



Grace Group Guide



United Purpose: Together we will designate time and place to deepening our desire for God, caring for and urging each other to action!

United Actions: WL Groups...

- Scripture:** Be in the Word together
- Encouragement:** One another each other
- Prayer:** With and for each other and the lost
- Accountability:** Now What? Put it into action!



ICEBREAKER (choose one or both):

- What's one highlight from your summer?
- What's something God has been teaching you this summer?

Transition: The summer is wrapping up, so we're back to offering group guides again! This Sunday we are starting a new sermon series titled ***The Glory of the Church***. In this series, we're going to look at the different images Scripture uses to describe the church and discuss what they mean/why they are significant. Today, we'll focus on Ephesians 5, where the church is described as the bride of Christ.

-DISCUSSION-

Read Ephesians 5:22-33

Note: When we read this passage, we often focus on the practical implications that it has for human marriage. While that is certainly one of Paul's purposes in this passage, we're going to focus today on the implications it has for the way we view the church.

- **How has Christ demonstrated His love for the church?**
 - "by giving Himself up for her" (v. 25)
 - **What does this mean? What is Paul referring to?**
 - Christ's sacrificial death on our behalf (see Jn. 15:13)
- **Why did Christ do this?**
 - "to make her holy" (v. 26)
 - "to present her to himself as a radiant church" (v. 27)
 - because "we are members of his body" (v. 30)
- **As a group, try to summarize what this passage teaches us about Christ's relationship to the church in one-two sentences.**

-REFLECTION-

- Do you love the church the way Christ loves the church? Why or why not?
 - *Note: consider also reading 1 Cor. 13:1-8 before answering these questions. Does your love for the church have the qualities listed in 1 Cor. 13?*
- How can you grow in your love for the church?
- What is one practical way you can demonstrate your love for the church?
 - *Note: this could include...*
 - *serving/volunteering (and doing so with the right mindset)*
 - *sending an encouraging text to another church member or pastor*
 - *praying for the health/unity of the church*
 - *deliberately choosing to speak positively about the church and other members in the church*
- How can knowing the truths contained in this passage encourage us in our daily walk with Christ?

-APPLICATION-

- Schedule a time this week to reread Ephesians 5:22-33 and pray through it, asking God to give you the same love for the church that Christ has.
- Drawing from your answers to the above questions, choose to do something practical this week which demonstrates your love for the church.

-PRAY-

- Thank God for what He has done for us in Christ. He loved us and gave Himself up for us that we might be pure and blameless in His sight.
- Ask God to stir up in you the same love for the church that Christ has. And if you realize that your love for the church has not matched Christ's, confess that to Him.