

CHRISTIAN HOME IN AN UNCHRISTIAN WORLD

by

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CHAPTER 8

THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND AND FATHER

"Tyrant, Tenant or Tutor"

We are now entering into the last phase of the Christian home series. We had one message of introduction; then we spent four lessons looking at the ideal, going into the spiritual, social and physical sides of marriage, together with Paul's advice to young people. We have two messages on the problems in marriage, and now we will consider the practice of the Christian home in three lessons.

I have subtitled the message concerning the Christian husband and father as "Tyrant, Tenant or Tutor" to seek to convey that not all Christian men who have wives and children are properly adjusted in their relationship with their families.

Some are tyrants, and the end result is that the children usually rebel from the position and faith of the father.

Some are only tenants in their homes.

Somebody else is running the show, and they have learned to keep their mouth shut so as not to disrupt the semblance of peace and harmony that does exist. The end result of this situation is that the children go their own way; and if they turn out right, it is in spite of the home training, but always with a completely warped idea of what a Christian home is.

When a husband and father has the role of tutor, he is training his household through correct procedures to live the Christian life. No one can play this role without being respected in his position, and without being an example to the members of the household of love and of a godly life.

Usually, the home is the LAST place we live the Christian life.

We will be all smiles and sunshine while we are at church or with others outside the home; but

when no one else is around but our family, we let those we love the most see what we really are.

What we were at church, then, was just a sham; we were playing a part that was not real or genuine. Now you may fool your pastor, and you may fool other people, but you will not fool children. They see through this and it causes them to rebel against the empty, hypocritical profession of the father and/or mother.

How can we say we love GOD and then come home and hate our wife and growl at the children? It is inconsistent. If a man say, I love GOD, and hate his own wife, he is a liar (I John 4:20); and children know this.

How can we have praise come out of our mouth at church and then cutting, bitter, angry, hateful words at home? It is inconsistent. **"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh"** (James 3:10-12).

GOD's Word says we have the whole picture turned around. The home is never to be the last place to live the Christian life. It is to be the first place.

1 Timothy 5:4 **"But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."**

1 Timothy 5:8 **"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."**

1 Timothy 3:4 says concerning an elder or overseer (bishop) that he must be **"one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity."** The reason for this is given: **"(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)."**

1 Timothy 3:12 says the same thing concerning a deacon, **"Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."**

A man is only to be placed in a position of leadership because he is right in his home. The home is first, then, and it is foremost in GOD's sight.

After the Christian life is lived in the home, it must also be lived out of the home in business and social relationships with others.

1 Timothy 3:7 adds concerning an elder, **"Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without."** Others that are unsaved must realize he lives the Christian life before all men, and so testify to this fact.

Thus, Scripture reveals that the very first place where the Christian life is to be lived is in the home.

The second place it is to be lived is in business or in relationship with others who are unsaved.

The final place is in the House of the Lord.

Only as you have this order is it genuine when you come to church to sing and pray, to testify and teach.

It is no small task to be a Christian husband and father. Respect cannot be commanded, it must be earned.

Hebrews 12:9-10, "**Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.**"

Today very little reverence is held for Dad.

In the modern home, everything is controlled by a switch, but the child.

The reason for the irreverence in the modern home is that the Dad is not what he should be, the wife is not what she should be, and the kids are not what they should be.

In some homes the kids are bringing up father, rather than father bringing up the kids. And if the kids are not bringing up father, the wife is.

There are homes where the kids tell their parents, rather than the parents tell the kids. They have, therefore, neither respect nor love for "their old man," and they show it.

Dad is only a figurehead in some homes -- someone to use for their own ends when needed.

You cannot love someone you do not respect.

You do not respect someone who is a pushover.

Then there is the opposite extreme where reverence has given place to fear because of the mercilessness of a tyrant. Once again there is not love; and while there may be outward subjection, there is not true submission, but rather rebellion in the heart.

GOD wants us who are husbands and fathers to be neither of these.

He wants us to be right in all of our relationships, but particularly is this true of our relationship as head of the home. Let us speak for a moment about headship.

