



Introduction:

Husbands, do you want to be victorious? I know you do. Nobody gets married with the goal of failing. Nobody gets married saying, "I'm going to be a rotten husband and have a rotten wife and raise rotten kids and just stink up this whole family thing." The problem is too many of us get into marriage with very dim ideas about what the victory is. Too many of us think victory means having that butterflies-in-the-stomach feeling for the rest of our lives. Most of us Christians at least have the notion that if we get to heaven at the end of it, we're victorious. And while heaven is a great goal, even this falls short. God did not establish marriage simply so we could get to heaven. God established marriage to be a Passion Play to the world (if you haven't heard or read "The Meaning in Marriage," preached on March 1, 2015, you need to do so to fully understand this victory). That is, God established marriage as a dramatization to our children and to the world of Christ's sacrificial and saving relationship with His bride, the church (cf. **Ephesians 5:22-33**). The meaning in marriage is to so conduct ourselves as to display the sacrifice of Christ and the submission of the church in such a way as to protect, preserve, promote, and propagate God's sanctuary with man throughout the whole world.

So, if this is the meaning of marriage, what does it take to be a victorious husband? As **Ephesians 5:22-33** says, it takes presenting Christ, His love, and His sacrifice to the world through your treatment of your wife. It takes being the head of that relationship, not with the privileges that seem to be entailed by headship in a fallen world or the mistaken rights that are often demanded by despotic husbands, but rather with the responsibility required by God's economy and the accountability demanded by Jesus's order. Let's examine where Adam failed initially and where Christ succeeded ultimately to learn what is the victory for husbands today.

Discussion:

I. Adam's Failure

- A. **Romans 5:12** has long surprised me. "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man..." Wait, didn't sin come into the world through one woman? Didn't Eve commit the first sin? And yet, the entrance of sin into the world is not laid at Eve's feet, but Adam's.
- B. Additionally, have you noticed that when God came into the Garden after Adam and Eve ate from the wrong tree, God doesn't call out to Eve but to Adam? And even more than that, after the fall, when God is kicking the first couple out of the Garden, notice what is said in **Genesis 3:22-24**. God was worried that the man would eat of the tree of life. So he drove the man from the Garden. Why this emphasis on the man? Obviously they were both driven from the Garden, but the emphasis is on the man. Why?
- C. Because the man was created first as the head. He was the leader. It was his job to guard and serve the garden. The woman was his helper, but he was responsible.
 1. Here is where we struggle. Having been brought up in our Euro/American Western culture, we think individually. We see the individual as the basic unit that makes up society. Therefore, we see man as responsible for himself and woman as responsible for herself (and of course, there is individual responsibility; nothing I'm going to teach absolves Eve from her sin or sets modern wives free to sin simply because their husbands do). But if we want to truly understand what is going on here and what is presented in **Ephesians 5:22-33**, we can't think from this individualistic mindset.
 2. The Eastern and Semitic mindset in which **Genesis** and **Ephesians** are written did not view the individual as the basic unit of society. They saw the family as the basic unit. Because of our western individualistic mindset we often look back at what the Bible says about men and women and think it is anti-woman and misogynistic. Once we can grasp that the Bible is viewing the family as the basic unit suddenly we recognize that the discussion of roles in the unit is not granting more importance or greater value to one over the other. It is simply granting separate roles. This mindset sees the man and woman as one unit.
 3. In fact, that is what **Ephesians 5:28-31** is saying. Let me ask you this. In your physical being, which is more important, your head or your body? Which one has more value? Which one is worth more? Which one are you willing to do without? Though the role of each is different, together they make up the unit without which you couldn't exist. That is how that eastern mind views the family—a unit that is made up of utterly essential, completely valuable, and equally worthy parts. That is why the ultimate outcome of the marriage is to become "one flesh," which is ever so much more than a euphemism for having sex. It

highlights that woman was made from the body of man and the path of marriage is getting to a unity that is so complete it mirrors the one flesh Adam had before Eve was taken from His side.

