

This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript.

Teaching: Carlon Tschetter
Series: Marriage God's Way
Message: God's Vision for a Christian Husband

Transcribed Message
July 24, 2022
Ephesians 5

Over the years as I have done premarital counseling, one of the things I'm always on the lookout for is new resources. Something that comes along that I want to pass along to the couple before they get married. A good read. Something for me to help in that process in challenging them about what is ahead. So, I'm listening to a podcast of a couple pastors and they're talking about a new resource of premarital counseling resources and it included a workbook. The workbook that they describe, one of the things they said about it is it was filled with questions. I love questions. I love to ask questions of these young couples and get them thinking about what is coming and maybe thinking about things they hadn't thought of. And so I got this resource. As I began to read it and look it over, I came to a chapter that was called "Who's the Boss".

As I'm reading these questions, the tone and the nature of the questions put me a little bit at a place of unease. I want to read a few of these questions and see how they strike you. One of them said, "Describe a marriage you've observed in which the husband is the clear undisputed ruler." I have been doing this a long time. I have never referred to a husband as an undisputed ruler. The question in regard to that is this happy? Is this a happy marriage? Is this a healthy marriage? Another question said: Have you witnessed the marriage in which the woman seemed to control the family and be in charge of everything? How did this work? Did this seem normal? Did this seem natural? And then maybe the one that confirmed my concern the most was this one: If you knew a young male who had grown up believing that the man is clearly the head of the home, but the man should be nice about it and not a jerk, how would you discuss this with the young man? At that point I know the answer to that. My answer to that is I would take him to Scripture and show him what the vision of a godly husband is to look like. And don't you know that's our lesson this morning. So let's do that together.

What we discover as we come to these verses this morning is this. Husbands, in marriage the primary way you express your obedience to Christ is by loving your wife like Christ loves you. Let's begin with what we've already seen to this point and hopefully you are at least in some measure in agreement with me on these things. If you're not that's okay too. But here's what we've looked at. We have said first of all, and we've said this repeatedly, that men and women are equally created in the image of God. That is simply what the Scriptures teach without equivocation. No differences at all here. There is total equality with regard to personhood, with regard to dignity, with regard to destiny, with regard to moral responsibility. Men and women are created equally in the image of God.

Secondly, we have said that we believe that in the Scriptures there are functional differences between men and women in the church and in the home. I think you see as we have hopefully in the opening chapters of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 been laying the foundation by putting forward different principles that underscore the fact that God has some different things in mind for men than He does for women, for husbands than He does for wives, in the church and in the home. even in the description of the fall in chapter 3 there are numerous ways as you read that story that show us that there is a functional difference in the eyes of God with regard to the man and the woman. That does not change. Point B does not in any way change point A. having functional differences between the two does not impact or adversely affect point A in which there is absolute total equality.

Thirdly, these differences are described in terms that the Bible uses of biblical headship and helper. Husbands are charged with the responsibility to lead, to initiate, to provide, to protect. A wife is charged with the responsibility to support, to complete, to affirm, to submit. This is what Paul talks about in Ephesians 5 when he speaks of the mystery of marriage. The mystery of marriage is such that is pictured in the relationship between Christ and the church. That is to be brought over and visually shown to us in marriage. These roles are not arbitrary. They're not reversible without adversely impacting the very purpose and goal that God has in mind with regard to both the church and the family. So this morning, husbands who lead and who love like Christ.

Let's begin like we did last week. Let's talk about first of all this matter of what biblical headship looks like and let's do again as I said what we did last week and start off by saying some things that it is not. Biblical headship is not in reference to the question that I asked earlier. It is not a command to rule. Biblical headship is not a command to rule. If God wanted men to rule their homes, He would've said men rule your homes. He didn't say that. He did command men to love their wives. He never commanded them to rule their home. the Bible doesn't say for husbands to make sure that your wives are submitting to you. That seems like a perfectly normal follow-up command. Wives, submit to your husbands. Husbands, make sure that she is submitting to you. He never says that. He never commands a husband to exercise authority over his wife. He does command and He does tell us that we're to love our wife like Christ loved the church. The principle of headship that is taught in Scripture both explicitly and implicitly is a command that is given to us in the context of loving your wife as Christ loved the church. It is to live with her in an understanding way. It is to honor her, as we'll see Lord willing next week in 1 Peter 3.

