

Key Text: Ephesians 5:33

“...every husband must love his wife as he loves himself, and wives should respect their husbands.”

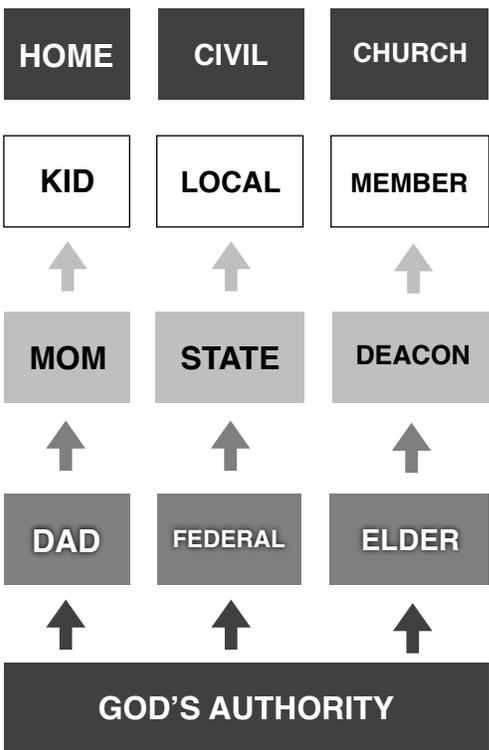
ESTABLISHING A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Just because two born-again believers get married does not necessarily mean that they have established a “Christian” home. **A Christian marriage is a choice, not an accident.** This principle is illustrated by how a real house is built. Just because the materials are in the same place at the same time doesn’t mean a home will be built. Someone has to do the actual work of building the house. This builder must also follow a design which fits the purpose of the particular home. This builder must also build a solid foundation and a proper structure or the house will not be functional and it will not last very long. In the “relational” sphere, someone must do the work of establishing a Christian home. This Christian home must be built and then maintained according to God’s plan or it will not last and it will not fit God’s intended purpose. **Establishing a Christian home and then maintaining it is costly, but it is worth every sacrifice.** Through a Christian marriage, the world can witness firsthand the Love that Christ Has for the entire church. (*Ephesians 5:32*) Through a Christian marriage, the husband will feel the favor of God. (*Proverbs 18:22*) Through a Christian marriage, a wife is going to flourish and experience blessing. (*Psalms 128:3*) Through a Christian marriage, any children raised will be like arrows in the hand of a mighty warrior. (*Psalms 127:4*) Through a Christian marriage, a community is going to be blessed. (*Proverbs 11:11*)



A HOUSE DIVIDED OR A HOUSE UNITED?

