

Humble Headship: How to Lead Through Servanthood

If you had to choose just one word to define your role as a husband, what would it be? Protector? Provider? Lover? Friend? Stud?

We so often struggle with marriage because our definition of marriage is not God's definition. Similarly, our definition of husband is quite often not God's definition. It's like have a wrong definition of gravity, and then getting frustrated that your always being held down by it.

Let's look at two verses and see what one word they use to define the term husband...

Headship Texts: Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3...the word is "head". (not such a strange term...our tax documents have a status called "head of household") So we need to think more about the idea of headship or of being the head as a husband.

Typical Dangers: To neglect this idea altogether or to see this headship through a worldly lens. Therefore, when it comes to husbands today, we have the following kinds of "head cases":

- **The Head Honcho:** autocratic, domineering, harsh, bossy.
- **The Sleepy Head:** passive, indifferent, unmotivated, often follows wife's lead.
- **The Heady Head:** defines headship as having more knowledge than wife; a teacher.
- **The Head in the Clouds:** loving and attentive, but directionless.

While there are a few important principles at work in some of these "head cases", these examples are inadequate in regard to God's design.

The key to understanding biblical headship is found in Ephesians 5:23: *the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.*

Defining a husband's headship is not up to our personal preferences, personality types, or cultural conditions. A husband's headship always takes its cues from Jesus Christ.

So we have to ask, "What does God's word teach us about the headship of Jesus? What did Jesus himself teach us about headship?"

Six Keys to Understanding True Headship:

Mark 10:35-45: True headship seeks greatness in the role of servant, not master.

What does this passage teach us about our the world's ideas of headship? FILL IN

This is the clearest passage in which Jesus addresses this idea of leadership or headship. While biblical headship can express itself in a variety of ways, this servanthood should be the foundation for all of them. This is radically different from the world's ideas of being the master of my domain...lord of the manor.

John 13:3-5, 12-15: True headship involves the kind of servanthood that knows no limits.

Why did Jesus choose to wash their feet? Why not some other way to serve these men? FILL IN

Jesus washed their feet because, culturally, it was the lowest kind of task given to the lowest kind of servant in the household. Jesus wanted to send shock them and send a clear message that humble headship serves without setting the bar in the middle. Men, don't call yourself a servant because you take the trash out, but won't sacrifice watching the game in order to serve your wife. Knows no limits.

Romans 6:15-18: True headship is marked by service that flows out of our slavery to God.

What does this passage tell us about which people can be described as "free"? No one! FILL IN

As Bob Dylan once sang, "You're gonna have to serve somebody." The only way that we can practice this kind of headship is if God first defeats our pride and selfishness through His love and grace. We see ourselves as a servant to our wife only because we know that we are first and foremost servants of God. Not living ourselves is now part of our spiritual DNA. Therefore if God is first, and He calls us to put others first, we do it!

Philippians 2:3-8: True headship always takes its cues from the true Head (capital "H"), Jesus Christ.

What does this passage tell us about the right standard by which we can measure our servanthood? FILL IN

Our servanthood must always come back to Jesus. If you are not looking to Jesus Christ, if you are not learning about Him and learning what is pleasing to Him, and relying on Him, then your headship will veer off course. This brings us back to the "key to headship" which is "even as Christ" from Ephesians 5:23. He did this to save us. How can we not do it for others, especially our wives.

II Corinthians 4:5: True headship is motivated by a desire to proclaim Jesus Christ!

What might Paul mean when he talks about this idea of "proclaiming ourselves", maybe something he was accused of doing? FILL IN

"Proclaiming ourselves" is living with a 'me-centered' agenda. It comes out in how we talk, how we spend our time, in our relationships, and in what we care about. "Myself" is what I want to broadcast. But if we want to broadcast Jesus, then our proclamation has two parts: 1) Jesus as Lord, and as a natural consequence of that, "ourselves as your servants". We don't want our wives to simply think we are great servants. We want them to think that Jesus is a great Savior. If we have a Jesus-centered agenda, in every area of our life, then our service will proclaim Him.

Ephesians 5:25-27: True headship always takes the initiative to accomplish God's best for our wives.

What did the church do in order for Jesus to love her like this? Nothing! FILL IN

Guys, if you want to live according to God's definition of the word "husband", then your headship cannot simply be reactive. You must take the initiative! We don't love our wives because they are lovely. We love our wives and serve our wives because we love Jesus and want to obey Him. Sometimes they are lovely. Sometimes there are benefits to serving our wives. Sometimes there are no benefits. It doesn't matter. AND we serve not make life easier for them or so they can do what they want. We serve them in order to see God's best accomplished in their lives. Goes back to what we want to proclaim...and who we are serving.

'Head' This Way...Everyday: *What are some practical ways in which we live this out, everyday?*

When you come home from work. Your time or God's time? A wonderful time to demonstrate that you are putting her needs before your own.

Get to know her real needs. Sometimes we think we know what our wife will appreciate, but our service is informed by what we want to do or by guessing...instead of by talking with our wives and observing what weighs on them.

Serve without being asked. Being a servant like Jesus does not mean you simply complete a "honey-do" because your wife's pestering was becoming unbearable. When they have to ask us to do things, they feel like they are being a burden. But show her that you know what she needs by anticipating those needs in Christ-like service.

Serve with a good attitude, no matter her attitude. Jesus was not a grumbling servant! He did not go to the cross or wash His disciples feet with a scowl on His face and critical comments on His lips. And as we've talked about, He didn't serve us because we had a good attitude. No! Are attitude put Him on the cross. Your wife's attitude does not inspire service. Obedience to Jesus inspires service.

Serve in such a way that what matters most to her really matters. Find ways to serve your wife that demonstrate to her that she matters to you, and do that by supporting her in those things that really matters to her. Watch the kids while she visits a friend or goes on a retreat. Take her to a chick flick, even if you feel like your 'man card' will be confiscated at the theater door. Give up your fun money so she can get that craft item she wanted.

MOST IMPORTANT: Show your Humble Headship has a motivation and a goal: Make Jesus Christ your primary passion each day! Like we talked about before, we don't want our wives to simply think we are great servants. We want them to think that Jesus is a great Savior. As we serve ourselves by walking with Jesus, by praying, through reading His word, through a commitment to the local church, through discipling our children, through giving to God's work, through reaching out with the gospel, by walking in sexual purity, by protecting our children's from worldly influences, by praising Him, and thanking Him, and honoring Him...then our service to our wives will *beautify what they know we believe*.

Marriages today are falling apart because everyone wants to be the master...because everyone has a me-centered agenda. Only through the grace of Jesus Christ can we be freed from our bondage to "me" and live for God's agenda, which means we will also live to serve others, just as Jesus has served us.

Let's pray that God would help us to practice this kind of humble headship!