

A Biblical View Of Authority Part 4 (The Relationship of the Husband and the Wife)



3. The unique nature of the husband's authority (as owner and a type of Christ) in relation to his wife, establishes unique expectations for himself before God (Eph 5:25-33):

3.1. Like Christ, the husband's authority over his wife is given for the purpose of loving her (25a, 28, 33).

3.2. The demands or decisions he therefore makes in relation to his wife, himself and his household will never cause her harm, but instead always be lawful or righteous since this is the definition of love (Rom 13:8-10 = love follows the Law or is always righteous toward others).

3.3. As such, the rule of the husband must be characterized by those righteous-love (or "wisdom from above") traits found in (1Co 13:4-7; Jam 3:17)

3.4. If the husband's rule is truly loving, meaning that it is characterized by the righteous and wise traits found in 1Corinthians 13 and James 3, then it will be apparent in the joyful testimony of his household (wife and children). He will be viewed as a wise and righteous king (Pro 29:2).

3.5. Like Christ, the husband's authority over his wife is based on his marital vow to *also* love her through seeking her emotional and physical well-being as important as his own (25b) - "gave Himself up for her" = Made a vow (or promise) to promote her emotional and physical well-being as necessary to gaining her as his wife. Both the wife's respectful submission and the husband's promotion of her emotional and physical well-being represent the promises/vows recognized by God in the ratification of any marriage covenant (Eze 16:8 w/Gen 2:23-24¹ w/Gen 28:13-22 w/Eze 11:20, 14:11, 36:28, 37:23, 27; Rev 21:2-3 w/Eph 5:28-32 - "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies...no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it [feeds it for physical health] and cherishes it [comforts it for emotional stability], just as Christ does the church" - regarding feeding see Heb 13:5-6; Phi 4:19; Psa 23:5; regarding comfort see 2Th 2:16-17 w/Act 9:31; 2Co 1:3-7; Psa 23:4). Hence the reason the Paul's marital instruction can be boiled down to the vows each spouse took at the time covenant was being made (Eph 5:33).

3.6. If the husband is keeping his vow to seek his wife's well-being, then it will include also the promotion of her moral character thru faithful and frequent encouragement, instruction, correction, admonishment and application from God's Word in relation to her life and their life together. In short, he will build his house on the rock of God's Word - causing her to see her life and his leadership thru the lens of God and His Word (Mat 7:24). This too will be apparent based on her personal testimony and the transformation of her moral character - i.e. in her becoming a respectful, submissive, holy and blameless woman of God. He will (as a result) be viewed (by her and the rest of the household) as a faithful priest to their home (26-27) = Christ's actions in these verses represent one of the most important duties of the priest who through faithful and frequent speaking of God's Word to the people not only made them mindful or knowledgeable to God's will and ways, but in so doing, sanctifying or "cleansing" [aorist participle] them from future sin thru both the removal of its practice [i.e. its "spot or wrinkle" in their character] and the establishing of new godly practice [that which made them "holy and without blemish" or "blameless" in their character]. IOW: He/the priest was to maintain the beauty/salvation of God's people thru the ministry of the Word - Eze 16:8-15 [the beauty referred to in these verses is an allusion to the Temple and its priestly ministry; see 1:3 w/7:26 w/33:7-20 = the priests failed to be the "watchmen" over God's wife/people - i.e. they failed to maintain their gained beauty or salvation thru continual cleansing or speaking of God's righteous words/Law to the people]; Hos 4:1-9; Mal 2:5-7; Psa 19:7-14, 23:5 w/Joh 15:3 and 17:17; also 1Ti 4:16²; 2Ti 4:1-2). The point not to miss = the husband as household priest must beautify his wife thru frequent washing w/the Word.

3.7. Seeing that God expects the husband to play an important role in his wife's moral character:

3.7.1. Equally means we should expect no first-time Christian wife to enter marriage already spiritually mature (Ecc 7:25-29)

3.7.2. Reveals that the only thing stopping a husband from his divine calling in this respect, is ignorance or idolatry. After today, it is likely to only be idolatry (Jam 4:17)

3.7.3. Agrees with his identity as his wife's owner, since in Scripture, ownership not only establishes authority - but also responsibility (1Ti 3:4a - "manage his own household well" = Household refers first to the relationship of the husband and the wife. Hence the reason the term husband - which means householder or ruler of the house is a marital designation versus a parental designation [i.e. father], though the children are also under his authority. This is most likely why Paul mentions the man's role in managing them separately - 4b. The point not to miss = it is the husband who is viewed as responsible for his household's success or failure)³.

3.8. Should a husband's failure to sufficiently love and provide for his wife emotionally, physically and spiritually/morally, cause her to fail in becoming the respectful, submissive, holy and blameless wife God has called her to be, then he (too) will be condemned to Hell (i.e. the requirement for salvation is faithfulness not improvement/growth - Mat 24:45-25:46; Mat 18:1-10). Understand then that it is a solution-oriented mindset God expects the husband to have in relation to the rule and reform of his wife. Excuses (btw) are not solutions.

4. The importance of the husband's rule in relation to his wife cannot be over-emphasized given it is not only a crucial key to her spiritual state, but also the husband's ability to advance the gospel, minister to Christ's church and withstand the storms of life (In re: to the gospel = Only when we are faithful to our roles in marriage do we accurately preach the gospel of marriage between Christ and His church; In re: to the church - 1Ti 3:5 = Only those faithful in their roles as husbands will be successful managers of their households and therefore qualified to minister to God's church; In re: to the storms of life - Mat 7:24-27 = Only those building their households on His words - whose husbands are anchored to the "rock" of loving, righteous rule and faithful discipleship - can withstand the inevitable difficulties that will come in life.).

¹ Scholars have long agreed that Adam's vow is the same as God's to His people ("bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh" versus "I will be their God, they shall be my people"). Both communicate not only the husband's ownership of his wife, but also their responsibilities. For the husband, it is caring for what is now a part of his body (my bone...my flesh...my people), for the wife, it is supporting the head of the body she is now a part of (bone of...flesh of...their God).

² It is no accident that the adornment of the priest resembled that of the husband (or bridegroom) on the day of his wedding (Isa 61:10).

³ The only time it is possible for the failure (or success) of the wife's spiritual state to not have some bearing on the husband is if she is an unbeliever. Even then however, how the husband leads and loves her can have an impact on her spiritually (1Co 7:12-16).