

THE HUSBAND'S DUTY IN THE FAMILY'S PURSUIT
OF JOY IN GOD

A Paper

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Dr. Daniel Heimbach

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Bret Allen Rogers

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ABBREVIATIONS

BDAG	Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
<i>JBMW</i>	<i>Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood</i>
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

THE HUSBAND'S DUTY IN THE FAMILY'S PURSUIT OF JOY IN GOD

Introduction

In this present evil age, either passivity, resulting in uninterested, weak, apathetic households, or domination, resulting in stiff, joyless, and, sometimes, violent environments plague male leadership in the home. Although both sinful dispositions exist in the hearts of men worldwide, submission to the Lord in his designed role for the husband/father will surely advance the eradication of such ungodliness from the home. God established the husband as head over his wife and the father as head over the home so that through the fulfillment of this man's responsibilities the family would aim to pursue their joy in God.

The Family, Joy in God, and a Husband's Duty

Before unfolding what the Scriptures reveal concerning the duties of the male leader in a Christ-centered household, some preliminary remarks will aid in explaining the thesis of this paper. First, since the socio-political agenda of this age seeks to redefine the traditional family—and even more so, the biblical family—two theological presuppositions will serve as the authoritative guide in defining the family: (1) the family is God-designed; and (2) the family is biblically-defined. The family is not merely a natural phenomenon, but an intimate institution designed by God. On the sixth day of his creative work, “God created man in his own image...*male* and *female* he created them” (Gen 1:27). Furthermore, he gave the newly created couple the warrant/blessing to have

children with the words, “be fruitful and multiply” (1:28). Chapter two of Genesis also bears witness to God’s creative work of the family, explaining that he created the man (2:7), fashioned the woman (2:21-22), crafted their functional roles (2:16, 18), and designed their “one-flesh” marriage union (2:24).

Second, this thesis also affirms a biblical worldview, which teaches that God created people to pursue their joy in himself. Through Moses, the Lord threatened his people with terrible judgment if they did not serve him “with joy and a glad heart” (Deut 28:47). The psalmist urges the people to delight themselves in the Lord (Ps 37:4). David finds joy and endless pleasures in the Lord’s presence (16:11). The righteous sing for joy in the Lord (33:1). After being lead by the light of the Lord’s truth, the psalmist says that he will “go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy” (43:4). The parable of the hidden treasure tells of a man who sells everything to gain what he took great joy in finding, namely, Christ (Matt 13:44). In the same Gospel, faithful servants will be told to enter the joy of their master on the Last Day (25:21). In John’s Gospel, Jesus speaks the truth to his disciples, and prays to the Father on their behalf, so that *his* joy might be fulfilled in them (John 15:11; 17:13). Jude’s doxological ending to his epistle speaks of the Lord who is able to make us stand in his presence with “exultation”—in many translations, “great joy” (Jude 24). From one end of the canon to the other, the biblical authors encourage people to pursue their joy in God. As the foundational institution in society, therefore, the family should make it their goal to pursue their joy in God.

Third, this thesis affirms the male leader, serving in his household as a husband only, or husband and father, has a *duty* to his family. That is, he has a responsibility—the primary responsibility—to lead his family in a manner that would make them most

satisfied in God. This, of course, assumes that the husband himself values God in the Gospel as his own exceeding joy, and leads his family out of the overflow of a supernatural joy wrought by the Spirit. Then the husband's duty is not a burden, but a delight. Because he tastes and sees that the Lord is good, he will be glad to lead his family to drink from the same well of everlasting joy. Therefore, his labors find their end not in transitory trivialities and earthly gain, but in everlasting consequences and heavenly reward since he aims to point the entire family to joy in God.

The Husband's Duty in His Wife's Pursuit of Joy in God

In order to display the glory of the union between Christ and his bride, the church, God ordained that "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24; cf. Eph 5:21-33). Rooted in this divine purpose for marriage is God's enabling a fallen people to partake of an eschatological glory by profiting from what is temporarily meant to image-forth the immeasurable worth of his grace in Jesus, his Son. God's ordained role for the husband, therefore, begins with a commitment and ministry to his wife that will display the love God has for his people in Christ, and the delight God's people have in him through Christ. Because God loves his people in all that his Son sufficiently purchased for them, they find supreme delight in God through the abundant grace granted them in the Son. Thus, the husband has a duty in his wife's pursuit of joy in God. This responsibility plays itself out through a God-designed role called headship.