Secondly, headship is not an opportunity to exploit. It is not an opportunity to exploit. As we'll see, headship is not self-centered. Headship is not self-exaltation. Any man who is focused on his authority and his power is missing the teaching of Scripture with regard to what he is called to. It's a gross distortion of God's plan. When a man becomes so focused on the issue of authority. The guy is walking around his home and making pronouncements about how he's the head of the home. I think we would all question whether he was in fact the head of the home if he has to go around and tell everybody that he is. There is no place for any kind of abuse of authority or power within the context of marriage and the home. we have a God-given responsibility to lead and love. It's probably unfortunately a fair statement to say that in this matter of headship and this charge that God gives to husbands and to men that there have been distortions of this and people have wrongly made applications to what this means in both the church and in the home. but those distortions never allow for there to be exploitation.

Thirdly, I'm going to say this again and I probably will say it again next Sunday and maybe the Sunday after that, but here it is again. Headship is not about superiority or inferiority. Scripture nowhere supports any kind of attitudes of chauvinism or

misogynism. Because we have seen people again acting that way does not validate that behavior. I know a lot of you last year listened to the podcast “The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill”. It was telling about the experience of the church in Seattle that was pastored by Mark Driscoll that took a very bad turn and a lot of bad things happened. There was a lot of expressions it seemed against women that were not biblical. If you remember, those of you that listened to that podcast at least as I listened to it and as other people listened to it and critiqued it, there was often times in those interviews and in those conversations an underlying sense of we know what's behind all of these problems. It's complementarianism. It's this view that the men are to be the head of the church and men are to be the head of the home. when you have that mentality, this is what it leads to. Again that's a false application of a biblical principle because that's not what the Scriptures call for. It is not superiority. It is not inferiority. Look at how Jesus treated women. That is the example that we follow. He always interacting with kindness and love and grace and compassion and truth, but He did so beautifully.

Then the fourth thing, headship is not a husband making every decision. Headship is not a husband making every decision. We touched on this last week when we talked about what submission looks like. When we said submission is not a wife not having a voice or never contributing or never saying anything or just nodding in agreement. No, a man who doesn't give his wife the opportunity to exercise initiative and be creative and make choices and create space in her home that truly reflects who she is. In my mind, this is my opinion, it's a guy who's got some issues. He's got some issues I suppose and insecurity about what his leadership looks like, because headship does not mean that your wife is not engaged and involved in things that make that home one of value and of joy. He is to be modeling again godly leadership in his headship.

So if those are some things that headship is not, then let's look at the positive side of what headship is. The first thing I want to establish is that it is a biblical principle. It is a biblical principle. It is not rooted in culture. Our friends who are egalitarians, who believe that there are no functional differences between men and women in the church and in the home. Egalitarians almost always begin here and say that what we read in the Scripture is culturally mandated and culturally driven. We're not living in that culture anymore and therefore we don't have to follow those purposes and designs any longer.

I want to say to you that this issue, this biblical principle of headship, is not rooted in culture. It is rooted in creation. When you go back to Genesis, you see in those first opening chapters that this is where the principle of headship is established. When you go to 1 Corinthians 11, Paul takes us back to creation. In Ephesians 5, he takes us back to creation. What is he doing in 1 Timothy 2? He takes us back to creation. It's always to creation that the writers of Scripture go, not to culture. Certainly there are cultural differences, but headship and submission and functional differences are rooted in the creative design that God has for men and for women.

When we look at Ephesians 5 and we look at that 23rd verse and right after Paul said that wife should be in submission to the husband, he says the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. His church, a body of which He is the Savior. He makes a very clear and explicit statement. Here's I think a good definition of headship. Someone has said, "Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership to protect and provide within his marriage and his family." Let me read it again: The divine calling. Men, it's the call of God on your life to be the head of your home, to lead within your marriage. You are to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership in protecting and providing in your marriage and in your family.

With that in mind, I say secondly to you that it is more a responsibility than it is a right. Headship is more of a responsibility, men, than it is a right. A right is something that you demand. A right is something that is owed to you. Here we are seeing a responsibility which is a trust. It's something of a sacred obligation. That's the way you should view it. It's a totally different tone. We don't talk about husband's ruling their home. we talk about husbands loving and serving within the context of their leadership while they are protecting and providing as the primary responsibility that God has entrusted to them.

