

## **A MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY/SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

“Home: where each lives for the other and all live for God.”

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### The Sacrificial Husband

1a. Read the following comparison of a mountain climbing experience to a marriage:

There was no question who was in charge, but neither was there any question that the one who led the way had to let his partner advance with and sometimes ahead of him for us both to make progress.

The goal was not for one to stay on top of the other, but for both to reach the top. To do this, the one in charge had to assess his own strengths and limitations (and those of his partner) and adjust his own actions and directions accordingly. . . .

. . . The challenges of careers and children, finances and failures, relatives and regrets, make it unlikely that the same person can be out in front all the time if the marriage is to succeed. Thus we need to assess what responsibility marriage partners bear for themselves and for their spouses if their growth in grace is to reach the summit God intends. (20)

1b. How can a couple decide who should be out in front with regard to the challenges of careers and children, finances and failures, relatives and regrets?

### Servant Leadership

2a. Read the following:

Once I asked this young man why he had not ended this nightmare marriage (regarding a wife who gambled). His words were as courageous as they were simple. He said, "My wife is a good mother most of the time. My children need her. But more than that they need to know their Savior. How can they know of a father in heaven who forgives them if their own father will not forgive their own mother? How can my wife know of the love of God if the spiritual leader in this home will not love her despite her faults?" . . .

He uses every means at his disposal, every fiber of his strength, every aspect of his biblical authority, and every commitment of his heart to help his wife. In these ways he fulfills his biblical responsibility to be the head of his home even as he sacrifices himself for the good of those he loves. (22)

2b. What is inspiring, helpful or threatening to you concerning the above quotation?

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2c. What are some character traits the husband exhibited?

**The Head Of The Home**

3a. Read the following:

The husband looks past his own rights to consider what is right for his spouse. He, then, refuses to surrender his leadership role in the family, but rather uses his biblical authority to arrange the family's resources and activities to serve the best interests of his wife and children. (23)

3b. Does the above quotation mirror or contrast with the current views regarding the husband's responsibility? Give examples from real life, the media, books or films.

**Was Paul A Chauvinist?**

4a. Read the following:

If the apostles were actually writing their own fallible opinions while they were claiming that their statements were being provided by God (cf. I Thess. 2:13, II Pet. 3:15-16), then they were either terribly deluded or inexcusably deceitful. Either alternative would deny us confidence in anything they say, and would leave us with only our own opinions to judge what parts of Scripture we will allow to instruct us. The result of such reasoning is that we would become the judges of the Bible, rather than using it to judge our actions. Thus, our preferences would determine what the Bible should say, and we would assume the role of God. Knowing my own sin and limited understanding, this is not a role I want to assume. (23-24)

4b. Define the word chauvinist.

4c. How does the above paragraph diffuse the argument that Paul was a chauvinist?

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- 4d. Restate the argument above in your own words.
- 4e. How does the above argument refute those who refuse to trust scripture by claiming Paul was a chauvinist or the view of headship was only specific to Paul's culture?
- 4f. How would you explain this thought to a seeking believer?

**What Headship Isn't**

- 5a. Read the following:

The Bible says that as the head of his bride, the Church, Christ serves as her Savior (Eph. 5:23). Jesus gave himself out of love to make the Church holy, radiant, and blameless (5:25-27). Thus, headship involves taking responsibility - even to the point of personal sacrifice - for the well-being of another. Such a definition grants nobility to the phrase, "being a man," and renders boyish and undeveloped those images of manliness that idealize personal independence, family disinterest, and a "sportin' life." The Marlboro Man and Michelob weekends represent true manhood about as well as a five-year-old in a cowboy hat resembles John Wayne. (26)

- 5b. Do you think the biblical view of man's responsibility or the "Marlboro Man" image is the prevailing view in our current culture? Give examples from advertising, films, etc.

- 5c. Read the following:

Husbands whose headship results in abuse or merely becomes an excuse for family disregard have no biblical support. Such men - who have made idols of the cultural icons of swaggering independence and managerial machismo - program their actions and emotions to be self-

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absorbed, self-contained, and non-responsive. They define their family role by what they have a right not to do. Being a biblical head of a home demands more than passive avoidance of whatever is bothersome, disquieting, or irksome. Biblical headship does not mean nothing. (28)

- 5d. It has been said even being passive is leading - but leading in the wrong direction by default. Explain your reaction to this statement.

**Imposing Inaccurate Definitions**

- 6a. Read the following:

The Bible requires men to treat their wives with consideration and respect (I Pet. 3:7). Headship does not grant spiritual or personal *superiority* to husbands that allows them to inflict arbitrary, selfish, prideful, or capricious rule on their spouses. This should be clear from the apostle's words: "Husbands love your wives" (Eph. 5:25). The Bible says, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (I Cor 13:4-5). (30-31)

- 6b. Think of some ways you have seen other men demonstrate any of the above ways of showing love?

- 7a. Read the following:

Because the husband's headship is built on the analogy of Christ's relationship to the Church, the right to exercise family authority exists only when it is consistent with Christ's nature and purposes. This does not mean that wives are only to honor the authority of husbands who are Christian (see I Pet. 3:1). The relationship between husbands and wives is rooted in the way that God created us to live, and his standards for this relationship do not disappear because our marriages are faulty. Rather the right ordering of our marriages is one of the ways that God brings the beauty of his love into scarred lives. Headship - even flawed headship - is designed to fulfill God's purposes, and should be honored accordingly. However, when a husband uses the power of his position to counter the purposes of God, then the man has no biblical authority for those specific actions. The husband who demands that his wife stay in a corner while he abuses their children speaks without biblical authority. Headship that transgresses the purposes of God

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loses his endorsement . . . The wife should submit to her husband "in everything" that God's Word approves. (32-33)

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7b. How might a wife go about learning what God's word approves?

Using Authority To Serve

8a. Read the following:

Paul does not remove authority from the heads of homes, he redefines it. Their authority is not the right to order other's around for personal benefit; it is the responsibility to arrange for a family's well-being. Biblical authority seeks the good of others and, therefore, serves their best interests. In this sense, the head of a home sacrifices himself for the good of his family, and surrenders his desires to the needs of others in the home . . .

Because a husband's headship reflects the ministry of Christ, we should understand that the head of a home is Christ's chief representative in that home. A wife and children should better know the love of their Savior through the actions and decisions a man makes. The head of the home dispenses Christ's grace into the home, making sure that God's caring standards guide the family and that his unconditional love governs its relationships. This is an immense responsibility—so overwhelming that it requires every man humbly to seek God's aid . . .

Only by his own close relationship with the Savior and by regular exposure to the mind of God in Scripture will a man know what it means to be the head of a home. This means that a husband must submit his own life to God before he should expect the submission of any other. Only when the head of a home bows to ask help being the man God desires, interceding for the welfare of his family, and petitioning for the daily wisdom to make God's grace evident in the home—only then can the man stand to give a proper account to God of his actions. (35-36)

8b. What recommendations from the above paragraphs do you think a man should incorporate into his daily life? How should he go about it?

Assignment: Read chapter 2 in *Each for the Other*.

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### God's Reasons For Servant Leadership

1a. Read the following concerning the headship of the husband:

The headship that honors Christ brings glory to women. Such husbanding enables a spouse to know God's care for her despite personal imperfections, circumstantial difficulties, and self-doubt. This redemptive purpose to which the husband should submit his efforts is apparent in Paul's description of Christ's care for his bride, the Church. This spiritual relationship the apostle calls men to make this spiritual relationship their model of their care as husbands: As Christ [the authoritative Lord of the Universe] loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church . . . In this same way husbands ought to love their wives. (Ephesians 5:25-28)

1b. Express in your own words the Biblical view of headship in the paragraph above.

