

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** June 20, 2010

**Title:** The Family In Christ - Male Headship

**Text:** Ephesians 5:22-6:9

**Theme:** Husbands are to lead their families by exhibiting a functional headship whereby the wife is prized and the children are cared for.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

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**Introduction:**

My intent in this study is to unpack the text. By default it will be highly application and perhaps pointed. I hope to stay out of the way and let the text speak for itself. It is my prayer that this text will prove pivotal for us as a fellowship and will reach within our hearts and change us forever.

I find it impossible to treat the text fully, but I would like to focus narrowly on the role of husbands as functional heads as it relates to their wives.

Paul has established the truth of being **in Christ** (Ephesians 1-3). He then unpacks what this looks like on multiple levels. He moves from the generic (Eph. 3:5-5:21) to the specific (Eph. 5:22-6:9). His application of this truth (i.e. **in Christ**) is very direct. This is what the family unit looks like **in Christ**.

Our current culture undermines the home and the marriage covenant. This is no different than what existed in Jewish, Greek or Roman culture.

**Our premise:**

Initially when considering this paragraph there are four significant presuppositions.

- The order is Trinitarian
  - It speaks of ontological equality and functional hierarchy
  - It is a shadow and speaks to something greater
  - To make the “shadow” the end is to invite “failure”
- The order is worship focused
  - It is never about **you**, but about **God**
  - To make it about you is inviting “failure”
- The order works **from** position and not **for** position
  - You are not “doing” this to achieve status or to merit favor.
  - This is what the body of Christ looks like in three areas of application.
  - We must always guard against “works righteousness”
- The order is **absolute**, not **optional**
  - That it exists is certain; how it looks is diverse and personal
    - We might not be able to make every necessary application of this principle in every situation, but it becomes evident when this principle is ignored or not right.
  - Its meaning is distinct, but not confined by its immediate context
  - We run contrary to this to our peril in multiple areas.

**The Problem:**

1. We exist in a culture where these “fruits” are **not taught** and thus **respected** both **within** and **without** the church.
2. In the **absence** of ontological equality and functional hierarchy there is nothing but **exploitation** and **anarchy**.

A primary and initial response to the problem is **TEACH** and **LIVE** the **TRUTH**. We must be dominated by who God is, what He does and who we are in Him or we will not be able to enjoy all that is ours in Him. Unless and until this happens the picture laid before us in Ephesians 5:22 will be discouraging and frustrating.

I began by noting how my intent is to unpack the text. It is not to be unnecessarily abrasive or “pig-headed,” but it is to be honest and open with what sits in front of us and what the implications are for us as a community of faith. Without further ado, let us begin.

**Outline:**

- I. For the Married (vv. 22-33).
  - A. Instructions for the wife (vv. 22-24)
  - B. Instructions for the Husband (vv. 25-33)
    1. The Position – Head (v. 23)

I would like to begin by simply noting how the word “head” is used throughout the New Testament. The “head” imagery can speak of primary or prominent or first (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7). First Corinthians 11 uses “head” as functional lead (1 Cor. 11:3-10). It is difficult to speak of headship without including thoughts of leadership and direction. It is intrinsic to the idea. Paul uses this same image when speaking of Christ being “head over all things” as it relates to the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18). Christ is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10). It is this same imagery used in Ephesians 5:23 when speaking of the husband’s headship over his wife. When the head is dishonored or negated the entire body suffers (Col. 2:18, 19). This dysfunction is readily seen on the earthly level where husbands fail to exercise headship or wives fail to respect the headship. It is inside of this context we speak to headship within the marriage covenant and within the home.

2. The Invitation – Love (v. 25a)

The text speaks to his headship in a fascinating way. It would appear completely counter cultural and outside our perceived notions. The ontology and economy within the Trinity forms the foundation from which and on which the home is built. The “role” God the Father exercises in His headship over the Son and the Holy Spirit is to be reflected by and through Christ over the Church and by and through the husband within the home. It is the Trinity that provides the basis for ontological equality and functional hierarchy within the home. And it is

the Church's relationship to Christ that provides the picture of what a marriage relationship looks like judicially/positionally and can be reflected experientially.

In noting this we can inquire further, "Does the Father have 'authority' over the Son and Spirit? It would appear we are asking the wrong question. The language is wrong. Christ does have authority/power over the Church. Yet it is not this aspect of headship that is celebrated. It is the love Jesus Christ has for His Church that is to mark the headship a husband has with his wife (vv. 25, 28, 32). Ephesians notes the husband's headship as loving and it is this love that is pictured in four ways.

- First, as head He is described as "the Savior of the body" (v. 23). This speaks to protection.

All wives should expect to be protected by their husbands. A wife should feel physically secure as a result of their husband's headship.

