

MARRIAGE

Marriage: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction.
- II. Marriage: A General Bible Study.
- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - A. Introduction.

CLASS #2:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - A. Introduction. (cont.)
 - B. The Divine Order of Creation.

CLASS #3:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - B. The Divine Order of Creation. (cont.)
 - C. What are the Functional Roles in Marriage?

CLASS #4:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - C. What are the Functional Roles in Marriage? (cont.)

CLASS #5:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - D. Analogies of the Marriage Relationship.
 - E. Conclusion
- Exam

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Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Defend the fact that women are equal to men by referring to creation (pp. 244, 245).
- 2) What is Biblical submission of a wife (pp. 259-262)?
- 3) Describe the Biblical role of the husband (pp. 265-267).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) State one of God's purposes for marriage. Include a Scripture reference (p. 242).
- 2) The marriage relationship is figurative of ...? Give two examples (include references; p. 243).
- 3) What do we mean when we use the word "hierarchy" to explain marriage roles (p. 249)?
- 4) What is the "correct motive" within marriage (p. 254).
- 5) In one or two sentences explain the difference between "50/50" love and "100/100" love (p. 264).
- 6) Use the concepts of identity and relational roles in the Trinity as an analogy of the concepts of identity and relational roles in marriage (p. 271).

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I. Introduction.

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A. The Importance of Marriage.

1. The most basic unit of society is the family.
 - a. The most basic relationship of the family is the marriage relationship. The relationship between a husband and a wife is the most foundational human relationship.
 - b. Marriage was the initial human relationship as it was ordained by God in the garden of Eden.
2. It has been said that marriage is not finding someone whom you can live with, but finding that person whom you cannot live without.
 - a. This statement highlights the sovereignty of God in putting two people together.
 - b. It also highlights the importance of marriage. Marriage serves to complete the other. Indeed, according to the Scripture, the woman was created as a “helper” or completion of the man (Gen 2:18).

B. The Contents of This Course.

1. First, we will offer a short, general Bible study of the theme of marriage.
2. Second, we will study more specifically the concept of marriage roles to understand what the Bible says about marriage and the relationship between husband and wife.

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II. Marriage: A General Bible Study.

A. Study of Gen 2:18-24.

1. First we see that God made a “helper” for the man (vs. 18-22).
 - a. The Hebrew word that is translated “helper” is a word that means “completion or complement.”
 - b. That is, the woman is the completion of the man. She complements him and completes him.
2. In vs. 23, we see man’s response to the creation of this “helper.”
 - a. The focus is that the man and the woman are naturally related to each other because the woman was taken from the man.
 - b. The relationship is natural and intimate.
3. Finally, in vs. 24, we see the declaration of the reality of the institution of marriage.
 - a. **“For this cause:”** The existence of the institution of marriage is based on God’s choice as the Sovereign Creator.
 - 1) Marriage is established **because** (“for this cause”) of how God created man and woman.
 - 2) Because God created the woman from the man, there is marriage. It is logical, natural, and intimate.
 - b. **“A man shall leave his father and mother:”** The man takes the initiative.
 - 1) He must leave his original family to begin a new family.
 - 2) His new priority must be to this new family.

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- c. **“And shall cleave to his wife:”** The new beginning includes both the man and the woman.
 - 1) The man must leave and cleave. That is, he must leave behind the old and cling to the new.
 - 2) The word “cleave” signifies the idea of permanence. This is not a temporary arrangement. It is a permanent and strong relationship.
- d. **“And they shall become one flesh:”** The result is that the man and the woman become so united as to reflect the original design of creation. They were originally and literally one (because the woman was taken out of the man).
 - 1) The use of the word “become” here points to what we might call the process of marriage. That is, the relationship is built. It is worked on, improved, and perfected over time.
 - 2) The idea of “one flesh” signifies that the marriage relationship creates a single identity. It also points to the sexual aspect of the marriage relationship. Most generally, it points to a unified and intimate relationship.
 - 3) The word “they” is very important. Although they become one flesh through their relationship, they do so as a “they.” That is, there are two of them, unified yet distinct, together yet as individuals.
 - 4) This will be important to keep in mind when we begin to talk about marriage roles in the next part of this course.
- 4. Conclusions to our Bible Study.
 - a. The marriage relationship was instituted by God.
 - b. It is the beginning or foundation of all human relationships.

