

“God’s Purpose and Plan for Gender” // *First Love* #5 // Ephesians 5:21–32

Introduction:

We are nearing the home stretch in our series through Ephesians 5 on relationships. The small group study guide for this week is on *Decision-Making*.

- What I’m going to give you this weekend is a general vision for the family and the home that will provide you with a framework out of which you can make a lot of the most important decisions in your family.
- *(I’m not going to spend a lot of time in this message discussing how you go about making day-by-day decisions, whether to live in location X or Y or take job A or B*
 - 1. *I’m hoping to do a short **mini-series** on that in the Fall;*
 - 2. ***Gospel-Centered Marriage Seminar*** early this summer on that as well)

But what I am going to give you today will be crucial, I think, in helping you think through major decisions in your marriage, or even whether or not to get married.

If you are single, what I hope you’ll see today is what you should be looking for in your spouse if you get married. You can’t know what qualities to look for if you don’t know God’s design in a marriage.

- You see, the **ancient view of marriage** was that marriage is primarily functional. Established economic stability. Give you kids who could take care of you in old age. So choose a woman whose family was wealthy and had good birthing hips.
- The **modern view of marriage** is that marriage is about romantic fulfillment. So you look for the person who completes

you and makes all your dreams come true. If you do, you’ll live happily ever after in infatuation bliss.

Paul says in Eph 5 that neither of those things is the primary purpose of marriage. **Preparing you for heaven** is the purpose of marriage.

And that leads me to the **biggest point for our non-married community in this series**. Whether you are married or not, **God’s goal** is the same: Christ-likeness. He uses **different means** to get us there, but his goal for us is the same.

- Marriage and biological family are not ultimate. Christ and the church are ultimate. Earthly marriage is a shadow of our most ultimate union, our union to Christ. And our biological family points us to our eternal family, the church.

Paul says that this is the **“mystery” of marriage** and the family.

So **whether or not you are in a nuclear family**, or a marriage, what God is ultimately doing in our lives is the same: preparing us for our **eternal marriage**, Christ, and our **eternal family**, the church.

- He’s just using **different means** to get there.

*(Now: real quick: A **word about sources** in this series*

- *Cumbersome to cite everything; transcripts have all the footnotes.)*

Ephesians 5:21–32

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **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. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...¹

- I told you the first week that when someone wants to dis the Bible, this is one of their go-to verses (see it on TV). *“Oh, you can’t possibly believe the Bible, it’s so backwards, it actually says...”*
- First, I want you to understand **God’s word to us is good**, given for our good and his glory. **Inevitably we find things** we are not going to agree with and we have to make a decision. **Are we going to revise** what we believe based on his word, or are we going to revise his word based on our pre-conceived notions? We’re **not the first people** to be offended by the Bible.
- But I told you that you have to really pay attention to the context.
 - The verse right before this vs 22, vs. 21, says **...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.** The “submit” used in vs. 22 when he tells the wife to submit.
 - *(In fact, in Greek, the sentence in vs. 22 reaches back to vs. 21 to borrow that verb through a complex Greek structure I don’t have time to explain.²)*
- The point is that the command to the woman to submit is a **specific application of a principle** given to all believers.
 - **Submit is a military term**, which means to submit your agenda to the greater whole. *(In the military, you don’t ever respond to an order by saying, “Well, that’s not good for me right now.” No, you set aside your agenda for the sake of the army, even if it costs you your life.)*

¹ Much help in this comes from Tim Keller, Gender Roles, pt 1. See also John Piper, *Men and Women: What’s the Difference*; Wayne Grudem, *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.

² The UBS Greek NT has 5:22 as, *hai gunaikes tois idiois andrasin hos to kurio*. In a wooden way, that’s something like, “The women to their own men [husbands] as to the Lord.” There *are* manuscripts that include the participial verb, “submitting,” in 5:22, but this was most likely added by later translators for clarity.

- So **Paul is making a specific application** to the wives of a principle given to both husband and wife. Both husband and wife are submitting to each other, just in different ways.
- Can’t ever forget that.

