

Introduction:

Men, if you were asked to boil down the role of manhood and especially the role of husband to one word, what would that word be? Think about that for a moment. What word would you choose? Love? Work? Finances? Adventure? Rule? Headship? Authority? I'm sure we could come up with a number of words that would apply to man's role and especially the husband's role in marriage. By the time we are done today, I hope if you are ever asked that question again, you will come up with this word—Accountable. **Hebrews 13:17a** describes the leaders in every relationship by saying, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account" (ESV). Men, in the family, that is us. We are the leaders, we are the ones who will give account for our marriages and for our families. In fact, in the beginning, that is exactly what Adam did. He gave account. Be ready, because by the end of this lesson, I'm going to ask us as husbands to give account for our marriages and our families. In fact, I'm going to challenge us to commit to even give an account to our wives, the helpers God has given us, this very week by having a very hard but serious conversation with her, as we seek her help and input on the job we are doing. Better to do it now with God's helpers than to wait until God Himself demands our accounting.

In our last lesson, we learned the mission and purpose of marriage as seen through the lens of the very first marriage. The mission of marriage is to represent the relationship between Christ and His church in such a way that the sanctuary of God (the new garden city of God, Christ's church) is spread over the entire earth, populating it with image bearers who bring glory to God. The question we must ask husbands is simply this, are we representing Christ through our husbanding in such a way that people in the world are saying, "If Jesus is like that, I'd absolutely love to be in His church"? Though Adam failed, in this lesson I'd like us to look at his role and responsibilities in that first marriage to see ours. May we, by the grace and example of Christ, succeed where Adam failed.

Discussion:

I. In the Beginning: The Husband's Role

- A. Though you didn't have to hear our last lesson to benefit from this one, we are building on what we learned in our previous lesson entitled "In the Beginning, Marriage: A Lesson for Couples." If you didn't hear that one, I encourage you to go to our website and listen to it. In that lesson, we learned that the Garden in Eden was more than an orchard. It was more than a plot of ground sectioned off for Adam to farm and find food. We looked in **Ezekiel 28:13, 14, 16, 18** to see that the Garden of God in Eden was the very first location considered "the mountain of God." When the Jews heard "mountain of God," it immediately led their thoughts to two locations: Mount Sinai, where God spoke to Israel, the covenant was established, and the tabernacle was constructed; and Mount Zion, where God met the people through the High Priest every Day of Atonement, where God's name dwelt, and where the Temple of Yahweh stood. In other words, the Garden of God in Eden was the very first Sanctuary, the very first meeting place between God and man. It was, if you will, the first house of God or city of God. And God placed Adam in that Sanctuary to work it and keep it, to serve it and guard it.
- B. Further, as we said in our introduction, we learned that the mission of marriage given to Adam and Eve was to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (**Genesis 1:28**). Even though the Garden is now gone, likely destroyed in the flood, that mission transferred to our marriages because we now live in the new Garden City of God, Christ's Bride, Christ's church (cf. **Revelation 21-22**). Thus, the mission for our marriages is to so represent Christ and His Bride/Church that God's Sanctuary subdues the earth and is filled with image bearers that bring glory to God.
- C. Turning our attention to Adam, the first husband, we naturally conclude his role as servant and guardian of the Sanctuary, the temple, the city of God, the way to the Tree of Life was the very first Priest. We do not, however, merely have to depend upon our logical conclusions for that. Consider **Ezekiel 28:13**. In this chapter, God is speaking against the king of Tyre, though we are not concerned with that aspect of the passage. Rather, note the connection He makes between the king and Adam. In **Ezekiel 28:13**, he describes the covering of the king/Adam. He lists a series of precious stones, settings, and engravings. This actually hearkens back to **Exodus 28:15-20** and the breastpiece of none other than God's Priest. God is relating the king/Adam to his Priests who dwell on the mountain of God, serving and guarding His Sanctuary the temple.

