Disciples Church

Marriage & Singleness Series - Session 3 -

Q30. What roles did God ordain for men and women within the family?

Q31. Is man or woman more important than the other?

Week of January 17, 2018

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q30. What roles did God ordain for men and women within the family?**

God has ordained the role of the husband to lovingly lead his wife and family. God has ordained the role of the wife to joyfully submit to her husband’s leadership as his helper.

**Ephesians 5:22-33** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

**Genesis 2:18** Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

**Titus 2:5** [Wives are] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

**1 Timothy 3:4** He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive

**Q31. Is man or woman more important than the other?**

No. Men and women are equal in dignity and value; both are created in the image of God.

**Genesis 1:26-27** Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**Galatians 5:14** For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

**Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

As we jump in tonight to study the roles within the family that God ordained for men and women to live out we must begin by acknowledging that He is creator and He determines how His creation is to function. Our aim is to know our perfect holy God’s design for his creation and specifically what He intends that to look like in a family. In sin mankind has done much to usurp God’s perfect design for the roles of men and women which we are all susceptible to cling to or value based on our own family upbringing, traditions or self formed worldview. Our desire is to seek to redeem and conform to God’s will for these things according to His written word. It is my high hope that he would grow us in many ways as a result of our time in the word and discussion tonight. I have seen what a biblical understanding and application has done in my own marriage and family and it has been so sweet to see what it has done in many of our church family over the last decade or so. No matter if these things are new to you or if you have rightly understood them for years, I pray each of us comes hungry to God’s word as we lean in to really grow in God’s will for us in this area of marriage and family life.

The 2 questions we are going over tonight cover the biblical description of God’s design for men and women. Our answers to these 2 questions fall into a view of manhood and womanhood called Complementarianism. Historically there have been 3 major viewpoints regarding human gender. The 2 categories of personhood that each of these 3 views distinguishes between are dignity/essence and function/roles. You have a chart on your handout to help you see the differences between these three views.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **VIEW** | **DIGNITY** | **FUNCTION** |
| **1. Hierarchicalism/Chauvinism** | Un-equal | Distinct |
| **2. Egalitarianism/Feminism** | Equal | No Distinction |
| **3. Complementarianism** | Equal | Distinct |

The first view to see in our chart is called hierarchicalism, also known as chauvinism. This is definitely not a biblical view but many of its proponents have ignored or twisted Scripture to try and justify this view.

Chauvinism is a sinful and unbiblical view because it rejects the equality of value, dignity, and personal worth of both men and women created in the image of God. It views a distinction in roles that are rooted in a superior view of men’s roles over women’s roles. Clearly unbiblical, clearly something Scripture doesn’t do. God help us as men to repent where we have been guilty of this sinful attitude.

Egalitarianism, or Feminism is the view that there is no distinction between men and women, either in value and dignity, or in their function or roles within the family or the church. For some who hold to egalitarianism, the goal is to elevate the equality of dignity between men and women, but it takes it a step further and rejects that there are any real distinctions of function/role/etc. between men and women.

Some extreme forms of feminism go so far as to promote the belief that women are more important or valuable than men.

All forms of Egalitarianism/Feminism are just as unbiblical as Chauvinism.

When we consider all of the examples throughout history, and in the world we live in today, of the abuse women have suffered at the hands of men who have dominated, suppressed, exploited, and treated women like chattel, it is easy to be sympathetic to the Egalitarian view. And that really is where this position gained its popularity. It is a worldly response to the evils of Chauvinism. Many of the people who embrace this view are driven by the desire to see women treated with the dignity and value they have been endowed with by God.

Egalitarianism has taken the good gift of the value and dignity that God has equally placed in men and women, and used it as a way to justify the rejection of the good and perfect design by God for men and women to function uniquely as men and women.

In Chauvinism, man has taken God’s good gift of woman to help man serve God’s will and purpose for creation, to a place of making her an object to serve his own sinful will and purposes.

