



BIBLICAL MANHOOD CLASS FOUR: THE HEAVINESS OF HEADSHIP

The goal of this Class is that no man would see headship as something to be taken lightly. Headship, when properly understood, is not something a man should want for himself. Rather, it is a God-ordained position that a man is to *reluctantly-embrace*, exclusively for the sake of others.

I. Bible: Key Points

Genesis 3:8–9

- Broad Context (2:15–18)
 - o Before God created Isha (Eve),¹ God spoke to Adam, giving him the Law.
 - o At no time did God return to speak this Law directly to Isha.
 - o Implication:
 - God expected Adam to:
 1. Faithfully teach Isha the Law.
 2. Lead Isha in the keeping of the Law.
- Immediate Context (3:1–7)
 - o The serpent sought to undermine humanity by approaching Isha, not Adam.
 - o Why?
 - Adam could not be deceived. He had heard directly from God.
 - Thus, the serpent's best chance for success was to deceive Isha, who had not heard directly from God.
 - o Isha had received God's Law, demonstrating Adam's teaching.
 - Note the similarities and differences between what God said to Adam and what Isha said to the serpent.

¹ We refer to Eve as "Isha" (meaning, Woman) to highlight the name that Adam gave his wife before the Fall. It is not until after the Fall that Adam renames his wife, "Eve" (meaning, Life).

Genesis 2:16–17		Genesis 3:2–3	
From all	מִכָּל		
the trees in the garden	עֵץ־הַגֶּן	מִפְּרֵי עֵץ־הַגֶּן	From the fruit of the trees in the garden
to eat	אָכַל		
you may eat	תֹּאכַל:	נֹאכַל:	we may eat.
but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil	וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע	וּמִפְּרֵי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגֶּן	But from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden,
		אָמַר אֱלֹהִים	God said
you may not eat from it.	לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ	לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ	we may not eat from it.
For on the day that you eat from it,	כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְתָּ מִמֶּנּוּ		
		וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בּוֹ	Neither shall you touch it
Death	מוֹת		
you will die.	תָּמוּת:	פֶּן־תָּמוּתוּ:	Or you will die.

– Isha omitted four parts from God’s instruction to Adam in her version of the Law to the serpent.

- “From all”
 - God’s law begins with staggering generosity. Adam is permitted to eat FROM ALL of the trees in the garden (with one exception).
 - Isha omitted the generous context of God’s Law.
- “to eat”
 - This single Hebrew word, TO EAT (אָכַל), qualifies God’s generosity. Adam is permitted to eat from all the trees *that are to be eaten from*. God will identify a single exception.
 - Isha omitted this qualification.
- “For on the day that you eat from it”
 - God was clear that death would immediately follow from the eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - Isha identified death as a consequence, but not necessarily an immediate consequence.
- “death”
 - God is emphatic with Adam: DEATH you shall die.
 - Isha lessens the emphatic nature of God’s command.

– Isha added two parts to God’s instruction to Adam in her version of the Law to the serpent.

- “God said”
 - This is, more or less, inconsequential.
 - However, it *might* demonstrate a beginning point to Isha’s perception of what God literally said to Adam.
 - Thus, the first part of Isha’s recollection of the Law (“From the fruit of the trees in the garden we may eat. But from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden. . .”) lacks the same level of authority as the second part.
- “Neither shall you touch it”
 - This is not a prohibition given to Adam by God.
 - Therefore, this has been added to the Law.

- Isha changed two parts to God's instruction to Adam in her version of the Law to the serpent.

