WEEK 20 2ND SEMESTER · DISCIPLESHIP & SERVICE

The Man's Role in Marriage and Family

To serve, lead, protect – loving like Christ

SPIRITUAL THEME

The Man's Role in Marriage and Family

PERSONAL THEME

To serve, lead, protect – entrusted by God

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Spiritual Theme: The man's role in marriage and family

Personal Theme: To serve, lead, protect - entrusted by God

Main Bible Passage: Ephesians 5:21-33

Parallel Passages: Genesis 2:18-24; 1 Peter 3:7

Lesson Aim: Students understand that biblical manhood in marriage is measured by Christlike love, sacrificial service, faithful leadership, protection, and honor.

1. Introduction: A Man Under Christ

This lesson must begin with Jesus, not with culture. Many cultures speak strongly about the authority of a man in the home. Some of this may contain truth about responsibility, but it can also be twisted into pride, harshness, control, fear, or neglect. The Bible does not call a husband to rule like a selfish master. It calls him to love like Christ.

A Christian man does not first ask, "What power do I have?" He asks, "How does Christ call me to love, serve, lead, and protect?" This changes the whole conversation. Biblical leadership is not self-exaltation. It is responsibility before God for the good of the wife, children, and household.

> ***A Christian husband is called to use strength for sacrificial love, not selfish control.***

2. Reading The Whole Passage Together: Ephesians 5:21-33

> *"Subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body. But as the assembly is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the assembly to himself gloriously, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without defect. Even so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord also does the assembly. For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife. The two will become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly. Nevertheless each of you must also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband."* (Ephesians 5:21-33)

3. The First Movement: Submission Begins In Reverence For Christ

Practical Application: A Man Must First Submit To Christ

Before a man asks whether his wife respects him, he should ask whether he is submitted to Jesus. Does he obey the Word? Does he repent when corrected? Does he pray? Does he listen to wise counsel? Does he use authority to serve? A man who refuses correction but demands respect has not understood the fear of Christ.

This is important in discipleship because many family problems are spiritual before they are practical. Pride, anger, laziness, lust, drunkenness, and love of money damage the home. The first step is not to blame others. The first step is to come under the Lordship of Jesus and say, "Lord, change me first."

Ephesians 5:21 says believers submit to one another in the fear of Christ. This verse gives the atmosphere for the whole household passage. The home is not a place where one person acts like God. The home belongs under Christ. Husband and wife both stand before the Lord.

This does not erase the specific commands that follow, but it protects them from abuse. The husband is never above Christ. He is never free to command sin, crush his wife, or use Scripture to protect selfishness. His authority is accountable to the Lord Jesus.

4. The Second Movement: Husbands, Love Your Wives

Practical Application: Love Is Visible In Ordinary Habits

Christlike love must become visible. A husband shows love by listening carefully, speaking gently, working faithfully, protecting his wife from shame, refusing adultery, helping with family burdens, praying for the home, and seeking peace after conflict. Love is not only a feeling. Love is faithful action for the good of another person.

Ask the students to think of the home as the first ministry field. A man may preach well in church, but if he is harsh, unfaithful, or careless at home, his ministry is deeply damaged. The wife and children should not receive the worst part of a man while the church receives his public smile.

The direct command to husbands is clear: love your wives. Paul does not first say, "Control your wives" or "Use your rights." He says, "Love." The measure of this love is Christ, who loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

This is one of the strongest commands in the New Testament for men. A husband must look at the cross and learn how to treat his wife. Christ did not use His strength to serve Himself. He gave Himself for the good, cleansing, and glory of His bride.

> *The husband's model is not culture, pride, or fear. His model is Christ crucified.*

5. The Third Movement: Serve, Lead, Protect

Practical Application: Serving Without Becoming Passive

Serving does not mean the man has no responsibility. It means he takes responsibility in a Christlike way. He does not wait for his wife to carry every spiritual, emotional, and practical burden. He asks, "What needs to be done for this home to honor God?" Then he takes initiative with humility.

This may include organizing prayer, discussing money honestly, working diligently, repairing broken relationships, seeking pastoral counsel, disciplining children with patience, and refusing habits that damage the family. Service is not weakness. In the kingdom of God, service is strength under the rule of Christ.

Practical Application: Leading Without Controlling

Leadership becomes sinful when it uses fear, silence, money, culture, or Scripture to control. Christlike leadership invites truth, listens carefully, and takes responsibility. A husband should be willing to hear his wife's concerns without anger. He should not treat disagreement as rebellion. Many wise decisions in a home will come through patient conversation and prayer.

