TRANSFORMED IN CHRIST

Ephesians



LifeGroups
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FALL 2026

Husbands

- Husbands are to lead their families as servant leaders
- Ephesians 5:22-25
- Paul's descriptions would have been countercultural to the Greco-Roman world.
- When they saw Christians this way, they would take notice.

Husbands

- God's design was revolutionary in the way it gave dignity and value to women, children and slaves.
- God's design wasn't new.
- It had been established in Creation, but it would have seemed revolutionary to the Gentile Christians who had been living in the Greco-Roman culture.

Husbands

- In Greco-Roman culture, the head of the household had *patria potestas* (the power of the father) which gave him absolute legal authority over all members of his household, including adult children, to do with as he saw fit.
- Adult children living with their parents was not unusual; they lived in multi-generational households with the oldest male as the head.



Patria potestas gave a **Roman** father life-and-death power. Under Twelve Tables tradition from **450 BC,** even a 40-year-old consul remained legally his father's propertyless child. He could not own, sue, or sell without permission. The right of **vitae** nec was rarely used, but its existence enforced absolute obedience for centuries.

Husbands

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Husbands

- But in God's design, the head of the household was commanded to lead his family with the humble, self-sacrificing love of Christ.
- This is just what Jesus said about all leadership positions – the leaders of the pagan world lord their authority over their people, but in God's design, leaders serve their people (Matthew 20:26).

Husbands

- Paul wasn’t challenging the authority structure of the household but the way the head of household used his power.
- In God’s design, headship isn’t the right to control, it’s the responsibility to lead.
- A responsibility defined by self-sacrifice.

Husbands

- Christ is our example of servant leadership.
- Although Christ possessed all divine authority, He humbled Himself by taking the form of a servant and willingly submitting to the Father’s will, even to the point of dying for us (Philippians 2:1–8)
- He did not come to earth to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45).

Husbands

- On the night of His death, Jesus demonstrated this for us.
- The One to whom every knee will bow Himself bowed down and washed the feet of His disciples, which was the job of the lowliest servant.
- He was their teacher, their master; they were His servants.
- They should have washed His feet, but He washed theirs.

Husbands

- It was in this context that Paul told wives to submit to their husband's leadership.
- Biblical submission does not mean enduring abuse or being blindly obedient to a man who does not love his wife as Christ loves His people. It is a wife's willing choice to place herself under her own husband's God-given leadership as an act of obedience to Christ.

Husbands

- Biblical submission does not mean women have lesser value or are inferior in any way.
- Both men and women are equally made in the image of God and equally heirs of salvation (Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; 1 Peter 3:7).
- Men and women are equal; they just have different roles in marriage. Husband and wife complement each other.

Husbands

- The phrase “as to the Lord” tells us that in a godly marriage, a wife’s submission is a service rendered to the Lord.
- It’s a joyful service in the same way God doesn’t want us to give begrudgingly or under compulsion but with a cheerful heart (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Christian Marriage

- Christian marriage is a tangible picture of Christ's love for His Church
- Ephesians 5:25-32
- Paul's description of living in Christian community (church and family) is framed by sacrificial love and humility because this is how Jesus loves us.

Christian Marriage

- Greco-Roman culture commonly understood a wife's submission in terms of the husband's authority and the assumed superiority of men.
- Paul, however, grounds his instructions in the relationship between Christ and His Church (5:22–32). The husband as head of the wife reflects how Christ is the head of His body, the Church, which Scripture also describes as His "bride" (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7–9; 21:9).

Christian Marriage

- Paul also used the “body” imagery to explain it. A Christian husband should care for his wife as he cares for his own body. Ephesians says he “feeds and cares” for it, or literally “nourishes and cherishes.”
- You naturally feed your body when it is hungry; you instinctively take care of your body and protect your body from harm.

Christian Marriage

- Paul used the terminology of a man and his wife being “one flesh,” drawing on God’s original design for marriage in creation (5:28–31; Genesis 2:24).
- Paul then explains that this one-flesh union points beyond itself to the relationship between Christ and His Church (5:32). A Christian marriage is a husband and wife united as one.

Christian Marriage

- As Christ is the head of the body He cares for, His Church, so a man is the head of the body he cares for, his family.
- Though husband and wife have different roles and responsibilities, they are one flesh, one team, working together for the good of the whole team, the whole family.
- When our marriages look like this, we create a picture for the world of Christ's love for His people.

