

# What Is “Headship”?

We as Christians are brought face-to-face with this concept of “headship” regularly through the Scriptures. It is a vitally important concept to understand, for it defines the incredibly important relationship each of us has with our spouse, and with Jesus Christ, the Father, and our brethren in the faith. There are no more important relationships to understand than these. Note I Corinthians 11:3:

*“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”*

## What is Meant by “Head”?

Let us look first at the meaning in the Greek of the word “head”. The word is used 57 times in the New Testament, and all but one time the word used is *kephale* (Strong 2776). One time, in Mark 12:4, the close derivative *kephalaioo* (Strong 2775) is translated as “head”. *Kephale* can mean the head itself, as part of the body, or be used in several non-literal senses.

### Figuratively

(a) “Heaping coals of fire on a head.” Romans 12:20.

(b) “Your blood be on your own heads” (Acts 18:6), which is similar to “Your bloodguiltiness rest upon your own persons”, a phrase often used in the Old Testament, such as in Ezekiel 3:18, 10; 33:6, 8; Leviticus 20:16; II Samuel 1:16; I Kings 2:37.

(c) Christ in relation to the ecclesia. Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19.

(d) Christ in relation to principalities and powers. Colossians 2:10.

### Metaphorically

(a) Authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to the ecclesia, and of the husband in relation to the wife. I Corinthians 11:3.

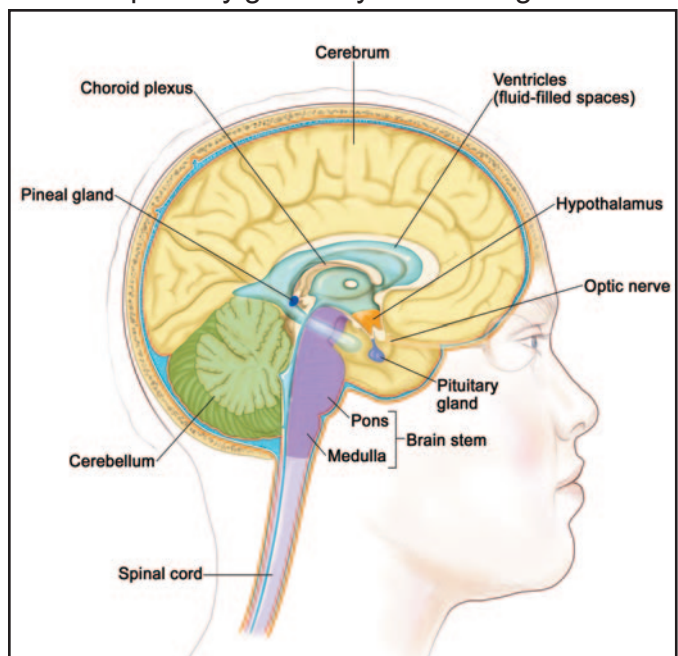
(b) Christ as the foundation of the spiritual

building set forth by the Temple, with its “cornerstone”. Matthew 21:42.

### Symbolically

The imperial rulers of the Roman power. Revelations 13:1, 3; 17:3, 7, 9.

Since *kephale* literally means the “head”, let us look at what functions the head serves for the body. It is the key part that controls the entire body through the brain ... that central switchboard that receives and processes information sent to it from all parts of the body. Not only that, but within the confines of the brain rests the pituitary gland, which is often termed the “master endocrine gland” that secretes hormones which trigger and control vital metabolic functions in tissues throughout the body. Nestled within the brain near the pituitary gland is yet another gland called



the pineal gland, which has direct communication with the optic nerve from the eyes, and thus may be said to associate directly with the outside world through light frequencies even though it is deep within the head. It produces melatonin which is involved with circadian rhythms (sleeping and waking cycles).

