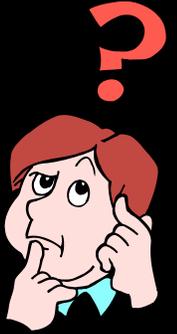




C.S. Lewis

“The homemaker has the ultimate career. All other careers exist for one purpose only - and that is to support the ultimate career.”

## Family values



### “Family” is a major framework for theological ideas in Scripture.

- **God as “father”** - We are “children of God”, Israel was God’s son, as was Jesus.
- **We are “brothers & sisters”** - We are in God’s family “in Christ” by the baptism of his Spirit.
- **Christ as “bridegroom”** - The church is his bride.
- **The household of God** - The church.
- **Family narratives** - The O.T. is the story of Abraham’s physical family. The N.T. is a story of Christ’s spiritual family.
- **Biological family** - The N.T. has “house rules” - about roles, functions, etc. in the biological family.
- **Genesis 1-2** - Marriage and family were the first institutions of human society.

“If we abandon marriage, we abandon the family.”

Michael Enzi  
(Wyoming Senator)



### What are some key factors in a successful marriage?

1. Individual emotional health & maturity
2. Love commitment
3. Shared realistic expectations (values, preferences, and roles)

## Biblical rules for gender roles?

### The ethics of marriage roles:

**Are they ascribed on the basis of gender or achieved on the basis of ability?**

### Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is **neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

**There is no gender hierarchy in the Body of Christ.**

**But how does this apply to roles?**



Mark 8:34-35

“If anyone would come after me, **he must deny himself** and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

There is no following Christ without self denial.

But how does this apply to roles?



1 Peter 3

“1 In the same way, you **wives**, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

7 You **husbands likewise**, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

### Changes in marriage & family

Earlier	20th century
Married for social reasons	Married for personal fulfillment
Premarital sex as shameful	Cohabitation was accepted
Married earlier in life	Married later in life
Divorce was difficult	Divorce made easy
<b>Roles based on gender</b>	<b>Roles based on ability</b>
Birth rates increased	Birth rates declined

*The Enlightenment and the great revolutions (industrial, technological, communication, and SEXUAL) played a big part in this change.*

### Different views



#### Egalitarian

Roles in the home and church are determined by ability, giftedness, and calling apart from gender.

Roles are grounded in nurture

the lens of modern culture



#### Authoritarian

Men are designed to rule (as head) and women to follow (submit) in all areas of life.

Roles are grounded in nature

the lens of traditional culture

tension

### Different views



the lens of modern culture

#### Egalitarian

Roles in the home and church are determined by ability, giftedness, and calling apart from gender.

Personal equality & dignity are respected

the lens of traditional culture

#### Authoritarian

Men are designed to rule (as head) and women to follow (submit) in all areas of life.

Some roles are ascribed not achieved

#### Complementarian

Men and Women have ascribed complementary and distinct roles in the home that affirm the dignity of each gender and person.

Husbands Ephesians 5

“21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. 22 **Wives**, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 **Husbands**, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; 26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.”



### Implications:

Both husband and wife are called to sacrifice as a part of their service and witness.

- ✓ The wife is to restrain her right to justice and outward adornment as she puts on a gentle spirit and respects her husband even when he has not earned it.
- ✓ The husband is to relate to his wife with gentleness, listening in order to understand and honor her.

The husband is to restrain his impulse to lead without listening and to use his headship as an excuse for selfish if not abusive exploitation or neglect of his wife.

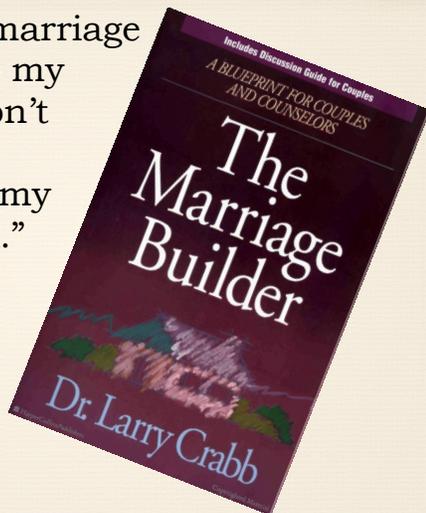
## Ephesians 5

A husband is called to self sacrifice in spiritual service of the undeveloped wife.

## 1 Peter 3

A wife is called to self sacrifice in spiritual service of the unrighteous husband.

“In a healthy marriage I MINISTER to my mate, and I don’t MANIPULATE them to fulfill my selfish agenda.”



## Headship & Submission

are crosses to bear not badges to wear.



### Possible analogy

The husband is like the **point guard** on a basketball team.



- He is first and foremost a member of a team.
- He need not be the most valuable player or even the most gifted leader on the team.
- He is assigned the role of initiating play.
- He may not be the only one who initiates play.
- The team is “his team” because he represents it and is responsible for its proper functioning.

### Possible analogy

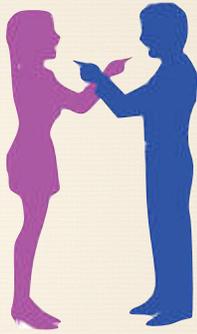
The wife is like a key **scorer or rebounder** on a basketball team.



- She is first and foremost a member of a team.
- Her primary job is not to initiate play or lead the team but to execute play using her strengths.
- She may be the most valuable player and the “behind the scenes” leader.
- She gets great satisfaction and honor from her work in enabling the team to function successfully.

## Three common misperceptions.

- Defining power positionally, freedom politically, and happiness materially.
- Confusing authority (in one sphere) with superiority (in all spheres).
- Failing to see marriage as two individuals becoming one flesh.
- Applying role rules before or without applying ground rules (Rom.12).



## Romans 12

vs 14-21

### Ground rules for Christian living

vs 1a

1. Grace of God must be deeply sensed

vs 1b-2

2. Cross of Christ must be willingly carried



vs 3-5

3. Body of Christ must be rightly discerned

6. Response to the world must be graciously given

*Worldly circumstances are not my hope*

vs 9-13

5. Love for the brethren must be openly shown

*God's people are not my hope*

vs 6-8

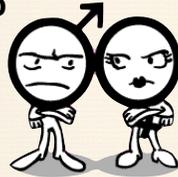
4. Gifts of the Spirit must be properly used

*The use of my gifts is not my hope*

## The most common abuses.

Insecure men who equate headship with superiority and leadership with privilege.

Rather than sanctifying, completing, and listening to women, they abuse and dishonor them.



Wounded women who equate role with worth and position with freedom /power.

Rather than helping men fulfill their difficult calling with respectful support, they seek their own fulfillment through independence.

*When you take male objectivity (which depersonalizes), and female subjectivity (which personalizes)*

*and express them through an insecure, immature, and un-renewed soul*

*you get GENDER WARS*

*- abusive chauvinists versus defensive rebels*

*and submit them to the orchestration of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' example*

*you get the Body of Christ*

*- sacrificial saviors and receptive servants*

## Conclusion

- There seems to be solid Biblical evidence for some ascribed gender roles in family, and ministry.
- The abuse of this teaching lies largely in its inappropriate application.
- When we keep our eyes on Jesus we tend to be more concerned about selfless service than power and position.
- Most women prefer to see men in leadership positions when they are strong, sensitive, and spiritual.

Jean Kerr

(Author)



“The only thing worse than a man you can't control is a man you can.”