



June 8 / 9
Ephesians 5:15-33

Submit! If you say that word out loud you'll probably have an immediate negative reaction. It feels like saying "mercy" or "uncle" to our mean cousin who played mercy too hard. The thought of it still makes your wrists hurt!

In this week's passage, that is exactly what we are told to do - to submit to one another. What does that mean? Does that mean there are some with power and authority, and those without need to submit? Is this about looking around the room and judging where you fit in the "power structure"? Or does Paul having something very different in mind?

Sermon Notes:

Welcome

- Introduce anyone new to the group.
- Optional icebreaker question: What have been the high points and the low points of your week.

Opening Prayer

It's important to begin with prayer. Pray that God would help each person hear exactly what they need through your time together.

What "in the world" are you doing?

If you've paid any attention to the calendar or the weather, you know we're right at the beginning of summer. There are months of good (though perhaps hot) weather in front of us. How will you take advantage of the fact that people are outside more? What serving opportunities exist today that are more challenging at other times of the year. If you've not planned a way to serve our community or your neighborhood together as a group already, take some time when you meet this week to have that conversation. And then get out and show Jesus' love in the world.

Look Back

- Over this past week, what is one way you saw God move?
- Is there someone whom you have helped take a step toward Jesus? Have you shared your story or God's story with someone?
- Did you follow-through with a step of obedience that you shared the last time your group met?



Look Up

- What makes for a happy marriage? Is it the coming together of two people who have committed to a sharing of the responsibilities and effort involved in the relationship 50/50? Each provides half of what is needed and then meet right in the middle? God's vision for marriage, as described by Paul, is very different. He begins with the concept of submitting to one another. For the husband this takes the shape of sacrifice. For the wife this takes the shape of respect. Enjoy working through and fleshing out this passage!
- Read Ephesians 5:15-33 one or two times together as a group.
- Compare what is asked of the wife and what is asked of the husband. What are the challenges of each? Why do you think he devotes 3 verses to wives, but 7 to husbands?
- In what ways is a marriage a kind of parable of the relationship between Christ and the church?

Read the passage again. What does it say about God? What does it say about us?

- What does this passage say about Jesus' relationship with the church?
- Why do you think submitting to one another is so challenging?

What especially caught your attention as you read this passage? What did you like? What did you not like, or find challenging or difficult to understand?

- Paul begins with calling us to pay careful attention to how we live. What is the opposite of this? Discuss what it looks like to live with this careful attention.
- After the call to be filled with the Spirit in verse 18, Paul quickly uses four present participles (verbs that end with "-ing") to describe the kind of activities that flow from the Spirit's filling. What are those four?
- When Paul says, "...submitting to one another..." what do you think he has in mind? How would he define "submit"? What is the motivation for us to submit to one another?

Look Ahead

- Take a few minutes to reflect quietly on what you have discussed.
- What is one thing that God is asking you to change in light of this passage?
- What is the name of the person you will share this passage with this week?
- Take a few minutes to pray for one another.