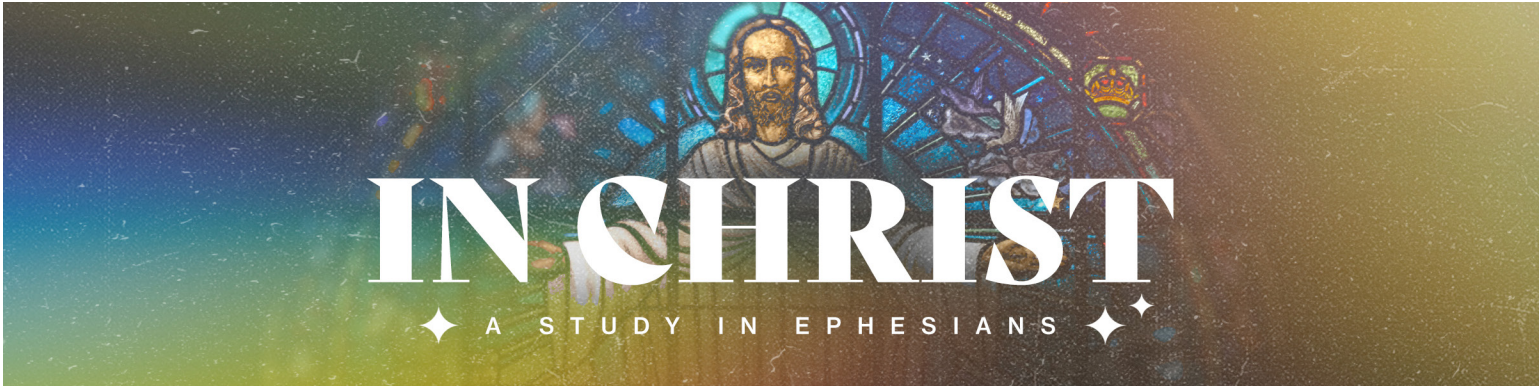




IN CHRIST

✦ A STUDY IN EPHESIANS ✦

DAY 1: MORE THAN A CONTRACT

DEVOTIONAL:

In a world where marriage is often viewed as a temporary arrangement or a legal convenience, God calls us to see marriage through His eyes. Marriage isn't just a contract that can be easily broken when things get difficult—it's a sacred covenant that reflects something far greater than ourselves. When we understand marriage as a covenant, we begin to see its true purpose. Just as God made an unbreakable covenant with His people, marriage represents a commitment that goes beyond feelings or circumstances. It's a picture of Christ's unwavering love for the Church, a love that doesn't waver when times get tough. This perspective changes everything about how we approach marriage. Instead of asking "What can I get out of this relationship?" we begin to ask "How can I reflect Christ's love in this covenant?" Instead of looking for an exit strategy when challenges arise, we look for ways to grow closer to God and each other through the difficulties. Every marriage has the potential to be a living testimony of God's faithfulness. When others see couples committed to their covenant regardless of circumstances, they catch a glimpse of how God loves His people. This is why marriage matters so much—it's not just about our personal happiness, but about displaying God's character to a watching world. Today, whether you're married, single, or hoping to be married someday, remember that God's design for marriage is beautiful and purposeful. It's worth fighting for, worth protecting, and worth living out according to His perfect plan.

BIBLE VERSE:

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." - Ephesians 5:31

REFLECTION QUESTION:

How does viewing marriage as a covenant rather than a contract change your perspective on commitment and the challenges that relationships face?

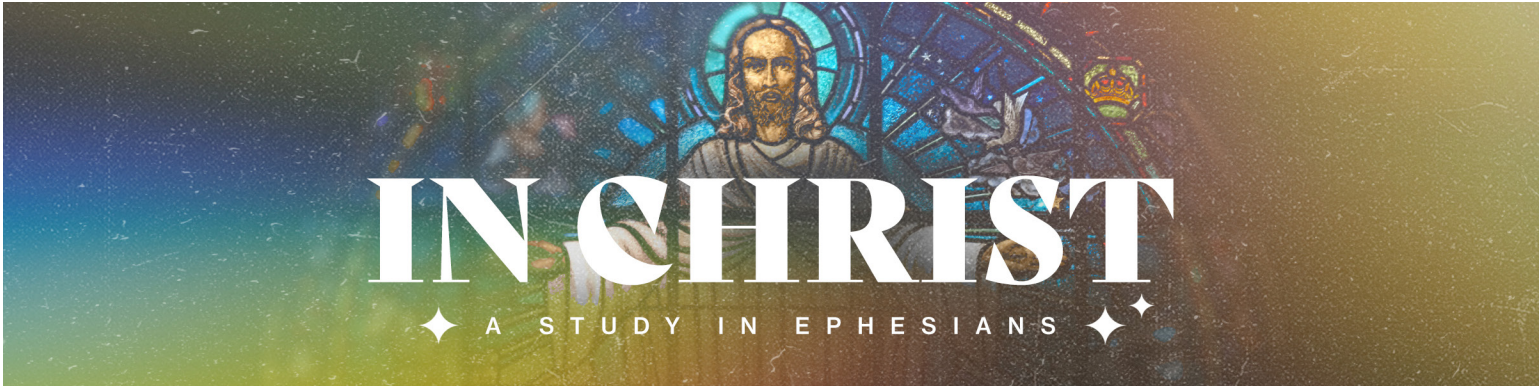
SERMON QUOTE:

"Marriage is more than a contract. It's a covenant, a picture of Christ and the church, a love that sacrifices, serves and sanctifies in Christ."

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to see marriage through Your eyes—as a sacred covenant that reflects Your love for us. Whether I'm married or single, give me a heart that honors Your design for relationships and seeks to display Your faithfulness in all my commitments. Amen.

NOTES:



IN CHRIST

✦ A STUDY IN EPHESIANS ✦

DAY 2: THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF GODLY HOMES

DEVOTIONAL:

Have you ever thrown a stone into a calm lake and watched the ripples spread outward? That's exactly how godly marriages and families work—their impact extends far beyond the walls of their homes, influencing communities, churches, and even nations. When families operate according to God's design, they become beacons of hope in a confused world. Children raised in homes where love, respect, and biblical values are modeled grow up with a solid foundation. They carry these principles into their schools, workplaces, and eventually their own families. The cycle continues, creating waves of positive influence that can transform entire communities. Conversely, when families struggle or operate outside of God's plan, the effects ripple outward as well. Broken homes often produce broken individuals who struggle to form healthy relationships and contribute positively to society. This isn't about condemnation—it's about recognizing the incredible responsibility and opportunity we have. Every family has the potential to be a force for good in this world. When we prioritize our relationships with God and each other, when we choose forgiveness over bitterness, and when we model Christ's love in our daily interactions, we're not just improving our own lives—we're contributing to the healing of our world. The beautiful truth is that God can use any family, regardless of past mistakes or current struggles, to make a positive impact. It starts with surrendering our homes to His lordship and committing to follow His ways, even when they go against cultural norms.

BIBLE VERSE:

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." - Ephesians 5:21

REFLECTION QUESTION:

In what specific ways can your family (whether current or future) become a positive influence that ripples outward into your community and beyond?

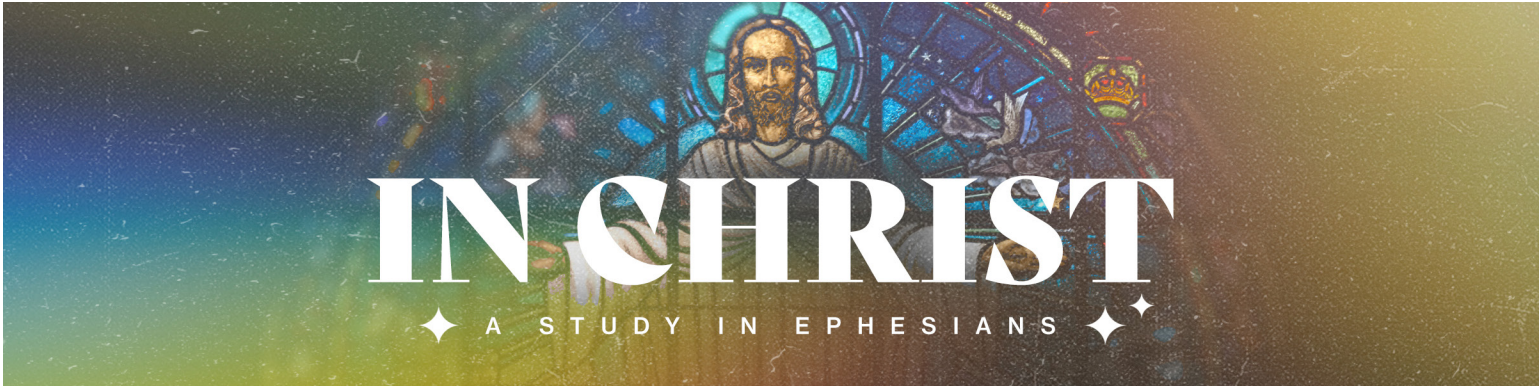
SERMON QUOTE:

"So goes the home, so goes the church, so goes the state, so goes the nation, so goes the world. It is that important that we get family right."

PRAYER:

Father, help me understand the far-reaching impact of godly families. Give me wisdom to build relationships that honor You and create positive ripples in my community. Use my family as a light in this world. Amen.