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Discussion Point

Discuss some of the modern problems in marriage related to the lack of understanding of the following concepts:

- helper/complement
- leave/cleave
- they become one flesh

B. God's Purposes For Marriage.

1. Marriage is used as a way to mirror God's image. A triune God (Gen 1:26) who operates in unity and oneness creates a man (who is male and female: Gen 1:27 and 5:1) in His own image who must operate in unity and oneness.
2. Marriage is created to multiply a godly heritage (Gen 1:28; Mal 2:14, 15).
3. Marriage is created to be part of the way that man will manage God's creation (Gen 1:28).
4. Marriage is created in order for man and women to mutually complete one another (Gen 2:18-24).
5. Marriage models Christ's relationship to the church (Eph 5:23-32).
6. Marriage is used to discourage immoral behavior (1 Cor 7:2, 9).
7. Marriage is meant to provide complete satisfaction (Prov 5:19).

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Aspects of Marriage:

Descriptions of the marriage relationship:

It should be honored (Heb 13:4).

It should be permanent (Mt 19:6).

The marriage relationship is figurative of:

God's union with Israel (Is 54:5).

Christ's union with the Church (Eph 5:23-32).

The marriage ceremony:

Jesus recognized its validity (Jn 2:1-11).

It is equated with joy (Jer 7:34).

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III. Marriage and Marriage Roles.

A. Introduction.

1. The Importance of Marriage. To understand the roles of marriage, we must first review the importance of marriage.
 - a. We have already demonstrated that marriage was established by God Himself (Gen 2:18, 24). It was not an invention of man.
 - 1) It was established because it was necessary (Gen 2:18, 20).
 - 2) It was established as a process (Gen 2:22-24).
 - a) The process begins when God Himself brings the couple together (vs. 24).
 - b) Original family ties are replaced with new family ties (leave and cleave: vs. 24).
 - c) It is a permanent relationship (one flesh: vs. 24).

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b. Marriage provides a way for the man to be completed (review our comments on the meaning of the word “helper”).

1) The analogy found in Eph 5 establishes a direct relationship between Christ and the husband and the church body and the wife.

2) With this in mind, read Eph 1:23.

a) The body is “the fullness” of Christ.

b) Using the Eph 5 analogy, we could say that the wife is “the fullness” of the husband. That is, she completes him (note how this is consistent with the meaning of the word “helper”).

Discussion Point

Share testimonies of how marriage has brought completeness for those of you who are married.

2. Inferiority versus equality. Women are not inferior to men. They are equal to them.

a. Women are equal to men in the creation.

1) God formed man. God also formed the woman. God was directly and equally involved in both creations.

2) The woman was not made by the man (the man was sleeping during her creation). The woman was made from the man. She was made by God.

3) The difference between men and women is based on the divine order of creation.

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- 4) Equality of men and women is based on the fact that both have the same Creator.
- a) Man is inferior to God because God made him.
 - b) The pot is inferior to the potter because the potter made it.
 - c) The misunderstanding that the woman is inferior to the man comes from the misunderstanding concerning who made the woman. Man did not make woman. God made woman. Man and woman have the same Creator.

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Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss the fact that women are completely equal to men in creation. What barriers exist within your culture that oppose this perspective?

- b. Women are equal to men in the continuation of the human race.
 - 1) Study 1 Cor 11:11, 12.
 - 2) If one person relies on a second person for existence, then the second person can not be considered inferior. They are equally and mutually dependent.
 - a) This is true with both men and women. They rely on each other to continue their kind.
 - b) Two women can not continue the human race. Two men can not continue the human race. It takes a man and a woman. They rely on each other for their own existence, and therefore are equal to each other.
 - c) The hierarchical difference that does exist between man and woman is not based on their identity, but on how they relate to each other in their roles.