- D. When we recognize this single societal unit of the family with man as head and woman as body we can easily see why Adam is held responsible. While we know of birth defects, diseases, and syndromes that cause the body to be unresponsive to the head, we all recognize that the norm is when the body acts, the head is responsible for it. And that is the point in **Genesis 3**. Eve may have eaten first, but Adam as the head of the unit was responsible. He was the one to be called to account and face the brunt of the judgment. No doubt, the rest of his family would suffer when judgment was brought against him, but the judgment was against him.
- E. In **Genesis 2:15-17**, God placed Adam in the Garden, charged him to work and keep it and then gave him the law. "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (ESV).
1. Eve was not there to hear that. She was created after. Adam was responsible to pass this law along to her. Adam was actually established to be God's priest for his family.
 2. Remember what we noticed in *The Meaning of Marriage* from **Ezekiel 28:12-19**. In that parallel between the fall of the king of Tyre and the fall of Adam, we recognized that Eden was the first Sanctuary of God, the first tabernacle and temple, the first meeting place between God and man. Which actually makes Adam God's first priest. We even noted **Ezekiel 28:13**, with the precious stones as a covering that relates back to **Exodus 28:17-20** and the ephod worn by the priests.
 3. Look in **Hosea 4:4-9**. As God was rebuking Israel for their spiritual adultery, He takes up an oracle against the priests. Why? Because it was their job to pass along the knowledge of God and His law to the people. But the priests had rejected knowledge and the people had followed suit. Therefore, God would judge the priests and the people. Interestingly, in **Hosea 6:7**, God relates Israel and Judah's transgression to Adam's fall saying, "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me." And then ties it back to the priests' sins again in **vs. 9**.
 4. Adam was responsible as the priest for his family to listen to God's will, teach God's will, hold his family to God's will, protect his family from attacks on God's will, and then take responsibility when his family fell short of God's will.
- F. But Adam failed. In **Genesis 3:1-6**, the subtle and crafty serpent questioned what Eve had heard from Adam. "Did God really say you can't eat from any tree in the Garden?" Eve repeated what she had been told. "We can eat from any tree except one. If we eat it or touch it we'll die." But then Satan lays the trap, "You won't die. God knows when you eat of it you'll be more like Him." Eve looked at the fruit and saw that it was like the other trees, a delight to the eyes and good for food (cf. **Genesis 2:9**). Having heard that it would make her wise, she is intrigued and makes the wrong choice. She takes the fruit, eats it. Then she gives to her husband who is "with her" and he ate. Did you see that? Her husband who was with her. Some suggest this is just a reference to the fact that her husband was with her in the garden. However, to me that makes no sense. We already know Adam is in the garden with her. I cannot absolutely prove Adam was with Eve throughout this whole temptation. However, it is interesting to note that when God gave the charge in **Genesis 2:16-17** the word "you" is the singular second person pronoun. But when Satan questions the woman, "you" is plural as if he is talking to more than one person. Somewhere in this Adam is present, if not for the serpent's questioning, at least for Eve's fall. And Adam does nothing. I can imagine Adam, in typical male fashion, thinking, "Well, I've told her what to do, if she wants to do something else, that's her business." He watches it happen and then when his wife gives him fruit from the tree, instead of listening to what God had told him directly, he listened to whatever argument his wife made and he ate as well. Then, to add insult to injury, when God comes to Adam, the head of this family, the priest of this sanctuary, he points to his wife. "It's her fault God. She gave it to me. In fact, it's your fault God, You gave her to me."
- G. As you hear this story, can you see where Adam failed? Adam failed because he wouldn't take responsibility as head of this family. He didn't step up when the serpent started leading his wife. He didn't step up when Eve was considering the tree. He didn't step up when Eve took the fruit. He didn't step up when Eve ate the fruit. And even if you can't see that Adam witnessed all of that, you can at least agree that Adam didn't step up when Eve brought the fruit to him. He didn't take responsibility and say, "No, this is what God said. I'm going to obey God." And after the sin was committed, he didn't step up and take responsibility for the sin, he passed responsibility off to Eve. What was the failure? He didn't step up.

II. Christ's Victory

- A. In **Ephesians 5:22-33**, we see Christ's victory. Adam refused to step up and take responsibility for his family. He looked on without intervention and he passed blame without taking responsibility. But Jesus stepped up.

- B. How did he step up? When He saw the failure of mankind, He stepped up and said, "I'll do something about that." He went to the cross. He sent His Word.
- C. Christ saw the serpent in the world and attacked. He stomped the head of the serpent by His own death and resurrection.
- D. And though He was completely sinless, He took responsibility for the sins of His church by going to the cross to pay for them by His own sacrifice.
- E. Can you see the contrast? Adam's failure was a failure to step up and take responsibility. Christ's victory was stepping up and taking responsibility.

