



God's Design for the Family

Lesson 3: The God-given Role of a Husband

Key Verse: Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

Overview

In our last lesson, we saw the roles that God has given to a wife. While husbands and wives are co-equal persons who are both created in the image of God, they each have a responsibility to obey the unique roles God has given to them in the marriage union.

While many women have been influenced by the feminist movement, many men have been influenced by an ungodly view of masculinity. In 2001, John Eldredge wrote *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*. In his top-selling, unbiblical book about manhood, he says this, “There are three desires I find written so deeply into my heart I know now I can no longer disregard them without losing my soul. They are core to who and what I am and yearn to be . . . I listen carefully to many, many men, and I am convinced these desires are universal, a clue into masculinity itself. They may be misplaced, forgotten, or misdirected, but in the heart of every man is a desperate desire for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue.”¹ Eldredge then encourages men to pursue these desires in order to be real men. However, as one book review says (and says it well), “If you believe that ‘real men’ need to be violent, aggressive, wild, rebellious, crass, rude, self-centered jerks who head off to do their own thing rather than give themselves to caring for others . . . then you need to humble yourself, admit your sin, repent, plead for God's mercy, and turn to Him and His Word for a real understanding of what it means to be a man.”²

Within the church there have also been ungodly views of headship and leadership. When Paul says in Ephesians 5:23, “For the husband is the head of the wife,” Paul is not saying the husband has all authority, control, or power over his wife. In fact, as John MacArthur states, “headship in Scripture never means raw authority. Instead, the biblical idea of headship puts the stress on sacrifice and service.”³ The role of a husband to be the head of his wife does not imply a position of superiority over her, but to be a servant-leader just as Christ was (Mark 10:45). For a husband to be the head of his wife does not mean he gets to dominate his wife by force, as a master-slave relationship, but to be a selfless, loving and caring provider and protector of her.

In Ephesians 5:25–33, Paul's exhortation to the husband is the longest and most detailed section within the roles of the family. No one in the family is given greater responsibility than the husband. He is called to prioritize his wife's well-being and spiritual growth as he loves her in a sacrificial and servant-minded manner.

¹ Joh Eldredge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 9.

² https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B001SER01K/ref=acr_dp_hist_1?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=one_star&reviewerType=all_reviews#reviews-filter-bar

³ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 53.

The First Instruction to Love

1. Ephesians 5:25a. What is Paul's command to husbands? _____
 - a. Definition of love (*agapaō*): _____
2. What type of love is this?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

The First Illustration of Love

1. Ephesians 5:25b-27. What is the first illustration Paul gives in verse 25? _____
 - a. How did Christ show His love for the church? _____
2. What is the second illustration Paul gives in verses 26–27? _____
 - a. What does sanctification imply? _____

 - b. How does sanctification happen? _____

The Second Instruction to Love

1. Ephesians 5:28a. Why does Paul repeat this command? _____

2. How is a husband to love his wife? _____

The Second Illustration of Love

1. Ephesians 5:28b–29a. What illustration does Paul use? _____

2. What are two ways a husband can love his wife better?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

3. Ephesians 5:29b–30. What example does Paul use to illustrate a husband’s love for his wife? _____

4. Ephesians 5:31–32. What kind of love does Paul illustrate? _____
 - a. What does it mean to be “joined”? _____

The Final Instruction to Husbands and Wives

1. Ephesians 5:33. What does Paul command the husband to do? _____
2. What does Paul command the wife to do? _____
3. 1 Peter 3:7. How are husbands to live with their wives? _____
4. How does Peter describe a wife? _____
5. What will happen to a husband who doesn’t live with his wife in this manner? _____

“Headship is something that carries a greater *responsibility*, not necessarily a higher degree of privilege.”
—John MacArthur

Application

1. Husbands, what are ways you show your wife that you love her?
2. Husbands, how are you leading your wife and your family?
3. Wives, are you showing respect to your husband?