

# Headship in a marriage

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## The expression of obedience

- The apostle Paul testified that he was a slave of Jesus Christ who had been separated by the Father to proclaim the gospel of God. Rom 1:1. He explained that when a hearer receives this message, they obtain faith which is demonstrated through obedience. This obedience is necessary for salvation. Rom 1:17. Heb 5:9.
- The expression of our obedience is from our spirit, by the Holy Spirit. The beginning point of obedience is the word of God. The Father is the source of the word. It is ministered by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of a messenger who has been sent from the presbytery by Christ. Rom 10:14-15. We hear this word with our ears, which we understand with our mind. Our mind, as a faculty of our soul, and our spirit connect with the Holy Spirit in our *heart*. He illuminates our being. Without the Holy Spirit, our spirit would remain in darkness. Having been illuminated, we then obey from our spirit, which is the substance of our identity, through the expression of the soul.
- *The capacity for obedience is faith.* We receive faith through illumination as we hear the word proclaimed from *El Shaddai*, our Lord. Because of faith, we obtain the freedom to choose the obedience that is being illuminated to our spirit. Choice brings responsibility, and responsibility requires *accountability*. We demonstrate faith as we respond to the command, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.' Pro 3:5-6. The choice to walk in obedience on the pathway of salvation is given to us, but the power of faith for obedience comes from God. The obedience of faith is by the Spirit, who guides us in all truth. Joh 16:13.
- Obedience from the heart is the fruit of remembering the word by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained that remembrance is the work of the Holy Spirit, saying, 'But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.' Joh 14:26. This ministry of the Spirit was evident when the apostle Peter proclaimed the gospel to the household of Cornelius. He said to them, 'The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ - He is Lord of all - *that word you know*, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea.' Act 10:36-37. While Peter was still speaking to them, 'the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word'. Act 10:44.
- We are to remember only what the Holy Spirit brings to our attention, because the remembrance of other things can be our destruction if we fail to forget those things which lie behind. Paul exhorted us in this way, saying, 'One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.' Php 3:13-14. In this regard, we note that Lot's wife was unable to forget her life and family in

Sodom. She looked back in remembrance of her former life, which the Lord had dedicated to destruction. Under the judgement of God, she became a sign and a wonder as she was turned to a pillar of salt. Gen 19:26. We must leave 'Sodom', and the spirit of the world, to walk in the light of the word that is preached to us, which the Spirit brings to our remembrance each day. This is necessary for salvation.

### A remnant of the Spirit

- Obedience to the word of Christ is the mark of our submission to His lordship. It is the conduct that belongs to confessing that Jesus is Lord, and to progressively obtaining salvation. Rom 10:9. Obedience under the lordship of Christ is equally foundational to Christian marriage. Notably, a man has no capacity to stand and to lead his family without connection to the lordship of Christ. Likewise, a woman who has not personally met Christ, and does not know Him as her Lord and Saviour, is unable to join the fellowship of Christ's lordship, which has been granted to her husband by Christ. She cannot be obedient, nor call her husband 'lord', as Sarah called Abraham. 1Pe 3:6.
- The capacity for fellowship together as a married couple is called '*a remnant of the Spirit*', and it is received only through fellowship in the lordship of Christ. Referring to this grace, the prophet Malachi declared, 'But did He not make them one, having *a remnant of the Spirit*? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.' Mal 2:15.
- A remnant of the Spirit is unique to a couple whose marriage is being recovered to the fellowship and order of headship. They are recovered as each person receives the lordship of Christ. A couple does not possess a remnant of the Spirit simply because they are married. Rather, it is given to them from the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

