

InterVarsity
Christian Fellowship

Fraternity/Sorority
Bible Study Series

Valentine's Day

**The Biblical Ideal
for
Marriage**

Background for Leader

Purpose of this Bible study:

What are the top qualities you look for in a spouse? What about the qualities *you* have to give to someone? What are the greatest needs of men and women anyway?

Valentine's Day is a time for remembering the importance of giving and receiving love. How do we show our love for the opposite sex? This Bible study points out that one of the woman's greatest needs is to be loved, and one of the man's greatest needs is to be respected (Ephesians 5:33). The real challenge is to learn how to love and respect one another according to the other's needs -- not just what *we* think is sufficient for the other. The purpose of this Bible study is to help people understand God's plan for marriage (and relationships) according to His Word, the Bible.

This Bible study is designed for a group of men and women to study together -- possibly around the time of Valentine's Day.

Background of the passage:

Ephesians 5:22-33 seems to be the most referred to, most quoted passage by those trying to understand God's plan for marriage. As an introduction to these verses, it is important that the leader understand verses 18-21 in order to get at the heart of God's marriage plan. We need to be "filled with the Spirit", which comes by accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, in order to understand the purpose of submitting to one another. This Bible study ends with a powerful poem (The Love Note) which stresses that before we fill our life with a relationship, we are to allow ourselves to be filled with God.

Why does this passage begin by saying that both the husband and wife should submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (v. 21)? Why does it go on to first address wives -- that they are to submit to their husband? What significance might there be that the section directed toward husbands is twice as long as the first section toward wives?

Questions such as these are addressed in this study to help both unmarried and married people understand the Biblical ideal for marriage. The more we study the Bible, the more we find that its truth is necessary for experiencing the abundant life that God intends for us to live.

Checklist for leader

*** Complete this checklist prior to the Bible study.**

* When all the boxes are checked, you will know you are ready to go.

* Except for Part III, ask people in your house who normally do not come to the Bible study if they would help you prepare something for the Bible study . This will give them more of a reason to come. Ask different people to help with different tasks. Separately, ask those who regularly attend to try to be at the Bible study to support all the newcomers.

* If you are extra busy, ask someone to help you delegate some of these tasks so you are not personally overwhelmed with responsibilities. Just make sure they get their part done at least 1 day prior to the Bible study so things are not happening at the last minute. If the Bible study were forced to be delayed because of bad planning, that could be a turn-off to people attending.

Pray for the Bible study; for all who will be coming, that they will grasp the meaning of the study.

For Publicity:

Make 3 or 4 copies of the publicity sign for each house or group that will be coming to this Bible study. (preferably on bright colored paper).

Fill in the blanks on publicity signs after the copies are made.

Post publicity signs in visible areas throughout each house 2-3 days prior to the Bible study.

Prepare a room for Bible study (set up two groups of chairs that face one another). Have extra chairs available.

For Part II: Ask that these passages be read with expression:

Ask a female to prepare Ephesians 5:21-24 from the NIV or NASB Bible and read it at the study.

Ask a male to prepare Ephesians 5:25-33 from the NIV or NASB Bible and read it at the study.

For Part V:

Make 25-35 copies of "The Love Note" (p. 6).

Have a female prepared to read the 1st half and a male prepared to read the 2nd half of "The Love Note" (with expression).

For Part VI:

Option: Buy enough flowers to give to each female who comes to the Bible study. Use your best judgment as to how many females will be at the study (better by have too many flowers than not enough)!

Have someone prepared to put a flower behind the guy's seats during the closing prayer.

Quiet Times:

Make 25-35 copies of Quiet Times to give out at the end of the Bible study.

* Read over each question and leader's note. Answer them yourself. Notice the times allotted next to each section. Prepare yourself so that you stay within that time allotment.

* Make every attempt to stay within 50 minutes -- even if it's a great Bible study. Going over may prevent people from coming to future Bible studies.

Valentine's Day

Bible Study

The Biblical Ideal for Marriage

_____ at _____, _____
in _____.

Valentine's Day Bible Study

The Biblical Ideal for Marriage

I. Introduction/Icebreaker: [10 minutes]

Have chairs already set up so that the men sit on one side of the room and the women sit on the other -- with the two groups facing one another.

