

# Imago Dei: Authority and Glory in Marriage – 1 Cor 11:3, 7-10

## Imago Dei and the Battle for Humanity - #4

**Introduction** – Paul had to deal with many issues of sexual immorality as well as the definition and design of marriage as God intended as he wrote to the church at Corinth. In this passage, he is speaking of the creation design of marriage as it relates to the Imago Dei (and being male and female) and the glory it reveals. This is not a passage speaking generally about men and women, but the husband and wife relationship. “*The chief end of marriage is the same as the chief end of man – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The chief end of marriage is not to have ‘your needs met’*” – D. Wilson. The particular application of this sermon is to display the glory of the husband and wife relationship, with an emphasis on the Imago Dei and the necessity of keeping God’s definition and purpose of marriage at the forefront of culture. (Also, thanks to Ben Merkle for many of the following thoughts and illustrations).

**Understanding Glory** (1 Cor 11:7) – Glory is a tough word to simply define. The Hebrew and Greek words mean “heaviness,” “significance,” and “revealed and reflected nature.” There is something about glory that is related to light, weight, descending, amazing, overwhelming, and filling. Glory is the revealed perfect character of God. When Isaiah sees the vision of God in the temple (Isaiah 6:1-3), the angels are declaring the three-fold holiness of God and the glory of that holiness-declared descends and fills the earth. When Moses asks God to see His glory (Ex 33:19-23), God declares His name/character (Ex 33:19, 34:6-7). To behold God’s glory is to have His character revealed to us; His perfect holiness, the perfect sovereign Judge and merciful Savior. When we praise God, we are glorifying Him (Psalm 50:23). And whoever does good works in God’s name glorifies Him (Matt 5:16). Why? Because it declares and reveals the nature of God.

**Descending Glory in Marriage** – This helps to understand verse 7 (and verse 10). Man is first of all crowned with the glory of God in creation (Psalm 8:1, 5-6). Man is the image and glory of God. In his role as husband, he reveals the nature of Christ to the church (Eph 5:23, 25-27). In her role as wife, she is covered with glory, his authority is bestowed upon her like a crown, revealing the nature of the church to Christ (Eph 5:22, 1:22-23). And apparently, our right worship as husband and wife in the presence of angels instructs them as well in the mystery of the gospel (v10). It is important in the creation-order that the distinctions of male and female, revealed fully in the relationship of husband and wife, are evident to the principalities and powers.

**Authority in Image-Bearers** (1 Cor 11:3) - In the worship service a covenantal meeting is taking place; the Husband, Christ, is meeting with His bride, the church, bestowing His name/character/authority upon her, which is His glory. That glory then redounds to Christ for she is His glory. It is under the headship of Christ that a man receives/reflects/returns Christ’s glory. It is under the headship of her husband that a wife receives/reflects/returns his glory. It is under the headship of God the Father that Christ receives/reflects/returns the Father’s glory (consider John 17:1-5 as well – note the authority bestowed upon the Son which brings forth eternal life).

**Glory of Glories Adornment** – A wife is the glory of her husband (who is the glory of Christ, who is the glory of God), and this means that she is the glory of the glory of the glory of God. This is not a glory becoming more and more diluted; quite the opposite. Just as the King of kings recognizes the finest king (or the Song of songs, the holy of holies, etc.), so the glory of glories declares her more beautiful and powerful adornment. Peter has this in mind when he instructs wives of their power to turn even an unbelieving husband “*without a word*” through her glorious adornment and submission (1 Pet 3:1-7). Glory is powerful, and adorned with this glory, she is able to submit to her husband without any fear or terror.

**Jesus our Example** (Phil 2:5-11) – How does submission turn into glory? How does submission to godly authority redound to more glorious authority? This is the story of death and resurrection, and of course the applications are numerous to both men and women. Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Mark 9:33-35).

**How She Makes More Glorious** – It goes without saying that women are beautiful; we love to look at women and we don’t care much about looking at men. Husbands bring raw, rough potential; then the wife receives what he brings and produces children, a home, culture and society. Godly authority in marriage is never something which separates, and the glory of a beautiful dance illustrates this. The woman must submit to the authority of the man (and desires that authority). And the better he is at wielding that authority, the more glorious she looks.

**New Jerusalem Glory** (Rev 21:9-13) – Here we see a picture of what authority and glory look like in the perfect splendor of the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb. He has authority over her. Why? Because He is *the Lamb*. What does that mean? And what has that done to and for her? And what kind of authority is now bestowed upon her, with glory, with gates open to all the world (vv12-13, 25-26)?

**Significance Culturally** – When we deny the Imago Dei, male and female He created them, we become Ichabod (the glory has departed) and humanity is progressively destroyed (Rom 1:22). Remember though, we are not people without hope. The Bridegroom has come and He is perfecting His bride. Jesus will have this world as His own. “*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...*”

**Significance in Your Home and Heart** – What is the chief end of your life? What is the chief end of your marriage? What could be greater than to receive, reflect, and return the glory of God?