

Jason Upchurch - Ephesians 5:25 - Husbands Love Your Wives - Part 1

This morning we are continuing our look at the household code of Christianity and our attention turns to husbands. We've seen that wives are to submit to their husbands as to Jesus. That was the main command of **Vss. 22-24**. This morning we see that the main command for husbands is to love their wives.

Side: I feel the need to make this clear when I say wives love husbands I am in no way endorsing polygamous marriage or polyamorous marriage or anything of the sort. I shouldn't have to say that, but sadly we live in a day when that needs to be said. I was listening to the Briefing podcast this last week and Al Mohler actually spent half an episode talking about how Brazil is experimenting with polyamorous relationships, and that throuples are the next thing in the sexual revolution.

Did you know that in order for Utah to become a state in 1895 they had to abandon permanently polygamy as a practice? That was part of the arrangement. Well, with the degeneracy in our society we also have to push back against not just adultery and homosexuality but other sexual deviances as well.

So to be clear when I say "wives submit to husbands" that is not endorsing polygamy or polyandry. Marriage is one man, one woman til death do us part. Glad we're all on the same page.

But this morning we come to the husbands. And just as the main command for wives was to submit as to the Lord and the rest of the passage described that submission, so too the men have one command that is described. And here's the one command: love. Love like Jesus loved.

Six times in 8 verses the word love is used and everything else in the passage describes and defines that love. So love is the main command that Paul gives to husbands.

Now, the command to love our wives might seem a little odd because Paul just told wives to submit to their own husbands. So if wives are to submit, why aren't husbands called to lead? It's actually a glaring omission here that husbands are never commanded lead their wives.

Added to that irony is that when most people talk about this section they usually talk about it in terms of husbands leading their wives. Or husbands leading in the home. But there's no mention of leadership or taking charge or at all.

In fact, in the 3 main passages in the NT on the husband's role in marriage there is no mention of leadership at all. Not here.

Col. 3:19: Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

That's it. That's the whole command to husbands. Love, don't be mean. That's Paul's whole admonition. No mention of leadership.

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.

The main command Peter gives is to live in an understanding way. Be amicable to your wife. She's weaker so stop being a jerk. And he describes how and why.

So the obvious question is: are husbands supposed to lead in marriage? Or are the egalitarians and feminists right and we're all just equal in every way and there are no roles or hierarchy?

Well, let me tell you that they are not right. At all. In any way. I know you're shocked. Jaws are agape.

Here's our plan for this morning. I want to do something like what we did with wives several weeks ago. I want to spend most of our time this morning talk about about God's design for men in general. Then I want to spend some time talking about husbands loving their wives. And then next week we'll flesh that out.

So let's talk about God's design for men in general. And this is important because, men, if you don't know what you're doing here on this earth you can't be effective in what God wants you to do. And if we have men and women getting confused about how God has designed them things will not go well.

Simple illustration: I have a hammer my dad gave me that I love to use. It's the perfect size and weight but the back of the hammer is like a dull axe blade. And for years I never knew why it was there. Took a picture of the hammer, asked ChatGPT and it said its a hammer for doing cedar roofs. I've never done a cedar roof before in my life, but the backside splits the cedar shingles.

But I had no idea what this hammer was designed for most of the time I had it. So I couldn't use it properly or to its full potential.

The same is true with our lives: If we don't understand how God has designed men and women not only will we miss what we're supposed to do in our role, but if we get those things mixed up disaster will happen.

Imagine if I had decided to sharpen the back of that hammer so it would be like an ax. And then got frustrated that it didn't work well. I mean, maybe it would split some kind of wood - but that's not it's design so it would never work well.

We need to know the design of men and women.

Big Picture: God has designed men to lead not just in the home but in every sphere of life.

That's the design and because God designed it, it is good. And just like I mentioned that we don't need to be ashamed about God's role with women helping and submitting, we don't need to be ashamed about men leading either. This is simply what the Bible teaches. And basically what all of humanity understood until like 10 minutes ago.

We see men leading as early as Adam in the Garden- we covered that last week. Adam was the federal head of all humanity and in Adam we all sin. Even though Eve ate first and was tempted first, it was Adam that plunged us into ruin and destruction and death and hell. And it was Adam that God held to account.

If you break down the various spheres of life there are basically 3: there's the civil sphere, the religious sphere, and the family sphere.

But let's talk specifically about each of these spheres. Let's talk about the civil sphere first. By civil I mean government. The civic function of society. How do we know men lead? Well, because the Bible tells us.

A. The 12 Tribes of Israel are named after the sons of Jacob. They are called the patriarchs - father-rulers. The sons led the nation. Jacob did have daughters, but the but it is his sons who lead the nation. It's the sons that are the heads of the tribes.

B. God commanded only men to for government roles.

Exo. 18:21: Israel was to look for able men from all the people, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Magistrates were all to be men. And just a few verses later, Moses does exactly that. He appoints qualified men. Not all men are to lead society in the same way. Some lead many people, some lead a few people. Some are US Representatives, some are on the board of their HOA or water district or whatever. But we see men leading in big and small areas.

