

BIBLICAL MANHOOD & WOMANHOOD: MASCULINE MEN, PART 2

MASCULINE ROLE CHARACTERISTICS

- God has given men a unique role, and when we read the old and new testaments looking for these roles we can discover God's design for masculinity
- Sin has marred every original design and perhaps nowhere to a greater extent than in the way a man fulfills his God-given role to lead
- It is only when a man submits his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ that the Spirit of God begins a process of restoring a man to become all that God intends him to be
- When a man humbles himself under the hand of Almighty God, he positions himself to bring the greatest possible glory to his Creator as he lives his life in accordance with the Word of God
- What exactly is the leadership role that God has given to a man?

LEADING

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- Throughout the Old Testament, God gave men positions of leadership within their homes, within the temple, within the armies, and within their tribes and clans
- Two men were most notable: Abraham and Moses
- God appointed other men to become priests, prophets and Kings
- In the New Testament, Scripture supports that God gives men positions of leadership within the home and within the church
- As such, men are privileged and responsible to serve as the spiritual and practical leaders of their wives, their children, and their churches
- There are two passages of Scripture that I'd like you to turn to

1 Corinthians 16: 13

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

Eph 5: 25-27

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed 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.

- These passages focus on the central aspect of male leadershipthat of loving and serving those being led
- Jesus said that the first shall be last and that the greatest individual in the group is the servant of all
- Biblical leadership has everything to do with loving others and serving them
- This being true, let's start with two things that male biblical leadership is not

BIBLICAL LEADERS ARE NOT PASSIVE

- God took responsibility for the salvation of His church and Jesus took the responsibility of fulfilling His Father's will at great personal sacrifice
- Loving leadership is not selfish or passive
- Some husbands do not expend personal effort to do anything responsible in their homes and claim that in so doing they are exercising the right of headship assigned to them, but in reality they are abandoning their biblical responsibility to be responsible
- Bryan Chapell writes in his book, "Each for the Other"

A mother of three recently told my wife, "My husband hasn't made a decision regarding our family in two years. He makes no attempt to discipline the children - that's left to me. He never consults me about taking out-of-town work assignments. He comes and goes seemingly without any regard for my feelings or our children's needs. They don't even know him. All he does is come home from time to time and break our routine before leaving again. I don't have three children - I have four."

This wife complains frequently to her husband about his habits and he tells her that in a few weeks he will work out a time when they can talk

about it. But he never does. He is a man whose headship is defined by passivity. His headship really means nothing but taking care of himself.”¹

- Husbands can often be non-responsive to their wives concerns passive
- In abusive marriages, there can be long periods of male passivity interspersed with brief periods of rage when the husband finally reacts to the continual pleasand naggingof his wife
- When the man finally does assert himself, it is not with godly leadership, but with pent-up anger
- He’s now compounding his sin of passivity by being verbally abusive
- His wife is not the recipient of unselfish loveshe is in the horrible position of being married to a selfish man
- Indifference to the needs of others is not biblical headship
- Who is the greatest biblical model of unselfish, loving leadership? Jesus Christ
- Jesus was not indifferent to the requests and concerns of all those who sought him
- He made countless personal sacrifices in order to lovingly care for those the Father had given to Him

BIBLICAL LEADERS DO NOT ACT WITH SUPERIORITY

- Men can be tempted to abuse their position of leadership whenever they overstate their God-given leadership role
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- A husband can regard himself to be superior to his wife and seek to make his wife his personal slave under the guise of her biblical responsibility to submit to him
- Instead of being a loving his wife as he loves himself, a husband can become a domestic dictator
- Kent Hughes writes:

¹ Bryan Chapell, *Each for the Other* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 27

God's word in the hands of a religious fool can do immense harm. I have seen "couch potatoes" who order their wives and children around like the grand sultan of Morocco with the domestic ethics of "Jabba the Hut" who cow their wives around with Bible verses about submission - insecure men whose wives dare not go to the grocery store without permission ...

