

Christ Community Covenant Church
Authority in the Family: Husbands love your wives!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - June 9, 2013

You know what they say, "Love is blind but marriage is an eye opener!" After one defined marriage as when you agree to spend the rest of your life sleeping in a room that's too warm, beside someone who's sleeping in a room that's too cold.

There is a story about an older couple having dinner in a restaurant. The wife sees another couple about their age sitting in a booth nearby. She sees the husband sitting close to his wife, with his arm around her. He is whispering things in her ear, and she is smiling and blushing. He's gently rubbing her shoulder and touching her hair.

The woman turns to her husband and says, "Look at the couple over there. Look how close that man is to his wife, how he's talking to her. Look at how sweet he is. Why don't you ever do that?"

Her husband looks up from his Caesar salad and glances over at the next booth. Then he turns to his wife and says, "Honey, I don't even know that woman."

We are in a time in our country and in the western world where relationships between men and women are strained and where families are experiencing unparalleled trauma. Abandonment by husbands and fathers has been increasing for the last 40 years and violence in the home has increased. Sadly abandonment by moms has increased as well and female or wife violence is on the rise as well.

But this is hardly a western world problem. The Middle East and Eastern cultures are mixed up and the genders are hurting each other as well. Africa has long struggled with strife and abuse. New studies show an increase in reports of abuse and violence across South America. There is confusion about what makes a man a man and what comprises a womanly woman. The world has opinions. God has answers. We are so confused and so angry and so lost.

Why is this so hard? [discussion]

The scholarly evidence, in short, suggests that at the heart of the explosion of crime in America is the loss of the capacity of fathers and mothers to be responsible in caring for the children they bring into the world. This loss of love and guidance at the intimate levels of marriage and family has broad social consequences for children and for the wider community. The empirical evidence shows that too many young men and women from broken families tend to have a much weaker sense of connection with their neighborhood and are prone to exploit its members to satisfy their unmet needs or desires.

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1995/03/bg1026nbsp-the-real-root-causes-of-violent-crime>

Research indicates that, on average, children who grow up in families with both their biological parents in a low-conflict marriage are better off in a number of ways than children who grow up in single-, step- or cohabiting-parent households. Compared to children who are raised by their married parents, children in other family types are more likely to achieve lower levels of education, to become teen parents, and to experience health, behavior, and mental health problems. And children in single- and cohabiting-parent families are more likely to be poor. http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_states/files/0086.pdf

I know you know this. I also know that many of us are struggling through with divorce and abandonment and relationships that went wrong. I am not trying to add salt to a wound. These can be deep wounds. I think I can say that virtually no one in church this morning has been spared from the hurts of a relationship that has turned heartbreaking. Honestly, I am trying to help. The reason we hurt so desperately is that we have let the world do the talking and suggest the answers. We have truths from God that we need to tell each other for correction and for encouragement. We are told by a confused world that the truths of God are judgmental and old fashioned. Not so, the truth is simply the truth and God made us and knows us. Please have ears to hear.

On that point, don't check out. Young people you have an opinion on what makes for a great husband and wife, father and mother. Together we need to know these truths and we need to courageously put them in place.

Bear with me. I want to take us on a theological journey for a moment into the subject of the Trinity. It is a good study no matter what and I hope to do a study on the attributes of God and the Trinity in 2014 but for now we want to look at this profound doctrine because I believe it creates the framework for family health and marital peace.

Understanding the Trinity

1. The Trinity is not belief in three gods. There is only one God!
2. This one God exists as three Persons.
3. The three Persons are not each part of God, but are each fully God and equally God.
4. God is not one person who took three consecutive roles. That is the heresy of modalism. There have always been and always will be three distinct persons in the Godhead.
5. The Trinity is not a contradiction because God is one in essence, three in Person.

It is not my intention to do a full examination and defense of the Trinity today. I simply want to establish the central equality of the persons of the Trinity so that we all agree. This doctrine is imbedded in the Old Testament where God said "Let *us* make man in *our* image". The name for God "Elohim" is a plural word. In Psalm 110, David says "The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand" - who are these *two* Lords? - and there are many other examples of plural thinking about God. God is three persons, equal in deity and each fully God but three unique persons.