Deut 1:13-15: Moses says they appointed wise, understanding, experienced men as the heads over the tribes.

So the civic leaders were all men who were qualified for the position.

The judicial arm of Israel was also all men.

Deut 16:18: tells Moses to appoint judges in all the towns of Israel and all the language indicators in Hebrew are masculine. And all the evidence we have in the Bible is that those who presided as judicial officers were men. There were no women judges or elders anywhere in Israel in the sense of a judicial magistrate. Justice, as performed by judges or the elders of the city were uniformly men.

But some will say, "What about Judges? Deborah was a judge." And of course Deborah was a judge. **Turn to Judges 4.**

Deborah is often thrown out as sort of a gotchya argument that God does occasionally allow women to lead. And Deborah was a judge, divinely appointed to do so.

But the problem with pointing to Deborah as a green light for women in civic leadership is two-fold. First, Deborah is an exception to a rule. Exceptions to the rule prove that the rule is valid.

Of the tens of thousands of male leaders in the OT, one woman leader doesn't disprove the point.

Second, if you remember, the recurring theme in Israel is that everyone in Israel did what was right in their own eyes. Israel was an absolute mess in the time of Deborah and men refusing to lead was part of the problem. And as we look here, we see that Deborah actually confronts that very problem. **Read 4-10**

So here's Barak, who says he'll only go into battle if a woman goes with him. We read that and think, "well, okay." But actually that's pretty weak and pathetic. And Deborah shames him: she says then a woman will get glory. And a woman does. Who actually defeats the commander of the army? Jael. **Read 17-24**

So can God use a woman to get glory when all the men abdicate their responsibility? Yes. Is that the design? No. Israel is so backwards that men are abdicating their role to lead and women are getting glory in battle. In a feminist world it's hard to understand just how shameful that is. But God has called men to protect and defend women and children.

So we see the 12 tribes are named after men, civic leaders are all called to be men.

C. The Israelite military were all men. **Turn to Deut 20.** There are many places we could look concerning military. **Num 1 & 26** confirm that all the army in Israel were men. **Deut 23** gives purity requirements for the military and the requirements are all for men.

Military service was for able bodied men. But **Deut. 20** shows that but also gives generous exemptions for men serving in the military. **Read 1-9**

All these exemptions are for men. Did you plant a garden? Do you need to get married? Are you scared? But they're all men.

And, the Bible talks about women fighting in battles as a curse:

Isa. 3:12 says that Israel is oppressed by infants and women ruling over them.

Nahum 3:13: God mocks Nineveh says that their troops are all like women.

This shouldn't offend anyone. Women are not designed for battle. That's not what God designed you to do.

You remember the movie Sandlot? When Hamilton Porter and the rich kids are in an argument? What's the insult that ends the whole argument? "You play ball like a girl."

Why is that an insult? It's not that girls can't play baseball at all. They can throw and swing a bat and all the rest.

Because girls simply can't compete on the same level as men. And we all knew this until two minutes ago. And we all knew this until just recently when our own military began allowing women into combat which has been a disaster. That's not a good thing, it's a curse. Our daughters and wives and mothers should not go out to protect us. Men, that's our job. We protect our families, we protect our neighbors, we protect our country. That's what God designed us to do.

Men, you should be able to protect yourself, your family, your home. This isn't a call to be bravado, but you need to be able to do this. Every man in every home in Israel was to be able to go to war. They were to be ready to protect and defend.

I remember several years ago when a republican actually put forward a bill to conscript women in the draft. It was gag bill, it was actually put forward to get voted down because it was obviously supposed to prove a point. You remember what happened? It passed.

That's how depraved we are: we will force our women to fight for us. And ironically, I remember talking to people about it at the time - people who claimed to be conservative - and they defended it. You know how they defended the move? "Well, modern Israel both men and women fighting in their army." And that's true, but it's not a good argument. Modern day Israel rejects the Bible's teaching on most things - and this is one of them.

John Piper: Woe to the man, and woe to the country who sends its women to fight for them. (Momentary Marriage)

So in the civic sphere, the nation and it's tribes are all led by men and named after men. God commands men for governmental roles. The military is all male. One more:

In the book of **1 Samuel**, who is appointed to rule over all Israel? A man: Saul, then David, then Solomon, then Rehoboam. The chief leader of the country was a man. **Turn to Duet 17:14-20.**

This is interesting, this is the law of kings in Israel. This is 400 years before a king would rule in Israel. God gave rules about it. Notice the masculine emphasis. **Read 14-20**

The rulers of Israel are to be kings. They are men. Often they are fallen men, wicked men - especially in Israel in the north. But God wants men to rule.

Now, how do we apply this? Men, God has designed you to lead in the civic realm. Maybe not everyone or all in the same way. But I think we need to consider that God specifically sets the standard that men who lead in civics and military and government. He hasn't designed women to do that.

And I think men just as some of you need to prayerfully consider your call to ministry as an elder or pastor, you might also need to consider your call to civics and being a godly influence there.

