

“Marriage” – 1-2

XXXII. - XXIII. Texts that Transform

Ephesians 5:22-33

Preliminary Considerations

My senior year at the University of Southern California I arranged for the Rev. Mark Neuenschwander to teach the very popular “Row Bible Study” of which, by default, I had become the caretaker. At the time he was the college minister for the historic Church of the Open Door in downtown Los Angeles. I handled arranging locations for the study – it moved from the public rooms of one sorority house after another – and publicity. Anticipation built as the fall semester of 1976 began and Mark arrived with his first of a series of lessons for the academic year.

His subject? Marriage and family, anchored in Ephesians 5:22-23. I was surprised and maybe a bit apprehensive of his choice. What did marriage have to do with a bunch of college students? As it turned out, everything. Out of that group of around 200 participants came multiple marriages of lasting duration. My best friends paired off and bucking the trends, married while still in college or right out of college. Christian homes were established and a host of children had the benefit of being reared by deeply committed Christian parents as a direct result of those studies.

What Mark did was cast a vision for Christian marriage and family. No small part of that vision was the role played by his wife, Sharon, who accompanied him every week. Sharon, like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Esther, was “very attractive in appearance” (Gen 12:11; 24:16; 29:17; Esther 2:7). More importantly, she was beautiful on the inside, a devout, compassionate, godly young woman, only a few years older than the students and a wonderful compliment to Mark’s ministry. Several months into the study Mark and Sharon adopted a 3-year-old little boy whom they brought to the Bible study each week. Their affection for him and his affection for them completed the visual portrayal of the lessons he was teaching from Ephesians 5. It was for me another of several self-evidencing moments, a blending of Bible and experience that inspired a new vision of life. “That’s *it*,” one responds on such occasions, or even “of course.” One sees what one hadn’t seen, but suspected. That Bible study combined the right man, the right lessons, the right students, at the right time.

Goodness of marriage

I was among those deeply impacted. From that point on I longed with “divine discontent” (more on this in a moment) to marry and to rear a Christian family. Up to that point I had rarely thought about marriage at all. If I did think of it, I considered it a burden to endure, not a condition to seek. Thereafter, I saw with increasingly experiential clarity that “it is not good that the man dwell alone” (Gen 2:18). The divine solution to Adam’s isolation was marriage. God instituted marriage for “the happiness and welfare of mankind,” as the old wedding service says. All throughout my four seminary years I longed to be married. Christmas break my first year in England as a theology student, I spent a week alone viewing the sites in London, wishing I had a wife with whom to share the experience. I envied the married students who went home to their

wives while each evening I went back to the sterile environment of the men's dormitory.

Likewise, in succeeding years as an intern and assistant minister, I hated coming home in the evenings to an empty house with its bare walls. I longed to have someone with whom to share life.

Foundational contentment

It is true that one can be happy as a single person. Christians can be content in whatever circumstances they find themselves (Phil 4:11-13). Indeed, it is vital that one enter marriage with a foundation of contentedness in Christ. Jesus is the Bread of Life who alone can satisfy the hunger and quench the thirst of the soul (Jn 6:35). If one thinks that one cannot be happy as a single person, or worse, that one's happiness in life depends on marrying *that* person, one places a burden on the marriage and him or her that they cannot bear. The expectation that any created thing, including marriage and my future spouse, are the key to my happiness, will lead inevitably to disillusionment and relational troubles. That expectation may even result in the dissolving of the marital bond in the quest to find that perfect match that one missed the first time around. Jesus says that if we wish to quench the thirst of our souls, we must come to Him and drink (Jn 7:37, 38). The worst condition in which to enter marriage is as a weak, needy, clingy partner for one's spouse, demanding that he/she satisfy me, fulfill me, make me happy, and in the process sucking the life out of him/her. Disappointment is inevitable. A destructive restlessness resides in those who lack a foundational contentment in Christ. It is vital that one marry fundamentally contented with singleness.

Singleness?

