Introduction: Is your marriage a “dance” or a “debate”? 

- A “Great Dance” Demands . . .
  - A Choreographer
  - Mutual Submission to His “steps”
  - Clarity of Roles
  - Practice, Practice, and More Practice

- A “Great Dance” Develops . . .
  - An Incredible Team
  - Balance, Timing, Rhythm, and Strength
  - Personal Joy and Joint Fulfillment
  - A Thing of Beauty
God’s design for “The Dance” of marriage:

Ephesians 5:21-33

- Mutual Submission to the Choreographer
  
  \textit{Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.}

  Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

- A Word to Women – Follow His Lead
  
  \textit{Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.}

  Ephesians 5:22-24 (NIV)

- Who is leading the dance?
  
  - Who handles the money?
  
  - Who disciplines the children?
  
  - Who initiates discussion of future plans or problems?
  
  - Who asks the most questions and who makes the most statements?

- The Command

- The Reason
• What Does this Mean?

• Marriage is not a __________ proposition.

• There are specific __________ and ________________ and lines of authority in marriage.

• The woman ______________ submits out of love for her husband.

• The woman’s greatest ________________ and ________________ will be achieved and embraced by following God’s design.

• What this Does Not Mean

• The man calls __________ the shots in the marriage relationship.

• The woman is a ________________ that she can’t voice her approval - that she should ever feel or be treated as an inferior.

• The woman should submit to her husband’s ________________, ________________, or ________________ demands.

Reference: Passive Men, Wild Women by Dr. Pierre Mornell

A Word to Men: Be Worthy of Following

25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her26to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,27and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.28In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.29After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--30for we are members of his body.

Ephesians 5:25-30 (NIV)
• **The Command** - Love your wife as Christ loved the Church.

• **The Purpose** - Help your wife reach her full potential.

• **What Does this Mean?**
  • The husband must love ____________________.

  • The husband must love _______ ____________________.

  • The husband must love ____________________.

• **What this Does Not Mean**
  • The husband always __________ ______ to the wife.

  • The husband doesn’t have a life ______________________ of the marriage.

  • The husband __________________ the wife or makes her feel totally ______________________ on him.
A Word to the World: It’s about the dance, not the dancers

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.

Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV)

Conclusion - Is your marriage a “dance” or a “debate?”

Discussion Questions:

1. What new insight did you gain concerning the roles of men and women in marriage?

2. How has our culture made it difficult to function according to God’s design?

3. How have abuses in the church made it difficult to function according to God’s design?

4. How could focusing on “your role” vs. evaluating your mate’s role help you both “get in step” with God’s plan for your marriage?

Resources:
For those with unbelieving or unresponsive spouses – CD Series available at Living on the Edge: LIFT! The Awesome Power of Encouragement, Authentic: How to be a Christian without Being Religious, & Love One Another For more research on male/female roles - Book: Male & Female: Enjoying the Difference by Larry Crabb