**Marriage Exhortation for Chris & Kristi (4 July 2015)**

**Text: Ephesians Chapter 5:22-33**

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, [submit](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5+&version=NIV#48505591) 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](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5+&version=NIV#44762034) 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.

**Being & Becoming One Flesh**

1. This is a double honor for me.
2. The first was giving away my daughter, Kristi, to Christopher.
3. The second is now, up here,
4. to give some words of exhortation to them.
5. Earlier on, we saw the bride walking up the aisle **apart** from the bridegroom.
6. Later on, we will see the t**wo** walking down the aisle together as **Mr & Mrs Christopher Sun.**
7. In other words, they would be joined together as one.
8. This is what Ephesians Chapter 5 verse 31, says will happen in a Christian marriage.
9. The verse reads,
10. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”.

1. This verse is God’s law of marriage
2. It says very clearly and specifically that marriage is for the joining of a man and a woman together to become one flesh.
3. Following their vows made before God as a witness,
4. God Himself, not man, will glue them together.
5. And let me tell you this,
6. the glue that God uses will not be super glue.
7. It will be super-natural glue.
8. Once joined together, it’s glued forever, “until death do us part”.
9. Note, it’s for life! No going back, only going forward.
10. Even Phua Chu Kang will tell you seriously,
11. don’t play play.
12. Becoming one flesh is the journey to knowing each other completely.
13. It’s the pursuit of oneness.
14. It takes the whole marriage to accomplish this.
15. It begins by leaving the family of origin
16. and cleaving to each other to start a new one.
17. The journey for sure will not be so smooth sailing.
18. When you have two very different persons,
19. both equally flawed and fallen,
20. trying to become one flesh on a daily basis,
21. there will be conflicts,
22. misgivings,
23. shortcomings,
24. disappointments,
25. hurts.
26. Still, you can make marriage last a lifetime.
27. Just don’t let those rough and tough times make you lose your heart.
28. As my exhortation, I would like to share 3 points from the text read to us earlier
29. That I hope would keep both your hearts as strong as ever
30. as both of you, seek and strive towards being and becoming one flesh in your marriage journey
31. I call them 3 Remembers.

The first is:

Remember that your marriage is a good thing,

for God Himself, not man, has formed it for both of you.

1. This first Remember comes from God’s law of marriage mentioned in verse 31
2. What prompted God to think of creating marriage?
3. I am sure most of you are familiar with the creation story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis.
4. In Genesis chapters 1 & 2,
5. after God had created everything,
6. He found everything very good except for one thing which He said was not good.
7. It had something to do with Adam.
8. God knew Adam would be alone.
9. Because Adam was different.
10. He was human made in the likeness of God.
11. All other creations, the animals and the angels, were not.
12. So, Adam was alone.
13. No one to “skype” or “what’s app” him,
14. It was Adam’s lonely existence that God said was not good for the man.
15. So, for man’s good, God made Eve for Adam.
16. Let’s see how good it is.
17. God could have simply made Eve using the dust of the ground, just like He did for Adam.
18. He did that for the world of animals.
19. He had mates for them to propagate their own kind.

1. But God didn’t make Eve that way.
2. He had something very good,
3. something far more wonderful,
4. far more fitting in His mind
5. to give to Adam and to us, human beings.

1. God used Adam’s body to make Eve.

1. Let me read that first major surgery in history in Genesis chapter 2 verses 21 to 25 for your consideration:

21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribsand then closed up the place with flesh.

22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called ‘woman,’  
for she was taken out of man.”

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

1. The surgery was truly superb, so out of this world.
2. That you can’t even find it in the Guinness book of world records,
3. Only in this Genesis book of world records.

1. But what I am most awed about is this grand idea behind that great surgery: **God’s making of two out of one human body**.
2. It is this grand idea that made Eve shared the same human nature,
3. the very substance and likeness as Adam who was made in the likeness of God.
4. Furthermore, being herself a piece of Adam
5. it also made her shared a sense of belonging, a sense of oneness with Adam and with God.
6. How not to be fitting for Adam?
7. No wonder, when God presented her to Adam,
8. Adam received her as his bride with such great joy and excitement.

1. How not to be excited to see somebody so lovely, so human like himself.
2. He could also see very clearly that she was different from him.
3. Of course he could tell the difference.
4. They were both naked.
5. As man and woman, they were originally one body, one flesh.
6. In marriage, God joined them back together again as one flesh.
7. The last verse of Genesis chapter 2, reads, “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
8. You can imagine how good the one flesh marriage is
9. I could imagine the excitement,
10. the blissfulness,
11. the full intimacy,
12. and open disclosure
13. that Adam and Eve enjoyed in their one flesh marriage.

1. Nothing to hide. Totally open, accessible, honest
2. and completely at home with each other and before God.
3. no barriers,
4. no power struggles,
5. no rivalries,
6. no attempts to manipulate one other;
7. no fear of being rejected
8. or put to shame.
9. When God created the big things,
10. like the universe, the stars, the waters,
11. God said, “Let there be”.
12. He just spoke, and they came into existence.
13. But when God made Adam and Eve,
14. He did not say, “Let there be man,” and “Let there be a woman.’
15. Instead, God said, “Let us make”.
16. God went to work.
17. He put His hands, His mind and His heart into making Adam and Eve.
18. And in saying, “Let us make mankind in our likeness”,
19. God patterned marriage after the divine oneness
20. that God the Father, God the Son, Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit themselves enjoy
21. so that we can also enjoy the highest, closest, most intimate human relationship possible in life on earth.
22. After creating Eve, and only after that,
23. God saw everything was very good.
24. Therefore, come what may during your marriage journey,
25. remember that your marriage is a good thing
26. that God made it happened for both of you.