Which brings me to a **2nd point**. It is **equally wrong** to deny that men and women are not given **specific, differing commands** to follow here. The woman is told in this passage to submit twice; the man is told to submit once.

- The **wife is told to submit** to her husband (vs. 21) by **submitting herself** and her agenda to the man and **following his lead**(vs 22)
- The **man is to submit to his wife** (v 21) by functioning as **her head**, like Christ is of the church, and laying down his life for his wife, like Christ did for the church. (v 25)

Let’s unpack those more.

Ephesians 5:23, Man is called “the head.”

- Scholars point out that the word ‘head’ can imply one of two things: “**source**” or “**authority**.”
 - In actuality, “head” means both, because **one implies the other**.
 - The **source** of something is **typically its authority**.
 - If I were an English teacher and we were interpreting a poem... The word “authority” has the root word “author.”³
- You see in **Genesis 2** (if you want to turn there; make sure you keep your finger in Eph 5), when God created woman, he made her **from the man**, and then gave him the **responsibility to name her**, both of which give him a **clear leadership responsibility** in the relationship.*
- *God had **put man in charge** of naming the entire creation. (Do you **ever wonder why** God did that—why God in the middle of creation suddenly puts the man in charge of naming everything? Was it because God was tired and out of names?*

³ Illustration from Tim Keller, “Gender Roles, pt. 1”.

“Shew. I am exhausted. After inventing that **subatomic particle system** I am all out of creativity. Can you give me some ideas?”)

- Of course not. He gave man the responsibility to name because naming yields a **shaping power; an authority; a headship**.
- So he **named all the animals**. When God **made the woman**, Gen 2:23 says he brought her to the man to name. That’s important.

Let me give you **5 leadership roles man was given in the GARDEN:**

1. **Provision:** The man had a job that the woman was brought into. (BTW: *There’s some great insight there. Girls, if the guy can’t hold down a job; he is lazy; or he is a terrible student, or he’s ever won a HALO tournament, you’d probably be better off not messing with him.*)
2. **Spiritual:** when the woman was brought into the world, the man already had a relationship with God. In **2:16** God gave the command to not eat of the forbidden tree to the man, **before he created the woman in vs. 18**, which means that after the woman was created man had to relay the command to her. *The first man was given the privilege and responsibility of leading his wife into a relationship with God and explaining his ways to her.*
3. **Romance:** In vs. 24, after she’s created, God says, “*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.*” He’s the one taking the initiative, leaving and cleaving. He’s inviting her into a stable home where she will be safe and protected.
 - In fact, **the first recorded words** of man in human history were a love poem composed to his wife. “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” I think there is a probably a lot more to what he said because there is no way a perfect man saw a perfect woman for the first time and simply said, “Hmm... flesh of my flesh.” R-rated.
4. **Protection:** When God says he should “cleave” to his wife—he’s **becoming one body** with her. And he’s supposed to look after her like he would his own body. In

Ephesians 5 **Paul takes that all the way** to laying down his life her, which leads me to #5...

5. **Self-sacrifice:** Paul says the model for all of this is Christ, who laid down his life for his “bride” and leveraged all his power to **serve** and **protect** and **exalt** and **bless** her.

Men, if you want a job description, and a way to evaluate how well you are doing, map these 5 things out and see how well you do in leading in them.

- EC: protecting a baby girl from the sex trade. I thought, “That’s a man.”
- **Servant leader:** *A servant leader is someone who takes initiative for the benefit of others.*

The woman in Genesis 2 is called “the helper.”