The Husband's Role as Head Over His Wife

Consistently, the Bible reveals that in a marital relationship the husband serves as head over his own wife (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:21-33; cf. Gen 2-3; 1 Cor 11:8-9; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:5-7). The term “head” comes from the Apostle Paul’s use of the Greek word κεφαλή (*kephalē*), a term he used to express one having authority over another.¹ For example, following his Son’s heavenly enthronement, the Father “put all things in subjection under his [Christ’s] feet and gave him as *head* over all things to the church” (Eph 1:22; cf. Col 2:10). In his relationship to the believing community, Christ is the *head* of the body (Eph 4:15). Also, Paul explains that in the same manner that Christ is the head (i.e. the authority) over the church, “the husband is the *head* over the wife” (Eph 5:23; cf. 1 Cor 11:3b).²

Domineering connotations are often associated with the term “head;” however, no such implications exist in the apostolic word. The term has nothing to do with the worth of the individual, but only explains the role in which the person serves in the relationship. It does not mean the husband finds more personal favor with God, or he has any right to behave towards his wife neglecting her personal value. God created the man *and* the woman in his image, equal in spirituality, personhood, and worth (Gen 1:27). It

¹BDAG, s.v. “κεφαλή.” Wayne Grudem argues rather extensively from both biblical and extra-biblical resources that κεφαλή means “ruler” and/or “authority over” in many of its occurrences (“Does *Kephalē* (“Head”) Mean “source” or “authority over” in Greek Literature: A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *TriJ* 6 [Spring 1985]: 38-59). For a response to more recent critique of Grudem’s own work, as well as to further study completed by others see his “The Meaning of *Kephalē* (“Head”): A Response to Recent Studies,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991): 425-468. Translators of the LXX also found κεφαλή a sufficient term for one exercises authority over others (Judg 11:11; 2 Sam 22:44).

²The subordinate conjunction, ὅτι, begins a causal clause following v. 22. Wives are to submit to their own husbands as to the Lord, “because the husband is the head of the wife even as (ὡς καί) Christ is the head of the church, he being the savior of the body” (Eph 5:23).

does mean, however, that the husband serves his wife in an authoritative role within the context of their marital relationship.

Through this role of headship, the husband's duty to his wife's pursuit of joy in God becomes apparent. In at least four ways, the Bible explains how the husband should practice this role of leadership in relation to his wife: (1) as the moral and spiritual leader; (2) as the physical and spiritual provider; (3) as the physical and spiritual protector; and (4) as the encourager to her happiness. Together, these four biblical employments of the husband's role as head cultivate a God-centered relationship that persistently develops the wife's pursuit to delight herself in God.

As the Moral and Spiritual Leader. The Scriptures teach in several places that the husband is the moral and spiritual leader of his wife. At the beginning of creation, the Lord assigned ultimate moral and spiritual responsibility in the marital relationship to the man, not the woman. Several observations in Genesis 2-3 lend support to this conclusion. First, the Lord assigned the man responsibility to work and keep the Garden (Gen 2:15). He also gave the command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil to the man (2:16-17). In both cases, the woman had yet to be created (cf. 1 Tim 2:13). Second, the man named the woman (Gen 2:23; 3:20). Just as his naming the animals demonstrates his dominion over them, so also the naming of the woman demonstrates his authoritative role over her.³ Third, God created the woman *for* the man, to be his "suitable helper" (2:23). In all her giftedness, the woman fulfills her God-

³By no means does this make the woman of equal worth with the animals, for the man identifies the woman with himself: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called 'woman (אִשָּׁה),' because out of man (אִישׁ) she was taken" (Gen 2:23). She is not like the animals, but is unique and purposefully fashioned for the man. Cf. Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991): 101-03.

designed role in the marital relationship by helping the man in his God-designed role as the leader in the home (cf. 1 Cor 11:8-9). Fourth, after the man and the woman sinned against the Lord, the Lord still addressed the man, even though the woman sinned first (Gen 3:9).⁴ Apparently, the man was to lead his wife in the Garden by instructing her in the ways of the Lord, by directing her to delight in the abundance graciously given them. Instead, he stood by as the Serpent deceived her, and shortly thereafter joined her in sin (3:6). The Lord then holds *him* accountable. Each of these observations from the creation narrative proves that the husband shoulders the primary responsibility in leading his wife morally and spiritually.