Now, the second is this:

Remember that your marriage is for both of you to be and become more like Christ and bring the best out in each other

1. This second Remember comes from verses 22 to 30.
2. These verses give us a good picture of how marriage is meant to work
3. for the husband and wife in being and becoming one flesh.
4. Verses 22 to 24 read

22 Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord23 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](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5+&version=NIV#44762034) to their husbands in everything.

1. Verses 25 to 30 read

25Husbands 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.

1. We see how Christ relates to His body of believers
2. which is the church and the church to Him.
3. As the Head, Christ loved and sacrificed Himself for the church.
4. He never stops to be unconditional and selfless in loving and sacrificing for the church
5. because He cannot help it;
6. the church is His body. It is part of Him.
7. The church, as His body, loves Christ who is her Saviour
8. and willingly submits to His word and His will as her head.
9. We also see the purpose of this entire manner of working.
10. Christ wants His body of believers to be holy, spotless and glorious,
11. to be the best, as He is.
12. Marriage is meant to be and work like this for the husband and wife.
13. God’s call for the husband to be the head
14. Is for him to be like Christ,
15. unconditional and selfless in loving and making sacrifices for his wife.
16. God’s call for the wife to submit to her husband’s headship
17. Is also for her to be like Christ,
18. unconditional and selfless in honouring, supporting and affirming her husband’s headship.
19. Both are called to live up to this responsibility
20. regardless of what the other does.
21. It means, not "wait until he starts loving me, then I'll submit to him,"
22. or "wait until she starts submitting to me, then I'll love her,"
23. It means keep being the one to love first
24. as that would be paying what you owed Christ who had first loved you,
25. even when your good is not returned.
26. Where else do we have opportunities to die daily
27. except in our marriage and our own homes.
28. Our natural nature is to commit to our own well-being at any cost.
29. But being one flesh means being selfless.
30. It means dying to our selfish nature.
31. Whenever conflicts arise, it would be a battle:
32. Between manipulating your spouse to get what you need in the moment.
33. Or, ministering to your spouse at any cost to yourself.
34. Being and becoming one flesh would ask us to put aside our own needs and wants
35. and focus on how we can serve our spouse.
36. Being and becoming one flesh would like us to forgive and be forgiven.
37. Being and becoming one flesh would want us to always assume the best about our partner.
38. In essence, being and becoming one flesh would like us
39. to be more other-centred, just like Christ.
40. When He had nails in His hands,
41. He was taking care of His mother.
42. When He had nails in His hands,
43. He was asking His Father to forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”
44. When He had nails in His hands,
45. He was inviting the thief on the one side of the cross to join Him in heaven in a little while.
46. Marriage makes us see our flaws and shortcomings,
47. makes us lay down our desires to control and manipulate,
48. makes us learn to forgive and be forgiven
49. and makes us develop a servant’s heart.
50. It is the process for us to grow to be more like Christ
51. and do our part to bring the best out in our mate,
52. Remember this also.

My third and last is this:

Remember that your marriage is a great sign of Christ’s unconditional and everlasting love for and commitment to both of you.

1. This third remember also comes from the same verses 22 to 30 as the second remember.
2. Like a good sign, the marriage between husband and wife
3. points to the supernatural reality of the union between Christ and His body of believers.
4. It is a great sign, telling us that, as marriage
5. creates a permanent bond between the husband and wife,
6. the bond is also permanent, in fact, eternal, between Christ and us, His body of believers.
7. In other words, marriage exists to remind us
8. that Christ is ever committed to love and cherish each and every one of us.

1. For better or for worse
2. For richer, for poorer
3. In sickness and in health
4. Christ will never leave us nor forsake us
5. Death will part both of you.
6. But death will not part you and Christ.
7. Therefore, you would want to be a good steward of that great sign.
8. You would want to conduct yourself and live out
9. your marriage in keeping with God’s design
10. so that it would be a visible, living display
11. that points others to the same unconditional and everlasting love and commitment that God also has for them.
12. At the same time, you would also want to remember that your is a great sign of Christ’s unconditional and everlasting love for and commitment even to both of you.

**Closing**

1. Let me sum up.
2. Proverbs chapter 18 verse 22 says,
3. “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favour from the Lord.”
4. Chris,
5. you have found something good from God.
6. Kristi, as well.
7. King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, says, in Ecclesiastes chapter 4 verses 9 to 12, that,

9 Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their labor:  
10 If either of them falls down,  
one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
and has no one to help them up.  
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
12 Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

1. When two chords of husband and wife are bound together in one flesh, they are not easily broken.

1. And when three strands are woven together, these three cords are not quickly broken.
2. If the third cord is God, then three are better than two.
3. Even the Devil cannot break what God has joined together.
4. Chris & Kristi.
5. Both of you have Christ as your Christian names.
6. How marvellous this has turned out to be.
7. That would be the best reminder of the third chord, Christ, in your marriage.
8. Let Christ, the third chord, helps you to make your marriage last a lifetime.
9. Each time, you call the other by the Christian name:

1. Remember that your marriage is a good thing,
2. for God Himself, not man, has formed it for both of you.
3. Remember that your marriage is for both of you
4. to be and become more like Christ and bring the best out in each other
5. And, remember that your marriage is a great sign of Christ’s unconditional and everlasting love for
6. and commitment to both of you.
7. Chris and Kristi.
8. May God look upon both of you with great favour and bless your marriage with the oneness of His kind, from this day forward.