- The word “helper” in Hebrew is a hard word to translate.
 - In English “helper” can have a **diminutive** tone, like “Daddy’s little helper.” My daughters when they want to help. “**Go get the hammer.** Now pound on the ground with it.”
 - The implication can be that men do the real work and women **make the coffee**. Sort of a **Mad Men** view of the world.
- But that is not AT ALL the implication of “ezer.”
 - Here’s how I know: “ezer” is a word most often used in the Bible for God, as in “*God is our ezer (our help), our strength and our deliverer.*”⁴
 - Now, God is not our gopher who doesn’t have the ability to help us. Saying “God is our help” means that there things we lack that God has. We are insufficient; he makes up the gap.
 - *If anything, calling woman the ezer, the helper, implies a superiority in her, not him, because it means that he is incomplete and insufficient without her.*
- Back in **Genesis 1:26**, it says, “*In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*”

⁴ Psalm 33:20; 70:5.

- God divided up various dimensions of his image into the two genders so that **together** they would be a better reflection of the image of God than would one gender by itself.
- God put part of himself—that a man needs, that he is incomplete without—into woman.
- So the two are necessary and **interdependent**.
- ***The two of you are not exactly the same; if so, one of you would have been unnecessary.***
- In **Genesis 2**, there is a very interesting disruption in the flow of the narrative after God creates the man. Up until now, after everything God has said, **“It is good.”** Well then God makes the man and says, “not good.”
 - Then God takes the man, makes him fall asleep, and then creates the woman out of him. When he saw her he said, “This is bone now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” A part of him that had been missing. He was incomplete and found fulfillment.
 - *And now, It was good.*
 - If she’d been just like him, it would have been not good; not good.
 - **God made the two genders to be a more complete presentation of the image of God then one of them alone, and he did so by making them complementary.**

For a while it became popular that gender was merely a sociological construct... that male and female are exactly the same, just with a different plumbing system. But almost nobody says that anymore.

- **Biologists have demonstrated** that every cell in our body is stamped XX or XY.⁵ Our differences are stamped into our cells.
 - God did not take **one generic body**, screw in 2 different sets of pipes to them, and call them two genders, as if we could change the piping, pump in a few hormones

and change our gender, even if Duke Univ is willing to pay for it. Our gender distinctions go down to our core.

- **Genesis 1:26** says that **from the beginning**, God made us male and female.
 - Read something recently about how **boys and girls**, from their infancy, approach problems differently, before society can conform them into a pattern.
 - **Obstacles:** Infant boys. Knock them over. Girl toddlers: go around or complain. You interpret that as you will.
 - Girls like **complexity**; boys do not. When **jazz music** is played, the heartbeat of a 6-month-old girl speeds up. There is virtually no effect on the boys’ heart.
 - From these differences come some of the greatest blessings, and challenges, of marriage. **DOGS and CATS.** (It’s a **stereotype**: I know a lot of marriages where the woman is more into sex than the man...)
 - Feminist **Carol Gilligan** (not an evangelical) *In a Different Voice: “Men see themselves as maturing as they separate; women see themselves as maturing as they attach.”* Men feel they achieve maturity when they become **independent**; women when they are **interdependent**.
 - Which is better? They are both good.
- The two genders are a more complete view of the image of God than would one gender by itself.
 - If the two of you were exactly the same, one of you would have been unnecessarily.
 - Ancient Jewish rabbis used to point out God did not take woman from his head, to rule over him (like the feminists say) or from foot to be his slave (as the Chauvanists say) but from his side. Not from his **front to lead him** or his **back to follow him** but **from his side to complete him.**

⁵ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/536952/sex-chromosome>. See also Tim and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, 172.

Not only were men and women created differently, they were cursed differently (*If there were any question as to whether men and women were created differently, the differentiation in curse should settle it.*)⁶

- Tim Keller points out that in **Genesis 3**, when God cursed the man for his rebellion, his headship of the earth was cursed.
 - The world, God said, would now rebel against his rule; the ground would frustrate him.
- God's curse of the woman was, *"that desire you have to complete your husband, it will become a desire for your husband, and he shall rule over you."*
- With the fall, our gifts became idols.
 - **Masculine independence became autonomy and then tyranny.**
 - **Feminine interdependence became absolute dependence, or co-dependence or even masochism.** That ranges from a girl who just wants a guy to take care of her to one that lets herself be abused because she really needs the attention of a man.
- Both **conservatives and feminists** forget something important about this story: *The feminists forget that our differences can be helpful; but the "traditionalists" forget that these tendencies have been cursed.*
- Listen: the Bible does not advocate a **Victorian, 1950's** view of the family. They had a few things right, but some other things wrong.⁷ The Bible usually **challenges every culture**.
- Saying that the Biblical view of the family is this macho, ruling guy, and a quiet, little, coffee-getting wife, is probably as much in line **with the curse than the biblical ideal**.

