

Let the Men be Leaders Supplement

Woodlands Community Church

Date: 10/06/2024

Speaking: Rhys Lamont

Book: *Let the Men Be Men* by Chris Mueller

Chapter #2: Let the Men be Leaders (Loving Headship Under Christ)

Scripture: "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself." Ephesians 5:28

Summary of Chapter One:

- 1. In our study last time we considered, as an introduction, the crisis of masculinity and the biblical solutions Chris will seek to develop throughout his book.** We discussed together the importance of framing the entire study in light of our calling as followers of Jesus Christ in the three-fold spheres of family, society and church. Each one of these spheres interact with each other and so how we fare in one will heavily influence the other. We want to have a biblical view of our role as men in each of them and be both aware of and so reject the competing worldly voices which often only cause further confusion to God's design for men.
- 2. In Chapter 1 Chris gave the below five examples as reasons for the confusion of biblical masculinity.**
 1. The first confusion is a **societal push towards unisex or no-sex ideals.**
 2. The second confusion is a **normalisation of the LGBTQ+ movement.**
 3. The third reason for the confusion is a **breakdown of marriage.**
 4. A fourth reason for the confusion is that **social media, entertainment, education, and news outlets routinely distort biblical standards.**
 5. A fifth and final reason for the confusion, is due to **Bible teachers and pastors not discussing it clearly enough.**
- 3. As a way out of the confusion, Chris made this statement, "Only through God's Word and by the power of His Holy Spirit can men and women know who God wants them to be. Only if we approach the Word of God with an attitude of total humility, submission, and obedience can we swim against the tide of our society and live out God's design for us."**

INTRODUCTION

Opening thoughts

- 1. As we can see by the below graph, many people in New Zealand and in the modern Western world think very little of marriage.** Few appreciate or recognize God's design for

the marital relationship. Biblical marriage is greatly misunderstood today, and many think of it as a patriarchal misogyny which forces the submission and subservience of woman, and as abusive. Marriage is becoming entirely dismissed and frowned upon. You can even detect this shift in how men and women in relationships refer to each other. It is less common now to hear husband or wife, rather we just hear "partner." Which is, for sure, just another regress to gender-neutral norms. There has been an immense breakdown of the understanding of men and women in union with one another through marriage, and it occurs at societies peril.

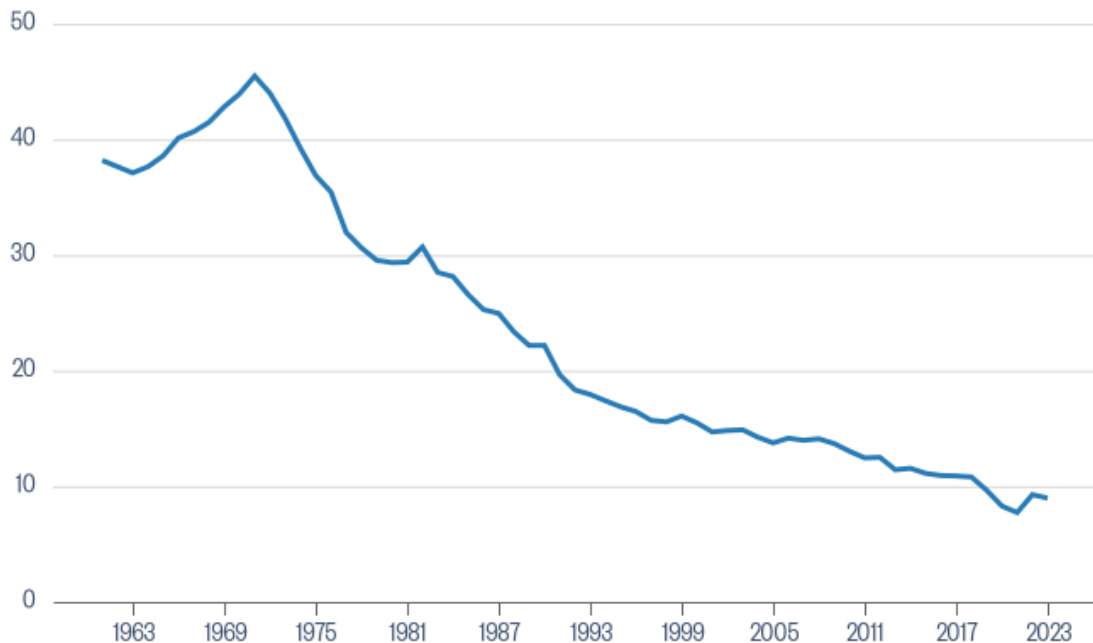
Q1: How might we respond if somebody said to us that the institution of marriage is abusive and archaic?

