



***THE ORDER OF CREATION
AND THE HEADSHIP
PRINCIPLE
A Bible Study***

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Session One

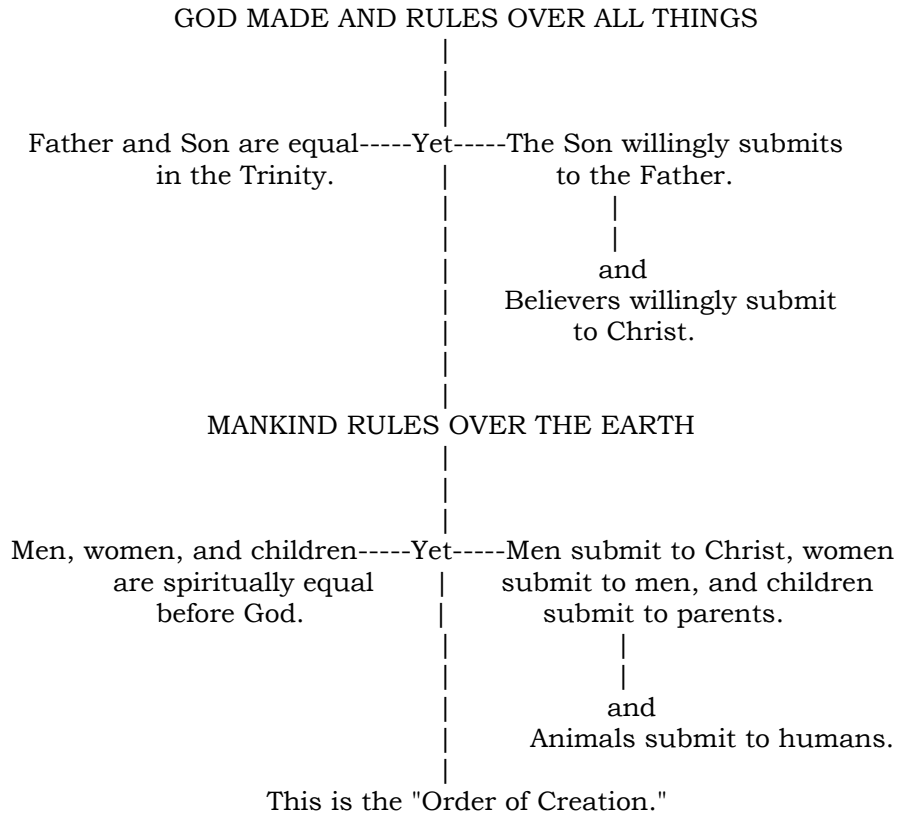
The question I am most frequently asked about the roles of man and woman in this life is: "Why do I teach that women should not exercise authority over men, also known as the "Headship Principle?" The answer is really quite simple: "I teach the Headship Principle because it is part of God's holy, immutable (unchangeable) will for believers in this earthly life."

It is as God's will because:

GOD'S ORDER OF CREATION LEADS US TO THE HEADSHIP PRINCIPLE

What is the "Order of Creation?"

Perhaps this diagram will help.



Thus, each entity has its own "sphere of responsibility" on its own level. The Triune God first, over all things. Christ, equal to, yet submitting to His Father, and the Father in turn placing all things under his feet, (**Psalm 2:7-9, 110:1, & First Corinthians 15:24-28**). Mankind, then as the pinnacle of all creation, with men as heads and women as helpers, are placed over children and the animal and plant kingdoms.

Now, for the Scriptural proof of this, let's begin with Genesis 1:28 & 2:18.

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Note that though the plants and animals were created first, God very specifically gave mankind rule over them. On the other hand, not only was the man created before the woman, but she was again very specifically

proclaimed as man's "suitable (or corresponding) helper." There can be no question as to God's intended meaning.

St. Paul makes this point abundantly clear in First Corinthians 11:3,8&9.

"Now 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.

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."

Next, please note another passage often overlooked in this connection, Genesis 3:16.

"Your desire will be for your husband (s position), and (but) he will rule over you."
[emphasis mine]

Note that the Fall into sin did not alter the Order of Creation or the Headship Principle. The Fall only tainted these portions of God's will with sin just as with the rest of His once perfect creation. Again, God's meaning is clear; the woman's desire will be for the position already occupied by the man. It would be meaningless for God to say that Eve's sexual desire will now be for her husband as part of a curse, because He created them both with this very desire for each other in the beginning and declared it was "very good!" Also, if woman had equal authority with man already before the Fall, then how can she desire something she already has? The answer is obvious; she was not equal in authority even before the Fall into sin. Indeed, God makes a point of saying that the man will continue to rule over the woman despite her attempts to take over. Again, if man and woman are intended to have the same authority, how can the man rule over an equal? The answer is clear; she never was equal in authority, and is not to be either after the Fall. Again, St. Paul teaches this clearly in his inspired writings. Read First Timothy 2:12,13.

"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. For Adam was formed first, then Eve."

The Bible also makes a clear application of the Headship Principle to the workings of the church. St. Paul writes in First Corinthians 14:33,34.

