

Sexual Complementarity - Lesson 3

by John Piper

John Piper discusses the biblical understanding of submission in marriage, emphasizing respect, autonomy, and the example of holy women.

Duration: 51:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7

Topics: "Biblical Manhood", "Marriage Roles"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor John Piper begins by expressing gratitude for the recent baptisms and testimonies of God's grace in the lives of believers. He emphasizes the transformative power of God's pursuit and salvation in bringing people to Himself. Piper then discusses the role of a man in protecting and assuming responsibility for a woman, even in situations where he may be physically limited. He uses the analogy of a man protecting a woman from a potential threat, highlighting the importance of a man's initiative in safeguarding his partner. The sermon also addresses the concept of submission, exploring what it is not and providing insights from Ephesians 5.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from Desiring God Ministries is available at www.desiringgod.org. Let's pray. Our hearts are rejoicing, Lord, tonight because of the baptism that we just witnessed here and because of the stories that were told of your manifold grace in these young women's lives.

What an amazing thing that you pursued them until you mastered them and brought them to yourself, and we glorify you for that. There's 100, 200, 300 stories like that in this room right now, and we all give praise for our salvation and that you found us and that you subdued us and that you overcame our rebellion and humbled us and brought us to yourself. Thank you so much.

And now, Lord, we want to understand your Word. We want to understand your will for manhood and womanhood in singleness and in marriage and in church, and so in the little time that we have, make it maximally useful. I pray that it would be biblical and faithful and balanced and that you would cause people to hear it for what it really is and then apply it with Christlikeness.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. I think what I'm going to do tonight is not try to get beyond the issue of marriage and headship and submission in marriage to the issue of leadership in church, but save all that

for next week, which is our last time to work on it, even though that's worth three or four times, because I don't want to go too quickly here and maybe there'll be time for questions.

And I think if you can get a handle on the nature-rooted, creation-ordained distinction between manhood and womanhood and headship and submission at this level, that thinking it through at other levels is not so difficult. And it's very clear, I think, in the Bible when it comes to marriage. Last week we looked at Ephesians 5, verses 21 to 33, and I will look at those again, but I want to start tonight with 1 Peter 3, 1 to 7. This is addressed to wives, and then a brief word to husbands down here in verse 7. And the situation, as you'll see, is a woman who's married to an unbeliever, and how Peter addresses her in regard to this issue of submission.

And the reason I'm starting with this text is because, as I reflected on this some years ago, this text provided me with at least six insights into what submission that wives are called to have is not. And I think it's real helpful to list those things, that submission is not. And so that's what I'm going to do.

We're going to read through the text, and then I'll walk you through the six things that I believe submission is not. And as we do that, I think it will become clearer what it is, and then we can lean back on Ephesians 5 and put some pieces together there, and then we can deal with three objections that have been historically, or more recently, raised, and then if there's time for questions. So let's read 1 Peter 3, 1 to 7. In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, and I take that to mean he's an unbeliever, not just that he's disobeying here and there as a believer, just because elsewhere in this letter to be disobedient to the word is a reference to unbelievers.

Even though he's disobedient to the word, they may be one, and that's another clue, one, one to Christ, without a word by the behavior of their wives. As they observe your chaste and respectful behavior, your adornment must not be merely external, braiding of the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on dresses, but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. Let me pause there and just raise the question, why in an admonition to women in relation to how they relate to unbelieving husbands and how to win them to Christ and how to be appropriately submissive to them, he brings up the issue of clothing and adornment.

And I think it's simply to throw into stronger relief the proper strategy for getting at a husband's heart. In other words, I think he's saying, be careful that you don't buy into some kind of advice that says, if you really want to win your husband over to the way you want him to be, become more sexy. Adornment must not be with external braiding of hair, wearing of gold jewelry, putting on dresses, but it's the contrast here I think that's significant.

If you want to work on something, don't let it be mainly the outward thing, though I don't want to minimize how significant that can be. I think a wife who lets herself go and becomes dirty or unclean or disheveled all the time and unkempt and unattractive does her husband a great disservice and is not a loving thing to do. But that's not where the emphasis falls clearly.

The emphasis should fall on let it be, let your adornment be the hidden person of the heart with this imperishable quality of a gentle and a quiet spirit. And see how that ties in without a word here. You want to win this man to Christ and there's a biblical way to go about it.

And it isn't primarily in becoming more impressive externally, but becoming more winsome internally, which will then show itself in various ways. And it's precious in the sight of God, whether the husband is changed by it or not. Verse 5. For in this way, in former times, the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves.

Now, don't miss that. In order to make his point here, he's going outside the immediate culture, which would just be one little point or why I don't buy the argument that such admonitions as this are merely culturally conditioned and that when you get another culture where there's different expectations on men and women, you can just throw away the calls for submission or quiet or gentle spirit. He reaches back now hundreds of years to Sarah in another time, another place, and he calls these women exemplary because they were holy and because they hoped in God.

It's another phrase he uses elsewhere in the letter. It's a favorite phrase. Peter's book all about hope and hoping in God.

113, 120 and so on. These were holy women who hoped in God. So if you want model women, you look for holy women.

You look for women who don't hope in their husbands. They don't hope in their husbands. They hope in God.

That's the kind of women you want to be. And that's the kind of women we want to beget. That's for him.

Holy women whose hope is in God and not in men or women or children or church or jobs or career or looks or intelligence, but hope in God. Well, these holy women who hoped in God also used to adorn themselves. He's still on this issue of adornment, not external, but of a quiet and gentle spirit.

And so he's reaching back to some examples. They adorn themselves being submissive. So now we've got that word brought on the scene again from up here, submissive to their own husbands.

That gives an example. Just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, comma, participle, calling him Lord. And you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

This is a very noble vision of womanhood here. If you are willing to get over some of the initial knee-jerk reactions of our day towards submission. He has them being holy women.

They hope in God. And they are absolutely fearless in life. It's like the woman in Proverbs 31 where it says she laughs at the future.

I love to be around women like that. I'm married to one. You see the future coming.

And the future is fearful. And there's daunting, daunting things. A pregnancy.

We've got a woman who just gave birth two months early. A pound and a half baby. Can that woman, will she have the holiness and the hoping in Godness and the fearlessness to say, We're going to make it through this.

We're going to make this thing. That's the kind of woman we want to breed. Or a woman, I probably should be careful naming names here, but I see Greg sitting there alone.

But Laura's willing with seven children in three months to up and go to Uzbekistan. Whether I have any toilets, etc. That's a special kind of woman.

Seven kids and no toilets. So I feel, see I'm not as prejudiced against the word submission as some people are. I feel coming through this text a very noble and mighty call upon women.

That would be admirable in most any culture I think. A word to husbands. You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way.

According to knowledge is the literal. According to knowledge as with someone weaker, literally the 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. Many prayers and families are hindered. Because husbands live together with their wives the way they ought to in this regard.

And here's another tribute to these Christian women. They are heirs of the grace of life. Fellow heirs.

So if we men conceive of ourselves as sons of God. And we are going to be ruling with Christ. Then we have queens in the Christian community.

Some are married and some aren't married. But if they're going to be princes, they're going to be princesses in the kingdom. If they're going to be kings, they're going to be queens in the kingdom.

So whatever we hope to inherit there. She's a fellow heir with us in it. And how you treat an heir of God, you will be called to account for.

You don't bad mouth an heir of God. You don't belittle an heir of God. You don't use petty put-downs with an heir of God.

You don't manipulate an heir of God. You don't abuse an heir of God. You don't even demand for sex when she's not feeling well.

There's a text in 1 Corinthians about yielding to one another with regard to sexuality. And you say, well, how does that work? Well, there's no way to quantify how that works. You compete with one another how to make the other person happy.

OK, now we need to back up and maybe a word about this word weaker before I back up and give you my six points about what submission is not. I'll give you a little sketch in my mind that I have that may take off some of the edge from that and yet leave it stand. Everybody can think of some ways that women are weaker than men in general.

I know there are some Russian shot putters that could squish me in a hurry. But that is the exception, don't you think? However, he might mean more than that, that in general, the large muscles are stronger in men. He might mean more than that.

I think if you take this way, I, I like to see the quality of personhood between men and women, the way God set us up. If you take two columns, put man at the top of one and woman at the top of the other, and then you start listing what you might call natural strengths and weaknesses. OK, you might say men with their testosterone and their natural aggressiveness have a weakness to be mean spirited or high temper or or belligerent or divisive or whatever.

And then you might say that women with without that ordinary natural impulse tend to be more nurturing or more caring or more relational or more intuitive. And you list those as strengths and these as weaknesses. And so as you go down the list here and talk about all the different ways that men and women by nature tend to be different.

And you put pluses or minuses by those as to whether the trajectory might get you into trouble with them. When you get to the bottom at any given point, looking across the two columns, you might have a plus here and a minus here. And the woman will be the weaker and stronger, or you might have the woman be the stronger.

Like she's clearly a better soprano singer than he is. And he's a better bass singer than she is. He might whatever that could be, a hundred things in this list that negative, positive, negative, positive.

If you look across, there's a difference of strength and weakness at the bottom. You draw a line and then you total all the numbers on both sides. I think they're the same.

That's my conception of equality. But at any given point of strength or weakness, the difference is different. And you could call it a weakness or strength without offending anybody.

I mean, I would not be offended if you made a list of 30 things by which the average woman in this church is stronger than I am. I think you could do that. And I hope you wouldn't be offended if you drew a list of ways that men in this church are generally stronger than women in five or six ways.

At the bottom, as God looks on personhood and male and female, he says a blessed yes with an equal strength to both those persons with their varied strengths and weaknesses. So when it says weaker here, goodness gracious, we can think of a lot of ways that has meaning. And if you think of a way it doesn't have meaning, that's OK.

Just don't throw out the fact that it does have meaning. And in that culture, no computers, no cars, no push buttons, bone breaking strength meant for a lot more than it does today. So no doubt, I think anyway, this weaker was just so obvious to them it was no big deal.

And for a woman to say, I'm glad my husband recognizes my weakness and is willing to be a protector and a guide and a help for me in a very rough and tumble world. Because it was it was I'll tell you before a hundred years ago to be a woman. Was 10.

What number should I choose? 500 times harder than it is today. Sheerly, physically, I read, for example. A history of gynecology when I was in Germany, in German called the following step, just because I wanted to practice my German.

And it was an interesting book and expect that to get on that. But it was a horrible book because it's a horrible history. To give birth before any kind of pain medication, before any kind of episiotomy that could be fixed, before anybody knew about cleanliness, before any of those instruments that help, before anything left thousands upon thousands of women ruined.

It was just the history. When you read Genesis three in pain, you should bring forth childbirth. We today say, well, you know, just give me a spinal block and you do it.

You fix it fine. Big rip. So what up? No problem.

Just I'm married, folks. So, you know, you're not married. Just have to learn about these things.

So the point is, before, before we had all this help, it was hard. And women needed men a lot more than they need men today. And so that gives you a little light maybe on why this might be heard as good news to a woman rather than offending a woman like it probably does so many today.

OK, let's go back and let me try to walk you through what I think submission is not based on this text. All on this text could get some of these elsewhere, but I'll get them here. And I don't want to just build a negative case, but I know the world I live in.

I know what I'm up against with a text like this. And so I am trying to make this as believable as I can. Without being unfaithful to Scripture.

What is submission not? Number one. Submission is not, does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says. First Peter 3.1, In the same way you wives be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them.

Can you believe there's a grammatical error in the NASB? Any is a singular word here. We'll notify the Lachman Foundation. If any of them is disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their husbands.

Now, very simply, that means she doesn't agree with his religion. And she will not be deterred from hers. Okay, is that clear? That's simple.

She's trying to change his religion. She's not complying with his. That's number one.

Submission is not, number two. Does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar. Same verse.

This is a major decision in life. Who is my Lord, my God, my Savior? And this text implies a woman must use her mind and her will and deal with God alone. And then if her husband is not with her in that.

She assumes a kind of demeanor that biblically she prays and hopes will over the long haul. Or short. Win him.

So I just infer from number one, number two, that if she's trying to win him, she has thought through this Christianity thing by herself. And he's not coming along. And she has thought it through and then she's exercised her will and embraced Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And now she's got a great project in front of her. And you can blow it and do it all wrong. Preaching and preaching and finagling and nagging.

Or you can try to figure out the way the Bible calls you to do. Number three, submission does not mean avoiding effort to change your husband. Be saying the same things in various ways, but you can hear different nuances here.

Submission does not mean avoiding effort to change your husband. Same verse. The same way you want to be submissive to your husband's hopes that they may be one over.

You want to change him. So I personally, while I have to give very careful counsel to couples, I have no problem with couples wanting to get each other changed. Just when they go on the warpath to do it or become conniving to do it, or it becomes a paralyzing, consuming thing that they can't even function until they do it.

That it's wrong. But to see flaws in your spouse and to hope that over time those would be better. That's not wrong.

Especially at this level. Before submission does not mean putting the will of the husband for the will of Christ. So I'm I'm a little bit leery of drawing a chain of command like those drawings.

God, husband, wife, children. It's not good. At least you're going to have to draw some dotted lines.

And probably some solid ones in that picture. Because if you got the line going from God to husband to wife, there's something doesn't fit this text here. Right.

Because you got to have a line that goes around the husband to God from the wife. These draw that kind of drawing is at least vulnerable to misunderstanding. Now, it has some truth in it.

I could describe a way to set it up like that because of a man's leadership that we're going to get to. But it's a bad drawing in my judgment because here the will of Christ is manifestly paramount in this woman's life. Because she has allegiance to him first, husband second.

And then she tries to bring her husband on board with her through biblically appropriate means. Because Jesus is king in her life and her husband is not king in her life. Though Jesus calls her as her king to submit to this person.

So for Christ's sake, she'll do that. And she does it differently, though, than if she had no Christ, because Christ is Lord, not the husband. Which raises the question about the obedience to Abraham.

So let's look at verses five and six. For in this way, in former times, the holy women also who hoped in God used to adorn themselves being submissive to their own husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham. OK, now.

There are limits put on this already in the context because she's not going to obey his faith. If he says, stop believing in Jesus and start believing in Moloch or something like that, she's going to say, with all due submissiveness. Honey, you know, I can't do that.

I want to submit to you. I want you to be my leader. I want you to take initiatives.

I want us to have a beautiful rhythm in marriage where you protect me, provide for me, lead me. But, you know, you know, I can't do that. That's a different way to talk than to become feisty and say, who do you think you are anyway? There is a sense in which this should and should not come to reality.

This word obey. So how does Peter illustrate it? That's really significant here. It's really strange.

So I'm just going to suggest something to you. Don't want to over interpret this. But if you let me ask you this.

Those of you who know Genesis, if you were going to illustrate this and you were going to pick out the singular obedience of Sarah to Abraham, what would you pick out? Somebody tell me. Yeah, right. We went to Egypt, chapter 13 of Genesis.

Abraham says to her, Sarah, you're very pretty. And this Abimelech king is going to want you for his harem. And if you're married to me, he'll kill me to take you.

So why don't you say you were my sister? Then if he takes you, he won't kill me. And she does. She complies.

Is it possible she didn't have another option? Yes, I suppose so. I mean, practically, where could she go? Got a domineering husband telling her, I want you to do this and no place to go down there. But my point is, he didn't use that as an illustration.

That's where I'm going. In other words, I think he could have used it, even if that were true. Because the picture you have in the text is that she didn't put up.

There's no statement there about Sarah argued or Sarah got mad or anything like that. She just did it. And he didn't choose that as the illustration.

That just stands out as the most obvious. Act of compliance, apparently, whether willingly or unwillingly. And he didn't use it.

What did he use? That's my I'm more interested in that. What he used is she obeyed Abraham. And here's the here's the illustration calling him Lord.

Where did you do that? She did it in Genesis 18:12. Why don't you turn there with me? It's the only place in Genesis that she calls Abraham Lord. 18:12.

I got the RSV here who totally avoids the issue, though I generally like the RSV. Let's start at verse 11. Now, Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age.

He had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So she's beyond menopause here. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, after I have grown old.

And my Lord is old. Shall I have a pleasure? Now, this is remarkable. Just think about this with me for a minute.

I wrote down three observations about this. The one we've already had. He did not choose the most obvious outright act whereby she complies with his will in a hard situation.

He doesn't. He chooses this one. The word Lord here is not the word for husband.

RSV translates it husband. Bad translation. I skipped it.

It's a deny. It's the word for Lord. Hundreds and hundreds of times of God and of other human lords and masters.

My Lord, she says. Secondly, or thirdly, the first one she didn't choose. Peter didn't choose the big act of obedience.

He chose this apparently little teeny one. And the word is Lord. Master.

But now there's one more observation here. I wonder if anybody sees it. And it relates directly to Matthew's question.

Of whether she had an option. Or whether this is done willingly. Can you see anything here that would prove she's doing this as willingly as you could want? What would be the evidence for that? She's in a tent by herself.

Exactly. She's talking to herself. She's not talking to Abraham.

Now, maybe I'm pushing it too far. I don't know. You got to decide whether New Testament readers of the Old Testament are this careful in the way they read.

I'm inclined to think that in not choosing the Abimelech story, Peter is saying, I don't think that's a good idea for wives to comply to sinful ideas. In other words, I don't recommend that relationship. That a husband commends entering a harem to save a husband's life.

Now, a wife might do that. She might. These are these ethical, marginal situations that we all hear about.

But that a husband should ever ask that of a wife, I doubt that Peter considered that a very admirable thing to do in living in accord with knowledge with a weaker vessel. And that he would choose such an obscure little text. Read it again.

So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, After I have grown old, and my lord is old. I'm saying it, my lord, like that, because I think that's probably the ring that it had. My lord.

I remember in the movie Hamlet. There was this jerk who sat there saying, my lord, my lord. Remember that scene? The funniest pronunciation of my lord, my lord.

And yet I couldn't, as I was watching this movie, I couldn't help but think, that's the phrase that she used. Not my king or my master, but it's just in passing, that's her way of respecting her husband. That's a title of respect.

My lord. She's talking to herself. This is this is the heart of Sarah.

I think that's why he chose just from inside out. She respects her husband that way, even though sometimes he was not an ideal husband. OK, that's number four.

Number five. Submission is not does not mean that the wife gets her spiritual strength mainly from her husband. She hopes in God.

She wins him without a word. She she's getting her strength without him, clearly, because he's not a believer. And she's getting it by hoping in God.

She is not frightened. She is a fearless woman. And six submission does not mean acting out of slavish fear toward the husband.

Again, she is fearless. So six observations there about what submission is not fully put up. My definition of what I think it is here.

First, the definition of headship and then concluding definition of submission. Now I am drawing on last week's Ephesians five text as well. Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christlike loving servant leadership, protection, provision in the home.

And these three words, leadership, protection and provision. I draw out of the text. I get leadership from the word head.

I'll come back to that in a minute. I think head means leadership guidance. So I put implied in head.

It's the corollary to submit, which would be another argument for why it means lead. The corollary to submit is lead. I put protection here because in the text it has Jesus dying for his wife to protect her from hell and sin.

And I put provision here because in verse 29 it has the husband nurturing the body and Christ nurturing and cherishing and caring for, providing for his bride, the church. So those are the three things that I think would be implied in being a good, loving, Christlike head in the home. Take leadership, take protection and take provision.

And I say primary responsibility. I do not say domineering right. These words are carefully chosen because I think they're more carefully capture the biblical picture here.

Responsibility implies it's a burden, not a right. And here it is a primary responsibility, not a sole responsibility. Because being a help suitable to him, she has many gifts he doesn't have.

And he is by his initiative taking leadership to bring all those gifts into sway at his right hand. So together they accomplish the will of God for the marriage. And that exercise of gifts on her part will involve many kinds of leadership in the home, some kinds of protection in the home and some kinds of provision in the home.

So to say that he is the one who's taking primary responsibility to get these things done doesn't mean there's no element of that for her, no element of that for her. No, no, I'm saying that I'm thinking I've got the tape here. No element of leadership, no element of protection, no element of provision.

That's not true. And you can all think of clear, simple illustrations of that. But let me say that for answering the objections in a minute, if we have time.

Let me put the definition of submission up here, which is just a corollary. This would be my definition of submission. Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership.

Honor and affirm. Be glad about her husband's leadership and help carry it through. Help carry it through according to her gifts.

Submission is an inclination of the will to say yes to the husband's leadership and a disposition of the spirit to support his initiatives. And I'm very carefully focusing on this inclination and disposition because there are points where she must go against his will. Like if he says, leave your Christ and follow my God or lie with me about our income taxes or do group sex or whatever.

She is not going to follow her underlord into sin against her overlord. But she will have an inclination and a disposition all the while to want to comply with this man and yet not be able to on certain points. You see the difference? This is really a spirit here.

Submissiveness is a spirit when you come into conflict situations like that. And frankly, I think a thousand questions that you may have right now by way of application are solved by getting the spirit right. If the spirit is right, every family in this church is going to look different in the dynamics.

If you walk into that family and see now who does this and who does that and how often do they do this and how often do that and who does this and who does that? That's going to be different in almost every family. But if this is right and if the leadership is Christlike and loving and the care is given, then I think you'll find the pattern that's right for you. Now, I wonder if we can very quickly.

I know I'm over time, but parents, if you feel you need to and run, get the kids. Let me just quickly run through these objections. Oh, I don't know if I can do this.

Shoot. We're going to have time to do church next week if if I don't get these covered. I think I could just point you in the direction.

Objection number one. What if she's more competent in everything? Which sometimes is the case. To me, that's totally irrelevant to my point, because this definition of submission and this definition of leadership can be performed when the wife is totally superior in every regard.

OK, I believe that. And I can give you many illustrations of it. And I gave what did I give here? Answer the question.

Would you still think a man should assume the responsibility of being a leader if he's less competent than his wife? Answer. Yes. Competence in skills is not the issue.

The differences between essential manhood and womanhood are the issue that a woman may be better at a skill than a man does not alter whether he can and should assume primary responsibility for leadership, protection and provision in the home. Suppose he's in a wheelchair or suppose he's drifting into Alzheimer's. There is a way he can be the protector and assume primary responsibility.

And he wants to. He feels the need to. It's written on his soul to protect this woman.

Even if he can't go to the door here, the window window breaking because he's paralyzed from the waist down. He'll do anything he can to protect this woman, though she may slay the drag. I used to use the illustration of Rebecca when I taught there that if a guy and a gal are going to McDonald's across Snelling or whatever that street is and at night and some guy jumps out wielding a knife and threatens them.

Everything written on this man's manhood should be that he takes the initiative to protect her. Even if she has the black belt in karate and can get this guy down and here's here's what's going to happen. OK, this guy who's just an ordinary weak guy and he's got this guy in front of him, 10 feet tall and wielding a knife.

And this cool, placid woman here that's ready to just nail the guy, he's still everything in him. If he does this, shake it, go get it. If he does that, he is not a man.

But if he says you're not going to touch her and she knocks him out of the way and levels the guy, that's OK. I don't know if I got any converts at Bethel saying that, but objection number two is what about mutual submission? I dealt with that at the end last week and I simply want to affirm it and say that we are to mutually submit does not mean that we mutually submit in the same way. Because if Christ and the church are the model in Ephesians 5 and Christ in some sense submits to the church and the church in some

sense submits to Christ, those aren't the same ways.

Christ submits as a leader, humbly himself to care for and die for and suffer for and lead and protect and provide for. And she submits by saying amen, yes, to that leadership and doing everything she can with her gifts to join forces with it and make an impact on the world. And the last objection is the most technical of all.

And I'll just point you in the direction. Does head really mean leader? What about source? That's what you're going to read in all these all these egalitarian books will say head doesn't mean authority or leader. It means source.

Well, you're not going to solve that problem. Believe me, Wayne Grudem has written two massive book length articles on that. So and so has written other two length.

These super scholars, they don't agree with each other. So what are you going to do? Right. Well, here's what you should do.

You should just go to the context and read what head means here in Ephesians five and head in Ephesians five is the head of a body. All right, it's the head of bodies, not the head of a river and it's not the head of an army. It's the head of a body.

That's clear from the context. The church is the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the church.

Then you have to ask, all right, if these egalitarian scholars have even a modicum of probability in their claim that its source, what's the head of a body? The source of. Answer, food, guidance with eyes, alertness with ears. The head leads the body.

Now, I don't think head means source. I don't think that's what it means. But if you're going to deal contextually with what head means, you've got to deal with the text here and not 10,000 references in Greek literature.

Which I think points in the other direction anyway, I think Wayne Grudem has the upper hand in the argument. But head, I think, contextually, as it does in the Old Testament, means leader. It means authority.

But if you want to press the image of Ephesians five, it's a head on the body and the body is the source of eating. Food goes in the head, in the mouth and goes down, nourishes the body. Light comes through the eyes so that the body can receive guidance from this mechanism.

And then the ears can tell, whoa, there's something coming here. Be careful. We've got to avoid it and turn around and make sure we're protected against it.

And so the head again is providing the alertness and protection. So that would be my main response to that objection. Now we're done.

My time is way over for the kids sake. What we're going to do next week is take it first. Timothy 2, 12, going to read up on it and we will talk about whether women should be elders in the church or not and why.

So let me pray. I'll stay at the front as long as you want to talk and ask questions tonight in case you have them and want to stay. So let's pray.

Father in heaven, I pray now that as we go, you would take what's been shared here and cause it to simmer and percolate and that it would bring an aroma of truth up into the souls of men and women in this church. I know I haven't dealt with a hundred application issues. Would you help us to be able to do that together as a people of yours? I ask in Jesus name.

Amen. Thank you. Thank you for listening to this message by John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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