- Second, as head He is described as "the Sanctifier of the body" (v. 26). This speaks to purification.

A husband should do what is necessary to promote a sense of spiritual, emotional and physical well-being.

- Third, as head He is described as "the Sustainer of the body" (v. 28). This speaks to provision.

Headship seeks to nourish the spouse. A wife should believe her husband is doing his dead level best at providing for her basic needs.

- Fourth, as head He is described as "the Savor of the body" (v. 29). This speaks to prizing.

A wife should feel prized. Husbands need to relish their wives. Please understand no husband bats a 1000%, but his intent should be toward his wives growing sense of well-being.

Love, as used here, speaks of a sacrificial giving of one's self for the benefit of another. Love is an act of the will not just some emotional feeling. You choose to live your life for the benefit of another. Love is not a derivative of the emotions, but of the will. People do not fall into or out of love. People simply choose to or not to love. The feeling of love is the result of the choice of love.

Most of us never want to hear that a wife submits and a husband loves simply because they have to. We want our spouses to desire us. Yet, emotion has little to do with love or submission. If there is not an emotional response, there must still be an intellectual and volitional response and the husband must live for the benefit of the wife.

What I find fascinating about this is that nowhere is headship described as dictatorial or

overbearing or domineering. As functional head in my marriage and home here are my responsibilities toward my spouse: protect, purify, provide for and prize.

### 3. The illustration – the Cross (vv. 25b-31)

Think about this. Although Christ has absolute authority in and over the Church, does the Church ever feel as if His headship is dictatorial or overbearing or domineering? Notice how His love for the Church is described. Remember His love is what headship looks like. Notice with me three characteristics intrinsic to headship.

#### a. Headship is characterized by sacrifice (vv.25b-27)

- What does HEADSHIP **demand** or **require** of the husband?
- SACRIFICE (v. 25)
  - What does sacrifice look like?
    - Offering up your own life for the protecting, purifying, providing and prizing of your spouse.
    - Putting the interests of others above your own (vv. 28, 29 [See further Phil. 2:1-4]).

Everything Christ does for the Church is beneficial.

#### b. Headship is characterized by selflessness (vv. 28-29)

Love for one's wife is, in a real sense, loving one's self (v. 29). Just as you would no more intentionally injure yourself, why then would you harm your wife. Husbands are to love their wives as they love themselves. You will treat your wife like you because you are one with her.

'Just as Christ so also is the husband' (**outos** 'in this manner') to love his wife. Did Christ love the Church as His own body? Yes, because the Church is His body (e.g., 1 Cor. 12).

#### c. Headship is characterized by solidarity/singularity (vv. 30, 31)

Verse 31 is an Old Testament quote of Genesis 2:24. It supports his argument. A husband should love his wife as his own flesh for the two are now one. The word "joined" is a graphic picture of the two becoming one. It means, "To glue upon, glue to; to join one's self to closely, cleave to, stick to."

Here we see God's design for marriage. "The relationship being broken is the authority, the rank of the parent/child relationship. To leave in order to establish a new rank of command."

It is only as we possess these three characteristics that we bring to light those innate qualities of Savior, Sanctifier, Sustainer and Savor. The headship of Christ and thus the husband is not portrayed as controlling or dominating (i.e. "foot on the throat"). It does not speak of restriction or bondage. There is no tone of abuse or bullying. It is this imagery of "headship"

a wife is invited to submit to and respect. Yet neither love nor respect is in response to either one. Both are rendered unconditionally. A wife is to submit to her head, just as the Church submits to Christ. Her submission is one of yielding. Yet it is not a yielding of impingement, but of privilege.

When reading this text I (as a husband) am captured by its beauty. By default of marriage, I am the positional head within my home. I am the functional head when I love my wife by protecting her from evil, purifying her thus enabling the resident beauty of Christ to shine forth, provide for her thus giving her a sense of security and care, and prizing her. My wife should believe she is the most important person in my life. She should sense my desire to place her well-being above my own. **Although this is counter-cultural, it is biblically right.**

Husbands, I call you to function as the head of your home and to love your wife in a manner that is sacrificial, selfless and singular. If you are a single man, learn to serve women in general. Protect them, defend their honor, seek to meet needs where possible and always hold in high esteem our female counterparts. O may this call be our quest. In so doing, the love Christ has for His church is seen. Let us never forget that all we render to our spouse is rendered to Christ. He is the ultimate and final object of our energy and affection. He is the one who lends substance to all our earthly shadows. Today may Jesus be prized in the loving of our wives.

APPLICATION: (Shepherding the Sheep):

Gentlemen will you join me as a husband and labor to be a functional head where our wives are protected, purified, provided for and prized? To men in general, will you accept the invitation to honor and value the women of our fellowship and of women in general? That is the invitation and that is the call.