The NT also bears witness to this truth. In expounding what it means for the members of God's household to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, Paul writes, "As the church is subject to Christ, so the wives also should be to their husbands in everything" (5:24). These words assume that in the marital relationship of two believers, the husband leads his own wife and models his leadership after Christ's, a point Paul elaborates in vv. 25-33. There it is clear that Christ leads the church by taking the initiative to save her; he first loved the church and determined to give his life for her. The husband's relationship to his wife, therefore, should resemble something similar: his self-giving leadership paves the way for her humble submission.

Peter, too, instructs wives to be subject to their husbands, even to adorn themselves with submission as Sarah did before Abraham (1 Pet 3:1-6). Like Paul, Peter understands the role God designed for the husband and wife: the husband serves his wife as the moral and spiritual leader; and the wife serves her husband by affirming his

⁴This interpretation of the events also seems to be that of the Apostle's in 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

leadership. The apostles' words concerning the role of the husband over his wife agree with those Moses set forth in Genesis.

By leading his wife in all moral and spiritual matters, therefore, the husband not only upholds the created order for marriage, but also serves his wife according to God's design. Both of these actions show an appropriate submission to the authority of Scripture, a profound love for God's wisdom, and a careful consideration of the wife's helpful role. As the wife observes these God-centered, other-oriented characteristics in her husband, she too will be pointed to gladly submit to God's word, love God's design, and consider her husband's leading role, all three of which increase her joy in God.

As the Spiritual and Physical Provider. As the head in the marital relationship, the husband also complements his wife as the spiritual and physical provider. This means that he plays the primary role not only in providing her with the essentials for life, but also in nourishing her with biblical truth for eternal life. After the Fall, the Lord cursed his creation, and to the man and woman he spoke of the effects it would have on their respective roles.⁵ To the man the Lord declared, "...cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground..." (Gen 3:17b-19a, NASB). In light of what the Lord also declared to the woman in v. 16, this text seems to reveal that the

⁵Already, God had given them a mandate both to be fruitful and to subdue the earth (Gen 1:28); however, pain would now be added to the woman's childbirth and sweat to the man's labor (George W. Knight III, "The Family and the Church: How Should Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Work Out in Practice," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem [Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991]: 345-48).

responsibility of breadwinner belongs not exclusively to the husband, considering also the woman of Proverbs 31, but *primarily* to the husband.

Furthermore, the husband's duty to his wife not only means that he should provide her with physical bread, but that he should also consistently supply her with spiritual bread. Paul develops this kind of nourishment in his letter to the Ephesians. Christ loves his bride, the church, by dying on her behalf, "in order that he might sanctify her, by cleansing her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph 5:26). One of the purposes in Christ's selfless death is the church's positional sanctification, and he accomplishes this *by* cleansing her from all her impurities using the Gospel word.⁶ Paul's portrait of cleansing in the context of Christ's relationship with his church surely draws from the same imagery of the Lord's purification of his people, Israel, in Ezekiel 16:8-14. In both cases, the redemptive relationship of God with his people is analogous to the relationship shared between a husband and wife. In the Ephesians text, Paul commands the husband to love his wife as Christ does the church. Therefore, in the same manner that Christ sacrificially loves his bride to promote her well-being in the Gospel, so also should the husband selflessly labor to promote his own wife's spiritual welfare.⁷ What is more, Paul reinforces the whole provisionary role of the husband in vv. 28-29, explaining that the husband both nourishes and cherishes his own body as Christ also does to his

⁶That this is only *one* of the purposes in Christ's death within this pericope is consistent with the two additional purpose clauses (ὡς) in v. 27. Furthermore, since the aorist participle, καθάρσις, follows the main verb, ἁγιασθή (also in the aorist tense), both actions, that is, the sanctifying and the cleansing, function contemporaneously (cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 614). The setting apart of the church to be holy occurs together with her spiritual cleansing, the latter being the *means* of the former (contra ESV, NASB, RSV).

