

The Glory of Glories – 1 Corinthians 11:7 (or 11:2-16, Part 2)

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. And we find ourselves in very similar battles today. In this passage, he is speaking of the creation design of marriage, the glory it reveals, and its relevance in the worship of God. What if the chief end of marriage is not to have your needs met, but to glorify God? Understanding glory and Trinitarian glory-sharing 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.”

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. 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. 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.

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. This is what covenantal headship does, for a head is someone invested with authority and responsibility to lead in order to bless. 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.

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 (v15, Isaiah 4:2-5). 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 can submit to her husband without any fear or terror.

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, formal 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.

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). Similarly, 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). Maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity, roles of husbands and wives, all these gifts of glory bestowed, when twisted, destroy humanity.

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.

New Jerusalem Glory (Rev 21:9-11) – 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 that was slain*. What happens when we live like that? What happens when we live as though the chief end of marriage is to glorify God? Eternal life is proclaimed with glory, with gates open to all the world (Rev 21:22-26).

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