

# God's Design of the Family: The Biblical Family

## INTRODUCTION

1. Where is our culture going? (secular/sociological worldview)
2. What does the Bible say? (Christian/theological worldview)

"This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

"The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:36).

## DEFINING THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

"God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents" (Article XVIII of the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, "The Family").

# Parenthood

## Lesson 2

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### THE “IDEA” OF ROLES FOR THE FAMILY

“Although we’re far from done, social movements have allowed women to achieve a greater level of equality. However, not all marriages have partners who are on equal footing, and in some cases, that’s by choice. Couples generally fall into one of two camps: partners either lean towards the traditional perspective of male breadwinner/female homemaker, or hold the more contemporary view that men and women are equal and have shared responsibilities” (Rob Pascale and Lou Primavera, “How Do Gender Roles Impact Marriage?” *Psychology Today*, 1/7/2020).

#### 1. What Roles Are Not

- a. Our society views roles and worth or equality as the same thing. This means they are not looking at the individual but what the individual does.

“The reality is couples who hold onto traditional gender roles are not as satisfied with their marriages as those who accept more contemporary roles. Modern thinking couples are sometimes referred to as androgynous, because the two partners share a number of personal traits. Both husbands and wives possess some degree of what might be considered masculine traits, such as means-ends problem solving, and feminine traits, such as emotional expressiveness.”

- b. Traditional husbands viewed as dominant.

“In the case of traditional marriages, both husbands and wives are comfortable with the idea that the husband is dominant. They have a set of expectations about how each partner should behave and they find their respective roles to be natural and even preferred. While they might admit to themselves that their relationship is many ways imbalanced, they are willing to live with things as they are because that’s how they see the way of the world. We should point out that these relationships are acceptable only if the husband is dominant. Neither partner likes the arrangement when the wife is dominant, possibly because this represents too extreme a departure from traditional male and female roles.”

- c. Traditional wives viewed as subordinate and unstable.

“It is common knowledge that when couples fight and eventually break up, they do so over seemingly trivial issues. Clearly, it’s not disagreements over the dinner menu or the remote control that lead a couple to divorce. It’s the disagreements over who is in charge and who isn’t, and the stress and disruption that come along with these disagreements. Couples with unresolved dominance may last for a while, maybe even forever, but their relationship is inherently unstable.”

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### 2. What Roles Are

When the Bible speaks of roles, it goes far beyond what we **do** daily and gets into the heart of **who we are** in God's sight and **what is in our own hearts**.

### THE BIBLICAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A FAMILY

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES	SCRIPTURES
Husbands/Fathers	Love wife as Christ loved the church	Eph. 5:25–33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7
	Lead, protect, & provide for family/children	2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8
	Ensure proper nurture and discipline	Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Heb. 12:6
Wives/Mothers	Help husband in submission, respect	Eph. 5:22–24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1–6
	Bear and raise children, motherhood	1 Tim. 2:15; Tit. 2:4–5
	Manage the home	1 Tim. 5:14
Children	Honor and obey parents	Eph. 6:1–3; Col. 3:20
	Love siblings; live at peace	Rom. 12:10, 18
	Care for parents in old age	1 Tim. 5:8

#### 1. The Role of Husbands/Fathers

##### a. Husband to his wife

##### i. *Servant headship*

“The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23).

“Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him” (Gen. 2:18).

“It is your ruin, O Israel, that you are against Me, against your help” (Hos. 13:9, LSB).

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### ii. Sacrificial love

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her” (Eph. 5:25).

“Authentic love is incompatible with a despotic or domineering approach to headship. When Paul commanded husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, he was in effect forbidding them to exercise severe or abusive authority over their wives. If the model of this love is Christ, who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28), then the husband who thinks he exists so his wife and children can serve him couldn’t be farther off the mark” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 58).

- Christlike love is not something that is going to come naturally to him. It is something that he is going to have to work on and be very deliberate about.

“And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

“So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11).

- Christlike love is not merely a feeling or an involuntary attraction. It involves a willful choice.

“...when Paul commanded husbands to love their wives, he was calling for all the virtues outlined in 1 Corinthians 13, including patience, kindness, generosity, humility, meekness, thoughtfulness, liberality, gentleness, trust, goodness, truthfulness, and long-suffering. It is significant that all the properties of love stress selflessness and sacrifice. The husband who truly loves his wife simply cannot wield his authority over her like a club. Far from being overlord of the family, the godly husband and father must make himself servant of all” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 59–60).

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

“But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3).

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### b. Father to his children

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won’t become discouraged” (Col. 3:21).

“We had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn’t we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live?” (Heb. 12:9).

“Anyone you forgive, I do too. For what I have forgiven—if I have forgiven anything—it is for your benefit in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:10–11).

“Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don’t give the devil an opportunity” (Eph. 4:26–27).

“But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

## 2. The Role of Wives/Mothers

### a. Helper to her husband

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Tit. 2:3–5).

- i. Young women need to be mentored by older women endowed with life experience and the skill and wisdom that come from years of practicing Christian virtues.
- ii. Love of husbands comes before love of children.
- iii. Wives are called both to love and to submit to their husbands.
- iv. Women need self-control in dealing with their husbands and children.
- v. Women’s hearts are to be pure, and their attitude toward others in the home is to be kind.
- vi. Women are to be devoted primarily to the home.
- vii. The desired result of proper wifely submission and diligent homemaking will be that no one will revile the Word of God.

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### b. Mother to her children

“But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with good sense” (1 Tim. 2:15).

“Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us” (1 Tim. 5:14).

“There’s a beautiful equilibrium in the way God has designed the family to function. Husband and wife are one. Men may have the role and responsibility of spiritual headship, but in many ways, the woman has the most powerful and lasting influence in the lives of family members. [Speaking of 1 Timothy 2:11–15] What Paul meant is that women are saved from insignificance and frustration by their role in the home and the family. God has given them a powerful influence that equals and, in many ways, exceeds the impact of the husband’s headship” (D. Jones and A. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 110–111).

### 3. The Role of Children

“Fundamentally, children, like all people, ought to be considered spiritual individuals who are uniquely created by God and yet are fallen sinners, so that the task of parenting is not merely that of behavioral conditioning but spiritual nurture and training” (David W. Jones and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 108).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land**” (Eph. 6:1–3).

“The parents’ authority provides a safe environment in which children can grow in all these ways. The children’s obedience is the fuel for all their learning and growth, and the better they learn to obey, the more proficiently they will grow in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 96).

### PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Family Ministry: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, and Where We Might Go” by Timothy Paul Jones at [timothypauljones.com/family-ministry-weve-might-go/](http://timothypauljones.com/family-ministry-weve-might-go/)