- D. In **Hosea 4:4-9**, God explains judgment is coming on Israel because of the sins of the priests. In **Hosea 6:7-10**, God specifically relates the priests of Israel back to Adam. Israel is going to be judged, just like Adam was judged because the priests aren't fulfilling their job and keeping the covenant, just like Adam.
- E. What was Adam's role? Priest. We actually see that fulfilled very literally during the patriarchal age. Again and again, the husband and father had the task of building the altars, offering sacrifice, and representing the family to God. We see this in Noah in **Genesis 8:20**. We see it in Abraham in **Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18**. We see it in Isaac in **Genesis 26:25**. We see it in Jacob in **Genesis 35:1-7**. We even see it in Job, who was not of Abraham's lineage, as he consecrated his children and offered sacrifices on their behalf in **Job 1:5**.
- F. Men, this tells us about our role. In this Garden City of God, the new and heavenly Jerusalem, watered by the river of life, fed by the tree of life, Christ's Bride/Church, we are the priests for our marriages and families. I understand of course, that Jesus is the High Priest (**Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15, et al**). And certainly, since Jesus Christ is our sacrifice, we are not literally going to offer animal sacrifices. But understanding Adam's position helps us understand our role better. Which helps us understand our responsibilities better.

II. In the Beginning: The Husband's Responsibilities

A. Husbands, we are accountable.

1. **Romans 5:12-14** has always shocked me. I know the **Genesis** account. Eve ate the fruit first. But in this passage, Christ's success isn't compared to Eve's transgression. It is compared to Adam's. That's just not fair. She sinned first. She led the family into sin and away from God. Why is Adam the one taken to task? Why in **Hosea 6:7** are the priests compared to Adam in their failure instead of Eve? Why in **Genesis 3:22-24**, why is the driving from the Garden focused on Adam. The family must be driven from the Garden lest the man reach out and take from the Tree of Life. The Lord sent the man from the Garden to work the ground. The Lord drove the man from the Garden and placed new guardian cherubim to keep man out of the Garden. Certainly, the woman was impacted by this. And certainly she was accountable for her own sins (as we'll see in our next lesson). But why is all of this centered on Adam, the husband.
2. Because, husbands, we are the leaders. We are the ones who will give account. We are the accountable ones. We referenced **Hebrews 13:17** in the introduction. We are the leaders in our marriage. As the priests of the marriage, we represent our marriages and families to God and we represent God to our families. We are the ones who will give account for whether or not our marriages and families fulfill the mission God gave it.
3. Sadly, for generations, couples have misunderstood what the role and responsibility of husband really is. It is not tyrannical dictator, despot, or even just ruler. It is accountability and responsibility. It means in judgment, husbands, we are not just giving account for ourselves, but for our marriage and our family. While everyone else in the family will give account for themselves, we also give account for them.
4. And this represents Adam's greatest failure. It was a failure to sit idly by as the serpent tempted Eve. It was a failure to sit idly by as Eve ate the fruit. It was a failure to eat the fruit she offered. However, I believe **Genesis 3:12** represents the worst of Adam's failure. When God held them accountable, instead of stepping up and taking responsibility, he said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate" (ESV). Essentially, Adam said, "Hold Eve accountable. It isn't my fault. Better yet, You are the accountable one God, because you gave her to me." But Adam was the accountable one. And husbands, that is us. We are the accountable ones for our marriage and our family.

B. Husbands, we are accountable to God

1. Sadly, many men have jumped to **Ephesians 5:23** and seen that we are the head of our wives and thought, "Yes, the marriage is about me. Do what I tell you, woman. Make me a sandwich!" Which is why so many moderns and even many Christian wives think they are opposed to the Bible family order. However, when folks are opposed to this version of marriage, they are not actually opposed to the biblical family order, but opposed to a perversion of it as all of us should be. This verse only tells half the story.
2. When Adam sinned and God rebuked him in **Genesis 3:17**, God didn't say Adam's problem was that he listened to Eve. The problem was that he listened to Eve against and over the command of God. God had told Adam not to eat from that tree. It didn't matter what he or anyone else wanted, God was in charge.
3. We need to fully see what has happened in the Garden. In the Garden there was an order. God made man from whom came woman who are all to have dominion over the beasts of the field. God→Man→Woman→Beasts. In the fall, the serpent, a crafty beast of the field (**Genesis 3:1**) led the woman who led the man who ignored God. Beast→Woman→Man→God. The entire order was turned upside down.

