

Husbands - Leaders or Losers

It's not by chance who wears the pants!

Being a husband is not easy, in fact, it is downright tough. Being a **good** husband is impossible without understanding God's structure for marriage and the principles that govern it. Unfortunately, these principles have been ignored as evidenced by the soaring divorce rate in this country. But, there is good news; those who learn and follow Biblical principles will make their marriages the secure and enjoyable unions God designed them to be.

Before we look at these principles, there are a few things to note about authority. God is sovereign which means He is the ultimate authority. His authority is ubiquitous; there is no place on this planet we can go to escape it. He delegates authority to certain people to ensure order, stability and the perpetuation of the human race.

Romans 13:1

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are established by God.

We all grew up under the God-given authority of our parents or guardian. Hopefully, we learned that submitting to authority is honorable, not humiliating. Their job was to teach us respect for authority and to prepare us to assume that role ourselves some day. If they did their job right, we have no problem submitting to the authority of police officers, judges, teachers, coaches, ministers, bosses, etc. Yet some would have a huge problem if "husbands" were added to the list.

This leads us to our first principle and the real focus of this booklet: The husband's leadership role in marriage.

PRINCIPLE No. 1

The Husband is the Head of the House.

Who says the husband is the head of the house? Where is it written? These are fair questions because a dogmatic statement must be supported by a credible source. The answer: God said it and it is recorded in His Word.

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, be submissive to your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives should be to their husbands in everything

Colossians 3:12 Wives, be submissive to your own husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Titus 2:5 (Wives should be) sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be dishonored.

I Peter 3:1 In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands . . .

See Appendix for more detailed information on the verses above.

God has given the husband authority over his wife and children. Consequently, he is in charge; he is the boss, the captain of the ship, the head of the house.

A popular notion today is that marriage is a 50/50 proposition with authority being equally shared between the husband and the wife. This unscriptural notion is contrary to God's design. It is a delusional formula for **no** authority. If no one is recognized as the authority, the first serious disagreement will weaken and possibly destroy the marriage.

The idea of sharing authority is pleasant and easy to embrace because no one has to be submissive or assume responsibility. But it is a fantasy and a lie conjured up by Satan to ruin marriages.

Actually, someone assumes the authority position in every marriage. Wives professing the 50/50 view do not want to share the authority; they want to **be**

the authority. They have no intention of yielding to their husband's commands.

Husbands who subscribe to the 50/50 view have, in reality, relinquished their authority to their wives and have become subordinate to them.

God disapproves of husbands abdicating their leadership role. He condemned Adam for becoming the follower instead of the leader in the first marriage. He punished him not only for disobeying but for subordinating himself to his wife's rebellious lead.

Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He (God) said, "Because you have harkened unto your wife and have eaten from the tree which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it' . . ." (Then God pronounced judgement on Adam.)

Husbands are not put in charge because they are smarter or better than their wives. God assigned the man the leadership role because He designed him physically and emotionally to shoulder the responsibility of command as well as to initiate love towards his wife. God designed the woman to complement the man physically and emotionally and to respond to his leadership with love and respect.

PRINCIPLE No. 2

Authority Means Responsibility, Not Tyranny.

This principle is true in every aspect of life, especially in marriage. The husband who thinks his authority is a license to be a dictator is a fool! He could kill the goose that lays the golden egg if he fails to give his wife the love and affection she needs; and, in reaction, she could make his life a living hell.

A real man does not abuse his wife to prove his manliness. He is gentle, tender considerate and affectionate towards his wife. By making her feel special and more important than anyone else, she will be inclined to respond and make his life heaven on earth.

Objectivity is the trademark of a good husband. A good husband makes

decisions based on facts and on what is best for all concerned. A husband who makes decisions without considering his wife's wants and needs is subjective, selfish and self-centered. If she disagrees with his decision, he must be fair and objectively consider both sides. If he realizes she is right, it is not a sign of weakness to admit it; in fact, it shows his strength of character. However, if after carefully weighing the facts he still thinks he is right, he must stand firm.

Authority means responsibility as demonstrated by the husband accepting the consequences for his decisions. The wife is spared the pressure of shouldering this load and should appreciate the sacrificial expression of his love. Any man who puts such responsibility on his wife is a coward and will cause her to disrespect or resent him.

PRINCIPLE No. 3

The Husband's Authority Will Be Challenged

Let's face it; everyone wants to have their way and wives are no different. There are several methods available to wives to make sure their desires are fulfilled. This is not to say they are being selfish or manipulative; they may just be using their powers of persuasion. Some tactics are obvious and innocent while others may be more subtle and sinister. At times there may even be "in-your-face" defiance.