Here's an important observation that you don't hear made very often: **Very few details** are given in Ephesians 5, or in Genesis 2, for that matter, about what **headship and submission** actually look like. **Paul says**, "God created man as the head of the marriage; the woman submits to him..." **but doesn't go** into any detail about

⁶ Keller, Gender Roles 1.

⁷ Keller, Gender Roles, pt. 1.

what that means. That's intentional. Because it looks different in different relationships, **based on the personality** of the two people involved.

- When a lot of conservatives start to apply this passage, they go out of the text:
- "The woman must stay at home and not work." *What about Proverbs 31?*
- "Women should raise the kids while the man just focuses on making money." *What about next chapter, Eph 6?*
- "This means that men should mow the grass and women should cook." What? Where do you get that out of these verses?⁸

Which means that headship and submission are going to look differently in every marriage.

Submission does not mean...

- **...the inferiority of the woman.**
 - Everything in the Genesis 2 passage screams equality.
 - They were both created in the image of God. Paul explains in Galatians 3:28 that there is no real hierarchy of any kind.
 - That the woman is told to submit does not imply the first shred of inferiority. *Went over this a couple of weeks ago:* Jesus was fully equal to God, yet he submitted himself to the Father. **This was not an assault on his dignity** and did not imply any inferiority on his part. If it **was not an assault** on his dignity to do that, it is not an assault on yours either. On the contrary, it makes you more like God when you do it.
- **...the dominance of the man.**
 - *As if she exists as a **serf** in his house to cater to all his whims.*
 - *The husband is told first to lay down his life for her. **Who has the harder job?***

⁸ Again, I owe this insight to Tim Keller from *"Submit to One Another."*

- *I've told you this before, but if I am the kind of leadership I should be, most of the disagreements in my house I should lose, voluntarily.*
- *My leadership should always be characterized by that one question, "How can I **serve** you?"*
- **..."unconditional obedience" by the woman.**
 - ***In Eph 5:22*** when it says, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" does **not** mean "**as if he was God,**" but **as a way of serving God.** *If the guy was telling you to do something that would make you disobey the Lord, i.e. if he were asking you to do something immoral—help him sell drugs, or keep your kids out of church, or abuse you, you would not do it. Romans 13* tells us to submit to government, but never in a way that makes us disobey God. Same thing is true, here.
- **...independent decision-making on the part of the man:**
 - *Remember that God put various attributes into each gender, so I look at life in an incomplete way without my wife. She has a whole different set of filters that complete mine.*
 - ***I tend to be detached.*** *Stuff my emotions down deep. Sometimes that is good.* (Little bit of a stereotype/generalization), but if you were to crack open a man's brain, you will see a **waffle**. A waffle has little boxes and you can put everything in a box. That's what we do. We put one issue in a box and carefully put it away making sure not to touch the other issues. **I'll be mad or hurt about something for days and not even know it...**
 - If you were to crack open a women's brain, you would find **spaghetti**. Everything is connected to everything; your job, kids, mother, everything is connected and there are no little boxes as it all bleeds into each other.
 - **Which quality is better?** Emotional compartmentalization or emotional connectedness? You need both.
- ***There are times feelings need to be considered***
- *Observation: "Professionalism" has been defined by traditional male qualities. A lot of the literature now points to a recovery of more female values in leadership.⁹*
- Her perspective is crucial, and often more insightful, than mine.
 - I can't tell you how often this happens in my marriage. Only a man who is a fool makes decision without the counsel of his wife.
 - If she tells you, "Don't get the 2nd job because you are being disconnected from your kids, listen to her!"
- **...women should not have the highest leadership positions in business or politics.** Real quick: Ephesians 5 and Genesis 2 are both in the context of the home, and ideally where both partners have the gospel at their center.
 - **Paul in other places in the NT applies this to the church,** but those are the **only two places** where this kind of **headship relationship** between men and women is to be normative: **home and the church.**
 - When this is enforced outside the home, **not only is it unbiblical, it gets dangerous,** because all the other safeguards that the Bible puts in place: **gospel-centrality, fullness of the Spirit, covenant loyalty,** these are not in place.
 - So this principle **in no way means a man should never work for a woman** or that a woman could not occupy the highest places of leadership in society.

