

HTPC Marriage Class- *Reforming Marriage*

Week 4: April 10, 2022

Chapter 1: “A Practical Theology of Marriage”; Chapter 2: “Headship and Authority”

Chapter 1: A Practical Theology of Marriage

1. **Foundations** (pp. 13-14). Wilson says a biblical view of marriage is an aspect of a biblical view of all things. How might this truth challenge ways in which we actually live our lives?

2. **The Covenant** (pp. 14-18). A. "Paul teaches us that we ought self-consciously to think of our marriages as dim pictures of the central marriage, that of Christ to His church. Depending on the marriage, that declaration is made poorly or well, but it is always made" (p. 12). This statement is a two-edged sword. Discuss its positive and convicting nature. B. Without getting into the details of the last name discussion, what important point does Wilson drive home? (esp. 1 Corinthians 11:11-12) (pp. 13-16)

3. **Purposes of Marriage** (See Westminster Confession of Faith, 24:2: "Marriage was ordained for the *mutual help* of husband and wife, for the *increase of mankind* with legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for *preventing of uncleanness*.”)

A. **Helpful Companionship** (p. 19). "Marriage was created by God to provide companionship in the labor of dominion. [The man] needs a companion suitable for him in the work to which God called him. He is called to the work and must receive help from her. She is called to the work through ministering to him. He is oriented to the task, and she is oriented to him." (p. 19) This quote likely raises some questions. Taking into consideration the biblical freedoms and parameters that exist for married couples, what important truth does Wilson drive home which is increasingly forgotten in our day?

B. **Godly Children**. When you exchanged vows (or if you do exchange vows), did you think of yourselves that day as a new family which would, Lord willing, add other members? (p. 20)

C. **Sexual Protection**. (pp. 20-21) 1 Corinthians 7:2-5: "2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." A. Discuss qualitative and quantitative protection. B. A Christ-centered marriage is one in which physical intimacy is rightly defined. How does this reality accent both Christ and life in his creation?

Chapter 2: “Headship and Authority”

1. Inescapable Headship (pp. 23-26) *Indicatives and Imperatives*

A. What is the relationship between the indicative and the imperative regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our lives in relationship to that Gospel? Why is this essential no matter what area of Christian life we are considering?

B. What, specifically, do you see as the practical implications of the indicative and the imperative matters applied to your marriage relationship? (E.g., Ephesians 5:23) That is, what does the "inescapable leadership" of the husband remind us about marriage? (See especially pp. 24-25.)

2. Love and Respect (pp. 26-28)

Qualifier: I greatly(!) appreciate Wilson's willingness to accent the biblical structure of marriage, something modern evangelicalism is increasingly reluctant to do. But I cannot agree with his basically unqualified suggestion that the husband only loves his wife and the wife only respects her husband. "Love your neighbor as yourself..." is a universal command and of course applies to wives as they relate to their husbands, just as the Golden Rule requires that we respect the person with whom we are interacting as we would hope they would respect us; that is especially true for husbands as they relate to their wives.

With the qualifier above in mind, what does it look like for a husband love his wife sacrificially? Again, be very specific. (Truth is a very specific thing.) And what does it look like for a wife to honor and submit to her husband "in everything"?

3. She Was Made for Him (pp. 29-32)

Qualifier 2.0: I think Wilson way overstates his case here, while I also so appreciate the important case that needs to be made about headship. A few things to keep in view: 1. Absolute equality between man and woman by virtue of creation. 2. Marriage as a good creation ordinance in which Eve was given as a helper suitable to Adam. But the wife is called to help her husband, not to help all men. Crucial distinction here. 3. Man and woman equally fallen. 4. Man and woman equally redeemed (Galatians 3:27). 5. Headship for the man is within the marriage relationship (and by extension, in the family of God, the church), not within society more broadly. There is tremendous freedom in the wider world of relationships and callings which we must preserve while also accenting fully the structures of the home and church.

How can we walk the biblical tightrope in this area of thought? What might it look like in action?

4. Responsibility

Do you agree that destructive, overbearing men and abdicating men are two sides of the same coin? Do you agree that men are responsible for all of the problems in the home? (Wives, you are not allowed to answer. (☹))

5. Weaker Vessels (pp. 33-36)

Qualifier 3.0: I do not agree with Wilson's take on "weaker." See comments above. I believe that a woman is a weaker vessel by virtue of having placed herself in a position of vulnerability in submitting to a co-heir.

A. In what ways has marriage amplified the person you are, for good or ill?

B. Men, in what ways have you turned your marriage into a competition? Discuss the terrible tendency of "projecting" back onto a wife a problem of which he husband is guilty.)

6. The Level Playing Field.

7. The Servant's Heart.

8. The Evangelical Husband.