

# A New Look At “Headship”

I. To understand the proper relationship with our heavenly Father and to Jesus Christ, it is essential to understand the proper relationship in marriage between the husband and wife.

A. The **marriage** of Christ to His wife, the Church [the ecclesia, the saints], is foretold in Revelation 19:7-9.

**Marriage** (Strong 1062) = *gamos*, “a wedding, especially a wedding feast.”

B. This marriage is between the perfect, sinless One (Heb. 4:15) and those who have been made sinless (clean and bright, like fine linen) through being purchased from sin and death by His blood sacrifice (Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:21-23; Gal. 1:4; 2:20).

C. It is a profoundly close and loving relationship that husbands and wives need to emulate in their marriages.

II. Marriage involves **headship** of one party with the other.

A. **Head** (Strong 2776) = *Kephale* “the head, as the part most readily taken hold of, lit. or fig.” The word is used directly to mean “head”, and metaphorically to show the relationships given here.

B. We read in 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 [the Father].*” The headship of Christ to the ecclesia, and the husband to the wife, is mentioned again in Ephesians 5:23.

C. This headship relationship shows direct parallels:

Husband → [head of] Wife

Christ → [head of] Ecclesia

D. Jesus Christ and the husband serve as “heads” in their associations with the ecclesia (“called out ones”) and the wife. Both are marriage relationships, and so critically important for us to understand if we are to know how to relate to our Elder Brother, and to our marital partner. By understanding how we ought to relate within marriage, we can understand how to relate to Christ.

E. Ephesians 5:22-23 shows in detail proper headship associations within marriage, which associations then can help us envision our correct relationship with Jesus Christ.

F. The husband and wife are **heirs together** (Strong 4789 = *sugkleronomos*, “a joint-heir or co-inheritor) of eternal life (I Peter 3:7).

III. Husband and wife, Christ’s and the church’s responsibilities

- Husband**  
**[Jesus Christ]**
- ◆ The **head** of the wife [or ecclesia] (Eph. 5:23)  
**head** (Strong 2776) = *kephale*.
  - ◆ Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23)  
**body** (Strong 4983) = *soma*, “the body as a whole, the instrument of life.”
  - ◆ **Love** the wife, and sacrifice Himself for her (Eph. 5:25)  
**love** (Strong 25) = *agapao*, “to love, in a social or moral sense.” Love the wife as His own body (Eph. 5:28-29)
  - ◆ **Sanctify** the wife (Eph. 5:26)  
**sanctify** (Strong 37) = *hagiazō*, “to make

- Wife**  
**[Ecclesia]**
- **Submit** to one’s own husband (Eph. 5:22)  
**submit** (Strong 5293) = *hupotasso*, “to subordinate, to obey.” Originally this was a Greek military term meaning to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader. In non-military use it is a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. Also in Col. 3:18: submit (Strong 5293) “*as it is fit unto the Lord,*”; Titus 2:5, obedient (Strong 5293) to one’s own husband; I Peter 3:1, 5, 6,

holy and set apart for God; the opposite of *koinos*, or common”.

- ◆ Cleanse the wife with the **washing** of water by the word (Eph. 5:26).  
**cleanse** (Strong 2511) = *katharizo*, “to make clean or cleanse, literally or morally (as from defilement by sin  
**washing** (Strong 3067) = *loutron*, “a bath, a laver; fig. baptism.”
- ◆ Present the wife as **glorious**, without **spot** or **wrinkle**, but **holy** and **without blemish** (Eph. 5:27)  
**glorious** (Strong 1741) = *endoxos*, “hold in honor, of high repute.”  
**spot** (Strong 4695) = *spilos*, “a spot or stain,” or no moral blemish.  
**wrinkle** (Strong 4512) = *rhutis*, “to draw together, a wrinkle, esp. of the face.”  
**holy** (Strong 40) = *hagios*, “separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God.”  
**without blemish** (Strong 299) = *amomos*, “without blame.”
- ◆ Dwell with the wife according to **knowledge**, giving **honor** as to the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7).  
**knowledge** (Strong 1108) = *gnosis*, “a seeing to know, as inquiry, investigation.”  
**honor** (Strong 5092) = *time*, “value, esteem, dignity”.

**in subjection** (Strong 5293) to one’s own husband calling him “Lord”; I Timothy 2:9-15, with all **subjection** (Strong 5292). The woman is not to **usurp authority** over the man (Strong 831) = *authenteio*, “to exercise authority on one’s own account, to domineer over.”

- ◆ **Subject** to the husband in everything (Eph. 5:24)  
**subject** (Strong 5293) = *hupatasso*.
- ◆ **Members** with the husband (Eph. 5:30-32)  
The husband is a member of the flesh and blood of the wife, and the wife with the husband.  
They are “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24), a great **mystery** (Strong 3466) = *mysterion*, that which is not known by natural observation, but can be made known only by divine revelation, in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and only to those illuminated by His spirit.
- ◆ Behave with **incorruption**, and a **meek** and **quiet spirit** (I Peter 3:4).  
**incorruption** (Strong 862) = *aphthartos*, “not liable to corruption or decay.”  
**meek** (Strong 4239) *praes*, “gentle, mild, humble.”  
**quiet** (Strong 2272) = *hesuchios*, “tranquility arising from within, causing no disturbance to others.”
- ◆ Listen to the teaching of the husband (I Tim. 2:11-12; I Cor. 14:34-35); she was created for the man, and Eve, not Adam, was deceived by the serpent (I Tim. 2:13-14).
- ◆ Live as a Proverbs 31 woman (Prov. 31:10-31).

IV. Along with these husband-wife and Christ-church relationships, our Creator desires us to submit to one another in the fear of God.

- A. Eph. 5:21. “... *submitting to one another in the fear of God.*”
- B. Philip. 2:3-4. “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*”
- C. I Peter 5:5. “*Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*”

V. How, then, are we to understand our responsibility to our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? **Note how the wife is to relate to the husband, and that is how we are to relate to God Himself!**

- A. Submit to your Father and Elder Brother — i.e., do the Father's will (Eccl. 12:13) — but this does not mean you cannot exchange ideas or voice your preferences to Them.  
Note Moses speaking with Yahweh in Exodus 32:7-14 and elsewhere.
- B. Be subject to the Father and Son in all things (James 4:7-8).
- C. Realize you are members of the heavenly sons of Elohim along with Jesus Christ (Romans 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 5:30; John 17:20-21).
- D. Relate to the Father and Son with meekness, humility, incorruption, and peace (Isa. 66:2; Matthew 11:28-30).
- E. Live life to the full by working willing with your hands, providing for your household, obtaining good land and merchandise, assisting the poor, speaking wisdom and kindness, and honoring God (Eph. 4:28; James 1:27; Gal. 6:9-10)

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