- "The trees in the garden" became "From the fruit of the trees in the garden."
 - Isha shifts the Law from trees to fruit of the trees.
 - Even though this is not a substantial change, it reinforces the point that Isha has not heard the Law directly from God.
- "But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" became "But from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden."
 - Isha does not identify the tree of the knowledge of good and evil directly. She may not even know of its existence.
 - By identifying the tree which is in the midst of the garden as the prohibited tree, Isha fails to identify that there are TWO trees in the midst of the garden: the tree of life AND the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).
 - Thus, this vague prohibition either: (1) cuts Isha off from the tree of life; or (2) endangers Isha from taking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when actually trying to take from the tree of life.
- What's the point in all of this?
 - God spoke the Law to Adam.
 - Headship required Adam to:
 - Teach the Law accurately to Isha.
 - Exercise authority/leadership in the keeping of the Law.
 - Adam failed on both accounts.
 - The Law was not accurately transmitted to Isha.
 - Adam, who was present with Isha as she conversed with the serpent (Genesis 3:6), failed to correct or lead Isha toward the truth.
 - Adam failed in a third way.
 - Rather than exercising his God-given headship, Adam followed his deceived wife into sin.
 - The result was the Fall and death of humanity.
- This is why God held Adam responsible for the fall of humanity instead of Isha.

- Genesis 3:8–9
 - Knowing of their sin, God called out to Adam.
 - God dealt with Adam and Isha *through the headship of Adam*.
- Romans 5:12
 - Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul identifies Adam, not Isha, as the one through whom sin came into the world.
 - Why?
 1. Adam was the head of his wife, and of all humanity.
 2. The Fall of humanity is – foundationally – the result of Adam’s failed headship, not Eve’s deception.
- Genesis 3:8–9 describes the heaviness of headship:
 - Headship means that God holds MEN primarily accountable for the health and sin of a marriage, the family, and the local church.
 - Headship means men must teach and lead with full knowledge that we will have to give an account of ourselves, our church, our wife, and our family to God almighty.
 - God calls and expects MEN to bear the weight and heavy burden of headship:
 - Faithfully teaching the Word of God.
 - Leading in its implementation.
 - Taking responsibility for all who are entrusted to our care.
 - Bearing accountability for the sin and failure of self, as well as those who are under our care.

Hebrews 13:17

- Broad Context (Hebrews 1–12)
 - The aim of the author of Hebrews is to show the supremacy of Jesus Christ and superiority of the New Covenant.
 - In chapters 12 and 13, the author exhorts his readers to live in light of the glorious doctrine of the letter and the exemplary witness of Old Testament saints.
- Immediate Context (Hebrews 13:1–16)
 - The author gives several exhortations related to life in the church.
 - Let brotherly love continue
 - Show hospitality to strangers

- Remember Christians who are in prison
 - Be faithful in marriage
 - Be content with what you have and do not be greedy for money
 - Imitate your church leaders
 - Beware of false teachers
 - Do good to others
 - Share what you have

- As part of this list, the author commands members to obey their leaders (Hebrews 13:17).
 - “Obey your leaders and submit to them. . .”
 - This is a reference to church leaders (overseers/elders/pastors).
 - The biblical view of church governance is that members will submit to their overseers/elders/pastors.
 - Why?
 - “. . . for they are keeping watch over your souls *as those who will have to give an account.*”
 - The author gives two reasons that members are to submit to elders:
 1. The elders are invested with biblical HEADSHIP in the local church (i.e. they are keeping watch over your souls).
 2. They will have to give an account of their HEADSHIP to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.
 - “Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”
 - Resistance to the headship of elders makes the oversight of souls an awful and unproductive responsibility.
 - A defiant and insubordinate member will not receive the same level of constructive care and oversight as a submissive member.

- Hebrews 13:17 describes the heaviness of headship.
 - Headship in the local church requires the watching over of the souls of the members.
 - Elders must invest constructively in the soul care of the members of the church.
 - Elders must correct, rebuke, and discipline (as an essential part of soul care) wayward members of the church.
 - Headship in the local church is accountable to Jesus Christ.

- Elders will stand before Christ and give an account for what was done and not done in the exercise of headship in the local church.
- Headship in the local church is painfully difficult when members refuse to submit.
 - Elders must continue to provide soul care in all its forms to members who are insubordinate.
 - Elders only relinquish this responsibility to headship if and when biblical discipline ends in excommunication or the member's personal removal from soul care.
 - Both excommunication and a member's personal removal from soul care inflicts deep wounds in the heart of an elder who understands biblical headship.