Guilt is one of the wife's more powerful weapons. Radio, TV, movies and government join forces the leader with her in making her husband feel guilty for being the leader. There is a barrage of subtle attempts to belittle husbands. TV commercials portray them as blithering idiots who deserve pity instead of respect. The result is emasculated husbands who lack confidence. They become putty in the hands of their wives because they feel guilty every time they show signs of having backbone.

WIFE: "Honey, let's buy a new car!" HUSBAND: "What's wrong with the one we've got?"

WIFE: "The A/C doesn't work very well and it's looking shabby."

A husband's desire to keep peace in the family can be used by his wife to control him. The temptation is to give in to the wife in order to keep the peace
GENTLEMEN, DO NOT DO THIS !

Maintaining peace is never as important as maintaining authority!

Husbands may receive pressure to prove their love. No doubt Eve made Adam feel that he must prove his love for her by following her rebellious lead in eating of the forbidden fruit.

Husbands never prove their love by: compromising their standards, convictions or responsibilities. The following fictitious conversation will help illustrate:

HUSBAND: "We can't afford one right now."

WIFE: "We had enough money to buy you some new golf clubs."

HUSBAND: "Golf clubs can hardly be compared with a new car."

WIFE: "I've done without a new wardrobe and have been pinching pennies so that we can buy a new car."

HUSBAND: " I realize that, Dear, and I really appreciate it, but we are barely able to pay our bills now.

We may be able to afford one next year."

WIFE: " I thought you really loved me, but I guess I was wrong!"

(At that point she goes to her bed room and slams the door.)

Let us assume the husband bought a new car to prove that he really loves his wife. Six months later, when they go broke, he will blame her and their marriage will break under the pressure. It will not be her fault, but his, because he allowed himself to be manipulated and intimidated. Rather than

demonstrate his love by buying the new car, he demonstrates his lack of character and courage. He was afraid of the trouble she might cause or of the possibility of losing her.

The wife gained a new car, but lost something much more valuable; respect for her husband. Instead of admiring him for his grand gesture of love, she despises him for being weak.

A WOMAN CANNOT LOVE A MAN SHE DOES NOT RESPECT! *And a woman will never respect a man she can dominate or manipulate.* Husbands must remember this when they are tempted to "cave in" to prove their love or to keep the peace. Respect is lost if the husband becomes a bully or a wimp.

THE WIFE'S RESPECT FORTIFIES HER HUSBAND'S LOVE AND THE HUSBAND'S LOVE FORTIFIES HIS WIFE'S RESPECT.

Husbands must be on guard against manipulation through tears, threats, fits, pouting, silent treatment or sexual withdrawal. It is more important to do what is right than to appease the wife.

PRINCIPLE No. 4

There's a Right Time and a Right Way to Assert Authority

Asserting authority does not mean throwing one's weight around or acting like a Marine drill sergeant. It does not mean yelling, threatening and intimidating. It is simply communicating to those under one's care the way things are going to be. There is a difference between being harsh and being firm.

Knowing when to assert authority is important. There is a time to be flexible and a time to stand firm; a time to get involved and a time to stay out. Wives must be given the freedom and space they need. When they make mistakes or lose control, they need time to recover on their own without their husbands

rushing in to straighten them out.

However, the captain of a ship can allow a wrong course for only so long before he must make necessary corrections. No marriage survives very long when the husband tolerates everything and never draws the line. The very security of a marriage rests in the husband's cognizance of this fact. The loving assertion of authority is one way a husband expresses his love. It is much easier to "go along in order to get along," but such is the route of a coward, not a leader.

Husbands who do not assert authority, lose it! A husband without authority is without respect, and where there is no respect, there is no love. Consider what is at stake for the husband who does not exercise his God-given authority; loss of:

* the wife's respect * authority

* self-respect * peace in the home

* the wife's love * the marriage

God gave the husband authority over his wife and it cannot be taken from him. He loses it only when he chooses to follow rather than lead.

In extreme cases, asserting authority can mean putting a marriage on the line. No matter how fair and gentle the husband may be, his wife may choose to end the marriage rather than submit to him. He must then decide whether to save the marriage by allowing her to wear the pants or to stand firm with the possibility that she will walk out on him.

This is a critical time for the husband to rely on God's Word rather than on his emotions. It takes two people willing to obey God's commands to make a marriage work. If the wife chooses to leave, the husband must be willing to let her go.

PRINCIPLE No. 5

The Husband Is Not Responsible For His Wife's Defiance

A husband cannot force his wife to do anything that she does not want to do. Indeed he should not even try. He can give commands and make decisions, but he cannot force compliance or agreement. If she accepts the role God assigned her, she will obey her husband even if she does not agree with him. A wife is not responsible for the decisions of her husband; she is only responsible for yielding to his decisions.

