



## Discussion Questions:

1. What thoughts, word pictures, and/or emotions come to your mind when you think of a bride? With that in mind, why do you think the Lord wanted to use the metaphor of a bride to help us better understand the Church?
2. A “mystery” in the New Testament refers to something that was hidden in the past but revealed in the New Testament (see Eph. 1:9-12; 2:11-12; 3:4-5; Mt. 13:11; 1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 1:26-27). Why does Eph. 5:32 refer to marriage as a “mystery” of Christ and the Church? What about this relationship was hidden in the past and now revealed in the New Testament?
3. Did God look at the marriage relationship between a man and a woman and then think it was a great picture of Christ and the Church? Or did He first plan the relationship between Christ and the Church and then create marriage between a man and a woman to illustrate that relationship? To help with your answer, which of the two relationships will continue on in Heaven? What implications should this have for the way we approach marriage?
4. What is the “Bride” of Christ? Is it you individually? Is it the local visible church corporately? Is it the Universal invisible Church? Is it all three? What biblical support do you have for your answer?
5. If it refers to the Universal Church what are the implications of the metaphor? What are the implications for us as individuals and for us as local churches? What responsibility do we have to the Universal Church? What does this say about the typical approach of “competition” between local churches in a given city?
6. Now think through the process of dating/courtship, engagement, and then your wedding day. What might a man think about, do for, and say to his future wife throughout the process? How might he sacrifice for her? What feelings will he have for her? What commitments does he make to her?
7. Now read through Eph. 5:22-33 and see what Jesus thinks about, does for, and says to His bride. How does He sacrifice for her? What feelings does He have for her? What commitments does He make to her? How intense are these thoughts, feelings, and actions to Him?
8. Assuming you have a good relationship with your spouse...What would you think, feel, say, and do if someone came up to you and said, “I really love you but I can’t stand your spouse!” Is this somehow different than when someone says “I love Jesus but I hate the Church”?
9. Read Rev. 19. What is the ultimate future for the Bride of Christ? How does she look? How did she get that way? What is all heaven’s attitude toward the Church? What should our attitude be toward the Church?
10. Read 2 Cor. 11:1-3. What is Paul’s concern for the Corinthian church? What might keep the church from being a “pure virgin”? What are some specific ways Satan deceives the church and keeps it from simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ? What must we do to overcome these temptations?
11. Do you LOVE the Church, the Bride of Christ? How are you demonstrating your love to your local church? How are you demonstrating your love to other local churches in your area? How are you demonstrating your love to churches around the world?
12. What specific things are you going to think, say, and do differently as a result of this study?