Thirdly, headship is all about serving. It's all about serving. Listen to what John Stott said. I think he did a great job in in this statement about headship and serving. Listen to what he said: "If headship means power in any sense, then it is power to care, not to crush. Power to serve, not to dominate. Power to facilitate, not self-fulfillment. Not to frustrate or destroy. And in all this, the standard of the husband's love is to be the

cross of Christ on which He surrendered Himself even to death in His selfless love for His bride.” We talk about servant leadership. Why? We talk about servant leadership because biblical leadership is almost always couched in terms of serving others. That is what leaders do. Men and women of integrity that are leading are doing so with an attitude of service especially as we think in the context of the home. Jesus Himself said He came not to be served. If anybody deserved to be served, it was Jesus. The Son of God comes down from heaven. He should have been served! But He said no, I didn't come here to be served. I came here to serve. Men, you step into your marriage and you step in with an attitude, a heart, a mindset that is not I finally got somebody to serve me. No, it is you're stepping into a mindset that says I am going to be the one who is serving you. It is with that in mind that we read in Philippians 2:7 of Jesus who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. He endured and humbled Himself all the way to the cross.

Then notice the fourth thing. Headship is about loving and honoring your wife. Headship is about loving and honoring your wife. With that in mind, let's go to Ephesians 5. We're going to fill in that detail by looking at what loving your wife looks like. What loving your wife looks like, and we go to Ephesians 5. This passage that I read before and the thing that comes out of this passage at the end where Paul talks in verse 32 – this is a profound mystery. It's the mystery of marriage that we step into in this Ephesians 5 passage. This relationship between the husband and wife Paul says is the mystery of marriage.

Look in verse 32 at the example that we are to follow: “This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church.” So marriage is to picture the original. It is to reflect the original. Christ loving the church. Christ loving the church, putting the church before Himself and giving Himself for us. Follow My example, Jesus would say to us. Husbands who love their wives and wives who submit to them are a snapshot, a portrait, a picture of this mystery, of this relationship between Christ and the church. So here we are this morning as the church the body of Christ. God the Son Jesus comes in and He loves us to the point of death on the cross. He brings us into this relationship with Him. And what is our heart response back? We submit to Him in

every area, every detail of life. It's called the Lordship of Christ for a reason because we're in submission to Him.

That picture of Christ and the church is what is carried over into every one of our marriages. It's a relationship of a husband who is exercising this headship in the context of loving service. The wife in response to her husband's loving service she submits back to him. And that motivates him to love and serve her even more. And what does that do for her? it motivates her to encourage and support and complete him even more. And then he is more motivated. You see, it's just a beautiful picture of this example. What ultimately is it? It's this message that we're to ultimately display which is powerful and profound and nothing less than the gospel. That's the beauty of this 5th chapter. Your marriage is to be reflecting the glory of the gospel. As people watch you interact as a husband and wife, they can't help but realize there's something unique and different and beautiful going on here. There's a mutual love and respect and care and honoring of each other. That's distinctive. That's different. That isn't happening everywhere. In fact, that is not happening near enough even in the church. But that's the beauty of this message that we're to be putting on display. It takes us right back to the first verses of this chapter. "Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." So that's where we are.

What kind of love is this? What kind of love is this? We all know that the word "love" is the most used, most misused, most abused word or one of them in all of the English language. It is thrown around all over the place all of the time with all kinds of different meanings and contexts. When we read love your wife as Christ loved the church, what are we looking at here? It reminds me of the conversation between a husband and wife. She said to him, honey, say the three words that I long to hear. He thought for a moment and he said let's eat out. She was wanting to hear him say I love you and then let's eat out. But I love you. those are the words that we long to hear. Let's summarize what this looks like.

This is the highest love that the New Testament puts before us. You've heard these different Greek words: *eraiō*, *phileo*, *stergō*, *agape*. This one as you know is that highest of all kinds of love which is *agape*. That's what Paul has in view. The strongest,

the most intimate kind of love that is shared between people and in this case between us and God. When the young man asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment remember Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love *agape* the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your might, and your neighbor as yourself. But he used this word. we know that when John expresses Jesus's love for us "for God so loved the world" is *agape*. He gave His only begotten Son. It is a love that is directed to our will. It is not directed to our emotions. It is not directed to how we feel. I can't command you to feel a certain way. you either feel a certain way or you don't. nobody can come into your life, nobody can step in your life and command your emotions. We can't command the way we feel.

