

EMBRACING GOD'S DESIGN

I. Enjoying the Differences

A. Our differences in roles in no way speak of inequality between husband and wife.

- “So God created man (Mankind) in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:27)
- Men and women are both image-bearers of God, called together in marriage to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and exercise dominion over it.

B. God designed these differences, in His wisdom, and not as a response to the Fall.

- Before sin came in through Adam, God created the roles for a husband and wife.
- The New Testament reveals our roles are ultimately designed to emulate the relationship between Christ and the church.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife **even as** Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now **as** the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph. 5:23)

II. The Role of the Husband

A. Marks of Christ-like Leadership.

- Your leadership is Christ-like if it is characterized by

loving sacrifice (Eph. 5:25)

- Your leadership is Christ-like if it results in your wife's sanctification (Eph. 5:26). **Speaking redemptively**
 - i. Leading her into a deeper relationship with **God**.
 - ii. Leading her to better understand the **Gospel**.
 - iii. Leading her to see and put to death her **sin**.
 - iv. Leading her to grow in her love for **fellowship**.
- Your leadership is Christ-like if it flows from a life of dependence upon God.
 - i. Meeting with God
 - ii. Commitment to the church

B. A Husband's Temptation: Abdication

- Our temptation as men is to be "nice guys" who don't lead.
- Abdication of leadership is sin against God.

C. A Husband's Temptation: Domination

- Our other temptation as men is to reject servant leadership and selfishly dominate our wives.

III. **The Role of the Wife**

A. A Call to Respectful Submission (Eph. 5:24)

- You emulate the church when you submit to your husband. This is not dependent upon his performance.

“The requirement to submit comes straight from God, to us as wives. And we are answerable to Him for our lack of obedience. We cannot blame our husbands for our lack of submission. The responsibility is entirely ours. (*Feminine Appeal*, Carolyn Mahaney, pg. 125.)

- You emulate the church with your respect for your husband. This begins in your heart and is displayed in expressions of respect towards your husband. (Eph. 5:23)

Respect Illustrated (taken from “*The Role of a Wife*”, *Betsey Ricucci*)

1. Listen attentively while he is speaking.
 2. Seek his counsel first.
 3. Always speak respectfully about him to others.
 4. Regularly communicated what you appreciate about him.
 5. Pray for him.
 6. Make his requests a priority.
 7. Ask for his evaluation of how well you demonstrate respect.
- A few statements about what respect is not:
 - i. It is not following your husband into sin.
 - ii. It is not watching him passively pursue sin.
 - iii. It doesn't mean he knows more than you, particularly about the management of your home.

B. A Wife's Temptation: Resisting Her Husband's Leadership

- Seeking to take over your husband's leadership role
- Unappreciative of your husband's attempts to lead you

God's call upon you is to embrace your role as a wife and experience great joy in being a wife: Be inspired to seek out a Titus 2 woman for you in this season.

IV. Marriage Reflects the Gospel

"Your marriage is meant to be, by the grace of God, the best echo, the most faithful reflection, of that relationship [Christ and His Church] that you can possibly be. It's not about impressing people or drawing attention to our selves. It's about being genuinely united in a strong, godly, intimate relationship that echoes the one between Christ and the Church. (*Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*, C.J. Mahaney, pg. 23, Crossway)

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Discussion Questions

1. Men, in what one or two ways were you convicted about the deficiencies in your leadership of your wife? What sin might this reveal? What needs to change?
2. Ladies, in what one or two ways were you convicted about the deficiencies in your submission to your husband? What sin might this reveal? What needs to change?
3. Men ask your wife:
 - As your husband, how can I demonstrate sacrificial love to you?
 - Are there aspects of my leadership that make it difficult for you to trust, submit and follow me? Please explain with illustrations.
 - How would you evaluate my decision-making skills? Please explain with illustrations.
 - How can I serve you in your pursuit of sanctification?
4. Ladies ask your husband:
 - Are there aspects of my submission that make it difficult for you to make decisions and lead me? Please explain with illustrations.
 - How would you evaluate my response to your decisions? Please explain with illustrations.
 - From Betsy's "Illustrated Respect" list on page 13, how can I begin to grow in respectfully following you?