### The lordship of Christ

- A remnant of the Spirit is a fellowship in Christ's lordship. This lordship was given to Christ, on our behalf, when He finished His offering journey and was raised and seated at the Father's right hand. The apostle Peter proclaimed this truth on the Day of Pentecost, saying, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has *made* this Jesus, whom you crucified, *both Lord and Christ*.' Act 2:36. Having been made Lord and Christ, Jesus was also made to be *the Head* of His body, the church, which is also His bride. Eph 1:20-23.
- As Lord and Christ, and Head of His body, Jesus was given the name above every name. Emphasising this point, Paul wrote, 'Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on Earth, and of those under the Earth, and that every tongue should *confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father'. Php 2:9-11.
- We note, therefore, that the power of Christ's lordship is given to every believer when they are baptised into His name. As we have considered in the publication, *New Creation*, this baptism, which is marked by immersion in water, is a step beyond baptism by one Spirit into the body of Christ when a person is born from above by the Father. 1Co 12:13. Once baptised into the name of Christ, a believer, under the

lordship of Christ, receives the capacity of Eternal Spirit through which Christ offered Himself. This is the power to lay down their life as He did, and to *become the expression of offering*.

- The capacity to express the Father's offering is now revealed through the order of headship by those who acknowledge and receive the lordship of Christ. It flows from the Father, by the Holy Spirit, through Christ, to the man, and then from the man to his wife in their home. 1Co 11:3.
- Christ ministers His lordship to us by the Holy Spirit. He is able to do this because the Holy Spirit is the substance of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord that rests upon Him. Isa 11:1-2. Jesus Christ testified of this anointing, saying, '*The [sevenfold] Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.*' Isa 61:1.
- The anointing of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord is the Holy Spirit, as Paul explained, '*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*' 2Co 3:17. The liberty that is ministered from the lordship of Christ, by the Spirit, is the *power* for us to walk blamelessly in the fellowship of Christ's offering. This capacity is expressed by the name, *El Shaddai*, or God Almighty. We note, in this regard, that it was *El Shaddai* who met Abram, saying, '*I am Almighty God [El Shaddai]; walk before Me and be blameless.*' Gen 17:1.
- Through this encounter, the Lord gave Abram and Sarai new names. He did this by placing an element of His own name (YHWH) within Abram's natural name, indicating that Abraham was joined to the fellowship of the name of Yahweh and had received a portion of the capacity that belongs to the name of Yahweh. Abraham's new name represented his share in the divine nature of God. Notably, Sarah did not receive her name directly from the Lord but, rather, through His word to Abraham.
- We demonstrate that we are receiving the power to walk blamelessly, which is liberty received from the lordship of Christ by the Spirit, as we lay down our lives in love, and serve one another in the order of headship. As the apostle Paul noted, '*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty [through the lordship of Christ, by the Spirit]; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*' Gal 5:13.
- Jesus demonstrated the power to lay down His life. He testified, '*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No-one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*' Joh 10:17-18. Importantly, Christ's power to lay down His life in offering was not sourced from Himself. It was received through the agency of the Spirit as He, '*through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God [the Father]*'. Heb 9:14.

### Recovery to the order of headship

- A man who looks into the face of his wife for direction and leadership in his family is not submitting to Christ as his Head, *for Christ is not the Lord of his life*. Oriented in this manner, it is apparent that he has not negotiated the most basic proposition of the gospel by which a person is saved from sin and eternal death; that is, '*if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised*

*Him from the dead*, you will be saved [through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit].’ Rom 10:9. Ti 3:4-7. A man who vacates his headship is not confessing, through his conversation and conduct, that Jesus is Lord; nor is he believing in the resurrection life that Christ makes available, by the Spirit, as a believer journeys each day in fellowship with Him.

- A wife also must submit, in faith, to her husband as to Christ, who is her Lord, within the order of headship. She does this by being obedient to Christ. By receiving the lordship of Christ, a wife is able to obey Christ with the wisdom that He gives to her, even if her husband is disobedient to the word that calls him to submit to Christ’s lordship. 1Pe 3:1. A woman is able to do this without being caught in the sin of presuming on the role of headship that belongs to her husband. Paul exhorted young women to this form of conduct in a marriage, writing, ‘Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, *manage the house* [that is, guide the home], give no opportunity to the adversary [Satan] to speak reproachfully [through her disrespect of headship]’. 1Ti 5:14.
- A woman defers to her husband as ‘lord’, as an expression of her appreciation, through illumination, of Christ as the Lord of her life. Her obedience to her husband is her obedience to Christ and to God the Father as a participator within the order of headship. It is an expression of offering within the fellowship and order of headship. The woman’s participation is possible because she has ‘a remnant of the Spirit’. The headship that comes from the Father is accessed and received by her through the obedience of faith, because of her submission to the lordship of Christ.

