

The Husband's Core Role in Marriage – Part 2

Introduction:

1. God created two different genders to fulfill two different roles in marriage.
2. A role is the essential function that God has designed a man or woman to fulfill in a marriage relationship.
 - While these roles differ, it doesn't mean that one is superior and one is inferior. Both are of equal value and importance.
 - Roles address one's responsibility, not one's rank. They are equal, but it doesn't mean they are the same. They are to be complementary.
3. Each partner must fulfill his/her God-given role. The understanding of this will determine the quality of life the couple will enjoy.
4. Here is what we want to explore from the Scriptures in this lesson.
 - What is the man's core role in the marriage relationship?
 - How does God expect him to fulfill that role?

The husband's core role: providing leadership in the home.

1. The Scriptures are very clear that the husband's core role in the home is one of headship. **Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3**
 - The word "head" doesn't mean boss, ruler, or dictator.
 - It carries the idea of life-giver, protector, provider, lover; responsible for, developer of. This is the biblical concept.
 - But it always carries the idea of leadership.
 - **Illustration:** the head of the army, the head of a corporation, the head of the home - The word "head" simply means to be the leader.
2. But here is the key question: What **kind** of leader is the husband to be? The apostle Paul had a revolutionary idea of a different kind of leadership.
3. The Bible paints the idea of male headship with:
 - Responsibility, not rank.
 - Sacrifice, not selfishness.
 - Duty, not domination.
4. Men, our role is to lead in these Christ-like colors, seeking our wife's best, even at our own expense.
5. Headship is a calling to empower another human being, not a license to indulge yourself. It is a historic moment when that concept finally sinks in.

Two different leadership styles that husbands employ.

1. The "lording leader" in **Genesis 3:16**.
 - The word "rule" means "to dominate, to keep beneath, to rule over as an absolute sovereign." Let me remind you that this is a statement of the curse of sin right after Adam and Eve fell and sinned.
 - This is foretelling how fallen mankind will naturally tend to live with their wives. It prophesies that they will dominate them and subjugate them to positions of lower status.
 - As we know, this has indeed been the case. We have thousands of cultures and years of history to document that this is exactly what has happened. Women

have struggled under the harsh dominance of natural men for centuries. But this is not the way of Christ.

- When Paul says that a man is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, he is not supporting the curse, he is breaking it! He is showing how men can break the cycle of misery and the "me-first" mentality that the fall of man inaugurated.
- Through Christ, a man can become a leader that reflects the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ **in us** is living **through us** as we live and dwell with our wives. This brings us to our next leadership style that men can employ.

2. The servant leader in **Luke 22:25-27**.

- We see the benefactor in verse 25. A benefactor is one who receives the benefits. Many rulers would use force and employ their supreme power to enrich themselves at the expense of helpless people.
 - In the home, many husbands tend to lord over their wife and children, receiving all the benefits, perks, and advantages.
- But Jesus taught and lived the concept of servant-leadership.
- Jesus was the greatest leader that ever walked the earth, yet He was also the greatest servant.
- These are not two terms we think of as going together. They seem to contradict each other.
- But in God's kingdom, to be the "head" is to be this unique blend of leader and servant.
- Men, we have the responsibility to lead our wives, but our style is to be that of a servant, not a lord. Our aim is not to suck the life out of our wives, but to be a source of life to them. Only then can we proclaim the title "head," as God proclaimed it in Christ.
- Think about it - we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the church? Was it by dominating and forcing His leadership on us? No, He loved us by expending Himself for us and ultimately dying for us so that He could give us life. **John 10:10-11; Ephesians 5:25**

What does a lording leader look like compared to a servant leader?

- Let's look at six issues that are common to every marriage. One disclaimer: I am not setting myself up as the example of the guy who has mastered all of this. Just like every other man, I am a work in progress.
1. Decision making
 - The lording-leader loves to give orders. He is the boss, and he has to have control. He makes all the decisions and everyone else just carries out his directives. If anyone questions his decisions, he silences them with another string of commands.
 - He is not interested in questions, suggestions, or better ideas. He is only interested in getting things done his way. There's no flexibility, even when he is obviously wrong.
 - Discussion is always a threat to a lording-leader.
 - The servant-leader seeks to hear what others in the family think. He stays open to better alternatives, even if he didn't think of them. His chief concern is to do

what is best for everyone involved. He takes everyone's needs and concerns into account and considers how his choices affect each one. **Proverbs 18:13**

2. Understanding the wife's needs
 - The lording-leader knows little about his wife's feminine needs. He has never given it much thought.
 - The servant-leader seeks to understand his wife better (**1 Peter 3:7**). He accepts that she is built differently than him, and he doesn't patronize her or demean her because she is a woman. He truly seeks to understand her better. He listens when she talks.
3. Conflict
 - The lording-leader becomes defensive when his wife challenges him with her thoughts and views. He views everything with a win-lose perspective. He can't stand to be wrong and his wife right. He is an expert at manipulating her to go along with his wishes.
 - The servant-leader is interested in arriving at the truth and values his wife's input (**2 Timothy 2:24**). She provides valuable perspective to his blind spots.
 - He wants to know what is right; not who is winning. He is a man of truth, not a scorekeeper.
4. Strengths and weaknesses
 - The lording-leader loves to point out the flaws and failures of his wife. Day and night, he tears her down, as if by criticism he will make her better.
 - The servant-leader focuses on what is right and good about his wife. He constantly affirms her, emphasizing her significance and importance in his life. **Ephesians 5:25**
 - This energizes a woman to grow, develop, and reach new heights. **Proverbs 31:28**
5. Power
 - The lording-leader pushes and manipulates his wife. He intimidates her to get his way (maybe even physically). He never helps his wife with the household chores. He is King Tut and deserves to be treated as royalty. He makes his wife feel like hired help.
 - Because he doesn't want to face his own weaknesses and insecurities, he tries to reassure himself that he is a real man by asserting his power and masculinity in domineering and maybe even violent ways.
 - The servant-leader refuses to resort to intimidation, regardless of whatever differences he might have with his wife. He has set his heart to value what she thinks is best for the marriage and for their lives. **Ephesians 5:28**
6. Spiritual direction
 - The lording-leader is conspicuously absent in this area. He isn't dominating or forceful at all. The wife must set the spiritual tone of the household. "All that spiritual stuff isn't manly."
 - The servant-leader sets the spiritual tone in his home (**Ephesians 6:4**). He tries to keep God's perspective in view and help his family reflect biblically on things that happen in their lives.

In Conclusion:

1. Men, we must look at ourselves honestly and ask, "What kind of leader am I?"
2. Do some of these descriptions of the lording-leader have an all too comfortable fit?
3. The wonderful thing is that we can all decide to change, and we **can** change through a complete trust and reliance on Christ.
4. I have provided a handout for you tonight entitled, "21 Ways To Be a Servant-Leader." Take it home and read it carefully and pray over it.