



## 6. My life as a Christian man or woman

*Christians carry out the roles God  
has chosen for them*

### Introduction

#### Teamwork

The catcher returned the ball to the pitcher. The pitcher got his sign and delivered to the plate. The batter hit a ground ball to the shortstop who fielded it and threw it to the first baseman before the runner could reach the base.

What if one player doesn't carry out the responsibility required by that position?

Teamwork is critical. Each player must carry out a unique function. The team doesn't work if that doesn't happen.

### The Scriptures Say

1. For generations the promise of a Savior was primarily the inheritance of one nation. How has this changed?

**Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 4:4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called.

**Romans 10:12,13** There is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

We are all one and under a head that is Christ. His promise is for all people. If Paul says that there is “neither male or female,” why do we distinguish between the roles of men and women? Equal status/value under the gospel, but different roles according to vocation (law)

2. We all have different responsibilities in life based on our situation and gifts. Describe the responsibility relationship God has established for men and women.

**1 Timothy 2:12** I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. Means what? Forbids not teaching, but authority over adult males.

**1 Corinthians 11:3** I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and **the head of Christ is God**. **Jesus submitted to his Father's authority, man to Christ, and women to men.**

**1 Corinthians 11:8,9** Man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but **woman for man**. **"a helper suitable for him."** **Designed to complement and complete each other, not duplicate each other**

**1 Corinthians 11:11** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. **A partnership, a team, interdependent**  
**We are spiritual equals. In wisdom and love, God has established a partnership in which he gives different responsibilities.**

3. People are motivated in many different ways and for many different reasons. Our own sinful yearnings or the sinfulness of others is never a proper motivation. How will we be motivated to carry out our roles as Christian men and women?

**Ephesians 5:21** Submit to one another **out of reverence for Christ**.

**Ephesians 5:22,24** Wives, **submit (means?)** yourselves to your own husbands **as you do to the Lord**. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands **in everything**. **Why does Paul immediately direct wives to submit, but not husbands?** While Scripture exhorts us to "serve" one another (e.g. men to women, parents to children, rich to poor) the word "submit" applies only to our relationship to our God-appointed heads (government, husbands, masters) "Submit, for example...wives, children, slaves" **In everything?** Unless sinful.

**Ephesians 5:25-33** Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ loved the church (who? men and women)** and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to **present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish**, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, **just as Christ does the church**—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. **Christ's love makes the church beautiful; it changes us from the inside out; so also a husband's love. Christ's love motivates the actions of both men and women.**

## The Principles

*Because the Bible clearly teaches the following truths . . .*

1. I believe we are all under a head, Christ.
2. I believe we are spiritual equals, but God gives different responsibilities.
3. I believe that God gave man the headship role, woman the helper role.
4. I believe we carry out our roles out of reverence for Christ (gospel motivation).

## Focus

### *Husbands, Wives, and Ephesians 5*

- Verse 21: Roles will be freely offered—never demanded—in the family out of reverence for Christ.
- Verses 22-24: A woman will see in her husband a symbol of Jesus Christ and help him carry out his role.
- Verses 25-33: A man will see in his wife a precious gift and offer self-sacrificing love to her as he carries out his role.

Husbands will take into account what is best for the entire family and seek their wives' advice, especially because their wives will have wisdom in certain areas that they do not.

### *Men and Women in Church*

- Women are free to make use of their talents and abilities in the congregation in every way that does not exercise authority over a man. **What if a woman has the gift of being a pastor/leader?** Use it in a way that doesn't exercise authority over a man.
- Why are WELS pastors always men? Hebrews 13:7,17 says, Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you...submit to their authority." By their office they are in a position of authority. Women will not put themselves in that position.
- Does the Bible allow women to vote in a Christian congregation? Why/why not? When a vote has authority over the entire congregation (men and women), it is reserved for those in positions of authority. However, to best serve them, women's voices must be heard. (surveys, straw polls, open forums, dinner tables)

## What Does This Mean?

1. In Ephesians 5, St. Paul doesn't tell husbands, "Be heads." He does tell them, "Love your wives." And Paul doesn't tell wives, "Love your husbands." He does tell them to submit and to respect their husbands. Suggest some reasons why Paul does this. Each spouse needs to focus on his/her respective role, not their spouse's. Husbands would rather dominate than unselfishly love. Wives will love, but then resent their husbands headship.
2. Unbelievers, of course, don't respect the headship of Christ. But the sinful nature within all of us resists bowing to Jesus our head. How can we encourage one another in this regard? What has helped you carry out your role?

Only the power of the gospel can conquer the sinful nature within us and convince us of the blessing that is ours to have Christ as our head. As the gospel works in our hearts, we will be motivated to trust the Lord in these matters and gladly take the role God has given us. Be Christlike. Focus on relationships more than tasks.

3. Read Genesis 3:17. The first sin brought a curse upon the entire world. Agree or disagree: The failure of Adam and Eve to honor the roles God had given them contributed to the first sin and resulted in the curse that now afflicts the entire world.

**Genesis 3:17** Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, "You must not eat from it," "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life."

The first sin was more than just failure to uphold God-given roles. It also involved a lack of trust in God and his Word and promises. But when God revealed the consequences of the sin, he specifically pointed to Adam's failure to be a servant-leader for his wife.

4. What should all men understand about their responsibility to be a servant-leader?

There can be far-reaching consequences when we abdicate the roles God has given us.

5. How can a woman help her husband, who may not have strong leadership skills, without usurping his God-given responsibility?

Be a helper. Help him by encouraging him with the gospel. Help him understand how he can lead. Be patient and allow him to lead.

6. What counsel might you offer to someone who has trouble with the Biblical roles of man and woman? **Focus on the gospel. Christ's loving leadership empowers our willing response. Don't buy the world's caricatures. Don't throw out the principles because sinners have abused the principles. Trust that God will never give you bad advice. He's not a kill joy. God still allows men and women to use all their gifts.**

## What This Means for Me

- Take a few moments to write a short statement expressing the way these truths shape what you believe and how you live.