### To Glorify The Wife

2a. Read the following:

Robbing another of their sense of value sounds awful, yet it is extremely common. Whether such robbery is deliberate or not, it is almost always the result of an insecurity that compels a husband to establish his own sense of worth by exerting power or control over another. Some evil math in us seems to reason that when we have managed to reduce another's sense of worth, then our own value increases. (42)

2b. As a group compile a list of ways a man can reduce a woman's sense of worth.

### Communicating Forgiveness

3a. Read the following:

A husband who grants forgiveness because he knows he also needs forgiveness, shows his wife she is valued beyond her faults and is not less in need of mercy than he. As a result, forgiveness communicates the preciousness of a spouse, confirms that one's spiritual need is no greater than the other's, and powerfully unites a couple in the knowledge that their weaknesses do not

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invalidate their love—or God's. (45)

3b. Should a strong leader admit his faults or weaknesses? Why or why not?

## **CONFIRMING BEAUTY**

4a. Read the following:

The Bible says Jesus made his Bride, the Church, radiant to him. Husbands should do the same with their brides. I love to shop for clothes with my wife, not because my tastes are any good, but because I enjoy seeing what makes her feel beautiful and being able to tell her so.

4b. Have you ever considered shopping with your wife as a way to affirm her beauty? If so, what limits would you set to avoid potential conflict? Shopping is one way a husband can affirm his wife’s beauty. What are some other ways a man can go about this?

4c. Do you dress to please others or to please your spouse?

## **Prioritizing Partnership**

5a. Read the following:

A man more dependent on the approval of a close friend (male or female) than on his wife, commits emotional adultery. A man married to a career, to a computer terminal, to a child's success, to a television screen, or to sporting interests more than to his spouse, sins against her. When husbands treasure their wives as God intends, then no relationship exceeds the priority of the marriage bond.

5b. How can a man pursue a career and interests while still keeping the marriage relationship the top priority? Do you think the amount of time or quality of time is most important?

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### Providing Care

6a. Read the following:

At his wedding a husband vows, "All that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you." With such words a man promises to sustain without reservation or concealment the wife God provided for the man's own support. This promise does not prevent a man from delegating resources and responsibilities in the family according to each member's respective talents and strengths. However, this division of labor should not be an excuse for hidden activities or hoarded treasures. Men who marry with the intention of withholding goods, accounts, or affection from their wives, deny themselves the benefits of the united love God designed to build up both partners in the marriage — and, thus, such men ultimately damage themselves. Scripture rightly indicates that a man should care for his wife as he does himself; for when he does, this is precisely the effect.

6b. Should a man leave his problems at work? Why or why not?

### Cherishing Grace

7a. Read the following:

Jesus sacrificed his body for us when we brought him no pleasure, but only heartache and pain. This is the message of grace: God loved us when there was no human reason. He treasured us when we had no esteem for him (cf. Is. 53:3 & Mal. 3:17). To love someone when her failures cause your hurt - to cherish her at the very moment that you believe that someone else might satisfy you more - shows that person God's regard for her and, thus, is the ultimate expression of her worth.

The fact that God uses husbands to glorify wives should be qualified by the recognition that biblically neither men nor women (except those gifted for celibacy) are complete without their spouses. Thus, biblical headship is designed not only for glorifying the wife, but also for the redemptive purpose of making the husband all that God intends.

7b. Put the above statement in your own words.



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### To Complete The Husband

8a. Read the following:

What does God intend for husbands to be? Complete, as emotionally whole and spiritually mature as they can be before they are with him in eternity. But how will this completion come about? . . . God created the wife to complement and complete the husband (Gen. 2:20-24).

8b. Think of some ways a woman can complete her husband.

### A Union Man

9a. Read the following about the complete husband:

Because the two are to be one, if either party to the union damages, demoralizes, or degrades the other, then neither will be completely whole. Just as a basketball deflated on only one side still cannot fulfill its purposes, so a marriage with one side diminished will deprive both persons of fully being and doing what God desires. God has designed the similarities and differences of a man and woman in marriage to complement and support the spiritual growth of both. Neither party to the marriage can develop fully if either one is denied his or her personal potential.

The purpose of a man's headship is not fundamentally different than that of Christ's redemptive activity in behalf of the Church. In fact, the husband is to be an instrument and channel of these purposes in his wife's life. As Christ enables each of us to use our personalities and gifts to bring glory to God, so proper headship builds up another in such a way that she can bring glory to God. This does not occur when a man makes his wife feel inadequate, incompetent, or incapable. Not only does such headship rob God of the glory he intends for her to bring him, it can also rob the husband of God's help in time of need. God designed the woman in such a way that her husband can lean on her for support. But if she has been robbed of her self-confidence and cannot stand, she will be of little aid to him.

9b. In what ways might a husband depend on his wife so that both would be more complete?

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### **A Real Man**

10a. Read the following:

Husbands require the support and influence of wives. The more capable is the wife, the more strong and appropriate will be her aid. The man who understands this divine design for his own development delights to build up the woman who makes him more able to be what God wants.

10 b. Why do you think some men back off rather than encourage a wife who is capable and strong?

### **A Godly Man**

11a. Read the following:

The influence a husband's headship has on his relationships with others should remind us that there are spiritual implications for the way a man expresses his authority. These spiritual aspects of headship obviously relate to whether a man uses his authority for self or others, wrongly or rightly, cruelly or sacrificially. A husband who berates his wife and beats his children may claim biblical principles of headship support his authority. His actions, however, indicate he has denied the authority of God over his own life. Biblical headship requires a constant examination of one's actions, attitudes, and priorities to see whether they conform to Scripture.

11b. How should a man go about examining his actions, attitudes, and priorities?

12a. Read the following:

A further, and deeper, understanding of how headship affects one's relationship with God flows from reflection upon how a wife's completion of her spouse affects his heart beyond the human sphere. In a profound way a wife not only helps a husband find himself, she helps him to find the deeper dimensions of his God. This is because the intimate is closely connected to the transcendent. The ability to express and experience human affection opens the door to understanding God's love, even as knowing his love transforms our affections and homes. If you cannot share your heart with persons God has placed in your life, then it is nearly impossible to know how to have an intimate relationship with your Lord. The union of human hearts deepens

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our understanding of who God is by introducing us to the feelings, actions, and forgiveness God treasures. Thus, the headship that damages this union threatens our knowledge of God, as the headship that promotes the union further reveals him to each of the marriage partners.
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- 12b. How might a woman help her husband find himself and the deeper dimensions of God without causing him to be defensive or to retreat?

Assignment: Read Chapter 3 in *Each for the Other*.

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### God's Resources For Servant Leadership

1a. Read the following:

Saying that biblical headship exercises authority to fulfill God's redemptive purposes for both parties to a marriage, does not precisely explain what men should do. Grandiose statements about sacrificing for the good of another can lead to daily inaction when such heroics seem unneeded. (60)

1b. Why do you think the idea of sacrificing for the good of another can be frustrating to both men and women?

2a. Read the following:

The Bible offers no specific "this-is-what-you-are-to-do" instruction for husbands regarding the division of household tasks, deciding when to move for whose job, determining who drives or holds the TV remote control, etc. Yet, by uncovering the resources Scripture gives men for the carrying out of their responsibilities, we get a clear picture of what should govern a husband's daily considerations, care, and conduct. (60)

2b. Since scripture offers no specific “this-is-what-you-are-to-do” instructions, how would you direct a husband to uncover the resources Scripture gives him for carrying out his daily responsibilities?