- 2. The state of confusion in the lives of many Christians in marriage typically boils down to a misunderstanding divine design.** Chris takes us back to God's original blueprint, found from the early chapters of Genesis. In Genesis we see God's creation of the first man and woman. In fact the text shows us that God created man and women with purpose and with roles for their relationship together. This ties into a key thought we raised last time which stated that in order to make any progress in this study we have to recognize that male and femaleness extends beyond biological differences and into the realm of leadership and headship. The scripture states as part of the creation account, **“And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”** (Genesis 2:20). When we consider Paul's commentary making reference to Genesis we see that the creation of the woman was for the sake of the man, and not vice versa **“For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man. For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.”** (1 Corinthians 11:7–9). And unfortunately for that passage in particular many strip it of its context and read twisted ideas into it.
- 3. In this second chapter, Chris will move from looking at male and female in relationship pre-fall and post-fall.** He will show the prerequisite to recovering masculine headship in marriages as contingent upon the work of the gospel, out of which we can practice and seek to fulfill our divinely instituted role in marriage.

General marriage rate for New Zealand

1961–2023, number of marriages and civil unions per 1000 eligible adults in the population

Provider: Stats NZ



Q2: Judging by the decline of marriages, not to mention the divorce rate, and rising number of single parent homes, what does this tell us about society at larges view of masculine and feminine relationships?

HEADSHIP IN ITS ORIGINAL DESIGN AND FALLEN DISTORTION

THE ORDER OF MARRIAGE IN CREATION

1. **After God Created Adam he is immediately in a special role in God's new creation and he is given work and he is given the role of cultivating and keeping God's sanctuary called the Garden of Eden.** He is also given a law before him to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He begins naming the animals, performing his work as a steward of God's creation in a priestly role.
2. **But God sees that he is alone. And God creates a helper for him.** In other words, one to come alongside the leadership and authoritative role that God has given him. The headship of the man would provide for the woman. The nature of the relationship that they have together is understood in the song **"Then the man said, "This one finally is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman, Because this one was taken out of Man.""** (Genesis 2:23)"
3. **We ought to see that the way that God established their first human marriage relationship between man and woman was one of harmonious unity.** Before sin entered the world, there was a perfect union of masculine and feminine as God had originally intended. Chris Mueller says, **"There was no animosity, no struggle, and no conflict in this glorious union—only a healthy partnership of supernatural oneness, which reflects the**

nature of the Triune God Himself: each Divine Person is unique, but there is one God (1 Corinthians 11:3)."

4. **Adam's leadership and Eve's submission would have occurred in a perfect co-existence.** It was complementary. Adam was not complete without Eve, and Eve was not complete without Adam. Together they were one flesh, and together work out and keep God's garden sanctuary, while maintaining their distinctive male and femaleness in that Adams was the covenantally assigned headship and work and Eve his helpmate.

Q3: Discuss the relevance of Chris's opening illustration, which talks about the time when he saw a mutated two-headed cow and how he applies it to marriage at the opening of the chapter.

THE ORDER OF MARRIAGE AFTER THE FALL

1. **Obviously we don't get many lines of scripture until the first attack on the family unit.** We can't overestimate the importance of understanding Satan's desire to unseat the headship of Adam. A great majority of society's woes find their way back to the family. Satan loves to destroy the family. Satan loves to destroy Christian families the most. When God's design is twisted, society suffers, and people suffer, the breakdown of the home.
2. **But the account of Genesis wants us to understand that it's not so much simply about Satan coming after this first family unit, but it is the headship of Adam.** His leadership is challenged by Satan. And how does Satan do this? He goes straight to Eve, to cut out Adam's voice. We see this in the biblical text, **"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1)** And we know this was Satan attacking the headship of Adam by going to the woman for his deceptions. Because later, when the Lord brings Adam and Eve to account, it is Adam who the Lord comes looking for, **"Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9).** Moreover the Bible looks at the fall of Adam and Eve into sin as a matter of Adams headship over the entire human race. In other words he as the federal or covenant head of Eve and the entire human race, is ultimately held responsible by God. **"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12).**
3. **Chris speaks of the consequences of the intrusion of Satan's deception in the marriage in this way,** "Because of the fall recorded in Genesis 3, today we have radical women's liberation movements. Because of the fall recorded in Genesis 3, we have the existence of male chauvinism. Because of the fall, there is pornography, homosexuality, and transgender confusion. All of these and more are manifestations of sin, fallenness, depravity, and the curse."
4. **We can actually see how part of God's curse from the fall stated that the desire of the woman would now be to rule her husband.** **"To the woman He said... Your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." (Genesis 3:16b).** I've included comments