⁷Cf. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 420-24.

body, the church.⁸ By generously committing himself to his wife's physical and spiritual well-being, the husband reflects much of the same care Christ has for his church, a care that bestows on his people everything needed to remain infinitely happy in God (cf. Eph 1:3-4; 5:27).

How does this kind of provision actually cause his wife's pursuit of joy in God to mature? As the husband daily attends his wife's physical needs, he persistently points her to God's benevolent mercy upon his creation (Gen 1:29-30; Ps 78:23-25; 136:25; Matt 5:45), or even to the abundant provision in the coming kingdom of Christ (Isa 65:17-25; John 14:2-3; Rev 22:1-2). This stirs within her a heart of thanksgiving and praise to God. Furthermore, as he devotes himself daily to read the word over her, memorize the Scriptures alongside her, sing psalms and hymns to her, pray to God for her, and bear burdens with her, he not only constantly fixes her gaze upon Christ, but fosters an environment for faith to grow. The husband's duty as the primary provider, therefore, helps to ensure that his wife's pursuit of joy in God constantly matures as he attends her physical and spiritual needs.

As the Spiritual and Physical Protector. The Bible also teaches that the husband's role as head over his wife includes the responsibility to be her spiritual and physical protector. Once again, Paul's words concerning the husband's role in God's household offer several details to validate this particular duty. When Paul commands the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church, he also explains *how* Christ loved the church, namely, by giving himself up on her behalf (Eph 5:25). By dying on behalf of his

⁸The latter of these two terms (θάλπω) also appears in his letter to Thessalonica, where he uses it to speak of a nursing mother nurturing her own children (1 Thess 2:7).

church, Christ serves as her spiritual and physical protector first in shielding her from the wrath of God (Rom 3:25-26; 5:8-10; Gal 3:13; 1 Thess 1:10). In the work accomplished on the cross, Christ also defeated the rulers and authorities, and transferred the believing community from the dominion of darkness to his own kingdom (Col 1:13; 2:13-15). By taking the initiative to lay down his life for the church, Christ took on the primary role as her protector, both from the danger of eternal fire and the power of darkness. Since the passage instructs husbands to love their wives “*as Christ loved the church,*” then they should find it quite fitting to take the initiative in protecting them, even if it means risking their own lives.⁹

At all costs, therefore, husbands should continually position themselves so that their wives receive dependable protection from both physical harm and spiritual dangers. As the husband fulfills this responsibility to his wife, he portrays for her much of what Christ is like in the protection of his people. This causes her to behold all that Christ is as her shield and protector, resulting in a joyful heart that can say with the psalmist, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe” (Ps 18:10), or with the Apostle, “The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thess 3:3).

As Encourager to Her Happiness. Finally, the Scriptures reveal that the husband’s role as head over his wife insists that he be an encourager to her happiness. This means that instead of quenching any desire she has to be happy, the husband becomes a catalyst for her happiness, always being sure to direct that happiness

⁹This does *not* mean that the husband’s protection of his wife, even at the expense of his own life, is either sufficient or effectual for her salvation. *Only* Christ is able to win protection from the wrath of God. We must be careful not to carry the analogous relationship in Ephesians too far.

Godward.¹⁰ This particular employment of the husband's role appears in several places within the entire canon. What a beautiful happiness is celebrated in the Garden after the Lord created the woman as a suitable helper for the man (Gen 2:23-25). Indeed, the man even uses a form of poetry to describe her. Deuteronomy 24:5 states, "When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year *and shall gladden his wife* whom he has taken." Although the legal material here is not binding on those under the New Covenant, it reveals God's own concern for the marriage relationship and provides wisdom concerning a husband's devotion to his wife, and in this case, her gladness. Wisdom testifies that the husband ought to delight himself in the wife of his youth (Prov 5:18-19). Even Solomon provides the readers of his Song of Songs with an intimate portrayal of the husband enchanting his wife with beautiful words (e.g. 4:1-15; 6:4-10).