### Self-Sacrifice

3a. Read the following:

A chief resource husbands have for enacting their headship is selflessness. When husbands daily love their wives as Christ loved the church, then sacrifice involves much more than the occasional slaying of dragons on white chargers.

A leader not only of his home but of the evangelical world is Robertson McQuilkin. In 1990, however, he resigned prematurely from the presidency of Columbia Bible College and Seminary because his wife, Muriel, afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, needed his care.

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During his last two years as President, McQuilkin wrote that it was increasingly difficult to keep Muriel at home. When she was with him she was content, but without him she became distressed and panic stricken. Though the walk from their home to the school was a mile round trip, she would often try to follow him to the office. Seeking him over and over she would sometimes make that trip ten times a day. When he took her shoes off at night, McQuilkin found her feet bloodied from all the walking. Washing such feet prepared him for what most saw as an even more Christ-like act, the sacrificing of his position to take care of her.

This is the leadership of humility; the ministry of submission; husbanding by sacrifice. To such headship God calls Christian men. (60-61)

3b. What words might describe your reaction to President McQuilkin's sacrifice?

**Leading By Godly Service**

4a. What scriptural principle should a husband follow when a wife

-hates the idea of moving to a distant town,  
-doesn't want a particular home,  
-thinks a child does not need another after school activity,  
-doesn't want a certain kind of love-making,  
-disagrees with a husband's method of disciplining children,  
-or, believes an investment is unwise

4b. How do you draw the line between asserting one's will to submitting one's prerogatives for the good of another?

4c. What is the difference between submitting one's prerogatives to the good of another and half-hearted compliance?

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Leading By Godly Nurture

5a. Read the following:

In the same way a man feeds and cares for his own body, the apostle says the husband should express his love to his wife (Eph. 5:29). The King James Version uses the words "*nourish*" (to bring to maturity) and "*cherish*" (to foster with tender care) to describe this care that is to parallel the way that Christ tends the Church.

Along with the tenderness implicit in these words also resides the concept of "causing to grow." As Christ gave himself to foster our spiritual growth, a husband is to take responsibility for fostering the spiritual growth of his wife — helping her to reach her godly potential. Through a husband's care, a wife should be allowed and encouraged to develop her gifts, talents, and traits so that they bring maximum glory to God. (62)

5b. Using the examples in 4a, give some possible ways a husband could nourish and cherish his wife and help her develop her gifts or talents.

6a. Read the following:

By his prayer life, his patience, his meditation on God's Word, his integrity, his commitment to his church, his care for his family, and his love for his wife, a husband fosters the personal and spiritual growth of his spouse. Giving himself as Christ did to setting a godly example for his family, a man leads his bride to honor God. Such giving may require much sacrifice. (62)

6b. What resources are there for a man who doesn't go to church, pray, read the Bible or meditate on God's Word?

7a. Read the following:

In the classic book, *To Understand Each Other*, Paul Tournier writes of the rift that can develop in a traditional home because the husband will not allow his wife to grow with him. Men accustomed to traditional home roles may presume that the concerns of their wives are mundane, simplistic, and without real consequence. Even if the wife is pursuing her own career, the

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husband may discover that while he discusses his job in terms of goals, concepts, and campaigns — she, on the other hand, speaks of her work from the perspective of personalities, emotional tensions, and social details.<sup>1</sup>

. . . We may still be tempted to shut our spouses out of our deepest reflections because they do not process issues as we do. Our presumption should be that the companion God gave to complete us has valuable contributions to make to our own growth so long as we do not stifle that contribution or isolate ourselves from it. (64)

7b. How could a husband encourage his wife to add her insights concerning his work?

7c. How could a husband discourage his wife from adding her insights concerning his work?

### **Leading By Godly Character**

8a. Read the following:

The example the husband sets has eternal consequences. This means headship is more a function of controlling one's character, rather than controlling one's wife. The man who is more concerned about how his wife should obey him rather than how he should obey God fails the kindergarten of biblical headship. (68)

8b. Think of some examples where a husband could control his character rather than his wife?

9a. Read the following:

With great wisdom the Bible mandates no particular style, manner, or set of behaviors that alone qualify as biblical headship. In fact, if this aspect of the believer's life holds true to other mandates for Christian character, then there are probably as many legitimate expressions of headship as there are variations of personality. Biblical headship is simply the exercise of a God-

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tournier, *To Understand Each Other* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), pp. 22-26 & 38-42.

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given authority whereby a man does all that is within his power to see that love, justice, and mercy rule in his house even where fostering such qualities requires his own personal sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> (68)

9b. What things could a man do to daily remind himself of his responsibility to see that love, justice and mercy rule in his home?

9c. Since no one is perfect, what should a man do when love, justice and mercy are not evident in his home?

Christ's Sacrifice

10a. Read the following:

Great Christian leadership always flows from meditation on the Savior's great love. (72)

10b. How do you go about meditating on the Savior's great love?

10c. What makes it possible to praise God and live sacrificially for your wife even when you don't feel like it?

10d. If you live by your mind and will do you think your emotions will follow?

Assignment: Read chapter 4 in *Each for the Other*.

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<sup>2</sup> "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).



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The Completion Of Another

1a. Read the following:

A campus minister at Vanderbilt University, recently said, "It does not matter whether the intelligent women on this campus are liberal feminists or conservative traditionalists, if you can get them to talk honestly about their deepest concerns, most will say that they constantly wonder if their personal choices are correct. Deep down they are desperate for a credible authority to help them decide what women are supposed to be."<sup>1</sup> (78)

1b. What are some possible options for a woman to turn to, in order to decide what women are supposed to be?

2a. Read the following:

So, what is a Christian wife to do? The plain answer stated in Scripture is that a Christian wife is to "submit." The Bible says, "Wives submit to your husbands as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).<sup>2</sup> However, neither mouthing ancient dogma, nor mindlessly shouting, "Submit," at modern women, nor even studying the original meaning of the biblical term (which means "to arrange under") will settle today's concerns. (78)

2b. What comes to mind when you think of the word submit?

Submission Does *Not* Mean Nothing

3a. Read the following:

God's desire for women to submit to their husbands reflects no passing or incidental concern. God considers the submission of wives extremely important. The Apostle Paul reflects the degree of God's concern by describing the duty as having eternal as well as earthly consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Hal Farnsworth, now a pastor in Athens, Georgia.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gen. 2:18-25 & 3:16; I Cor. 11:3 ff.; 14:33-36; Eph. 5:22ff.; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; Titus 2:5; I Pet. 3:1-6.

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(79)

3b. Think of some eternal as well as earthly consequences that might result from submission.

The Scope Of The Apostle's Words

A Compelling Expression

4a. Read the following:

The biblical [view of submission] does not mean that a wife should treat her husband as though he were God. . . . She renders the service the Bible requires as to God himself . . . rather than simply to another human (whose failings may make her service seem unfair and onerous). The idea is that as a woman submits to her husband, she looks over his shoulder to see the Lord who is saying, “You are ultimately doing this not for him but for me.” (79)

4b. How would you help a woman look past her husband to God himself when she is called to submit?

5a. Read the following:

. . . a wife's responsibility is not removed simply because her experience with a husband is difficult. (80)

5b. What are some things a wife could do to love, encourage and arrange her gifts under an unbelieving or undeserving husband? (80)

An Example

6a. Read the following:

A woman disobeys God when she ignores, undermines, or counters the properly expressed authority of her husband. At the same time, the apostle's example frees the wife from submission to ungodly demands since the Church's submission to Christ never includes participation in evil or yielding to what dishonors God's plan for his people. (81)

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6b. Restate the paragraph above in your own words and give an example.