here by John MacArthur to help with understanding of this phrase. He states that the "desire" of the woman here "for" her husband is a desiring to rule him, and so this perfect harmonious balance pre-fall is now skewed. "Just as the woman and her seed will engage in a war with the serpent, i.e., Satan and his seed (v. 15), because of sin and the curse, the man and the woman will face struggles in their own relationship. Sin has turned the harmonious system of God-ordained roles into distasteful struggles of self-will. Lifelong companions, husbands and wives, will need God's help in getting along as a result. The woman's desire will be to lord it over her husband, but the husband will rule by divine design (Eph. 5:22–25). This interpretation of the curse is based upon the identical Hebrew words and grammar being used in 4:7 "...sin is lying at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7) to show the conflict man will have with sin as it seeks to rule him."

5. **Thus, as we can see things are not in very good shape following the fall!** Our relationship with God was severed in that garden on that day, but so was our relationship with one another, and particularly in marriages, many of which look a lot like a power struggle! And so, understanding how things began and how things then became, set us on the path to recover God's intent and design in the way we pursue marriage. Be it those married now or those hoping to be married in the future.

Q4: Do you agree or disagree with this idea that we can observe and prove Adam's headship as we see Satan going to the woman, and not to Adam, with his lies?

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL ON MARRIAGE

1. **Chris now moves on in the book to outline five ways our sin can affect the way we exercise headship in marriage that we must fight against.** We want to come at this from the perspective of the masculine role. Obviously, sin deeply affects how women view their role in a marriage, but we are focused here on recovering biblical masculinity.
 1. **Some men will become dictators in their marriage as a sinful expression of headship.** On this point, Chris says, "In some Christian homes, men act more like frustrated drill sergeants who run around with a biblical club saying, "I am the leader of this home!" Obviously, biblical headship and leadership has nothing to do with a dictatorial rule.
 2. **Some men will exercise their headship in a way that they are revered.** I think of this point by Chris as like the kind of man who wants his wife to basically worship him. To kiss his feet when he walks in the door. This will lead to headship based on fear and is deeply flawed because the wife of such a man and the family will not truly respect him from their hearts. It is to bypass trust and respect.
 3. **Some men will want to become the sole decision makers in their marriages and suppress their wives.** Men are typically built, personality-wise, as more dominant and assertive. We are naturally more prone to taking charge and "fixing problems". We have to be careful that we don't begin to rule the roost and cut out our wives from

the decision making process. Remember that in the pre-fall created order, it wasn't just that Adam was alone, he needed a helper for the task God gave him! So, a godly husband should involve their wives in the various decision-making processes. And men may be surprised when they see how when a wife truly recognises that her husband is trying to draw her into the process, that it makes her feel respected and valued, and she will naturally fall under your leadership out of that process.

4. **Some men will think of themselves as an infallible authority source.** Headship does not mean you get everything right. The responsibility of stewardship for your home falls to you. But you are not perfect. And many times men you'll have to exercise leadership by confessing that you were wrong and lead your wife out of the problem you created in the first place.
5. **Some men will think of their headship as making them a superior species.** This can be tremendously dangerous. We have completely misunderstood and lost sight of godly biblical headship if we think men are superior to women. Or did God make a mistake? Were they not made to be one flesh? Were they not incomplete without each other? So we must treat carefully.

Q5: Are there any of these five points which you personally resonate with or would like to discuss?

