



Guarding Against Wrong Ideas of a Husband's Authority
2020 ACBC National Conference – Keith Christensen

- I. The Nature of a Husband's Authority
 - II. The Context of a Husband's Authority
 - III. The Manner of a Husband's Authority
 - IV. The Aim of a Husband's Authority
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I. The Nature of a Husband's Authority

a. Displayed in the Ideal Marriage of Creation (Adam and Eve) – Genesis 1-3

- i. Adam's authority in marriage means he has the primary responsibility to 1) ensure the family is moving in a God-glorifying direction, and 2) secure the well-being of everyone else in the family.¹ God made this his burden to bear, not hers.

- ii. The Garden of Eden was not merely designed for mankind's hunger, but also his happiness and holiness. Adam's "working and keeping" commission obliged him to cultivate and protect these things for his wife.

- iii. Complementarian co-regency: even as Adam has a unique authority in the marriage as head, he also is called to stand under authority with his wife, and also share/exercise authority with his wife.

¹ This explanation of male headship is adapted from Ray Ortlund's definition in: Ortlund, "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), pp. 86-104.



- b. Displayed in the Ideal Marriage of the New Creation (Christ and the Church) – Ephesians 5:25-33
 - i. God’s design for marriage in Eden is reaffirmed, though the husband’s burden of responsibility is even heavier outside of Eden (i.e. in a fallen world), as his wife’s well-being may now require the expense of his own.

 - ii. Complementarian Co-regency: the Church Will Reign with Christ!

- c. Distinguished from Other God-ordained Authorities
 - i. Different from God’s Authority

 - ii. Different from the Authority of Parents, the Government, and the Church

 - iii. Distinguished from his Authority as a Father

II. The Context of a Husband’s Authority

- a. Within a *Marriage*!
 - i. God’s Fundamental Design: Two Become One Flesh – Genesis 2:24-25, Matthew 19:5-6, Ephesians 5:31, 1 Corinthians 6:16



“‘One flesh’ is the biblical definition of marriage in two brief but freighted words. This expression names marriage as *one mortal life fully shared*. The word *one* bespeaks a life fully shared, and the word *flesh* suggests the transient mortality of this life (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 78:39). So in the one-flesh union of marriage, all the boundaries between a man and a woman fall away, and the married couple comes together completely, as long as they both shall live. In real terms, two selfish me’s start learning to think like one unified us, building a new life together with one total everything.”²

- ii. The ideas of headship and submission must be placed within the larger picture of a godly marriage, and even that within the larger picture of godly relationships (e.g. *all* the one-another commands are in play)

b. Intersected by Other God-ordained Authorities

- i. Under God’s Authority

- ii. Under the Church’s Authority – Hebrews 13:17, Matthew 18:15-20

- iii. Under the Government’s Authority – Romans 13:1-7

² Taken from *Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel* by Ray Ortlund, © 2016, p. 30, Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.



III. The Manner of a Husband's Authority

- a. Taking Responsibility (see above)

- b. Sacrifice – Ephesians 5:25

- c. Love – Ephesians 5:25-33, Colossians 3:19

- d. According to Knowledge – 1 Peter 3:7

- e. With Honor and Tenderness – 1 Peter 3:7, Colossians 3:19

- f. Not Lording Over – 1 Peter 5:2, Mark 10:42-45

- g. Not Self-Serving, but Serving – 1 Kings 12:7, Ezekiel 34:2-10, Mark 10:42-45, John 13:1-17

- h. With Affirmation – Proverbs 31:28-31



IV. The Aim of a Husband's Authority

a. The Wife's Flourishing – 2 Samuel 23:3-4

b. The Wife's Splendor – Ephesians 5:27

c. Ultimately: the Glory and Pleasure of God by Being Like Him