**The Comprehensive Extent**

7a. Read the following:

The Bible tells husbands to "be considerate" of their wives and to treat them with "respect" — the same word used to describe how we are to honor kings.<sup>3</sup> However, even when this regard is not given, the Bible reminds wives to respect their husband's decisions so long as they do not demand disobedience to God.

7b. Make a list of ways women show disrespect and/or disobedience to their husbands.

7c. Make a list of ways women show respect and/or obedience to their husbands.

**Submission Does Mean Something**

8a. Read the following:

The original word [submission] is a combination of Greek terms that in the roughest translation would mean something like, "to arrange under."<sup>4</sup> In common usage submission conveyed ideas

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. I Pet. 2:17 & 3:7. The New Testament word for “respect” in these passages has a range of meaning determined by context as does our modern equivalent (for example children who “respect” their father and “respect” the president are not expected to hum “Hail to the Chief” each time dad enters a room). Nevertheless, the Bible makes it clear that husbands must treat their wives with the consideration due those for whom Christ gave his blood.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek word for submission is a combination of a word meaning, “to arrange,” “to put in order” or “to command,” (tasso), and the word for “under” (hupo). Standard Greek references will interpret “hupotasso” in the forms that occur in these passages as meaning “to be subject, subordinate, or submissive.” Still, we must take care to interpret all words in the Bible not merely in accord with their background meanings but in the light of their context

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of "obedience" and "subservience."

From the precise Biblical contexts in which the term is used, commentators variously interpret submission as "a disposition to yield," "voluntary yielding in love," or "not to exercise authority over."<sup>5</sup> To these technical ideas can be added the colloquial commentary that biblical submission means that "a wife should follow her husband's lead, but it does not mean that she should be her husband's shadow."<sup>6</sup> Though the specific definitions vary a little, it is apparent that submission includes actions, since it involves *obedience* (I Pet. 3:5-6 ),<sup>7</sup> and it includes attitudes, since it involves *respect* (Eph. 5:33). (85)

8b. Are these above definitions of submission familiar to you? If not, what do you think is the current spin concerning a woman's responsibility? (85)

### To Complete Another

9a. Read the following:

"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 ..." (Eph. 5:31, 32). These words remind us that marriage commits two people to a union which forms their mutual completeness even as they give of themselves to provide for the good of each other. A marriage will never fulfill God's

and biblical use. See James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 142-146.

<sup>5</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), p. 61; George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), p. 166; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), p. 125. Note this last definition is based on the parallel phrasing in I Tim. 2:11-12.

<sup>6</sup> Marion Stroud, *I Love God & My Husband* (Wheaton: Victor, 1973), p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> Virtually all commentators quickly add that submission is not an unqualified mandate to obey a spouse if such submission would require transgression of God's standards. E.g. Susan Foh, *Women and the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), pp. 184; and, Susan Hunt in *The True Woman* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1997) writes, "[W]omen are not to submit to sin. Sometimes it is very clear when that line has been crossed. Sometimes the line, or the vision of the line, is blurred. When the authority of the husband cannot be trusted, I encourage women to seek the advice, authority, and protection of the elders of her church" (p. 206).

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purposes for the couple or for the individual partners, if either abandons care for the fulfillment of the other. Thus, one dimension of a wife's responsibility involves the pouring of herself into the completion of her husband. (85)

9b. Think of some ways a woman could complete her husband without causing him to feel resentful.

10a. Read the following:

If you are dishonest with your spouse, the one God intends for you to know most intimately, you will necessarily give up aspects of spiritual development that are needed to safeguard your integrity in other areas of life. A person engaged in an extra-marital affair not only damages the oneness of the marriage, but stunts his or her own character development. Lack of consideration for one's spouse (in habits, conversation, or faithfulness) almost always creates an individual others recognize to be self-centered and ruthless. For their own advantage neighbors and co-workers may laugh at the jokes and cater to the interests of such an individual, but they know better than to trust a person who does not honor the trust of marriage. (81)

10b. Do you think the majority of people today distrust a person who does not honor the trust of marriage? Explain why or why not.

**To Honor Another**

11a. Read the following:

. . . submission (in addition to requiring the pouring of oneself into the completion of another) involves the exercising of gifts for the glory of another. . . . Husbands must never abuse their authority so that they rob their wives of "radiance" (Ephesians 5:27). At the same time wives are to submit so as not to rob their husbands of "respect" (Ephesians 5:33). (90)

11b. How might a wife rob a husband of “respect?”

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11c. How might a husband rob his wife of “radiance?”

12a. Read the following:

Biblical submission truly is an "arranging under" of one's own resources and abilities for the glory of another.<sup>8</sup> Such submission is never an abdication of responsibility for another's welfare, nor is it an abandonment of one's own gifts to fit a predetermined behavior mold. (91)

12b. Keeping in mind the relationship of your parents, what are some expectations a wife might have of her husband and visa versa?

**To Mature Another**

13a. Read the following:

The fact that a wife wants to honor her husband's leadership if possible does not mean she will sit in mute silence. Questioning his reasoning or acquainting him with his error is not evidence of a rebellious spirit, but rather of love. Refusing to support his moral folly is not sin. A Christian wife can stand with Christ against her husband with a humble, loving spirit which indicates her longing to honor his headship. The attitude is, of course, key.<sup>9</sup> (93)

13b. Describe how a wife could question her husband's reasoning or acquaint him with his error so as not to offend him.

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<sup>8</sup>This understanding fits with Piper's and Grudem's conclusion that, "Submission refers to a wife's divine calling to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990), p. 185.

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13c. How should a humble husband respond to the correction of his wife?

Assignment: Read chapter 5 in *Each for the Other*.

## **A WOMAN'S DIGNITY**

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### **The Care Of Another**

1a. Read the following:

In heaven's accounting, persons are not valued according to the level of authority they possess but according to God's infinite, equal, and unconditional love. Our purposes vary but our value does not. . . . Precisely because God has varied his design for the way individuals will carry out his purposes, each has special dignity. Eternal purposes, not earthly position, indicate why each person is of equal importance to God. (98)

1b. Explain in your own words the difference between God's value system and the current world's value system.

1c. What various places do people go in order to find value in themselves?

### **A Common Denominator**

2a. Read the following:

Everyone must sacrifice for someone . . . Each person must offer whatever gifts, rights, or authority he (or she) has in service to the good of another for the building up of Christ's kingdom . . . All Christians are to submit themselves to the good of others God has placed in their lives. Although . . . [God] clearly assigns differing purposes to husbands and wives, he just as clearly exempts no one from the Christ-like attitudes and actions required of everyone. (100)

2b. Remembering that even our good works are tainted, name some ways people sacrificed for the good of others.

2c. Read the following:



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Being equal in worth does not require our being the same in function. To conclude otherwise would ultimately require us to reason that Christ became an inferior in the Godhead when he submitted himself to the Father, or that the Spirit deserves less glory because he carries out the desires of the Son. Such reasoning is, of course, heretical. The persons of the Trinity are equally divine despite their distinctly different functions and purposes. By his Trinitarian nature our God has made it abundantly clear that equal value does not require identical roles.

- 2d. The world cynically teaches that "nice guys finish last." But God gives dignity to the one who sacrifices. Give an example of both.
- 2e. How does awareness of the differing functions within the Trinity help in understanding the different functions of a wife who still has equal value with her husband?