At times, a husband is not worthy of his wife's devotion or respect; and she may not feel like obeying him, but she must in order to obey the Lord. Her submission comes from her love and respect for the Lord, not her husband.

Of course if the husband commands her to do something illegal or immoral, she must decline because she is answerable to a higher authority than him, the Lord.

If she takes her cue from feminists, she will reject anything she disagrees with. Therefore, it is imperative for a man to make sure a woman understands and accepts God's pecking order before considering her for a mate.

What should a husband do if his wife defies him? He should lovingly explain to her that he understands and appreciates her views, but his decision is final. If her defiance continues, he must simply carry through with his decision. **HER DEFIANCE DOES NOT LESSEN HIS AUTHORITY!** He must not be intimidated if she gets angry or threatens him. If he wimps out, he has had it!

In extreme cases, the wife may even physically attack her husband. If this occurs, he must defend himself; but even then, his purpose is not to harm her but to keep himself from being injured.

If she continues to defy her husband, she will come under divine discipline. She will find that there are consequences for disobeying God and her husband.

CONCLUSION

Husbands are either leaders or losers. Leaders motivate; losers intimidate. Leaders take the heat; losers get out of the kitchen.

Husbands are human; when they make mistakes, they should freely admit them.

This does not weaken their authority; but strengthens it. Families appreciate their sensitivity and humility. Learning from their mistakes makes them better prepared to care for their families in the future.

Most couples contemplating marriage think that love is the paramount issue. Not so! Why do so many marriages start out with couples so much in love and end so hatefully in divorce? Love alone will not carry the relationship. It is very important; but no matter how much love a couple shares, without understanding the basic principles of authority in marriage, the relationship is doomed. People do not fall in love, get married, then automatically live happily ever after. They must learn how to be good husbands and wives. Those who learn and follow God's design for the family will realize how wonderful the relationship between a husband and wife can be. There is nothing like it!

Appendix

Eph 5:22-26

22 Wives, (be subject) to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

The Greek literally says: "The wives to your own husbands as unto the Lord." The fact that they were to submit or "be subject to," was understood.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church .

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The Greek word for "head" is "*kephale*" which means the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate. The thought here is that the husband has the same authority over the wife that Christ has over the church - complete authority.

Christ commanded Peter to, "*Feed my sheep*" (*John 21:17*). Peter did not think it harsh or unloving to receive orders from the Lord. He did not insist that Christ ask him rather than tell him what to do because he accepted His authority. Wives should have that same attitude towards their husbands.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

"Is subject" in the Greek is "*hupotasso*" which means to subordinate, to render obedience, to submit oneself . Notice that the wife is to be subject to her husband in everything. This means that the wife is to subordinate her volition or her will to her husband's. One definition of "submit" is "to yield oneself to the authority or will of another".

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;

The husband is commanded to love his wife. The Bible does not command the wife to love her husband, however this naturally occurs when her husband loves her as Christ loved the church.²⁰

Titus 2:3-5

3 The older women, likewise, are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good.

4 That they may teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their

children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, kind, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The Greek word for "obedient" is "hupotasso" the same word used in *Eph. 5:24* for "*is subject to*". Note that the wife is to obey her husband, not for his sake, but for the sake of God's Word.

1 Peter 3:1-2

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the behavior of the wives;

2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Wives with unbelieving husbands are to win them to the Lord by their pure, respectful behavior rather than by trying to preach to them from the Bible.

1 Peter 3:5-7

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands.

6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him lord, and you are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker vessel and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Being in *subjection*, from the Greek word "hupotasso" in verse 5, is the same word found in Eph. 5:24, translated "*is subject to*" and "*obedient*" in Titus 2:5. *Obedied* from the Greek word "hupakouo" in verse 6 is also used in *Eph. 6:1*, "*children obey your parents,*" and in:

Col 3:18-20

18 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

These three verses give the duty of each member of the family. "*Be subject to*" in verse 18 is again from "hupotasso" which means to render obedience to the husband. The Greek word for "*obey*" in verse 20 is "hupakouo" which means to be obedient to the parents. Both Greek words are in the imperative mood which means that they are direct commands to us from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wife's duty – Submit to the authority of her husband, respect his position as the head of the house, support him, and help him to be successful at whatever he undertakes.

Husband's duty – Love his wife, provide all needs, and protect her and their children, and take on the leadership role, not shying away from responsibility.

Children's duty – Obey their father and mother and respect their authority.