I. Our Headship

GOD has given the man the headship in the home. Man is responsible and is held responsible by GOD for the home and the children.

A. Why Headship?

There are eight reasons for the headship of the man given in Scripture.

1. The Supernatural reason: "**But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God**" (I Corinthians 11:3)

Man was created in the image and glory of GOD, but the woman was created in the glory of the man (I Corinthians 11:7). The CREATOR has established the headship Himself.

This headship does not indicate inferiority anymore than CHRIST is inferior to the Father; but rather it gives the order of responsibility. When anything comes up between the man and the woman, the man is held responsible.

2. The Scriptural reason. "**Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.**" (I Corinthians 14:34)

The law as used here is not a reference to the Mosaic law, but refers to the entire Old Testament as an indication of the program of GOD. The woman is to be in subjection.

In Genesis 3:16 we read: " . . . **and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.**"

3. The Natural reason: "**For Adam was first formed, then Eve**" (I Timothy 2:13).

The priority of creation gives a headship to the man.

4. The Psychological reason: "**For Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression**" (I Timothy 2:14).

The psychological makeup of the woman is known by the CREATOR, and is a record also of history beginning in the Garden of Eden. This is one more reason for the headship of the man.

Nearly every cult has a woman somewhere, out of her God-given place.

5. The Social reason: "**That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed**" (Titus 2:4-5).

The salvation experienced through the Lord JESUS should make women better wives and mothers.

If it doesn't, then the Word of GOD will be cursed by the unsaved husbands.

The conduct of the wife is to win the husband out of submission, not rebellion: "**Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives**" (I Peter 3:1).

The social custom of all people has the man the head of the home.

6. The Illustration reason: "**For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well . . .**" (I Peter 3:5-6)

This is the godly example of those who have gone before.

7. The Physical reason: "**Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered**" (I Peter 3:7).

The original design of the CREATOR is seen in the difference in strength. This very fact shows a headship.

8. The Spiritual reason: "**Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing**" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

The husband and wife relationship is a spiritual example of the relationship and subordination of the church to the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

If there were no other reason for the subordination of the wife to the husband, this alone would be sufficient.

B. What is Headship?

The wife cannot very well perform this ministry if she does not understand just what headship is.

Headship is what is illustrated by CHRIST and the church (and what is illustrated also by CHRIST and the Father).

In reference to CHRIST and the church, the work is His, and the willing submission is ours. The direction is His, and the obedience is ours. The responsibility is His, and the obligation is ours.

Headship is leadership and responsibility. No company can work together without someone ultimately being responsible for everything. GOD says the man is responsible. He may delegate work, but he cannot delegate responsibility. He is responsible for the conduct of the children. He is responsible for their spiritual training and their discipline. He is responsible for physically providing for his family. The wife may help, but the man is responsible. The wife may make suggestions, but do not nag. The wife is to guide the home: "**I will therefore that the younger**

women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (I Timothy 5:14), but the husband is to rule the home: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (I Timothy 3:4).

The responsibility of the husband extends even to being the one who initiates the procedures to get an argument settled between himself and his wife (I Peter 3:7). He is the leader; and if he fails to do this, his prayers are hindered. GOD holds him responsible for not dwelling with his wife according to knowledge.

This responsibility that a man has may be seen, also, in another area. Abraham told Sarah to tell a half truth and to say that she was his sister (which was a part truth), but he did not want her to say that she was also his wife. Abraham told Sarah to lie, but GOD held Abraham responsible. The sin was Abraham's.

C. How Does Headship Work?

Peter tells us that Sarah called Abraham "lord" or master in Genesis 18:12. We are children of Abraham and Sarah by faith. They have set the example (I Peter 3:6).

The wife is to be submissive to the husband even as the church is to be submissive to CHRIST, and CHRIST was completely submissive to the Father.

If your husband says, "Don't call the Doctor" when your child is sick, and the child suddenly grows sicker, you should never throw it up to him in any way. The total responsibility is his to bear. Don't add to his guilt and club him when he is down.

