

Ephesians 5:31-33 – Mystery of Marriage

Handfuls, TSK, GreekLexicon, Gill, Geneva, Rienecker, Poole, JFB, Robertson, Barnes, Trapp, Calvin, Henry, PNT, Clarke, Family, Vincent, Ellicott
Beloved in the Lord, one of the more popular things for young people these days is going into and finding their way out of a mystery room. And I am sure it is fun. You solve the mystery and you get freedom. The thing is, if you get lost and the time is up, the employees come in and free you, guaranteed!

But is that how real life is? No. Marriage is a mystery and you have to solve it to be successful. There is no easy way out. I can't come and open the door and let you out of your marriage. You have to solve the mystery. Ignorance destroys and kills. **So what is the mystery of marriage?** Hear God's answer.

Our headings are:

Mystery: Adam and Eve

Mystery: Christ and his Church

Mystery: Man's Response

Our goals are: **That you will understand and pursue marriage so that you can better fulfill your responsibility to your Savior.**

Mystery: Adam & Eve

31 "For this reason a man shall **leave his father and mother** and be **joined to his wife**, and the **two shall become one flesh.**"

1. Marriage is a mystery in many ways: Two people from completely different backgrounds, even from different races, even from different economic backgrounds, even from different educational backgrounds, even from differing ages, decide to start living together and having and raising a family.

Two people marry and remain faithful and committed to each other for the rest of their natural lives! It is a total rejection of the Bacchanalian Mysteries with multiple partners. It is a total rejection of what we see today in North America.

2. But this strange phenomenon of 2 strangers coming together in marriage is not really strange at all; Adam and Eve were one. At creation God said a man is to leave his father and mother, a place where he was born and raised, and a place where he is comfortable, and marry and move in with a stranger and start a new family.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall **leave his father and mother** and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This separation was a complete separation from the authority of the parents. Matthew 19:5 repeats the same thing. Unfortunately, at the time Apostle Paul was writing to the Ephesians, "two becoming one" marriages were disappearing. So God had to reveal this truth – this mystery- again.

3. This union of 1 man and 1 woman becoming 1 in holy union is not mystery in the sense of suspense or the unknown.

It is a mystery in the “unbelievable, perplexing or strange sense!” A man and his wife – two strangers - become literally “glued” together.

We use similar language. A man might say: “**It is a mystery why my wife would love me.**” What he means is it is strange that a wonderful woman would love a miserable man.

4. And yet, this union in marriage is not so strange when you consider Eve was formed out of Adam’s body!

What could be closer?

Genesis 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

Adam went to sleep and Eve was made out of his body! That was quite strange.

Adam said in his marriage vows? “This is now bone of my bone...and flesh of my flesh...” So the **closeness of marriage from two disparate persons was not strange.**

5. Lessons:

a. It is wickedness – abhorrent- for parents to try to control their child after he is married. They must let their child be married and united as one with his spouse and start a new family.

b. Children must not complain to their parents about their spouses but deal with the issues, learning to be independent.

c. This does not mean that a man no longer has any obligations to his parents. Far from it! It simply means that the greater degree of interest must be focused on his wife. But he still has to help his parents if they need help.

Mystery of Christ and his Church

32 This is a **great mystery**, but I speak **concerning Christ and the church.**

1. This great mysterious union between a man and his wife is pictured in the love for Christ and his church.

There is no kingdom of God without the marriage of the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, with his bride, the church. The Latin Vulgate, the Roman Catholic Bible, translated “this is a great mystery” as “that is a great sacrament.” This was absolutely not the original word. **Marriage is not a sacrament!** The word for mystery is transliterated as “mysturion,” from which we get mystery. And mystery here means “unbelievable, perplexing, or strange.” **Christ illustrated this amazing mystery!** How?

2. The great mystery is the Bridegroom left his Father's bosom in the glories of heaven to come and redeem his bride that had sold herself into slavery.

She was like a pig wallowing in mire and muck and loving it! That was her life. She was like one who sold herself for more drugs so she would think she is happy after taking them.

3. The great mystery is the Bridegroom had to have blood and water flow from his side for his bride to get new life, just as Adam had to give up the rib from his side to give life to his bride.

Simply put, the breaking of Adam's side resulted in life. The breaking of Jesus's side resulted in restored life.

4. The great mystery is the Bridegroom had to go to sleep, literally be buried in a tomb, for his bride to get life, just as Adam's bride was made alive when he was asleep. Christ died so his bride might live.

5. The great mystery is the Bridegroom, after he was joined to his former sinful bride, became as one with her.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His death**, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that the **head of every man is Christ**, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But he **who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

Ephesians 5:30 For **we are members of His body**, of His flesh and of His bones.