### **The Glory Of A Christian Wife**

- 3a. Read the following:

The dignity of a Christian wife shows not only in the sacrificial calling that she shares with all God's people but also in the glory of the purpose God grants her. (105)

- 3b. Explain how a wife could be sacrificial in her calling and also show forth the glory of the purpose God grants her.

- 3c. Read the following:

When estimations of personal worth get linked to personal success or superior position, then one's dignity exists simply in comparison to the position of others . . . A subtle, yet spiritually debilitating, change occurs in a woman when her dignity is measured by wealth, number of children, size of house, personal accomplishments, or a husband's prestige. Such measures turn a woman's attention from God's purposes to herself. The shift of focus deprives women of true dignity. (106)

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3d. Can you think of any stimulating conversations you have had in which someone alluded to something other than personal success or a superior position as a measure of one's worth?

3e. How do women allow themselves to be robbed of their dignity?

3f. Read the following:

Feminism is no longer a battle for equal opportunity in a male-dominated society, but a kind of 12-step recovery program for wounded women . . . "There is an endless appetite for self-help books . . ." They do not offer women still struggling in an unfair world any clarion call to arms. Instead they urge women to redefine their inner lives.

3g. From what sources do you hear women urged to redefine their inner lives?

**The Church's Affirmation**

4a. Read the following:

Because we have trouble remembering that submission is an arranging of one's gifts under the purposes of God and is a disposition to yield to authority rather than a universal code of behaviors, we create tensions that needlessly deny women the opportunities to serve God. We damage our own wives and daughters as a result. (108)

4b. How can the church body encourage women variously to arrange their gifts under the purposes of God?

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The Husband's Affirmation

5a. Read the following:

A Christian women said to me recently, "I understand why so many women struggle with what the Bible says about submission but I have never struggled with submitting to my husband because he lets me know how much he respects me." That husband's life is what Scripture requires men to live. (108)

5b. Do you think the perfect couple described above never has conflict regarding his respect and her submission?

5c. What helps are there for couples whose behavior doesn't always measure up to their belief?

Assignment: Read chapter 6 in *Each for the Other*.

## **A WOMAN’S DESIRE**

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### **The Honor Of Another**

1a. Read the following:

When a woman nourishes, nurtures, and affirms her spouse, her love for him deepens. . . . The Bible instructs that a wife search for the affection that deepens biblical love, not in the attributes of her husband but in the desires of her heart ( I Peter 3:1-6). (113-114)

1b. What are some ways a woman could nurture, nourish and affirm her spouse?

### **To Respect Her Husband**

2a. Read the following:

As the apostle Paul concludes comments on marriage in the Book of Ephesians, he reminds men to “love” their wives, but he tells women to “respect” their husbands (6:33). Here the apostle seems to be dealing with each gender at the weak points of our relational tendencies. Often a man's great temptation is to use the power of his position and physique to enforce dictatorial rule or to indulge passive self-absorption. A woman's parallel temptation is often to use the power of words and emotions to diminish a husband so that she has control. (114)

2b. How does a woman’s attempt at power-plays differ from a man’s?

2c. What is the difference between respect and love?

2d. What are some ways women can get things accomplished without seizing control?  
(See page 117, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph for answers.)

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2e. How do the godly methods of seduction available to every wife differ from the current culture's view of seduction?

2f. Read the following:

Power may be expressed through intimidation or manipulation. Control measures may take the form of screaming or scheming, silence or secrecy, whining or withdrawal, violence or victimization. Whether the means are active or passive, the goal of each of these behaviors remains the same - keeping the other person under control. (115)

2g. Give examples from films, books or real life where you have seen these control measures in action. Were they passive or active? Was control achieved in a positive way?

### For Her Sake

3a. Read the following:

The firmer the ground of his wife's respect, the more able the husband is to react with proper strength or tenderness to the challenges at hand. When he is less sure of his wife's regard, he is more likely to seek security in other things or persons. The respect a wife shows her husband secures her marriage in ways more powerful than most women (or men) fully comprehend. (120)

3b. Do you agree with the above statement? Why or why not?

### To Reverence Her Husband

4a. Read the following:

"... the wife must **respect** her husband" (Eph. 5:33). The word translated "respect" actually comes from the same term the apostle Paul used a few sentences earlier to say we must

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"reverence" Christ (Eph. 5:21). The apostle uses this word to communicate godly fear or holy awe. (121)

- 4b. We can easily make sense of the word **reverence** when it refers to Christ. We understand how and why we are to honor our Savior. But why would Paul say a wife should **reverence** her husband?

### The Reasons For Reverence

- 5a. Read the following:

Every husband is accountable to God for the spiritual guidance he gives his family. The holiness and gravity of a husband's obligations are so awesome that they require honor, even though he carries them out imperfectly. (122)

- 5b. How can a woman encourage her husband to be the spiritual leader?

### The Resources For Reverence

- 6a. Read the following:

The reverence you have for your husband should find its source not in who he is, nor in what he does, nor in how deserving he is. The attitude to which God calls you is rooted in your relationship with the Savior. Thus the honor you show your husband should come from the desire you have to please God. (122)

- 6b. What are some things a woman could do to kindle her relationship with God so that she could better reverence her husband?

- 6c. Read the following:

God requires a wife to honor her husband, not because of the goodness he possesses but because of the grace he needs. (122)

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6d. How do you define grace?

6e. What is the source of grace?

6f. Read the following:

Just as a husband’s qualities do not ultimately kindle his wife’s respect or reverence, neither should his faults quench them. This does not mean that a wife should approve of her husband’s errors or participate in his ungodliness. She should, however, recognize that in service to her Savior, she is a conduit of grace to her spouse as long as God binds her to him. A husband experiences God’s unmerited favor through the undeserved honor a wife gives him personally, regardless of his frailties and failures. Respecting the characteristics of a spouse that can be honored, forgiving the flaws that cannot be honored, and caring for the man regardless of his dishonor - all these attitudes in some measure bless the man, but in greater measure they reverence God (see I Peter 3:9). (123)

6g. Have you ever experienced joy from putting the above principles into practice? Try to explain.

Assignment: Read chapter 7 in *Each for the Other*.

## **EACH FOR THE OTHER AS PARENTS**

“Home: where each lives for the other and all live for God.”

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### Each for the Other as Parents

- 1a. Have either the leader or participants read the following out loud:

This is the essence of biblical parenting: not acquiescing to children’s demands but seeking to provide for their need to live as God requires. Sometimes this parental service is pleasant and other times painful but it is always characterized by the selfless application of one’s resources, insights, and energies to help a child grow in the knowledge and likeness of Christ. All aspects of biblical parenting - including training, encouragement, and discipline - seek to serve these spiritual interests of the child rather than the convenience, preference, or interests of the parent. (130)

- 1b. In contrast to the above, think of some cliches such as “children should be seen and not heard” regarding children.

- 1c. Read the following:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” - which is the first commandment with a promise - “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Eph. 6:1-4 (131)

- 1d. How do you go about training a child to honor his parents?

### A Love Relationship With The Lord - The First Building Block

- 2a. Read the following:

. . . the Lord expects biblical parenting to occur in a church context. We can learn much about parenting from those in the church. . . .

The formal relationship one has with a church should be indicative of one’s personal relationship with God. This means that a deep, personal relationship with the Lord is the most basic building



## EACH FOR THE OTHER AS PARENTS

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block of Christian parenting. A Christian parent’s first priority and most important duty is to love Jesus. (132)

2b. What are some practical ways the church can help parents?

