

Correcting Distorted Teachings about Headship in Marriage

One thing you can count on is sadly enough, that the sheep in the Church are going out into the world, absorbing its values, and then bringing them back into the Body of Messiah. It's like many parents worry about their kids, who if they don't have the right friends, will be bringing the violence, disgusting language, drugs and rebellious behavior back into the home. These days, in the *Kahol*, it's much more guaranteed to occur than with children. It will absorb the world's man-based values, then bring them home, then make doctrine out of them. And even if they don't write them down as doctrine, they surely will treat them as if they are.

One of the biggest areas where this occurs is in gender roles. Whether the church either adopts entirely the feminist views, or it waters down the divine truth and the natural truth so much, that it's nearly unrecognizable. Young people especially, but mature Christians too, can be damaged by the false teachings they're almost certainly going to hear at the local congregation. I really feel sorry for any sheep that listens to them. If you've got Christian books and CDs about marriage, for instance, the chances are good that the best thing you can do is throw them in the garbage where they belong.

And the marriage relationship is what I want most to speak about today. The congregations have watered down the relationship between husband and wife so much, that there is virtually no authority or submission there. At least not in any clear and practical way. Because of this, I would like to correct a few of the common distortions and errors you are going to hear from your local minister, usually one who's been badgered into being embarrassed by the Bible, and badgered into accepting the more trendy feminism. You'll hear these distortions in abundance, so I consider it a high priority to correct them. Christian marriage has real, clear pillar of authority and submission. Let's begin.

Distortion 1 The husband needs to be a great communicator so his wife will understand his wishes

Many Christian spouses have been led to believe that excellent communication is key to everything and that the husband needs to be able to explain or justify everything if he expects his wishes to be done. Many Christian husbands out there are confounded as a result. They are NOT great communicators. Therefore, they feel -- maybe I can't lead the home, or maybe I can't give these instructions. This creates weak leadership in a home that should have a clear head -- the man.

Yet nothing in the Bible or common sense demands that a leader must be very eloquent and communicate his will perfectly so that all can understand its reasoning. It is true there are times when some detailed communication is necessary. It is true some gift in communication might help. However, excellent communication is not necessary at all, either biblically or logically. Nowhere is it demanded.

Just like any leader, a husband can expect his will to be done, even if his wife does not understand all of it. She does not have to understand all of it. She only needs to submit. Understanding may be good. However, the wife's need is to submit, even if she doesn't think it's the greatest idea and even if she doesn't understand all of her husband's reasoning. It's that simple. The same is true of anyone who is subordinate to another. You don't need complete understanding to obey. But at times it can be ideal.

Distortion 2 The husband should never be strong or blunt in his language

Due to the culture's hatred of male leadership, and its hatred of female submission, there is also a common belief among Christians in marriage that the husband must never speak bluntly or strongly to his wife. This distortion is also based in misunderstanding the biblical teaching about being gentle in speech and applying it universally broadly. Any leader, husband or otherwise, has times to speak bluntly or strongly. It might be because the time is short and he needs to communicate bluntly. It might be because those under him have not been understanding or complying, and he desires to be strong in his communication. This is natural in leadership. A Christian husband should not feel it is anathema for him.

True, the general habit of a child of God's speech should be caring and gentle, but this is in general habit only. A quick run-through of the New Testament ALONE will give you numerous examples of strong and even harsh speech, sometimes long and detailed ones. I must emphasize, these are not RARE examples. They are COMMON. So what gives? Well, if Yeshua and the apostles spoke strongly in many occasions, there must have been a good reason for going against that gentle and peaceful pattern of speech we should have. Those situations I think you will see involve correcting others, and speaking out against falsehood and evil.

So Christian husbands, and Christian men in general, do not need to feel there is never a cause to speak with strength. There are. Between time constraints and orders which must be given urgently, as well as the need to show strength, the born-again man has call to be bold in speech. That includes with his wife. They may appreciate you for it men. Often women know they need it, and richly appreciate it.

Distortion 3 **Headship merely covers the “final decision” of certain major choices**

If ministers don't want to deny the pillar of authority in marriage entirely, they often find they can take the strength out of it, and take the offense out of it, if they water it down enough. Not so many people are offended by a mere rare call on a final decision by a male. True feminists would be. But many Christians can still tolerate a backed-off, final-decision, behind the curtains male headship. The problem is, brothers, this isn't biblical.