Christian Marriage

- This is the same principle God described in the role of a king in the Old Testament. A king of Israel was not to be like pagan kings; he was not to rule on his own authority; he was a representative of God, the ultimate king.
- He was not to rule for his own glory or power but as a servant of his people. His goal was to ask what he could do for his people, not what they could do for him (Deuteronomy 17:14–20).

Christian Marriage

- TThe same is still true for us today when we love each other the way Jesus loves – humbly putting one another's needs ahead of our own, showing one another grace, forgiving one another, being patient and kind, and all the other qualities of agape love (1 Corinthians 13:4–8).
- Our marriages, our families, and our church communities can be a light to the world of the deep and wide love of Jesus.

Healthy Marriage

- Love and respect are crucial to a healthy marriage
- Ephesians 5:32-33
- Paul talked about Christian marriage reflecting Christ's love for the Church and ended by saying it is a "profound mystery."

Healthy Marriage

- In Scripture, a “mystery” is not something unknowable but a truth previously hidden in God’s plan that is now revealed through divine revelation.
- Paul was saying marriage was designed from the beginning to point us to the relationship between Christ and His people.
- We just didn’t understand that until God revealed it to us.

Healthy Marriage

- Marriage was never just about companionship or building a social institution.
- Paul reveals that God's design for marriage, established at creation, ultimately points beyond itself to the union between Christ and His Church – a relationship marked by Christ's sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:25, 31–32).

Healthy Marriage

- Marriage is a picture of the Gospel; the roles of husband and wife point to it in different ways.
- Husbands are called to love sacrificially, reflecting how Christ gave Himself for the Church.
- Wives are called to respond with respect and submission, reflecting the Church’s joyful obedience to Christ.

Healthy Marriage

- The imagery of marriage runs through the whole story of the Bible.
- It begins in Genesis, continues through God's relationship with Israel, reaches its fullest depiction in Christ and the Church, and culminates in the wedding feast of the Lamb, after which God will live with His people forever.

Healthy Marriage

- The “one flesh” union established at creation was always intended to foreshadow the greater union between Christ and His people.
- This is why Paul called it a mystery, a hidden truth later revealed.
- Adam and Eve could not have known their marriage was a prophetic picture.