It's important to note the Scriptures don't do that with regard to marriage. God is not commanding men to feel an emotion of love towards their wives in this statement. Love your wife as Christ loved the church is a command that is directed to our will, to our choices, to our actions. That's the point that he would make here. Sinclair Ferguson nailed it when he said, "Love is not maximum emotion. Love is maximum commitment." Karen Koehn just told me that she and Joe have been married sixty years. There are other people in the church family who have been married 6 decades or longer. But how do you get to 60 years? You don't get to 60 years simply by emotion and simply by feeling. Now obviously there's a strong emotion and a strong feeling within the context of love, but that ebbs and flows at times. We all know that. Those of us who are married and have been married we know that emotions ebb and flow. That's not what holds a marriage together. What holds the marriage together is the commitment to love. It is the commitment to act. It is the commitment to persevere. That's what he is saying to us here. Husbands love your wife in this way...which takes us back to verse 18.

Be filled with the Spirit. Be controlled by the Spirit. How can you do that? You can't! you're married to a sinner. And the sinner you're married to is married to a sinner. Two sinners can't achieve this apart from divine enablement and help. That's the context in which this flow of loving is only possible at this level and in this kind of commitment when we're depending on, leaning on, and trusting God in all of those circumstances. This is a Christlike love.

Now there are four ways that we can picture this and we're going to do this quickly as we move into the end here. But there are four ways. We'll touch on some of these again next Sunday as well but notice verse 25: "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." If you had to come up with a word that would describe the love of verse 25 and we had time we could step into that and hear what you might say. I think the word that fits it most is sacrificial. It's sacrificial. He gave Himself up for her. That phrase takes us from heaven to earth, from the glory of heaven and it takes us all the way to the horror of the cross. He gave Himself up for us. It's a statement of radical self-abandonment. It is a statement of radical self-denial. That's what it means when he said He gave Himself up for her.

If I asked you guys this morning would you die for your wife, I think most of you would think of some scenario in which your wife is in jeopardy. Her life is literally on the line. She needs some form of protection, some kind of rescue, and you can envision right now doing something heroic to save her. That's commendable because I believe you would do that. But what this text is asking is are you willing to live for your wife every day. To that question, a lot of guys are not quite so sure. That's the point. It's not just enough to think of some scenario in which you would be the hero and rescue your wife and literally put your own life on the line. He's calling on you to put your life on the line every day in loving your wife. It is an act of self-abandonment. Sacrificial love is always a love that denies self. That of course is the calling of the Christian life anyway. A marriage can only flourish when both husband and wife die to self every day. We die to self every day. Every day we die to self.

Secondly, it's intentional. Verses 26 and 27. "...to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless." Two verbs jump out of those two verses. To make and to present. There's a goal in mind. There's a purpose in mind. There's a view here of seeing something and I think you can summarize those two verses with two words. Spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership. Look at that. To present. To make. A husband's goal is to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word to present her to himself. That's part of the charge that God has given to you, men, as spiritual leaders in your home.

I think a lot of men in their heart of hearts want to be the spiritual leader in their home. They desire that, but I think a lot of men aren't exactly sure how that works or what to do. So they tend very often to shrink back from that. Godly wives, bless their hearts, are often put in that position then of being the spiritual leader in their home. If their husband is not going to do it then somebody's going to. Somebody has to. But these two verses, men, charge us with spiritual leadership. We are to make. We're to present. This is a goal and a purpose that is in view.

Let me just briefly give you four things that when I think of spiritual leadership and what this might look like in your home and in your life. These are things I would think of. First of all, most importantly, you have to be pursuing Christ yourself. You have to be pursuing Christ yourself. You have to be in the word daily yourself. it's not enough for you to look across the room and see your wife reading her Bible every day and draw strength from that for yourself. You've got to be doing that. You've got to be pursuing Christ. You've got to be growing in your walk with Christ. You need to consider the possibility of joining in a men's group and finding that mutual encouragement, to press into together your walk with Christ. But it begins there. If that's not happening, this isn't going to work. You're not going to be making and you're not going to be presenting your wife in the way that God calls you to.