III. The Victorious Husband

- A. What then is our victory as husbands today? The victory is we must step up. We must love our wives so much that we will step up and take the responsibility.
- B. Husbands, step up.
 1. Step up and listen to God: When God rebuked Adam in **Genesis 3:17**, He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife..."
 - a) When husbands want to be autonomous despots, they mistake this verse as saying they don't have to listen to their wives' fears, concerns, perspectives. But that is not what this verse is saying. After all, it is a very foolish head that does not heed the input of its body. Can you imagine a hand saying to the head, "This stove surface is hot. It hurts. It is burning me. I'm being damaged," and a head responding, "I don't care. It makes me look manly to keep my hand on this hot stove surface"?
 - b) What it is saying is God established an order. In creation, we see an order: God leads the man who instructs the woman, both of whom have domination over the beasts of the field. In the fall, we see that order completely reversed. As the beast of the field leads the woman, who leads the man, who ignores God. God's point is not that man should never listen to anything from his wife. His point is that the voice of God is the authority for man and man was supposed to listen to the voice of God as His ultimate authority for where he leads his family.
 - c) Guys, let me tell you what that means. It is our job to listen to God. Certainly, as God has revealed His Word and made it available to all, our wives and children should read God's Word themselves. But men, we have the great responsibility as priests in our family to listen to God's Word, to be in God's Word, to know God's Word. Our job is not merely to get our families to church in hopes that they will hear what some other man says. It is our job to step up and listen to God.
 2. Step up and teach: Adam was to teach God's will to his wife. In **Ephesians 5:26**, Jesus cleanses His bride by the Word. (We'll talk more about this in the Victorious Wife.) Certainly it is good, men, that we have our wives and families here to worship with the saints and be taught among the saints. But men, it is our job to step up and teach our families the will of God that we have learned.
 - a) By the way, husbands, while we are mostly dealing with marriage. Please note **Ephesians 6:4** lays the raising of our children at our feet. Obviously, mothers have responsibility in this as well. But the ultimate responsibility is ours. It is our job to bring up our children in discipline and instruction. When our families stand before God in judgment, God is going to require of us the status of our families. He will not require that from our wives. We must not burden our wives with the discipline and instruction of our children. Rather, we must lead the way on that and allow our wives to fill their role of helper, instead of burdening her with our role of leader.
 3. Step up and protect: Adam didn't protect Eve from the serpent or from God's wrath against her sin. Jesus, on the other hand protects His church from both, protecting us from God's wrath against sin by paying the price in His death and stomping the head of the serpent through His resurrection.
 - a) Paul describes this in **Ephesians 5:29** as nourishing and cherishing our wives. It is our job to protect her from the enemy. Sadly, too many of us, through lack of love, lack of cherishing and nourishing, become the tool of the enemy by which our wives are tempted and attacked.
 - b) Men, please listen carefully. Too often we have marriage troubles that our wives announce either through words or through their emotional responses to our poor leadership. Instead of nourishing her and cherishing her and trying to figure out where we have not protected her, we either passively throw up our hands and proclaim ignorance of what the problem is or we actively accuse her of being the problem. In either case, we are not stepping up to take responsibility. In either case, we are actually putting the burden on our wives. In the latter, we are clearly avoiding responsibility by blaming our wives. In the former, we are saying, "You see a problem, but I can't see a problem. If you would

just see things like I do, you would know there is no problem. Why can't you be more like me?" Do you see how that is actually avoiding responsibility ourselves?

4. Step up and sacrifice: Adam could not be inconvenienced to step between Eve and the serpent or Eve and the wrath of God. But Jesus did both for His church. It cost Him so much. He left the glories of heaven to come among us (**Philippians 2:5-8**). Then while here, He laid down his own life to protect us from the consequences of our own sinfulness. Jesus loves His bride so much, He went to the cross. Men, can we love our brides so much to give up a weekend of fishing or golf or an evening on the television? Can we love our brides so much that we will sacrifice being the king in his castle, in order to wash her feet by listening to and responding to her deep emotional needs? Can we love our brides so much that we will let go of having to prove to our wives and everyone who looks on that we are in charge, in order to lay our lives down that our wives may be healed and whole and heading to heaven?
5. Step up and take responsibility: I don't know the state of your marriage. But I know that some of you can't wait for your wives to hear the next lesson on the victorious wife so that she can learn how to get her act together and be the wife you want. If she would just do that, everything would be better. Shame on you. She is not responsible for fixing your marriage and leading it to godliness. You are.
 - a) Perhaps Adam's greatest failure was refusing to recognize his failure and take responsibility for himself and his wife. And too many of us repeat that failure every day.
 - b) Notice I said to step up and take responsibility, not take control. We must be like Joshua who declared, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (**Joshua 24:15**). I do not think Joshua meant by that, "I'm going to rule with an iron fist, forcing my wife and children to do exactly as I say in serving the Lord or else." What he meant was he was going to lead His family to serve the Lord. He was going to take responsibility for his family serving the Lord. And if his family didn't serve the Lord, he would be accountable and responsible.
 - c) As I said, I don't know the state of your marriage. But, husbands, I know who is responsible for the state of your marriage. You are.
6. Step up first: In **I John 4:19**, God through Jesus sets the example for us. Jesus took responsibility for loving us first. According to **Romans 5:6-8**, God through Jesus sets the example for us. Jesus took responsibility by loving us even when we were weak, sinful, ungodly. He did not wait for us to straighten up and be all that He wanted us to be. He loved us first.
 - a) Husbands, last week we examined the most important Bible passage for your marriage, **Philippians 2:3-4**. In that lesson, we learned that both spouses must learn to put the other first. We talked about viewing the other as more significant and seeking the interests of the other. We pointed out that too many marriages are in an awful cycle and someone needs to break the cycle by living **Philippians 2:3-4**. In that lesson, we learned that either one can and should step up and do that.
 - b) While there is a very real sense in which that is true, men, you need to be aware there is an even greater sense in which you have the greater responsibility to break those negative cycles and make **Philippians 2:3-4** the governing way you treat your spouse.
 - c) Men, step up. But more than that, step up first.

Conclusion:

Men, don't be Adam in your marriage. Be Christ. Step up. Step up first. Be responsible. Brothers, no matter how your wife responds, you will be victorious, because you will be displaying Christ to the world.