

# Order in the Home

## Ephesians 5:21-33

**INTRODUCTION:** There is an ancient story about those gathered at the gate of Heaven, where they found two signs. On the left was a sign that read, "Stand here if you did what your wife told you to do." Behind that sign stood a number of men greater than the stars of the sky or the sand of the sea shore.

Another sign to the right said, "I did as I wanted." Behind that sign stood one man. St. Peter approached the man out of curiosity and said, "I have to ask, in thousands of years, no man has ever stood behind that sign. What makes you different? Why did you stand behind that sign?" The man replied, "I don't know; my wife told me to stand here."

Order in the home is a difficult subject to address, yet it is vital to the order of society as a whole.

You see, my grandfathers were not highly religious men. Yet, if you walked up to either one of them and asked, "Is it wrong to lie?" they would say, "Of course." If you pressed further and said, "Why is it wrong to lie?" they would say, "Because it is a sin." If you continued to press and say, "Who says it is a sin?" they might answer, "God says it is a sin." If you said, "Where did you hear that God said that?" they would say, "Hand me a Bible".

In that day, even the atheist disbelieved in the God they talked about down at the Baptist church, you see?

Today, those foundations have been shaken. Those old presuppositions have been demolished.

**CONTEXT:** Something similar happened in Paul's day, especially when he took the Gospel outside Israel's influence. In Greece for example, when Paul came to Athens, it has been said there were more statues of gods in that city than there were men. Yet, they had no understanding of the God of Moses.

Venturing on to Corinth, he found a city where families were in extreme disorder - sins were happening there, in the context of the Church, that didn't even happen in the lost world. Therefore, he began to set things in order.

In almost all of the Pastoral Epistles, Paul has a section that Martin Luther called the "***Hauستafel***," which means the household code in German. Similar codes were given by the famous Greek philosophers of the day.

The idea was that for society to have order, the home must have order. Yet, when the Greeks looked to their pantheon of Gods for an understanding of rightness and order, they found deities that were more messed up than humans.

In Greece, like in many Middle Eastern cultures today, a head covering was worn to show subjection to one's husband. Yet, in the Corinthian Church, women began to cast off their head coverings. Beyond that, they would shave off their hair to indicate that they were subject to no one.

This made perfect sense when they looked to the pagan gods of their day for direction.

Paul, on the other hand, looked to the holy, righteous, trinitarian God of Scripture and deduced from Him how a home should be ordered.

So, when we pick up in verse 3 of chapter 11, Paul is introducing his haustafel. But notice where he begins to talk about the order of the home. Paul doesn't begin in the home... he begins in the nature of God.

**TEXT: 1 Corinthians 11:3–6 (ESV)**

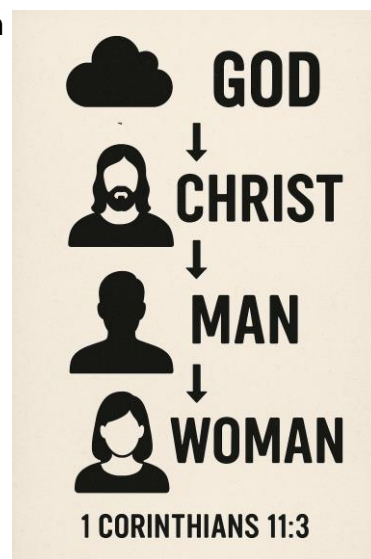
<sup>3</sup> But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

So, Paul begins setting the home in order by turning our attention to the order within the Godhead.

- God the Father rules and leads
- Christ, though equal with the Father, willingly and lovingly subjects Himself to the Father.
- The Husband, therefore, is to willingly and lovingly subject himself to Christ.
- Then the Wife, willingly and lovingly subjects herself to her husband, who is submitted to Christ.

This is how it is supposed to be. But in our day, like in Paul's, there has been a wholesale rejection of this biblical mandate. Notice how it was manifest in Corinth:

<sup>4</sup> Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.



It began with men casting off the authority of Christ. Greek culture was different from Jewish culture; Jewish men wore skull caps to indicate they were submitted to God. The Greeks would remove their head covering, the way a man in the South takes his cap off when he prays. These men, in rebellion, would break those cultural norms intentionally to declare that they were subject to no one.

So, notice the HUSBAND is called to subject himself to proper authority before the wife is. Men, let's be honest, this isn't easy for us any more than it is for our wives.

- How many of you just love when a police officer flashes those blue lights?
- How many of you just get a thrill out of paying your taxes?
- How many of you eagerly subject your will to God's?

But that is where it begins - a MAN subject to authority.

MEN, if a young man wishes to marry your daughter, the first question you should ask is how is that young man subjected to the authorities in his life. If he is unable to submit to proper authority, your daughter will have great difficulties submitting to him.

