

## Perfect Harmony

### Portraits of Prayer Series

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#### Did You Know?

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There is a system set up in the roles of husbands and wives that is found not only in Paul's writings but also in Peter's and others. The power of the gospel changes not only who we are in light of Christ, making us new creatures, but it also transforms our intimate relationships and regular relationships. It changes our whole life. The strife of marriage does not have to be if the husband and wife would commit to obeying Christ and fulfilling their equally important roles in their marriage. It is a system that when followed feeds off of itself and produces the Happily Ever After.

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Monday, February 18, 2013

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**Read:** Ephesians 5:18-24

**Discuss:** In the original language, this whole section is one verse. The main idea comes from "Don't get drunk" and "Be filled with the Spirit." All the other actions in these verses are based off of that idea. So to submit to one another is part of what being filled with the Holy Spirit. Submission is first to Christ, and then to one another when it agrees with Christ's teachings. We don't submit if the person is using that power for ungodly purposes.

**Act:** What is the most challenging part of these verses for you? What's hardest for you to do? Why is it so hard? Do you have a fear of doing this in your life? Today, seek to serve one another out of reverence for Christ. Seek to submit to godly leadership when you find it. Submission cannot become an act of the person until it is an attitude of a humble heart. Pray for God to give you the ability to submit when you are supposed to and to those God tells you to submit to.

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Tuesday, February 19, 2013

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**Read:** Ephesians 5:25-33

**Discuss:** It is equally hard for the husband to completely fulfill his role in marriage as it is for the wife. To love so sacrificially that one can be like Christ is impossible. A husband's love touches at least three areas of his marriage. He is a provider for wife and family, sacrificing his strength and time and talents to provide whatever they need. This is not their wants but their needs. He is protector of the home, guarding against wickedness,

guarding against spiritual lifelessness and physically protecting his family. He uses his strength as a shield to the family. He is also a cultivator and encourager. He seeks the very best for his wife and family. He does what is in his power to make her the very best she can be, as well as the children. He seeks her counsel and makes the final decision, and bears the consequences for the whole family.

**Act:** How does the image of Christ and the Church factor into these roles of husbands and wives? What do you each do as a couple that fulfills these roles? What do you both need to work on? Usually, both husband and wife need to work on at least one thing in themselves and in their marriage. A marriage is two imperfect people becoming one in Christ. How can you personally help that cause along this week?

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Wednesday, February 20, 2013  
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**Read:** Colossians 3:18-21

**Discuss:** What are the similarities and differences between this passage and the Ephesians 5 passage? What is the significance of these differences? How does that add to the perspective of the roles of husbands and wives in marriage?

**Act:** Keep on working on your marriage. Keep on working on yourself. What can you do to make it better? What are some things in you that stop the marriage from being all that God intended for it to be? Consider three negative aspects in you that hinder your marriage and one negative aspect of your spouse's character that might be hindering the marriage's progress and pray for your needs, and then theirs. Do not share these with your spouse. Watch for progress to see if your active changing your three areas has any affect.

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Thursday, February 21, 2013  
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**Read:** 1 Peter 3:1-7

**Discuss:** What differences does Peter bring to the discussion on marriage roles? How does he treat the marriage roles differently? What examples differ from Paul's approach? What similarities exist?

**Act:** Wives are called by Peter's letter to submit, just as in Paul's, but with a different approach. Wives seek to be beautiful on BOTH the inside and the outside. They seek to have the behavior that shames their husbands into being more like Christ. Husbands are called to be understanding. Do you ever treat her without understanding, being harsher than needed? Do you fight with her like you would another guy? She's not built for war. She's built for love. Is God not answering your prayers? Peter says it's because of how you treat your wife.

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Friday, February 22, 2013  
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**Read:** Genesis 3:1-7

**Discuss:** Contrary to most people's understanding, Scripture tells us in verse 6 that Adam is with Eve when she partakes of the fruit. This is significant, because it shows that men have had trouble leading and loving their wives from the beginning. It also shows that women have had trouble submitting to their husbands since the beginning, for Eve leads Adam to eat the fruit. But Adam is the leader, and he receives the credit for bringing sin and death into the world (Rom 5:12-21). He did not lead, and she did not submit. They both paid the consequences!

**Act:** How does this passage help you to understand why God calls husbands to love and lead and wives to submit and respect? In what ways can you begin to reverse the tide of those wrong roles even in the beginning that can make your marriage better? How will you not be like Adam and Eve? How will you avoid death to your marriage through rebellion to God's ordained roles?

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Saturday, February 23, 2013  
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**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

**Discuss:** This passage talks all about the foundation to every good marriage: love. Love is required of both husband and wife, and so is submission. Christians are called to love one another (whether married or not) and to submit to one another (whether married or not). The difference is that you live in close quarters with your spouse, and see all that goes on. But these words are still timeless examples, setting the standard for love higher than we could have imagined.

**Act:** What part of this sticks out to you the most? Which description seems hardest for you to apply to your marriage right now? Focus on that part of your love for your spouse. What active steps can you take to make that a part of the description of your love for your spouse? Do one action today that will demonstrate that description of love today for your spouse.

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Sunday, February 24, 2013

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**Read:** 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

**Discuss:** This is our text for Pastor's message this morning about Paul's teaching on marriage. Pastor will be discussing the biggest problems that arise in marriages. As you read through the text, think of two questions that puzzle you concerning prayer and persistence.

**Act:** If Pastor does not answer these questions, ask him after service to help you understand better this parable.