HEADSHIP UNDER CHRIST, REDEEMED AND RESTORED

THE PREREQUISITES OF BIBLICAL HEADSHIP

1. **Chris at this point will turn to a key chapter in Ephesians 5:22-33, and stresses that before we can evaluate our marriage in relation to God's Word, we must first be a man who is in Christ!** Our personal salvation matters first, then we can look at how that salvation works out in real life such as modelling Christ within a godly marriage. For instance, in Ephesians 5, Paul calls husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church! We can't possibly love our wives as Christ loved the church if we are not in Christ at all! Chris says "These earlier chapters teach that salvation causes a dramatic change in our lives. Ephesians 1–3 describes a person who was spiritually dead and then miraculously made alive. That kind of salvation goes beyond being "religious" or merely professing to be a Christian. Instead, it means the husband must be a born-again believer who has Christ living in him and empowering him through the Holy Spirit to live as a Christian by obeying the written Word of God."
2. **This is incredibly important for us to understand because the Christian life is not simply a moral code of conduct, do this, do that, do this, do that, rather it's as Chris calls dependent obedience.** For it is only in Christ as born-again believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, living according to God's Word, that we can ever hope to exhibit the kind of qualities of a godly man to lead successful marriages.

THE PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL HEADSHIP

- 1. The text of Ephesians 5:22-33 reads as follows,** “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.** This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:22–33).
- 2. We find in this passage a central ethic of love, and specifically it is emulating a love that Christ has shown already for his bride the church, in the gospel.** Chris develops five key points from this section of Scripture.
 - 1. A man's love for his wife must be sacrificial in nature.** Chris says, “The word Paul uses here for “love” is *agapao*, which is the strongest, most intimate term for love. Yes, there is to be authority in a marriage. There is to be one who is the head, and there is to be one who follows. But verse 25 does not say “Husbands, rule your wives” or “Husbands, subjugate your wives” or “Husbands, command your wives.” Rather, the text says this: “Husbands, love your wives.” *First, this love must be limitless.* If we want our wives to fall under our headship and authority, so as we are not in a constant power struggle, we must ensure on our part we are demonstrating a sacrificial love to make it easier for her. Our love must be of such a sacrificial nature it emulates Christ, who gave up his own life for the church. A man is to treasure his wife to the point that he is willing even to die for her. That's not to say he is to worship her, but to love her. And so this sacrificial love has no limits. *But secondly, as a sacrificial love, it must therefore provide.* Men must make wise decisions financially, which will see them be able to free their wives for their own special callings inside of the family unit. Chris says, “A mother of young children can keep house (1 Timothy 5:14) A wife can be a worker at home (Titus 2:5) A wife and mother can watch over the ways of her household (Proverbs 31:27)” Now, your wife may want to work and can be encouraged to work, and many have the ability to bring in really good income in a modern economy, but we also must consider what happens when children come along. And be very careful that material means are not being put ahead in front of the raising and nurture of children, who basically require full-time care from their parents very young. Young men should be challenged to consider what they are spending their time doing and should be encouraged by fathers and other men in the church to start

thinking about what they can do to provide for a family as young as possible. If you're a father with a teenage son, you should be helping him to understand and grow into this frame of mind, where he is making decisions about study, developing skills which can help him provide value to society and so provide financially for a family. *Thirdly, Chris says that a sacrificial love will repent first.* You must be willing to say when you're wrong, and ensure that nothing comes between your marital oneness, and don't keep a list of offences.

