

This midweek study will explore the biblical teaching of the bride of Christ. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Bride of Christ

The church is described as the bride of Christ, faithfully waiting for the day when Christ will return and heaven and earth will be one. Made up of all believers from all tongues and nations, the church is the bride that Christ redeemed. The picture of a bride also speaks to the permanence of Christ's relationship with the church, for marriage was intended by God to be a lasting covenant between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5).

1 The entirety of the church across history and geography composes the bride of Christ (Mark 2:19-20; John 3:29; Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 21:9-10).

Read Mark 2:19-20.

- ▶ In this analogy, to what did Christ liken the disciples? Who is Jesus in the analogy? What figure was (so far) missing?

Read John 3:29.

- ▶ Where is Christ in John's analogy? Who is John in the analogy? Whose identity is still not clear?

Read Ephesians 5:31-32.

- ▶ Whom did Paul finally reveal as the bride of Christ? What Bible verse did Paul say contained the mystery of this knowledge from long ago?

Read Revelation 21:9-10.

- ▶ How did John confirm Paul's understanding? To what did John compare the bride of Christ?
- ▶ How would you treat the bride of an important figure (maybe a politician or a pro athlete)?
- ▶ How should we treat one another as the bride of Christ?

2 As a bride remains pure and faithful to her fiancé, so also the bride of Christ seeks to remain pure to Him (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:1-3,6-9).

- ▶ How do engaged women behave differently than single women? What is different about their motivation for their lifestyles?

Read 2 Corinthians 11:2.

- ▶ How did Paul want to present the Corinthian believers to Christ? What does this idea mean practically in our lives today?
- ▶ What are some specific things we can do this week to present ourselves pure before Jesus?
Remember we'll need the Holy Spirit's help.

Read Revelation 19:1-3, 6-9.

- ▶ How does the prostitute of Babylon contrast with the bride of Christ?
- ▶ What glorious event was about to unfold for the bride? What had she done before?
- ▶ What are some righteous deeds we can do this week that would be the fine linen we would put on for our Groom?
- ▶ How can we help one another (not just ourselves) be dressed in fine linen for our Groom?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How would you respond to someone who said this whole idea of us being the bride of Christ was too gushy-romantic? What happiness is this person missing out on?