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- 3) Men and women are equal in their identities.
- 4) They are different in their roles. To say that men and women are equal does not require that we say that they are the same.
- c. The doctrinal error of the “inferiority of women” is based on bad logic.
 - 1) The old Hebrew Rabbis said that women were inferior because Eve was formed from Adam. This type of logic would mean that men are inferior to dirt because Adam was formed from dirt!
 - 2) The old Hebrew Rabbis also said that women were inferior to men, because Eve was formed after Adam.
 - a) If that is true, is man inferior to the animals that were formed before him?
 - b) Actually, the fact that woman was made from man establishes her equality with him. She is, as Adam proclaimed, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. They are part of each other and therefore equal in identity.
 - c) Again, that does not negate their differences. The woman was formed from man and after man. There is a divine order of things. Thus, there is a divine order within the relationship between man and woman. This is the basis for marriage “roles.”

Discussion Point

Has your cultural or religious background taught that women are inferior?
If so, are you prepared to help correct this way of thinking?
You can start in the church. Discuss this issue.

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- d. Jesus came against this bad logic during His time, but would not be an advocate of the modern day women's liberation movement which is prevalent in the Western world.
- 1) Jesus rebuked the double standards of the Pharisees that were formed by their discrimination and prejudice against women (see Mt 5:28).
 - 2) He did this because he looked at men and women as being equally responsible for sin.
 - 3) However, Jesus never became an advocate of "women's liberation" as it is promoted today in the Western world.
 - 4) He understood that men and women are different.
 - a) The modern women's liberation movement actually proposes the opposite of liberation. For a woman to be liberated, she must be liberated as a woman. To be free from being a woman is no freedom at all.
 - b) The women's liberation movement does not want to make women equal with men. It wants to make men and women the same.
 - c) Men and women are equal. They are not the same. As obvious as this should be it is not seen by a futile, sinful world (see Rom 1:18-32).

Discussion Point

In what ways has the modern women's liberation movement (particularly as influenced in the Western world) seemed to help and hurt the actual role of today's women.

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- 5) Women are equal to men in Christ.
- 6) It is fallen humanity that has created the inferiority of women. From the beginning of creation it was not like that.
 - a) Redemption has brought fallen humanity back to its original intention. Freedom for mankind is found in God's original intention. So, in the truest sense, Christ liberates women.
 - b) He redeems man's mind to be able to understand the equality of men and women while applying correctly the difference between men and women.
- e. We have seen that the difference between women and men is not found in their identities (their identities are in Christ). The difference between women and men is found in God's sovereign relational order that was established at creation.

Discussion Point

Use the following Scriptures to discuss how the Bible declares the equality of men and women: Gen 5:1, 2; Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:28; and 1 Pt 3:7.

B. The Divine Order of Creation.

- 1. Yes, husband and wife are equal in terms of identity. Now we must ask: How do they relate to each other?
 - a. The family is the basic unit of the society.
 - b. In the order of the family, the wife is subject to the husband as the children are subject to the parents. There is a divinely ordained authority structure.
 - 1) We must repeat that husband, wife, and children are equals in the sense of their identity as human beings.
 - 2) They are different in terms of how they function in the family (role).

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- c. In the order of the Trinity, the Father has a certain precedence over the Son and the Spirit although all three are equally God. That is, they are equal in identity and different in function or role. As it is in the family, the Trinity includes a divinely ordained authority structure.

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Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to discuss creation order.
Consider 1 Cor 11:3 in relation to creation order and the diagram below.

Equal In: Identity	Different In: Function/Role/Relational Order
Man = Woman = Child	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 20px;"> Man Woman Child </div> <div> 1 Cor 11:3 Eph 6:1 </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> } Authority Structure </div> </div>
Father = Son = H.S.	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 20px;"> Father Son Holy Spirit </div> <div> John 3:16 Acts 13:33 John 15:26 John 16:14 </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> } Authority Structure </div> </div>

2. What do we mean when we use the word hierarchy?
- Hierarchy does not refer to what men and women are worth. It does refer to the position that each takes according to God's established order.
 - Hierarchy does not imply inferiority and superiority because it is a hierarchy of function. It is not a hierarchy of dignity or value.
 - Hierarchy does refer to a hierarchy of function and order because it is a hierarchy of responsibility and authority that was established at creation.