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

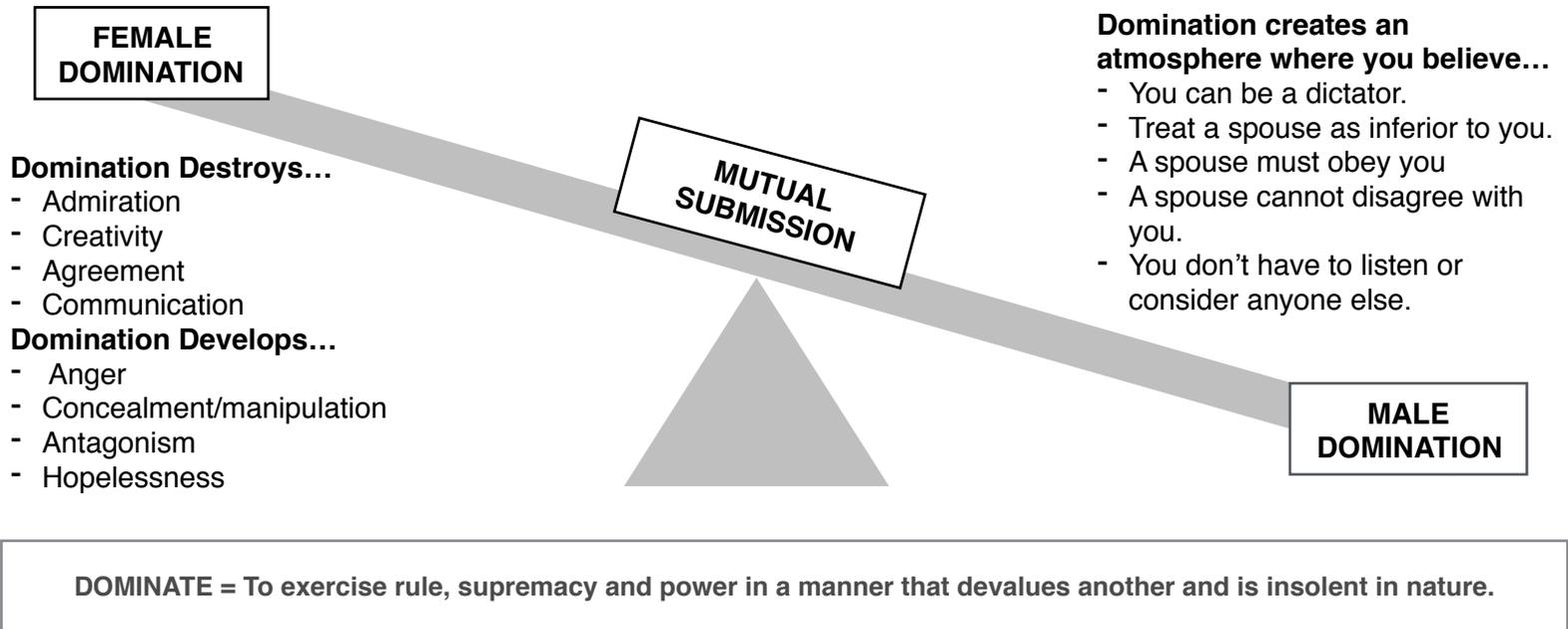


WILL YOUR MARRIAGE STAND THE TEST OF TIME?

The answer lies in whether or not you and your spouse are divided or united in obedience to the Word of God. **Matt 7:24-27** Explains how nothing can destroy a person who puts into practice the words of God. So to the degree that you and your spouse are submitting to the word of God, you will be able to withstand everything and be like a house built on the ROCK! To be united around things like hobbies, education, work, and even family are all good but none of them are the same as being united first on the word of God. This is the most important part of your marriage. **ESTABLISHING DIVINE AUTHORITY.** God’s word must be the final authority in all things pertaining to life and godliness. When you start with submission to God’s authority then you are free to submit to His “DIVINE ORDER”. There is an order for life that is based on Christ’s authority. (*Matthew 28:18...All Authority...*) There are three circles of authority and order taught in the Bible and all of them come from God. There is CIVIL AUTHORITY, (*Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13*) there is FAMILY AUTHORITY, (*Ephesians 5:21-26; 6:1-3*) and there is CHURCH AUTHORITY. (*Ephesians 1:22; 4:9-13 Hebrews 13:17*) If you reject this divine order of delegated authority then you must understand that you are really rejecting God’s authority. Here is a simple flow chart of the divine order in each circle.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

Colossians 3:18-20 lists the three levels of authority in the home. This is how God has designed a family to function. The problem facing the wife is "Submission". The problem facing the husband is loving sacrificially without "Bitterness". The problem facing the child is "Obedience" without disrespect. Each of these problems shares the same root problem of...wanting to be the BOSS. **God is truly the BOSS of everything. As a result, there should be a reverence for God first and that reverence should find its true expression through mutual submission to His divine order.** You might be asking yourself if there is an acceptable time to REBEL? Yes. We are only obligated to submit "In" the Lord. So, if a delegated authority is asking for submission to something that is in direct opposition to our submission to God, then we respectfully refuse to obey. This introduces a new principle of...BALANCED AUTHORITY. (*Ecclesiastes 7:18*) Because we are learning to submit to God, as we grow we will learn to walk in balance. We will avoid the extremes in our relationships. Here are some of the extremes:



HOW TO FIND THE "SWEET BALANCE" **Philippians 2:1-11** teaches us how to avoid the extreme of domination and find a balance through "Mutual submission". Regardless of your past examples of marriage you can always look to Christ's example for inspiration. Jesus showed us the way to exercise true authority. **Jesus used His position and power to serve others instead of himself, He did not insist upon his rights but rather focused on others.** That is exactly what a balanced marriage relationship looks like.

What does it mean to submit? Ephesians 5:21 states that we should submit to one another. *This word "submit" means to come under the influence of someone else and yield power to them.* This word also means to GIVE UP RESISTANCE. Jesus submitted to God the father to the point of DEATH ON A CROSS. That is a high standard of submission. If there is an attitude of RESISTANCE between a husband and wife then there isn't going to be much submission.

Do you feel that you listen and understand your spouses felt needs?

Is it easy for you to manipulate the situation to satisfy your own desires?

Do you always feel like you have to win or get your way?

How can you let go of more resistance in your marriage and demonstrate more submission to your spouse?