

Scripture and Background Information for February 2-February 8

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Background for Ephesians 5:21-27

One of the most misunderstood, misread, and abused passages in the Bible, this passage is not meant to be read in isolation. These verses live in the context of the rest of the book of Ephesians particularly in the message of 5:1-2. This passage reminds us how to love and be imitators of God in our most precious God-given relationships.

This passage makes clear that Christ is the center of the husband and wife relationship. As both husband and wife pursue one another in love, service toward Christ defines each one's mutual sacrifice and service. In the middle ground, in between extremes and abuses in interpretation lives Paul's true and proper interpretation and application of this passage. Just as the Gospel message itself lives in the middle between legalism and complete licentiousness, so does this message of service but not slavery, love but not codependency, and selfishness but not lack of self-care. But just as Christ pursues and serve each of us in our mess, we too are called to love our wives and husbands in sacrificial, selfless, service.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

February 9

1 Corinthians 7:25-35

February 16

John 2:1-11