2c. Why is loving Jesus the highest priority of parenting?

### Our Heavenly Model

3a. Read the following:

We tend to become our parents. For good or ill, parental models significantly shape us. Abusers raise abusers, alcoholics raise alcoholics, well-adjusted parents raise well-adjusted children. Of course there is comfort in this equation only if you are on the positive side. Fear and despair press in, however, if you recognize your own parents’ modeling was inadequate or horrid. How can we hope to raise our children well if our own models are broken? The words of the apostle rescue **Christian** parents raised in deprived situations from hopelessness by reminding them that they are on the positive side of the child-development equation. (133)

3b. Think of some positive parental modeling that you would like to imitate.

3c. Read the following:

The reality of the heavenly Father’s love can be more real, more powerful, more motivating than biology and learned behavior. For this reason an intimate relationship with him does more to establish what we will be as parents than any other single factor in our existence or background. The realization that ***the Father we perceive our God to be largely shapes the parent we are able to be*** challenges us to make sure that our understanding of, and consequent relationship with, our God is biblical. (133)

3d. What steps can be taken to make sure our understanding of and consequent relationship

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with God is Biblical?

3e. Read the following:

Of course these are not gender-specific traits. There are plenty of fathers who will not discipline for fear of a child’s rejection and many mothers who serve their own egos through managing the performance of their children. My point is not that both mothers and fathers have flaws but that insecurity can affect the behavior of us all. If we are more concerned about how people outside the family view us, we tend to overreact in discipline. If we are more concerned about how those within the family view us, we tend to underreact in discipline. (134)

3f. What are some things people say or do to cause us to over or underreact in discipline?

**A Love Relationship With A Spouse - The Second Building Block**

4a. Read the following:

What, after all, is the ultimate goal of the submission of a wife to her husband’s authority and the sacrifice of the husband’s prerogatives to the needs of his wife? The ultimate aim is to bring the reality of Christ’s love into the marriage.

Expressions of love for one another in the home are a direct path to understanding God’s love for each of us. As a result, it is important to resurrect the time-tested and biblically corroborated truth that the greatest earthly gift you can give your child is a loving relationship with your spouse. (136)

4b. Do you agree or disagree with the above statement? Explain why.

**Giving Comfort**

5a. Read the following:

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The grace that a Christian heart embraces and that a Christian’s marriage should foster allows Christian parents the privilege to fail, to seek forgiveness, and to try again. The Father’s unconditional, eternal love erases the dread that a momentary lapse or a mistake in judgment will ruin our children or destroy our own relationship with him. This grace of God frees Christians to parent without second-guessing every act of discipline or feeling the need to deny past errors. (138)

- 5b. Can you think of a time when relationships in your family were sweeter than ever as a result of getting and receiving forgiveness?

### **The Responsibilities Of The Child - The Third Building Block**

#### **Submission Is Right**

- 6a. Read the following:

Of course there are moments when our circumstances, or our children’s situations, will require discretion regarding the timing and degree of our disciplinary measures. Still, we cannot make dismissal of discipline a pattern. If we think we love our children too much to require them to do what is right, then we have not really loved them enough. (140)

- 6b. Think of some circumstances that might require discretion and timing of disciplinary measures. Discuss potential ways to handle the situations.

#### **Submission Is Good**

- 7a. Read the following:

Not only does an undisciplined child inherit a parent’s frustration, he also reaps the disapproval of teachers, neighbors, other parents, friends, future employers, and ultimately his own heart. A child who consistently sees his reflection in the frown of the world can view himself only as despised. This is why the Book of Proverbs says that parents who will not discipline, hate their child (13:24). Such parenting subjects a child to a lifetime of misery - a fate we typically desire only for our enemies. (141)

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- 7b. Since what works for one child may not work for another, make a list of as many types of discipline as you can think of.

### **The Responsibilities Of The Parent - The Fourth Building Block**

- 8a. Read the following:

Because the Bible holds the spiritual head of the home accountable for the nurture of children, the task has obvious spiritual priority. While a man may need to delegate child rearing responsibilities, he cannot turn over all child rearing decisions and activities to another. A father remains biblically responsible for the nurture of his children. (143)

- 8b. What are some ways a father who works away from the home all day or who travels a lot can nurture his children?

### **What Parents Should Do - The Sixth Building Block**

- 9a. Read the following:

This means we parents should constantly examine whether our words, our manner, our correction, and our home environment nurture an understanding of the Lord. This requires more than the application of a specific technique of discipline or setting a curfew in accord with the standards of the latest parenting seminar. (150)

- 9b. What are some things you would expect to see in a home that nurtures an understanding of the Lord?

### **Parenting By Grace**

- 10a. Read the following:

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We (parents) are not all called to die for our children, but we die to self each time - for our children's sake - we hold our tongues, control our anger, endure being misunderstood, take time for a ball game, absorb an insult, ignore an embarrassment, turn down a promotion requiring more time away, love patiently, discipline consistently, and forgive always. By the ways we love God and each other, by the ways we model the Lord and mold our children's perception of him, by the way we raise them in the patterns of his love, and by the way we constantly seek his direction - in all of these ways we give ourselves so that our children may understand their Savior's love for them. In doing so, we discern the love we require as well as the love we must give. By lifting our children to the Savior, we become like him and thus discover in a parent's heart another means to measure and to marvel at the love of the Savior who lifts us to heaven by his sacrifice. (151)

- 10b. There are many inspiring thoughts in the above passage. Choose one that you would like to remember and practice, and share it with the group.

Assignment: Read chapter 8 in *Each for the Other*

## **EACH FOR THE OTHER IN SOCIETY**

“Home: where each lives for the other and all live for God.”

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### Each For The Other In Society

1a. Read the following:

. . . the Bible reminds us in an almost startling fashion that home life and outside life are intertwined. Each affects the other because both influence the character of the heart that must operate in all spheres of life. (155-156)

1b. What do you think is involved in living for the other outside the home? What does God require of you?

### Duties To Others/Higher Duty

2a. Read the following:

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men” (I Peter 2:13-14).

If Christians are ever tempted to dismiss Peter’s words with the explanation, “That old apostle just does not understand the kinds of people who are in authority in our culture,” then it is time for the reminder that the highest human authority when Peter wrote was Nero, the Roman ruler who fed Christians to lions.

Peter captures the reason for obedient regard for authorities when he says, “Submit yourselves *for the Lord’s sake* to every authority instituted among men” (v. 13, italics added). Our submission is for the sake of the Lord and not for the petty interests of earthly rulers. So long as the government maintains general order in society and does not require Christians to disobey God, then the truths about Jesus can spread through ordinary human relationships. Without order, this higher purpose of God and his people usually fails. (156-157)

2b. Can you think of some times in history when the gospel spread especially rapidly in spite of corrupt ruler?

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2c. Read the following:

Peter further specifies the nature of Christian conduct in society by saying that we must *silence foolishness with righteousness* as part of our submission to authorities. The apostle says we must submit to governing authorities, “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men” (v. 15). Peter wanted the exemplary conduct of believers to short-circuit rumors and accusations that Christians were troublesome zealots who could not function in Roman society because they would only honor their God. Nero, the ruler in Peter’s day, displayed this foolish thinking when he blamed the burning of Rome on Christians - and he opened the door to the barbarous persecution of Christians as a result. (158)

2d. Do you think Christians are highly regarded or not in our current culture?