Number one, it's plain to see this kind of mostly-independent attitude is out of harmony with the truth that the wife represents the Bride of Messiah, and the husband is like Christ to her. The WAY that she loves Him is like to Christ. You see the Church does not look to its Savior merely as a friend, but more than that. The Church looks to its Savior also as its Lord. The Church desires to please Him. To do His will. To be conformed in every facet to Him. So while a husband may not literally be the perfect God, His wife should still desire to look up to Him and accept His leadership, not just in a few things. In all things.

Interestingly, “all things” is just how the Holy Spirit instructs the wife to obey her husband (Ephesians 5:24). The Scripture says she submits to him in all things. Not in some. His will and decisions are above hers. A lot of people will question this, and even try and squirm out of it completely, by claiming that “all” doesn't really mean all. It just means all kinds of things, as the phrase is at times legitimately used. And there are fair questions to ask about scope of authority as well. However, even if all we meant were all categories of things, that would cover about all she does anyway. It is important to point out though, for those who fear some kind of micromanagement by the head of the home, that for practical purposes, the wife is making her own decisions in the areas that she manages. It's just that the husband has general authority over those domains, and at times can make individual decisions in them over her.

Let me give you an example; my wife takes care of the children's eating, clothes, homeschooling and other things. My own authority has placed certain parameters on what she does, and set certain limits, but I do not make every decision for her, nor could I, nor do I desire to. In fact when she is worn out and need some help, I typically have to ask her how she does some things, because that's her domain and not mine. To make things even more specific, my wife may have a general time she plans to give the children their baths. However, if there is a need to make it earlier (as there sometimes is) I do have the authority to say it has to be earlier. I just step in and tell her. It's not that complicated. So to return to my original point, that's how much of the authority arrangement works out when a wife obeys her husband in all things; she still manages her own domains beneath the general headship and decision making of her husband. I think such arrangements are common in headship structures.

Moreover, recognizing that the wife submits to her husband in all – not some – things is in harmony with the biblical truth I pointed out to begin with: that the wife illustrates the Church. The Church is a living body which certainly desires to follow the will of Christ in all – not some – things. We desire to please Him in all we do. Likewise, the wife so views her husband. Like women saints for thousands of years, she is not ashamed to call him lord (1 Peter 3:1-6). That is the beauty of the Christian woman's soul. Not one found in independence. But in submission. Its beauty is incorruptible.

Perhaps this observation belongs at the end of this essay, but I will give it to you here. One of the very best ways for a woman to nurture submission in her soul is to seek to say YES to her man, and avoid whenever possible to word NO. Her word should be a yes. Her attitude a yes. Just as we desire to say yes in all things to our Lord Yeshua, the woman who is a picture of the Church desires to say yes to her husband. Her Christ figure. Just as we seek to receive with grace all that God gives us, including those things which don't sound appealing, so the submissive wife desires to accept all that her husband decides, even if she doesn't think she likes it. It's true it may be impossible to avoid saying "no" in every single situation, but a wife living in the spirit of submission does well to try her best. Like other goals we have in our new life, which can seem completely beyond us at first hearing, we can trust the Holy Spirit of God will give her the grace to do this. We are being transformed by the hand of God.

Distortion 4 We really can't speak of obedience in marriage

This problem false teaching really deserves to be number one on the list. Not only is it extremely common, but it arguable causes the most damage. It strikes at the heart of the marriage relationship, and not only waters it down, but even seems to deny it. If any minister tells you that submission in marriage does not include obedience, they are not to be heeded about marriage. They are without credibility in this matter. Beware. They will mislead you.

The leadership of a husband is real, and he is to be obeyed. True many deny this, but when you look at it, a denial is absurd. If someone told you they submitted to the government authorities, and then broke the law, they would not be submissive, would they? If someone told you they submitted to their employer's authority, and then broke THEIR rules, they would not be submitting, would they? In fact, if someone told you they lived in submission to God, and they willfully and repeatedly disobeyed God, you would have every reason to doubt their submission, wouldn't you? Likewise, to say a wife should submit, but not obey her husband, is

equally absurd. It is an impossibility. To submit is to order yourself BENEATH another's authority, in a relationship which includes obedience.

