

Are You 'Manning Up' in Your Marriage?

As you walk into churches today, you see many of the programs and ministry outreach efforts performed by ... women. In some cases, these same women are also the head of the household, raising kids, paying bills and sometimes bringing home the bacon. The biblical model that God gave us—that men should be the leaders in the church and home—is not being followed by many Christian men today.

Countless married Christian men have become spiritual sissies. These men have their tail between their legs, and their wives have them by the collar. Many of these men have allowed their wives to call all the shots, and they just follow her around like a lost puppy waiting for the next treat. In many cases, it's not because the wife wants to act this way but because she doesn't have the choice: Her husband isn't stepping up.

Don't get me wrong: I am not being a chauvinist with these statements. Women have a major role to play in God's kingdom and the home, and they are equally gifted in many areas of ministry. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives us many examples of women God used mightily for His kingdom.

But unfortunately, this has become the stereotypical view of Christian men today: whipped like dogs and too frail to stand up for their God, their family or their marriage. Men need to bronze themselves and *man up*.

The Picture of a Spiritually Sissy Husband

When I was married in 1990, my wife was far more mature than I ever thought about being. Some might say she still is. But since I became a Christian in 2003, our roles have reversed.

During the first 13 years of our marriage, my wife was raising

me. I mean that in the sense of the way you raise a child. She always had to mold me, scold me and hold me, just like a kid. And I came to the point where I actually liked it.

The day before I got married, my mom made my bed. The day after I got married, my wife made it. I had just gone from one mom to the other. I was the biggest sissy around. My wife was my mom, not my soulmate. She spent many years training me to become a man. It didn't work too well because that isn't the biblical model, and I think over time she finally stopped trying and just let go.

In the early years of our marriage, when people asked us about having kids, I would jokingly say, "She has to raise me first." What I later realized was that it wasn't a joke. Not a good way to be a biblical husband.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Eph. 5:25–31).

After I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I began to read what the Bible says about being a good Christian husband. What I found was that I wasn't even close to the biblical model, and neither were most of the men I'd met in church.

But reading about what kind of husband I needed to be and actually doing it were two different things. I had 13 years of bad habits to get rid of—an old, comfortable routine. I had a wife to convince that I had changed, and I had to close my

ears to Satan telling me I couldn't do it. This, so far, has been the biggest challenge for me in my Christian walk.

In my marriage, I had made a lot of mistakes. I had let my wife down more than once. So for me to start trying to assert my newfound "spiritual head of the household" attitude ... well, it was going to take a long time, a lot of prayer and actions that were much different than what I had shown in the past. As she has always said, "Actions speak louder than words."

My wife had spent our marriage providing the majority of the income. She had moved up in the ranks as a pharmaceutical saleswoman in the largest company in the industry.

She was successful, beautiful and confident, and she was fast becoming the No. 1 salesperson in the company. This was something I was proud of but also very jealous of. The jealousy part is something I didn't bring up very often.

But after having kids, my wife's job began to suffer. We had a full-time live-in nanny while we both worked, but the thought of leaving her children with another woman became just too painful for my wife, and it began to affect her attitude at work.

On top of all this, for the first time in our lives, we were listening to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to direct our lives. What He was telling us to do was a hard pill for me to swallow. God was telling my wife she needed to stay at home with our kids.

This was not something I felt like we needed to do—not because God wasn't talking to me too, but because I was not ready for this kind of change. All I was worried about was the money, the lifestyle and having to step up and be the man of the house.

If God is calling you to do something, no matter how far-fetched, He will see you through it. It won't be without trial

or without error, but He will see you through to the end.

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2–4).

God Spoke

After fighting through the conflict and after I was eventually convicted by God that my wife did need to stay home with the kids, she quit her job, and we haven’t looked back since.

Although there have been trials and tribulations in our life, it was the best thing we have done to date. As I said earlier, God will get you through the bad times if He called you to it.

Look at Paul. After God called him on the road to Damascus, he spent many years in prison, faced death and stoning, and was shipwrecked. But he followed God’s call, and this is what he said near the end of his life: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

God’s plan for your life may not turn out as you want it to, but whose plan would you rather live—yours or His? Keep fighting the good fight.

After listening to God, my wife quit her job to stay home, and God began to do a mighty work in both of us. For my wife, it was to start letting me take over as head of the household, both spiritually and financially. For me, it was becoming the man God intended me to be. We both dug into Scripture to figure out what it was we were to do. Through this process we have had ups and downs, but thus far, God has been faithful to us.

The preceding is an excerpt from Jody Burkeen’s book, Man Up:

Becoming a Godly Man in an Ungodly World. You can purchase the eBook [here](#). Jody is the founder of Man Up God's Way Ministries, birthed out of his desire to help change the way Christian men "do" Christianity. He is also a regular columnist for .