

Dig Deeper into Eph 5:21-33 for personal study ...

Introduction...
... controversial, Christ-centred  , crucial 

Wives... (v22-24)
 ...submit with Christian respect 
What might it look like for Sally?

Husbands... (v25-33)
 ... sacrifice with Christlike love 
What might it look like for Harry?

CHRIST CHURCH HUNTINGDON  EPHESIANS 5:21-33  BE WHO YOU ARE!

A few questions to help us continue to think about this passage. Feel free to talk with someone at church if this passage raises difficulties and questions for you...

1. What do people normally think when they hear bible verses like v22?
2. Can you see the verses that show that this passage is about our relationship with Christ as well as about marriage? This means it's a passage for all of us, whatever our marital status.
3. Although many men have abused their authority in ugly ways, can you see how headship can be an beneficial and godly thing, especially if husbands are loving their wives sacrificially? How does the fact of Christ's example in 1 Corinthians 11:3 bring out its dignity and value?
4. If you are married, in which area do you need to pray for God's help for your marriage to display Christ's relationship with the church more? Husbands- what will it look like to you this week to "walk to the cross every day in your marriage"? Wives- how can you "encourage, support, affirm your husband"?
5. Whatever our marital status, how does the passage help you grasp more of Christ's amazing love for you?

Further Reading: Hosea 2:16-23 and Revelation 21:1-4 pick up the theme of God's marital love for his people.

A couple of resources...

- **Fifty Crucial Questions.** On the subjection of complementary roles in marriage and the church. https://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/50Q_contents.pdf
- **10 ways to exercise Christlike Headship-** Owen Strachan. The best and most practical article I have read on what headship looks like in practice. See overleaf for a full copy. <https://cbmw.org/topics/leadership-2/10-christlike-headship/>
- **Understanding headship for blended families.** Written by a guy whose kids are not his own. <https://cbmw.org/topics/leadership-2/understanding-headship-for-blended-families/>

10 ways to exercise Christlike Headship- article by Owen Strachan.

Few words are more invested with meaning than the term “headship.” It’s a Christological and theological term that is grounded in Ephesians 5:23, which reads “For the husband is the head [Greek *kephale*] of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” This is the preeminent statement in all of Scripture on what a husband is and is to be.

This means that the husband, in John Piper’s seminal words, is the one who takes “primary responsibility for Christlike servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home” (*Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 84). There is so much to unpack here, and it can be confusing for modern men to understand, especially since a secularizing culture dislikes, even detests, the concept. Because that is the case, let me suggest ten ways by which godly husbands can practice Christlike headship in their home.

10. Christlike male headship means that you see the spiritual nourishment of your wife as your primary duty (Eph. 5:28-30). This doesn’t happen by accident; it happens as, on a regular basis, you open the Bible with her, pray with her, and talk about God with her. You don’t need to be a global theologian to read the Bible and pray the Bible, right?

9. Christlike male headship means that you love just one wife. Like Jesus, who loved only his bride, you have eyes for no one else. You save up your affection for her. You live on a continual mission to treasure her and to make her feel treasured.

8. Christlike male headship means that you train yourself to know the Lord in a vibrant way. You recognize that your family will only flourish under your leadership when you are flourishing in Christ. This means being in the Word regularly and praying regularly and being a faithful church member. You don’t have to be a spiritual all-star, future biographers poring over your Moleskins for clues into your thinking. You do need to be faithful to your Savior by the Spirit’s awesome power (Romans 6, 8).

7. Christlike male headship means on date night/vacations, you think first, “What would she like to do?” not, “What would I like to do?” If you’re on vacation or a date, you’re first trying to find activities she would enjoy. With apologies to 1990s-era bracelets, I try to ask myself, WWBL—what would Bethany like? For you, this may mean that you forgo a war museum, a basketball or baseball game, or a superhero movie. Then, not only do you find something she would like to do, but you enter into it fully. You’re present with her. She will love you for it.

6. Christlike male headship means that at dinner, after a long day at work, you hold the baby so your wife, frazzled from kids and home, can eat first. Your food is getting cold; your stomach is growling. You are hungry, and mannishly so. But you hold your child so that the woman who sacrificially gives 100% of her energy each day to care for your children can, at the very least, eat a hot meal. You can’t make childraising easy; it’s always challenging. You can, however, make it more pleasurable.

5. Christlike male headship means, when conflict happens (as it will), you lead in apologizing. First, before you speak, you listen well, inviting your wife to share what hurt her. You don’t interrupt her or fight her off. As you think about what you’ve done, you confess your sin to her. You don’t offer excuses; you display humility by owning your faults like a man. You lead in showing humility; you don’t expect her to show it first.

4. Christlike male headship means that you show strength wherever you can. You’re not a sphinx; you’re not a superman. You can and should show genuine emotion, and you should make clear to your son(s) that men get sad, men get angry at evil, men are tender and gentle with women. But like David charged Solomon, you’re engaged in a lifelong process of “showing yourself a man” and thus being strong for others (1 Kings 2:2). When hardship hits, headship persists.

3. Christlike male headship means that you put yourself in harm’s way, gladly taking a hit to protect your family (and the weak). Christ “gave himself up” for the church (Eph. 5:25). You do the same for loved ones and, by extension, those in your neighborhood without protection. You do so willingly, without fear, knowing that this is your divine call as a man. You may not be a fearsome linebacker; your shoulders may not ripple with muscle. But as a God-ordained head, whether 6’6” or 4’10” you put yourself in the line of fire, and you take others out of it.

2. Christlike male headship means that like the best leaders—generals, presidents, coaches, and so on—you solicit gobs of wisdom from wise counselors (namely, your wife). You generously and gladly solicit your wife’s wisdom. If your relationship is like mine, she will put you to shame in this category. She will have good idea after good idea. None of this threatens you or upsets you. The strongest men are not those who never listen. The strongest men are those who are so confident in Christ that they crave wisdom, celebrate humility, and are glad, not threatened, when others contribute.

1. In these and 1,000 other ways, Christlike male headship means you die to yourself daily. This is your constant thought throughout the day: how can I be like Jesus and die to myself for the good of my wife and my family? He “gave himself up” for others. In the power of his cross and resurrection, I am going to do the same, come what may.

Conclusion

You may never have witnessed this kind of leadership. It might only be theoretical. Men in your past might have abused their authority and strength, and doubly damned themselves by justifying their abuses as part of manhood and leadership. If this is your experience, I invite you to consider the cross, which makes all things new. Christian leadership doesn’t mean everyone bowing down to you because you’re so great. It means, like Jesus, that you become a courageous servant, dying to yourself for the benefit of others. If you have heard differently, wipe the slate clean. The Bible’s word is better than any other. Read Ephesians 5 again, and soak it in.

Our culture may reject male headship; it may undermine men. None of that matters to you. None of it bogs you down. Whether trained by a godly dad from birth or newly learning about headship as a young believer, your face is set like a flint to pursue the glory of God as the Christlike head of a home. That’s your goal; that, like a distant trumpet summoning you to sacrificial leadership, is your call.