It is your husband's responsibility to see to it that there is daily Bible reading and prayer. Look to him to do it, and expect him to bear this responsibility. If out of necessity you supplement this, that is one thing, but if you assume his position, that is something else. Some men do not do anything because they are never looked up to, but only down upon. A good wife will make the man -- not break him. This is why it is a truth that behind every great man there is a great woman: **"She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. . . . Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land"** (Proverbs 31:12, 23). Now if you stand behind your husband, be careful about constantly pushing. Just as in the physical, you yourself would certainly get annoyed with anyone doing this to you, so does he. Be wise, not wearisome. Live so your husband wants to be around you, not hating to come home. There is nothing wrong with being the neck that turns the head, just don't twist it off.

This headship is true for all wives even though you may have unsaved husbands. In fact, this is certainly one of the main reasons why more unsaved husbands are not won to the Lord because the wife, all too often, is not submissive to him in all things. (Ephesians 5:24; I Peter 3:1).

This brings up a point that is important. Just how far does a man have headship over a wife? He only has it in his position as a husband.

In Acts 5 we have the account of Ananias and Sapphira. They agreed together to lie about the price for which they sold their property. Both died because both were guilty. Sapphira did not

have to lie. She lied because she herself wanted to lie. Her husband's headship did not extend to doing wrong acts. There is a place where the headship of the husband ends and a higher headship begins.

1. There is the Family Sphere of Headship.

The wife is subject to the husband.

2. There is the Ecclesiastical Sphere of Headship: "**And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves**" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13) and "**Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. . . . Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. . . . Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.**" (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24).

There are certain ones who are over us in the Lord in the local church.

3. There is the Governmental Sphere of Headship: "**Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour**" (Romans 13:1-7) and "**Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king**" (I Peter 2:13-17).

All are subject here to the powers that be even though they be godless as Nero.

4. There is the Spiritual Sphere of Headship: "**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus**" (Galatians 3:28) and "**Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all**" (Colossians 3:11).

In this sphere there is neither male nor female. Here both the believing man and the woman are

subject to the Lord. CHRIST is the head of the body. All believers are subject to Him.

Thus, any one person may be involved in many headships. For instance, the Christian wife has a responsibility personally to her husband, saved or unsaved; to the elders of the church; to the officers and leaders of state; and to the Lord JESUS CHRIST Himself.

At no time can the leaders of the state command us to submit to them when there is something morally or spiritually wrong with this act. Thus, the early church refused to submit to their instructions not to speak about the Lord JESUS CHRIST. Here the state had superseded their power or authority.

So it is that the husband has no right to demand that his wife do something morally or spiritually wrong. When he does, he has gone beyond his God-given headship position. Should a wife submit in a wrong thing, she is equally responsible and accountable, and she will be judged accordingly.

II. Our Heartship

Ephesians 5 speaks not only about headship, but also about heartship. It speaks not only about leadership, but also about love. The man has a position, but he also has a practice.

This is the other side of the picture; it is the coin turned over. The reason a wife rebels at giving headship to her husband is because of the failure of the man here.

There is an intrinsic relationship between headship and heartship or love.

Headship minus love = slavery and dictatorship

Love minus headship = milquetoast

Both situations are intolerable.

Headship is very misunderstood today by both men and women. It is neither dictatorship nor is it anarchy. Both are without love.

But the two -- headship and heartship -- must go together.

Two examples are given as illustrations of love here in Ephesians 5.

1. The divine illustration of CHRIST and the church: "**Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself**" (Ephesians 5:25-28)

This is love to the extreme limit.

2. The human illustration of a man's love for himself: "**For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church**" (Ephesians 5:29).

This is love that is very great. A man loves himself naturally, and this love is to be extended to his wife because of her union with him, and even in spite of her unloveliness.

The husband is never commanded to dictate; he is commanded to love: "**Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it**" (Ephesians 5:25).

And we should always remember that

**"Love is very patient; very kind;
Love is not jealous or boastful;
It does not put on; it is not rude;
Love does not insist on its own way;
It is never irritable, never resentful;
It is not happy over injustice; it is only gladdened with truth.
Love is able to bear anything, ever trustful, ever hopeful, ever patient.
Love never fails."**

~ end of chapter 8 ~
