

## **Series – Family Check Up**

### **#4 - ‘Till Death Do Us Part Ephesians 5:21-33**

**Introduction:** Did you know that the matrix is the formative tissue around your toenail? No, it’s not fungus, it’s the matrix. Did you know that the matrix is the solid matter in which fossils are embedded? The matrix is a metal plate used for old type style setting. The matrix is the primary metal of an alloy. For instance, iron is the matrix of steel. The matrix is the connection between inputs and outputs of a computer.

As you read through the dozen different definitions of the matrix, you discover several that sounded vaguely like marriage. For instance.

- **“The matrix is an intersection of two opposites.” That sounds like marriage.**
- **“A matrix is a relationship in which something new develops.” That sounds like marriage.**
- **The matrix is a binding substance that keeps two things together.” That sounds like marriage to me.**

The Bible doesn’t call marriage a matrix, it calls marriage a mystery. Today I want to continue our family series, Family Check Up, with a message I’m calling **“Till Death Do Us Part.”**

**Our text for this morning is from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5 verses 21-30. Listen as I read these verses with the subtitle, Instructions for Christian Households, that gives practical guidance for marriage that God has put in His Word. After we read it—I will point out three basic truths that all spouses must understand.**

#### **Instructions for Christian Households**

***21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.***

***22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.***

***23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.***

***24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

***25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.***

***28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.***

***29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—30 for we are members of his body.***

***31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”***

***32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.***

***33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.      **Let’s Pray*****

Unless you’ve been in a coma, I don’t think I have to tell you that our nation is in disarray —Every time we turn on the news, we see more and more evidence for this claim.

Our young people are suffering from historically high rates of depression and drug abuse, abandoning religion, identifying with LGBT lifestyles at historically high rates and so much more. And on top of it all, young couples aren’t even starting families and having children anymore, ushering in a population collapse that no nation can survive.

Dr. Ben Carson recently wrote a book entitled, "The Perilous Fight: Overcoming Our Culture’s War on the American Family." [Here is an excerpt from his book:](#)

**"We are facing an enemy who wishes to destroy us, not with rockets, bombs, or ballistics of any kind, but from within. The battle is real. The enemies against us are powerful. If we are to be victorious in this pivotal battle, we must first turn to our faith for guidance and grace as we fight to reassert the very values that made us great."**

When the Great Awakening came in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and religious fervor swept across the colonies, there came an overwhelming desire in many of the

colonists to embrace the holiness and righteousness of our God. And with that desire to be holy and righteous marriage began to be held in much higher esteem.

Tom Brokaw (speaking about the Greatest Generation - those who lived thru WWII) said: ***"It was the last generation in which, broadly speaking, marriage was a commitment and divorce was not an option."***

In other words: marriage was highly prized in American culture.

**ILLUS:** One article told of a study conducted by Pamela Druckerman, a former Wall Street Journal reporter. She surveyed married or committed couples all over the world, and not only charted the international styles and frequency of cheating, but also looked at each country's capacity for guilt and shame - regarding infidelity.

She found that no other population suffers the same anguish over affairs as Americans do.

Russians regard an affair as if it were a benign vice, like cigars and scotch.

The Japanese have institutionalized extramarital sex through clubs and lifestyles.

The French, prize discretion in their affairs.

In sub-Saharan Africa, even the threat of death by HIV hasn't stopped people from cheating.

By contrast - American attitudes toward divorce/affairs differ... We find shame in these matters. And the reason these things bring shame is because of the teachings of Scripture.

What we do know is that God withheld His blessings from Israel when it failed to honor marriage.

**ILLUS:** In his book *'The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire'* Edward Gibbon cited 5 major reasons the Roman empire fell. Two of those reasons were these:

1. The rapid increase of divorce and the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which was the basis of society.

2. And religion decaying and becoming impotent to guide people's lives.

**He concluded that Rome wasn't conquered by its enemies... it collapsed.**

**In the ancient wisdom of God, we are told that men and women should be treated differently. Why? Because we are different. Three things to do, "Till Death Do Us Part."** (Give Disclaimer, failed marriages, etc.)

**But I'll tell you a secret this morning. A wedding is a vow...a commitment...a covenant relationship.**

That's where marriage begins. A marriage does not start with feelings. Marriage doesn't even start with love. A marriage does not begin with physical intimacy. Marriage does not begin when emotional needs met. Marriage doesn't begin with an extravagant wedding. It starts with a sacred promise.

A man and a woman stand in front of each other before witnesses and before God and say, "I promise to you as long as..."