"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law (the Books of Moses) says." [emphasis mine]

The kind of speaking that is forbidden is clear from the passages already discussed; that is, speaking in authority. Obviously, women, as well as men, are encouraged to sing, and speak, and pray in the church as elsewhere, for St. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:19.

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

Based on these clear, unequivocal words of Scripture, I am compelled to find that the Headship Principle is grounded firmly on God's Order of Creation, and that it is part of His clearly revealed will for all people of all times and all places.

Additional notes:

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Session Two

Because,

A. THE HEADSHIP PRINCIPLE IS PART OF GOD'S HOLY, UNCHANGABLE WILL.

and,

B. THE HOLY, UNCHANGABLE WILL OF GOD IS, BY DEFINITION, NEVER SET ASIDE BY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Therefore,

C. THE HEADSHIP PRINCIPLE CANNOT BE SET ASIDE BY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Based on this understanding, it must be maintained that:

1. All women are "helpers" to all men, and all men are "heads" over all women, even if only in a theological sense. Concrete applications will follow from this basic fact, and without this foundation, there can be no binding applications.
2. In marriage this means that wives are to submit to their own husbands, and husbands love and honor their own wives as they would their own bodies. God intends this relationship to be an unselfish and self sacrificing one. There is no room for any kind of abuse, physical or otherwise, on the part of the husband, or for refusal to submit on the part of the wife, unless compelled to go against God's clear Word. Jesus tells us in Matthew 19:4-6,

"Haven't you read, He replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Paul also gives us these directions in Ephesians 5:22-24,& 28,

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, of which He is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies."

3. In the visible church this means that women are not to exercise authority over men. Please refer to the passages noted in Session One, especially ***First Corinthians 11:3-12, 14:34-40, and First Timothy 2:11-15.***

Since the church is to be ruled solely on the basis of God's perfect Word, the church is to hold its members to the clear application of God's will in the areas over which it has some jurisdiction, such as marriage, and the organization and workings of the congregation. Nothing is to be done which would call God's Word into question, or send an unclear message about God's Word to the world.

4. In society this means that believing men and women will strive to demonstrate this truth in every aspect of their worldly lives. Again, please note that Adam and Eve represented not only the first marriage, and the whole church on earth, but also all of society. **(Genesis 1-3)**

Many people disagree with the idea that this teaching should be applied in society at all. However, if the Headship Principle, based on the Order of Creation, does not also apply in society, but only to believers in the visible church, then it does not apply to all people of all time and in all places. Thus, this teaching would be, by definition, NOT part of God's perfect unchangeable will (Moral Law), but only a Ceremonial Law, of which there are none for New Testament believers. **(Colossians 2)**

Therefore, if the Headship Principle does not apply in society, it does not apply anywhere. Thus, this entire study is a waste of time, and we should immediately remove any suggestion of submission of wives to their husbands from our marriage vows, and quickly approve and encourage women voters, Elders, and Pastors in our churches. To do otherwise would be unbiblical and hypocritical. And to maintain our present restrictions, without the backing of God's Moral Law, would be unloving and unchristian.

However, since it is clear that the Headship Principle is part of God's holy unchangeable will, we can and must apply it also to society. Yet, we need to remember that while we as individual believers can hope and pray that society, including the government, will use all of God's will as a guide for law, justice, and morality, and can work within our system to bring this about; it is not the church's role to force society to live according to God's will. We must preach the Law and the Gospel clearly, and without equivocation, then allow the motivating power of Christ's love for sinners to move men and women to conform their lives to all of God's will, including His Order of Creation and the Headship Principle, as they grow in the grace and knowledge of Scripture. Thus, it is not up to the church or even individual believers to attempt to legislate society's conformity with the Headship Principle, but rather their duty to apply it in their own lives to the best of their Christian ability and thus serve as a model and guide to the world around them.

VERY IMPORTANT: Let it be clearly understood immediately that upholding and proclaiming this teaching of Scripture is not a matter of inequality, prejudice, or discrimination. For, when it comes to the way of salvation, all people are equal before God. St. Paul writes,

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

However, this teaching is simply the way God Himself has revealed He wants the lives of His children directed, and His visible church operated here on earth. As our Creator, and the Head of the Church, He has every right to set down the guidelines by which we and His Church serve Him. This includes the Headship Principle based on the Order of Creation, and the obvious applications that can be drawn from it.

We must also realize that this teaching is certainly not the central theme of all Scripture, nor even one of the most important or fundamental doctrines. Still, it is clearly taught. Thus, I must also teach it. Otherwise, I would be dishonoring my Divine Call and my Lord Jesus Christ, my own Head and Shepherd.

Additional notes:

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Session Three

Some practical questions:

Q 1. Is this teaching responsible for the terrible abuse women sometimes suffer at the hands of men?

A. Absolutely not! If so, then God would be guilty of promoting such abuse. Remember two important points; first, that this tension, which can lead to violence, was part of the curse of sin God saw would happen after the Fall. Secondly, God makes it extremely clear how men are to treat women, especially husbands their wives; not as slaves or worse, but as they themselves would want to be treated, indeed, they are to give their very lives for their wives.

