

SESSION 16: FINDING GOD’S PLAN FOR RELATIONSHIPS

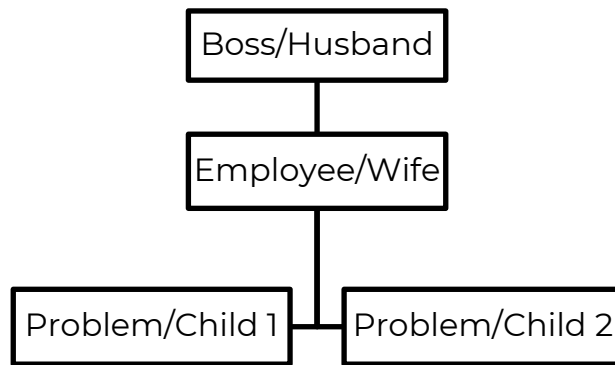
I. Definitions of Womanhood and Manhood

A. A Real Woman is one who rejects deception, empowers others, shapes future generations, and looks to the greater reward—God’s reward.

B. A Real Man is one who rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously, and expects the greater reward—God’s reward.

II. Two Modern Views of the Marriage Relationship

A. Top-Down Traditional Model

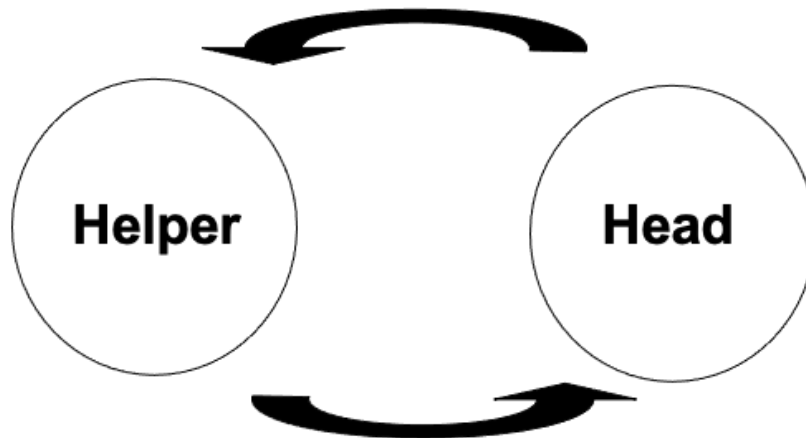


Luke 22:25-27

1. Position: King
2. Leadership Style: Authoritarian
3. Goal: To Receive Benefits
4. Key Phrase: “You are not to be like that”

B. 50-50 Mythical Model

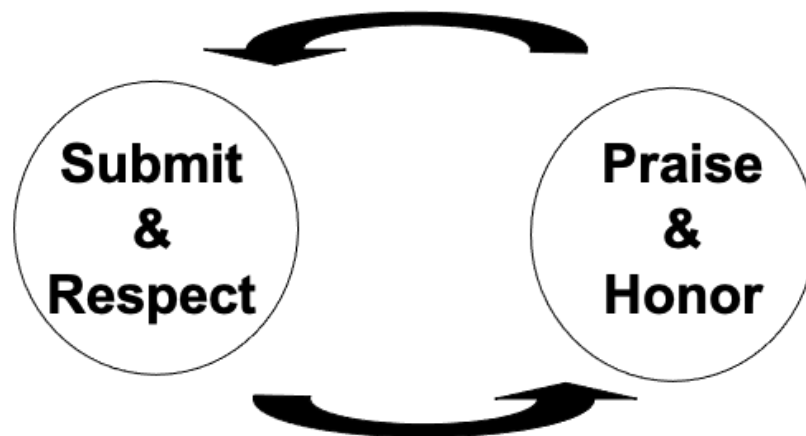
III. A Biblical View of Marriage
A. Core Roles



The Husband as [Head](#) is a [servant-leader](#).

The Wife as [Helper](#) is a [nurturer-completer](#).

B. Core Responses



*We are greatly indebted to Robert Lewis of Fellowship Bible Church Little Rock, author of *Men's Fraternity, Quest for Authentic Manhood*, and *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*.

BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Discussion Questions:

1. From our Reflection Assignment last week: What are some ways you can begin to live out God's definition of Womanhood? How can you: Reject Deception for Significance, Empower Others in Relationships, Shape Future Generations, and Look to the Greater Reward – God's Reward?
2. How is the biblical model of leadership different from the world's model or what we typically think, and how have you observed each in our community and society?
3. What are your thoughts and reactions to the differences between the Biblical model of marriage and the Top-Down Traditional model?
4. Compare and contrast the 50-50 Model with the Biblical Model of a side-by-side/symbiotic relationship. Why do you think the differences are so critical?
5. How does a man's response to his wife of praise and honor impact the kind of woman she becomes?
6. How can giving a man respect actually make him a better leader? How can withholding respect make him a worse leader?

Reflection Assignment:

What is the difference between the cultural and the biblical views of "submission"? How can submission, in a biblical sense, be liberating for you?

Passage to Ponder this week: Hebrews 13:17

Week Sixteen Summary:

Last week we examined a definition of “Woman,” from a biblical perspective:

A REAL Woman is One Who...

- Rejects Deception
- Empowers Others
- Shapes Future Generations
- Looks to the Greater Reward—God’s Reward

It makes sense, of course, that God’s ideal for male/female relationships would entail a relationship between a REAL Woman and a REAL Man. So, let’s add another definition:

A REAL Man is One Who...

- Rejects Passivity
- Accepts Responsibility
- Leads Courageously
- Looks for a Greater Reward—God’s Reward

For women who earnestly want to pursue this standard in their own lives, questions immediately spring to mind: How do those definitions play out in the most elemental building block of relationships, marriage? What **is** God’s Design for Relationships? When we see the words, “Leads Courageously,” most of us think immediately of a traditional “Top-Down” model of leadership. In other words, for “leader” we substitute the word “boss” or “king.” This implies an authoritarian, maybe even oppressive, style of leadership in which the “leader” receives benefits at the expense of those he leads. Our appropriate and natural reaction to this image is a negative one; Jesus had the same reaction. In reaction to this faulty model, we think we would prefer a more “modern” approach to the marriage relationship—a 50-50 Model. Wouldn’t it be better if there was no leader, if everyone shared all responsibility equally? It would be GREAT . . . if we could just get the men to do their share. We call this 50-50 concept the “Mythical Model,” because while it sounds wonderful, a real, live example remains elusive.

Interestingly, the Bible lays out a completely different paradigm for leadership; we don’t have to pick between the faulty model and the fantasy model. Jesus taught a model of leadership which is completely at odds with the “Traditional Top-Down” model and is actually reality-based unlike the “50-50 Mythical” model. According to him, His followers are to lead as He did—sacrificially serving those they lead. Likewise, in the Biblical Head/Helper Model of the marriage relationship, the husband leads by working unselfishly for the benefit of his wife and family. The wife helps by bringing all her strengths to bear as she empowers and supports him in that effort. Rather than a Top-Down relationship, it is a Side-by-Side (even symbiotic) relationship. The wife responds to her husband’s servant leadership with submission and respect; the husband responds to his wife’s help with praise and honor. Those responses enable and encourage both spouses in their effectiveness in their core roles. And as God himself said, it is “very good.”