



Weeks Three: The S Word

So if the power imbalance between men and women is off, how do you get it back? Is there some way to relate that actually smooths the relationship between men and women? What is it? You might not want to hear the answer, but if you understand the answer, it could transform your relationship with the opposite sex.

Questions

1. In your relationships with the opposite sex, in what ways have you seen respect or a lack of respect impact those relationships? How are your relationships better when respect is present?
2. Thinking about your marriage or your closest relationship with the opposite sex, what role has submission played in that relationship? How do you feel about submission to another person? What bothers you about submission?
3. Ephesians 5:21-33 is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible - particularly verse 22. How do you react to Ephesians 5:22? How do the women in your group respond to it? How do the men respond to it?
4. Ephesians 5:22 speaks about mutual submission. Genesis 3:16 speaks about control and power. Which dynamic would you rather have present in your key relationship - control or submission? Why?
5. How does Ephesians 5:21 help us understand verse 22? Does it change your reaction to the verse in any way? What would it look like in your relationship for a man and a woman to submit together to Jesus Christ and to each other?
6. Now re-read verses 25-29. In what way do these verses help husbands understand how to treat their wives? In light of the reality that the church has not always reflected Christ well, does it surprise you that Christ continues to love the church and present her "blameless" and "without blemish" before God.
7. What would happen in a marriage if husbands loved their wives in the way that Jesus loved the church and died for it (also see Romans 5:6-8)?
8. If men loved women selflessly and saw inherent value and beauty in them, do you think women would have an easier time submitting to that kind of love?
9. It has been said that women crave love and men desire respect. How do you think a husband submitting to Christ and loving his wife as Christ loved the church would impact a marriage?
10. In what ways do you think Ephesians 5: 21-33 'reverses' the curse of Genesis 3:16? How could living according to the passage in Ephesians change the dynamics of power, desire and control in your relationship?
11. In the message, Carey said one of the best ways to reverse a negative dynamic of power, desire and control in a relationship is to stop in the moment and have both partners pray a prayer of submission to Christ. Do you think that might help you in your relationship? In what ways could you begin to implement that this week?

Changing Your Mind

This week, try praying this prayer when you notice the tension of power, desire and control at work in your relationships. If you are dating, engaged or married, try praying this prayer (or a prayer like it) together as a couple: "Lord, right now we submit to you. We put our wills aside, and seek the mind and will of Christ. Forgive us for abusing power, desire and control. Lead us and guide us we pray to respect and love each other the way you show love and respect toward us."

Taking it Home

"And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Ephesians 5:21