

Marriage

Merchantville Small Group Guide

Warm-Up Questions

1. What's the best or worst piece of relationship advice you've ever received?
2. Growing up, how did you see conflict handled in your home? Has that shaped how you respond today?

Key Passage: Ephesians 5:21-33

This message from Ephesians 5 invites us into a radically different kind of love—one marked by mutual honor, sacrificial leadership, and courageous trust. In a culture that often defines marriage by control, status, or convenience, Paul offers a vision rooted in the gospel: husbands laying down their lives like Christ, and wives responding from a place of strength and trust. Pastor Billy vulnerably shared his own journey of learning how to break unhealthy patterns and embrace a new legacy of love. Whether married, single, or somewhere in between, we are all invited to reflect the mystery of Christ and the Church in how we love others.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What part of this message felt most personal or uncomfortable for you? Why do you think that is?
2. How has your family of origin shaped your view of marriage or intimate relationships? Are there any patterns you feel called to break?
3. Ephesians 5 describes a love that “dies a thousand small deaths.” What does sacrificial love look like in your life right now—and where do you resist it?
4. Pastor Billy asked, “Is your spouse flourishing under your leadership?” If you're married, how would you answer that question? If you're not married, how might your presence impact the people closest to you?
5. What's the difference between love that controls and love that empowers? How do you know when you've crossed that line?
6. For those not currently married: In what ways do you see your singleness as a reflection of Christ's love? What lies do you battle about your worth or value in the church?
7. Paul calls marriage a “great mystery” pointing to the love between Christ and the Church. How does your understanding of the gospel shape how you approach relationships?
8. What would it look like for you to stop waiting for someone else to change—and begin embodying the kind of love Christ has shown you?

Challenge + Application:

This week, reflect on one relationship in your life—marriage, friendship, or family—and ask God: *How can I love more like Jesus here?* Write a prayer or take one practical step: have a hard conversation, offer forgiveness, speak encouragement, or simply show up. And if you're married, ask your spouse: *What*

makes you feel most loved by me? Then act on it. Let the love you've received from Jesus flow into the people closest to you.

Pray