The worldview that values Chauvinism and Egalitarianism is a very tragic depiction of what happens when we seek to live our lives according to our own human logic and desire rather than looking and submitting to God’s word as our only rule of life and faith.

Sin is deceptive and one of the ways it is so effective is in getting us to believe that our ability to recognize sin, to see what is wrong with the world, means that we are also capable of fixing what is wrong with the world with fleshly “wisdom.”

In sin, every fallen man and woman wants to be their own god, and we want to rule ourselves, but fleshly so-called wisdom-- fallen humanity doesn’t look to God’s word for instruction but follows his or her own desires instead.

Egalitarianism/Feminism has rightly identified that chauvinism is wrong and has recognized that its view of women as lesser in value is not healthy.

But what it fails to recognize in Chauvinism is the lie that a person’s value is directly related to their function or role. Chauvinism ties a person’s dignity and worth to what they do. In this sense, E/F has bought into the same lie. It has embraced the notion that a woman’s value and dignity stems from what she does. And not only that, it agrees with chauvinism in that the roles traditionally and biblically assigned to men are superior to the roles traditionally and biblically assigned to women. That is why extreme feminism promotes the agenda of women climbing the corporate ladder and disdaining the notion of managing a household and raising children.

I had a friend tell me a story that shows the tragedy of how this way of thinking has corrupted the beauty of God’s design for men and women. He said that he worked with a woman who was quite an outspoken feminist, and one day a man opened a door for her and she unleashed her wrath on him for daring to assume that she was incapable of opening a door for herself.

That is obviously an extreme example of how this mindset is typically lived out, but the logic behind it is consistent with the presuppositions that drive it – my value comes from what I do. Chauvinism says that women are incapable and unable, that they are inferior to men and can’t provide for themselves without the aid of a man to do it for them. It says that women don’t lead because they are inferior. Feminism says, I as a woman will find my worth and my value by doing the things that *Chauvinists* say gives a person worth, rather than finding my value and worth in Christ, and discovering the fulfillment of living out the role God created me for.

The third view, the one that we believe and teach is Complementarianism. It gets its name from the idea that God has designed men and women to complement one another through roles that are designed to work together in perfect unity. On your chart you can see that it views men and women as equal in dignity, essence, and value, and distinct in roles and function, but unlike Chauvinism, this distinction is viewed in light of the equality of men and women and does not place a higher or lesser value on the roles of men or women.

Let’s read our question and answer together now:

**Q30. What roles did God ordain for men and women within the family?**

God has ordained the role of the husband to lovingly lead his wife and family. God has ordained the role of the wife to joyfully submit to her husband’s leadership as his helper.

**The Role of Man**

Before we jump in I just want to say that even though we are looking at how the roles of men and women function within the family, specifically as husband and wife…That does not mean this is irrelevant to single men and women. These things do not transfer to every other situation/relationship one for one, but the principles are to be known and upheld. The differences between husbands and wives is directly related to their male and femaleness. We would never say that Jesus or Paul did not meet up to the full measure of a man because they were unmarried. We will be getting to some great teaching on biblical singleness in a few weeks that will be more specific on what it means to be a single man or woman of God. I just wanted to make it clear that we, nor the Bible are elevating marriage to be the defining component of what it means to be a man or a woman. And at the same time, the Bible does teach us that God has created marriage for a specific purpose, and that the differing roles of men and women lived out in the context of the marriage covenant are meant to reflect the faithful, covenantal love of Christ and His church. So we all, married and single, need to have a right view and understanding of male and female roles in marriage.

Let’s start with the role of man.

God’s design for man to lead is found all the way at the beginning of creation. In Josh’s lesson on marriage he taught on creation ordinances. The roles of men and women are creation ordinances, they were established at creation. They were not a result of the fall or a consequence of sin. It was God’s good and perfect plan from the beginning.