Ephesians 5:25

- Broad Context (see notes from Class 3)
- According to Ephesians 5:25, headship in marriage is so heavy that it is literally impossible.
 - “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. . .”
 - The model of headship is Jesus Christ on the Cross.
 1. Jesus was without sin.
 2. Jesus initiated His own sacrifice by “laying down His life” of His own accord.
 3. Jesus did not revile those for whom He was crucified but considered it all joy to die for our salvation (Hebrews 12:2).
 4. Jesus died so that we might live.
- Ephesians 5:25 describes the heaviness of headship.
 - Headship in the home is an expression of love, even toward a wife who may not be deserving of such love (c.f. Romans 5:6–8)
 - Headship in the home is more concerned with godly leadership than being proved right or innocent.
 - Headship in the home requires the husband to initiate reconciliation with his wife with a self-sacrificial posture.
 - Headship in the home means a man will not revile his wife, even when she has wronged him, even significantly.

- Headship in the home means the husband dies first, in every way, even by LIVING for the sake of his wife.

Ephesians 6:4

- Broad Context (see notes from Class 3)
- Paul describes the challenge of headship over children
 - “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. . .”
 - Fathers must lead and encourage (pull, not push)
 - “. . .but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - At the same time, fathers must establish right from wrong.
 - Fathers must also discipline wayward children.
- Ephesians 6:4 describes the heaviness of headship.
 - Headship is not the exercise of RAW authority.
 - Yet, headship is the exercise of GODLY authority.
 - Balancing these statements is a heavy burden.

Ephesians 6:9

- Broad Context (see notes from Class 3)
- Paul describes the challenge of headship over slaves/employees.
 - “. . . stop your threatening. . .”
 - Masters/Employers are to lead and encourage (pull, not push)
 - “. . . knowing that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven. . .”
 - Masters/Employers will give an account of the way in which they exercised their headship to the Lord Jesus.
 - “. . . and that there is no partiality with Him.”
 - There may be masters/employers and slaves/employees on earth, but every person is a slave to Christ.
- Ephesians 6:9 describes the heaviness of headship.
 - Headship is not the exercise of RAW authority.
 - Yet, headship is the exercise of GODLY authority.
 - Balancing these statements is a heavy burden.

1 Peter 3:7

- Broad Context (see notes from Class 3)

- Peter describes the challenge of headship in the home.
 - o “Live with your wives in an understanding way. . .”
 - Women are not like men. They think, feel, and act differently.
 - Headship requires men to seek to understand their wives in all these ways.
 - o “. . . showing honour to the woman. . .”
 - Honour has two meanings:
 1. To show proper respect.
 2. To be of material benefit to.
 - Headship requires men to respect their wives as their equal, and to be a means of provision to her.
 - o “as the weaker vessel”
 - Weaker vessel is likely referring to three comparative aspects between men and women.
 1. Physical
 2. Emotional
 3. Positional
 - Headship does not permit a man to take advantage of a woman as a result of these vulnerabilities.

- 1 Peter 3:7 describes the heaviness of headship.
 - o Headship requires empathy and an ability to see the world from another person’s point of view.
 - o Headship is not self-seeking, but rather seeks to show honour to others.
 - o Headship is gentle, protecting the weakness of others.

The Heaviness of Headship

Genesis 3:8–9	Teaching the Word of God	Leadership by the Word of God	Responsibility for others under headship	Accountability to the Lord God	
Hebrews 13:17	Soul-care to and for others	Discipline of the wayward	Endurance of insubordination		
Ephesians 5:25	Unconditional love	Not self- seeking	Initiative for reconciliation	Gracious even when wronged	Sacrificial even by living
Ephesians 6:4	Not the exercise of RAW/BRUTE authority		Yet, the exercise of GODLY/CARING authority		
Ephesians 6:9					
1 Peter 3:7	Empathetic and understanding	Extension of honour to another		Gentle with the weakness of another	

Key Words about Headship:

Teaching
Leadership
Responsibility
Accountability
Unconditional love

Not self-seeking
Taking initiative
Gracious
Sacrificial
Authority

Empathetic
Understanding
Extension of honour
Gentle

II. Köstenberger & Köstenberger, God's Design for Man and Woman, 257–289

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III. Parnell & Strachan, Designed for Joy, 67–87

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- Naselli, "Discipline for Our Good," 81–87
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