5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Loving Your Spouse as Christ Loved the Church

Day 1: The Mystery of Marriage Reading: Ephesians 5:21-33

Devotional: Marriage is not merely a social arrangement or a legal contract. It is a living picture of something far greater than two people sharing a life together. When God designed marriage, He embedded within it a profound mystery: the relationship between Christ and His church. Every husband and wife who covenant themselves to one another are given the extraordinary privilege of displaying the gospel to a watching world. This means that how you treat your spouse is not a private matter. It is a public testimony. Ask yourself today: does the way I love my spouse point others toward Christ?

Reflection: In what ways does your marriage currently reflect the love of Christ for the church? Where does it fall short?

Practical Application: Set aside fifteen minutes today to write down three specific ways your marriage could more clearly display the gospel. Share one of those observations with your spouse.

Day 2: The Servant-Leader Husband Reading: 1 Peter 3:7; Mark 10:42-45

Devotional: The world defines leadership as authority exercised over others. Christ defines it as authority poured out for others. In Mark 10:42-45, Jesus makes clear that greatness in His kingdom is measured by service, not status. When Peter instructs husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way and to show them honor, he is not offering optional suggestions. He is describing the posture of a man who has genuinely submitted himself to Christ. A husband who leads through domination has misread his calling entirely. A husband who leads through sacrificial love is walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

Reflection: Are you leading your household from a place of pride and convenience, or from a place of humble, Christ-centered service?

Practical Application: Identify one area of your home or marriage where you have been passive or self-serving in your leadership. Take one concrete step today to engage that area with intentionality and humility.

Day 3: Understanding and Honoring Your Spouse Reading: 1 Peter 3:7; Proverbs 31:28-29; Song of Solomon 4:1

Devotional: Peter's instruction that husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way carries with it the weight of active, deliberate pursuit. Understanding is not something that accumulates passively over years of cohabitation. It is something that must be sought. To understand your wife is to ask questions, to listen without an agenda, to learn what brings her joy and what causes her pain, and to pursue the depths of who she is as a person and as a fellow heir of God's grace. When a husband refuses this pursuit, Peter warns that his very prayers are hindered. Dishonoring your spouse is a spiritual issue, not merely a relational one.

Reflection: How well do you truly know your spouse right now? When did you last ask her about her hopes, her fears, or her needs?

Practical Application: Ask your spouse one meaningful question today that you do not already know the answer to. Listen fully before responding, and resist the urge to fix or redirect the conversation.

Day 4: Love That Costs Something Reading: Ephesians 5:25-27; John 15:12-13; Hebrews 12:2

Devotional: Christ did not love the church when it was lovely. He loved the church at great personal cost, laying down His life before there was any response to earn it. Hebrews 12:2 reminds us that it was the joy set before Him that enabled Jesus to endure the cross. This is the model placed before every husband. The love you are called to is not contingent on how your wife responds, how much she appreciates your effort, or whether she meets your expectations. It is a prior love, a pursuing love, a love that gives itself up freely and finds its joy in the giving. This kind of love does not come from human strength. It comes from abiding in Christ.

Reflection: Is your love for your spouse contingent on her behavior, or is it rooted in your commitment to Christ? Where does the cost of loving well feel most heavy right now?

Practical Application: Do one act of service for your spouse today that you know she will not necessarily notice or thank you for. Do it without drawing attention to it, and offer it to the Lord as an act of worship.

Day 5: Repentance, Accountability, and Restoration Reading: James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:31-32

Devotional: No reading plan about marriage can end without addressing the necessary work of repentance. James 5:16 teaches that confessing our sins to one another carries with it the power of healing. For many marriages, the turning point is not a grand romantic gesture. It is a husband or wife sitting down and saying plainly: I have not loved you the way God has called me to, and I am sorry. That moment of humility, when pride is set aside and the truth is spoken, is where restoration often begins. First John 1:9 assures us that God is faithful to forgive. That same faithfulness can flow through us into our marriages when we are willing to repent and begin again.

Reflection: Is there an apology you have been withholding from your spouse? Is there a pattern of behavior you have refused to name honestly before God and before others?

Practical Application: Identify one man in your life whom you trust, and ask him this week to hold you accountable in your role as a husband. If an apology is owed to your spouse, do not wait. Offer it today, without conditions or qualifications, and ask the Lord to begin something new in your marriage from this moment forward.