

Session Four:

Manhood and Womanhood in Marriage

A. Introduction:

1. What We've Learned

- a. **Week One: The Importance of Genesis 1-3.** God created mankind equal, yet different. Men and women are both image bearers of God, and therefore equal in personhood, worth, and dignity. Yet God has assigned distinct and complimentary roles to men and women. (Gen 2.15-23) When sin entered the world, it did not introduce a distinction in roles. Sin brought a distortion of God-ordained roles and hardship in fulfilling them. (Gen 3.16-18)
- b. **Week Two: Defining Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.** God calls both men and women to “exercise dominion” over the earth, in ways appropriate to their differing roles, as men and women. (Gen 2.15-18)
- c. **Week Three: Leadership and Roles in the Church.** While God gifts all believers for the building up of the church, distinct gifts for shepherding, teaching, and leading the church are given to pastors. Paul clearly teaches the role of elder or pastor/teacher is reserved for men and roots his teaching in the Creation narrative.
- d. **Today: Biblical Manhood and Womanhood in Marriage.** The Scriptures clearly reveal marriage as an institution created by God and a gift given from God. To fully enjoy the goodness of God in marriage, an “equal, yet different” understanding of roles must be worked out.

“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’... And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.” (Gen 2.18, 22)

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Gen 2.24)

B. Marriage: The Current Concerning Cultural Landscape

1. The Marriage Index: (<http://www.americanvalues.org/>)

“The Marriage Index is based on solid data and includes five major components: the percentage of adults ages 20-54 who are married, the percentage of married persons who are “very happy” with their marriage, the percentage of first marriages that are intact, the percentage of births to married parents, and the percentage of children living with their own married parents.”¹

“The percentage of adults who are married is an obvious indicator of the health of marriage in society. The report considers this percentage among the population of adults who are most likely to be coupling and least likely to be widowed. This indicator is not encouraging. As the report reveal, “The trend in the last four decades suggests that many adults are less likely to find marriage an attractive choice. In 1970, 78.6% of adults ages 20-54 were married. In 2008, it dropped to 57.2%.”²

2. Our Local Church “Index”

a. Encouraging Trends: 40 to 50 Engaged Couples each year.

- Marriages are Prospering
- Divorce is rare

b. Conclusion: The Difference Gospel Grace Makes

- Through Teaching
- Through Pastoral Care and Mutual Counsel
- Result: A Testimony to God’s Wisdom in Marriage

C. Marriage in the Old Testament: What do we learn?

1. Genesis 1-3

¹ <http://www.albertmohler.com/blog/>

² Ibid

a. **The Man's Ultimate Responsibility for the Marriage** : In the Garden, we see God placing upon Adam (man) a responsibility of headship.

- Creation Order: God created the man first.
- Representation: Adam, not Eve, had a special role in representing the human race.
- Naming of Eve: Adam named Eve (Gen. 2:23)
- Naming of the human race (Gen. 5:1-2)
- Primary Accountability: God spoke to Adam first after the Fall (Gen. 3:9)

b. **The Wife's Role as His "Suitable Helper"**: In the Garden, we see God gracing Eve (woman) with an orientation to Adam, as his helper in marriage and fulfilling his call.

- Amid Eden's perfection, something was still "not good".
- God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Gen 2:18
- After Adam named all the animals, Genesis 2:20 tells us: "But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."
- The fact that the 1st woman was literally created from Adam and was created to be a helper fit (or suitable) for Adam is very significant. It speaks of male and female equality. The word "fit" means "a help corresponding to him," that is a helper "equal and adequate to himself." She is his partner. She, uniquely, is compatible with Adam.

2. **The Wisdom Literature Upholds God's Good Design in Marriage**

"While the Old Testament historical books bear witness to the increasing deterioration of the observance of God's plan for marriage, God's ideal is upheld in the Old Testament wisdom literature. The two primary examples are the poem praising the excellent wife in the final chapter of the book of Proverbs and the celebration of married love in the Song of Solomon. These passages provide a refreshing counterpoint to the overall

pattern of compromise of God's ideal for marriage presented in the historical and prophetic Old Testament books."³

a. Proverbs 31

- Holding out the Ideal of A Godly Wife
- Undoing Misperceptions of A Godly Wife

b. The Song of Solomon

- Don't Prematurely Awaken Love
- The Beauty of Sexual Intimacy in Marriage (see also Heb 13.4)
- A Right Portrayal of Roles in Marriage (Song 7.10)

"Contrary to the world's notion that truly exciting love must be outside of the confines of marriage, Scripture makes it clear that it is the very security provided by an exclusive, lifelong marriage relationship that allows for the sexual satisfaction and fulfillment of both the man and the woman."⁴

3. The Prophetic Literature Depicts Marriage as a Prophetic Witness

a. Hosea

- The Theme of Covenant Love
- The Theme of Spiritual Adultery

D. Marriage Roles in the New Testament: What do we learn?

1. Ephesians 5:21-33: Complementary Roles Provide a Gospel Analogy

a. The Wife's Call: Submission that Reflects the Church (v.22-24, 33)

³ *God, Marriage, and Family* by Andreas Kostenberger, page 51; Crossway Books; 2004.