Still, *permanent* singleness seems to be an exception that requires a gift. Jesus says that some “have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God.” Yet this condition is “only (for) those to whom it is given” (Mt 19:11, 12). Similarly, the Apostle Paul describes his single state as a “gift from God” that not all share (1 Cor 7:7). He commends the advantages of singleness, stressing the freedom from the troubles of married life it provides:

³² I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. ³³ But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴ and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. ³⁵ I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. (1 Cor 7:32-35)

“Undivided devotion” is a good thing. The single person has this advantage. One thinks of the ministries in recent times of John Stott (1921-2011) and William Still (1911-1997), single men who were able to devote themselves full-time to the ministry because they were not “anxious about worldly things, how to please (a) wife.” Yet “undivided devotion” only is possible for those gifted for singleness, while the rest are likely to be distracted by loneliness and lust. Hence the Apostles’ instruction: “It is better to marry than to burn with passion” (1 Cor 7:9).

Divine discontent

While foundational contentment is vital, there is a *divine discontent* that motivates us to marry. So I longed to marry. I longed for a partner with whom to share life and rear a family, the major task we are placed on earth to do. Years ago I was called to a home in which the father of one of our members had just died. Her parents had been married for 64 years! Yet her weeping mother finally said, “I just want to see him come around the corner *one more time*.” Sixty-four years were not enough. That is the beauty of Christian marriage.

I came to aspire not just to have a family, but a *large* Christian family. It became clear to me that to a considerable extent this was what life was all about. We are to be “fruitful and multiply” and rear children to the glory of God (Gen 1:28). The “fruit of the womb” is God’s reward. A “full quiver” is a blessing (Ps 127:3-5). As God would have it, I would have to wait a decade, not only because my future wife was only ten at the time (I was 21), but frankly because I lacked the maturity to husband a wife properly. There was much selfishness to purge and foolishness to correct before I would be ready to marry and assume responsibility for a wife and a family. Yet when I proposed to Emily, I did so by taping her engagement ring to a Bible precisely at Genesis 1:28.

The genius of our college study of Ephesians 5 quickly became obvious. The lessons on marriage and family were not merely about marriage and family. The Apostle’s teaching about the roles of husbands and wives is deeply rooted in the gospel itself: wives are to be subject to their husbands

as the church is to Christ (5:22-24); and husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church (5:25-33). Simultaneously, we got gospel lessons and marriage lessons which made both all the more powerful and compelling.

Importance

How important is it that we understand the principles, the structure, the ethos of Christian marriage? It is beyond crucial and not merely for our personal well-being. Christian marriage is the foundation of the Christian home. That should be obvious. A good, solid, devout Christian home is only possible in the context of a good, solid devout Christian marriage. Beyond this, the Christian home, and the family more generally, is also the foundation of the church, the school, and the nation. Precious generations understood this well. I have collected in another place the statements of the older theologians such as the English Puritans Thomas Manton (1620-1677), Richard Baxter (1615-1691), George Swinnock (1627-1673), Matthew Henry (1662-1714), the Americans Cotton Mather (1663-1728), and Samuel Davies (1723-1791), all affirming the foundational role of the family.¹ If the family fails in its duties, the church, the school, and the nation will all suffer irreparable damage. Rarely will the church overcome the failures of parents to rear their children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Rarely will the

¹ These can be found in Manton, “Epistle to the Reader,” in *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Publications, 1994), 9; Richard Baxter, “A Christian Directory,” *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, Volumes 1-4 (1654-5, 1673; Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 19th century reprint, 1990), I:425-426; George Swinnock, “A Christian Man’s Calling,” *The Works of George Swinnock*, Vol. 1 (1808; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), I:330; Matthew Henry, “A Church in the House,” *The Complete Works of Matthew Henry: Treatises, Sermons, and Tracts*, Volumes I-II (1855; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), I:262; Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 73; Samuel Davies, “The Necessity and Excellency of Family Religion,” in Don Kistler (ed.), *The Godly Family: A Series of Essays on the Duties of Parents and Children* (Pittsburgh: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993), 2; Ryken cites similar sentiments from James Fitch (1662-1702) and William Gouge (*Worldly Saints*, 73).

school be able to overcome the failings of a home in which the foundations of learning are not modeled. As goes the family, we say proverbially, so goes the nation. Governmental institutions will never provide what only the family can provide; they will never supply what only parents can supply. The flourishing of human society depends on healthy families and healthy families depend on healthy marriages. We can say truly that we undertake no more important tasks in this life than that of marrying and raising a family.

