

Read: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Dancing Together

Ephesians 5:22-25

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever seen professional dancers? Maybe you've seen some on TV shows like *America's Got Talent* or *Dancing with the Stars*. Wow, are they good! Some of the couples do amazing things! Can you picture them dancing together? Their feet move so quickly as they twirl and spin around. The very strong man lifts up the woman who is so graceful and elegant. She trusts him completely to hold her up in the air. At the same time, while the man is showing off his strength, the woman gets the spotlight for her dancing skills, too. Together, they make an incredible team.

What would happen though if they didn't work as a team? What if the man wanted to lead in one direction, but the woman wanted to dance in a different direction? They would bump into each other or step on each other's toes! Ouch! Or what if the man wanted to steal the spotlight and only show off his skills? That would be pretty mean to the woman who is also so good at dancing! Or, what if the man just stood in the corner and decided not to dance at all? That would be lazy, and the team would be a total failure.

In many ways, God designed marriage to be like one of these beautiful dancing teams. One partner is facing forward while the other has their back to the direction of travel. The forward partner takes the lead for the benefit of the dance. The apostle Paul says in the Scripture for today that the husband is the head, or leader, of the marriage. But that doesn't mean he is the boss or the king of the wife. Paul says he is a leader like Jesus. That means husbands should be loving, humble, and gentle for the benefit of the marriage. They should be so loving that they want to serve and help their wives in every way—even to the point of being willing to die for their wives like Jesus did for us.

Paul then says that wives "submit" to their husbands. But this doesn't mean that they are less important or just cook and clean all the time. Definitely not! This means that wives should love and honor their husbands just like we Christians love and honor our leader, Jesus. Wives are equally important partners and team members in the marriage.

When husbands and wives follow God's plans, it looks like a beautiful dancing couple. They work together. Both get the spotlight as sometimes the husband has his gifts and abilities on display, and sometimes the wife does. Neither selfishly does whatever they want. Neither is lazy, doing nothing. Instead, like a dancing couple, they work hard and work together to have a beautiful relationship just like God planned.

Just like doing a special dance is difficult, so is marriage. It takes a lot of work and practice. Thanks to Jesus, there is forgiveness for the times the dance of marriage doesn't look so pretty. And thanks to Jesus, he offers strength to help husbands and wives continue their beautiful dance together.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Why is a marriage like working together on a team?
- Name two or three ways that husbands and wives can work together in a marriage?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How is marriage like two people dancing together? How is it different?
- God says that husbands are to lead in a marriage like Christ. What are ways husbands do that?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Many people wrongfully think that wives are less important in marriage. Explain how God designed wives to be different yet equal in a marriage.
- Explain how our relationship with Jesus is similar to the relationship of a husband and wife. Explain how it is different.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, you bless husbands and wives with a beautiful partnership in marriage. Help all husbands and wives to honor and respect each other as they work together in love. Amen.

Hymn: CW 506:1,5 – Oh, Blest the House Whate'er Befall

Oh, blest the house, whate'er befall,
Where Jesus Christ is all in all!
A home that is not wholly his—
How sad and poor and dark it is!

Then here will I and mine today
A solemn promise make and say:
Though all the world forsake his Word,
I and my house will serve the Lord!