Secondly, I would suggest this. I'm preaching to myself, okay. This is all to Carlon. Practice it more and preach it less. Practice it more and preach it less. Which is simply to say, live by example. What God has called you as a husband who is leading his home as a servant leader and what that looks like. In this case, be a little less of a preacher and more of a practitioner. Be doing it and not telling everybody else how to do it.

Thirdly, honor your wife. honor your wife. We are going to step into that and more next Sunday.

Then I think pray for her. Pray with her. Pray with your family. That's part of spiritual leadership. That is part of what that looks like. I know, guys. I know, having talked to hundreds of guys, this is an area of spiritual leadership in the home. It is an area of spiritual conflict and spiritual battle in every home that I'm aware of because the enemy does not want you to fulfill this calling. He knows what's at stake. He knows that

a marriage like this is presenting the beauty of the gospel and he does not want that to happen. So he puts within you a lot of doubt and insecurity, and a lot of feelings of insufficiency about your capacity as a spiritual leader. You need to just push back against that. You need to step into your God-given role. Trust me, your wife will encourage you even as you stumble along. She will love the fact that you are taking on this area of responsibility.

Then thirdly, it's caring. It is caring. Verse 28: "In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their bodies just as Christ does the church for we are members of His body." Two words. Nourish and cherish. We're going to look at that more next Sunday.

Then lastly, it's steadfast. This love that God calls us to is steadfast. Or another way of saying is it is permanent. Look at verse 31. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh." There we are. Right where we started six weeks ago. Leaving. Cleaving. Becoming one flesh. There is this sense of an unbroken, exclusive, lifelong commitment that we make to each other. So, husbands, in marriage the primary way you express your obedience to God and to Christ is by loving your wife like Christ loves the church and loves each one of us.

What do we take away? Treasuring your marriage requires action. Treasuring your marriage requires action. I want to give you three real quick practical things. Give your wife a voice. Give your wife a voice. Invite your wife to speak into your life. Invite your wife to speak into your life. Yeah, sometimes it hurts. Sometimes it can be hard. And maybe when she says something that falls into that category, before you respond, you just need to step back and give yourself a little time to think about what she said. But invite your wife to speak into your life. Reflect on the words that she shares with you. Ask her to do that regularly. Speaking to things that are both positive and negative. But give your wife a voice.

Secondly, exclude all others. Exclude all others. It's her and her alone. Period. There's nobody, nothing else, there isn't room for anybody else. You leave. You cleave. You become one flesh. One plus one is one. There is nobody else in that picture. We

can say so much more here. This is just my personal opinion. This is just something that I exercise personally. I do not comment on another woman's appearance. I don't care if she's single or married. I just do not comment on another woman's physical appearance. That's not my place or my role. I don't need to comment on it on a new haircut. I don't need to comment on some article of clothing. I just don't need to do that. If she is single, her friends can do that for her. If she's married, her husband can do that for her. I don't do that. And what does that mean? That means I literally make choices to exclude anybody but Bonnie. She's the only one that would hear me say something in that vein. That's just my personal opinion but to do otherwise can, it doesn't have to but it can, open a door.

Then lastly, express and show your love every day. Express and show your love every day. Remember as you are doing these things that you are coming right back to this beautiful picture of the gospel. That's what we're wanting to put on display. That's what we're wanting the church to see. That's what we're wanting the world to see. We want them to see the beauty of the love relationship between Christ and the church. We want to put on display the fact that apart from Christ we have nothing. Our need is total and it is desperate and Jesus alone has met it through His death and resurrection on the cross, and by our simple step of faith and trust that what He did was enough and all that needed to be done.

Let's pray. Father God, I am so thankful for this very clear instruction that you have given to us as husbands and to these young men that will one day step into this arena. I pray that your Spirit would encourage the men here this morning. Father, I pray that we would step out in renewed faith, even having failed as we all do every day, but yet stepping again and again and again into your grace, into your mercy, into your kindness. Father, that was shown to us so incredibly in Jesus's coming to this earth, dying on the cross so that my sin could be forgiven and that I could have this relationship with you. Let us as the people of Covenant and in the marriages of Covenant put on full display the glory and grace of the gospel today and every day. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.