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Insert Your Illustration:

3. Study Eph 5:22-24.

- a. Paul says that the husband is the head of the wife. He does not say that the husband is ahead of the wife.
 - 1) The husband is the head in his functional and relational position.
 - 2) He is not ahead in superiority and identity.
- b. In Eph 5 Paul speaks about two different functions of two equal beings.
 - 1) That is, the functions of husband and wife are different, not uneven. Simply because they are different and have different functions within God's order does not mean that they are not equals.
 - 2) Again, the reason for this is because men and women are at the same time equal and different.
 - a) To say one is inferior to the other is the common error of proud and oppressive men.
 - b) To say that one is the same as the other is the popular error of rebellious and confused women (commonly seen in the women's liberation movement in the Western world).

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Insert Your Illustration:

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4. Review Gen 2:18-24.

- a. We have already studied this passage to see the equality of husband and wife. Now we must see how husband and wife are different.
- b. The hierarchy of function previously described is not a result of the fall of man. It is the result of Divine choices and organization at creation (consider 1 Tim 2:13).
 - 1) Woman is made from man.
 - 2) Woman is made for man.
 - 3) Woman is given to man.
 - 4) Woman is named by man.

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5. Conclusions.

- a. Thus, the redeeming of the marriage relationship does not negate the different functions and roles of husband and wife. Instead, it makes the functions healthy again, after they have been distorted by a fallen society.
 - 1) When the functions and roles are healthy, then the marriage is healthy. Without a proper understanding and practice of these functions or roles, the family will be thrown into chaos. It will lack order and unity.
 - 2) Yes, there must be order in a family. Someone must lead. This responsibility of leadership is clearly given to the husband and father. His authority must be accepted.
- b. This need for order is true in all other types of fellowships. Consider the example of the local church.
 - 1) There is a certain hierarchy of function within a local church.
 - a) A church member needs to submit to a pastor (see 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Thes 5:12, 13; Heb 13:7).
 - b) At the same time a pastor or leader must selflessly serve and be devoted to the members of the church (see 1 Cor 16:15, 16).
 - 2) There is a certain hierarchy of function within a family.
 - a) A wife needs to submit to a husband (Eph 5:21, 22). Interestingly, the same Greek word (upotaso) is used in 1 Cor 16:16 to describe the submission of a church member to a church leader, as is used in Eph 5:21, 22 to describe the submission of a wife to a husband.
 - b) At the same time a husband must selflessly serve, love, and be devoted to his wife (Eph 5:25).
 - 3) Each type of fellowship must respect these relational positions in order for the fellowship to exist and function correctly.

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- 4) The church leader and the church member are different in their structural and functional roles in the church. However, they are equal in their identity because their identity is in Christ.
- 5) The husband and the wife are different in their structural and functional roles in family. However, they are equal in their identity because their identity is in Christ.
 - a) Husband and wife must understand their equality.
 - b) They must also understand that they are different and both must submit to Christ in serving Him within their divinely ordained functional roles.

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Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion and answer questions.

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C. What Are the Functional Roles in Marriage?

1. The Correct Motive.

- a. The commands to be filled with the Spirit and to submit to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph 5:18, 21) function as the introduction to Paul's explanation of the marriage roles in Eph 5:22-33.
- b. This introduction puts the focus on who is under Christ, not on who is over who.
 - 1) The point is that husband and wife must relate to each other according to the desire of Christ.
 - 2) They must obey His ordained structures. The correct motive with respect to functioning in your particular marriage role is obedience to Christ.
 - a) A husband who does not selflessly love, serve and lead his wife disobeys Christ.
 - b) A wife who does not submit and respect her husband disobeys Christ.
- c. If we do not allow submission and obedience to Christ to be our correct motive, then we will begin to focus on the responsibilities of our mate.
 - 1) We will begin to make our role dependent on the completion of the other's role
 - 2) We will begin to focus on our "rights" in our marriages, instead of on our responsibilities in our marriages.
 - 3) This all leads to a selfish, false love.
 - 4) In a healthy marriage, a husband and wife are motivated to function in their roles by the responsibilities of their roles, not by the privileges of their roles.
 - 5) More than anything, they are motivated by their desire to obey and please Christ.

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2. The role of the wife is **submission**.

a. The importance of a wife's submission.

