

Living Example



Donna hung out at her friend Ayira's house every week. Ayira's mother and father were in charge of the marriage ministry at the church. They were working on ideas for Black Marriage Day, where they would hold workshops for adults and teens.

"Classes on marriage for us? Why?" Donna crinkled up her nose.

"We still need to figure out what kind of adults we want to be and what kind of families we want to have. Don't you want to get married someday?" Ayira asked.

"Girl, no! Whenever a man comes in, they want to run everything! My mother and her last boyfriend fought all the time. He wanted her to take care of him, but she couldn't get him to help out with anything. And he told her that she was supposed to care for him as the church cares for Christ."

"My parents disagree. I'm not saying everything is perfect, but it isn't just that my mom cares for my dad; my dad cares for my mom, too. The rest of that Scripture says that husbands are supposed to care for wives as Christ does for the church. Christ died for the church."

"He left that part out—of course," Donna huffed.

"There are times when I know my dad would rather do something other than wash dishes when he comes home from work, but he does it because Mom is worn out. And there are days when Mom is exhausted and still works hard to make sure Dad has a meal he loves that is good for him. It seems like more of a give-and-take to me."

"I've never seen anything like that. Maybe I will come to Black Marriage Day ... and bring my mom."

Ayira smiled. "I was hoping you'd say that."

In My Heart

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"
(Ephesians 5:21, NIV).

WORD!

Ephesians 5:21–6:4, NIV—Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. **22** Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. **23** 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. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. **25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, **27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—**30** for we are members of his body. **31** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." **32** This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—**3** "so that it may go well with you **12** and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." **4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord

SIDEBAR

Christ's Love for the Church

In Ephesians, Paul directs Christians to use Christ as the model for loving each other as husbands, wives, parents, children, and brothers and sisters in Christ. By following the examples of Christ's sacrifice and love for others, Christians are given a blueprint on how to be kind, compassionate, and giving to each other. Husbands are asked to live sacrificially for their wives, wives are asked to live determined to love their husbands, and parents are reminded that they are to lovingly lead and guide their children. Using Christ as the model, all involved will gratefully work to "out-love" each other by showing a bright example of God's love.

How to Spread Love

1. Meditate on God's love for you.
2. Starting with your family, demonstrate Christ's compassion and care.
3. Pray for the wisdom and compassion to love others.

GOT IT!

A. Show Some Love

Use Word! to help you determine whether each of the following statements are TRUE or FALSE. If the answer is false, change it to make it true.

1. Wives, submit to your children as you do to the Lord.

TRUE

FALSE

2. Husbands, love your pastor, just as Christ served the church and gave himself up for it.

TRUE

FALSE

3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is the first commandment.

TRUE

FALSE

B. High Expectations

1. Find Ephesians 6:4 in Word! and consider what it means.
2. Brainstorm your expectations of your parents.
3. In class, discuss the expectations you have of your parents and why.
4. Write letters to your parents, sharing your expectations.

JAM SESSION

Family Matters

People struggle to balance the demands of their daily lives with their need to show love for one another. The writer of Ephesians states that family members should love and care for one another, just as Christ loves and cares for the church. Ayira and Donna were discussing marriage, one of the first places that we are able to see God's love. A healthy marriage not only displays the love of Christ, but also provides an example of sacred love for children. The love between a married couple creates a home that allows for the guidance and love of children. Family allows a perfect place to practice loving with the love of Christ. In marriage, a husband and wife work daily to love each other as Christ and the church love each other. The Scripture even sets up a standard for how children should love, honor, and respect their parents and how parents should love and guide their children. *Have you ever celebrated Black Marriage Day?* Visit www.blackmarriageday.com for ideas on how you and your class or youth group can create a celebration in your church.

JAM ON IT!

Listening Party

There is a saying from Zimbabwe: "When an elder dies, it is like burning a library full of books." Family is a very precious gift. Go sit with the eldest member of your family, church, or community and take along a tape recorder. Have a conversation and listen a lot. You'll be surprised at what you learn about your community, your family, and yourself.

LAST JAM

Love your family.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.

Everybody's Talking



Everyone was talking about Raquel. She became an overnight sensation when her videos on YouTube suddenly went viral. Only 14 years old, Raquel was very pretty and also very wise beyond her years. A national news station interviewed her and asked what her motives were for the videos.

"I want to help young girls in high school. It's a tough time in life for them. Believe me, I know. I just want to give advice so they can be happy being themselves like me."

"You heard it here first," the reporter said as she signed off. "If you are a young girl in high school and you need some guidance, Raquel can help! Just log on to her YouTube channel and see for yourself!"

When Tracey heard this, she thought about her first semester as a ninth grader and all the social problems she had. She did a search for Raquel's YouTube channel to see what all the hype was all about.

She is very wise. She seems like an adult in a child's body, Tracey thought to herself after watching Raquel's first video, "The Truth about Boys." She scrolled down until she saw another video title that caught her eye: "Carry Your Bible."

Everything in this seven-minute video confirmed all that Tracey had learned at home from her parents and at church in her youth group. She couldn't believe that someone so pretty and popular was a Christian. She also wondered why the news reporter didn't elaborate on her faith.

Everyone admired Raquel because of her outward appearance and her wisdom, but Tracey admired her because of her faith. Whether people talked about her because of her beauty, her wisdom, or her faith, Raquel was happy to be an overnight celebrity!

In My Heart

"But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice"
(Philippians 1:18, NIV).

WORD!

Philippians 1:15–26, NIV—It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. **16** The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. **18** But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

SIDEBAR

Proclaiming Christ

Paul was interested in advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is preaching the Gospel out of love and because he was especially called for that purpose. Paul sacrificed everything for the good of the Gospel. He bore his afflictions with the hope of fulfilling the needs of the Gospel. Everyone was not and is not as dedicated as Paul. Some people preach Christ for other reasons (some good and some bad). Despite the various reasons or motives, Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached.

How to Proclaim the Gospel of Christ

1. Learn as much as you can about what Jesus preached and taught.
2. Strive your best to live according to His rules and teachings.
3. Don't be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. Have courage to exalt Christ in your daily life.

GOT IT!

A. Preaching Christ

Use Word! to help you fill in the blanks below.

1. It is true that some preach _____ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.
2. For to me, to live is _____ and to die is gain.
3. So that through my being with you again your boasting in _____ Jesus will abound on account of me.

B. Lights, Motives, Action!

1. Make two lists of reasons people may preach Christ, one positive and one negative.
2. Use your ideas to create a skit showing the differences between the kinds of people who preach Christ.
3. As a class, discuss how you feel about the different reasons people may preach the Gospel. Does it matter?

JAM SESSION

Motives and Message

In a media-driven world, we hear many messages without fully knowing what motivates the "messenger." *In what ways does the messenger's motive affect the message?* Paul claimed that regardless of the person's intentions, the result was still that "Christ is proclaimed in every way." In a similar way, everyone was talking about Raquel because of her beauty and wisdom, but Tracey admired her because of her faith. The reasons why people were talking about Raquel, however, didn't matter. Raquel knew that the more people talked, the more YouTube hits she would get. She also knew that her witness would eventually get out, and God would get the glory. *Do you carry your Bible to school? Are you ashamed of the Gospel? Do you proclaim Christ wherever you go?*

JAM ON IT!

To Live is Christ

Reread verse 21 in today's Scripture lesson. What do you think it means "for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"? As you think about your interpretation, write a poem to express your thoughts. Share your poem with the class next week.

LAST JAM

Never be ashamed of Christ. So that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.