Let’s look at Genesis 2:15-18

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

God created Adam first and appointed him to work and keep the garden. Adam was given the instruction not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

One of the ways we know that God had put Adam in charge of leading his wife is that after the fall, and it was Eve who sinned first, but it is Adam who God calls to account. In Genesis 3:6-9 we read:

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

God was not disrespecting Eve here by dealing directly with Adam first. He was dealing with Adam first because Adam had failed in his responsibility to lead his wife. Adam should have stepped in and protected her when the serpent first tried to lead her into sin, but instead of leading her, he followed her into sin.

Look at what God says in response to Eve’s sin in Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said,

"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband,

and he shall rule over you."

God’s pronouncement of judgment here is not new ***instruction*** for Adam and Eve. When God says that her desire will be for her husband, He is saying that although her will was previously bound to her husband’s in joyful unity, the consequence of her sin is that she will now be bound to her husband’s will in a way that feels more like bondage and less like joyful service and submission. This is a very negative connotation here, it is not a good kind of desire. The ultimate fallout of her desire being subjected to her husband’s will is that she will be tempted to seek to usurp his God-given authority and challenge to diminish or eliminate his position of God-given leadership.

It’s really important to remember that this authority and leadership placed on the man is God-given, because it reminds us as men that we did not do anything to earn it or deserve it. And it reminds you women that your submission to man’s authority and leadership is not because we have earned it or deserve it, but because God in His infinite wisdom has given us our roles.

When God tells Eve that her husband will rule over her, He is saying that the loving, sacrificial protection, leading, and provision that Adam was commanded to provide in his role will be corrupted by sin to tempt him to rule over her in a dominating self-serving way. He is not saying that Adam had not previously been responsible to lead her before but now he will. He is saying that because of sin, Adam’s leadership will become something she resents. God is stating the truth that sin begets sin. He is stating the consequences of sin.

This would be an utterly hopeless pronouncement if it weren’t for the good news of the gospel. We are so blessed to have the full revelation of God’s word and to know the fullness of what it means when God said to the serpent in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. We know that the seed of the woman is Christ, and that by His perfect life of obedience, His substitutional death, and His victorious resurrection, we who have put our faith in Him have been set free from the bondage of sin. Sin’s curse no longer has dominion over us! Amen?

As we look at the biblically appointed roles for men and women, it’s important to remember that we can never live out these roles as God originally intended us to without the life transforming power of the gospel at work in us. Without the gospel we are still under the curse of sin. When we are operating in our flesh, we may be capable of recognizing the just condemnation of sin, but we will be powerless to overcome it. In our fleshly attempt to overcome sin we will simply swing back and forth between the sinful extremes of either trying to gain salvation by our own works or we will give ourselves over to sinful despair, not resting in the finished work of Christ proclaimed in the gospel. Only the gospel can free us to walk in victory over sin and live lives that model true manhood and womanhood.

I want to spend some time and get specific on what it means for a man to lead his wife and family. One of the things that really effects our ability to lead the way we are supposed to as men is our presuppositions of what leadership is. When we think of leaders in our culture we think of presidents, CEOs, quarterbacks or coaches, or our bosses at work. We could probably identify the fact that the examples of leadership we see in the world around us are not always the examples we should follow if we want to lead like Christ. In my experience, most people in our world culture aspire to leadership because of the power, privilege, and prestige associated with it. They see leadership as being the person at the front of the line for rewards, the one to get all the accolades and praise, being the person who gets to tell everyone else what to do.

This is the definition of leadership that has been pounded into our heads by the world. We may have moments of clarity where we are conscious of the fact that this is a sinful definition of leadership but it is most likely to be our default way of thinking in our flesh.

True Christlike leadership is not something the world aspires to at all! Christlike leadership is not about privilege, it’s about sacrifice. It’s not about power, it’s about responsibility. It’s not about prestige, it’s about being a servant. None of that is what we want in our flesh.

Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5 and let’s look at how Jesus gave us a redeemed way to lead our wives and families. I want you to see how different the leadership modeled in Christ looks then the common forms of leadership propelled by the world.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

I’ve never met the man who wouldn’t say that he would die for his wife and family, and I think most men really would if put into a life threatening situation. But Christ didn’t just jump in front of a bullet for us. He gave Himself up completely. He already had the power, privilege, and prestige as God. He set all of that aside to take on flesh and live a life of perfect obedience to the Father that began at His birth in a nasty manger and stretched all the way to His death by one of the most excruciating torture devices ever conceived of by sinful man.