However it is in the life and teaching of Jesus that we meet the Trinity full-on. Jesus' baptism in Mark 1:911 - there is the Father's voice, Jesus the Son in the water, and the Holy Spirit descending. All three members of the Trinity are present.

What does the Trinity have to do with marriage?

Now, notice this carefully: Since by nature or essence the Father, Son, and Spirit are identically the same, what distinguishes the Father from the Son and each of them from the Spirit cannot be their one and undivided divine essence. At the level of the divine essence, each is quite literally indistinguishable as each possesses eternally and fully the identically same divine nature.

What, then, distinguishes the Father from the Son and each of them from the Spirit? What distinguishes the Persons of the Trinity are (1) ***the particular roles that each has within the Trinity and in the work each carries out in the world, and, (2) the respective relationships that each has with the other divine Persons and within the creation that the triune God has made.***

Since the Father, Son, and Spirit must be distinct from each other as Persons, while they are in another sense identical to one another in their common essence, their distinction must be in these areas of roles and relationships, since they cannot be distinct in regard to their divine essence. How, then, are the roles and relationships of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, distinct from one another? And how do these distinctions help us in understanding better the ways in which the Trinity can provide a foundation for family health?

What are the Distinct Roles and Relationships of the Persons within the Trinity?

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God. They are each equally God. They each fully possess one undivided divine nature. Yet each Person of the Godhead is different in role and relationship with respect to the others. To distinguish the roles and relationships that exist in and among the triune Persons, we might say this:

- The Father is supreme in authority among the Persons of the Godhead, and he is responsible for devising the grand purposes and plans that take place through all of creation and redemption (Eph. 1:3, 9-11).
- The Son is under the Father's authority and seeks always to do the Father's will. Although the Son is fully God, he nonetheless takes his lead from the Father and seeks to glorify the Father in all that he does (John 8:28-29, 42) He is the Living Word, the Father is not.
- The Spirit is under both the Father and the Son. As the Son sought to glorify the Father in all he did, the Spirit seeks to glorify the Son, to the ultimate praise of the Father (John 16:14; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil 2:11). The Son and the Father sent the Spirit, He is the Comforter and Counselor and the Father and Son are not. Jesus speaking in John 14:15 "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor- the Spirit of truth*". The word 'another' means 'of the same essence as me' (i.e. divine).

<http://www.sbts.edu/family/blog/the-father-the-son-and-the-holy-spirit-the-trinity-as-theological-foundation-for-family-ministry/>

Or; looking at the plan of salvation, the role each person plays in our hope of deliverance from the consequence of sin:

- The Father designed and organized how mankind would be redeemed (Galatians 4:4-5). He set into motion a complex set of events, actions, and prophecies which culminated in the life and death of a Savior.
- The Son carried out the plan (John 6:37-38). He followed the Father's instructions to come to earth, even though that meant He would have to die.
- The Holy Spirit sees to it that every person feels a call toward God's saving grace (John 14:26, John 16:8; Romans 1:19-20). Furthermore, He transforms the lives and hearts of those who receive salvation through Jesus Christ.

Here is the point moving forward: ***that 'order' can exist without compromising the equality of each Person in the Godhead may be helpful in thinking about the man-woman relationship in the Bible.***

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹²And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

So guys, what do we know?

1. That as ***male and female we are equal in God's eyes***, each fully expressing the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Galatians 3:28

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

What this means is . . . neither has the right to act or talk superior. We must reject the media lies that put down women and degrade men. We should probably stop joking about it and certainly must watch our conversations more closely.

2. That something has happened to disrupt our relationship with each other

Genesis 3

Eve had the conversation with the Tempter, took the food from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and gave it to her husband. It seems Adam was right there watching doing nothing to stop the events. Eve took the lead; Adam submitted to his wife. When God came to confront the sadness do you remember who He went to first . . . Adam. To Eve, God said "Your desire will be for him but he will master you." Now the relationships are about power not mutual submission and love.

3. ***That repentance and forgiveness, love and mutual submission helps to restore relationship, especially in marriage.***

Ephesians 5:18b-21

. . . Be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

4. We are each, male and female, to understand that the ***mystery of marriage is a living word picture*** concerning the deeper truth illustrating the oneness of Christ and the Church.

