

A Man Under Authority: Husbands Ephesians 5:23-30

I. Introduction: Be Strong and Courageous

“Be strong and courageous, consider His Law; regard it with reverence; perform it with awe. Be careful to follow all God has decreed, for then He will bless you, and you will succeed. Be strong and courageous and conquer the foe! The Lord God is with you wherever you go! (vs. 3, Be Strong and Courageous; #22 in Hymns for Worship (Supplement)).

In our society today, relationships as defined by God’s word are being challenged and ridiculed. Society’s definition of marriage continues to develop further and further from the true design as created by God. Satan is actively pursuing this avenue of driving mankind away from God by creating in man a determination to develop his own course of action rather than relying on the commands of God. In the roles that God has defined for men within the church and home, we must be strong and courageous as we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, being “children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” (Phil. 2:12-16)

Except for the personal relationship that each of us shares with God, the relationship that a husband and wife develop will be the most important relationship in their lives. As discussed in previous lessons, God has ordained chains of authority in all of our human relationships. These relationships work best when God’s order is respected and maintained. As stated in 1 Cor. 11:3, God defines the chain of authority within the man and woman relationship: “*But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*”

God



Christ



Man



Woman

In today's society, people want to manipulate this hierarchy, or chain of authority, to whatever works best for them. Some go to the extent of completely removing any relevance to deity and push God and Christ completely out of the picture. They also like to elevate the woman to roles that are not God-defined.

Those who have a desire to be obedient to God's word need to ensure that the chain of authority is maintained in all aspects of their lives. This lesson will specifically focus on the role of the man and the relationship he develops and molds with the woman he has chosen to be his wife.

In Ephesians 5, the apostle Paul writes about how those following Christ should walk:

- A. **We are to walk in love** (vs. 1-7); "...walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us..."
- B. **We are to walk in light** (vs. 8-14); "Walk as children of light...finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."
- C. **We are to walk in wisdom** (vs. 15-21); "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Paul then addresses the relationship most important to mankind outside of the relationship with God \implies the marriage relationship. In this context, Paul uses the relationship that Christ has with the church to clearly define the required relationship between the husband and the wife that God desires. As you read vs. 22-33, please note what Paul states in vs. 32: "For this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." As we read and study this scripture, we shall see that Christ is the head of the church, the man is head of the woman (family), and we will discuss some characteristics that man should develop in this role.

II. Christ, the head of the Church.

As Paul begins his letter, he reminds the Ephesian brethren that God worked mighty power through Christ when "He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly

places.” God placed all things under the feet of Christ “*and gave Him to be head over all things to the church*” (ref. Eph. 1:15-23). As Paul describes the relationship between Christ and the church in chapter 5, he clearly states that Christ is head of the church (5:23). As head of the church, Christ’s characteristics are revealed in His actions within this relationship.

A. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:25)

Christ’s love for the church is shown through His humility in “*taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men*” (Phil. 2:7) although He was with God. He had the desire to please the Father, and a love that was unimaginable. He willingly gave His life for the welfare of those who had sinned against the Father (John 10:17-18; Rom. 5:8). It was a sacrifice that He was willing to give because of the love He had for her (the church).

B. Christ sanctified the church (Eph. 5:26)

The objective of the Redeemer was, and is, to purify and save the church. All of His actions were to ensure that she (the church) is devoted to God and His cause: thus the church is set apart to be holy. His blood from His sacrifice still continues to redeem the obedient of mankind and cleanse them of their sins. “*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*” (Is. 1:18)

C. Christ cherished and nourished the church (Eph. 5:27)

Christ is preparing the church to be His glorious bride presented in the last day in heaven. His endearing love, demonstrated through His actions, shows the concern and care that Christ has for the children of God. Christ left us an example (1 Peter 2:21-25) that the obedient should follow. We were all like sheep going astray, but because of the love and nourishment shown by Christ, we “*have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*”

III. Husband (Man), the head of the wife (woman).

Paul states in Eph. 5:23, “*for the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church.*” We have illustrated the relationship that Christ has with His bride, the church. He “loved the church” (Eph. 5:25). Paul specifically commands the husbands

to have the proper relationship with their wife: “**Husbands, love your wives.**” In Colossians 3:19, Paul once again clearly communicates the relationship that God expects in marriage: “*Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*” When you enter into marriage, and as you continue in your marriage, you must love your wife. How should these commands reflect in our relationship with our wife? What type of love should a husband have for his wife?

A. The husband’s love for his wife should be a sacrificial love. (5:25)

Just as Christ was willing to give his life for the church, a husband should be willing to give his life for his wife. The husband must have the attitude that he would do anything for his wife.

- What did Jesus give up for the church? He gave His life (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
 - Christ gave Himself for her to present her to Himself as a glorious church (Acts 20:28).
 - Just as Christ desired for the will of the Father to be completed (Mt. 26:39), husbands should pray for God’s will to be accomplished in the marriage relationship. The husband should pray that he can be the man that God instructs him to be.
 - The husband should be willing to give himself (physically, emotionally) for his wife.