Why did He do that? Why did He give of Himself so fully for the Church?

Ephesians 5:26-27 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Jesus gave His life, all 33 years of it on this earth, not just the day He was crucified, for the good of His bride, the church. He did it to cleanse her, so that He might present her to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

That’s us! We as His Church are the ones He gave Himself for. He served us with His life because He loved us. He did it for *our* good. He did it to see us flourish, to set us free from the stain of sin and all its consequences. His joy was to see our joy made complete in Him.

That needs to be our motivation as husbands. Our desire should be to see our wives find their ultimate joy in Christ. We are far too flawed to ever be able to perfectly love, care for, and protect our wives. Only He can do that. And our wives are far too flawed for us to ever love and serve them based on their own merit. We must love and serve them based on what Christ can do for them as we lead them to Him.

It’s really important that we begin with the proper motivation. Our motivation will drive our effort, so if our motivation is flawed, our execution will also be flawed. If selfless love is the motivation for men to serve their wives, that serving will be lived out in these 4 ways.

**Serve by:**

* + Sacrificing
  + Leading
  + Protecting
  + Providing

As men we look to Jesus as our example of how to serve.

Jesus said in **Mark 10:45** “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus lead His bride the Church by serving her. He took on human flesh and went through all of the struggle and faced all of the same temptations we face. He suffered countless daily inconveniences and discomforts all for our sake. He did not try to cruise His way to the cross. His willingness to go to the cross for her was lived out in His willingness to serve her every day of His life.

We are not modeling Christlike love of our wives if we sit back on the couch and say “just because I’m too tired to get up and serve you right now doesn’t mean that I won’t lay down my life for you.” Men, the fact is…God willing, we will never get the opportunity to actually die for our wives, and even if we do, we won’t get to see that it resulted in any way for the good of our wives.

If we want to see our wives blossom into women who are reflecting the purity and holiness of Christ, we have to be willing to lay down our lives for them NOW. If you want to see your children grow into men and women who are in love with the God who gave them to you to steward, you need to lay down your life for their sake every day.

If we are going to lead our wives by serving them, we must abandon the notion that their role is to exist for us, to serve us like a slave in bondage. Their role is to be our loving helper in submission to our God-given authority as the head of the home. Their serving us is ultimately meant by God to be a joyful expression of their love and submission to Him.

Our Lord did not live His life on this earth for the temporary benefits He deserved. Quite the opposite, He suffered what He didn’t deserve. What makes us think that we should be above our Lord? We don’t deserve anything good from Him or from our families. It is all the grace of God. When we lovingly serve our wives and families, we put on display the grace that we’ve been given. They don’t deserve it any more than we do. It’s grace because it is undeserved. If our sacrificial service is contingent upon a person’s deserving of it, we will always be able to find a reason not to do it.

Leading as men means that we are not waiting for them to deserve it. We are initiating in acts of sacrificial service because that is what Jesus did, and we are following His leadership. Our eyes are fixed on being like Him. The more we become like Christ the more perfectly we will lead our families unto holiness. We will never lead them to holiness by coming behind and pushing them. When our eyes are fixed on the shortcomings of those we are serving, we are not going to be focused on following Christ. And if we’re not focused on Christ we are going to be much less aware of our own shortcomings. That is when pride and entitlement have the greatest foothold which leads us right back to more sinful reasons not to serve.

We must see that if we are truly going to love our wives and serve them as Christ loved the Church, we have to be ready to go out of our way every day to love them through countless sacrificial acts of service.

**Sacrificing:**

What does this sacrificing look like? Christ sacrificed His entire life for His bride, that means that other than our commitment to obey and follow Christ, there should be no aspect or area of our lives that we are ever unwilling to sacrifice for the glory of God and the good of our wives.