Here are four things husbands must understand in order to love their wives well:

1. Husbands are to love their wives by leading in sacrifice and understanding.

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Ephesians 5:23

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

According to Ephesians 5:23 'Headship' is a role or order that God established with Christ as head over the Church. In this living word picture of the oneness of Christ with the church, the husband is established as head in the marriage. As we noted in the Trinity, it is possible to have different roles and certain orders and still have perfect equality and submission one to another. As a result:

- God has given the husband the leadership role for the good of his wife, not as an excuse for him to be proud or selfish, and not as an excuse to treat her as a servant.
- Some husbands do not seem to understand that yelling for food or beverage service while they are watching a sports event on TV and while their wives are scrubbing the kitchen floors on their hands and knees does not reflect biblical truth in balance.
- God has not said the husband must, or should, make all decisions in his family. If a husband wants to please God, and if he loves his wife with agape love, he will engage his wife and family in decision making.
- God has not said that the husband must make decisions according to his wishes, nor even according to his wisdom. Instead he must make decisions that are best for his wife and his family. If the husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church he will come into the relationship to serve not to be served. God has not made him the leader in the family to feed his ego, or to satisfy his selfishness, but for her good, his good and the good of the marriage.
- If husband and wife disagree, if he is not proud, and if he is not selfish, he will be willing to go along with her ideas and her desires - unless it would hurt her or someone else spiritually, emotionally, or physically, or unless what she wants is unsafe or unbiblical. However, again keeping biblical truth in balance, if she is not proud, and if she is not selfish, she will not think that she is always right, and she will not want her way just to 'win'.

- Obeying God and loving his wife with *agape* love includes the husband assuming his God-given responsibilities and participate with the Holy Spirit in helping to present her blameless before the Father.

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Understanding and knowing your wife is a lifelong effort – A Ph. D. in your spouse

2. That *this headship of love and sacrifice has a purpose of healing and redemption.*

Ephesians 5:26

²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

3. Husbands are to love their wives as their own body.

Ephesians 5:28

²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

4. That there *is never room for dishonoring or the use of power or coercion* in marriage by the husband or wife.

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Howard Markman of the University of Denver studied newlyweds over the first decade of marriage; they found a very subtle but telling difference at the beginning of the relationships. Among couples who would ultimately stay together, 5 out of every 100 comments made about each other were putdowns. Among couples who would later split, 10 of every 100 comments were insults. That gap magnified over the following decade, until couples heading downhill were flinging five times as many cruel and invalidating comments at each other as happy couples. "Hostile putdowns act as cancerous cells that, if unchecked, erode the relationship over time," says Markman. "In the end, relentless unremitting negativity takes control and the couple can't get through a week without major blowups."

So what are we to do as husbands? We have said that authority is established through submission. We must yield; submit to the Father as Christ did and establish your authority in Him. You will be like Christ, a servant of all, including your wife and children. You may have some apologies to make. More than that you may have pieces of your life that need to come under the authority of Christ and your life will change when that happens. Yield, do not be drunk but instead be filled with the Spirit.

Kyle Idleman has written a little book called "Not a Fan (Fanatic)." His thesis is that fans are fickle and love with a passion and identify with a team, but tend to follow and identify with their team according to how well the team performs. They are fanatic only when the team seemingly deserves his passion.

Idleman suggest that too many of us who call ourselves Christians are really just fans of Christ, not really into the command of Christ to deny ourselves and to follow Him without regard for our own will for self-rule.

"One way fans try to follow Jesus without denying themselves is by compartmentalizing the areas of their lives they don't want Him to have access to. They try to negotiate the terms of the deal. I'll follow Jesus,

but I'm not going to sell my possessions. Don't ask me to forgive the people who hurt me; they don't deserve that. Don't ask me to save sex for marriage; I can't help my desires. Don't ask me to give a percentage of my money; I worked hard for that cash. And instead of following Jesus with their financial life, they follow Money magazine. In their relationships, instead of Jesus they follow Oprah. In their sex lives, instead of following Jesus, they follow Cosmo. They follow Jesus, just not with every area of their lives."

Men, it is time to yield and lead.