- The Bible requires men to treat their wives with consideration and respect

1 Peter 3: 7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

- A husband who is a godly leader will love his wife as Scripture defines love

Love is patient and kind.....love is not arrogant or rude.....love does not insist on its own wayit is not irritable or resentful.....love doesn't keep a record of wrongslove bears all things

- This same passage of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 13 states that

...if I have all faith to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing

- If you have the faith to each day remove the mountains you face at workand come home the mighty conquererbut have not love for your wife and childrenyou are simply NOTHING
- While the bible says that a wife is to submit to her husband's authorityhis authority is based upon the models of the way in which Christ exercises authority over His church
- Loving your wife as Christ loves the church means giving yourself up for your wife just as Jesus gave himself up for his church with all humility.....
- He left His place of heavenly glory ...He was born in the most humble of circumstances....He spent the first 30 years of his life in obscurity.....
- He washed the feet of His disciples.....and He suffered the greatest shame and humiliation by hanging naked upon Calvary's cross
- Jesus, the Creator of all that exists, humbled Himself to demonstrate the greatest love that will ever exist

- Humility is the foundation of true biblical authority upon which godly leadership stands, and prideful arrogance is the quicksand in which biblical leadership disappears
- Bryan Chapell writes of this:

The relationship between a husband and wife is rooted in the way God created us to live, and his standards for this relationship do not disappear because our marriages are faulty.

Rather, the right ordering of our marriages is one of the ways God brings the beauty of his love into scarred lives.

Headship - even flawed headship - is designed to fulfill God's purposes and should be honored accordingly.

However, when a husband uses his position to counter the purposes of God, the man has no biblical authority for those specific wrong actions.

The husband who demands that his wife stay in a corner while he abuses their children speaks without biblical authority. HEADSHIP THAT TRANSGRESSES THE PURPOSES OF God LOSES GOD'S ENDORSEMENT.

A wife's obligation to submit to her husband's authority also has no biblical support when he demands that she disobey God.

When Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord in everything, he is not teaching that wives are to treat their husbands as divine . Such homage is due God alone (however much men may wish it otherwise.)

A wife who submits to her husband's authority honors God, but not if by obeying the man, she disobeys God.

The wife should submit to her husband in everything that God's word approves.

Husband and wife bear mutual responsibility to obey God...the Bible never sanctions the actions of a bully in the name of headship and never approves the abuse of any family member for the sake of submission.

Headship receives biblical sanction and support only when it is governed by godly purposes and practices. ²

² ibid, 32

DEFINING BIBLICAL HEADSHIP

- Biblical leadership is the conscientious and loving use of the authority God grants to a husband to ensure that a home (and all its members) honor God and experience his blessings.³
- This is the greatest privilege that God gives to a man
- Why? Because a husband who leads His wife biblically becomes a means of God's grace to her
- God gives a husband the unique privilege of participating with God in giving glory to his own wife
- Think about the way in which God loves each of us because this is the way that a husband is to love His wife

TO GLORIFY HIS WIFE

- The love of Christ for a person not only saves them from eternal punishment, but goes far beyond this
- Throughout our Christian life, God is always working through His Word and His Spirit to conform us more and more to His character
- He is patient and kind, lavishing grace upon us and never treating us as our sins really deserve
- It is this process that changes our character more and more to reflect the character qualities of God Himself
- The work is never fully completed in this life because it always remains possible for us to sin in countless ways
- But there is a day coming when the work will be completedon that final day when Jesus Christ returns to this earth each and every person who belongs to God through faith in Christ will finally be glorifiedprepared to live with God throughout the age of eternity as His Bride
- This is God's final work of presenting the church to Himself in splendor

³ ibid, 34

- God has loved us even before our birth, and He loved us when Christ bore the penalty of our sins upon the cross of Calvary
- God loves us throughout our earthly life by causing us to become more and more like Himself in our characterthis is called sanctification
- The end result of the love that God has for us is glorification
- This is how God loves His churchby loving each individual Christian in this way
- It is the love of God that brings salvation, brings sanctification and finally brings glorification
- Paul teaches that a husband's leadership of his own wife is to be modeled after God's leadership of His church
- How is this done practically? What does this mean?
- It means that a husband is to love his wife by always acting toward her in such a way that she will know God's care for her despite her personal imperfections, her struggles and difficulties, and her own self-doubt
- Paul uses particular words that describe this kind of love that a husband is to have for his wife

Eph 5: 25-27

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed 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.