⁹ See "What Makes a Leader?" by Daniel Goleman, Harvard Business Review <http://hbr.org/2004/01/what-makes-a-leader/ar/1>; "Leadership is All About Emotional Persuasion," by Nick Morgan, Forbes; <http://www.forbes.com/2010/02/02/communication-emotional-persuasion-leadership-managing-speaking.html>; Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead, by Sheryl Sandberg; The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, by Patrick Lencioni. Also Arbinger Institute's *Leadership and Self-Deception* as an example of this. In this book they show how emotional damage in one area can color relationships in multiple areas and we should at least recognize that. Or consider Bill Hybel's article on the importance of measuring your "emotional stamina" along with your physical or spiritual stamina.

- I plan for one of **my daughters to be president**.
- Ever seen one of those **stunt shows** that starts with the warning, “Don’t try this at home?” Paul puts a warning on this passage, “*Only try this at home.*”
- **...the man has a power to leverage over his wife.**
 - I pointed out the 2nd week that this verse is written to women. It’s not written to you guys. Get out of her verse. You have enough of your own verses to worry about. You can never demand it, She can give it to you.
 - **MLJ:** Very conservative Bible interpreter. If she’s not doing her role, all he can do is try to earn it, to fulfill his role and leave her to God.
 - Maybe you can try leaving the Bible open to Eph 5 every night on her pillow.
 - But men should never quote this verse “at” their wives. It’s her verse to obey; not yours to demand.

Submission does mean: *the man breaks the tie in a split decision.*

- *Keller: NYC example. He felt yes; she no. They had to make a decision; to not make one would be, functionally, to make one. He conceded: “OK, if you don’t want to go, we won’t go.” Kathy: No, you are letting me make the decision. You have to make it. Submission means man has to make the decision in the best interest of the family.*
- The number of times this has actually happened I could count on 1 hand
- People who say, “Well, just work it out.”
 - That doesn’t work practically. Somebody ends up submitting.
 - Like a **dance:** somebody leads.
 - If two people are dancing face to face, they cannot do exactly the same thing without running into each other and ending the dance. The movements cannot be identical and equivalent; they have to be complementary and harmonious.
 - The lead role in the dance of marriage God gave to the man.

- **C. S. Lewis** says that the **physical dance** of sex corresponds to the relational dance. In the act of sex, Lewis says, **man plays the role of initiator; he “moves toward”** the woman. The woman plays the role of receiving the initiative of the man.
 - We are given corresponding roles in how we relate as husband and wife.
 - These are just parts we play; not some statement about our worth or superiority.¹⁰
 - **(Paper and thorns)?**

That’s about all I can tell you about what submission does and does not mean.

- ***Honestly, I can’t tell you what submission will look like exactly in your marriage.***
- You need to take these principles and wrestle with them and have a long discussion and just work out what it looks like in your marriage.

A few reflections for the man

I want to spend the last few minutes talking to the guys about what this means for them.

- If it bothers you that I’m going to talk more to the guys than the girls, well, that’s what Paul does in this text. 3 verses for the girls; 6 for the boys.
- *Video of wives discussing submission @ summitrdu.com/firstlove*

Guys, you were given 5 areas to be a leader in.