⁴ *Ibid*, pg 54-55.

b. The Husband's Call: Sacrificial Love that Reflects the Savior (v. 25-33)

c. Conclusion: The Profound Mystery of Marriage

- Human marriage “refers to Christ and the Church” (v.32)
- In Heaven, we are “neither married nor given in marriage.” (Lk 20.35)
- Revelation 19.6-9: The Long Awaited Wedding Feast

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude crying out...Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure.” (Rev 19.6-9)

2. 1 Peter 3:1-7: Complementary Roles Provide a Gospel Witness

Note: This passage is part of a broader context of commands beginning in 2.11. 1 Peter 2:13-3:7 addresses authority and submission in three particular spheres of life (a) submission to human government (b) submission to masters (w/ application to vocation) and (c) submission and honor in marriage.

a. The Wife's Call: Fearless Submission (v.1-6)

- Exclusiveness of Submission (v.1)

“your own wives”

- Motivation of Submission (v.1)

“so that...they may be won”

“Peter sees the ‘impossible position of the Christian [wife] as a remarkable opportunity to bear witness to Christ.”⁵

⁵ The Message of 1 Peter, by Edmund Clowney, IVP, pgs. 129.

- Strategy of Submission (v.1)

“won without a word by the conduct of their wives”

“Christian wives can have an important part in the Church’s witness. That witness may not be easy...So strong may be their hostility that it is no longer possible for their wives to speak of the Lord to them. Even then the wife must not despair. She still possesses a mighty weapon for winning her husband to the faith; it is the testimony of her life. Her husband has refused to heed the word; very well, let him be won without words. The silent eloquence of his wife’s pure and reverent behavior can preach daily the transforming power of Jesus Christ.”⁶

- Peter’s Definition of Submission (v.2)

“respectful and pure conduct”

- Pursuit of Inward Adornment (v. 3-4)

“the hidden person of the heart”

- Example of Generations of Holy Women (v. 5-6)

“holy women who hoped in God”

“Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts. It’s the disposition to follow a husband’s authority and an inclination to yield to his leadership. It is an attitude that says, “I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love. I don’t flourish in the relationship when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works.”⁷

b. The Husband’s Call: Understanding and Honor (v.7)

- How Husbands are to Live with their Wives

“in an understanding way, showing honor”

⁶ Ibid, pg. 130

⁷ “The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission” by John Piper, JBMW Vol. XIII, Issue 1

- Recognizing Their Weakness and Equality

“heirs with you of the grace of life”

- The Spiritual Significance of a Husband’s Conduct

“so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

“So concerned is God that Christian husbands live in an understanding and loving way with their wives, that he ‘interrupts’ his relationship with them when they are not doing so. No Christian husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. And no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lies with his wife ‘in an understanding way, bestowing honor’ on her. To take the time to develop and maintain a good marriage is God’s will; it is serving God; it is a spiritual activity pleasing in his sight.”⁸

c. What Submission is NOT:⁹

- Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says.
- Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar.
- Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband.
- Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ.
- Submission does not mean that a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength primarily through her husband.
- Submission does not mean that a wife is to act out of fear.

⁸ 1 Peter, Wayne Grudem, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, No. 17, 146

⁹ “The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission” by John Piper, JBMW Vol. XIII, Issue 1

E. Concluding Definition

- a. **Husband:** “Biblical headship for the husband is the divine calling to take primary responsibility for Christ-like, servant-leadership, protection and provision in the home.”¹⁰
- b. **Wife:** “Biblical submission for the wife is the divine calling to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.”¹¹

F. Helpful Resources for Studying Marriage

God, Marriage, and Family, Andreas Kostenberger ; Crossway

Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: <https://www.cbmw.org/>

Doing Things Right in Matters of the Heart, John Ensor; Crossway

Feminine Appeal, Carolyn Mahaney; Crossway

Womanly Dominion, Mark Chanski; Calvary Press

God's Unfaithful Wife: A Study in Spiritual Adultery, Raymond C. Ortland Jr.; Intersity Press.

¹⁰ Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, John Piper, Ch. 1, pg 52-53

¹¹ Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, John Piper, Ch. 1, pg 53