- The example of Jesus (the Master) serving the disciples. (John 13:1-17)
 - If a husband is not willing to serve his wife, he doesn’t really love his wife.

B. The husband’s love for his wife should be a sanctifying love. (5:26-27)

As Christ’s purpose was to purify and sanctify the church, all of His time and effort was used to teach, edify, and leave an example for those who would follow Him.

- The husband’s efforts should be focused on helping his wife be a better Christian.

- The husband's words and actions should be helping his wife to truly love God with all her heart, soul, and mind (ref. Mt. 22:36-37).
- The husband's efforts should be focused on doing everything within his ability to help the wife develop into the beautiful spiritual person that God wants her to be.
 - The husband's words and actions should help his wife grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:17-18).

C. The husband's love for his wife should be a self-considering love. (5:28-29)

Just as Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, the husband should be prepared to nourish and cherish his wife.

- ❖ Nourish: to promote the growth of; maintain, support
- ❖ Cherish: to hold dear; feel or show affection

- Men know how to take care of themselves. We don't deprive ourselves of much (electronics, sports equipment, vehicles, etc.).
- Paul states that men should love their wives as their own bodies (5:28). Are we willing to treat our wife like we want to treat ourselves? We should be as sensitive to what the wife needs or wants as we are to ourselves (ref. Phil. 2:3-4).
- Men should provide their wives everything they need to be the helpmeet that God created for man. (Gen. 2:18, 21-23)

- **Golden Rule of Marriage: do unto your wife as you would do unto yourself.**

IV. Characteristics of a Leader

Leadership can be defined as one's ability to get others to follow willingly. Christ is the Leader of the church (Eph. 5:23) and demonstrates leadership skills throughout His time on earth. As the man is head of the wife (5:23), the husband must also demonstrate leadership skills to fulfill his role as defined by God.

A. A Leader must have Good Character. (Note: Character Counts!)

❖ Character: moral excellence and firmness (Merriam-Webster)

A person that has high character (or integrity) is the same on the outside as on the inside. Such an individual can be trusted because he never veers from inner values even when it might be expeditious to do so. A leader must have the trust of his followers and therefore must display integrity. Some of the traits illustrating good character and leadership in the home can be found in Ephesians 4:

- Honesty (vs. 25): *“therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.”*
- Self-Control (26): *“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”*
- Provide for his own (28): *“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”*
- Sound speech (29): *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”*
- Kindness & forgiveness (31-32): *“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*

B. A Leader must have a Vision.

A leader must have a clear idea about what he wants to achieve. A good leader must have the discipline to work to his vision. Action is the mark of a leader. “It is not enough to just have a vision; leaders must share the vision and act upon it.” (Jack Welch, CEO General Electric)

- The husband should have the desire, or goal, that his entire household get to heaven. He **must** be the leader in the home and share his vision for his home.
- Leaders are always moving forward toward the goal. *“...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”... (Phil. 3:12-16)*

C. A Leader must be a **Motivator**.

A leader with a domineering attitude will only spark resentment among others. An effective leader must have an attitude filled with enthusiasm, understanding, and motivation that will promote a healthy environment.

- The husband should not try and force his leadership position. It must be fostered and nurtured through his desire to be pleasing to God.
- Husbands must dwell with their wives with understanding, giving honor to the wife, and be heirs together of the grace of life (ref. 1 Peter 3:7)

D. A Leader must be a **Good Listener**.

The ability to listen and take action is very important to a leader. A husband must seek and respect the opinion of his wife on matters within the home.

- James 1:19 – *“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*
- Listening does not occur naturally but is a result of a conscious choice.
- True listening requires you give another person your attention and possibly to change your attitudes as you listen.
- The art of listening is fundamental to your growth as a leader. As the writer states in Proverbs 18:13: *“He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.”*
- Again, husbands must dwell with their wives with understanding, giving honor to the wife, and be heirs together of the grace of life (ref. 1 Peter 3:7).

V. **Conclusion: Be strong and courageous; husbands love your wives.**

As the world moves farther away from God and His commandments, men must step up and take responsibility for the role which God has ordained for them in the home environment. **God wants husbands to be His instruments for building up their wives.** As His instrument, we must be prepared to fight the spiritual battle that Satan

is casting before the family. God, in His infinite wisdom, has provided everything that a man needs to fight this battle against “the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). As Paul is writing to the Ephesians brethren, and encouraging them to stand strong and be courageous against these forces, he instructs them to take up the full armor of God so that we “will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm” (Eph. 6:13).

As God’s instrument in the role of husband, a man must:

1. Put on the full armor of God.
2. Pray to God for the strength and courage to do His will.
3. Be the leader in the home as God wants him to be.
4. Love his wife unconditionally.
5. Serve his wife.

And remember....

Be strong and courageous and conquer the foe! The Lord God is with you wherever you go!