- 1) Ask the men to get together and think of the top 5-10 things that they are looking for in a woman.
- 2) Ask the women to get together and think of the top 5-10 things that they are looking for in a man.

Have the two groups come together and share their findings. Then, answer these questions: **How are these two lists the same? How are they different? What does this tell us about the difference between the needs of men and women?**

II. Topic/Passage: The Biblical Ideal for Marriage -- Ephesians 5:21-33

Have a female prepared to read Ephesians 5:21-24.

Have a male prepared to continue by reading Ephesians 5:25-33.

[1 minute]

III. Personal Testimony -- no testimony this time.

IV. Bible Study: [up to 25 minutes]

•Leader open in a prayer that follows up the intro and leads into the Bible study.

1) **Women, how do you respond to this passage? Why?** (Pause for answers).

Men, how do you respond to this passage? Why? • These questions are focused on their opinion of the passage.

2) **According to what we have read in this passage, how positive or negative do you see the Bible's description of marriage? Why?** • v. 25

This question is focused on the passage -- what it actually says.

3) **Why do you think twice as many words are devoted to telling husbands to love their wives as to telling wives to submit to their husbands?** • If the husband treats the wife as instructed in vv. 25-30, she will find it easier to respect and trust his leadership.

4) **From vv. 25-30, what are 3 ways that the man should love the woman?** • Three possible answers might be: 1) He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her, like Christ did for us; 2) He should make her well-being of primary importance; 3) He should care for her as he cares for his own body ---> no wife needs to fear submitting to a man who loves her this way.

- 5) **What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband?** • To respect him to the point that she acknowledges his leadership.
- 6) **Verse 25 says that Christ gave Himself up for the church (meaning all people who accept Him as their Lord and Savior). What is the significance of this?** • He offers to give us eternal life and provides a model for us to follow.
- 7) **According to verse 31, what must two people do before they come together as one?** • To no longer be dependent on the parents in the same psychological way. **What are some examples of other things that we must leave in order to come together as one?** • selfishness
- 8) **In verse 21, what does it mean to "submit to one another" in marriage?** • The man is to submit to the woman's needs for love. The woman is to submit to the man's needs for respect. They are both to submit to Christ by loving Him and obeying His teaching.
- 9) **According to verse 33, in order for the ultimate marriage to happen, the man must show what to a woman?** • love **What must the woman show to the man?** • respect
Let's break into two groups again (men and women separate).
Men, discuss what you could do to show more love to a woman, and come up with a list of 5-10 ways to show that love. Also, discuss why you think it is so important for the woman to be loved.
Women, discuss what you could do to show more respect to a man, and come up with your list of 5-10 ways to show that respect. Also, discuss why you think it is so important for the man to be respected.
After 10 minutes, we'll bring everyone together and share what we conclude. How does this compare to what each group shared in the intro? • Make sure that people understand that love and respect must be given from both the man and the woman.

V. Thought: [up to 7 minutes]

Give everyone a copy of "The Love Note" (p. 6). Have someone prepared to read it to the group with expression. After it has been read ask: **From reading this, what seems to be the answer for being the ultimate lover and respecter of a spouse?** • To be in a proper relationship with God. **Why?**

VI. Prayer: [5 minutes]

Form a circle -- male/female/male/female, or as best as possible.

Save 5 minutes at the end for the group to pray. Mention that it is ok to pray, or to pass and let the next person pray. Ask someone to open the prayer time who feels comfortable. After it has gone around the circle, the leader closes the prayer.

Suggestion: While people are praying, have someone prepared to place a rose behind each guy's seat. After the prayer has been closed, instruct the guys to reach behind their seat, pick up their rose and give it to the female closest to their right.

VII. Closing Comments: [2 minutes]

- Thank everyone for coming!
- Give everyone a copy of the quiet time sheet and briefly explain how to use it.

Love Note

Everyone longs to give themselves completely to someone,
to have a deep soul relationship with another,
to be loved thoroughly and exclusively.

But God says to a Christian:

"No, not until you are satisfied, fulfilled,
and content with being loved by Me alone.

With giving yourself totally and unreservedly to Me,
with having an intense personal and loving relationship with Me alone.