Preliminary considerations

What, then, does a Christian marriage look like? There are many competing visions of marriage today. At one end of the spectrum there is *egalitarian* marriage, which argues against male headship and any distinction in the roles of husbands and wives. At the other end of the spectrum there is *complementarian* marriage, which argues for the more traditional view of male and female role distinctions. Recent Supreme Court decisions have essentially redefined marriage as any living arrangement between any two consenting adults without providing any principle by which to restrict marriage to two. With increasing numbers of Muslims moving into the formerly Christian West, we can expect the barrier to polygamy to be challenged next. However, Christian marriage is not a free-for-all. We are not left to make of it whatever we wish. There are principles which are the basis for it functioning happily. We ignore these principles to our peril. However, first we must identify several important considerations which will govern our discussion.

Divine instruction

The first of these preliminary governing principles is that the Bible's teaching on marriage is *God's instruction*. What He says to husbands and wives is not advice. It is not merely wise counsel. It is not opinion. It is rather the authoritative word of God. The Apostle's admonition to the church at Corinth applies to his teaching to the church at Ephesus:

If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. (1 Cor 14:37)

Yes, the Apostle Paul writes these verses. Yet ultimately, he writes not his words but God's words. They are not Paul's principles, but God's principles. They are not Paul's commands, but God's commands. We should seek to be commended as the Thessalonian Christians were commended for receiving the apostolic teaching "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess 2:13). Consequently, the biblical instruction is authoritative for the people of God. Scripture must give shape and structure to our own marital and familial practices.

Timeless

Second, the biblical instruction is *timeless*. It transcends the generations. It will never be dated. It will never be outmoded. It may become out of *fashion*, but that is another matter. The principles given are universally true, relevant, and binding. They apply in all places and all time. How can this be? Especially, we might wonder, when we consider how different our world is from the ancient Middle East? After all, we are modern. We are technologically advanced. We are

enlightened. We are educated. We have rights. Yes, it is true, places, times, cultures, and customs all change. Yet because human nature doesn't change and God doesn't change, essential moral and marital principles don't change either.

The Apostles typically root their teaching on what we might call “gender issues” in universals. When the Apostle Paul argues for male leadership in the church, he appeals to the order of creation, the order of the fall, and what can be learned from the nature of things. For example:

¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Tim 2:12-14)

He is not appealing to local custom, but the creation (“Adam was formed first, then Eve”) and the fall (“Adam was not deceived, but the woman...”) as he establishes male leadership in the church. He does the same in 1 Corinthians, as he insists that “the head of a wife is her husband” (1 Cor 11:3-16). He appeals to the divine design in creation:

⁸ For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. (1 Cor 11:8, 9)

He also appeals to what nature itself teaches (11:14). Creation, fall, and nature are super-cultural. They are universals. They are givens. They are not culturally relative. They don't change according to time and place. They precede culture. They transcend culture and apply to all cultures.

The Apostles don't seem as concerned about cultural differences as we are. When the Apostle Peter urges women to obey and submit to their husbands, he appeals to the example of Sarah. Sarah lived about 2000 years before the people of Asia Minor to whom he was writing. Sarah and Abraham were nomads, Peter's readers were farmers, shepherds, and city-dwellers. What did they have in common? What did the example of ancient nomadic Semitic women like Sarah have to say to the settled, then-modern people of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1)? Yet we see no hesitation at all in urging,

^{1a} Wives, be subject to your own husbands ...⁴ let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. (1 Pet 3:1a... 4-6)

Wives are to “be *subject* to (their) own husbands.” They are to follow the pattern of the “holy women” of old “by *submitting* to their own husbands.” “Sarah *obeyed* Abraham.” What the “holy

women” of the past “used to” do is precisely the example that the Apostle Peter expects Christian women to follow in his day and ours. Why? Because God’s word is not culture-bound. It is timeless. The biblical principles for marriage apply, they “work” in the ancient world and the modern world, in primitive cultures and advanced cultures, in rural contexts and urban contexts.