In the NT, Paul instructs the husband not to deprive his wife of her conjugal rights, but to selflessly offer his body for her satisfaction (1 Cor 7:1-4). Only for a short period of time can there be mutual deprivation, and this must be for prayer (7:5). Paul also tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph 5:25-26). Without doubt, Christ devotes himself to his bride's happiness in the very act of presenting the redeemed church to himself in all her glory (Eph 5:27). In Christ, in glory, the church shall be forever happy with him (Rev 19:7-9; 21:9, 22-27; 22:5). Peter also adds to this gladsome marital theme by teaching husbands to live with

¹⁰That a wife is happy is not sufficient. Happiness does not necessarily mean godliness. For example, a wife could be happy with many earthly pleasures and still fail to be happy in God. This is why I add that all of her happiness must be directed "Godward;" that is, towards God and all that he is for her in Jesus Christ. As mentioned above, the Bible advocates joy *in* God, not joy in worldliness.

their wives in an understanding way, and *to honor them* as fellow heirs of the gracious gift of life (1 Pet 3:7).

The overarching testimony of the canon, therefore, gives husbands biblical warrant to increase daily the happiness of their wives. As husbands remind their wives of the pleasures in God's right hand (Ps 16:11), or of the joy found in the shadow of the Lord's wings (Ps 63:7), they will be reminded to delight themselves in the goodness of their God. As a husband honors his wife with uplifting words (1 Pet 3:7), or compliments her God-given beauty (e.g. Song of Sol 4:1-15), she will be encouraged to fight joylessness and strengthened to combat discouragement. Furthermore, as he makes conscious efforts to do various things she enjoys, and uses each one as an opportunity to point her Godward, she will not only find great joy in her husband's efforts, but also will learn to live a life in glad submission to God.

The Father's Duty in His Children's Pursuit of Joy in God

The aim of this paper is to explain the man's role in leading the entire family to pursue their joy in God. Only one aspect of this role has been covered thus far, namely, the delightful duty the husband has to his wife in their marital relationship. As the family grows, however, the responsibilities of the husband only continue to increase. Now with children, the husband takes on a second role in the family, that of a father.

Fatherhood grows out of the Lord's design for the family. In order to share his glory with the coming generations who inhabit and subdue the earth, God ordained the family to be the primary institution where parents model the *imago Dei* before their children and conform them to God's purpose to unite all things together in his son, Jesus

Christ (Gen 1:26-31; cf. Eph 1:9-10; 5:21-6:9).¹¹ God's ordained role for the father, therefore, begins with a commitment to lead his children in a manner that continuously points them to God's rule over creation and reign in all of life through Jesus Christ, both of which advocate their pursuit of joy in God.

The Father's Role as Head of the Household

Biblically, this responsibility works itself out through the father's role as head over the household. The Scriptures consistently assume that the father plays the primary role in leading the home. He is both head over his wife and head over the household. Daniel Block calls this "normative biblical disposition," "patricentrism."¹² That is, the entire family structure is centered around the father figure. He is the sun in the family's solar system so to speak. Several texts lend support to this conclusion.

God created Adam and gave him instructions well before the rest of the family (Gen 2:16-17). Repeatedly, when the Lord refers to the covenant between him and his people, or the iniquity of his people in failing to keep that covenant, he always mentions them in relation to "the fathers" (e.g. Exod 3:13; Lev 26:39; Deut 1:8, 11, 21). Whenever there is talk of certain inheritance passed on to a later generation, it is always recognized as the father's (e.g. Num 36:3-8; 1 Kgs; 21:3; Ezek 47:14). When noting unique

¹¹In Ephesians, Paul clearly ties his exhortatory material concerning God's household (5:22-6:9) to God's overall purpose in uniting all things together in Christ (1:9-10). As the risen and reigning Lord (1:20-23), Christ unites men to himself (2:1-10) and to each other (2:11-22). This is a direct result of the revelation of Messiah in the gospel to Jews *and* Gentiles (3:1-13), who, united in the Messiah, make up a new humanity that walks according to the Spirit (4:1-5:21). The instructions Paul gives concerning the household, therefore, stem from God's larger redemptive purposes and are included in this definition of the family accordingly. Andreas J. Köstenberger also makes this important contextual observation in his *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 66-73.

