

Leading and Loving
February 8th, 2009

1). When the first person of the trinity communicates His nature and character to His creation He describes Himself as 'Father' – He is God the Father.

Ephesians 6:23

Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:5

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

- And within God's Word we also see God as Spirit, love, compassion, grace, mercy, sacrifice, teaching us discipline and judgment.
- Then within a marriage relationship between a man and a woman God uses the same name to describe the husband when a child is born to that couple. At that point the husband becomes a **father**. This puts fathers in some pretty important company.

2). Then within this role of father, a specific instruction is given in –

Ephesians 6:4

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

- The word "provoke" is the Greek word *parorgizo*, which literally means to lay anger alongside, enrage, or provoke to wrath.
- So we see that there is one thing fathers are not to do – do not provoke your children to wrath.
- But instead, fathers are to bring them up in the child training and admonition of the Lord.
- And to do this, fathers are not just to teach the truth of scripture (although this is incredibly important) but they are also to model a life of faithful obedience, thereby giving a tangible impression of the One who is our Father in heaven.
- There is nothing more likely to make a child angry or confused than to be told one thing about living a holy life while seeing their father doing something completely different. The old saying, 'Do as I say not as I do', is a recipe for disaster.

3). Within the day-to-day routine of normal living, there is no better opportunity for the child to witness the father's life of faithful obedience than to see this within its parents marriage relationship.

- Now I know that as a matter of biological function someone can become a father without being married, and that there are many fathers who would have to raise their children

without a wife. But for the purpose of our study this morning we are going to stay within the confines of the marriage relationship because of what this speaks to in our future.

- What we can realize then is that you cannot separate the role of husband from that of father, as the actions of the father are dictated by his role as husband.
- So our focus this morning will be, 'what does this role look like?'
- I am sure that we can realize that a child's whole perception of what marriage is and how a husband is to behave is determined by what that child sees every day. If what they see is scripturally incorrect and they base their own life on the incorrect model they have seen, then anger, bitterness and resentment will await them at some point within their own marriage.

4). And so as we look at scripture, we will see that the primary role of the husband is that of 'head'.

Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

And--

1Corinthians 11:3

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

- And the reason for this is spoken of in the following verse-

1Corinthians 11:8

For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

- Now please note that the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the head of the church, and the same way that God the Father is the head of Christ.
- If we think about God the Father and Christ for a moment, we will realize that headship here is not an issue of superiority – God the Father and God the Son are completely equal –

1John 2:23

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

- It is their role within the Godhead that is different.
- In the same way the husband and the wife are equal –

1Peter 3:7b

...as being heirs together of the grace of life...

- Even though they are equal, and their roles are different – the husband IS head of the wife.

5). The husband is assigned the role of head, so as to lead, by God's command.

- It is not a question of whether we want the role
 - or feel we can do it
 - or feel qualified
 - or have the confidence

- The moment we say, 'I do', we are head. From that point on it's just a question of how well we fulfill our role.
- Remember--what God has said about our role as husband will form the basis for part of our judgment at Christ's Judgment Seat.

6). The extraordinary thing is that God has delegated the authority to be head to the husband in the same way as we see authority delegated to God the Son –

Ephesians 1:22

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- And with delegated authority also comes responsibility. Can you imagine the enormity of what it means for God to place a husband as head over the life of another human being?
- Do we realize that the blossoming, the nurturing, the maturing of that person placed under our headship is our responsibility?
- No doubt as we think about this we will feel an encouragement to do this just the way God says.

7). Please note though that the husband is head of *his own wife*, not of anyone else's wife. Nor are all men the head of all women. This is exclusively with respect to a man and a woman within their own marriage relationship.

8). So, having established that the husband is the head of the wife by God's command – what does it mean to be the head?

- What do you think of when you think of being head? Thankfully we don't have to think – we just have to follow scripture.
- The first scripture we shall look at concerns being a leader within the church, but gives us insight into the role of head –

1Timothy 3:2

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

- So, being head requires us to rule our own house well and in verse 5 here we see that ruling our own house and taking care of the church of God are synonymous ideas.
- The word for "rule" is the Greek word *proistemi*, which means to stand before (in rank) to preside, or to maintain, be over, rule.

