

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:18-21 ¹⁸*Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

ICEBREAKER

If you could pick a TV family to be like, who would it be: the Walton's, the Cleaver's, the Cosby's, the Brady's, or some other family? Why?

THEME

Marriage God's way

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This week we began a new series on marriage, specifically marriage God's way. Although marriage is a human institution, it has a divine origin and so we are going to look at marriage as God designed it.

We learned right off the bat from Ephesians 5:18 that if you're going to have a marriage as God designed it you must have a Spirit-generated ability. In order for a husband and wife to be what God designed them to be, they must experience the filling—the empowering—of the Holy Spirit. Apart from being filled by the Spirit, two people cannot have marriage to the level God designed it. Based on this we looked at three reasons why we need the Spirit's filling in our marriages.

- A. **Self-Centeredness.** Self-centeredness is the main problem, the main cancer, the main enemy in any marriage. Often times, neither partner sees “my selfishness” in the same ballpark as “your selfishness.” If neither partner budes, an emotional distance will start to develop. As a follower of Christ we need to see our own selfishness as more serious than our spouses. We need to start living marriage for the other person.

1. *How would you define self-centeredness?*
2. *Why do you think it is so difficult to budge and see our own selfishness as a problem?*
 - B. **Mutual submission.** We saw in verses 19-21 that Spirit-filled people sing, give thanks and submit to one another. *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* (Ephesians 5:21) Reverence for Christ is where we get our motive and by submitting, meaning, no one lording it over another; everyone serving in humility. Submitting is to be humble—humbly concerned about the needs of others. It involves gentleness, an un-willingness to argue or complain. It involves serving, to minister to others, more than stroking my own ego or desires. To submit means that I lose control. I defer to you, I become part of a whole which means that I don't have the entire say.
3. *Do you find it easy or difficult to humbly (no complaining) serve others? Why do you think that is so?*
4. *For those that are married is it easy to humbly serve your spouse? What do you think makes it easy or difficult?*
 - C. **The Magnificence of marriage.** We need God's Spirit to be able to catch how magnificent God designed marriage to be. In our culture today marriage can be viewed as strictly a human invention—something to make us happy. So when we are not happy, we discard it! As believers we live in this culture and must be careful that this low view of marriage doesn't rub off on us so that we settle for less than God's best. Instead of lowering marriage like our culture has done, we need to place it back where God originally set it.
5. *Spend some time discussing how we can elevate marriage to the place God intended it.*

PRAYER