¹²Daniel I. Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003): 35.

memorials built to remind Israel of God's faithfulness, children will ask their *father* to explain it to them (e.g. Josh 4:21). In the list of exhortations to Christian households, Paul addresses *fathers* when he speaks of training their children (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21). These and others¹³ confirm that the father bears the responsibility as the head of the household.¹⁴

Like the husband's headship over his wife, a father's headship over his family is by no means domineering. Two places in the NT instruct fathers not to treat their children in ways that would exasperate them or cause them to be angry (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21). The family's benefit is always in view when fathers are instructed in relation to the home (e.g. Gen 18:19; Deut 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; Ps 78:4; Prov 19:18; 22:6; 29:27; Eph 6:2-4). By its very nature, the father's role as head over the household is sacrificial, selfless, and other-oriented. In serving the family with this kind of headship, the father's duty to his children's pursuit of joy in God becomes apparent. The Bible explains how fathers should practice this role of headship in relation to his children in at least three ways: (1) as the moral and spiritual instructor; (2) as the lead disciplinarian; and (3) as the spiritual and physical provider.

As the Moral and Spiritual Instructor. First, the Scriptures teach that the father fulfills his duty to his children when he serves as their primary instructor in all

¹³Andrew M. Davis lists several other texts throughout Deuteronomy mentioning fathers are the representative leaders in the family in "Fathers and Sons in Deuteronomy 6: An Essential Link in Redemptive History," *JBMW* 12 (Spring 2007): 23-25.

¹⁴Though the father serves his family as the head over the household, this does *not* mean mothers are not allowed to teach their children. The Scripture clearly states the importance of the mother's role in the rearing of children, especially in teaching them (Prov 1:8). Surely Timothy's mother, who was a believer, taught him the Scriptures (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). This wonderful truth about mothers, however, does not negate the role the father has the *primary* leader in the family.

moral and spiritual matters. Some of the OT texts mentioned in the previous section have already alluded to this conclusion. For example, God instructed Adam first (Gen 2:16-17), associated the covenant with the fathers (Exod 3:13), held the fathers responsible for the people's sin (Lev 26:39), and recognized their role as teacher (Josh 4:21). Moreover, when God established his covenant with Abraham, he did so in order that Abraham, as father, would "command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord" (Gen 18:19). Moses gave instructions for the various feasts to the elders, presuming that their children would be asking them to explain their theological significance (Exod 12:24-26; Deut 16:9-17).¹⁵ Furthermore, the mere fact that Moses often instructs the elders to teach the Lord's ways to their *sons* emphasizes the expected role of the men to become the representative moral and spiritual leaders in their households and in Israel (Deut 4:9; 6:7; 7:3-4; 11:19; 31:19).¹⁶ Proverbs too speaks of the father training his son in the way of wisdom or of the son following in his father's footsteps (Prov 3:12; 4:1; 6:20; 10:1; 23:22).

The NT also places a unique emphasis on this role of the father. After addressing how wives, husbands, and children relate to each other in God's household, Paul then charges *fathers* to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Children are to obey both parents, but fathers receive the specific

¹⁵Cf. Block, "Marriage and Family," 47.

¹⁶This conclusion regarding the relationship between fathers, their sons, and God's people, is Davis' argument ("Fathers and Sons in Deuteronomy 6," 23-26). Although some translate בני as "children" (e.g. ESV, HCSB, RSV, NIV), Davis argues that the context in Deuteronomy demands the preservation of "sons" (so NASB), so that we maintain a "multigenerational vision of family leadership" (Ibid., 25-26; cf. 30).

command to instruct.¹⁷ Thus, agreeing with the OT's revelation concerning moral and spiritual leadership in the home, Paul makes a similar demand concerning the role of fathers in the new humanity.¹⁸

According to the testimony of Scripture, there is no place for moral apathy and spiritual lethargy in the father's role. No, for the sake of the children, God designed his leadership role to be morally active and spiritually vivacious. Fathers teach their children the Lord's statutes, train them in righteousness, and tell them the stories of redemptive history. Moreover, they live as an example in the home which models before their children what their heavenly father is like and gives them a foundation for understanding him. As the father serves his children in this way, they will be led to make loving God their highest goal (Deut 6:5), and so increase their joy in him.