Calibrated

Third, the biblical instructions for husbands and wives are *calibrated* to accommodate the differences between men and women. The Bible recognizes that men and women are different, and consequently have different duties and need different instructions. Genesis 1:27 teaches that “God created man,” men and women both together, “in his own image.” Yet also it says He created “man,” “*male and female*,” utilizing the technical words for sexual distinction. For example, Genesis 7:16 says that Noah took two of every species onto the ark, “male and female.” There are male and female insects, male and female animals and male and female humans. We are not merely men and women. We are male and female within our species, distinguished by our sexes. This principle is declared in a foundational passage that emphasizes distinctions. God *separates* and thereby *distinguishes* light from darkness (Gen 1:3-5), the heavens from the earth (Gen 1:6-8), the seas from the dry land (Gen 1:9-10), and the day from the night (The word “separate” is used four times in Gen 1:3-18). God distinguishes sea animals from birds and birds from land creatures (Gen 1:20-25); and He distinguishes all other creatures from man (Gen 1:26). Finally, male humans are distinguished from female humans. The differences, the distinctions between men and women are *intentional*. They are *deliberate*. They are *innate*. They are declared to be “good” and “*very good*” (Gen 1:31). Men are not women and women are not men. There is that which is distinctive to the female and that which is distinctive to the male. We

have different organs and body shapes, but we also have differing capacities, strengths, and weaknesses. We have different perspectives and priorities. Our sex is not “assigned” at birth as some moderns would like to say, but given. The term for the distinctive male qualities is “masculine”; the term for the distinctive female qualities is “feminine.” The Bible recognizes our differences and accommodates them by assigning roles and tasks suited to our distinctive qualities as males and females. For example, the Apostle Peter goes on to instruct husbands,

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Pet 3:7)

Husbands are told to live with their wives in “an understanding way,” but wives are not told to live with their husbands in “an understanding way.” Apparently, this is crucial for men to grasp in a way it is not crucial for women. An “understanding way” means both understanding that wives are equals, made in God’s image, “heirs with you” or a “co-heir of the grace of life” (NASB), and a “weaker vessel.”

She *is* an equal. She is not a child or an employee or a slave. So, husbands, don’t speak to your wives as though they were and don’t treat them as such. The Bible’s marriage and family directions, its “household codes” (e.g. Eph 5:22ff; Col 3:19ff; 1 Pet 2:1ff) as they’ve been called, are built on a foundation of essential equality. It is unimaginable that any writers from antiquity would say, as the Apostle Paul says,

*⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does.
Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife
does. (1 Cor 7:4)*

The status of women in the Greco-Roman world was very low. Typically they received little or no education. They were legal property of some man at every stage of their lives. Husbands could divorce their wives simply by throwing them out of the house. Women had few if any rights. Often their husbands forced them to get abortions or demanded that the infant daughters be left to die.² The revolutionary nature of the Apostle's teaching often has been overlooked.³ The wife has authority over her husband's body?! Indeed. "Conjugal rights" (1 Cor 7:3), or "marital duty" (NIV) or the wonderfully euphemistic "due benevolence" (KJV) are owed in both directions, not just by a subservient wife to her husband. What a married couple does or doesn't do in this regard, the next verse adds, is by mutual "agreement," not the unilateral authority of the husband (1 Cor 7:5). No culture and no religion in all of human history has asserted this essential equality between men and women as Christianity has.

Or again the Apostle Paul writes in the context of a husband's authority over his wife,

² See Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 95-128.

³ See John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 233.

¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; ¹² for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman.