2e. Read the following:

One of the most difficult tasks Christians in a democratic society face is boldly advocating God’s purposes without abandoning God’s principles. The gospel powerfully progresses when we speak truth in love, rather than matching insult for insult, and hate for hate (Eph. 4:15; I Peter 3:9). God calls us to such courageous compassion for the sake of Christ’s purposes in our society and in our own hearts. By giving proper respect to everyone in society, we solidify the attitudes that give Christian foundation to our marriages, families, churches, and wider relationships. (161)

2f. How can you convey respect for someone in authority who - like Nero - is undeserving of the honor?

**Wider Duty**

3a. Read the following:

Not only does the apostle say that we must show respect to distant governing authorities, he expands our obligations to include the daily authorities of our lives - those for whom we work (I Peter 2:18).

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As citizens we are to live with integrity even when ruled by ungodly leaders. And as servants and employees we are to *live with Christ-likeness* even when we are abused. “To this [suffering for good] you were called, says Peter, “because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (v. 21).

When we have been treated horribly by one who has control of our livelihoods, no task seems more difficult than responding with Christ-like attitudes and actions to our oppressor. ((161-163)

- 3b. Do you know of anyone who has responded with a Christ-like attitude while being treated unfairly?

**Deeper Duty**

- 4a. Read the following:

The Bible indicates how integrally related all our relationships are. We cannot divide our hearts in two, hoping that one part will serve in society and another will function separately in the home. Every place God calls us to serve helps form the character of our hearts and affects the way they will function in every other place. A heart that truly beats for others in society is the one most ready to live for others in the home. The heart that has learned sacrifice in the home is the one inclined to selflessness in the world. (165)

- 4b. Name some places where you serve. How does the way you function in one place affect the way you function in another place?

- 4c. Read the following:

By indicating that our obligations to God extend from government to the workplace to our families, the Bible has effectively said that our Christian responsibilities apply to the entire spectrum of human relationships. Further, because those closest to us can hurt us the most deeply, the Bible has indicated that these obligations remain no matter how difficult their



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application. Living for another does not cease to be an obligation because that one has ceased living for you. (165)

- 4d. What words of encouragement might you give to someone who has been hurt in a relationship?

**Duties To God**

- 4a. Read the following:

The reasons Christians sacrifice for others in home and society ultimately reside in the God we serve, not in the character of the people with whom we deal. With each obligation to serve people, the apostle lists a corresponding divine motive. In dealing with governing authorities Peter says that we must submit for the Lord’s sake” (I Peter 2:13), resist foolishness by doing “God’s will” (v.15), live with integrity “as servants of God” (v. 16), and “fear God” while loving and honoring others (v. 17). (166)

- 4b. What habits could you develop to help you focus on God’s provision and power instead of the character of the people with whom you deal?

**Kept From Dancing**

- 5a. Read the following:

When I write that our accountability to God keeps us from dancing, I am not speaking of the tango or the two-step. I refer to “the ol’ Christian side step,” the assumption that because someone else is not living up to his or her obligations, we can dispense with ours. Under such assumptions Christians reason, *Of course, it is proper to submit to governing authorities, unless they happen to be like our governing authorities.* Similar reasoning in the workplace asserts, *Of course, we should submit to employers, unless they have dealt with me unfairly, embarrassed me, or not given me my due.* In the home this rationale becomes, *Of course, I should live sacrificially for my spouse, unless he (or she) has treated me unkindly or made me feel small.* Each of these statements sidesteps the standards of Scripture on the basis that others’ faults have removed our obligations. (167)

- 5b. Do you think “the ol’ Christian side step” attitude is true of just Christians or of every tribe

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and tongue on earth?

5c. Read the following:

The requirements of a holy God press from us the hope that by our own strength we could meet the requirements of heaven or claim its blessings. This is not a hopelessness Christians ultimately regret, for only when we have fully faced the inadequacies of our own spiritual resources do we long for the saving grace of God. (168)

5d. Do you think Christians are generally regarded as people who think they have it together or as people who have fully faced the inadequacy of their own spiritual resources? Explain why.

**Obligations Fulfilled**

6a. Read the following:

Jesus has already met for us the standards we cannot meet. In describing Christ's sacrificial ministry, Peter carefully reflects the perfection of the Savior's service in each dimension of our human obligation. Jesus, King of all creation, *submitted to the rule and the cruelty of human authorities* when he “suffered for you” at the hands of Jewish and Roman officials (I Peter 2:21). He *endured foolish accusation and profound injustice* when he neither retaliated nor threatened those who “hurled their insults at him” (v. 23). Though faced with this monstrous unfairness, he *maintained a testimony of integrity* before God and man: “He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth” (v. 22). Jesus performed each of these obligations *motivated by love*: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (v. 24). Although he had done no wrong, Jesus fulfilled every righteous standard that we find ourselves incapable of keeping. Though we are undeserving of his care, he remains faithful to us for our sakes. (169)

6b. Remembering that we can't always muster up the righteous attitude, how should the sacrificial work of Jesus affect our:

a. mind

b. emotions

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c. will

Penalty Accepted

7a. Read the following:

A close examination of our relationships will indicate that we all stand before God guilty of failure to live as he requires - whether by willful transgression or personal weakness. A holy God cannot ignore these faults. Our inability to meet our human and divine obligations results in separation from God because his approval of (or union with) what is sinful, unloving, or unholy would mean that he could not retain his own holiness. (171)

7b. Drawing upon the above paragraph, explain in your own words why humans are separated from God.

7c. Read the following:

God himself grieves because of this separation and has released his people from its pain by putting the death penalty for our sin on his own Son. The very obedience by which Jesus fulfilled our righteous obligations uniquely qualified him to assume this penalty. Since “he committed no sin,” he was in no debt to God. His righteousness had no limit and thus was of infinite worth. As a result, Jesus’ sacrifice perfectly balances the heavenly books and cancels the penalty for all who ask God to account Christ’s righteousness on their behalf. By God’s decree, Christ accepts this penalty and sets us free from the consequences of our own sin (I Peter 2:24; Isa. 53:10). (171)

7d. Drawing upon the above paragraph, explain in your own words how God solved the dilemma of man’s separation from God.

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7e. Read the following:

Peter cites the ways Jesus paid our penalty when his own righteousness released him from any obligation to suffer for sin. The apostle calls Christians to selfless sacrifice on the basis of Christ’s example. “You should follow in his steps,” says Peter (I Peter 2:21). The words reveal an often-overlooked aspect of Christ’s suffering. We can only follow in the steps of one who walked this earth. Peter’s call reminds us that the King of the universe came to be born in disreputable circumstances, to live in an impoverished condition, to endure humiliating bondage to human laws, and to suffer a despicable death. (171)

7f. According to the above paragraph, what sacrifices did Jesus make on our behalf?

7g. Read the following:

This is the greatest truth of the Christian faith. We are saved from the consequences of our sin by the sacrifice of Jesus. We need not pretend that we have been good enough to merit the eternal blessing of a holy God. We do not have to hide our eyes from our own errors and hope God does not notice. In the death of his Son, our God reveals to us the seriousness of our wrong and by that same sacrifice, he tells us how special we are to him. (173)

7h. From what consequences of sin are we saved and from what consequences are we not saved?

7i. Read the following:

By his perfect righteousness, Jesus became the perfect payment for the penalty our worst sins deserve. As we approach God, *not* on the basis of our wholly inadequate satisfaction of his requirements but on the basis of Christ’s perfect fulfillment of our obligations, God accepts us as readily and completely as he does his own Son. We stand before him freed from all guilt because Jesus paid the debt we were unable to pay. (173)

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7j. Can you think of some ways people who don’t know Christ try to get free of guilt?