- 1) She is to learn in submission (1 Tim 2:11).
- 2) She is to teach about submission (Titus 2:5).
- 3) She is to evangelize through her submission (1 Pt 3:1).

b. What submission is not.

- 1) Submission is not 'oppression.'
- 2) This distortion of 'submission' is a result of the fall of man in the garden.

Notes —

Author's Bible Study:

Bible study of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:7.

What is meant by the word "desire?" (note: the Hebrew word for "desire" is "teshuka," and these are the only two places in the book of Genesis that we find this word).

First, we must see from 4:7 that it is not a "positive" sense of "desire." The interpretation that equates desire in 3:16 with a woman's physical desire for her husband is probably the result of both wishful thinking (on the part of men) and poor Bible study.

Exegetically, the term "desire" is a "negative" concept. In 4:7, it is used in the context of sin's "desire" to control. In 3:16, we can conclude that the "desire" of the woman is not a positive one (remember, this is part of the punishment or curse of the fall). The wife negated her **natural** role of submission in the garden when she took the leadership position with respect to the fruit of the forbidden tree. Thus, the wife is now punished by desiring to control her husband.

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Author's Bible Study:

Interpretation of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:17

Secondly, as the Lord tells Cain in 4:7 to master or rule sin, so too does he tell the husband in 3:16 to rule the wife. Natural submission is forcefully changed to unnatural subjection. (Remember: this is the result of the fall of humanity and the fall of humanity is redeemed in Christ).

The consequence and corruption of the fall is clear. It is not what God intended (remember: through redemption this curse can be redeemed).

The fall has corrupted the willing submission of the wife by making it a desire to control the husband.

It has also corrupted the loving headship of the husband by making it an oppressive ruling or oppression.

If we continue our comparison of 3:16 and 4:7, then we could say that if a husband does “well” (that is, if he loves his wife as Christ loves the Church), then the wife will not be “crouching at the door” or trying to control him.

This is a very important truth in our discussion of marriage relationships. They are very natural. Sin makes them unnatural. If the husband loves the wife as he should, then it will be more likely that there will be a natural response by the wife to be in submission. The opposite is also true. If the wife submits to the husband then it will be more likely that there will be a natural response by the husband to love his wife.

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- 3) Punishment is to live life unnaturally. It is to go against the current of the river or to cut against the grain of the wood. It is to resist what is natural.
- a) In this sense God does not punish us at all. We punish ourselves by not obeying and thus experiencing the consequences (see this principle in Jn 3:18, 19).
 - b) This is a truth of life. Sin results in punishment not so much because God inflicts punishment upon us (although He does discipline us: see Heb 12:4-11), but because to go against God (to sin) is to go against creation and what is natural. This results in inflicting pain upon yourself by doing something the wrong (unnatural) way (see Rom 6:23; Jn 3:18, 19).

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Analogy #1: If you are hammering a nail and you put your finger over the head of the nail, then you will feel pain. This "punishment" is not from a God who in that moment decided to make you pay for your error. It is the result of doing something the wrong way.

Insert Your Illustration:

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Author's Illustration:

Analogy #2: If you are playing soccer and trying to score a goal and you run ahead of the ball and all of the defensive players, then the referee will call you "offsides." You are penalized by the referee because you did something wrong. The referee does not punish you. You punish yourself.

Insert Your Illustration:

Author's Illustration:

Analogy #3: The deadly disease called AIDS is not so much a judgment of God against sinners as it is a result of doing things against God's natural creative order. God does not so much judge or punish the person whose life is lived in sexual error. That person punishes himself by going against God's order. We actually, for the time being, judge ourselves (consider Jn 3:18, 19; 1 Cor 11:31; Mt 7:1, 2).

Insert Your Illustration:

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c. What is Biblical submission?

Notes —

1) It is **dependence**.

- a) In Eph 5:21-24 Paul uses the concept of the body of Christ (which he had already defined in Eph 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16) to explain the concept of marriage roles.
- b) It is interesting that in 4:16 Paul uses the Greek word “epichoragia” (translated as “supplies”) to show that the body receives its nourishment, life and direction from the head. This same word was a technical word used during that time to indicate the obligation of a husband to provide basic necessities for his wife.
- c) When we consider the analogy of the body of Christ that Paul uses to describe the submissive role of the wife in Eph 5, we can make the connection with Eph 4:16. An important part of submission is accepting and practicing a sense of dependency.
- d) The wife who depends on her husband is being consistent with nature. In Gen 2 we saw how the creation of the woman depended upon the creation of the man.