- It's a love that is so Christ-like that a wife will be changed for the better because of it
- A husband, then, has the power to change his wife through his unselfish love for her
- And it is tragic when a husband does not love his wife in this waylisten to the words of one woman

I hate him. I hate him because he made me feel worthless, inadequate - like a nonperson, a slave. I could never do anything that made him happy. I always came short of the mark. I was always desperately

working to win his approval. I hate him for the crummy way he made me feel about myself. I don't know whether I will ever get over the hurt he caused in my life.

- While we cannot excuse this wife's anger and bitterness, we can judge that this husband's headship is unbiblical and greatly sinful
- He is robbing his wife of some measure of the grace of God that she could experience through his love
- Listen to the words of Bryan Chapell

My wife, Kathy, is one of the most competent, capable people I know. Her grades were far better than mine in school. For two straight years she was selected as the outstanding musician among all music majors at her university. Numerous academic and professional honors have come her way. Yet after we had been married only a short while, I realized that I had robbed her of a significant amount of her self-worth.

I made this discovery when our washer needed repair. I was busy and asked Kathy to call a repairman while I was at work. She agreed to do so but then did not get around to calling. The next day she again agreed to call the repairman, but when I returned from work, she still had not called.

That evening, when I confronted Kathy for not phoning the repairman, she confessed in tears that she did not feel capable of making the call. We both remember the event vividly. She remembers because that conversation now embarrasses her. I remember because it scared me.

I thought, Kathy, what is wrong with us that after a year of being married to me, you - so capable and intelligent - think so little of yourself that you cannot make a phone call? How have I managed to reduce you to this? What have I done to you?

I cannot say that answers came immediately to those questions - neither my thought nor maturity were mature - but I will tell you of an image that regularly flashed into my mind for months after that moment. In my mind's eye I saw a framed print that used to hang in my grandmother's home.

The picture shows a young man at the wheel of a great ship during a violent storm. Wind whips the sails into tattered sheets around the boy and the waves crash about him. Yet despite the great threat and obvious challenge, the boy's face remains calm and confident. The reason is clear. In the picture Jesus is standing behind the young pilot of the ship. The Savior's hand rests on the boy's shoulder, and the caption beneath the picture reads, "Jesus is my copilot." The words and the image communicate that when we sense the presence of the Savior, our confidence grows to meet any challenge.

The opposite was happening in my relationship with my wife. My presence often made her self-confidence vanish. She felt like a capable driver only when I was not in the car. She doubted her competence in social gatherings only when I was in the conversation. In a thousand ways (some of which I recognized and others I did not) I made my wife question her adequacy

....and thus I robbed her of a sense of her own worth. I had to reexamine myself in the light of Christ's model for the church. My headship should build up my wife, enabling her fully to sense and to live out the reality of the treasure that she is to me and to her Savior. She cannot readily know or reflect her worth to God if the husband he has provided constantly diminishes her. She will not glorify God with the radiance he intends if her husband deprives her of her glory.⁴

TO COMMUNICATE FORGIVENESS

- You and I, if we are genuinely saved, are continually being

“sanctified by being cleansed by the washing of water with the word of God”

- When a man has been given authority by God for anotherparticularly when a husband has been given authority from God for his wife.... He has been given a stewardship
- Part of the responsibility of that stewardship is to cleanse his wife from her imperfections
- He does this primarily by his wordsA husband's words can cleanse and healor his words can bring damage and harm

⁴ ibid, 42-44

- He can extend complete forgiveness to her, as Jesus Christ completely forgives himor he can sin against her through his unforgiveness and building up of resentment

A husband who grants forgiveness because he knows he also needs forgiveness shows his wife she is valued despite her faults and is not less deserving of mercy than he. As a result, forgiveness communicates the preciousness of a spouse, confirms that the spiritual need of one is no greater than the other, and powerfully unites a couple in the knowledge that their weaknesses do not invalidate their love - or God's

Controlling others by demeaning them or by making them question their worth is abhorrent to God and contrary to the goals of the gospel...

God sent His Son to the cross to demonstrate to us that we are dearly loved and he commands us to say and do only what will build up one another in the knowledge of his care⁵

APPLICATION

- How can a husband “build up” his wife, and how can a man in a position of leadership “build up” those whom he serves?
- Expressing love and appreciation
- Building security
- Encouraging strengths
- Understanding challenges
- Providing assistance
- Initiating godly correction

PERSONAL MINISTRY

- Husbands who need to repent
- Wives who have been belittled

⁵ ibid, 44-46