As the Lead Disciplinarian. Second, fathers who lead their children as the moral and spiritual instructor must also take on the responsibility as the lead disciplinarian. Children are born corrupt into a wicked world (Rom 5:12-14; Eph 2:1-3), and will run down paths of darkness unless someone teaches them to fear the Lord. God designed fathers to be the lead parent in building this healthy fear into their children. On several occasions, the biblical writers even use analogies that directly associate discipline with the role of the father (Deut 8:5; 2 Sam 7:14; Heb 12:7). They do so, because on a

¹⁷Without doubt, mothers will spend more time with their children than fathers, especially considering the other responsibilities fathers have to provide for their household (see below). Thus, much of the husband's instruction must come to his children *through* his wife as they work together to raise them. The previous section concerning the husband's duty to his wife, therefore, is crucial for childrearing.

¹⁸The Apostle's understanding concerning the father's role as the children's primary instructor also appears in 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12: "For you know how, *like a father with his children*, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you in order that you would walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory."

much larger scale it illustrates how the Lord disciplines his people. Fathers, therefore, are like the Lord when they train their children to fear the Lord.

Paul's words in Ephesians 6:4 also suggest the father shoulders this responsibility to discipline. He exhorts fathers, "Do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the *discipline* (παιδεία) and instruction (νουθεσία) of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). Although the παιδεύω word-group can refer to a more general sense of upbringing, the idea of discipline or chastisement is in view here (cf. 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9; Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11). Coupled together with the latter term, which is often associated with other forms of correction (1 Cor 10:11; Tit 3:10), Paul covers a broad range of disciplinary concerns for fathers as they conform their children to the obedience of Christ.

A father's discipline, therefore, attempts to accomplish at least two things in childrearing: (1) it serves to portray God's relationship to his people; and (2) it fosters a healthy fear that produces obedience to Christ. By faithfully and consistently disciplining their children, fathers not only help their children know God (e.g. in his justice and mercy), but also cultivate the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11). Knowing God, fearing God, and fleeing sin all encourage a child's pursuit of joy in God.

As the Spiritual and Physical Provider. Finally, the role of the father as head over his children summons him to selflessly and faithfully devote himself to their physical and spiritual well-being. Children are needful not only of life-resources, such as food, shelter, and clothing, but also of Gospel-resources, such as knowledge of God, an understanding of redemption, and biblical wisdom. Accordingly, a father should be attentive to his child's complete personhood, physical and spiritual dimensions alike.

The Bible teaches that fathers advance their children's entire well-being by serving them as provider. Again, Paul's words in Ephesians 6:4 are helpful:

“Fathers...*bring up* (ἐκτρέφετε) [your children] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” This imperative has implications for fathers to ensure their children receive daily physical nourishment and stability as well as spiritual training and education.¹⁹ The same word used here to more generally describe a father's actions in childrearing also appears in 5:29 with regard to the husband's care for his wife: “for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes (ἐκτρέφει) and cherishes it.”²⁰ Both places are telling of the man's familial responsibilities to provide for his wife/children's physical and spiritual needs.²¹

Additionally, 1 Timothy 5:8 provides father's with an even weightier message concerning their role as provider. Paul writes, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Thus, a Christian man disregarding provision for his own household proves something quite repulsive about his character: he is not even willing to live up to what pagans deem as normal “decency.”²² A text such as this one gives great incentive for Christian fathers to gladly provide for their households, for in such steady provision their children are enabled to survive and the church maintains a strong reputation.

¹⁹This broad conclusion is based on the semantic domain gathered from the LXX's use of ἐκτρέφω in 1 Kgs 12:8, 10; Is 23:4; 49:21; Prov 23:24.

²⁰Cf. O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 446.

²¹Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), §35.51.

²²William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 285.

As children live under a father who attempts to provide for them, foundations are established whereby they will be able to understand God better. In other words, the father's role as the lead physical and spiritual provider is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means in the attempt to bring their children into communion with the heavenly Father, who always meets his children's needs and never fails to do them well, especially in the overflow of Calvary. Each opportunity the father has to provide for his children also becomes an opportunity to share the gospel with them, which, doubtless, points them to pursue their joy in God.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Scriptures affirm the man's role in a Christian household to be vital in the family's pursuit of joy in God. By design, God established the husband as head over his wife and the father as head over the home. Within both of these roles, the man has several familial responsibilities through which he attempts to lead the family in a God-besotted manner. As he gladly fulfills his God-given duties to them, he also cultivates an environment for spiritual growth that consistently encourages the family to pursue their joy in God through Jesus Christ. When this happens, the aforementioned plague of male passivity and domination finds itself fleeting.

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