The brain, pituitary, and pineal glands are thus centers of electro-chemical control that in-

fluence every cell and tissue in the body. The instructions these organs give dictate metabolism, growth, and overall functions of the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, nervous, muscular, skeletal, reproductive, and endocrine systems involving all 10 trillion cells of the human body. What an amazingly designed body we have, created as it is by our heavenly Father in the express image of His own spirit body! What is even more impressive is



***The human body is an awesomely complex organism made in the image of God.***

what the spirit that the Father puts in His children will do to direct the body to His purposes. All of these systems make possible what we call thought, imagination, and creativity, the sublime qualities which the spirit of God directs in the brethren.

### **Functioning As a Head**

We should know first of all that the over-arching essence of our interrelationships involves service. As Matthew 7:12 clearly states, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you; this

is the meaning of the law and the prophets”. After His final Passover with the apostles, Jesus stated,

*“The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not act so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that serves. For whether is greater, he that sits at the meal, or he that serves [at the meal]: Is not he that sits at the meal? But I am among you as He that serves”.*  
Luke 22:25-27.

The head, with its sensory and thought processing and endocrine controls, serves the entire body; without this “control center”, of course, the body could not function and grow. The entire body is the “temple of the holy spirit” — with which we are to glorify God in body, mind, and spirit (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 19-20) — and the head is the “directing servant”, as it were, of that entire body.

We already read I Corinthians 11:3 which defines the headship relationship of the husband and wife, Christ and the ecclesia, and the Father and Christ. We also see this relationship referred to in Ephesians 5:23, 1:22, and 4:15, and Colossians 1:18. It is interesting that in both I Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5, nearby scriptures tie the headship relationship to gifts of the spirit, showing that the head — Christ — is directing the whole body through the spirit He grants.

*“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in*

love.” Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16.

*“For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him.”* I Corinthians 12:12-18.

Notice that in I Corinthians 12 Paul does not mention any of the gifts as being the *brain*; that is reserved for Jesus Christ, who is the coordinator through service of the entire ecclesia, each with his or her specific gifts granted through the spirit. The brethren function as eyes, ears, feet, legs, arms, fingers, and other parts of the body that are integrally attached to the head and its brain and pituitary gland. They are directed in service and function for the good of the whole by the brain ... a process known in medical science as “accommodation”. The body accommodates the shortcomings of any organ or tissue by adjusting the entire organism so it will survive the best it can, and hopefully thrive.

Note also from Ephesians 1:22-23 that Christ lives in each part of the body, showing how the influence of the brain is pervasive throughout the body. Actually, research has shown that our memory, previously thought to be only a brain function, is located in all tissues of the body!

## The Husband and Wife

This knowledge of Christ’s responsibilities to the ecclesia, and conversely the brethren’s responsibilities to Christ, places the husband and wife in a very humble position. They must emulate that headship relationship of Christ and the church.

*“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body.”* Ephesians 5:22-23.

This command is on top of the stipulation of Ephesians 5:21, just before this: *“Submitting yourselves [Strong 5293, hupotasso] **one to another** in the fear of God.”* How is this possible if the husband is the head? That question has already been answered: the brain — the head — exercises service to the body for its own best good, as does the body to the brain to maintain its optimum condition, so that both the head and the rest of the body function together as the temple of the holy spirit ... full complementary service! The only difference in the husband’s and wife’s role in marriage is **responsibility**, which is defined by the Creator for the optimum joint functioning of the unit in love.

Let us examine specifically a few of the responsibilities God has placed upon the head and the body in the marriage relationship. There are many more than these six points mentioned below that could be discussed.

**1. The husband is the savior of the body** (Ephesians 5:23). *Savior* [Strong 4990] = *soter*, “a deliverer, savior, or preserver”. As the head, the husband must use sense and discernment to deliver his wife from danger in the world, protecting her, even giving his life for her if necessary so both the head and body may live. Where would the body be without a head?