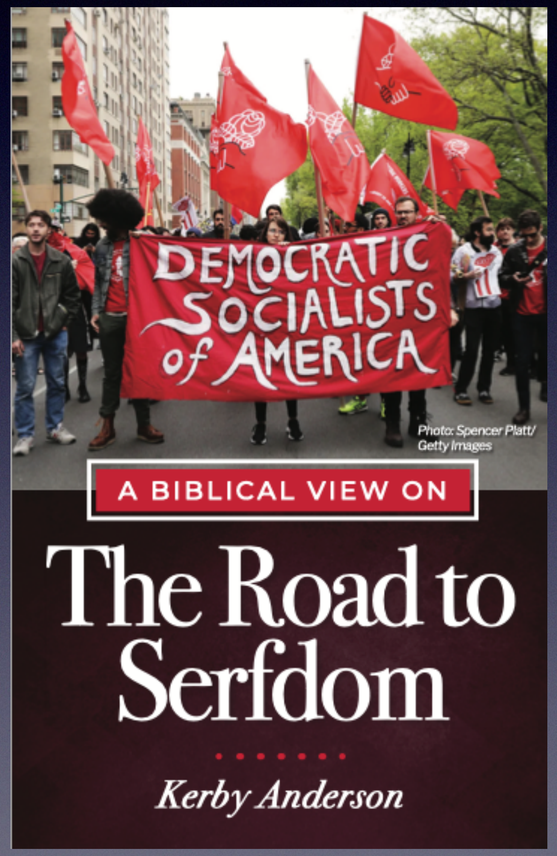
Healthy Marriage

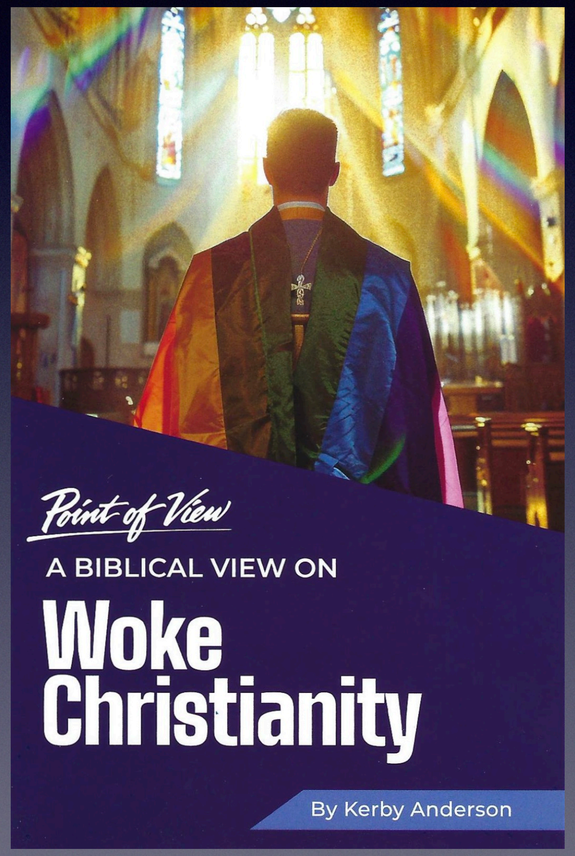
- In the final verse of this passage, Paul brought his teaching on marriage to a practical conclusion.
- Just as Christ leads His Church, husbands are called to lead their wives through selfless, sacrificial love.
- Just as the Church submits to Christ, wives are called to submit to their husbands' leadership.

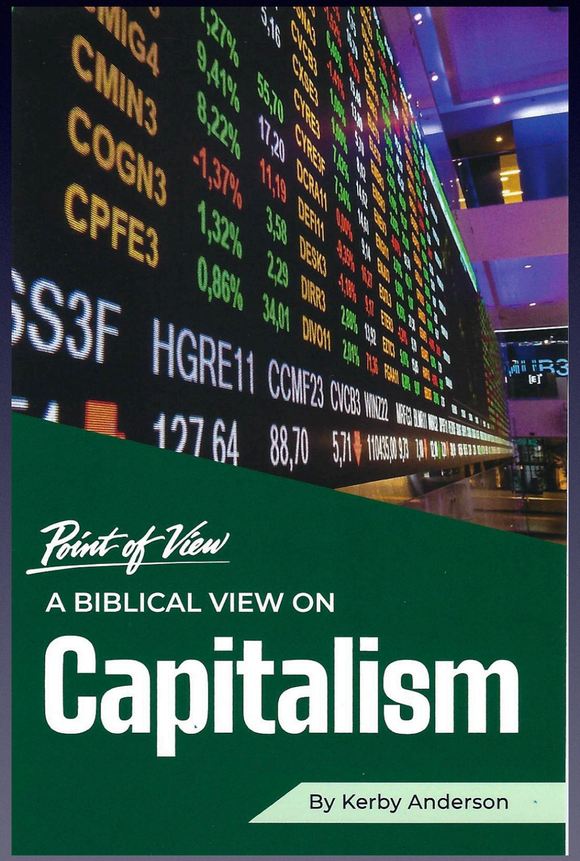
Healthy Marriage

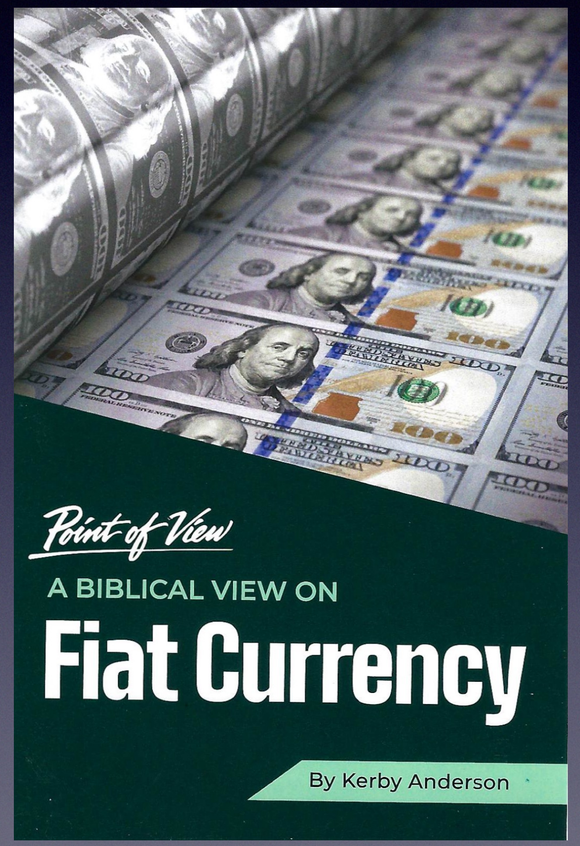
- This does not mean wives are exempt from loving their husbands (Titus 2:4) or husbands from honoring their wives (1 Peter 3:7).
- Paul places particular emphasis on the responsibilities of each spouse within God's design for marriage.
- Marriage is an opportunity to display the relationship between Christ and His Church.

Booklets


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