4. The key for us is to notice who is actually the head. It is true that the husband is the head of the wife, but remember what **I Corinthians 11:3** says. Christ is the head of every man and God is the head of Christ. Men, while we are the head of our wives, we are not the head of our marriages, God is. Being head of our wives and children does not mean our wives and children are here to accomplish our hearts' desires. It does not mean we get to set the agenda for our marriages and they have to fall in line. It means God has established us as the leaders of this working unit to accomplish His will. He has set the agenda for our marriages and families. We are to lead our marriages and families to accomplish God's agenda. We are accountable to God; and as Adam did, we will give account to Him.
- C. Husbands, we are accountable to God for training in His will
1. Have you ever noticed when God gave the command about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in **Genesis 2:16-17**, it was before Eve was created? Only Adam was present. How was Eve supposed to find out about it? It is possible that God told her also. However, I'm convinced Adam taught her.
 - a) First, be aware when God gave the command to Adam, the word "you" is singular. Further, when God referred back to it in **Genesis 3:17** saying "and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you..." it is also singular. God specifically speaks of the command He gave not to Adam and Eve, but to Adam.
 - b) Second, consider a passage that has always troubled me. In **I Timothy 2:13-14**, when Paul is explaining the role of the sisters within the congregation, one of his justifications is that in addition to adding being formed first, he was not deceived though Eve was. What on earth does that mean? We know Satan is a liar and the father of lies. We know all temptation involves deception, but Eve was deceived in some way that Adam wasn't. I think it is very simply this: Adam was not deceived regarding what God had said because he heard God say it. Eve, on the other hand, was deceived by the serpent concerning what God had said because she had only heard it second hand and took Satan's word for it instead of Adam's. In fact, if Eve had herself heard it directly from God, then she would not have been deceived either.
 - c) Third, remember a few moments ago we read from **Hosea**. The priests are told they sinned just like Adam (**Hosea 6:7-9**). What was the priests' failure? According to **Hosea 4:4-9**, they were supposed to teach the people. But the people were without knowledge. Because of that, they would be destroyed. That is exactly the issue with Adam. Though he clearly passed on God's words to Eve, he did not train his wife to fully trust and obey God.
 2. Men, we are accountable to teach and train. That means we are accountable to learn. We are to lead our families in knowing God, knowing His will, and not simply knowing Him but serving Him. And men, while our wives have great responsibility for training up our children, keep in mind that **Ephesians 6:4** lays the raising, teaching, and training of our children at our feet. We are accountable to God for this training.
- D. Husbands, we are accountable to God to rely on His help
1. Men, is anyone sufficiently freaked out yet? I know I am. In fact, at this point I fully know this mission is too great for me. I'm going to need God's help. I'm going to need God's grace, strength, and power. Of course, when we get to the end of this lesson, we'll look to Jesus Himself, His gift on the cross and His grace for when we are brought to account. But in last week's lesson, we learned God bestowed grace and help from the beginning.
 2. This is part of our accountability that I have missed until very recently. In last week's lesson we learned God gave Adam a job he could not accomplish alone. That is why it was not good for the man to be alone. God's grace came in the form of a helper (**Genesis 2:18**). The word translated "helper" is used 19 other times in the Old Testament, 16 of which actually refer to God Himself. We determined in that lesson that the wife is therefore the physical embodiment of God's grace and help to husbands. God, who is the ultimate Helper, chose to help man by bundling up His help in the form of woman. Praise the Lord!
 3. But think about that for a moment. Men, if we want God's help in our role, we have to rely on the helper God gave us. As **Proverbs 18:22** says, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD." Is that how you look at your wife?
 4. Men, if we are not seeking our wife's help, we are not relying on God or His grace in our families. If we are not letting our wives influence us, we are not relying on God. I know what you are thinking, "But Edwin, God rebuked Adam for listening to his wife." No, God rebuked Adam for listening to someone who contradicted Him. In our next lesson, we are going to talk about Eve's failure. We will talk about how she messed up here and what that means about her role and responsibility. And yes, men, if our wives advise and counsel us to contradict God's will, then we must obey God rather than women (cf. **Acts 5:29**).