"Not as long as it's expedient." "Not as long as you keep making me happy." "Not even as long as you love me back." "Not as long as it's easy." ***It's "as long as we both shall live, 'til death do us part."***

The reason that a wedding vow is such a moving and wonderful and frightening thing is it's a lifetime commitment. It is a no-matter-what-happens promise. It's about as close as two finite, imperfect human beings can get to what it is that God does for us when He vows unfailing, unending love to us.

1. Ephesians 5:21 gives the overall governing thought for what is to follow.  
**SUBMIT TO ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST.**

That verb, "submit," is the word, *hupotassomenoi* in Greek. It means, TO LINE YOURSELF UP UNDER, or, TO GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS.

The word only appears here in v. 21. It's then implied in the next two paragraphs. So, when we read in v. 22, "Wives, submit to your husbands..." that verb "submit," isn't in the sentence. It's understood from v. 21 that that's what Paul is talking

about. Likewise, when you get to v. 25, the same verb, "submit," applies from v. 21.

Here's what the Bible is saying: Men and women are to line themselves up under their mates to make the marriage work. Each one is to give up their rights and look out for the best interests of their spouse. If you line yourself up on top of or refuse to give up your rights, the marriage won't work well.

Mutual submission is one of the great keys to a great marriage.

**Key Take-away** - MARRIAGE WORKS BEST WHEN BOTH THE HUSBAND AND WIFE GIVE UP THEIR RIGHTS FOR THE SAKE OF THE OTHER.

Here's what it means. 1 PETER 3:7, says, "HUSBANDS, BE CONSIDERATE AS YOU LIVE WITH YOUR WIFE." - Consider her needs. Consider her personality. Study your wife and figure out what enables her to grow and what brings out the best in her and when you've figured that out, do it.

SUBMIT TO ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST.

Imagine what would happen if the leaders of Palestine and Israeli sat down at a table tomorrow and said, "What are your needs, really?" and then gave up their rights and started working towards the betterment of the other.

Men, imagine what would happen if your wife sat you down at a table tomorrow and said, "Honey, I've been making some demands of you. I'm giving up my rights to expect you to be who I think you should be."

Women, imagine what would happen if your husband sat you down at a table tomorrow and said, "I know there are some things you've needed from me, and I haven't been willing to help you with. But starting today, I'm going to do my best to love you as you need to be love."

For some of us, there would be a quiet revolution of joy, which is how marriage was designed in the first place.

Husbands, submit to your wife. Wives, submit to your husband. That's principle #1. Because if we've each got the other's back, then nothing can sneak up on us and no one can get between us.

**2. The second "Until Death Do Us Part" truth comes from the verse 33, where Paul says, "EACH ONE OF YOU ALSO MUST LOVE HIS WIFE AS HE LOVES HIMSELF, AND THE WIFE MUST RESPECT HER HUSBAND." (NIV)**

Look at this verse for a minute...are husbands and wives given the same command?

What are husbands supposed to do? -- **Love their wives.**

What are wives supposed to do? -- **Respect their husbands.**

Does that mean that husbands don't have to respect their wives? (No.) Does it mean that wives don't have to love their husbands? (No.) Because you can't love without respecting, and you can't respect without loving.

But because we are different, we have different ways of receiving what we need. And while men want to be loved, at the core of their being, we need to be respected by the one that matters most to us. Likewise, while women want to be respected, they have a hard time fulfilling their life's purpose unless they feel loved by the one who matters most to them.

**Key Take-away - MARRIAGE WORKS BEST WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES AND TREAT EACH OTHER ACCORDINGLY.**

You know this is true when it makes it into a Country Western Song.

Brad Paisley sings a song about this called, "Remember, I'm Still a Guy."

When you see a deer, you see Bambi.

And I see antlers up on the wall.

When you see a lake, you think picnics.

And I see a large mouth up under that log.

You're probably thinking that you're going to change me.

In some ways well maybe you might  
Scrub me down, dress me up oh but no matter what  
remember I'm still a guy

Well love makes a man do some things he ain't proud of  
And in a weak moment I might walk your sissy dog, hold your purse at the  
mall. But remember, I'm still a guy.