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Discuss Biblical submission in light of today’s society and the pressure for women to be employed outside the home (in Western culture).

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2) It is **subordinance**.

- a) Again, we can refer to the analogy of the body of Christ being subordinate to the Head.
- b) This subordination includes a love for the Head and production for Him (evangelism, good testimony and reputation, etc).
- c) We see these same kind of actions in the submissive wife who is referred to in Titus 2:4, 5.
 - (1) She loves her husband (vs. 4).
 - (2) She is sensible and pure (vs. 5: she provides a good reputation for the husband.)
 - (3) She works at home (vs. 5: she is productive for him).
- d) We also see these same kinds of actions in the Proverbs 31 woman. She is productive and provides a good reputation for her husband (see vs. 11, 12, 15, 18, 23).

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss Biblical subordination.

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3) It is **respect** and **honor** to your husband.

- a) Read Eph 5:33.
- b) An important part of submission is showing respect.
- c) In Paul's day, this was done by wives as a legal requirement. The Christian submission of a wife must go way beyond this. It must be sincere, real, and must be motivated by a fear (respect) for Christ and His order of things.
- d) It is referred to within the context of Christians, in general, submitting "to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph 5:21).

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Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

What is the impact on a husband when he knows his wife does not respect him? What is his response when the wife does respect him and even demonstrates this publicly?

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d. Conclusions about Submission.

- 1) A wife must understand submission in terms of the divine order. She must see it as the way in which she can assume her own divinely ordained position.
 - a) Thus, her submission must be based on freedom and love, and not on compulsion and fear.
 - b) Indeed, the Church is not forced into submission. She submits out of her own free will and desire to be obedient to the head.
 - c) Appropriately, a wife's motivation to submit to her husband must be based on her fear of God (Eph 5:21). That is, it must be based on her desire to obey God.
- 2) A wife must understand and accept that her submission to her husband can not depend on her husband's willingness to fulfill his role.
 - a) Her motivations must be pure. That is, they must be based on her desire to please Christ. Her eyes must be on Him, not on her husband.
 - b) If her eyes are on her husband, then she will fail because her husband will fail. Her submission cannot depend on her husband's actions.
 - c) If her eyes are on Christ, then she will not fail because Christ never fails. Her submission must be an unconditional one.
 - (1) It must be motivated by her desire to operate in the divine order.
 - (2) It must be motivated by her desire to be righteous (to stand in the correct position before God).

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- 3) Here we can establish a key principle for a good marriage. The husband and wife must focus on their own responsibilities instead of on the other's responsibilities (Mt 7:3-5).
- a) The ironic thing about this point is that if it is applied, it usually will correct an unhealthy marriage.
- (1) The submission of a wife naturally motivates a husband to love and lead her.
 - (2) The love and leading of a husband naturally motivates a wife to submit to him.
- b) An unhealthy marriage is often the result of a husband or a wife who focuses on the responsibilities of the other instead of focusing on his or her own responsibilities.
- (1) When this happens, a husband tries to **force** a wife to fulfill her role of submission, and a wife tries to **manipulate** a husband into fulfilling his role of headship.
 - (2) This reminds us how the fall of man distorted the marriage roles (review Gen 3:16 and 4:7).
 - (3) The husband **oppresses** (rules).
 - (4) The wife **manipulates** (desires to control).

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Author's Comment:

Christian Love vs. Carnal Love

Let us examine the differences between worldly, or carnal love (called “50/50” love), and Christian love, or agape love (called “100/100” love).

Carnal (“50/50”) love is the type of love that is self-interested. Each partner gives half of their total being, or makes a 50% effort in the marriage. Each person gives with the expectation that the other person must give an equal share. This is actually a form of selfishness.

Jesus exposed the hypocrisy that is associated with this type of love in Mt 5:46-48.

Christian love is “agape” or unconditional (“100/100”) love. This type of love is unconditionally committed to the success of their partner, without self-concern. Each partner gives all of their total being, or 100% of their effort in the marriage. Each partner desires to help the other partner without any expectation of a return, even when the giving is at their own expense and is at great cost.

