

21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. **23** For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. **24** As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her **26** to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. **27** He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. **28** In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. **29** No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. **30** And we are members of his body.

31 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." **32** This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. **33** So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

— *Ephesians 5:21-33*

Discussion/Journal Questions

As we are talking about joy today, share something you appreciate about the person next to you.

Have two or three people read Ephesians 5:21-33 out loud slowly. After some time of reflection, ask each other what words, phrases, or ideas stand out to everyone. What questions come to mind as you meditate on this scripture?

Rather than seeing joy as the icing on the cake when everything is going well, Pastor John says, "Joy is designed to be the thing that keeps us going when life gets hard." How are these two views of joy different? Which view do you hold?

What contributes to moments of shared joy with your spouse, family, or friends? (Shared hobbies, shared trips, etc.)

Our brains form bonds (relationships) in one of two ways: joy bonds and fear bonds. From your experience, what do joy bonds look and feel like? What do fear bonds look and feel like?

Do you relate to God through a fear bond or a joy bond? (Note that when the Bible talks about the fear of the Lord, it is speaking of healthy respect and not the kind of fear bond we are discussing here.)

Husbands and wives are called to relate to each other according to the example of Christ. What example does Jesus give us?

What is something specific you can do for your spouse, family member, or friend this week to love them in the way of Jesus?

Our capacity for joy (our joy bucket) can grow as we deliberately stir up joy through appreciation and relational connection with others. The 28-Day Joy Challenge is a good way to intentionally grow our joy buckets: <https://4habits.org/4-habits-of-joy-filled-people/#28day>.

As you pray for each other, share both praises and prayer requests so that you can rejoice together.