- To rule then means to stand before, *to stand in front of*, as the one who has responsibility, and in turn *accountability*. And we would understand this in the same sense as ‘to take care of.’
- The word for “take care of” is the Greek word *epimeleomai*, which means to care for (physically or otherwise).
- To get a clearer picture of what this looks like we can go to another scripture where exactly this same word meaning ‘to take care of’ is used –

Luke 10:34

"So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you."

- We see within this context that to rule as head means to continually provide assurance and security, to take care of every hurt and every need – to be the one who can be relied upon to be there no matter what.

9). Then into the idea of taking care of we can add one more thing –

1Timothy 5:8

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

- The word for “provide” is the Greek word *pronoeo*, which means to consider in advance, look out for beforehand (actively, by way of maintenance for others, to provide for).
- Taking care of, then, must also include providing, and providing is to be proactive, it is planning and being prepared in advance.
- It is not damage control, but damage prevention.
- And I am sure you did not miss the shocking consequence of not doing so
- *he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
- There is no place here for passivity, for apathy, or absence. This is the role of the head given to the husband by God. This is the one who is the leader.

10). The next thing we would consider is how the husband is to do this. What attitude of heart is to direct his actions as head of his wife?

1Peter3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

- According to the scriptures, there must be understanding and there must be the giving of honor, as both are heirs together of the grace of life. And failure to do so will, for the husband, hinder his prayers. Hinder literally means “to cut down.”

- To have understanding would mean to have intimate perception with regards to our wife's emotions, feelings, needs so that we could respond accordingly with sensitivity and tenderness.
- The word for "honor" is the Greek word *time*, which means a value or money paid, or valuables; esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself.
- Husbands are to see and treat their wives as the most precious and valuable person outside of God Himself. Consequently, the husband will devote himself to his wife above children, friends, recreation, ministry or work.
- There is no place in this for 'lording it over' our wives, no place for abusiveness either through a raised voice or a raised hand or beating them with the scriptures – **never, under any circumstances.**

11). How effective are we being as husbands in our role as head? There is only one way to know. Look at our wife and see if she is flourishing under our care in the same way we are flourishing under Christ's.

12). We are going to move on now from the role of the husband to the scriptural responsibility of the husband. Within our role as head, what is our primary responsibility?

- Just as the role of head is given by command of God, so is the responsibility that comes with that role given by command, and we find the command in two specific places in scripture.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

AND--

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

- And here we see it – 'husbands love your wives'.
- This is the command of God to husbands. It is not a suggestion and it is not optional. And the surprising thing is that God has to command husbands to love their wives. We would tend to think that this is automatic, but it is (at times) not.

13). Husbands are to love their wives, just as Christ also loved the church. So, we are dealing with love here that goes beyond romantic inclination to a love that is unconditional and sacrificial. Love here is the same Greek word, 'agape', that we find in the Gospel of John—

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- The husband's love for his wife is to be unconditional. He is to love her regardless of her attitude, behavior or reciprocation of that love. Love is an action in faithful obedience to the command of God, not in response to the action of the wife.
- And the husband's love is to be sacrificial. We would understand this in two ways. Firstly, it will require the death of self to love this way. In the natural, we would only want to love our wife if she deserved it. Our model for this sacrificial love is in —

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- And secondly, there will inevitably be occasions when we will have to sacrifice what we want to do in preference to the desire of our wife.
- This takes us back again to 1 Corinthians 13, where we can truly see what agape love is supposed to look like.

14). Now the command to love your wife, in the Greek language, is given in the present tense, which means this is to be a continuous action. It is to begin at the point where the man becomes head and it is then to continue without stopping until death do us part. At no time then is the husband ever to be **not** loving his wife unconditionally and sacrificially. And if we do stop loving here, then God calls this sin.

- We would realize that God in Christ never stops loving us, regardless of what we do.

15). The command to love your wife is also given in what is called the active voice, which means that loving your wife is something the husband is to do actively.

