



## *Discipleship Course*

# 5. Being distinctive- Sex and marriage

*Being God's people today*

### The Big idea

*What God says and what our society says about sex and marriage grow ever wider apart. It's therefore all the more important for believers to be clear on what God says, and to resolve to follow Him, rather than just fitting in with the world around.*

## Introduction: Why talk about sex and marriage?

a. "You are a holy nation"

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"  
**1 Peter 2:9-10**

b. Marriage and society

c. Marriage and me personally

## 1. Two good gifts from God

"I wish all men were [single] as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that" **The apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 7:7**



## b. Homosexuality

<a href="http://www.livingout.org">www.livingout.org</a>	Testimonies and articles from those who are same sex attracted by seeking to follow the Bible's teaching.
Is God anti-gay?	A short and helpful book written by Sam Allberry

## c. Marriage and singleness

Married for God	Short book by Christopher Ash about living out God's purposes for us in marriage
The single issue	Short book by Al Hsu about the Bible's perspective on singleness.
Marriage refreshment course	Sue Bauhahn organizes this occasional course. Contact her directly to enquire about the next one.

## Small Groups

1. Whatever our own marital status might be (married, single, divorced, bereaved), why is it important to be clear on God's plan for marriage?
2. How do you feel about following God's teaching on this area, even when it's counter cultural?
3. When Christians just follow the world in this area, what kind of message does that communicate?

### *Read Ephesians 5:22-33*

*Paul's instructions for wives and husbands are counter-cultural. In our own day, talk of 'submission' makes us nervous. But in Paul's own day (when women were routinely mistreated), his teaching to husbands was pro-women in a revolutionary way.*

---

4. What is Paul's basic instruction to wives? What reason does he give for it?
5. Three times, Paul uses the word 'as' to make a comparison.
  - What comparisons are being made in each case?
  - We can easily think of 'headship' as dominance, and 'submission' as subjection or inferiority. How does the comparison with Christ and the church show that thinking to be horribly wrong?
6. What is the practical challenge of this teaching for wives? And for husbands?
7. What example has Jesus set for husbands? (v25-28)
8. What would such love look like in a husband towards his wife?
9. In v28-31, what second reason are husbands given to love their wives?

10. In v31-32 Paul says that 'two becoming one' of marriage is a picture of 'Christ and the church'. How does marriage give us a picture of Jesus' relationship with his people?

11. To think through- perhaps in pairs...

- If you're married, how can you grow your own marriage to better reflect God's design for marriage?
- If you're single, how will this help you set your own expectations if and when you do marry, and how can this help you better support Christian friends who are married?

## Taking it further in the week

### Reflect

- Is your thinking about sex marriage and singleness more influenced by the Bible, or by our culture?
- How can you personally grow in your attitude towards marriage/singleness?

### Read

- Read through **Acts 18:24-28**, and **Romans 16:3-4**. Priscilla and Aquilla were a married couple who were friends of the apostle Paul.
  - *How did they use their marriage as a means of serving God?*
  - *If you're married, what might this look like in your own circumstances?*
  - *If you're single, and hope to be married, how will this affect your priorities in finding a husband/wife?*

### Respond

- If you're married, and if appropriate, chat to your spouse about these things and pray about them together.
- Spend some time thanking God for the good things about the 'gift' of marriage/singleness he's given you.

## Prayer points