And all things are from God. (1 Cor 11:11, 12)

Men and women are *equally* dependent upon each other. That is the Apostle's point. Neither is independent of the other. Both owe their existence to the other. Search the Islamic, search the Hindu world, search primitive tribal societies, search antiquity and one will search in vain for such affirmations of the essential equality between men and women. Those who wish to cast Christianity in the role of oppressor of women are either ignorant or dishonest.⁴

Yet she is *different*. Husbands need to understand this. Equality is not sameness. Equality does not obliterate the differences between the sexes, as modern progressive society imagines. Men and women share the capacity for rational thought and for the knowledge of the truth. They equally are made in God's image, the objects of God's love, and the beneficiaries of Christ's cross. Yet she also is by design a "weaker vessel." She does not share a man's brute strength. She does not share his stamina. She is different. That must be understood. She is not a man. Don't treat her like a man. At the heart of this difference is her capacity to conceive life within her, to carry that child, bear it, and nourish it. As a consequence, she is more careful with her body and less reckless than a man. As a consequence, she has a deeply rooted maternal instinct to protect her young. She is concerned more broadly about safety, security, shelter, and other

⁴ Rodney Stark essentially assigns the credit for the rise of Christianity to the elevated status it afforded women, leading to marital security and fertility rates that simply overwhelmed the pagan Greco-Roman world in the space of 300 years (*The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996]).

provisions for her family. She is more relationally oriented. Relationships generally are important to her than is the case with men. She will tend to be a generalist and multitasker because of her concern to care for the lives of those around her. If she pursues a career, she will tend to choose one which will allow her to give priority to the care of her family. She also has developed strategies and tactics to deal with her vulnerability to predatory males. Women, generally speaking, are more complicated than men, or at least men find them to be so. They are more subtle, more nuanced.

Men, by way of contrast, by design, are called to be protectors. God has given them greater physical strength, not for their own sake but for the sake of their loved ones. Because they do not carry children within them, they can expose their bodies to dangers on behalf of their wives and families. Indeed, in order to provide that protection, they *must* be less careful about their own safety. Men also tend toward abstraction rather than the relational, towards things and concepts rather than people. They are not as inherently tied to relationships as are women who bear and nurture children. It is vital that these differences be recognized and taken into account as the Bible does. We are *equal*, but we are not the *same*.

Our culture pretends that these differences don't exist. Yet no one who coaches a girls' basketball team dares do so in the same way as he coaches a boys'. No one who manages a department store or a mall provides equal floor space for men's interests as women's. A very large surprise awaits anyone who marries thinking that men and women are exactly alike. If brides think that their grooms will communicate in the same way as their girlfriends did; if

grooms think their brides look at safety and security issues the same way the guys on the football team did, they will quickly learn otherwise. The differences between men and women must be sympathetically accommodated and understood and not mocked, ridiculed, or treated with contempt in either direction.

Accommodate is exactly what Scripture does. Male and female differences are recognized, celebrated and then accommodated in the fundamental directives given with noted consistency throughout the New Testament. Wives are to be subject to their husbands, an instruction repeated in Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:8, 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; 14:34-35; Titus 2:4, 5, and 1 Peter 3:1-6, and implied in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. Husbands are to love and lead their wives with the love of ultimate sacrifice, repeated in Ephesians 5:25-33, Colossians 3:8, and implied in 1 Peter 3:7 and the above 1 Corinthian passages. The husband's sacrificial love requires that he face the dangers that confront the family. He has the primary responsibility to protect and provide for his wife and family, even if it costs him his life. The wife has the responsibility to support and respect the authority of her husband as he seeks to do so (Eph 5:33). This blend of essential equality and difference leads Matthew Henry to write with words often cited at weddings.

The woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.⁵

⁵ Matthew Henry, *Exposition*, on Genesis 2:27.