- **Romance**
 - **College-aged, single guys:** I don’t mean to get off on a soapbox, I’ve told you this before. We’ve raised a generation of guys who don’t really lead in anything, including this.
 - No courage to ask her out; state your intentions; you’d just prefer to coast along; see how things

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis: God gives man a crown to wear in marriage, but it is primarily made of **paper** (just a role) and **thorns** (sacrifice).

work out, get some sex along the way. Friends with benefits.

- That's not a man; that's a boy. A man in Genesis 2 is characterized by one who takes initiative.
- **Married men**, we never give up the responsibility to keep romancing our wives. For most men, their wife is a **trophy they take in hunting**. In hunting, the hard work is in the capture or the kill. Once you've captured or shot what you were looking for, most of the work is over. Hang it on the wall.
 - Men quit fighting for their wife. They've got her.
 - I never want to quit competing for my wife's affections. It's not that I think she will ever be unfaithful to me, but a lot of affairs do happen because they guy simply quits fighting for his wife.
- Men, you are commanded in vs. 25 to "love your wife." A mentor of mine told me to become a "student of my wife" and gave me a construct that really helped. **Love languages**.
 - **Explain concept**
 - **Acts of service**. Serving them by giving them help they didn't ask for. Guys: vacuuming the stairs or doing the dishes.
 - **Gifts being given**. You bring your wife a bouquet of flowers after work. You buy her perfume or clothes.
 - **Physical touch**. Hugs, holding hands, and other forms of physical affection.
 - **Words of affirmation**. This is where hearing words means a lot to your spouse. "I love you;" "You're doing a great job."
 - **Spending quality time**. This is where full, undivided attention speaks volumes.
 - Here's the catch: how you receive love is not how she necessarily receives love.
 - I know a guy who says that his wife's love language is acts of service and if he just up and

does the dishes or runs the vacuum cleaner it is guaranteed sex, every time. Another friend of mine heard that and started to vacuum like a fool and his wife was like, "Oh, thanks honey." And he's like, "What? That's it?"¹¹

- For my wife, it's a **combination** of physical touch and acts of service and gifts. **The first years of our marriage I communicated my love through "words" and occasional gifts (that's mine: want to make me feel loved—tell me I'm awesome; give me a gift card...** And so I told her and it wasn't doing a lot for her... if I do an act of service. Buy a small, unexpected gift. Reach over to touch her affectionately while we are watching TV that is obviously not an attempt to get something started... ironically, that's when things start cooking.
- Guys: here is what happens. If you quit doing that, and you take her for granted, you're opening the door for someone else in their life to make them feel more treasured and special than you do.
- It's wrong and immoral for her to do that, but I just want to make it really hard for any other guy to out-romance me with my wife.
- I'm not really good at this... but I'm trying.
- Leading in romance means **being responsible for where your relationship is**: a lot of women have to drag their husband to counseling.
- Let me talk for a minute about **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**
 - God gave you a responsibility for your family for which he's going to hold you accountable.
 - **Ephesians 6**:
 - Addressed to 'fathers.'
 - Are you leading in the discipline of my kids?

¹¹ Colt McCoy and Matt Carter, *Real Win*, 62.

- Man, **you** have to answer to God for where your family ends up spiritually.
- That's what spiritual headship is. It is RESPONSIBILITY. **Love the words of Tony Evans, African American preacher: Spiritual headship** is God **telling the woman to duck** so he can punch the man.

Guys, your leadership is a **sacred** responsibility.

- ***You are the servant leader: someone who takes initiative for the benefit of others.***
- ***"Spiritual headship is not license to do what you want to do, but empowerment to do what you ought to do."***

Single guys: if you become this, I can't explain to you how attractive you will become. Because they were created to love a guy like this.

Here's the other thing that just burns in my heart for this. I know that as God heals the man, the healing of the family and the healing of the society seem to follow.

When you look at Genesis 3 you can see that humanity's fall happened through a failure of the man to lead.