Author Gary Smalley wrote about his personal experiences with the gender  
differences. He said:

**"Several years ago, after going through the section in Ephesians on  
husband-wife relationships, I decided I was going to commit myself to  
my wife. But how could I demonstrate my willingness to build our  
relationship?"**

**Suddenly the idea hit me -- My wife loves to shop. I could show her  
how much I care for her by getting a babysitter and going with her to  
the mall.**

**As we walked around the shopping center, I got a real-life lesson in  
some of the common differences between men and women. What I  
learned that night began to change the way I related to my wife, and  
it's continued to be one of the most enriching concepts we've ever  
applied in our marriage.**

**Norma told me she needed to look for a new summer blouse. After  
walking into the nearest women's clothing store, she held up a blouse  
and asked, "What do you think of this one?" "Great," I said, "let's  
get it."**

**Then she picked up another blouse and said, "What do you think  
about this one?" It's great too." "Get either one of them." But after  
looking at some other blouses, we walked out of the store without  
getting any of them!**

**Then we went into another store where she did the same thing, and  
then another and another. All the time we were going into and out of**

**all those shops, I was getting more and more anxious. Then, after looking at what seemed like hundreds of blouses, she held up a dress that was our daughter's size and said, "What do you think about this dress for Kari?"**

**I couldn't take it any longer. I blurted out, "What do you mean, a dress for Kari? We're here shopping for blouses for you, not dresses for Kari!" And if that wasn't bad enough, after we left that store without buying anything, she asked if we could stop, sit down and talk, and have coffee!**

**Do you know what I learned that night? I wasn't at the mall shopping for blouses with my wife. I was hunting for blouses. I wanted to conquer the blouse and then get back into the car and head home. My wife, however, looked at shopping from a very different angle. For her it... it was a way to spend time communicating and sharing together.**

There are some obvious differences between men and women. Men have thicker skulls, thicker skin, more red blood cells and more muscle tissue. Women tend to be more resistant to heat and cold and outlive men.

It has been said that a man won't hesitate to pay \$2 for something worth a \$1 if he really needs it.

On the other hand, a woman won't hesitate to pay \$1 for something worth \$2 even if she DOESN'T need it.

**A woman marries a man expecting him to change.**

**A man marries a woman hoping she won't change.**

Men tend to be physically stronger than women. But because of their greater lower body strength women tend to do better than men in long distance activities like running or swimming. Men function best when they can focus on one thing at a time while women can usually be multi-focused—an ability that can be very handy when it comes to parenting.

H. Norman Wright adds, "Men snore more, fight more, their daylight vision is superior...they have thicker skins and longer vocal cords...they age earlier but



wrinkle later...their immunity against disease is weaker...they talk about themselves less but worry about themselves more.”

From the first moment of birth, little girls have more lip and mouth movement than boys. In a Harvard study of hundreds of preschoolers, researchers found that 100% of the sounds coming from little girls’ mouths were words, whereas only 60% of sounds coming from preschool boys were words. The other 40% were yells and sound effects like, "Vrrooom!" "Aaaaagh!" and "Toot, toot!"

Smalley points out, "This difference persists into adulthood. Communication experts say that the average woman speaks over 25,000 words a day, while the average man speaks only a little over 10,000. What does this mean in marital terms? Very often a man has already used up his 10,000 words at work... while his wife is just warming up by the time he gets home!"

1 Corinthians 7:3 says, ***“A man should fulfill his duty as a husband and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife and each should satisfy the other’s needs.”*** To satisfy each other’s unique needs—we must know what they are!

You see, it is difficult for a husband and a wife to enjoy any level of INTIMACY unless they really DO understand each other.

Think about it. Husbands and wives are supposed to live together, sleep together, eat together, spend money together, vacation together, socialize together, raise children together, worship together...and so on. How can we do all this in a way that brings fulfillment and joy—and at the same time glorify God if we don’t understand each other?

These differences make marriage challenging, but also makes it wonderful!

We could create a long list of ways in which we’re different. But for now, let’s just start with one, because it will take us 90% of the way to a good marriage.

**Women, take what I’m about to tell you on faith:** while we can be tough on the outside, inside we need the one who matters most to us to believe in us, to respect us. If we’re not the heroes of our homes, we’re not going to be heroes anywhere else, or some men try to be a hero somewhere else, at work, etc. If

you've stopped respecting your man, think and pray about how you can regain that sense of respect.

Phrases like these will really help:

I'M SO PROUD OF YOU

I BELIEVE IN YOU

YOU DO THAT SO WELL

(Give Examples...)

Guys, I must tell you that your challenge is bigger than the one I've just given to your wives. Because God says that she needs BIG TIME doses of love. **HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER. -- EPHESIANS 5:25**

Men, you've never been and will never be a woman. You'll never go through monthly cycles or menopause. You'll never carry a baby around inside of you or do any of those things that make women a woman. So, you'll never really understand what it's like to be a woman.

**Take this by faith:** your wife needs to know that you love her. She needs to hear it from you, see it from you, feel it from you, receive it from you. And the way she receives it best will probably be a way that you have never studied or trained or prepared for.