NOTES:



IN CHRIST

✦ A STUDY IN EPHESIANS ✦

DAY 3: DESIGNED WITH PURPOSE

DEVOTIONAL:

In our culture's confusion about gender and roles, it's refreshing to know that God isn't confused at all. He created us male and female with intentional design and purpose. Understanding this truth brings clarity to the beautiful way marriages are meant to function. God's design for distinct roles in marriage isn't about superiority or inferiority—it's about complementary functions that create harmony and effectiveness. Think of a symphony orchestra where different instruments play different parts. The violin isn't better than the cello; they're simply designed to contribute different sounds that, when played together, create something beautiful. When wives embrace their calling to submit to their husbands' godly leadership, they're not diminishing their worth—they're stepping into a role that reflects how the Church relates to Christ. When husbands embrace their calling to love sacrificially and lead humbly, they're modeling Christ's heart for His people. Both roles require strength, wisdom, and complete dependence on God. This design only works when both spouses are walking with Christ and seeking to honor Him above all else. It's not about cultural expectations or personal preferences—it's about trusting that God's ways are perfect, even when they challenge our natural inclinations. The beauty of God's design is that it creates an environment where both husband and wife can flourish in their unique callings while working together toward the common goal of glorifying God and building His kingdom through their marriage.

BIBLE VERSE:

"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." - Ephesians 5:23

REFLECTION QUESTION:

How can you embrace God's design for your role (whether as a husband, wife, or future spouse) while celebrating the equal worth and value of both men and women?

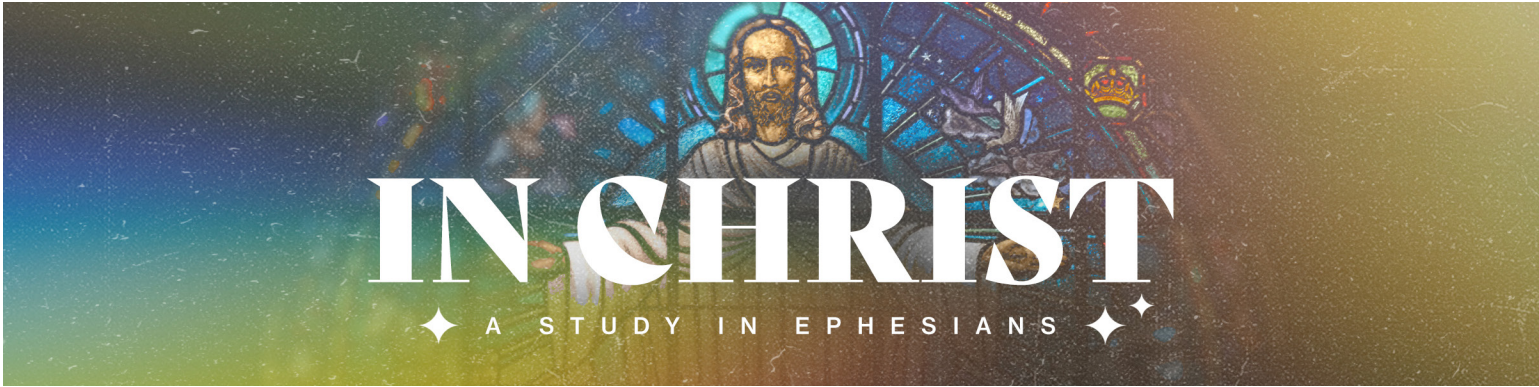
SERMON QUOTE:

"God is not confused on gender, and you should not be either."

PRAYER:

Lord, thank You for creating us with intentional design and purpose. Help me to embrace Your plan for marriage roles, not out of cultural pressure, but out of love and trust in Your perfect wisdom. Give me grace to honor You in my relationships. Amen.

NOTES:



IN CHRIST

✦ A STUDY IN EPHESIANS ✦

DAY 4: LOVE LIKE CHRIST

DEVOTIONAL:

The command for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church sets an incredibly high standard—and that’s exactly the point. This isn’t about human love that comes and goes based on feelings or circumstances. This is about divine love that chooses to sacrifice, serve, and sanctify regardless of the cost. Christ’s love for the Church was intentional. He didn’t stumble into loving us; He chose to pursue us with purpose and determination. Husbands are called to love their wives with this same intentionality—not just when it’s easy or convenient, but as a daily, deliberate choice. Christ’s love was sacrificial. He gave up His life for the Church, putting our needs above His own comfort and desires. This kind of love in marriage means putting your spouse’s wellbeing, growth, and happiness ahead of your own preferences. It means dying to selfishness daily. Christ’s love was redemptive. He didn’t love the Church because we were perfect; He loved us to make us perfect. In marriage, this means loving your spouse not just as they are, but with a vision for who God is calling them to become. It means being part of their sanctification process. While this devotional focuses on husbands, the principle applies to all of us in our relationships. Whether we’re married or single, we’re all called to love others with Christ’s love—intentionally, sacrificially, and redemptively. This kind of love transforms not just marriages, but every relationship it touches.