- Gen 3: he was "with" the woman when she ate. The dirtbag was standing there, wondering if Gen 2:17 was true.
- Colossal failure of the man to lead.
- The first sin was not one of **commission**, but **omission**: the failure of man to lead.
- How I know: God's question was, Adam, where are you? Or, "where were you."
- How the conversation should have gone...

That's still his question. *Where are you, men?*

- My friend **John Bryson:** We've got a generation of males that never grow up to be men who take up their role as servant leaders; boys who never become men.

We've created a new name for it. "Dudes." The man-child. ***Boys who can shave.***

Most guys, he says, feel like they are good husbands if they provide food and shelter for their families. That's the standard. *"Men: Possums give their offspring food and shelter, is that the bar we want for manhood?"*

A true man is a SERVANT LEADER, leading spiritually, romantically. Taking responsibility.

"Boys blame; men own. Boys take; men give. Boys complain; men figure out. Boys pout; men endure. Boys wish; men do. Boys start; men finish. Boys stiffen their neck; men bend their knees."

The world fell into sin through a failure of a man to lead; but God saved the world by sending a new man, a **2nd Adam**, who would **lead where the first Adam** failed. Who would serve the church where the first Adam served himself.

- That, of course, was Jesus. **Jesus displayed more manhood** in the manger than Adam did in the Garden. In the **Garden, Adam looks like a man**, but he acted like a boy. In the **manger Jesus looked like a little boy** but he was doing the most manly thing imaginable: he was fighting for the ones that he loved.¹²
- **Salvation will spread through the world** as men begin to follow that 2nd Adam and become like him.

Listen: **Every sociological study** done points to the fact that the leadership of the father is the greatest determining factor on how the kids turn out.

- **Tony Evans:** As goes the man, so goes the family. As goes the family; so goes the church. As goes the church; so goes the community. As goes the community; so goes the nation. *So if you want to change the nation; change the community; if you want to change the community change the church; if you want to*

¹² Inspired by John Bryson, from "33."

change the church; change the family; if you want to change the family, change the man.

God give us a generation of men to rise up again to take the servant leader roles they have been called to take.

How can you do this?

The clue is back in vs. 21: **21 ...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

The gospel is the power for your marriage. It shows you a God who served this way for you, who submitted and laid down his life for the church. And this gives you the power to do it for others.

- After what Christ did for you, you look at him and say that question I gave you the first week, “*What can I do to serve you?*” Christ says, “*Serve your spouse.*”
- Paul says, vs. 21, “*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” When your **horizontal service of spouse has a vertical dimension of worship**, your gain strength to serve your spouse and lay down your life for them; in fact, service to your spouse becomes joy, not drudgery, and you can endure in it even when they don’t repay you for it.

Marriage is ‘**gospel re-enactment.**’

Can I tell you why some of you resist this?

- First, you are a sinner. You don’t want to submit to anybody.
 - Marriage is not the only relationship where you learn to submit. Paul says that God have given us numerous earthly authority laboratories—political rulers, our bosses, our parents, marriage, as a way of learning this.
 - If we can’t submit to God-appointed earthly authorities, we won’t submit to heavenly ones, either.
- The other reason that we resist this is because we are selfish. We don’t want to leverage our power for somebody else. We leverage it for us.

If you’re single then that’s how you should be listening to this. God has other ways of teaching us these things beside marriage. Whether we are married or not, God’s goal for us is the same: Christlikeness. Marriage, singleness, they are all temporary. Our relationship to Christ and the church are eternal.

- To the single: Are you learning submission and Christlikeness in your other relationships?

FOR MANY OF YOU, what is missing from your marriage is the relationship that makes all marriages work: knowing God through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

- **You need to know a God who is a lover so you don’t turn your lovers into gods; a God who is a servant leader so you don’t feel like you have to use your power for yourself.**
- You’d find that trusting Christ as your Lord and Savior would do more to transform your marriage than 10,000 seminars or sermons or books.
- Have you received him? You can do it today.

Prayer