2. **A man's love for his wife must be a responsible love.** You must view your headship in light of responsibility. It's not about power, it's about duty. Just as elders of churches will give an account to Christ for the flock, they were given headship over, so husbands will one day answer for the way he shepherded his family. So you must be careful to not become embittered against your wife or harsh towards her. **“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.” (Colossians 3:18–19).** Don't say thoughtless, careless things. Don't be a fault finder. Don't be impatient. Don't suddenly start avoiding your wife, or stop loving her. Honour her as far more precious than expensive jewels. Chris says of his own marriage, **“In forty years of marriage, (that’s 14,600 days or 262,800 waking hours) I may have asked my wife to submit to my decision only twice. A husband asking his wife to submit to his decision should be extremely rare. When a Christian couple pursues God’s Word by: (1) walking in God’s Spirit; (2) seeking to live out their biblically designed roles; (3) trusting and respecting each other; and (4) desiring to be one in marriage; there will rarely be a need to impose submission.”**
3. **A man's love for his wife must be a purifying love.** To have headship over your family and wife, is to seek their very best. Their purity is our chief concern. And so as a Christian man the goal and purpose is to lead your wife closer to the Lord Jesus. You want to keep, as Chris says, her feet clean from the dirt of the world. Maintain her holiness, virtue and purity. Don't join her in sin, or compromise yourselves together in sin. We often forget one of the secondary points emerging out of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, and implies that men should have the ability to teach and discuss the scripture with their wives. Or else why would Paul instruct the woman to ask their husbands at home? **“The women are to keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.” (1 Corinthians 14:34–35)** So the scriptures must permeate our marriages. You must take your wife to church. You must pray with her. You must read scripture with her. You must pray together for your family. Nurture your wife in Christ.
4. **A man's love for his wife must be sensitive and caring.** Just as Paul said in 5:28, we must love our wives as our own bodies. On this point we must remember that we are considered by God to be one flesh with our wives. We are operating together. We are still individuals, of course, but inseparable. God pronounces the man one flesh with his wife and so we ought to act like it! Just as Christ provides the church with all she needs for growth and nourishes her, God is telling husbands the same thing. To supply

their wives with all they need to flourish and thrive in accordance with God's intention for their role in life and the marriage. **“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)** Typically, women are smaller and physically weaker than men. And so a biblical man must keep this in mind in the way he treats his wife, and be careful. He must ensure that the his wife's feminine gentleness is nurtured and not cut down or trampled upon. And God's warning to us is that literally a believing mans prayers can be hindered if we fail on our part to live in obedience to God with respect to our wives. Now this isn't to say things can't go wrong inside a marriage. And so even if a man, a Christian man, finds himself ostracized from his wife he must make sure that on his part his hands are clean and he is still seeking to fulfill his duty in as much as he can.

5. **A man's love for his wife must be an unbreakable and eternal love.** Attempting to break the marriage bond is to defy God. Divorce, on the basis of adultery and desertion, is biblically permissible, but God's ultimate purpose and desire for marriage is that it be a permanent fixture, or as the vows say, until death do us part. If we were to ask this hypothetical question, a man might have, how do I know if I married the right woman? The answer is to look at the wedding band on your hand.
6. **A man's love for his wife must be joyous and intimate.** There is another important passage in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 to help on this point, **“But because of sexual immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Corinthians 7:2–5, LSB)** A man of God must consider his wife the standard of beauty. He is completely fixated and focused on her. There is no comparison for the beauty of your wife, because she is the only woman God has made for you. Your wife is your ideal woman, and your personal standard of feminine beauty. Setting these standards for yourself will ensure that the sexual intimacy with your wife is as exhilarating God intended it to be for both. God's purposes for sex, while of course, are not beyond child-rearing, are much more than that, simply consider the book of Songs of Solomon in the bible! It is a beautiful gift of God in which husband and wife can express the depth of their love for each other. And this level of intimacy, Chris says, does not happen right away. Unlike the world's ways of sexual experience, which are perverted and cheap imitations, a godly marriage and true intimacy between a husband and wife will deepen over time as there is a growing maturity in Christ, greater sensitivity and trust toward each other, communication, and intentional work on their marriage. The lesson here for young and single men is to learn to control one's natural passions and desires, so that when you are provided the privilege of marriage, you will be able to direct your desires

towards your wife alone. If we are uncontrolled sexually going into marriage, there is a great danger of harm to your wife. Your loyalties will be divided between serving sin, and your wife. You are serving self, flesh, and sin rather than God and the wife that he has given you. Chris says, "For the young single man, becoming a faithful, committed, and godly spiritual head of his wife does not happen instantly on the wedding day. Instead, it takes years of spiritual commitment through learning the Word, praying, cultivating his giftedness in the church, and walking in the Spirit. And it starts during the years before marriage when he is still single, as he pursues the biblical qualities of manhood which the coming chapters will unfold."

Q6: Which of these six principles of love towards one's wife sticks out to you the most as it relates to the central idea of recovering biblical manhood and marriage? Why do you think that is?

Q7: Can you think of any times in your life when you have observed a Christian man treating his wife in a certain way, that you have seen this kind of love Chris is talking about?

Q8: What are some of the key takeaways for a young single man from this chapter?