It could mean something as big as setting aside the dream of a certain career or job in exchange for a less desirable job or career that provides the immediate needs of the family. There might be several major sacrifices that we will have to make as men over our lifetimes but it is the smaller, more trivial things that will present themselves more often.

Our personal preferences, our plans, dreams, and desires should all be on the table, and not just as a possibility, but in practice. We should go out of our way as men to sacrifice our wants and wishes in order to bless our wives with their preferences in matters. There may be times when our wives preference may actually be more wise or prudent and would warrant our deference to them, and in those cases we should always be humble and grateful to go with their preference in that case. Sometimes their preference may not be the most wise or the most prudent, and might even be sinful. If the most wise and prudent direction in these cases lines up with our preference than we should lead accordingly.

But in cases where it is simply a matter of personal preference, and the only real consequence is that one of us doesn’t get our personal preference, as sacrificial, servant leaders, we should be quick to sacrifice there. No matter how much we may personally dislike their particular preference in some things, we should have a desire to know their heart and give real consideration for how we might find ways to sacrifice for them.

Looking to sacrifice in smaller more trivial things like what restaurant to eat at, which movie to see, or what color to paint the house can be a great way for us to remain in a frame of mind that is always working towards being a sacrificial, servant leader. Of course we still need to actually lead with discretion and wisdom …I mean if she wants to paint the house purple with pink polka-dots you might need to have a bigger conversation about loving our neighbors, and being good stewards, and property values, etc..

I used to really struggle with this. I wanted to inject my own personal preference into nearly every aspect of how Laurie managed the home, which drawer the spatula goes in, which wall to hang the picture on…you name it. It’s not like I was gifted in interior decorating or anything, I just valued my own preference more than hers.

I truly believe that repenting of that particular sin and showing more interest in Laurie’s personal preferences regarding those kinds of things was one of the milestone leaps forward in the pleasure of our marriage. I have found so much more joy in deferring to her in these things than I ever did in getting my own personal preferences met. And I’ve seen her grow in her enjoyment and satisfaction in managing our home.

We also have to sacrifice our comfort in order to serve. Too many men think that because they work 8-10 hours a day bringing home the bacon, they should not have to do any work once they get home. We should never feel entitled to sit and watch our wives serve us all evening while we relax on the couch just because we put in our 8-10 hours at the office.

Managing a home is not an easy job at all and can be just as or more taxing than many other jobs. A wife should feel a sense of relief when her husband gets home at night, knowing that the man of the house has arrived and is ready to lead and serve in such a way that she is encouraged in her effort to reach the end of her day having managed her household well.

Men, you should be actively looking for ways to sacrifice for your wives in big and small ways, daily, weekly, yearly…and so on.

Making these sacrifices for your wife doesn’t mean you never get what you want. Christ loved the church sacrificially that He might present her to Himself in splendor, as a pure spotless bride, without blemish.

And Hebrews 12:2 Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

Jesus was looking to the outcome of His sacrifice, that which God the father had promised to give Him – a pure spotless bride.

We are not the savior of our wives, but when we sacrificially love them as Christ loved the Church, we point them to Jesus and remind them of His glorious grace in salvation. The closer we lead our wives to Jesus, the more they will be transformed into His likeness, and the more we’ll enjoy true unity and oneness together with Him.

It becomes this dynamic giving and receiving of sacrificial love, rooted in the eternally secure love that we have in Christ.

**Leading:**

**1 Timothy 3:4** He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive

Leading our wives and families means taking charge. It’s not coming home and being passive, disconnected from all that needs attention. We cannot say that we are leading by sitting back while the wife does all that is needed to manage the household…it’s also not barking out orders and considering that our only role. A servant leader helps to bring calm to the storm. Often times that will mean bearing the burden of our family’s weaknesses or bad days. But that is what the gospel empowers us to do.

In our flesh we are prone to give in to the lie that our hard work is all about enjoying the temporary pleasures of this life, whether it’s an evening on the couch, or a new boat, or a new house, or getting to retirement when we can afford to stop working altogether.