One can wax philosophical about why the Church is so rebellious against this divine teaching. Why the very sound of a godly wife submitting to her lord in marriage rubs their proverbial fur the wrong way. But it comes down to a hardness of heart, and being repeatedly surrounded by worldly environment and culture. We should be joyful at those words instead. We should know how good and beautiful they are. The apostle Paul did not mind comparing the submissive and meek wife to the matriarch Sarah, who called her husband lord. We should also see the same goodness in it and hunger to live accordingly. Don't buy the modern reinvention of the word submit, brothers and sisters. Submission includes obedience. Or it is not submission.

Distortion 5 **A wife only submits to her husband when he is acting worthy of it**

Honesty, this one doesn't fool so many people, because it's so foolish you've really got to want to be deceived. But you still hear it today, so I will address it. Nowhere does the Bible state that a woman's gentle and quiet spirit, her meek submission to her husband is conditional on him being a great husband. Nowhere. It is conditional simply on him being her husband. Not on him being great at it. If I have a few things for my wife to do, she's not going to say – sorry, buddy, I'm not convinced you would die for me, so I'm not going to obey. That would kind of be a comedy routine if she did. She's going to obey not because I am perfect. Rather, because I am her husband.

Granted, husbands should be as just and righteous and loving in their roles as they can in Christ. It will make that submission much easier and joyful for their wives. But his excellence at his role is not a condition for her submission. In fact, the Bible specifically addresses what a wife should do in the case of a husband who does not obey the Word of God, and the answer is this: ***even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. (1 Peter 3:1,2)*** This means a wife quietly wins over her not-so-godly husband not by refusing to submit, but rather by her submission itself, a submission conducted with a meek spirit. She speaks to him as her lord. How then could submission be conditional to his godliness or excellence? That option is completely ruled out in the Word of God.

Defeating the Enemy

I know that some of you out there already know the truths I've just spoken on. Many already believe most or all of it. But...many don't. The bigger problem though than the sheep who don't accept clear headship is the Church itself, which censors and intimidates anyone who speaks these truths with clarity. They will censor the truth. Sadly, the same Church which complains about the secular PC code in our Humanist society, and who wish it would go away, are true slaves to their own PC code, one which they must demolish if the Word of God can have any open airing and fair preaching in Church. That's especially true in the area of gender roles, where plain talk is almost always quashed and replaced by unclear and even anti-biblical teaching. Those of you out there who know the truth – it's YOUR job to make this PC code a thing of the past in the churches. Speak it plainly in your gatherings. Speak it plainly to your friends. If you have a chance to preach and teach in your congregation, don't mince words about the different roles given to men and women. The censorship has to go. And the Word of God has to be preached.

One of the many things which make this seem urgent to me is this: We live in an era when young people have grown to mistrust marriage in general. Especially the men. They see how they stand to marry a woman who will not respect their leadership, who will make their lives miserable, then easily divorce them, and rob them both of beloved children and hard-earned money. I can see how people today, especially men, distrust marriage so much. It's not what it is meant to be. Moreover, I think of the many women, some who have tried diligently and sincerely to find a man who will marry them and stay with them for life, but find themselves with disinterested men at best or players at worst. I sincerely feel for these women's frustration. For their sorrow. But they have to realize, if they are demanding that marriage is an equal partnership, and if they are refusing to be submissive women to the men they meet, they are causing up to half the problem themselves. They go day after day and year after year waiting for that serious lifelong mate, all the while shoving him away by demanding independence. This is intolerable. Yet it continues. How much better things would be, if we accepted what the Word of God teaches. How much less frustration and loneliness there would be if we respected the natural differences the sexes have, as nearly all civilizations in human history have up to the present. Why continue with this unbelievable mess? Let's obey God in gender instead.

To sum up all of the above, no matter what cowardly churches will tell you these days: husband is an authority position. Much like parent is. Much like boss is. Much like king or Messiah is. Husband is a position of authority. The men out there don't need to worry that they are being greedy with power or arrogant if they use their authority. They do not need to think they are power-hungry when they expect those under them to obey. Rather, it is a normal and good thing to expect. It comes with the position. The people who are trying to chop down this authority are those who do not respect the Bible or the natural differences between the sexes. And if they are trying to attack that authority, they have lost all credibility on the subject. They

should not be teaching you about marriage. And as long as churches are frequently doing that, I will be frequently preaching like this too. Establish your marriage on the clear teachings of scripture, and if you haven't, work as hard as you can to bring it there. We will have more, stronger and happier marriages.

Thank you. And God bless you.