Because the way she receives love best is to have you listen to her. Listen to her dreams, her feelings, her fears, and her thoughts. If you will sit and listen, with full eye contact, and as much emotional engagement as possible, it will fill her more than you can know and reap more benefits than you can imagine.

Just so you know, when you listen to her, she does not want you to fix her. Men tend to listen for the problem to be solved. Your woman doesn't want you to solve her problem, she wants you to care about her. So, while she's talking, as best you can, try to listen for and understand what she's feeling. Then say something like, "That must have felt terrible." or, "That must have felt great." If you got it wrong, she'll let you know and you may need to start over.

Guys, write this down: If you want to fill her tank tomorrow, pick up the phone and call. Say, "I just wanted you to know I was thinking about you, and I love you." Then, don't ask her for anything, to remind her of anything, don't plan or solve anything. Just listen and when she's through, go back to work and see what happens when you get home.

- A. MEN NEED RESPECT.
- B. WOMEN NEED LOVE.

If you had to take this last truth by faith, this third thing may require even more faith. It comes out of v. 32.

### **3. "THIS IS A PROFOUND MYSTERY, BUT I AM TALKING ABOUT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."**

On a very deep level, marriage is a mystery. A mystery is something you cannot understand unless it is explained or revealed to you.

Long ago, something took place in the heart of God that you could not have known about unless He explained it.

God, who had always existed in relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wanted more relationships. So He created us in His image. He placed us on this planet and said, "grow." But instead, our first parents, Adam and Eve, turned their backs on God.

God still wanted a relationship with us, so He decided to do the work necessary to restore it. He sent His one and only Son, so that whoever would believe in Him, whoever would be willing, could have eternal life, with God, forever.

Jesus was that Son. He came, lived among us, showing us God's love, and then died on our behalf, to pay for our sins.

His hope is that we'll receive His love on our behalf, accept the forgiveness He offers, and come back into relationship with Him. If we'll do that, the Bible says that we will not only live closely with Him for the rest of our lives here on earth, but we'll be united with Him one day in heaven as the Bride of Christ.

**Key Take – Away** - MARRIAGE WORKS BEST WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND AND REMEMBER THAT SOMETHING MORE THAN YOUR HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE IS TAKING PLACE

Here's the mystery friends. What you and I experience in marriage is a foreshadowing of our relationship with Christ forever in heaven.

So, if you are married, or plan to be married, treat your marriage sacredly. Give up your rights. Build it with love and respect. Recognize that you will never fully understand all that is involved in a life-long commitment to a single spouse, and revel in the fact that you don't have to understand it, and secondly that the Holy Spirit will help you do your part.

Way back in the 1960's, the Beatles wrote a song that sold about as many records, cassettes, CDs, and downloads as one song can sell. The song was called, "All you need is love."

**All you need is love. Love.  
Love is all you need.**

While it's a great song, the truth is, it takes more than a mushy love to keep their vows, "until death do, they part," from the threats assaulting twenty-first century marriages.

**Here's the truth: Lonely, insecure, unhappy single people become lonely, insecure, unhappy married people. Problems like loneliness, insecurity, and unhappiness are not cured by another human's companionship... they are cured by the love of Christ.**

Marriage was not an end unto itself. God created it to point to a higher reality-Christ's relationship to His church.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Marriage is not the ultimate; it is a sign and shadow of a higher reality. Just so you know, the point of marriage is not to make you happy by finding a perfect soulmate; but to make you holy by teaching you to love like Jesus.

The love you were created for is not just the love of another human being; it's the love of God. The church is the ultimate, eternal family.

Think about the fact that God caused deep sleep to fall on Adam, to pierce his side and take a rib. ADAM'S DEEP SLEEP IS A PICTURE OF JESUS' DEATH. Jesus side was pierced, and the bible says that blood and water flowed out. And from that, Jesus' bride, the church was formed. God brought Eve to Adam as a picture of bringing the Church to Jesus.

***"In the resurrection," Jesus said, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).***

What's that going to be like-when I see Nancy flying by? Will I reach out to take her hand? Will we stop and chat about the kids and the grandkids and the life we had on earth? I'm tempted to let that make me sad, but I know that whatever God has for us in heaven will be better than we could imagine.

The point is that marriage is not eternal, it is temporary; and will finally give way to the relationship to which it was pointing all along: Christ and His bride.

According to Scripture, the ultimate family is not biological; it's ecclesiological. It's not produced by procreation, but by regeneration, being born again. And it's great when your natural family are also part of God's, eternal family.

**You were not created to be "completed" by the love of another human being; you were created to be completed by the love of Christ.**