your wife is emotional closeness: quality time, physical affection (non-sexual touching, such as hugs, holding hands, and sitting close), intimate conversation, and honesty and openness about your life and feelings. Why is emotional closeness so important to wives, and what are some other expressions of love that are important to women?
9. Respecting your husband means not scolding (fussing at him angrily and even in public), complaining, criticizing, a sour look, a disrespectful attitude, or a negative attitude. These are all negative behaviors to avoid. Why is respect so important to a husband, and what are some positive behaviors that a wife can do to help her husband feel respected?

The Last Word: Dr. Emerson Eggerichs explains love and respect like this: The wife is the one who asks, "Does my husband love me as much as I love him?" The husband is the one who asks, "Does my wife like me?"