**ILLUSTRATION:** One of the most interesting passages on how authority works was when a centurion approached Jesus and asked him to heal his servant. Jesus said that he would go to the centurion's home and do so. Yet, the centurion said, "I am not worthy for you to come under my roof," ... but sir, I understand how authority works, you say the word, and it will be done. Then he gives the secret... FOR I, TOO, AM ONE UNDER AUTHORITY. You see, this centurion knew that while he was rightly under the authority of Ceaser, he spoke with the authority of Ceaser. Jesus under the authority of the Father, could do the same... so men it begins with our submission.

Then, notice how Paul instructs the wives:

<sup>5</sup> but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. <sup>6</sup> For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. <sup>7</sup> For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.

So, Paul is reproving the church and calling them to reflect the biblical pattern in ways that are appropriate to their particular culture. Now, he did this from the nature of the Godhead, then he proceeded to argue the case from the nature of creation.

<sup>8</sup> For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup> Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. <sup>10</sup> That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

That verse seems out of place by the way our logic operates. But it seems to be indicating that as our angelic friends watch how we carry on in our families and in the Church, they are confused and bewildered when we are out of order. Just as they subject themselves to proper authority, they expect us, who are on the same team, to do the same.

Paul describes this order more explicitly in **Ephesians 5:22–23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

What does it mean to be the HEAD OF YOUR HOME? Well, it's a term that is a figurative term used frequently in Scripture to speak of authority or leadership.

So, the husband is to be the **LEADER** of the wife just as Jesus is the LEADER of the Church.

- He didn't say, "The Husband is **SUPPOSED** to be the leader"
- "The Husband **OUGHT** to be the leader"
- But rather, "The Husband **IS** the leader"

**NOTE:** Paul did not say, "All men are to lead all women." This is specifically speaking to the Christian home.

What does it mean to be the spiritual leader of your home? Well, to understand it best, Paul calls us to look to Jesus as an example.

- **Headship/Leadership does not mean Superiority -**  
Within the trinity, there is absolute equality, but there is also diversity and order. The Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit. The Son subjects His will to that of the Father, the Spirit comes to glorify the Son.
- **Headship does not mean that you are somehow better than your wife –**  
She is described as a weaker vessel... that has reference to her physical body, not what is in the vessel. Her heart, soul, and mind may be much stronger than yours. I will tell anybody, Julie has always had a more sincere, consistent walk with the Lord than I have. I can beat her at arm wrestling, but she can probably out pray me.
- **Headship doesn't mean that you lead autocratically** or independently of your wife -  
I chose her as my wife, she is what the Bible calls my Bride-Elect. I chose her as a warrior chooses his weapon or an artist chooses his medium. I would be a fool to operate and lead independently of her counsel.
- **Headship does not equal infallibility –**  
You are not some sort of Protestant Pope in the home. You do not speak ex-cathedra. You will get it wrong many times.

## 1. Headship Does Mean Responsibility

Remember in Genesis 3, God warned man and woman not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They both ate, as a matter-of-fact Eve ate first and shared it with Adam. But when God came to call them to account what did he say?

**Genesis 3:8–9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

**2. Headship Does Mean Sacrifice****Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and **gave himself up for her**,

The essence of biblical leadership is self-sacrifice for the good of those you lead.

Remember, we subject ourselves first to a man with nails scars in his hands, ...and then we are willing to lead our families with those same scars.

- **Exodus 32** - God is so angry with Israel that he decides to kill them all. Moses intercedes and begs God to take him and let the people live.
- **2 Sam. 24** - The Death Angel is moving over Israel striking the people, David sees what is happening, and he volunteers to die so that the people might live.
- **Romans 9** - Paul said that he would be willing to die and go to Hell so that his fellow Jews might be saved.

Moses didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

David didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

Paul didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

But there was another that stood before God and said, “Take me and give them life.”

Brother, in the same way you are called to sacrifice for your wife and children.

That means,

- You may have to wait a few years on that new boat.
- You may have to get up early to drop them off at school.
- You may have to have to say NO to what you want in order to provide what they need.

You say, “Pastor, I do sacrifice, but they don't even acknowledge it... they don't say thank you and frankly, I'm not sure they deserve it.”

**Romans 5:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Deserve had nothing to do with it.

### 3. Headship Means Setting the Direction

Jesus had risen from the dead; he was about to ascend into Heaven. But before he did, he set the direction for his bride, the Church.

**In Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) we see the only passage that can be found in all four Gospels and the book of Acts.**

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

In other words, I’m the head, I’m the leader...

<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

So, the Church wasn’t told to get together and come up with some clever idea that they could put on coffee mugs and bumper stickers.... The leader set the direction. The leader set the vision. We know what we are supposed to be doing.

Question - do your wife and kids know what they are supposed to be doing? Have you set the direction for them? Have you given a clear vision? What does a win look like for your family?

In 20 years, will your family arrive somewhere intentionally? Or, may your family be better described as drifting? If so, get with Jesus and learn how to lead well.

**CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**