How the details work out in practice will vary from place to place, culture to culture, and couple to couple. Nevertheless, because of creational differences, these role differences transcend culture and are permanent. Those given to challenging these norms should consider if we ought not to think ourselves wiser than God who has spoken clearly in His word. If we may cite the Apostle Paul again,

If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God. (1 Cor 11:16)

Our good

Fourth, these instructions are *for our good*. There is only one arbitrary command in the Bible. That was the Garden prohibition to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16, 17). There was nothing wrong with the fruit. It was pleasing to look at and seemed to promise good effects. God simply asserted His authority and said, “No!” Since then all of God’s commandments are designed to promote our well-being as divine image-bearers. What Jesus said of the fourth commandment, that “the Sabbath was made for man,” can be said for all of the commandments (Mk 2:27). They were given *for us*. They are for our good. They promote human flourishing. They are issued with human nature in view. They are designed for our benefit as God has designed and constituted us. They accommodate the distinctive characteristics of men and women. His commandments are our Maker’s manual for how to operate and care for the human organism without breakdowns.

The laws of God are suited to human nature and the human condition. With distressing frequency, traditional Christians are accused of being anti-science. Not so when it comes to differentiating role distinctions. It seems silly to have continually to point out these things, yet regrettably, we do, once again. Physical, physiological, biological reality must be accommodated if human beings are to flourish. Men are physically stronger than women. Women are more vulnerable. The average American woman over 20 years of age is 5'4", the average male is 5'9". The woman weighs 168 lbs., the man weighs 195 lbs. Men have greater muscle mass, both in absolute terms and relative to total body mass. Men have 50-90% greater brute strength. Anyone familiar with body-building will immediately observe the difference between men and women. Why are there no women in the NBA or NFL? Why do no women play college football? Why indeed are there female and male athletic teams beginning in youth leagues? Why are women not expected to compete with men on an equal footing? The greatest women's tennis champion Serena Williams lost an exhibition match to the 203rd ranked male player the same year that she won the U.S. Open and the Grand Slam cup (1999). The answer to these questions is, our society still today recognizes the unequal physical capabilities between men and women. This is why we teach boys not to hit girls. This is why rape laws target men and not women. This is why there is a "Me too" movement for women and not for men?⁶ This is why traditional Christian society developed a code of chivalry in which the greater strength of the strong was to be used, not to exploit, but to serve those who are less strong and therefore vulnerable. This is why men are

⁶ Remarkably, 37% of those polled in one study believe women are stronger than men!

commanded to protect and provide for their wives, and wives are called to follow and respect their husbands.

Masculinity may become “toxic” at times, yet that doesn’t mean that masculinity is itself inherently toxic. “Masculinity Isn’t a Sickness,” writes Erica Komisar, a psychoanalyst and author. She debunks the American Psychological Association’s critique of “traditional masculinity” which it characterized as “marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance and aggression” and as “on the whole, harmful.” She argues in response,

The truth is that masculine traits such as aggression, competitiveness and protective vigilance not only can be positive, but also have a biological basis. Boys and men produce far more testosterone, which is associated biologically and behaviorally with increased aggression and competitiveness. They also produce more vasopressin, a hormone originating in the brain that makes men aggressively protective of their loved ones... What’s unhealthy isn’t masculinity or femininity but the demeaning of masculine men and feminine women... Every person will have some mix of the two. But that doesn’t change the reality that women tend to be feminine and men tend to be masculine. Why can’t the APA acknowledge biology while seeing femininity and masculinity on a spectrum?⁷

⁷ Erica Komisar, “Masculinity Isn’t a Sickness,” *The Wall Street Journal*, A15, Jan. 16, 2019. See also Harvard professor Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Richard Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016).

Do we want to have happy marriages? Of course we do. The first step towards a happy marriage is to comply with our Maker's instructions. "His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). His commandments are suited to created reality and therefore are for our good. The hierarchy in marriage envisioned by the biblical writers is not burdensome. It is suited to and consistent with the natural, biological, physiological differences between men and women. Want a tension-filled life? Want constant conflict in your marriage? Then ignore what the Bible says and let the fight for control begin. Want peace and joy in your marriage? Then embrace the divine design for marriage revealed in Scripture and bring one's life into conformity with it. One will need God's grace to do so. Only as empowered by the Holy Spirit can men lovingly lead and women submissively help. Yet by the gospel power that flows to us from the cross, our marriages can sing to the glory of God.