
“Restoring Headship In The Home”

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

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AT A GLANCE

God designed men to lead their homes with Christlike love, humility, and strength. When that calling is neglected, families suffer—but when it’s embraced, everyone flourishes. In this sermon, we explore Ephesians 5:22–33 to recover the beauty of biblical headship and the powerful impact of faithful, godly leadership in the home.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABANDONING GOD’S ORDER

God designed a beautiful order for the church and the home: men are called to lead—not for the sake of control, but for the flourishing of everyone under their care.

When male headship is abandoned, men often withdraw from their God-given roles in the church and in the home; everyone pays the price.

Most denominations that embraced radical feminism are now aging and declining. Many churches that embraced what they called a “New Hermeneutic” in the 1970’s to try to remain relevant with the feminist culture have shut their doors for good.

Look to the home. Five to six decades ago the divorce rate was half what it is today and women reported greater feelings of happiness in the 1950’s than after 50 years of radical feminism.

What’s worse, 18 million American kids, about 25%, live without a father in the home. Women and children are suffering right now. And it’s no better for men. We’ve got a suicide epidemic, caused mostly by men, who are four times as likely to die by suicide as women.

Folks, we’ve tried abandoning God’s created order and it has failed us. No one wins when men are marginalized or take a back seat. But where men are encouraged to lead like Christ—sacrificially, humbly, lovingly—we all thrive.

THE BLESSING OF BIBLICAL HEADSHIP

At Wildwood, we joyfully affirm God’s created order and we are seeing God’s blessing as a result. Scripture consistently calls men to lead in the church and in the home—not because men are superior, but because God’s order brings blessing.

Psalm 128 says the man who fears the Lord is blessed—and so is his wife and his children. The Bible teaches that the flourishing of families hinges on faithful, godly male leadership. Let’s restore this vision of Christ’s headship in the home!

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

²² **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.** ²³ **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.** ²⁴ **Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.**

²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,** ²⁶ **that**

he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,³⁰ because we are members of his body.³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

THE CREATED ORDER

As we saw last week, Satan didn’t merely tempt Eve with fruit—he attacked God’s created order. He twisted God’s Word and drew Eve to reject Adam’s headship. Satan wasn’t just trying to deceive; he was trying to destroy the family and, with it, God’s glory on the earth.

Dr. Tony Evans, in his book *Kingdom Marriage*, says, “When headship is broken, authority is lost.” He writes, “Without spiritual authority, it is difficult to accomplish anything worthwhile, let alone experience a thriving marriage...The problems we are facing in our homes and marriages...come from giving the garden over to the Devil.”

What is this spiritual covering Dr. Evans describes? We see it in Ephesians 5 and more explicitly in *1 Corinthians 11:3*: “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.” This is the created order. We call it biblical headship.

WIVES: SUBMISSION AS FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST

Let’s start where Paul starts, with **verse 22: Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.**

Ladies, this is God’s Word—inspired, inerrant, and authoritative. Your submission to your husband is an act of obedience to Christ. It’s not weakness; it’s beauty, strength, and full of glory. Verse 24 tells us why.

Verse 24 says, **Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.** How does the Church submit? Not by apologizing for its strengths. The Church uses its gifts to support Christ’s mission. So too, a wife uses her strength to bless her husband’s leadership and support God’s mission for their family.

Now, who would find shame in the church’s submission to Christ? Far from shameful, it’s glorious when a church joyfully submits to her head. Why would we feel differently about wives when, as **verse 32** so clearly reveals, marriage is a living picture of Christ and His church?

Women, submitting to your husband is part of your faithfulness to Christ. It’s part of your sanctification. The curse of Eve was more than increased pain in childbirth. It was a contrarian spirit opposed to her husband. It’s a part of you that you must bring into submission to Christ.

Granted, this can be difficult in real life, as sanctification tends to be. What makes this so difficult is that a wife’s head is a flawed human being who lives in the same house.

HUSBANDS: LOVE AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

But we men can do something that helps our wife submit joyfully. That is, by demonstrating our own submission to Christ. If a husband isn’t visibly submitting to Christ, his leadership is hypocrisy at best and may end up becoming spiritually abusive. This is why biblical headship is rooted in the husband’s own submission to Christ.

Too few churches look Christian men in the eyes and say, “You must submit to Christ.” We treat men like boys, expecting little—and getting little in return.

But Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*
Matthew 16:24 The call to follow Jesus is a call to die to self.

Thus in **verse 25**, when Paul writes, **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her** that’s nothing more than basic Christian discipleship. It is how husbands follow Jesus. If you’re married, you submit to Christ, by giving yourself up for your wife every day.

Men, let me ask you: When do your wife and children see you submitting to Christ? Are you counting on your Sunday morning attendance to convey to them that you’re a man under Christ’s authority? That’s not going to be very convincing.

FAMILY WORSHIP FOSTER A SAFE CULTURE OF SUBMISSION

Family worship is a simple yet very powerful way for your family to feel your submission to Christ. Here, they watch you seeking God in prayer, reading His Word, and singing His praises. When done faithfully, they hear you teach what you’re striving to live in your own life.

This fosters a culture in your home that makes them feel safe submitting to their head knowing that you are submitting to yours. More than that, family worship is the very vehicle by which we obey what Paul commands in the rest of the passage.

Verses 25–26 say Christ gave Himself up for the Church **that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.** And **verses 28–29** say a husband should love his wife **as his own body... nourishing and cherishing her, as Christ does the Church.**

Husbands, do you see that you are called to imitate Jesus? He sanctifies His Church through the preaching, praying, and example of elders. In a similar way, He uses you to lead your wife and children toward Him. You cannot sanctify your wife—but Jesus uses your love, prayers, and spiritual leadership to help her grow in grace.

Practically speaking, how does a husband follow Jesus’ example of **washing her with the water of the Word** if not in the regular course of reading the bible with his wife?

How else does a father obey what Paul says in *Ephesians 6:4*? *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

RESPONSIBILITY, NOT CAPABILITY

Your wife can certainly read the bible herself and teach the Bible to your kids—maybe better than you. But listen carefully, biblical headship isn’t about capability. It’s about responsibility. God has given spiritual responsibility of your family to you, men.

This is Christ’s headship in the home: not dominance, but service. Not pride, but humility. Your family sees Christ’s headship not so much when you go to church, but when you come home from church transformed by the Word. And they see it when you emerge from your time with the Lord and open the Word with them. Isn’t that a glorious picture? Doesn’t that inspire you to lead with courage?

A CALL TO SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Men often talk about being protectors. Most men embrace the call to defend their family. Many of us have weapons at home. The reality is you’ll probably never be called upon to go to blows to protect your wife and kids. Yet you pride yourself in knowing you would. And rightly so.

But there is a real battle happening in your home right now. It’s a spiritual battle. Yet so few men ever pick up the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. They’re ready to fight imaginary dragons, while the real enemy whispers lies inside their home.

There’s a real battle with a real enemy and you are called to be a real defender. It starts with God’s Word in your heart, and in your home.

A PERSONAL CONFESSION AND WAKE-UP CALL

Let me close with a personal confession. Years ago, when I preached on headship, Kellye came to me and said that during one of our hardest seasons, she felt spiritually alone. I left her to fight the battle by herself.

I can pinpoint a decisive point at which I dropped the ball. We were in a marriage study here—*Kingdom Marriage*. I didn't read the material. I coasted, thinking, "I'm the lead pastor. I got this." But I didn't. I was ill-prepared for the fight. God would've used that study to prepare me. Instead, I was proud, lazy, and distracted.

With Kellye's permission—more than that, her desire—I'll tell you: that season nearly broke her. She was drowning in confusion and fear. And I was so absorbed in church ministry, I didn't even see it.

I thank Jesus for intervening because I know I failed her. But the Lord is restoring her, and He's helping me become the husband I should be. I dropped the ball. I don't want you to.

It started with one decision: to coast through a study, to blow off what God was trying to teach me through His Word and through other men in our church. That moment led to my wife's near destruction.

Brothers, let's not be passive in the most important battlefield we've been given—our homes. If Satan shattered the first garden by attacking the family, then let us rebuild ours by planting the Word of God every single day.

REBUILD WHAT SATAN TRIED TO DESTROY

Let's be men who don't just attend church but bring church home. Pick up the sword. Take your place under Christ's headship, and lead with humility, tenderness, and strength. May our homes tell the story of a man submitting to Christ, his head. And fostering a culture in which his wife and kids joyfully and gloriously submit to theirs.

Let's restore Christ's headship in our homes. May it begin with you—and may it begin today.