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The Glory of Man – 1 Cor 11:7

Introduction – Who was it who said, “the thing about life is that it’s so daily”? Well, the thing about marriage is also that it is so daily. As the years go by, you must continue to return to the basics (like the things we have been talking about – confession of sin, forgiveness, and bitterness) to keep cleansing, renewing, and growing in your relationship. So too with understanding and then really living the biblical roles of husband and wife. My principal goals in this sermon are for – 1) A deeper understanding of the glory of the husband and wife relationship, and 2) A greater motivation to apply these truths, to live according to them, in order that the glory of God might be more greatly manifest. We want to be a people who hear the Word and by the grace of God understand and embrace it. We also want to be a people who not only hear, but also heed the Word; we want to be a people who love to find new ways to practically live in this grace given to us (James 1:22-25).

The Context (1 Cor 11:1-16) – Paul exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him in keeping with the apostolic teachings (not cultural traditions) – vv1-2. How a man prays ought to be different than how a woman prays in the public worship because the man is the glory of Christ and the woman is the glory of the man – vv3-7. Note that both actions are exhibitions of glory – there is glory to be given, revealed, and reflected in the relationship of husband and wife. Paul then argues for this order and revelation of glory because of historical and natural reasons (again, not cultural) – vv8-15. If anyone wants to argue their case, Paul makes clear this is the way the church worships – v16.

The Issue Before Us – “...but woman is the glory of man.” There are many questions that the passage itself raises: headcoverings, length of hair, women and men in the service, and what about the angels (these are just a few). As best as possible, I want to set those aside and address what is tied into our foundational theology of marriage. And that is the glory of marriage. Paul argues for many things here, but he bases those things upon certain underlying assumptions. He teaches that Christ is the head of man in some fashion the way a husband is the head of his wife (taking these passages and other epistles together). He then teaches us that there is a glory revealed in and through a wife that is the glory of her husband. What is glory? What is that particular glory? Does this demean or exalt the offices of husband and wife? How should this affect our relationship as husband and wife?

Revealing Glory – The glory of the Lord is first directly mentioned in Ex 16:10 where Aaron and the people of Israel see the glory of the Lord in the cloud. This glory rested upon Mt. Sinai during the time of the giving of the Law (Ex 19, 24:16-17). Later, Aaron’s priestly garments are to reflect this glory (Ex 28:2, 40). We also know that all of mankind was created in the image of God, crowned and reflecting His glory (Psalm 8:5).

The Glory of the Trinity – Jesus is the brightness of the Father’s glory (Heb 1:3). The Father bestows glory upon the Son (John 12:23, 28), the Son prays for this glory (John 17:1-5). He prays that in this glory, the Father Himself would be glorified. The Holy Spirit reflects His glory back up to the Son (John 16:13-14). In these passages on glory we see how the three Persons of the Godhead bestow, reflect, reveal, return, and magnify their glory upon One another.

Will God Share This Glory? – God says He will not share His glory (Isaiah 42:8), that is with any other god. But God does crown man with His glory, and in Christ, we receive, reflect and magnify this glory (Eph 1:6, 12, 14, 3:10-21). This Trinitarian glory-sharing and bequeathing is the key to understanding what it should look like when man is the “glory of God” and a wife is the “glory of man, her husband.”

Glory-definitions – What is glory? It’s a tough word to define. The Hebrew and Greek words mean “heaviness,” “significance,” “revealed and reflected nature.” The thing about God-given glory is that it is always intertwined in coming and going, bequeathing and receiving, identifying and representing. The moon has a glory, but only because it has received glory from the sun. At night, the moon represents, reflects the sun’s glory, but it is her glory nonetheless.

Bad Applications of Glory, Headship, and Submission – When we do not understand the Trinitarian aspects of headship, submission and glory, we often reflect a Unitarian, Allah-like god. He is the boss and requires her to submit so that he can receive all the glory. These wives are trampled all over (look at the Muslim culture). We also teach lies about the Trinity when we teach an egalitarianism in roles; but Christ submitted to the Father because the Father is the head of Christ. But when we understand the nature of glory and the relationship of the Trinity, and the reflection of these things that we are to be, we begin to return to true glory-bearing.

Husbands – The most powerful man, the most effective husband, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who rose to power through agape-submission to His heavenly Father and self-sacrificial love for His bride. When He gave Himself away in obedience and joy, He rose to the most powerful position any man will ever have. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church. Bestow upon her the glory that has been given to you.

Wives – The most beautiful woman, the most effective wife, is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. She has been given all things from her Husband and reigns at His side. Her perfection and beauty are gifts from Him and yet they are hers. She is glorious and she is His glory. Wives, submit to your husbands as the perfected church will to Christ. This is very precious in the sight of God.

People of God – While there is specific application for the husband/wife relationship, this bestowing of glory, receiving of glory, reflecting glory, and revealing glory is the work of the church and all her members. We do this to one another as we love one another in Jesus Christ. Corporately, we are the church, the bride of Christ. We are glorious in Jesus Christ and we reflect His glory to the world. In a very real way, we will fulfill the manifestation of the end of Isaiah 6:3, “...*the whole earth is full of His glory.*” Where is this glory? “*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.*” (Rev 21:10-11). We are the glory of God.

Dave Hatcher – February 19, 2006