Paul described this love in 1 Cor 13: 5 when he said that it “does not seek its own.”

A Christian marriage must be full of “agape love” and practice “100/100” love. Both husband and wife must fulfill their roles without expecting or requiring anything in return. Their motives must be pure. Pure motives are the result of being motivated only by Christ.

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3. The role of the husband is **headship**.

Notes —

a. The meaning of headship.

- 1) The Greek word for “head” is “kefalay.” It refers to someone who has a higher rank.
- 2) Headship points to two main ideas: **authority** and **direction**.

b. Authority.

- 1) Authority is not a result of domination. It is a result of service (Mt 23:11).
 - a) When a husband views authority as his “right,” then he will inevitably begin to demand it. He will practice domination instead of service. This will result in an unhealthy marriage.
 - b) When a husband views authority as his responsibility, then he will work for it and earn it. He will serve instead of dominate. This will result in a healthy marriage.
- 2) Authority is not a result of the fall. It is a result of creation.
 - a) We should remember that the man received the role of headship in the garden of Eden.
 - (1) Adam was given the authority to name the animals (Gen 2:19).
 - (2) He also named his wife (Gen 3:20).
 - b) In the redeemed marriage of Abraham and Sarah, Abraham practiced this authority. In a passage about the submission of a wife and the authority of a husband, we see that Sarah called Abraham “lord” (see 1 Pt 3:1-6).

MARRIAGE

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Insert Your Illustration:

c. Direction.

- 1) The aspect of direction in a husband's headship includes the ideas of leadership and initiative.
 - a) Again we must stress that leadership is the result of service (see Lk 22:26). A husband is not the leader of his family until he is the servant of his family.
 - b) In the Bible, leadership and initiative are seen to be aspects of the role of the man.
 - c) In Gen 3:20, we see that the man takes the initiative to name the woman. Those who reject the Biblical concept of the headship of the husband might argue that Adam should have consulted Eve and allowed her to make the decision with him.
 - d) In Gen 3:17, it becomes obvious that the husband must lead and give direction to his wife. The man's error, according to God, is that instead of leading the wife he allowed the wife to lead him.
 - e) Remember, the fall of man was much more complex than the fact that he ate a piece of forbidden fruit. The roots of the fall of man are those of rebellion. Man was to lead. He did not. The woman led. They rebelled against God's creation and His creative order.

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- 2) The act of leadership and initiative which is divinely ordered, should not be forced upon the wife. Instead, it is established by love.
- a) Paul establishes this difference in Col 3:18, 19. He says that husbands should love their wives instead of being “embittered” against them.
 - b) The husband who is embittered against his wife may try to force his leadership on her. He might become impatient with her lack of response to him and try to force her into submission.
 - (1) This leadership that tries to force itself upon someone is not true Biblical leadership.
 - (2) This leadership is characterized by a leader who is constantly irritated with the one he is leading and is constantly focusing on the faults of that person.
 - c) The husband who loves his wife is patient and does not criticize her. His leadership and initiative are received by the wife in submission.

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Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about Biblical headship and to answer any questions.

MARRIAGE

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d. The key action of headship is love.

1) “Love your wives” (Eph 5:25) is for husbands what “be subject to your own husbands” (Eph 5:22) is for wives.

a) Christ and His love for the Church is the husband’s model.

(1) It is unconditional love.

(2) It is a love without limits.

b) This love must be motivated by a profound understanding of the great worth of the wife. This is consistent with Christ’s understanding of the great worth of the Church. It leads to a willingness to give oneself up for the other (Eph 5:25).

c) This love must be a sacrificial love. It must go to the cross.

d) This love must be a compassionate love. It must be willing to suffer with the wife to understand and be sensitive to her.

(1) It must motivate the husband to “walk in her shoes.”

(2) It must enable him to love her as his own body (Eph 5:28).

2) The Scripture says, “He gave Himself up for her” (Eph 5:25).

a) This is the heart of “agape” love.

(1) Christ acquired the Church by giving of Himself.

(2) Adam acquired Eve by giving of himself (his rib).

