



Who Is Head Of The Home?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Who is the head of the home? At one time, it was widely accepted that the husband is the head of the home. Today, this idea has changed in many places. As pushes for equality between men and women in many different areas have increased, so also this idea of the husband being the head of the home has been challenged. Therefore, we need to evaluate this question from a Biblical perspective in order to see whether this change has been for the better or the worse.

God Created The Home

In a very real sense, God is the true Head of the home because He is the one who has created it. Now, we will see that God has given authority to another over the home, but it should never be forgotten that the home can be traced back to God and it was created to accomplish His purposes. It was *not* created by man to accomplish man's purposes!

God created the home in Genesis 2. Of everything God had made, the only thing that was deemed to be "not good" was observed during the sixth day. God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:18). At first, God had only created man. But, as God saw the need to make a companion for the man of the same nature as man (though not exactly like him), God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Then, God took one of Adam's ribs and, from it, made woman (Genesis 2:21-22).

When God brought her to the man, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). Then, Moses (the author of the book of Genesis) provides the following statement: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Thus, this was the very first marriage and the very first home involving the very first man and the very first woman. But, you should carefully recognize that God is the one who created it!

So, you can see by this account in Genesis, that God had a very particular purpose in mind whenever He created the home. He was so concerned about man being alone that He saw fit to create a suitable companion for the man. Thus, one of the God-given purposes of the home is companionship.

But, this goes far beyond just having someone to converse with. Just imagine the situation Adam was in after He was created. He could look around and see all kinds of living things and animals. But, there was no one like him. Remember that God had created Adam in His own image. Thus, Adam possessed a spiritual nature.

Then, woman was created to fix this problem of companionship. And, in identifying husband and wife as being “one flesh,” God is telling us (through Moses) that these two share in the most intimate of all earthly relationships. This level of companionship was created by God so that the woman would be a helper suited for her husband as he lived on this earth. Therefore, they would share in life together.

God Assigned Roles In The Home

As the ultimate Head of the home, God also assigned roles to each member of the home. So, as we consider these roles, we must remember that their origin is with the eternal and all-wise God who never changes! Therefore, God always knows what is best for those people He has created – including in the home.

Now, as we consider these roles, let’s recognize that these roles *do not* indicate that anyone is unequal in value. All people in every home have the same value physically and spiritually! They just *do not* have the same roles and standing in the home. But, please remember that God is the only one who has the authority to assign roles in the home – because He is the one who has created it!

With regard to the husband, God has assigned him to be the head of the home. Listen to Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Please consider two things from this verse. First, the headship of the husband in the home is compared to the headship of Christ over the church (see Colossians 1:18). So, just as there can be no doubt that Christ is Head of His church, there can be no doubt that God has assigned the husband to be the head of the home. Second, the headship of the husband over the home is *not* a matter of cultural preference. Just as Christ continues to be the Head of the church, husbands continue to be the only proper and God-assigned heads of their homes. And, this headship lasts for exactly as long as he has a home to be head over. Shifting opinions in culture do not change God’s arrangement in the home!

Also consider 1 Corinthians 11:3. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Now, there are two important lessons to see from this verse. First, this is another passage that proves God has assigned husbands

as having the role of being head over their wives. There is a God-given structure that is identified in this verse, and this structure never changes. Second, this passage provides evidence that the husband's headship does *not* make him more valuable than his wife. For instance, God (the Father) is Head over Jesus. But, this does not make Jesus any less God than the Father is. The same thing is true with regard to men and women.

With the husband as head of his wife, God's had given the wife responsibility to submit to and respect her husband. Ephesians 5:22 says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." And, Ephesians 5:24 says, "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Ephesians 5:33 adds, "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."

So, this passage continues to use Christ and the church to help us understand the roles in the home with the husband and wife. Just as the church has the responsibility to submit to Christ as its Head, a wife must submit to her husband "in everything." To "submit" means to yield to and arrange oneself under another. And, there must be a respect that is shown toward the husband as the God-authorized head of the home. Then, please recognize that there is one very important exception to a wife's submission to her husband. She has the responsibility to obey God over her husband (compare with Acts 5:29). So, if her husband ever instructs her to do something that would cause her to sin against God, she must obey God rather than her husband!

Finally, God has given children the role of obeying and honoring their parents. Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." So, children have been assigned a role by God that also places them under the guidance from both their parents. And, again, they must be obedient to their parents as long as the commandments do not cause them to violate the instructions of the Lord. Furthermore, the actions of the children must demonstrate honor for their parents. This is the "right" thing to do in the Lord's sight.

Although this provides just a very brief overview of the God-given structure of the home, demonstrating that the husband is assigned by God to be the head of the home, I do want to spend a moment considering *why* this is the case. Now, please recognize that God does *not* have to explain His reasoning. But, I do believe that He helps us to understand His reasoning in 1 Timothy 2:11-14. "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

Now, I recognize that this passage is not directly talking about the home. It is much more in line with the God-given gender roles in the church. But, I believe the two reasons that are given are also fitting to explain why God has assigned the husband as head of the home. First, God created the man before the woman. As we saw in Genesis 2, the woman was created to be a helper suitable for the man. Second, the woman was the first to commit sin. Only after Eve committed

sin do we read of God telling her, “Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16).

Contrasting Four Structures Of The Home

The ways that homes are structured can probably fit into one of four “models.” And, as a point of application in this study, we should all carefully evaluate which “model” properly identifies how our homes are structured. For the purposes of this application, we will continue using the comparison between the husband/wife relationship and the head/body.

First, some homes have the husband as the head over the wife. This, as we have seen, involves the wife submitting to and respecting her husband. And, as Ephesians 5:22-33 teaches, this must involve the husband loving his wife as Christ loved His body, the church – if this home is to please God. For, this is the “model” that God has approved in the Scriptures.

Second, some homes have the wife as head over the husband. In these homes, the wife is the primary decision maker and leads the home wherever and however she believes is appropriate. And, the husband is submissive to his wife. However, this is not the “model” that God approves – and God is not pleased with this home.

Third, some homes have dueling heads. In these homes, there are regular power struggles between husbands and wives. Both are fighting for headship of the home. However, this is not the “model” that God approves – and God is not pleased with this home.

Fourth, some homes have no head. In these homes, majority opinion (of the husband, wife, and children) may be the way that decisions are made. There is no one who is recognized as having authority in the home to make the decisions and lead the family. However, this is not the “model” that God approves – and God is not pleased with this home.

Conclusion

God is the one who has the ultimate authority over the home. And, He has given authority to husbands to be heads of their homes. If husbands do not fulfill this great responsibility according to God’s instructions, he sins. And, if wives do not fulfill their submissive role, they also sin. So, no matter what the prevailing cultural opinion of headship in the home is, we must determine to live according to how God has structured the home!

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