BIBLE VERSE:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” - Ephesians 5:25

REFLECTION QUESTION:

What would it look like for you to love the important people in your life more intentionally, sacrificially, and redemptively, following Christ’s example?

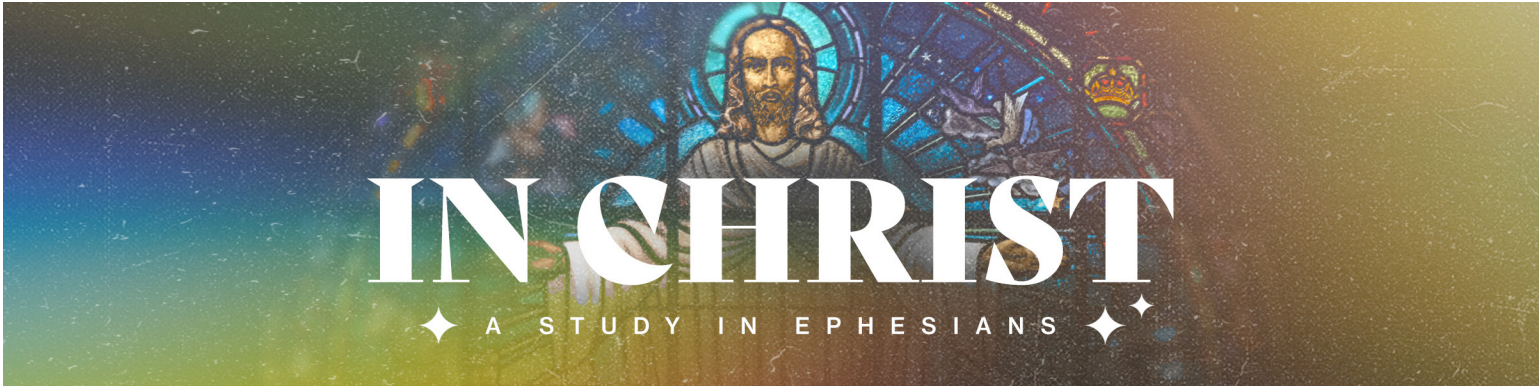
SERMON QUOTE:

“Husbands, love your wives like Christ loved the church, intentionally, sacrificially, redemptively.”

PRAYER:

Jesus, thank You for showing us what perfect love looks like. Help me to love others the way You love the Church—with intention, sacrifice, and a heart for their growth and wellbeing. Transform my selfish heart to reflect Your love. Amen.

NOTES:



IN CHRIST

✦ A STUDY IN EPHESIANS ✦

DAY 5: FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN

DEVOTIONAL:

As we conclude this journey through God's design for marriage, we face a crucial question: Will we follow God's plan, or will we try to create our own? The choice we make will determine not only the health of our relationships but also the impact we have on future generations. Following God's plan for marriage requires courage because it often goes against cultural trends and popular opinion. It means choosing covenant over convenience, sacrifice over selfishness, and God's wisdom over our own understanding. It means believing that the One who created marriage knows better than we do how it should function. The beautiful promise is that when we align our marriages and families with God's design, we position ourselves to receive His blessing and experience the fullness of what He intended. This doesn't mean life will be without challenges, but it means we'll face those challenges with God's strength and wisdom guiding us. For those who are single, following God's plan means preparing yourself to be the kind of spouse who can contribute to a godly marriage. It means developing character, growing in your relationship with Christ, and learning to love others sacrificially. For those who are married, it means daily choosing to honor your covenant, serve your spouse, and seek God's will for your family. It means being willing to change, grow, and sometimes admit when you've been wrong. The question isn't whether God's plan works—it's whether we'll trust Him enough to follow it. Today, let's commit to building marriages and families that reflect His heart and bring Him glory.

BIBLE VERSE:

"However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."
- Ephesians 5:33

REFLECTION QUESTION:

What specific steps will you take this week to align your current or future marriage more closely with God's design and plan?

SERMON QUOTE:

"Will you follow God's plan for your home? Will you follow God's plan for your marriage?"

PRAYER:

Father, I choose to trust Your plan for marriage and family, even when it challenges my natural inclinations. Give me the courage to follow Your ways and the wisdom to build relationships that honor You. Help me to be part of the solution in a world that desperately needs to see Your love in action. Amen.

NOTES:
