Sunday Session 2

The Husband, His Helper, and the Home

(Various texts) Dr Gregg Laskow

1. The Constitution of Marriage

- God established marriage between one man and one woman in the beginning (Gen. 2:18-25).
- Marriage is not a human invention but a divine revelation, reflecting the relational intimacy the Trinitarian God has always enjoyed with Himself.
- Men and women, husbands and wives, are equal in terms of dignity and worth. Missionally, Adam, as the husband, is the head of Eve (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23). She is his helpmate and is to serve with him, exercising dominion over creation with him (Gen. 1:27-30).
- In marriage, a man shall leave his mother and father, and they shall become one (Gen. 2:24). Marriage removes any barriers to singleness and brings about a comprehensive oneness.
- The woman was created to complement and support the man and to strengthen his exertions for God in the world. She, in a sense, "completed him" (Gen. 2:23). She is not property. She is a unique counterpart. The gifts and abilities vary greatly, but to the advantage of both.
- As the helper, the wife is indispensable to stewarding creation and the home.
    - In Hebrew, the *"helper"* in 2:18 and 20 describes Yahweh as Israel's helper.
    - This word appears twenty-one times in the OT, and sixteen times it describes Yahweh offering powerful assistance from a position of strength, not weakness.
    - "Helper" carries no element of inferiority. It means "standing face to face, or opposite," as one "suitable" for him.

2. The Conflict in Marriage (Gen. 3:16-19)

A. <u>The shattered relationship in the Garden</u> (Gen. 3:9):

- The serpent sowed doubt by questioning the goodness of God before Eve (v.1-6).
- Eve was authorized to exercise dominion <u>with</u> Adam (Gen. 1:26-28), but her royalty was never meant to be exercised <u>apart</u> from Adam's headship. The "you" (v.1- 5) is plural, yet Eve speaks on behalf of Adam. The serpent drew Eve into speaking for herself and her husband. She is the only one who speaks in vv. 1-7, and Adam does not.
    - <u>Before</u> they ate the fruit, there was a sanctioned overreach in Eve in which she undermined Adam as her head. There was a foreign, sinful imposition within the heart of Eve that she readily partook of. Adam was also complicit in this.
- Yahweh God called to Adam (v.9), *"Have you (singular) eaten of the tree which I commanded you (singular) not to eat?*" (v.11). The pronouns in v.9 and 11 are in the singular. He addresses Adam as the head because he is responsible. Yahweh God rebuked Adam and placed the blame on him, though Eve was the complicit one who not only listened and ate but also gave it to Adam. With headship comes greater accountability (v.17).

B. <u>The consequences of disobedience were catastrophic</u> (v.16-19):

- Her desire to control her husband (v.16) will become a broader, more consistent pattern.
    - The desire for the woman will be for her husband: this unique word appears only twice more in the OT (Gen. 4:7; Song Sol. 7:10).
- She will desire to control and dominate.
- In response, the husbands will dominate their wives unkindly, with cruelty, self-gratification, and convenience. He will be more of a master than a lover, more of a critic than an admirer. The wife will seek to dominate him.
- Each will exacerbate the other's weakness (sin), following the Fall (Genesis 3). They will no longer, naturally, be a team. A current of opposition will always remain: bitterness, anger, and alienation will follow naturally in Adam. Each will vie with the other, and each will try to dominate either passively or aggressively. Marriage will not function as it was intended because of the presence and domination of sin within the human heart.
    - The good news is that the gospel transforms sinners from one degree of glory to the next (2 Cor. 3:18).

<u>Application/Observation</u>:

3. The Command and Content of Love and Honor in the Marriage

A. The husband is to love his wife and grow in his love (Eph. 5:22-32; Col. 3:18-19):

- "Husband" is from the word husbandry, which means cultivation.
- He is a sacrificial lover-leader who must love his wife as Christ loves the church.
- The tendency for a flesh-filled husband is tyranny, intimidation, and self-centered control.
- The Greek word for "harsh" means "bitter, sharp, or resentful," often in tone or treatment. It is a spirit of bitterness or anger that seeps in or explodes.
- Harshness toward his wife ultimately appears as the flower that grows from the bud of the flesh. It is a critical, dismissive, cold, and neglectful use of authority to pressure or control.
- Loving her is both subjective (considering her peculiar personality) and objective (according to Scriptural principles). Both are needed to love well.

Application/Observation:

B. He knows that his wife is a weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7):

- *"According to knowledge"* (KJV) means he must (1) know her strengths, her weaknesses, her struggles, and her shortcomings; (2) be thoughtful, not careless; and (3) lead her knowledgeably and patiently to the truth, without compromising headship. This is an intentional, informed, understanding love.
- He honors (respects), protects (proper exercise of strength), and is humble toward her (equal standing with before God). She needs intentional and thoughtful concern.

Application/Observation:

C. He reassures his family that he loves them, and demonstrates that in word and deed:

- Throughout His ministry, Jesus assured His disciples that He was for them, and that He loved them (Matt. 14:27; 28:20; Jn. 14:1, 2-3, 16-17, 18, 27; 16:33; 20:19).
- The masculine husband and father verbalizes and demonstrates his love for his family.
- He allows his children to stumble but not fall: the extent to which he lets them experience the consequences of their sin or poor decision-making is proportional to their age, expectations, instruction, and defiance. The more accountable they are to God's expectations (through teaching), the greater must be his willingness to let them stumble or fall, so that he may teach them the blessings of obedience.

Application/Observation:

D. He is a leader-servant, not merely a servant-leader:

- He is marked not by demanding but by giving. He models self-sacrifice for his wife and children's benefit.

Application/Observation:

E. He is strong, bold, courageous, and unflinching in the face of danger and difficulty:

- This is not arrogance, pride, or hubris.
- Every NT command to be bold, particularly announcing truth, is descriptive or prescriptive of a male. It is an attribute of manliness in men.
- Jesus uses aggressive, intense, cutting language to those who oppose God as hypocrites. He calls them hypocrites and liars (Matt. 23:13; Jn. 8:55), a brood of vipers (Matt. 23:33), children of Satan (Jn. 8:44), sons of hell (Matt. 23:15), a wicked and adulterous generation (Matt. 16:4), whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:27-28), fools (Lk. 24:25; Matt. 23:17) and blind guides (Matt. 15:14). Masculinity despises hypocrisy.

F. He seizes every opportunity to love his family well, regardless of the season of life:
- While he cannot always choose the special moments he shares with his family, he is guaranteed a share proportional to the time he spends with his children.

G. He does not provoke his children to anger (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21):
- In Greek, to provoke means "to stir up anger unnecessarily." Constant provocation can crush the spirit of the child. If he is harsh and unfair, he will produce resentful children in the future.

What causes a child to be provoked to anger by their parents?
- (1) They are constantly criticizing their child's faults, (2) are harsh or overly strict in their discipline (punishment, not redemptive), (3) are inconsistent in carrying out consequences, (4) publicly shame or humiliate their children, (5) provoke the child to anger because they discipline in ignorance, (6) set expectations that are impossible to meet, or (7) discipline for violations their child is unaware of.

H. The command for the wife to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22-32; Col. 3:18-19):
- The wife is to submit to her husband, as unto the Lord, with the right attitude and heart (Ephesians 5:22, 24; Col. 3:18). This submission must be in love, and not the flesh.
- The wife does not have the right to choose her version of submission. She must submit unto her husband, as unto Christ.
- The command is not "honor and respect your husband when he is worthy of that respect."
- Her honor is unqualified, but her submission is unto Christ. Even in areas of disagreement, the godly wife can have peace in Christ. She is called to submit, not to lead.
- In her submission, she prays for his submission to Christ and headship of the family.

Application/Observation:

Summary: The masculine husband and father: (1) protects his family, (2) prioritizes his family, and (3) prefers his family as a steward of the grace of God. The masculine husband is responsible for pivoting, adapting, initiating, and executing with his wife's aid, administration, and help.
*The flesh fights for respect, but the marriage calls us to focus on giving it. Respect, honor, and love are the fruits of walking by the Spirit, and not gratifying the desires of the flesh.
Why is it important to know your spouse?
Knowing your husband:
- In most cases, when a husband is upset or frustrated, he will either retreat and want to be left alone or will become angry and sin.
- A wife who knows her husband is tactful, intentional, selective, and wise with the use of her words, tone, gestures, and facial expressions.
- It is more than the use of words; it is the timing (Prov. 25:11). She must not be "tone-deaf" to her husband's strengths and weaknesses.

Knowing your wife:
- In most cases, when a wife is frustrated or upset, she may over-verbalize and accuse.
- Other times, she may withdraw from him verbally, physically, and emotionally.
- A husband who knows his wife will be tactful, intentional, and pursue her with care. This is a skill every husband needs to master and adapt through every season.

4. The Collaboration and Commitment to Godly Parenting

Parents are the main disciple-makers (Deut. 6:6-7; Ps. 78:5-6; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21):
Parents are the main disciple-makers for their children, as stewards before the Lord.

How must the father and mother engage with their children?
- They must exercise authority without harshness.
- They must discipline their children without humiliating them.
- They must guide with patience, care, and consistency.

What are the characteristics of manhood?

- He is marked by leadership, sacrifice, toughness, resilience, and courage. This requires:
    - Vision (where we are going)
    - Direction (this is how we get there)
    - Instruction (let me show you how)
    - Imitation (watch me)
    - Inspiration (the morale is high)
    - Affirmation (you are doing a good job)
    - Evaluation (how we are doing)
    - Correction (we need to change our ways)
    - Protection and provision (I will take care of you, and you can trust me)

What does biblical masculinity do in a family?

- It provides stability and an anchor for the full, blooming enjoyment of God's design.

<u>Questions for discussion between husband and wife amongst themselves:</u>

A. Husbands, ask your wife: *"What am I doing well in our marriage? What do I need to improve? How am I loving you? How can I love you better?"*
B. Wives to their husbands: *"What am I doing well? What do I need to improve? How do I respect you? How can I honor you better?"*
C. Discussion questions to be addressed with one another:
    - "What areas can we improve on?"
    - "How can we encourage each other?"
    - "How should the gospel affect our marriage and our parenting?"
    - "Is there anything we want to tell one another?"

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