

The Church as a Bride. Ephesians 5:25 - 32



As a man I've struggled with the image of the Church as a bride. After all, how can a bloke be a bride? But this obstacle can be overcome by carefully lifting the bridal veil to see the universal meaning behind this feminine symbolism. So how can observing a bride, assist us in understanding what the church is called to be?

- 1. The Bride and Groom love each other. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25) Who can resist that smile that takes over the face when we see a bride and groom gazing into each other's eyes on their wedding day? Christ has demonstrated his love for his Church by giving up his own life for her. Do you truly love Jesus? As a church, how do we reciprocate Christ's love for us?*
- 2. The Bride submits to her Husband. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:21 - 22) Gender roles in marriage are not as clearly defined today as they were when Paul wrote this letter to the Church in Ephesus. However, two things are clear from this passage: a) Paul expects all Christians to submit to each other out of reverence for what Christ has done for us; b) As part of this mutual submission, Paul asks wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. Are you submitting to Christ's authority? What does it mean for us as Christ's church to submit to his headship?*
- 3. The Bride presents herself with purity and beauty to her husband. "[Christ gave himself up for the church] ... to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Are you remaining faithful to Christ? How does the Church present itself with purity and beauty before Jesus? (Ephesians 5:25 - 27)*
- 4. The Bride and Groom are meant to be together. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31 - 32) Read Revelation 21:1 - 5 and 19:6 - 9. What does marriage consummation mean in respect to Christ and his Church?*