

Marriage

Howard Hendricks

Introduction.

- A. Ephesians tells us how to live a heavenly life in a hell-like world.
- B. Chapters 1-3 comprise the theological foundation.
 - 1, Christian experience is rooted in theology.
 - 2. It does matter what we believe because what we believe determines how we behave.
 - 3. If we don't understand the truth of God we are prey to error.
- C. Chapters 4-6 give the behavioral imperatives built on the theological foundation.
 - 1. Some call these chapters the experimental section but they are really the experience.
 - 2. We are building a skyscraper and need the foundation of good theology.
 - 3. In these chapters Paul addresses the believers' walk.
 - a. We learn to walk by walking.
 - b. All my children learned to walk by imitation and experimentation.
 - c. They fail and try again.
 - d. We learn to walk in the spiritual realm the same way, by trial and error.
 - e. We never get to the place where we never fall but we learn to avoid it.
- D. What is the key to walking in the control of the Spirit? (Ephesians 5:18)
 - 1. Family life.
 - a. If Christianity works at home it's genuine.
 - b. If it doesn't work at home don't export it.
 - c. If the fruit of the Spirit is evident in your home then you have the fruit of the Spirit.
 - d. A man told me he had not sinned in twelve years and I wanted to interview his wife and kids.
 - e. On sabbatical I spoke at the National Sunday School Convention where I spoke to 8000 people and feared that unless God spoke through me I was done.

f. Returning home I faced a terrible problem with my home sewage and as it got worse and worse I realized it's easier to be filled with the Spirit as a speaker than when digging out a sewage problem.

2. Evaluating our Spirit controlled lives requires us to look at our marriages more than at our ministries.

I. Tonight we want to concentrate on the role of the husband.

A. Paul sets forth a two-fold thrust to his argument. (Ephesians 5:2-29)

1. The husband's Scriptural position is that of leader, which lends authority to the relationship; an objective aspect to a relationship. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

2. The husband's passion is that of lover, which lends affection to the relationship; a subjective aspect to the relationship.

3. The enemy wants to make us fanatics by getting us out on extreme positions.

4. The husband's position is leadership and his passion is love, thus he is to lead by love.

a. Leadership without love is dictatorship.

b. Love without leadership is sentimentality.

B. Let's look at his Scriptural position. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

1. Five things do not represent headship.

a. Headship is not dictatorship.

1. No husband has the right to dominate his family.

2. Men are not called to dominate but to lead.

b. Headship does not teach that the man is superior to his wife.

1. There is neither male nor female in Christ.

2. Spiritually there is equality; functionally man and woman are different.

3. Christ is the head of men and man is the head of woman and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

4. A man or woman out of fellowship with Christ will probably be out of fellowship with each other.

5. Jesus' submission to the Father does not make him inferior, and a woman's submission to her husband does not make her inferior.

6. Submission is a lifestyle of each believer, male or female.
7. Christianity rescued woman from degradation of culture.
8. Our culture loves freedom but there are consequences to disobeying God's order of headship.
9. It is arrogance to presuppose that God doesn't understand male and female relationships.

c. Headship does not mean the man makes all the decisions.

1. It does not preclude discussion and delegation.
2. In some areas men are incompetent and should leave decisions to his wife.
3. We need to realize that God gives wisdom to women.
4. Wisdom encourages couples to discuss issues before deciding.
5. Man makes the final decision when couples disagree but will be help accountable for his decisions.

d. Headship does not mean the husband is right, just responsible.

1. The man is the steward of the home.
2. He will give an account of his stewardship in his home.
3. Wives must not expect husbands to be omniscient.
4. God doesn't hold wives for the husband's mistakes but he does hold wives accountable for their submission.

e. Headship is never to be demanded.

1. The command of God to the man is to love his wife.
2. The woman is commanded to respect her husband.
3. Older women are told to teach younger women to love their husbands but the primary command to women is to submit to their husbands.
4. No woman in her right mind should resist the headship of a man that loves her.

2. What is headship?

- a. The man is the pace setter.

1. He can't delegate leading to his wife.
2. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.
3. Headship makes the man the savior of the family.
 - i. Salvation in the home is from damage.
 - ii. The man leads by encouraging and providing.
- b. The woman needs to encourage her husband to lead.

C. The husband is also to be a lover.

1. The average man is brought up in a culture that makes loving a weakness.
 - a. Jesus loved his enemies. (1 Peter 2)
 - b. It doesn't take strength to retaliate but to forgive.
 - c. Only the Spirit can control us in times of difficulty.
 - d. Are you developing your child by affection and thoughtfulness?
 - e. I am never more proud than when I seem my sons take my wife out and treat her as a woman.
 - f. We are not developing more lovers in the Christianity community because not enough of us are modeling it.
 - g. Love demands a response—a continuous response all the years of a marriage.
 - h. I suggest you fall in love with your wife each day.
 - i. If Jesus loved you because of your loveliness you'd be lost. So we need to love each other because we choose to love.
 - j. For a man to love his wife means to have her best interest at heart.
 1. A surgeon cut me open to heal me. He hurt me in order to heal me.
 2. Love without occasional hurt is not real.
 3. My wife has sometimes hurt me in order to help me, and visa versa.
2. This relationship between a man and a woman is a mastery picturing Christ and the church. Could a person ever see Christ prefigured in your marriage? They could if there is a leadership of love being worked out between the man and the woman.