

# Thoughts on Christian Marriage

## An essay

### Introduction

In today's confused, debilitating age where gender is a matter of choice and same-sex marriages are deemed legally normal, it may be of use for me to give my subjective thoughts about marriage, rather than a cold Biblical exposition of it.

There are only three types of secular marriage.

- Marriage where a woman seeks a submissive man.
- Marriage where a woman seeks a domineering man.
- Marriage where both parties seek an equal relationship.

The first is perhaps the most common, or it was in the past. In practical terms this can appear to work; I have seen many happy marriages where the man was the weaker vessel. For, an easy life, the husband would simply do what he was told. Being in control, the wife saw no need to rebel or have an affair.

Of course, the problem with this type of marriage is that it is unbiblical and it is not a marriage. Marriage was ordained by God for specific purposes and with specific rules. A domineering wife contradicts God's order.

The second is where a woman partners with some rogue. Now why women do this is a mystery to me but I have met many women who complain that they always date bad men. These men don't just dominate, but they also abuse and mistreat the wife and many of this type also have multiple affairs.

Obviously this is a distortion of marriage and it is utterly unbiblical.

Now the third type would probably be the one that most modern young people would aspire to; surely this is a good marriage. In this relationship everything is shared and everything is decided unanimously together.

The problem, however, is that life doesn't work out like this. There are many issues where two people cannot agree on a common decision. This then calls for one of the pair to win and one to give in. So it is not such a balanced equilibrium as it appears. As soon as the first biased decision has been made, the relationship is no longer on an equal footing, and this sows the seeds of break up down the road.

But the bigger problem with this relationship is that it too is not Biblical.

So what is a Biblical marriage?

## Biblical marriage

Biblical marriage is none of the above. It involves headship, but not domineering. It involves submission but not servility. It involves equality of complementary persons but not democracy in decisions.

Marriage is both very simple and also very complicated to describe. In simple terms, if two Christians decide to marry according to God's law, it will be a good marriage. But let us unwind this a bit.

### Headship

First, Biblical marriage does not have a domineering character and nor does it have equal partners; but it does have order and authority because it is a reflection of the Godhead.

Now the Godhead has three equal personalities that share in an eternal loving community. However, there is an order in the Godhead: the Father is the initiator; the Son is the achiever sent by the Father and the Spirit is the applier sent by both the Father and the Son. Despite their inherent equality, there is an order of headship and authority.

Despite being equal with the Father, Jesus saw no problem whatsoever in being subject to the Father during the incarnation. In fact he utterly subjugated his will to the Father, saying only what the Father said and doing only what the Father demanded.

In the same way marriage has a head and this is the man. The man is the glory of Christ and must head up the family.<sup>1</sup> The woman is the glory of the head of the family.<sup>2</sup> This follows the creation order where woman was made to help man.<sup>3</sup>

Families, to have order, must have a head, and that head is the husband. There has to be a final arbiter in a marriage, just as in any social group. So the husband is the final authority in the marriage. He must decide all the most important family decisions, in respectful consultation with his wife (and children).

This means that the wife must respect this order and therefore must submit to any final decision made for the good of the family by the husband.<sup>4</sup>

Paul uses the term 'submit' and 'be subject' in the English translation (Eph 5:22, 24), but both words are the same (Greek *hupotasso*) meaning to arrange under, be subordinate, to submit to one's control. Now modern women, indoctrinated by decades of Feminist propaganda (which actually only makes women miserable, as studies now prove) hate this kind of language because they think that it is demeaning. It is not, otherwise it would be demeaning for Christ to submit to the Father.

For a partnership to work, there has to be one who is the head under God carrying the burden of responsibility and who will be accountable to God.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 11:3, 'the head of every man is Christ'. Eph 5:23, 'the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church'.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor 11:3, 'the head of woman is man'. 1 Cor 11:7, 'woman is the glory of man'.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 11:8-9, 'For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man'.

<sup>4</sup> Eph 5:22, 24, 'Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord ... Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything'.

## Love

But it does not stop here since the man is the representative of Christ in all things not just authority. One of the most powerful verses in the NT is Eph 5:25, ‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her’. The implications of this are huge, but we must ignore the theological ramifications for now and concentrate on practical matters.