**2. The wife is to be subject unto her husband in everything, submitting in all things** (Ephesians 5:22, 24; see also Genesis 3:16; I Corinthians 14:34; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Peter 3:1). *Subject unto* (Strong 5293) = *hupotasso*, “to subordinate or obey, originally a military term meaning to arrange troops in a mil-

itary fashion under the command of a leader, but in non-military use a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden." *Submit* also is Strong 5293, *hupotasso*.

**3. The husband must love the wife, and be willing to sacrifice and even die for her** (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29). *Love* (Strong 25) = *agapao*, "love, affection, benevolence." The head — the brain and master endocrine gland — must do all it can to deliver life and vitality into the rest of the body by directing the body's members on a right pathway: proper nourishment, protection from accidents, hygiene, sunshine, and everything the body needs to grant optimum health for the entire organism. The husband is to love and care for his wife as he does his own body, fulfilling Matthew 7:12 by doing to others as he would want done to himself.

**4. The husband and wife must be unified, "one flesh"** (Ephesians 5:28, 31; John 17:21; Genesis 2:24). There cannot be a schism [division] in the body (I Corinthians 12:25) or else there will be a brain fighting against the arms, legs, and organs, lending to disease and suffering. They are to submit themselves to each other (Ephesians 5:21), and live as the brethren, Christ, and the Father are one (John 17:21).

**5. The wife must reverence her husband** (Ephesians 5:33). *Reverence* (Strong 5399) = *phobeo*, "to show reverential fear". The body — the wife — must respect the direction of the brain

and master gland, for upon it she utterly depends for her life. Remember that I Timothy 5:8 states, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

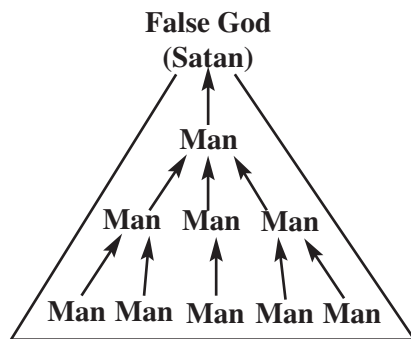
**6. The husband must strive to present his wife as clean, spotless, perfect, and blemish-free** (Ephesians 5:26-27). The head must direct the body into every proper pathway to achieve these ends by being an excellent teacher of the word of God to his family, by providing food, clothing, and shelter, and by attracting uplifting friends and family to surround them.

Remember too that cleansing is really forgiveness, for both the husband and wife fall short of perfection and need to forgive one another.

Life in this current evil world system does not set a proper example for the Godly headship model. All around us are the fruits of Satan's intervention: divorce, homosexuality, women's libera-

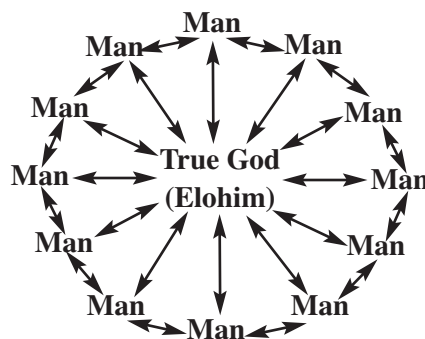
tion, and a plethora of other fruits of forsaking God's perfect ways. If we are to avoid becoming a victim of this world's corruption we must strive daily to read His work, mediate upon His ways, pray frequently, and fellowship with the brethren. Only then will we gain the proper understanding of what it truly means to have Christ as our head, and to live in love and harmony as husband and wife, and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Man's Government**



Direction of service is one-way, towards hierarchical leaders, everyone for himself in a jungle-like struggle.

**God's Government**



Directions of service are two-way, each serving the other, "one within the other" and assisting each other through trials.

**Love cannot thrive or survive in an environment where the husband or wife lord it over the other. God's government requires us to be subject to one another, but with headship. Note that sin coming into the world brought the following prophecy from Yahweh Elohim: "... and your [the wife's] desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you". Genesis 3:16.**