

OVERVIEW OF THE DISTINCTIVE ROLES OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION: WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

TRUE FREEDOM

“But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does” (Jas. 1:25).

1. What is a *law of freedom*?

2. Freedom *from* and freedom *to*.

“And having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness” (Rom. 6:18).

“Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free” (John 8:34–36).

“You are good, and you do what is good; teach me your statutes” (Ps. 119:68).

THE ORIGIN OF ROLES IN CREATION (GEN. 1–2)

1. Different Orientations to the Task

a. The man: “work and watch over” the garden

b. The woman: “a helper corresponding to him.”

Biblical Marriage

Lesson 4

2. Leadership of the Man

- a. Created first from the dust of the ground (2:7)
- b. Given responsibility to tend God's creation (focus—vocation) (2:15)
- c. Receives the commands of God for obedience (2:16-17)
- d. Receives a helper to fulfill God's plan (2:18)
- e. Names what God created, including the woman (2:20; 3:20)
- f. Leaves father and mother to hold fast to his wife (2:24)

3. Supportive and Submissive Role of the Woman

- a. Created after the man, not simultaneously (2:18)
- b. Created in order to be a "suitable helper" to the man (2:18)
- c. Created from the man, not from the soil (2:22)
- d. Named by the man (3:20)

THE DISTORTION OF ROLES IN THE FALL AND IN THE CURSE (GEN. 3)

"He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you. 17 And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust" (Gen. 3:16–19).

1. Reversal of roles takes place in the fall itself.

2. Roles are affected in the curse on the man and the woman.

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THE DISPLAY OF THE GOSPEL IN THE ROLES OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. 27 He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. 28 In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 since we are members of his body. 31 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. 32 This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband” (Eph. 5:22–33).

1. **Christian marriage is a display of the gospel because two sinners have personally experienced the grace of God in Christ and are living and loving each other in a way that is consistent with that grace.**
2. **There are particular ways that a marriage relationship distinctly displays the glory of God in the gospel.**
 - a. The husband and a wife are bound together in a permanent, life-long covenant relationship that is different from any other earthly relationship.
 - b. The husband and the wife are called to live out particular roles that picture forth the way Christ relates to the church in that covenant relationship.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON

- Read “3 Questions about Submission” by Melissa Kruger at crossway.org/articles/3-questions-about-submission
- Read “The Goal of Submission in Marriage” by Abigail Dodds at crossway.org/articles/the-goal-of-submission-in-marriage
- Read “What Authority Does a Husband Have over His Wife” by Jonathan Leeman at crossway.org/articles/what-authority-does-a-husband-have-over-his-wife