



LESSON 1: COUPLES THAT THRIVE

WELCOME

Choose one of the following to answer:

- What song(s) have you memorized and why?
- Share what happened on your funniest date ever.

WORSHIP

Read **Psalm 100** aloud and take a moment to reflect on both the big ways and the small, everyday ways God has shown His grace in your life. Then, share with your Life Group one or two things that you are especially grateful to God for.

WORD

Read **Ephesians 5:19–33**. If you haven't already, watch the video lesson on Shepherd Church's Life Groups webpage.

There are 7 questions/prompts in the WORD section. Your Life Group doesn't have to cover every question below. Life Group Leaders may select the ones that best fit their group. You can also use the remaining questions as personal reflection throughout the week.

1. In Ephesians 5:19–21, what four practices does Paul describe as evidence of a Spirit-filled life? Which of these do you see most clearly in your life right now?

2. When relationships get difficult, what is the biggest difference between how you want to respond and how you actually respond?

3. How can living out Ephesians 5:21 lead to mutual respect and Christlike love?

4. What does Ephesians 5:25–28 mean, and why is it such a high calling?



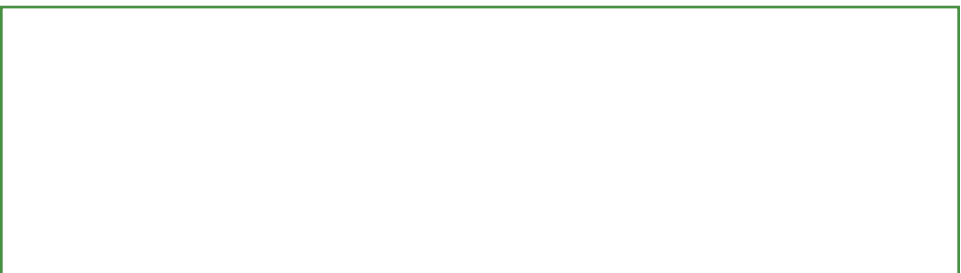
5. In Ephesians 5:31, how does Paul's use of Genesis 2:24 help us understand what he says in Ephesians 5:32?



6. How does viewing marriage as a picture of Christ and the Church reshape what it means for couples to thrive together?



7. Based on what you studied in this lesson, share one spiritual habit you feel led to practice this week (e.g., gratitude, encouragement, worship, mutual submission, etc.) that will help your relationships thrive.



WITNESS

Share the name of one couple, friend, or family member you could encourage this week by sharing how Christ's love shapes the way Christians approach relationships. Then, share how you might start that conversation.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DEEPER STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

This section is designed to help you continue growing in your faith throughout the week by reflecting more deeply on what you explored in your Life Group. Hopefully, these prompts and questions will create space for you to listen to God, apply Scripture to your life, and take your next step in following Jesus. Whether you work through them all at once or over a longer period, our hope is that your time with God will draw you closer to Him and strengthen your walk with Jesus. And please, don't rush. Go at your own pace, and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time.

- Review anything in the WORD section that either was not covered during your Life Group or that you want to take a deeper dive into.
- Memorize Ephesians 5:21 and/or Ephesians 5:31–32.
- Read Ephesians 5 all the way through each day this week in one sitting. You can also download the YouVersion Bible App and listen to Ephesians 5 every day this week.
- Read Mark 10:42–45; Romans 12:10; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3–11; and 1 Peter 5:5.
 - o Which passage do you connect with the most and why?
 - o Based on these passages, create your own definition of biblical submission.
 - o What motivates Christians to submit to one another according to these passages?
 - o According to these passages (and other verses you can think of), how is mutual submission different from cultural ideas of power and authority?
 - o Where do you find mutual submission most difficult to practice in your relationships, and why do you think that is?
- Read Ephesians 5:31–32
 - o How can your commitment in relationships become a visible reflection of Christ's love to the people around you?
 - o Where do you most need to experience closeness with Christ rather than simply knowing about Him?
 - o Where is Christ inviting you to reflect His covenant love more clearly in one relationship this week, and what is one step you can take to respond to that invitation?
 - o Where is God inviting you to practice deeper commitment instead of emotional withdrawal or distance?