

Follow-up to Submission in Marriage

Below are the answers to a few questions (along with a few additional comments) that were asked after the November 23rd message “The ‘S’ Word Part 2” dealing with the biblical concept of submission in marriage. If you have not read 1 Peter 3:1-7 and listened to the message I strongly recommend that you do so in order to have the proper context to understand the questions and responses below. I hope this supplemental information proves helpful for understanding submission in marriage and the husband’s role of being considerate and respectful of his wife...his equal “*heir of the gracious gift of life*” (1 Peter 3:7).

Question #1: Does submitting to my husband mean that I no longer can make any decisions?

Answer: Not at all; submission does not mean the absence of decision-making. A husband with any sense at all will recognize that there are some matters in which his wife is more skilled, experienced or wiser than himself. In such cases it is perfectly reasonable for the husband to delegate decisions related to these matters to his wife, along with adding any wise counsel he can to the particular decision being considered. Delegating decisions does not violate the biblical teaching of wives submitting to their husbands.

It is important to note that with delegation, the husband, as the spiritual leader of the home, is ultimately responsible for the decision. Husbands should not blame their wives for a decision that results in a bad outcome (note how “effective” it was for Adam in Genesis 3 to try and shift the blame).

Question #2: What should I do when my husband won’t make any decisions and chooses not to lead our family?

Answer: This is a question that first needs to be preceded by the question “How did it get to my husband not leading?” If he’s been pushed out because of a strong-willed or overly controlling wife then that needs to be acknowledged and resolved together as a couple; possibly with the assistance of the family’s church. If on the other hand the husband is neglecting his role as the leader of his family because of laziness, defaulting to a personality type weakness, or being overly consumed with his job, then there exists a legitimate biblical concern.

It is against the will of God for a husband to retreat from family decisions (e.g., financial, parenting, spiritual) to leave them to his wife. After God a husband’s first priority is leading his family which involves staying informed and involved in the life of his family. This is best accomplished when the husband and wife come together and prayerfully seek, from the Bible and godly counsel, unity in how this will practically play out in their home. If a husband is neglecting his role of involved leader it is appropriate for a wife to approach her husband with the right attitude and address her concern(s). If this results in no change she should seek the help and involvement of the family’s church leadership.

Question #3: What are some practical ways for a husband to demonstrate spiritual leadership in the home?

Answer: There are many ways a husband can practically be the spiritual leader of the family. The best way to begin to understand that role is from the teachings of the Bible:

- Philippians 2:12-13 – Leading spiritually begins by leading yourself in the pursuit of spiritual growth. The old leadership adage “you can’t lead where you’ve never been” holds true. The best leader is one who leads by example as well as experience. Practically speaking this includes:
 - Getting involved in a local church
 - Reading and reflecting on the Bible regularly
 - Getting into a small group and allowing accountability into your life
- Deuteronomy 6:1-9 – Fathers leading their children to know God and grow in their relationship with him is crucial. This includes intentional times of teaching, discipline, modeling and encouragement. Practically speaking this includes:
 - Setting aside regular time with your children to talk about and teach them spiritual lessons.
 - Getting them involved in a local church youth group.
 - Correcting them in a redemptive way when they disobey.
- Ephesians 5:25 – Husbands are to love their wives in a sacrificial way. That is to say husbands are to put what’s best for their wives above their own wants and desires. Practically speaking this includes:
 - Husbands should pray with their wives and for their wives.
 - Husbands should celebrate the accomplishments of their wives and seek to do whatever they can to see their wives succeed in their endeavors.
 - Husbands should discuss their own spiritual lives with their wives and inquire as to how their wives are doing spiritually.
- 1 Peter 3:7 – Husbands should study their wives to see what their needs are and seek to meet them (please refer to the November 23rd message for further explanation).