

**SUSTAINABLE MARRIAGES #1**  
**CONFLICT AND COMMITMENT**  
**Ephesians 5:31-33**

*NOTE: For some of these questions, you may have to modify your answers to your specific relational status. For example, if you are unmarried, you may talk about how your joys and struggles in relationships relate to conflict and commitment as well. Regardless of relationship status, we can learn from the scriptures and one another as a spiritual community.*

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

Did you grow up in a home where you felt secure in your parents oneness? Were your parents of origin a good example of what a committed, loving, Christ centered relationship looks like? If so, why do you believe they stay married? If not, what did you grow up seeing and feeling? At what point did you know your parents were not committed to oneness? How does this background impact the way you view your dating or marital relationship(s)?

**EXPLORING THE BIBLE**

Read Genesis 2:18-25. Make a list of the things that Adam experienced in these verses. What is significant about these experiences in terms of God's design for marriage?

Why is it important that the principle in Genesis 2:24 was recorded at the very outset of God's creation? How does this create a paradigm for all marriages? What do you think it means to "commit to ONE-ness" in marriage?

Read Genesis 2:25-3:13. What changed between Genesis 2:25 and 3:7-10? How did this change Adam and Eve's relationship?

Read Genesis 3:16-3:19. How would the relationships between men and women be changed by our fall into sin? After sin entered the world, how can a couple maintain the ONE-ness for which they were created?

Read Ephesians 5:31-33. Verse 33 gives two commands, one for husbands and one for wives. These commands are intended to address the major marital needs of each spouse. How are the needs of each spouse different?

In his book titled *Love & Respect*, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs claims that a couple's failure to meet these two needs results in a "crazy cycle," with a unloved wife showing disrespect to her husband, an unrespected husband reacting in unloving ways toward his spouse, and so on. Do you ever see this cycle lived out in your own relationship? How do you get it to stop?

When you've worked through a conflict in your relationship, how do you know that you have fully restored the ONE-ness of your relationship rather than just saying the right thing and moving on?

**LIVING IT OUT**

When you experienced a healthy relationship, what kinds of things were you doing to develop ONE-ness together? Do you find that you've stopped doing some healthy things that you used to do? What is one thing that most prevents ONE-ness in your relationship at this time? Is there anything in your life that is driving a wedge between the two of you? What "urgent tasks" distract you and keep you from the truly important task of developing ONE-ness in your marriage?

What is one thing you can prioritize over the 30 days to develop ONE-ness in your marriage?

How can this group encourage one another to honor God in our relationships?

*These sermon notes are produced each week for further study and discussion in our small groups. If you are interested in joining a small group, please contact Leslie Ann Yell at [smallgroups@chathamchurch.org](mailto:smallgroups@chathamchurch.org) or 545-9589. Some of these questions were based on questions in other curriculum. If interested, ask Jeff Lawrence for a list of sources.*