

# THE FAMILY: MARRIAGE HEADSHIP AND SUBMISSION

## Lesson 2

### INTRODUCTON

1. The Bible is clear about the distinction of the husband and the wife in their roles.
  - a. The husband (man) is head of his wife (woman) (Eph. 5:23)
  - b. The wife (woman) is in subjection to her husband (Eph. 5: 24, Col. 3:18, I Pet. 3:1).
2. In this lesson we examine what does headship and submission mean as applied in the role of husband and wife.

### I. THE MEANING OF HEADSHIP

- A. Headship denotes “*source*” and “*authority*” (Eph. 4:15, Col. 2:19, I Cor. 11:3, 10)
- B. The husband is to fulfill his responsibility as “*leader*” in his marriage.
  1. Nature: the “head,” which contains the “eyes,” is placed upon top of the body to lead.
    - a. “Nature conforms leadership of the body in the head” (Philo, Special Laws III, 184).
  2. Scripture:
    - a. Jephthah leads in battle – made head (Judges 10:18, 11:8-9, 11)
    - b. Jesus leads in church – made head (Eph. 1:22-23)
- C. Husband manifests loving, servant leadership – like Jesus (John 13:12-17)
  1. Jesus: “he that is chief as he that serves” (Lk. 22:26)
- D. “*Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christlike servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.*”  
– John Piper

### II. THE MEANING OF SUBMISSION

- A. Subordinate oneself in obedience to another (I Cor. 15:28)
  1. The conscientious submission of Christian to government rulers (Rom. 13:1, 5)
  2. The humble submission of Christians toward one another (Eph. 5:21, I Pet. 2:18, 5:5-6)
- B. Wife willingly subordinates in obedience to her husband (I Pet. 3:1, 5-6).
  1. The reverential submission of Christian wife to her husband (Eph. 5:22, 33)
- C. A submission “fitting in the Lord” (Col. 3:18)
- D. “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.” – John Piper
  1. Not demeaning slavery, but manifesting God’s design of “help” (cf. I Tim. 5:14).

### III. MODERN AVOIDANCE OF BIBLICAL HEADSHIP AND SUBMISSION

- A. Submission in marriage is “mutual submission” equal submission, not “hierarchal submission” (Eph. 5:21)
  - 1. Hierarchal recognizes levels of importance with authoritative power.
  - 2. The husband- and- wife- relationship is the joining together of two people of equal importance (I Pet. 3:7)
  - 3. Some say, “By definition, mutual submission rules out hierarchical differences.”
- B. Biblical response:
  - 1. In a sense, Christ subjected himself to His bride, the church for her well-being (Phil. 2:7-8, Eph. 5:25-26).
    - a. But as Head, He demanded unconditional obedience from His bride, the church, which is not demanded of Him (Eph. 5:24).
  - 2. Elders as spiritual shepherds, submit themselves to fellow members for the well-being of our souls, but are to be submitted to in their unique role as our overseers (Heb. 13:17)
  - 3. The same occurs in the church. We are members of one another in the body submitting to one another (Rom. 12:5, Phil. 2:4), but the wife has at the same time a unique relationship of submission to her husband, distinct from the husband’s responsibility (Eph. 5:33)
- C. Another avoidance: Headship means “Source,” not “Leader”
  - 1. The husband has the responsibility for being the “source” or “fountainhead” of blessings for his wife; without implying obedience of wife to follow His “authoritative lead.”
- D. Biblical Response:
  - 1. It is true Christ, as head of His body, the church, He is the source or fountainhead for spiritual nourishment for body- provided through the mouth (Col. 2:19)
  - 2. But as eyes are also located in the head, it is also the source of “guidance” and “protection.”
  - 3. We can also reason from “headship” as one has accurately concluded, “the husband, has a primary responsibility for leadership and provision and protection (Eph. 5:29)
    - 1. This therefore demands submitting to leadership role of headship (Eph. 5:24).

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. The New Testament clearly reveals Distinctive responsibilities of the husband (headship) and wife (subjection) are to be assumed and carried out as God’s will in marriage.

2. Those who reject God’s existence because they do not like the demand of wives subordinating themselves in obedience to their husband, need to think what life would be like without “hierarchal submission.”
  - a. Societal order would result in universal violent chaos (cf. Gen. 6:12-13)
  - b. Government takes on responsibility to offer traffic lights that authorize you as more important at a precise time than the others for safety and order. How do you escape disorder with “mutual submission?”
  
3. God’s wisdom created man first – then woman. Man deliberately given headship by God due to being created first (cf. Gen. 2:18-23, I Tim. 2:13, I Cor. 11:3)
  - a. But as God designed marriage to manifest His Glory – it blesses the family with order through loving headship and reverential submission.
  
4. It has been well-said that, “*Headship is not a right to command and control. It is a responsibility to love like Christ.*” – Joyful submission can easily follow.