Teach students this practical sentence: "Let us seek what honors Christ." This moves a conflict away from ego and toward obedience. The goal is not for the man to win every argument. The goal is for the household to follow Jesus.

Practical Application: Protecting The Family From Real Dangers

Protection is not only physical. A man protects his family from false teaching, sexual immorality, financial foolishness, bitterness, violence, addiction, and spiritual neglect. Sometimes the danger is outside the home. Sometimes the danger is inside his own heart. A man must be honest enough to ask, "Am I protecting my family, or am I one of the dangers they need protection from?"

This is a serious question. If a man is violent, abusive, drunk, unfaithful, or spiritually careless, he must repent and seek help. The Bible never excuses sin by calling it leadership. True protection begins with the fear of God.

A man is entrusted by God to serve, lead, and protect. These three words must be understood through Christ. Service means he uses his strength for the good of others. Leadership means he goes first in obedience, prayer, repentance, work, and responsibility. Protection means he guards his family from harm, false teaching, neglect, and his own sinful anger.

This kind of leadership is strong, but not harsh. It is gentle, but not passive. It is humble, but not lazy. It is responsible, but not controlling. A biblical man does not disappear from responsibility, and he does not dominate. He stands under Christ and gives himself for those entrusted to him.

> ***To serve, lead, and protect means taking responsibility for the good of the family before God.***

Sketchnote: Love Like Christ

6. Parallel Passage 1: Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 2 shows that marriage is rooted in God's creation. The woman is not made as a possession, but as a suitable helper and companion. The man receives her as a gift from God. Marriage becomes a one-flesh covenant, not a temporary arrangement for convenience.

This means a wife is not an object for use. She is a covenant partner before God. The husband must treat marriage as holy. He leaves, cleaves, and becomes one flesh. Faithfulness, tenderness, sexual purity, and shared life all belong to this covenant.

Teacher's Note (Polygamy): Students will likely ask about polygamy, because it is legal and common in Uganda. God's design is one man and one woman: "the two will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), and Jesus confirms "the two," not "the many" (Matthew 19:4-6). A Christian man must therefore not take a second wife. A church leader must be "the husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). But be pastoral with a man who already had several wives before he came to Christ: do not demand that he send away wives and children as "repentance" – that creates new injustice. He should provide for and honor them all, take no more wives, and be welcomed as a brother, but not serve as elder or pastor.

7. Parallel Passage 2: 1 Peter 3:7

Peter commands husbands to live with their wives according to knowledge and to honor them as fellow heirs of the grace of life. This is very important. A wife is not spiritually lower than her husband. She shares the same grace, the same salvation, and the same inheritance in Christ.

Peter even warns that harshness and dishonor can hinder prayers. A man cannot mistreat his wife and then act spiritual before God. God sees the home. The way a man treats his wife is part of his discipleship.

> *A man cannot dishonor his wife and still pretend that his spiritual life is healthy.*

8. Cultural Background And Application For Uganda

Practical Application: Reject Both Harshness And Neglect

In some homes, men are present physically but absent spiritually. They may bring some money but never pray, never disciple children, never listen, and never take responsibility for peace in the home. In other homes, men are harsh and controlling. Both patterns are wrong. Biblical manhood rejects both sinful passivity and sinful domination.

The teacher should speak directly but carefully. Some students may have grown up with painful examples of fatherhood. Others may have copied the patterns they saw. The gospel gives a new pattern. In Christ, men can repent, learn, receive healing, and become different kinds of husbands and fathers.

Practical Application: Faithfulness In Sexuality And Money

Two common tests of family leadership are sexuality and money. A man who is unfaithful sexually breaks trust and wounds the home. A man who hides money, wastes money, or refuses responsibility also harms the family. Students must learn that private choices have public consequences. The home is strengthened by purity, honesty, planning, and generosity.

A practical class exercise can ask: What financial habits build trust? What sexual boundaries protect marriage? What friendships or phone habits can become dangerous? Let the students answer concretely, because vague teaching will not help them fight real temptation.

In many communities, a man may be expected to be strong, decisive, and publicly respected. These can be good when purified by Christ, but they become dangerous when joined to pride, alcohol abuse, sexual unfaithfulness, violence, laziness, or neglect of children.