I think men especially should be attuned to the nature of government around us. Not just bantering about politics in general or taking in the latest Fox News breaking headline or whatever app you use. But actually engaging in the actual civic process. It amazes me how little engagement there is. It's the low hanging fruit on how to affect society.

2. Men also lead in the religious sphere. And by religious I mean specially in the way that we worship the one true and living God. This is true in the OT and NT.

Israel's worship was orchestrated by male leadership. We see this on basically every level of religious life.

When it came to the tabernacle and the Temple, God commanded that women can only come so close to the Tabernacle. They could only come to the outer court. It was men who could come into the inner court and

sacrifice. Male priests who could go into the Holy Place and only the High Priest who could go into the Most Holy place.

So women couldn't be directly involved in the sacrificial system. Interestingly, even now in Israel women can't touch the Western Wall. You know the wall everyone goes to pray at in Jerusalem. Only men can go there. Women are forbidden from going in.

Further, the vast majority of prophets in the OT are men. And by vast majority, I mean of the hundreds of prophets that are mentioned, only a handful of ladies are ever called prophets. Miriam, Moses's sister. Deborah, we just read about. Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah - who was actually a false prophet opposed Nehemiah, and probably Isaiah's wife was a prophetess.

But aside from those few, the Lord consistently raises up men to lead his people in worship. This is also true when it comes to music: the psalter is written by men, the musicians were almost exclusively men. **Turn to 1 Chronicles 25:1-8**

For whatever reason I think we often consider music to be feminine. And a lot of music is feminine, even music in the church. But worship through music in Israel was always to be led by men. We see this here in **1 Chronicles. Read**

So men are primarily in charge of the music, and God blessed it in that manner. We do see women in there too, don't we? But I think men primarily are called to lead God's people even in music. It's a function of teaching and leading and direction where we use music - which is very powerful - to point people to the Lord.

And I think we need to pause and say it's not that women have no part at all in corporate worship. We have ladies who sing and play music. We had a gal years ago who played the violin here, it was awesome. When we sing parts in our songs and you ladies belt out your parts it's amazing to listen to. You should be very involved in corporate music.

The question is simply: who did God fashion and make to lead? And the answer, with very few exceptions, is men.

The same is true in the NT. The apostles were all men, elders are men. Deacons are primarily men - though it appears that women can work with male deacons to serve.

But the spiritual formation and leadership in the OT and NT is through qualified men. That is God's good design in the church.

What this means, men, is that just like you need to consider your role in civic leadership you should also consider your role in corporate worship.

Men, if you have gifts to lead us in music or teaching or reading or imparting wisdom, you need to consider using those in the gathered body of Christ. Every man should be striving to meet the qualifications of 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1. Those are qualifications for elders who lead the church, but all men should strive to live their lives accordingly.

But if you have gifts, and you have a desire - like 1 Tim 3:1 talks about - you need to consider your role in leading in the church. If that's something you aspire to you should let one of the elders know.

3. What about in the home? How do we know men are called to lead in the home?

Well, we saw last week that as early as Genesis 2 God set Adam up as the head of Eve. She is his helper, he is responsible for her. He leaves his father and mother and clings to her. He is help accountable for what she does.

We also see laws throughout the OT where men are responsible for their homes. There are actually times in the OT law where if a wife makes a vow, the husband can veto it in a certain time frame because he is the head.

We see that the family legacy - the family birthright - was given to men. Remember, that was the who contention with Jacob and Esau. Jacob took the birthright - the right to lead the family from Esau for a bowl of soup, but he also stole the generous blessing from his brother. **Turn back to Eph. 5.**

Our biggest indication that men lead their families is not actually in the section on men. It's in the section on wives. **Read 5:23-24**

So husbands are the head of the wife. That word head means lead, authority. Whatever it is that Christ does for the church, men, that's your role in the home.

Here's the point to note: Paul never commands men to lead. Never says they need to do it. What does he say? He says they are the head.

Men are, by nature the leaders in their homes. The question is simply: are they good leaders or not.

Do you guide and direct your family well? Especially your wife?

Are you gracious with your family like Christ is gracious with the church?

Are you good communicator? Jesus has given his word to the Church to know how to follow him. Do you communicate well to your wife how you want to lead your family?

I would argue one of the biggest causes of difficulty in marriage is poor communication. And if you've had poor communication for years it's a lot of work to make it better. But men, that's primarily on you to improve.

And men, do you love your wife? Not just verbally. Though you should express verbally that you love your wife and children. That goes without saying.

The old "I told her I loved her when I married her" doesn't work. You have to say it.

But you also have to live it. To cherish her and comfort her through all the seasons of life.

Paul says we are the head - we are lead - but the problem that most often happens in the home is that we don't love our wives well. We're mean, harsh, intolerant. We don't communicate our plans and goals, and often we don't even have plans and goals to communicate anyway.

Gentlemen, our wives should be to us, what the church is to Christ. Valuable, lovely, worthy of good leadership. Worthy of our sacrifice. This is our part of the gospel play that we live out.

Let's play the role of Jesus well that he might get glory.

Pray