The standard of love required by God of the husband is huge – it is the same standard as revealed by Christ when he gave up his life for the church. This is the necessary balance to the authority that the husband has; he must love utterly self-sacrificially, putting the wife (and children) first in all things. ‘So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church’ (Eph 5:28-29)

Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband. Eph 5:33

Does this mean that the wife has no authority at all but is a mere slave? Absolutely not; she is the partner of the husband, and the husband must take great care to listen to his wife and love her.

However, there are areas of responsibility.

### Man – the breadwinner

The husband is the breadwinner. He goes out of the house and earn a living to provide for his wife. This is God’s order and it should not be reversed. This order was established after the Fall: the man’s role is provider, the woman’s role is mother.

### Wife – the mother and homemaker

However, in her role as mother and homemaker, the wife has huge responsibility. While the husband is away at work, the wife is literally lord of the house. In fact Paul uses a very powerful term for this.

Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 1 Tim 5:14

‘Manage’ here (‘guide’ KJV) is hopelessly inadequate. The word is *oikodespoteo*, meaning to be master or lord [*despoteo*] of the house [*oiko*]. We derive the word ‘despot’<sup>5</sup> from this word for master.

So, the man rules the family but the woman rules the home. It would be a foolish man to intervene in decisions about the home. This is the realm of the wife, as work is the realm of the husband.

### Protection of the weaker vessel

The husband must honour the wife: ‘Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs

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<sup>5</sup> One who has absolute power.

together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered' (1 Pt 3:7). He does this by giving her the honour of ruling the home. She knows what is best for the children. 'Honour' means giving the wife value, a deference to her ministry.

Now for centuries women found great comfort in this doctrine in times when being without a husband meant social mistrust, exclusion and probably great insecurity. Women were happy in this God-given arrangement. Indeed, some men felt that their burden was far greater than the woman's. In fact, the burden is equal.

So we see Middle-Eastern women calling their husband 'lord' and being discreetly submissive, 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord' (1 Pt 3:6); 'For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands' (1 Pt 3:5).

### **What about unbelieving spouses?**

What about a Christian wife that is married to an unbeliever? The same principles apply because this is a creation ordinance: 'Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear' (1 Pt 3:1-2) By the way 'fear' here is *phobos* (from which we get phobia). Here it means a reverence for your husband.

Now all of this is anathema to modern women who have been brainwashed by Cultural Marxism and other evil things to believe in their own personal sovereignty above everything. They have rights as a woman and this makes them special. In fact, most women are actually taught that they are better than men and should rule the world. We occasionally see female politicians state this (as Caroline Lucas and Heidi Allen have done). A popular modern trope is the idea of a matriarchal dominated world in tune with Gaia (the female Earth).

As a result of Feminism we see women in all sorts of unsuitable jobs and environments, include fighting as soldiers. This is a travesty. Men should be protecting women and keeping them far from any sort of danger.

Why is this?

Peter tells us that woman is the weaker vessel (1 Pt 3:7). 'Weaker' means exactly that; in fact it means 'weak, infirm, powerless, feeble'.

The husband honours his wife; he cherishes her, nourishes her and loves her, and is mindful of her weak state. The idea of abusing a wife is horrific. Thus if there is any argument or stress, the husband must remember her weakness and be gentle in dealing with the problem.

### **Functional complementary relationships**

So although there is order and headship is male, there is no inequality, just difference of function. When both parties obey God's instructions, there is no problem.

When you realise that Christian marriage is a reflection of the divine order in the Godhead it changes your perspective. The difference in function and the equality in value makes absolute sense. The big mistake is to view marriage in human terms.

### **The failure of Feminism**

The current Third Wave of Feminism reverses all of this. In fact it seeks to make women like men and for women to hate men. Misandry is everywhere in modern Feminism, which is why only 17% of women identify as Feminists. The lie is unravelling and many modern women want a traditional idealised marriage.

Women have tried to have it all – have a professional career working all hours, try to be a good wife, try to be a good mother, try to make a home, and balance everything together. It can't be done. At some point something snaps. This is why many modern women are very depressed. The successful professional women are those who have servants and nannies and don't spend much time with their family, or they are spinsters. However, they pay for this later in life when they realise what they have done.

## **Conclusion**

The only way to contentment and success in married life is to follow God's instructions. There is no other way.

There is headship, but not servility. There is equality of value, but not a democracy. There are different functions that complement each other. There is love, respect and a desire to cherish each other.

Christian marriage, following the Biblical order, is a beautiful thing and it works. This is why marriage has been under relentless attack by the Devil for the last 100 years.

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