5. But all that being said, men, God gave us our wives to help us accomplish His mission for our marriage. We must get our wives' help. We need their intuition. We need their input. We need their perspective. We need their outlook. And, yes, it is often going to be different from ours. That alone doesn't make it wrong or ungodly. God gave you a helper, let her help.
- E. Husbands, we are accountable to God to preserve His gift
1. God places Adam in the Garden to work and keep it. Or, as we learned in our last lesson, to serve and guard it (**Genesis 2:15; 3:24**). Then He gifted man with a helper (**Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 18:22**). Yet, when the serpent entered the Garden threatening to turn everything upside down, tempting and attacking Adam's wife, what did Adam do? Nothing. He simply stood by and watched. In **Genesis 3:6**, notice where Adam is while Eve's temptation is happening? "...she also gave some to her husband who was with her..." Where was Adam? He was with her. It is possible this just means he was with her in the Garden, but that really doesn't make any sense. We already know Adam was also in the Garden. The real picture is while the serpent is tempting Eve, Adam is just sitting idly by. Then when she turns to him and offers, instead of rebuking her for her own good, he follows her lead instead of God's.
 2. Adam was the guardian (see **Ezekiel 28:14, 16**—before God set up the guardian cherubim, Adam was the guardian cherub). He was to guard, protect, and preserve the Garden, but also guard, protect, and preserve his wife. Yet, he failed. The way Paul describes this responsibility is to love our wives as our own bodies, nourishing and cherishing them (**Ephesians 5:28-30**). This means providing, protecting, and preserving our wives physically (nourishing) and spiritually (cherishing—which includes emotionally and psychologically).
 3. Men, I know some of you are saying, "Yeah, but Edwin, I didn't know it when I said 'I do,' but I quickly found out my wife was a wreck when God gave her to me." Perhaps, and if Adam were her husband, she'd be even a worse wreck now than she was at the wedding. But if Jesus were her husband, where would she be? Is she better off because you have nourished and cherished her? Or is she worse off because you gave up and decided to look out for yourself against her?
 4. Perhaps it would be good someday to look at **Psalms 23** as a psalm for husbands shepherding our wives. Men, have we preserved our wives, nourishing and cherishing them like our loving shepherd has us? Have we helped her lie down in green pastures and led her beside still waters? Would she say we have restored her soul when it was needed? Have we led her in paths of righteousness, for the sake of Christ's name? Have we addressed her fears as she walks through the valley of the shadow of death? Have we prepared a table for her in the presence of her enemies? Would she say that our presence in the marriage is an anointing and that her cup overflows? Does she see goodness and mercy from us and is excited to dwell in our house for the rest of our lives? If you are like me, husbands, we have work to do and growth to accomplish. We are accountable to God for how we have shepherded, preserved, nourished, and cherished our wives.

III. Jesus succeeded where Adam failed.

- A. Brothers, we have learned our intense role and some serious responsibilities in our marriages from Adam in the beginning. However, we have also learned that he failed. He failed miserably. And while that meant some very awful things not only for Adam and that original family, but for the world and all of us in it, praise the Lord it didn't end with Adam. As **Romans 5:12-21** demonstrates, where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded.
- B. **Ephesians 5:22-33** demonstrates the success of Jesus. He has been our loving Shepherd. Adam refused to step up, be accountable, and take responsibility for his marriage and his family. He looked on without intervention and he passed blame without taking responsibility. But Jesus stepped up.
- C. When Jesus saw the failure of mankind, He stepped up and said, "I'll do something about that." He went to the cross. Jesus saw the serpent in the world and instead of sitting idly by, He attacked, at great cost to Himself, stomping the head of the serpent by His own death and resurrection. Though He was completely sinless, He took responsibility for the sins of His church/bride, paying for them with His own sacrifice. He didn't turn to the Father and say, "It's this bride you gave me." He said, "I'll be responsible. I'll pay for that."
- D. While Adam demonstrates our responsibilities, Jesus demonstrates success. And in so doing He demonstrated when we are to take up the mantle of accountability and responsibility. Husbands, we are to do so first. In **I John 4:19**, we learn that we love because Christ loved us first. We learn from **Romans 5:6-8**, that Christ did not wait until His bride straightened up to fulfill His responsibility. He did so while we were sinful, weak, ungodly enemies. Adam wanted Eve to be accountable because of her sin. He wanted God to do something about her first. Jesus took the opposite approach. He loved His wife and took responsibility, being accountable first.

E. Husbands, you have a choice. You can either be Adam in your marriage, or you can be Jesus. Who will you be?

Conclusion:

Folks, husbanding is not for the faint of heart. But Jesus stepped up and took that role and responsibility. Praise the Lord! So, before I address the husbands, I want to address everyone. A day is coming when each and every one of us will give account to God for ourselves (and husbands when you will also give account for your marriage and family). You have a choice. You can either face that with only yourself to give account, or you can be part of Christ's church, His Bride, and He will be accountable. He gave the sacrifice. He took the punishment. You can stand before God alone, giving account for yourself, or you can stand before God with Jesus taking account for you. In just a moment, when we sing our song, we'll give you opportunity to come forward and let Jesus be your Savior, by being baptized for the remission of your sins, being buried with Jesus in the water and raised to walk in new life.

Men, let me say again. Husbanding is not for the faint of heart. Some of you are thinking about it. Think long and hard. Understand what you are signing up for. Some of you knew what you were getting into and did it anyway. Some of you are hearing for the first time what your role and responsibilities are. In any event, I don't want to leave you with merely the generic and fuzzy challenge to be a better husband. We didn't need this sermon to know we needed to do that, did we? I want to leave you with a specific and clear challenge. Husbands, God gave us our wives as His grace and help. Are you relying on her? Are you listening to her? Are you accepting her help? She is likely your greatest guide in helping you fulfill your other responsibilities in your relationship with her. And if you are like me, you haven't been relying on her properly. So, here is our challenge. Talk to your wife. Seek her counsel and advice and help. And begin by having a conversation with her this week based on the questions at the end of the interactive outline. I am here this evening saying that this lesson has not been be a husband like me, that would be awful for all of us. I'm here this evening saying this part of husbanding is where I have continued to fail. I am down front this evening to make a commitment to my wife, my shepherds, and my fellow brethren to have this conversation with my wife this week. I'm asking you to make this commitment to have this conversation this week before our next lesson. Are you willing to make this commitment with me?

A conversation with your wife:

The following are questions for husbands to ask wives.

Wives, please remember this is a hard conversation for us. Please treat us with the same grace you want to receive after you learn your role and responsibility in marriage. Even if you have to address sin, please do so gently as **Galatians 6:1** teaches.

Men, truth hurts sometimes. Be prepared to hear hard things. Promise your wife absolute safety. That means no raised voice and no defensiveness. Ask the questions, listen to the answers. If you need clarification, lovingly ask for that. If you are starting to get angry, ask for a break, set a time to pick up the conversation again later, then go distract yourself with something else (work, working out, hobby, etc.)

1. Let's begin with the positive. Please give me some examples of what I'm doing well as your husband.
2. Have I sought your help in a safe and loving way? If not, what would be a good way for me to start seeking your help in our marriage and family?
3. Would you say that my leadership in the marriage has been more about seeking my will or God's? What can I do to make our marriage more about God's will than mine?
4. Have I nourished and cherished you? How can I improve so that you feel more preserved, protected, nourished, and cherished?
5. Have I addressed your fears well? What fears can I address better? In what ways can I address those fears better?
6. What can I do to make it easier for you to respect me and submit to my leadership?