### Dealing with conflict in a marriage

- Conflict within a marriage indicates that a couple is ‘stumbling’ at Christ. They stumble, being *disobedient* to the word to which they were appointed; that is, the word of their name. They should be receiving the word of their name as an obedience under Christ’s lordship. 1Pe 2:8. However, they cannot receive the light of the word because of the deluding effect of their self-sourced projections. To this end, their disobedience is the implication of living and relating to one another according to the principles of the flesh. It is the fruit of the desires that are associated with ‘the other law’, which was established in the heart of every person through Adam and Eve’s disobedience.
- Observing this dynamic, James wrote, ‘Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from *your desires* for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.’ Jas 4:1-3.
- Conflict arises between spouses because of the clash of desire. The Scriptures teach that, fundamentally, a woman endeavours to verify her identity by creating a cultural expression in her own image. She desires for her husband to celebrate and champion this pursuit. However, the man reacts against these expectations because they clash with his fundamental desire for identity verification through the exercise of dominion over his life and over others. Summarising this discord, the Lord said to the woman, ‘Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ Gen 3:16.
- The only provision for conflict resolution within a marriage is the cross of Christ. For this reason, we are exhorted to ‘consider Him [Christ] who endured such *hostility* from

sinner against Himself [that is, His identity]'. Heb 12:3. In the court of Caiaphas, Christ dealt with the hostility arising from our iniquitous self-image as He was being humiliated and His justice was taken from Him. Act 8:33. He completed this work as the Lord, the conquering Slave. He conquered that which had *no right to justice*, by embodying our iniquitous self-image and taking it out, through humiliation, to destruction in the sea of God's forgetfulness.

- Our projections, which are the expression of our carnal self-image, are a lie. They have no substance and, therefore, have no right to justice. How then does a person undertake to make their projection substantial? A lie, which is the basis of a projection, finds its existence by stealing the substance, or reality, that belongs to another. That which is false feeds off that which is true; it cleaves to that which is true, with *deceit*. Dan 11:34. This is often the basis for romance within a marriage and a family.
- Those who seek to be joined to another in this manner, demanding the acceptance of their projection and its works, do not have *agape* love. They are self-centred and deluded, presuming that their projection, which they assert and defend, is reality. However, only *El Shaddai*, Almighty God, is the source of all reality as the Creator. He is love, and the acknowledgement of His lordship, through obedience, is our participation in His love. 1Jn 4:7-9.
- Instead of fighting for verification of our projections by others, including our spouse, we 'consider Jesus' by acknowledging that these endeavours caused the marring of His face. We cease from arguing, and reckon ourselves dead with Christ, our Lord, on account of our disobedience. This is what it means to 'draw a line' on the matter. The Spirit brings to our remembrance the word of our obedience. The capacity for our obedience is the resurrection life that we receive from Christ because we have died with Him. Php 3:10-11. Rom 6:11. That is, we are made alive to God for the obedience that belongs to the fulfilment of His will, which is our sanctification that we walk in each day. 1Th 4:3.
- Describing this response for a wife, the apostle Peter wrote, 'Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward [a projection] - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.' 1Pe 3:1-4.
- We recall that when Christ looked at Peter, they met eye to eye. 'Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So Peter went out and wept bitterly.' Luk 22:61-62. In a spirit of mourning, Peter then began to despise being a zealot. That is, he began to despise the projection of which he was now ashamed. He also began to despise shame as a motive for hiding and covering himself with his projection. In this regard, we note that the *leaves* of the fig tree are not *the fruit of the fig tree*, which typifies a worthy house. Rather, the leaves are a covering of shame, tailored through self-assessed penance.