- This then moves us beyond the thought of, 'I love my wife', and beyond the feelings of love for my wife that I experience, into the realm of taking action-- through which my wife knows and feels that she is loved.
- Regardless of what is in our thinking, our wife is not loved unless she feels she is loved.

16). And finally, the command to love your wife is written (in the Greek) in the imperative mood, which means that the husband is to love his wife by his own choice. The husband can choose to love his wife or he can choose not to. It really is a matter of choice...a matter of obedience or disobedience.

- What we will realize here of course is that if the husband says he no longer loves his wife, it is because he has chosen not to. And because this is a matter of choice, he can choose to change his mind and start loving her again.
- Please remember that this is a command of God, and He does not command us to do something we cannot do. And He always provides the grace for us to do it.
- We are in control of our emotions, we just need to put them back where they belong and start loving again. And if we have stopped loving our wives, repentance before the Lord for having chosen to sin would be a good idea at this point.

17). And then in our Colossians 3:19 scripture –

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

- We find something the husband is commanded to do, ‘love your wife’, and, something he is commanded not to do, ‘do not be bitter’ toward her.
- So the command is to love on the one hand and not be bitter on the other.
- The word for “bitter” is the Greek word *pikraino* from *pikros*, which gives us the idea of piercing; sharp or pungent, or acid.
- The idea here is that of stabbing or piercing for the purpose of causing pain, and this is something husbands are commanded not to do.
 - This means there should never be an unkind tone of voice, but always a tender tone.
 - Never a harsh or demeaning manner, but always gentleness.
 - Never tearing down, but always building up.
 - Never controlling, but always empowering.

18). God has made every wife so that the thing she needs most is the love of her husband, and He has given the husband the responsibility of fulfilling that need.

- Although the husband needs to be loved, the thing he needs the most is the respect of his wife, and it won’t be any surprise to know that this is what wives are commanded to do.
- Fulfilling this responsibility means the husband will choose to love his wife fervently and not allow his love to grow cold.
- He will choose to love with both his actions and his emotions.
- He will choose to care deeply and to lavish his affection on her
- His love will never fail and will guard against unforgiveness and apathy. Just look at—

Matthew 18:22

Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

19). Let’s call to mind that which was stated in Genesis and repeated in our Ephesians Chapter 5 scripture –

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- With that in mind let’s recall another verse from Ephesians –

Ephesians 5: 29

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

- Now follow where this takes us. The husband and wife are one flesh, therefore to nourish and cherish our wife is to nourish and cherish our self.
- And the example here is the Lord and the church. The Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, because the church is His body –

Ephesians 5:30

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

- To cause our wife pain or heartbreak is to hurt our self.

20). And finally, let us remember the context for marriage within the big picture. Genesis introduces the marriage relationship as a prerequisite for ruling, through Adam and the Woman. A relationship that finds its fulfillment with Christ and His Bride in Revelation –

Revelation 19:7

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

- In between these two points we have the marriage of a man and a woman in the here and now, a relationship that, because of its scriptural context, is to transcend a simple joining together in matrimony by presenting a continuous, tangible picture of the relationship between Christ and those who will constitute His Bride.
- And what greater way can there be to demonstrate to our children the love that Christ has for us than the everyday example of the love that Dad has for Mom?
- What an awesome responsibility and what an incredible opportunity.
- And of course, husbands, as we embrace wholeheartedly our role to lead as head and our responsibility to love, so we are being faithfully obedient to the word of God. We are doing a good work and producing fruit for the Kingdom, and we are making our own wedding garment in preparation for that Day.
- And as we lovingly lead our wives as their head, so we will empower them to faithfully fulfill their role and responsibility as wife, the submitted helpmate– with exactly the same outcome for them.
- The happiness, joy, intimacy and fulfillment that comes through faithfully following God's directives is almost beyond description, and God commands us to continually have this experience. He will then reward us for doing so. How incredible is that?

21). And so let me encourage every father here today to be the husband that God has called you to be, be the head that He has appointed you to be, and fulfill the responsibility He has equipped you for – love your wife as He has loved us –

1John 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.