

Principles of a happy marriage

Study 5 - Taking the lead

Without leadership, any venture is headed for failure. Marriage is no different. A happy marriage does not just happen. A successful business does not just happen. A beautiful garden does not just happen. Behind every magnificent building is a master builder who carefully studied the plans and directed the building operations in accordance with those plans.

Furthermore, any business can only have one leader who is ultimately responsible for its operations. That leader usually has a team around him, and though dictatorial leadership is able to accomplish quite a lot, they never have a happy crew! The best leader is one who can work as a team together with those close to him. The same happens in marriage.

There seems to be a general trend away from accepting that there must be leadership in the marriage. This might possibly be because the leader is either not taking the lead, or that he is ruling like a dictator. Both styles are disastrous in a marriage. The former creates confusion and a lack of direction, and the latter breeds rebellion and hatred. The middle road is a thin tightrope which requires skill and much prayer.

What does the Bible have to say about leadership?

Firstly, who is the leader? It is certainly not the children – though they do often test their boundaries, and sometimes want to dictate their terms. And, I'm really

sorry lady, with all due respect to you, God has not appointed you to be the leader of the home. God appointed the husband.

1Cor 11:3 "... Christ is the head of every man, and man is the head of a woman ..."

Because of this ordination, the Lord gives the command:

Eph 5:22 "Wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord,

5:23 "for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church."

Many people have a serious problem with this command and try every way possible around it. I tell you why I think people don't like it. It is because men have abused their position of authority. They have used it to manipulate, dictate and demand things which are entirely for their own pleasure. No wonder this leadership has been confused and therefore rejected by most. However, that is not the kind of leadership that God intended.

Sir, would *you* like to be a *good leader* and end up with a happy home? Then take a look at God's style of leadership:

God's style of leadership

John 13:1-17 describes a scene at the last supper where Jesus was very aware of:

1) who He was,

2) what He was called to, and

3) that all power in heaven and earth had been given into His hands.

Imagine such knowledge going through your own mind if that were possible. I think most of us would at least have a feeling of immense importance if not arrogance. What did Jesus do with all that knowledge? Simple! He stripped off His outer garments, took a towel, and wrapping it around himself, took a bowl of water and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet. I don't believe He did this just to inaugurate a foot washing ceremony (as good as that might be). I think He did it because the disciples' feet were dirty. A dirty servant's job needed doing, and He was not too proud to do that.

What follows, is the frightening part. When He finished the job, to the astonishment and embarrassment of all the disciples, He sat down again and taught them the essential principles of godly leadership - that they *were not called to be served, but to serve!* Sir, with respect to you, your wife is not your slave, neither are your children, and they should not be treated as such!

If we are to lead our home according to God's call, then it is to be *in humility, serving our family*. That kind of leader will earn the respect of his wife and family, and he will have a home filled with peace. What does servanthood mean?

It is amazing how many little jobs there are to be done in the home - washing the dishes, ironing the clothes, cleaning up, etc. Now don't be alarmed! This does not mean that you must do it all. You are a team, remember.

But I believe that the husband is the one to take the lead by serving, and certainly he should not be lazy!

What about leading the family in devotions? Many men are scared of this and would rather that the wife take the lead here. What about the control of what is or is not allowed in the home - such as the types of videos or music allowed? The word *gentleness* seems far removed from the word *discipline*, and one might tend to think that a servant leader would be the downtrodden little mouse in the house. I don't think so.

Certainly, *discipline is a godly leadership characteristic* which should be enforced. I believe that godly leadership should have a good balance of *gentleness, discipline, strength of purpose and clear direction, hard work, and time with the family*. Jesus' leadership is the best example you could ever follow. He led the congregation (disciples) the way a husband should lead his wife. He gave His all for her.

Please remember again that I am writing from the husband's perspective, so you ladies please forgive me. I am a leader of men, and my ministry is therefore generally to men. However, I would love to hear your comments, too.

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