Discovering that only in Me is your satisfaction to be found.

Then you will be capable of the perfect human relationship
that I have planned for you.

You will never be completely united with another until
you are united with Me;

-exclusive of anyone or anything else,

-exclusive of any other desires or longings.

I want you to have the best. PLEASE allow Me to give it to you.

I want you to stop planning and stop wishing and allow Me
to give you the most thrilling plan existing,
one that you cannot imagine.

I want you to have the best so just keep watching Me,
expecting the greatest things and listen and
learn the things I tell you. You just wait- That's all. Don't be anxious.

Don't worry. Don't look around at things others have received or that
I've given them. Don't look at the things you THINK you want.
Just keep looking to Me or you'll miss what I want to show you.

And then, when you're ready, I'll surprise you with a love
far more wonderful than any you could dream of.

You see, until you are ready, and until the one
I have for you is ready, (and I am working
even at this moment to have both of you ready at the same time).

Until you are both satisfied exclusively
with me and the life that I have prepared for you,
you won't be able to experience the love that exemplifies
your relationship with me, and this is the PERFECT love.

And dear one, I want you to have this most wonderful love,

I want you to see in the flesh a picture of your relationship
with Me and enjoy materially and concretely the
everlasting union of beauty, perfection, and love.

Know that I love you. I am God. Know it, and be satisfied!"

Quiet Times -- The Biblical Ideal For Marriage

ABC Bible Study -- Ephesians 5:21-33

SUGGESTIONS: Best when done as 15-30 minute quiet times 3-5 days of the week.

- Day 1 ---> 1) Read entire passage a few times for understanding.
- Day 1 ---> 2) Choose best verse and write it on a card to carry with you to memorize.
- Day 2 ---> 3) Outline the passage.
- Day 3 ---> 4) Paraphrase or summarize (rewrite in your own words).
- Day 4 ---> 5) Write out your best verse (ideally by memory).
- Day 4 ---> 6) Develop a contract based on an action you will do this week as a result of studying this passage.
- Day 4 ---> 7) Create a title relating to your understanding of the chapter (possibly creative & funny).

• Best when done with few or no outside resources, just your own interpretation of the Bible.

Creative chapter title -- _____

Analyze

Outline

21 _____
22-24 _____
25-30 _____
31-33 _____

Paraphrase or Summarize

21 _____

22-24 _____

25-30 _____

31-33 _____

Best Verse:

Contract: (make your application specific)

Greek Bible Study Evaluation: Valentine's Day

(For additional space, please write on the back of this page or on additional paper).

Return to: Matt Grimm PO Box 751 Greenwood, IN 46142

To order another Bible study, write the above address and include \$5. Questions, call (317)865-9622

NAME: _____ **HOUSE:** _____ **DATE:** _____

1) Briefly describe the character of the group you were leading (i.e. male or female, seekers, young Christians, mature Christians, a mixture).

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = average 4 = very good 5 = excellent

2) How would you rate the overall quality of this study? 1 2 3 4 5

3) Was the study interesting and thought-provoking? 1 2 3 4 5

4) Did the study adequately draw out the meaning of the topic? 1 2 3 4 5

5) Did it do a good job of generating discussion? 1 2 3 4 5

6) Did the study lead the students to apply these truths? 1 2 3 4 5

7) How did the "Background for Leader" and "Checklist" pages help you in preparing to lead the Bible study?

8) Was the publicity effective? Any suggested additions or changes?

9) Briefly comment on each section of the "Bible study" itself. Did each section fit with the study? Please give any necessary feedback, both positive and negative.

a) Introduction/Icebreaker:

b) Bible passage (appropriate choice of scripture?):

c) "Testimony":

d) "Bible study":

Were there any questions in the Bible study which the group responded to more eagerly than others? If so, list the question(s) and explain your response.

Were any questions problematic or poorly written? If so, list the question(s) and explain your response.

e) "Thought":

f) "Prayer":

g) "Quiet Time" for the following week:

10) Were you able to keep the entire study within the suggested 50 minutes? Explain if necessary.

11) How do you see the overall format of this Bible study as effective (including the Background for Leader, Checklist, Publicity, Introduction, Testimony, Thought, Prayer & Quiet Time)?