But if we really want to reap the rewards of hard work, we must recognize the truth that we can’t stop working once we clock out from our vocational jobs. The rewards that we will get from the hard work of being a servant leader in our homes are eternal!

Leading means that we as men are in front. We give our wives and children someone to look to and follow. So we have to ask ourselves, “where am I leading my wife and children?” If we don’t have a solid answer to that question, it probably means that we are not leading with a purpose.

**Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go;

even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Sadly, many in the church have understood this verse as some kind of magic key to ensuring their children’s salvation, or at least their moral conduct. They think that if they drag their kids to church every Sunday and beat moral instruction or religion into their heads with constant lectures then they will be indoctrinated through that process to such a degree that they will never fall away from it.

But what this verse is really teaching is that we as parents, but particularly fathers (Proverbs is written by a father to his son) must be very determined and conscientious about what and how we are training up our children. We are leading them, and the operating principle is that they are going to follow in our footsteps good and/or bad. The way we train them as children will determine what kind of adult they are going to be.

So a man leads by having a real vision for his family, he has a destination in sight as well as a plan to get there, and he is a man of action.

A godly leader does more than just acknowledge that God’s word and ways are best, he seeks to know, understand, and follow God’s word. He will look to other godly men for guidance, wisdom, and instruction so that he is growing and maturing beyond his own limitations because he recognizes the fact that he will never be able to lead his family further than he has gone himself.

**Protecting:**

A man is given the role of protector. That means that he leads out in making sure they are kept safe from harm. He keeps them safe from physical harm by providing them with food, clothing, and shelter. It’s making sure the brakes on the car work properly. He might not know where the brakes ARE on the car but he makes certain that they work by employing the help of others who do.

Being the protector doesn’t mean He has to be bigger or even stronger than his wife but the man IS the one who will take the bullet. He WILL put himself in harm’s way to protect his wife and family. Not because he is Chuck Norris, because that is the responsibility he has been given by God.

He also protects them spiritually. Men, I pray that we would be far more mindful of the spiritual threats and predators that we are often allowing into our homes. The fact is that you could turn your child loose at a very early age and they will probably make it through life relatively unharmed from physical danger, but the spiritual dangers that threaten our families are far more prevalent and pervasive.

He keeps them from the danger of Satan’s lies by guiding them in the truth through careful warning and instruction. He protects his children from the influence of the world by limiting its access to them and their access to it. That means he is aware of and in control of what comes into the home through television and computer screens.

And it means he is doing spiritual warfare on behalf of his family. He prays for them! It has been such a blessing for me to grow in the practice of praying regularly for my children. I wish I had been more faithful when they were younger. Now that my children are grown and out of the house, prayer has become my only means of influence sometimes.

**Providing:**

**Ephesians 5:28-29**In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.For no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes and cherishes** it, just as Christ does the church,

The words “nourish and cherish” are significant.

The word *nourish* is most often used in the Bible for raising children and **providing them with what they need.** It carries the idea here of him being a caring provider, of nurturing unto maturity.

The husband who leads like Christ KNOWS what his family needs and takes the initiative to see that those needs are met. **He provides for them.**

Realize husbands there is physical food that needs to be provided,

and there is **spiritual food** that needs to be provided.

When it doesn’t negatively affect her fulfilling her responsibilities given by God, a wife may help support her husband and family by bringing in an income to the family budget, and she may even make more money than her husband, but there is still a leadership role the husband takes in being the one to make sure that his wife and family are being provided for and that certainly includes him working to the degree he’s able to. And if he’s not employed, his 8 hour a day work is finding employment.

The godly husband recognizes his responsibility to be the primary provider and he works hard to be that. He doesn’t sacrifice the time and effort necessary to be investing in the other areas of leadership in his home, for the sake of making more money, or climbing the corporate ladder. At the same time, he is not unwilling to work hard long hours at a difficult, unsatisfying job if that’s what is required for a season or even longer to make sure there is food on the table.