The gospel does not destroy responsibility; it cleans it. A Christian man should become more faithful, not less. He should work honestly, speak gently, reject adultery, care for children, honor his wife publicly and privately, and lead the home toward prayer, Scripture, church, and service.

9. Practical Training: A Household Under God

Practical Application: Family Worship Can Be Simple

Many men feel unqualified to lead spiritually because they think family worship must be complicated. It does not. A simple pattern is enough: read a short Bible passage, ask one question, pray together, and sing if appropriate. Five faithful minutes can be better than a big plan that never happens.

For students who are not yet married, this can begin now in personal discipline. A man who cannot open the Bible alone will struggle to lead others in the Word. A man who never prays privately will struggle to pray with a family. Preparation for marriage begins in secret obedience before God.

Practical Application: Conflict Must Become A Place Of Discipleship

Every marriage will face conflict. The question is not whether conflict will come, but whether the man will respond like Christ. Anger, silent punishment, threats, and insults are not spiritual leadership. A godly man learns to slow down, listen, confess sin, forgive, and seek peace.

Teach students four simple conflict steps: listen before answering, speak truth without cruelty, confess your own sin clearly, and pray before making big decisions. These steps do not solve every problem, but they create a Christ-honoring direction.

Students should not leave this lesson with theory only. Ask them to describe what Christlike love looks like in ordinary home life: listening before answering, confessing sin, praying with family, refusing pornography or adultery, working diligently, helping with children, protecting peace, and seeking counsel when conflict grows.

For unmarried students, the lesson still applies. They are preparing character now. A selfish single man does not automatically become a Christlike husband after marriage. Faithfulness begins before marriage: purity, discipline, humility, respect for women, service in church, and submission to Christ.

Practical Response Time

Give students quiet time to write two lists. First: where do I need repentance as a man or future husband? Second: what one habit can I begin this week to become more Christlike in family responsibility? Encourage honest answers, not religious acting.

10. Theological Summary

This lesson can be summarized in five truths. First, Christ is Lord over the home. Second, the husband's command is to love like Christ. Third, biblical leadership is sacrificial responsibility, not selfish control. Fourth, the wife must be honored as a fellow heir of grace. Fifth, the family should become a place of worship, discipleship, protection, and service.

Rick Warren wrote, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." Whether in marriage or leadership, that idea helps. A husband does not become small by serving. He becomes more like Christ.

11. Main Application For The Students

Practical Response Time

Give students quiet time to examine their lives. Married men can write one way they need to love their wife more like Christ. Single men can write one character area they must develop before marriage. Every student can write one repentance step and one obedience step.

A strong closing question is: "If God gives me a family, will they experience my strength as a blessing or as a burden?" This question should lead men to prayer, not despair. Christ can forgive, cleanse, and train men to become servants in His image.

The main application is this: a man must measure his role by Jesus Christ. If he wants authority without the cross, he is not ready to lead. If he wants respect without service, he has not understood Christ. If he wants family without faithfulness, he is building on sand.

A student should ask: Am I learning to serve? Am I becoming faithful with money, words, sexuality, anger, work, and church? Am I safe for others? Do I honor women as image-bearers and fellow heirs? These questions are practical and necessary.

> ***Biblical manhood is Christlike responsibility: humble in heart, strong in service, faithful in love.***

12. Discussion Questions

1. Why must a husband's role be measured by Christ and not only by culture?
2. What does it mean to love like Christ in daily family life?
3. How can leadership become sinful control if it is not shaped by the cross?
4. Why is 1 Peter 3:7 important for how a man treats his wife?
5. What habit should a young man develop before marriage?

13. Group Exercise

Divide the class into small groups. Each group discusses one area: words, money, sexuality, work, prayer, children, or conflict. They should answer: What does selfish masculinity look like here? What does Christlike responsibility look like here? What practical step can a man take this week?

14. Memory Statement

> ***A godly man serves, leads, and protects by loving like Christ and honoring his wife as a***

> *fellow heir of grace.*

15. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us to understand manhood through Your cross. Forgive men where they have used strength selfishly, spoken harshly, neglected responsibility, or dishonored women. Make our homes places of love, prayer, truth, protection, and humble service. Help every student become faithful before You, whether married or single. Amen.

Source Note

Research and background were checked against Ephesians 5:21-33, Genesis 2:18-24, and 1 Peter 3:7, with attention to household-code context, one-flesh covenant theology, and the command to honor wives as fellow heirs of grace.