

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### DISCUSSION GOAL



*To establish dating's biblical purpose as discerning a Gospel partner, while exploring and exposing our own purposes for dating.*

### ICE BREAKER



What was the best or worst date you have ever been on?

### TEXT



*Have a member of your group read the passage aloud.*

#### Ephesians 5:22-33

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

*(turn to Ephesians 5 in an ESV bible to continue reading verses 29-33)*

### MESSAGE OUTLINE



*This is what our pastoral team observed about the passage.*

**Big Idea:** Dating is for discerning a gospel partner.

**Key Question:** How do you discern if a person is a good gospel partner?

1. Do they love and follow Jesus? (vv. 22-30)
2. Are they a lifelong partner? (v. 31)
3. Will they help you embody the mystery of the gospel? (vv. 32-33)

## DISCUSSION



- In Ephesians 5:22-33 we see the apostle Paul giving instruction to husbands and wives for a marriage that displays the “mystery of the Gospel.” When you think about dating, is this the end goal or target you have in mind? As you reflect, does the Bible support any other purposes for dating?
- When thinking about entering relationships with others, we should first analyze our own health. How healthy is your relationship with Christ? When identifying someone to date, what are some life indicators you can look for that demonstrate they love and are actively following the Lord?
- Ephesians 5:31 addresses the intention of permanence, not transaction, when looking at a marriage relationship. If dating’s purpose is to find a lifelong partner, what types of questions should you ask, or evaluations should you make when discerning a partner?
- Do your views of dating change based upon “embodying the Gospel” as an end goal? If dating, does the person your dating have a fully committed relationship to Christ? If you’re not dating, how can you encourage others to make this a priority?
- Since dating is for discerning a Gospel “partner,” both people need to be personally committed to the Gospel, as well as corporately committed to each other’s embodiment of the Gospel. How has this discussion changed, challenged, or affirmed your commitment to relationships reflecting the Gospel?

## LIFE APPLICATION



While this was a direct discussion about dating, take this time to look at some other relationships in your life. Brainstorm a couple of simple and attainable ways to more closely align your relationship purposes with God’s purposes. Additionally, who will we lovingly and intentionally share these purposes with outside of the group?

*Jot your ideas below and send a picture to your group to remind everyone of your action steps this week.*

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## PRAYER REQUESTS



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