

The Two Becoming One

SGC Marriage Seminar

Session 3: Who’s in Charge Here?

“A marriage, or a marriage partner, may be compared to a great tree growing right up through the center of one’s living room. It is something that is just there, and it is huge, and everything has been built around it, and wherever one happens to be going—to the fridge, to bed, to the bathroom, or out the front door—the tree has to be taken into account. It cannot be gone through; it must be respectfully be gone around. It is somehow bigger and stronger than oneself. True, it could be chopped down, but not without tearing the house apart. And certainly it is beautiful, unique, exotic; but also, let’s face it, it is at times an enormous inconvenience.

“So there are many things that can be said about one’s life’s mate, but finally, irrevocably, the one definite thing that needs to be said is that he or she is always there. And that, while it may be all very common in the world of trees, is among us human beings a rather remarkable state of affairs” (The Mystery of Marriage, 31).

Introduction

A. Confusion, Chaos, Controversy, and the Culture

As scandalous as these two passages may sound to the secular ear [i.e., 1 Pet. 3:1ff., Eph. 5:22ff.], they are of relatively minor importance. The Bible gives far more examples of women standing as equals to men in power instead of merely respecting them from the sidelines. Rahab challenged the invading Israelite armies to spare her family’s life. Pharaoh’s daughter saved baby Moses from her father’s command to kill all infant Hebrew males. A teenage Queen Esther challenged the king to protect the Jewish nation. Mary challenged Jesus to save her brother Lazarus from death. Jesus himself even praises a woman for besting him in a debate and consequently heals her daughter (Matt. 15:21-28).¹

B. Egalitarianism and Complementarianism

1. We do not affirm what is called Egalitarianism
 - a. The only differences are biological, no more.
 - b. God’s redemption has undone whatever lingering differences there were (e.g., Gal 3:28).

¹ Obtained at : <http://swampland.time.com/2011/08/19/understanding-michele-bachmanns-submission/#ixzz1VemaP1i0> on August 21, 2011.

2. We affirm what is called Complementarianism
 - a. There are God-designed differences between men and women that include biology and physiology, but which go beyond these.
 - b. These do not indicate superiority and inferiority, but simply distinctions.
 - c. Men and women are to serve in different “roles” in the family and the church.
 - d. These are understood biblically, not chauvinistically.
 - e. Thus, men are called to lead, love, protect, shepherd, and care for their wives for the goals of her growth, happiness, and blessing in Christ.
 - f. Women are called to submit, respect, love, and labor for their husbands that they might flourish in their various callings.
- C. The goal: *To be biblical, informed and joyful complementarians because that is the Bible's command.*

II. Glorious Diversity

- A. The Key Principle: Equal in glory, distinct in function
- B. Modeled in the Trinity – Function (Economic Trinity) + Unity (Ontological Trinity)

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing (Acts 2:32-33)

God is one (Gal. 3:20)
- C. Modeled in the Church

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Rom. 12:3-5)
- D. Modeled in Men and Women

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:26-27)

III. The Husband: The Head (Eph. 5:23-24)

A. What He Is: The Head

“What does the Bible mean when it says that the husband is the head of the wife? The head of a home possesses the most authority in the family....

Biblical headship is the conscientious and loving use of the authority God grants a husband to ensure that a home (and all its members) honor God and experience his blessings. Biblical headship assumes responsibility for others. The head of a home must his authority to serve the good of his family.²

- Note God's grammar:

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. (Eph. 5:23)

B. What He Does

1. Love (Eph 5:25)

- Love = agapaō

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

- How? "...as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
- Love has a goal = "so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (v. 27)
- How? = "as their own bodies" (v. 28).

"Nourish" = Ps. 23:2, "By still waters he nourishes me" (LXX).

"Cherish" = care for, as a mother bird her young (Deut. 22:6), a mother her children (1 Thess. 2:7)

- *What is surprising here?*
- *What is challenging?*

2. Understand

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7)

² Bryan Chapell, Each for the Other, 31, 34.

- “understanding way” = “according to knowledge”

- *Why is “knowledge” important?*

3. Honor

showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

- “honor...as the weaker vessel” = attributing value, worth, extra care
- *What are some practical ways to “honor” your wife?*

4. Romance

“Rejoice in the wife of your youth; a lovely deer, a graceful doe. ...Be intoxicated always in her love.” (Prov. 5:18, 19)

- *Hallelujah!*
- *More in the next session...*

IV. The Wife: The Helpmate

A. What She Is: The Helpmate

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Gen. 2:18)

B. What She Does

1. Submit

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ—wives...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. (Eph. 5:18, 21-24, ESV slightly modified)

- How? = “...as to the Lord”
- *Where is the challenge here?*

2. Love

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:3-4)

- *“love their husbands”* = philandrous, ‘husband-lover’

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. (Eph. 4:15)

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant. (1 Cor. 13:4)

- *How should this “love” look in your marriage?*

3. Builds her home

“working at home” (Titus 2:5)

The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down. (Prov. 14:1)

- The wife is called to effort, to be proactive, to be diligent
- *What are the temptations that keep us from doing this?*

4. Modesty

Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness--with good works. (1 Tim. 2:9-10)

- To cover what should be covered. There is something “proper” that all women, of every age, should wear.
- To help your brothers in Christ, lest they stumble.
- *What comes to mind here?*

5. “Does him good”

An excellent wife who can find?

She is far more precious than jewels.

¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

¹² She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. (Prov. 31:10-12)

- A good, overall job description for the wife.

- *What are some practical ways you can do your husband “good”?*

6. (Feminine) Romance

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine...⁴ Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers. (Song of Solomon 1:2, 4)

- Feminine romance seems to lean toward *response*, where masculine romance seems to lean toward *initiative*.
- More in the next session...

Conclusion

A. Good news for sinful spouses:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 1:8-2:2)

- Acknowledging sin is “the truth” (1:8, 10)
- Confessing sin brings forgiveness and change (1:9)
- Sinners “have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (2:1)
- Jesus provides “propitiation” *for all our sins* (2:2)

B. How are you doing?

1. Husband

- Do you recognize that *you are the head* of your home?
- Is your headship marked by love? Service? Nourishing? Cherishing? Understanding? Honor? Romancing?

2. Wife

- Do you recognize that *you are the helpmate* for your husband?
- Is your help marked by submission? Love? Building your home? Modesty? Doing him good? (Feminine) Romance/enabling romance/responding to his initiative?