(3) A husband receives a wife by giving himself for her.

b) Thus, a man does not so much “take a wife” for himself as he gives himself for a wife.

MARRIAGE

Insert Your Illustration:

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Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about “agape” love and answer any questions.

- c. The key attitude of headship is **patience and understanding**.
- 1) The husband must live with his wife in an understanding way (see 1 Pt 3:7).
 - a) He must understand that she is a **fellow heir** and therefore equal to him in terms of identity in Christ.
 - b) He must also understand that she is a weaker vessel. She is subordinate to him in relational order.
 - 2) The husband must respond to the wife in an understanding way. That is, he must take the initiative and lead her knowing that it is not natural for her to be leading him.
 - 3) This is the point of “your” (plural in the Greek) prayers being hindered in 1 Pt 3:7.
 - a) A husband who does not understand the role of his wife and who does not accept his divinely ordained position of headship, will not take the initiative to lead his wife in prayer.
 - b) The verse refers to husbands and wives who do not pray together because the husband lacks understanding of marriage roles.

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Author's Illustration:

Sometimes a husband's attitude is that he is tired of having to initiate everything. He says: **Why is it that she can not take the initiative and lead us in prayer?**

It takes a strong husband who understands Biblical marriage roles to lead a wife in prayer. This is the **reality** of headship. We might say that it is the difficult part of headship.

Yes, husbands have the authority, but they also have the responsibility! A humble and effective husband will be one who is much more concerned with his responsibility than with his authority.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about the husband's need for understanding and patience. Also, answer any questions about headship.

Insert Your Illustration:

MARRIAGE

D. Analogies of the Marriage Relationship.

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Marriage Analogy #1:

The Trinity (see 1 Cor 11:3).

It remains essential to understand that the husband and wife find their equality in terms of their identity in Christ, and their headship and submission roles in terms of their relationship to each other.

This same thing is true in the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal. They are all God. Yet the Son is in submission to the Father. And the Spirit is in submission to the Son.

The cross reveals the equality of men and women (Gal 3:28). Yet it does not nullify the divine structure of the relationship between husband and wife. The cross reveals the equality of the Son and the Father that exists within Trinity (Phil 2:6). Yet it does not nullify the divine structure of the relationships within the Trinity (see 1 Cor 15:27, 28).

Also note the Biblical progression that describes the Son only doing what He sees the Father doing (Jn 5:19), and the Spirit only saying what He hears the Son saying (Jn 16:13, 14). They submit to each other in an order of relationship, yet they are perfectly equal in identity.

This is the paradox of the Trinity. The three natures of the Godhead are equal yet different. This is, perhaps, the paradox of marriage also. The husband and wife are equal yet different (consider the idea of “mystery” in Eph 5:31, 32).

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Marriage Analogy #2:

The relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Marriage, in the Old Testament, revealed the nature of the relationship between God and Israel.

Generally, we can study the book of the Song of Solomon to see how this analogy is used.

Specifically, we can study the Prophets who often refer to this analogy (consider Is 54:1-8; 62:4, 5; Jer 2:2; 3:6-14; 31:32; Ez 16; Ez 23; Hos 1-3; especially Hos 2:2).

Marriage Analogy #3:

The relationship between Christ and the Church.

We have referred to this analogy throughout this course. Christ the Head is analogous to the husband. The submissive Church is analogous to the wife. Indeed, the mystery is great (Eph 5:32).

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E. Conclusions to our Course.

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1. Christ must be the focus of every marriage. Obeying and pleasing Him must be the motives to function in your marriage role.
2. The headship/submission relationship of husband and wife must not be understood in terms of what the husband **is** and what the wife **is not**. It must be seen as the divine order that allows each partner to complete the other. Each partner is equally important. Although they are equal, they are not the same.
3. Freedom of sex is not established by trying to be what one is not. Men are men and women are women. A man can only be a free man. A woman can only be a free woman. Fulfillment and freedom are found within the divine order of relationships, not outside of it. Fulfillment and freedom for men and women are available because they are equal, not because they are the same.
4. When husbands and wives accept and practice the divine order established by God, then they do not view headship as oppressive and submission as slavery. They do view headship and submission as the open door into a marriage of freedom and joy.

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