New Position

8a. Read the following:

When each lives for the other, we not only share with another the love God has for that person, we also discover more of the love God has for us. In the position of care God secures for us, he protects us further by giving instructions that keep us in the safety of his paths and directions. Thus by serving as our Savior (who gave himself for us) and as our Lord (who gives direction to us), Jesus protects Christians from the penalty of their past errors and directs them away from further errors. (175)

8b. According to the above paragraph, explain a believer’s new position in Christ.

8c. Read the following:

The way that Jesus shields us from our wrong helps us determine what the Bible describes as Christ’s work of atonement . . . Under the cover provided at the cost of his blood, we are shielded from the guilt of our sin and sheltered from its penalty. This cover enables us to live eternally in the warmth of the heavenly Father’s love. Further, our experience and expression of that sacrificial love serve as invitations to others to share in the same. God designs the selfless love of a husband and wife to radiate outward - touching family members, church associations, societal relationships, and, ultimately, eternal souls. The God who gave himself for us now lets us participate in his plan to reach others with the message that his care will cover them forever. No biblical truth is more precious or compelling. (175)

8d. The above paragraph describes how Jesus covers over our sin. The Bible sometimes describes this as Jesus’ work of atonement. As you read aloud the paragraph above, underline the benefits and obligations that we derive from Jesus’ atonement.

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Under The Cover

9a. Read the following:

I hope you, my reader, will not consider me disrespectful for suggesting it is with echoes of this love that your heavenly parent now summons you into his care. Whether you have never known the shield God provides from your guilt or have wandered by your own tendencies from the shelter he provides, he beckons you under the cover made by his Son's atonement. Here lies the warmth of the eternal Father and rest for your soul. By turning from confidence in your righteousness and trusting in his provision alone, you too may come under the cover of his love.

9b. What does the paragraph above inspire you to want to do?

Assignment: Read chapter 9 in *Each for the Other*

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### Each For The Other Forever

1a. Read the following:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. I John 3:16-18 (178)

1b. Do you think love is best demonstrated by words or actions?

### The Problem With Words

2a. Read the following:

Words can also have different meanings for different people in their marriage commitments. For some “forever” means for a real long time. For others “till death does us part” means until our affections die. For some the promise to stay united “in sickness and in health” means as long as you don’t make me too miserable for too long and the problems we face are not your fault . . . Words alone simply cannot bear love’s weight over time. What we say to each other, or even what we say to ourselves about our feelings for each other, cannot guarantee a love that will last. (179-180)

2b. Think of some others words and phrases people say but don’t really mean indicating that words alone cannot guarantee a love that will last.

### The Need For Actions

3a. Read the following:

The Bible defines love by sacrifice. The preeminent example the apostle offers is that of Jesus who willingly gave up his glory and privileges to suffer on the cross for your good and mine. John goes on to say that “we ought to lay down our lives” for each other (v. 16) and he offers the

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concrete example of sharing our material possessions with those in need as embodying this type of love (v. 17). (180)

3b. What are some things you should do or not do to apply the above truth to a marriage?

**The Truths That Count**

4a. Read the following:

. . . [W]ords about forgiveness are important for they remind us that all these instructions *sound* easy until we disappoint, frustrate, or sin against each other - then loving actions become enormous challenges. Not only do we have trouble forgiving, but the very fact that we find this divine imperative a struggle reveals the spiritual weakness in each heart. That is why the apostle John tells us to love “in truth” as well as in deed. That “truth” involves more than dealing with one another in integrity. Each of us must also face a vital truth about ourselves: We are far less capable of selfless love than we dare to confess.

To care for another more than we do for ourselves runs counter to our nature. Personal satisfaction, control, and advancement dominate our thoughts and pursuits. Even our care for one another cannot rid itself of the motives of recompense and recognition. If you do not believe this, then simply remember the rage that filled your heart the last time you went the extra mile for a spouse or a child and no one said thank you. (181-182)

4b. Do you find the words in the above paragraph to be encouraging or discouraging? Why?

4c. Read the following:

The Bible tells us about the sacrifice of Jesus, not merely to give us an example to mimic but to remind us of our guilt that he must cover. Yet in this reminder there is more than the exposure of truth about us; there is also the revelation of a God who is *for* us. In the sacrifice of his Son, our God reveals his selfless desire to bless his children. Our God gains nothing in the deal of providing his Son to take the penalty for our guilt. His love is more selfless than that of a mother nursing her baby. She gives of herself to the child, who can do nothing for her. Our God has given his own life for us, even though we are as helpless as infants to benefit him. (182)



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4d. According to the above paragraph, why did Christ die for us? How does his sacrificial death make you feel?

4e. Read the following:

Full understanding of our Lord’s selflessness ultimately engenders in us those attributes lacking in our own love that will make it last. First, as we humbly contemplate the forgiveness that God freely gives us, we discover how hypocritical it is to receive undeserved pardon and, then, not offer it (see Matt. 18:21-35). Then, in recognition of our own need for forgiveness, we discover the willingness to forgive that heals and seals our relationships. This is why love has a chance despite the inescapable truth of personal selfishness that we each must confess. (182-183)

4f. According to the above paragraph, what is our motivation to forgive those who have wronged you?

**A Third Party**

5a. Read the following:

If we have given our lives to the purpose of reflecting God’s character and commitments, then in our marriage vows we promise God that we will live for the other person. God does not make his love conditional on the way we feel about him, or on how we treat him, or on whether we have failed him. Thus neither the cooling of our affections for another, nor the heat of stress with that person excuses us from our marriage commitments. We live for another because we have committed ourselves to living for the God who requires it. We love another because we promised the God we love that we would. (185)

5b. Do you think the parents and children in most families would give their lives to the purpose of reflecting God’s character and commitment? Explain.

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5c. Read the following:

Because the actions that keep a Christian couple united are linked to their eternal commitments to God, their marriage becomes a haven for the constant renewal of love rather than a trap to escape when an initial ardor dies. The man and woman need not be constantly questioning if either will say or do something that destroys their relationship; rather they proceed to live with freedom and boldness in the knowledge that their mutual commitment to God has secured their home more surely than their affections ever could. Yet, curiously, it is this very security that gives their affections the greatest potential to deepen. Committing to love another person beyond his or her weaknesses, to work on a relationship despite difficulties and differences, and to live for the other because that's what God requires, gives love the richest soil possible in which to flourish. (185-186)

5d. Put the thoughts in the above paragraph in your own words so that you can verbalize them to young people who are afraid to make a commitment.

5e. Read the following:

Consider that no matter how happy your marriage is now, this may only be the beginning of the joy that you can know as you entrust your lives to the Lord. He will use your shared love for him to increase your love for each other. And in marriages where love for God is not shared, God can still use your love for your spouse to deepen your appreciation of God's unconditional care for you, to teach your spouse the nature of God's care through you, and even to stimulate in your spouse renewed love for God and you (see I Peter 3:1-2). (187)

5f. Put in your own words the two encouraging thoughts in the above paragraph.

5g. Read the following:

Such sacrificial love is not secured by words that we mouth nor even by actions that we initiate under some romantic impulse to make another (or ourselves) feel good. The love that is truly secure stems from hearts united with God. Because words can ring hollow and actions can spring from motives hidden even to the one who acts, only our hearts' commitments to Christ will turn our words and actions into the marriage we most desire. Our spiritual commitments -

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what is deepest in our hearts rather than the outward expressions of words or deeds - ultimately will secure what is dearest in our lives.
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- 5h. Do you think the above paragraph could be true even if you don't feel like your heart is always united to God? What will make these words true for you?