WE ARE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST!

Any married man can tell you that his bride is his shining beauty — the treasure he honors and protects. A man will do anything for his bride because he adores her. God’s design in marriage was for a bride to be her husband’s partner in life and his most intimate friend, enjoying every moment of the inexplicably deep bond they share as the two of them actually become one together. Marriage is a union of such intensity and depth, so it isn’t any wonder that Satan so brutally assaults it. In marriage, our enemy sees a celebration and a reflection of the bond we have been destined to walk in with our Savior, and he desperately wants to delay our inevitable joy as long as he possibly can. Just as a man in love sacrifices everything for the heart of his bride, our Savior has chosen to make us his beloved: his Bride. He’s chosen to catch us up in a whirlwind of divine romance.

Some take offense at such a romantic view of Christianity. They sneer at sappy sentiments and demand we only see God as a holy King to be revered. Indeed, he is King over all of creation. However, he also says he is our Father, our Friend, our Head, our Shelter, our Refuge and our Husband. And he knew full well what the words meant when he chose “husband” and “bride” to describe the relationship he desired with us. Jesus isn’t merely saying that our relationship is like that of a husband and bride. No. Our marriage to him is our deeper reality. Every marriage on earth merely reflects our profound relationship with him. The reason no one is given in marriage in heaven is because we’re all already married — to him — and our God is not a polygamist! As the global Church that unites under the banner of his name, we are being prepared as the Bride of Christ. And he calls for his Bride to stand united as one. We have to move beyond denominational lines and our obsession about proving who is right and who is wrong about every tiny detail of our faith. We have to lay down our pride that fuels us to judge and to separate ourselves from each other. We are being prepared as a Bride that will show the whole world how glorious our groom is by how we love each other. We have to be united — and we have to be together. The time has come to wave goodbye to our independent consumerism that sees everything through the lens of “me.” We have to re-focus our lives to the lens of “we” and learn to embrace what it looks like to be a bride together who is ready and eager for her wedding day!

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” John 17:20-21 – Emphasis added.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church” Ephesians 5:31-32 – Emphasis added.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready” Revelation 19:7 – Emphasis added.
QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. Do you struggle with a romantic view of God — the picture of being married to him as his beloved? Why? Why does God want you to embrace this aspect of your relationship with him?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any pride or judgment you hold toward other believers or denominations. Ask him to heal your heart from any specific people of faith or churches who have hurt you. Seek help if you need it to walk through this process.
3. Do you see your life through the lens of “me” or the lens of “we?” Where are you walking in a consumer approach with your church? What is a practical step that you can take to move from “me” to “we?”
4. Optional: Spend some time of reflection in the Song of Solomon for a better picture of Jesus as the Bridegroom and you as the Bride. Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart and help you see yourself through his eyes.

WORSHIP RESOURCE:

“You’ve sealed it with a kiss, God: You are my Beloved!”

Listen to “Beloved” by Caleb & Jamaris. Find more info about their album at the back of the devotional.

PRAYER:

Beloved, you call us your Bride! You have chosen to lavish such wondrous love upon us and sweep us away in a divine romance with you. It is too much for our minds to comprehend so reveal it fully to our spirits so that we would embrace this divine dance with you. Father, show us as a church and as individuals any blemish, spot or wrinkle so that we can be cleansed and delivered. We repent for where we have lived isolated and cut off from the relationships and love that you desire for us to share together. Help us open our hearts to welcome and cherish the rest of your Bride as you do! Wash over us again and again that we are your Beloved!

LISTENING TIME:

Stop for a few minutes and ask the Lord what he wants to say to you. He might bring to mind a picture, a word, a song, an encouragement, a Scripture or an answer to a burden in your heart. Don’t rush or feel pressure to figure out the meaning of your impressions. Just invite him to speak and draw or write down what you sense. Afterward, ask God to help you discern and understand what he is saying to you. You might want to ask other trusted friends in the Kingdom for their input as well.

USE THE FOLLOWING SPACE TO RECORD WHAT GOD IS SAYING

(Additional note space in the back of the book).

TOOLS FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS:

Bring out your wedding album and talk about the joy and anticipation of your wedding day. Talk about some of the ways the relationship between a husband and wife is a picture of our relationship with Jesus.

TOOLS FOR PRAYING FOR OTHERS:

Pray for churches in your community to come together in a spirit of love and unity. Pray against any assignments of the enemy of pride, judgment or distrust to keep the church segmented and separated from each other.