Q 2. Is voting in the church really an exercise of authority?

A. Simply put, yes, voting in the church is an exercise of authority, at least in our day and age. If voting is not an exercise of authority, then there is no advantage in having the privilege. Indeed, in most of our congregations, the ultimate decision making authority rests with the Voters, within which the majority rules. When women take part in this voting, they are exercising authority over at least some other men by canceling out their votes, whether or not they are contributing to the majority.

Of course, there is nothing in the Bible which demands that our congregations should be run in such a democratic fashion. Authority could be vested in the Pastor alone or any number of individuals or groups. Wherever the authority is, there is where the restriction of the Headship Principle belongs, and nowhere else. On the other hand, the church is always free, and on most occasions would be wise, to poll both the men and women of the congregation to gauge their opinion as to some project or program. Since there is no exercise of authority in such cases, women members can, of course, freely take part in such "straw votes," and the discussions surrounding them.

Q 3. If all voting then is an exercise of authority, isn't the same true of voting in society, such as for President? Why don't we also forbid women to exercise this kind of authority?

A. As for restricting other kinds of voting in the world around us, see the comments concerning society and government under point 4 above. Our government, by an amendment to the Constitution, has determined that women also may participate in voting. However, there can be many God-pleasing ways for believers to respect the laws of the land, and also keep God's will in this regard. Still, it should go without saying that, at the very least, a believing wife who understands the teaching of the Order of Creation will endeavor not to cancel out the vote of her husband, and thus overrule his headship.

Q 4. How can the concerns of women members be addressed by the congregation if they can't vote, especially if they are single, or their husbands are not members?

A. As part of the Headship Principle, it is the duty and responsibility of every man in the congregation to take into consideration the feelings, questions, and suggestions of the women members. If this is not done, or no provision is made for this, then it is the men who are clearly violating God's Order of Creation. Note that Barak was dishonored by God when he failed to take the lead against Israel's enemies. Judges 4:9 records,

"Barak said to [Deborah], 'If you go [along to war] with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go.' 'Very well,' Deborah said, 'I will go with you. But because of the way you are doing this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.' So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh."

Q 5. How and why do so many other church bodies, even "conservative," Bible-believing ones, justify allowing women voters, Board members, Elders, and even Pastors?

A. The answer to this question is simple enough, but not so short. Obviously, this teaching of the Order of Creation and the Headship Principle is not popular in our world today. In fact, it is often seen as a barrier to the growth of our congregation and the Wisconsin Synod. Thus, there is great pressure to find a way around this portion of God's will, especially on the part of churches that want to be or remain popular with the majority of people. Thus, the denominations that permit women to vote and/or hold the Pastoral office regard the Bible passages we have discussed as being open to other interpretations, questionable as to their true origin, not part of God's inspired Word, or simply as having no bearing or authority on us today.

However, let me point out that if we were to say that Moses and Paul did not write the sections quoted, or that these sections are not inspired by the Holy Spirit, or that they no longer apply, or they are not clear enough to guide us, then nothing is to prevent any other portion of the Bible to be called into question, such as the Ten Commandments, the life and work of Christ, or Paul's words about justification by grace through faith.

In addition, it can be said without fear of contradiction, that without exception, every single denomination or church that has given up the teaching of the Headship Principle and Order of Creation, along with their applications, has also eventually set aside other clear teachings of the Bible, including the Trinity, Creation, the Flood, Original Sin, the Virgin Birth of Christ, His Resurrection, and the Vicarious Atonement; not all at once, or quickly, but inevitably, little by little, over many years. Thus, the very basis saving faith could be lost, and with it, immortal souls.

Therefore, since part of my Call is to protect you, my sheep, from spiritual wolves who would try and destroy your faith, and since it is abundantly clear from church history that the denial of even one teaching of Scripture, however, minor it may seem, can ultimately lead to the denial of others, even fundamental doctrines necessary for salvation, I cannot and will not allow such denial to gain a public foothold in the congregation God has placed under my care.

Q 6. What happens if some members don't agree with this teaching? Will they be forced to leave our church?

A. No, that is not necessarily called for. Because this is a difficult, unpopular, and often misunderstood teaching of the Bible, it is not only possible, but indeed likely, that there will be many members in this and other WELS congregations who privately do not agree with this doctrine. Such members should not think they are unwelcome or cannot remain in this congregation. The fact is that nearly all members have some difficulty with any one of many such difficult teachings. This does not make them unbelievers, heretics, or outcasts. As long as they do not refuse to continue to be instructed, and do not make public propaganda for an unbiblical doctrine, there is no problem staying and being active in the congregation.

I pray that this study has answered most of your questions and concerns about this sensitive and complex subject, and given you the guidance and confidence to accept, defend, and live by it. Always feel free to ask further questions and make comments and suggestions as to how I can better and more effectively communicate this portion of God's perfect will to people both within and outside our church. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to assist you in understanding this part of your Lord's directions for your life of faith.

Additional questions and notes: