

# God's Design for the Church – The Bride

## 3 Images in Scripture:

- The Body of Christ
- The Bride of Christ
- The Family of God

Each metaphor highlights different aspects of God's intended design for his church

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## The Bride of Christ – 3 Key Questions Answered:

1. What significance does the imagery of a bride have?
2. How does God see his Church?
3. How should this affect the way we see *HIS* Church?

# God's Design for the Church – The Bride

## Significance of the bride imagery:

### 1. Relationship

- Most significant and deepest bond between humans of love and commitment
- Covenant relationship between 2 people
- Historical element
  - God's original design of a man and a woman (Genesis – 2 become one)
  - God consistently uses the “husband/wife” imagery through the OT describing his relationship with his people

# God's Design for the Church – The Bride

## Significance of the bride imagery:

### 1. Relationship

### 2. Roles

- Christ leads – we follow
- We submit ourselves to Jesus
- Ephesians 5:21-24

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## Ephesians 5:21-24

<sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

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## Significance of the bride imagery:

1. Relationship
2. Roles
3. How Christ sees His Bride/Church
  - Christ's love for us is like a bridegroom's love for his bride
  - We are not loved because we are so loveable but rather because Jesus is making us loveable
  - Revelation 19:6-8
  - Ephesians 5:25-27

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## Ephesians 5:25-27

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.



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## Significance of the bride imagery:

### 3. How Christ sees His Bride/Church

- Holy
  - Christ's love for us saves us and makes us holy because of his sacrifice (sanctified, set apart)
- Clean
  - Cleansed by water (reference to baptism)
  - Cleansed by the word (the gospel)
- Radiant
  - Glowing in beauty



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## Significance of the bride imagery:

### 3. How Christ sees His Bride/Church

- Holy
- Clean
- Radiant
- Perfect
  - Without defect (spot/wrinkle) – picture of youth
- Blameless
  - Not just forgiven, but regenerated (new creation), justified (penalty paid) and sanctified

# God's Design for the Church – The Bride

## Significance of the bride imagery:

1. Relationship
2. Roles
3. How Christ sees His Bride/Church
4. How Christ cares for His Bride/Church
  - Ephesians 5:28-30

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## Ephesians 5:28-30

<sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.

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## Significance of the bride imagery:

1. Relationship
2. Roles
3. How Christ sees His Bride/Church
4. How Christ cares for His Bride/Church
5. One
  - Ephesians 5:31-33

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## Ephesians 5:31-33

<sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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## How should we respond?

### 1. Current Trends

- Trashing Christ's bride
- “Churchless” Christianity
- Disillusionment with the church

### 2. Cultural Outrage

- Jesus uses nasty words like “submit” and “sacrifice” which flies in the face of our culture's values of “anti-authority”, “me first” and “only if it benefits me”.

# God's Design for the Church – The Bride

How should we respond?

1. Current Trends
2. Cultural Outrage
3. Embrace God's design
  - We should see the church in the same way Christ sees his church
  - Yes, we have flaws and failings, and we need to work on things, but we also need to remember who the church belongs to and what Jesus sees



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## The Point...

- All other relationships flow out of our relationship with Christ
  - As the Bride, our goal is to be faithful to Jesus
  - Revelation 21:1-5; 9-11