6. The Bridegroom, in that love that is a great unbelievable mystery, continues to nourish and comfort his bride.

He urged his bride to remain in him. (John 15) This is why we often say, "The Lord be with you!"

7. Then after all the work is done and the bride (church) is purified, the marriage will continue forever in heaven (John 14).

Revelation 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has **made herself ready.**"

8. Lessons:

a. May God have mercy on the soul of anyone who promotes break up of a marriage by conversations or by actions of luring one away from that marriage.

Matthew 19:6 "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, **let not man separate.**"

b. Take the time to wonder at the work of the Savior for a wicked, wild, wayward woman! He took her even in her filthiness and made her his bride! Take the time to wonder at the depth of his love! Take the time to praise him!

c. Only those who have experienced this love of Jesus and are a part of his church can be able to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Rejoice that you have experienced this.

d. Those who are married without Christ survive by compromise and emotion – not true love. So share Christ's true love so they can love like Jesus loved! Reveal the mystery to them! Let them please God *and* have a complete marriage!

e. Christ's bride (Psalm 45) is called to completely separate from her father's family so she could be joined to the Bridegroom. So the Devil is no longer your father! God snatched her out from there! Don't go back to the Devil – in your marriage or if you are part of the church.

Mystery: Man's response

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she **respects her husband.**

1. While marriage is mysterious, the Apostle Paul did not want people to become preoccupied with it, but rather, he wanted a husband and a wife play their part in the marriage.

2. He said the man must love his wife, even as much as he loved himself.

When a man loves his wife, it would help her to submit to the Lord, and therefore make it easy to submit to her husband.

3. He said the wife must respect (literally "fear") her husband.

Our NKJV used the **dynamic equivalence translation** rather than the **literal equivalence translation.** So it says a woman should "respect" her husband. But the literal word is "fear." She should **fear her husband.** Why did the translators use the word "respect" instead of "fear?" They did this because of the context.

Apostle Paul was speaking of a good fear – a fear flowing from love...which is "respect." The original word is "phobaetai." **But no woman is expected to be scared of her husband.** Consider Sarah's "fear" of her husband, Abraham. She simply honored her husband and did not usurp his authority.

1 Peter 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, **calling him lord,** whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

When women have this respect for their husbands, it would help to stop man's straying and help him to fulfill his task at home better. (The goal is serving the Lord!)

4. Lessons:

a. No society can be blessed if the structure God put in place is ignored. Look at the corruption in the family and society today! Look at the divorces! Look at the struggles raising children when a husband or wife is absent! Look at how women choose by themselves to kill their babies! Of course God mercifully forgives all sins and is gracious and gives help, but sometimes the consequences still remain.

b. No society can be blessed unless men assume their proper position as heads and fulfill their responsibilities. Too many families are without fathers or have fathers who are too busy to fulfill their responsibilities. This is the biggest issue in Black families: Fathers are missing.

c. Encourage marriages...if you are single...or if you are child. Pray for marriages. Pray for your mother and father's marriage.

d. Ask God to prepare you for your marriage as you think of Christ's work.

e. Let me make some comments about women teachers, as this is one of the areas where we are having much discussion in Christendom. Hear the words of Apostle Paul to Titus:

Titus 2:3 the **older women** likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, **teachers of good things** — 4 that they **admonish the young women to love their husbands**, to love their children, 5 to **be discreet, chaste, homemakers**, good, **obedient to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Note that Apostle Paul did not say a woman is to teach other women, period. He said she should teach other women **how to love their husband and to be keepers of the home**. So the one who speaks God's Word and opposes women teachers is not a misogynist, but one who fears God!

f. You can begin to have a marriage like pre-Fall Adam and Eve when you understand what Christ did for his bride, and when you become a part of his bride.

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Conclusion:

It is a mysterious thing that a man would leave his father and mother and be united with a strange woman and two would become one! They then live together in harmony, raise a family, and bring glory to Christ. This mystery is **illustrated in how Christ loved an extremely wicked woman** – who loved to sin – and made her his bride. He then protected, provided, and promised her more in the future. She is called to submit to him. The mystery is revealed. This is the guidance in how a husband and wife should live.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. The only way you can be a good husband is when you realize how much Christ loved his church – a church of which you are a part – and then love like he loved.

2. The only way you can be a good wife is when you realize how much Christ loved his church – a church of which you are a part – and then love like he loved.

3. The only way you can expect to have good marriages around you is if you lead men and women to Jesus Christ. Let them experience the mystery of Christ's love. **Otherwise, marriage is a mere compromise – a business.** So speak of Jesus' love for sinners and his power to renew the most wretched sinner in this whole life.

Finally, if you are not a Christian today, you are not in a good place. Put your trust in Jesus Christ. He will give you what you need the most – a new heart, and new record, and a new life.