**Woman’s Role**

**Genesis 2:18** Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

God created the woman to be a helper to man. Everything that God had created was called good, but then He says that it is not good that man should be alone. Man without woman was not good. He needed a helper that was suited to him, not a dog, certainly not a cat, or anything else that had been created thus far was a suitable helpmate.

**Genesis 2:20** The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

So then it says that God created woman from Adam’s rib.

**Genesis 2:24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Therefore…because God designed it this way, a man and a woman shall fit together to make one. Not two men, not two women…one man and one woman. They were designed to fit together in a complimentary way, not just physically, but in function also. They were designed to work together toward the common goal of subduing the earth and filling it with worshippers of God.

Two people trying to lead or two people both submitting/following is not a very efficient way for things to get done.

There is a beautiful oneness that happens when a wife is joyfully submitting to the loving servant leadership of her husband. That oneness is negatively affected when either person is not performing their own role according to God’s design.

But just as a man should not make his loving, sacrificial servant leadership contingent upon his wife’s submission to him, neither should a wife make her submission to her husband contingent upon how well he is performing his role. Her motive should be to honor God and His word.

**Titus 2:5** [Wives are] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Being a loving, submissive helpmate means that you as a wife want to see your husband succeed in the role God has given him. You want him to be a good leader. You want him to be a good follower of Christ. You will never help him succeed in that by performing his role for him, even if you can do it better.

Scripture teaches that the way a woman influences her husband to be a better leader is by focusing on performing her role as a submissive wife.

**1 Peter 3:1-2** Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Even if your husband is an unbeliever, you are to be subject to him. That doesn’t mean you follow your husband into sin. Your submission is ultimately to the Lord. If you ever are placed in a situation where your husband is forcing you to choose between submitting to him over submitting to Christ, even that can be done in a way that displays your pure, respectful conduct. He may not like it or respond well, but in that moment, you are getting the opportunity to show him that it is your ultimate submission to Christ that has been the driving force behind your submission to him.

If your husband is not a believer, your obedience to the word of God, and the peace you display in your faithful dependence on Him as your Lord and savior, may be the means God uses to draw him unto salvation and sanctification.

What does your husband think of the sufficiency of the gospel to bring true lasting joy if what he sees of your life is a discontent, bitter frustration that God has not provided you with a husband who is worthy of your loving, submissive help?

As a side note, let me just point out that this passage is not saying that it is ok for a woman or a man to marry an unbeliever. This instruction is for women who have found themselves in this situation. It is certainly not ideal and it is going to be incredibly difficult and even painful at times for a woman to submit in this way to a husband who is not leading his wife and family through the power of the gospel at work in him. If you think you can marry a man who is nominally committed to his faith with the hopes that marrying him will give you more influence to see his commitment to Christ grow, you are setting yourself up for bitter disappointment.

For those of you who are looking forward to marriage, I pray that you see the critical importance of being united to someone who is a true Christian, not just a cardholder in the church. And you fathers out there need to be modeling the qualities your daughters should be looking for in a husband, and be involved in helping to vet the man who wants to marry your daughters. O.K. sidenote over...

What does this submission actually look like?

Submission does not mean never having an opinion that differs from his. There are ways to express a differing opinion without attempting to exert authority over your husband. There should be a posture of readiness to support what he feels convicted to do, but you should always be willing to lovingly share your insight or concerns over a decision that must be made for the family. The less your husband is leading in the ways we just described, the harder it will be for you to want to submit. The temptation will always be there to idealize how easy it would be to submit to a husband who is doing everything exactly the way you would if you were leading. But submission is not just following and supporting your husband’s leadership after you have been able to come to full agreement about a direction.

**Ephesians 5:22-24** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

True submission to your husband has to come from your ultimate desire to see God glorified in your sacrificial obedience and submission to the Lord. That is how you will be able to support and encourage your husband even when you don’t always agree 100% with some of the decisions he makes.

Notice that the text says, “wives should submit **in everything** to their husbands” in verse 24. This means there is nothing horizontal (nothing created) a wife holds outside of this. There is to be nothing she has on a pedestal above her husband or in an untouchable box. She knows that God has given her this husband, as crummy as the husband may be, to honor and love by submitting in everything. Her heart wants to show that God is her highest joy and her Lord, by submitting to her husband in the here and now.

Again, this does not mean that you are a doormat who just passively sits back and watches as your husband continues to flounder in poor decisions. But what happens far too often is that some husbands are never really allowed to lead because their wives refuse to be led. If you are giving your husband ultimatums and demanding that he lead his family, you are the one exercising authority, demanding that he submit to you and to your will. Yes, you are correct that it is God’s written, revealed will that your husband should lead, but you as his wife trying to wield God’s command to your husband, in a way that puts you in authority over him is you ignoring God’s written revealed will of how you are to help him become that leader.

If your husband is leading the way you want him to because you are keeping him in line with your demands and threats, you have neutered your husband into a man who will always be ruled by fear and resentment.

You must see ladies that if you want to help your husband’s be successful godly leaders in your home, your greatest contribution is in setting the table for his success by giving him the confidence to know that he has a wife who is there to support him because he has been called by God to lead, not because he always gets it right, or always does things the way you want them done.

Many of the decisions your husband will have to make for the family are not moral decisions. They are not choices that the Bible will give clear answers to. The Bible will not tell him which job to take, which city to live in, which house or which car to buy, which retirement plan to invest in, etc…

What the Bible does teach us is how to make wise decisions based on the moral implications of these choices and to seek wise counsel from others who are wise. Wisdom is the practice of right living, right choices. Proverbs says that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. So your wisdom as a wife is lived out in your submission to your husband, not in your constant critiquing and correcting, and telling him what he should do.

Submission is a beautiful and glorious display of the supreme worth of God when it is done rightly. Jesus displayed His perfect wisdom in His submission to the Father through His entire human life, so never allow the world to convince us that submission is second class.

**Q31. Is man or woman more important than the other?**

No. Men and women are equal in dignity and value; both are created in the image of God.

Hopefully you are already convinced of this truth based on what was just taught. Because we spent so much time on the first question, I am not going to go into a lot of detailed discussion on this one. I just want to read several texts from scripture that affirm the equal dignity and value of men and women.

**Genesis 1:26-27** Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Let us make ***man*** in our image, after our likeness. And let ***them*** have dominion…

Man is spoken of here as plural- “them”, just as God speaks of Himself (the Trinity) as plural- let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.

So God created ***man*** (that is- ***them/mankind***)in his own image, in the image of God (that is the triune God- the three persons of the Godhead) he created him; male and female he created them.

Male and female are each created in the image of God. There is no inequality in God, so there is no inequality in man (mankind- male and female).

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

God has one Holy standard and both men and women have failed to meet that standard. There is no such thing as a more worthy sinner in God’s perfection.

**Romans 8:14-17** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

The Greek word for sons in verse 14 and 15 was used here to include men and women. It had to do with the legal position of an adopted child. In many of the eastern cultures, and even in modern western cultures (if you watched Downton Abbey or any of those time period pieces on BBC), women were not allowed to inherit their fathers possessions.

God is saying here through Paul’s pen, that the rights of adoption are equal among God’s children, both men and women.

**Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

As Christians, our ultimate value and our ultimate worth come from God, and not simply because He made us male or female, but because He has given us His Son to save all of us who belong to Him, male and female. There is no higher value you could place on a person. Christ didn’t come to save any animals, He didn’t even come to save angels. He came to save His people, men and women created in the image of God.

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As we wrap up, Let meremind us again that marriage is not mainly about staying in love.

**It’s about covenant keeping.**

And the main reason it is about covenant keeping is that God designed the marriage relationship between a husband and his wife to represent the relationship between Christ and the church.

**This is the deepest meaning of marriage.**

And that is ultimately why the roles of headship and submission are so important.

**If our marriages are going to tell the truth about Christ and his church, we cannot be indifferent to the meaning of headship and submission. We must live it!**

**LETS PRAY**