

# God's Plan for the Marital Union

God is the architect of marriage (**Genesis 2**). It is Biblically defined as a life-long union between a man and a woman (**Matt 19:4-6**).

In Ephesians 5, the apostle Paul reveals by the Holy Spirit that the marital union illustrates the spiritual oneness and intimacy between Christ and His church. Here God teaches that His divine plan for matrimony will produce the harmony and happiness God intended in this lifelong bond. Men may change God's plan, but God's plan does not change.

### Loving Husbands

Paul teaches that the husband has the responsibility of headship in the marriage, as Christ is head of the church (**Eph 5:23**). The great challenge of his spiritual leadership is for the husband to love his wife sacrificially, as Christ loves the church and gave Himself up for her (**Eph 5:25**). Paul teaches that each husband, without exception, should love his wife as being in a sense his very own self; he is to lead her, to nurture her in the things of Christ, and to live with her faithfully for life (**Eph 5:28-29**). This is the kind of man that a godly woman will want to give herself to unreservedly.

### Submissive Wives

Paul teaches the wife must lovingly submit to the leadership of her husband in the home (**Eph 5:22**). This is still God's order, despite cultural rebellion against it. This submission involves support, cooperation and encouragement for the

husband to fulfill his responsibility. She must also look up to and "respect" him (**Eph 5:33**). This involves noticing him, regarding his efforts, esteeming his good points, and loving him exceedingly.

We should teach our children to make it their aim to marry someone who is a good Christian, who will help them go to heaven. As two committed Christians grow closer to Christ, they will grow closer to one another as best friends.

Husbands and wives daily wear a physical token of this spiritual union. It is made of gold, symbolizing the preciousness of marriage. As a ring, it is an unending circle, symbolizing unending love. Every time a spouse sees their wedding ring, it should be a silent reminder of the promises made on that joyous wedding day. It is a daily symbol to prompt faithfulness to each other always.

Terry Gunnells wrote about the growing power of a love in marriage: "When beauty fades from the cheek, luster from the eyes, when steps become short and wrinkles may crease the face, when silver threads adorn the head, true love will still sparkle and happiness will increase until that perfect day when the great marriage feast of the Lamb will be enjoyed for all eternity."



# The Auburn Beacon



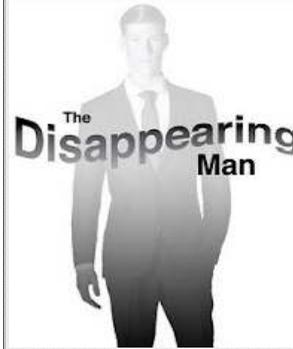
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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## The Disappearing Man

By Larry Rouse



### Thoughts to Ponder

Courage in people is like a tea bag. You never know their strength until they're in hot water.

You can see the signs all around you, from the fatherless families to the ridicule of "patriarchal" homes (those who have the husband as the head), the God-given roles of men and women are under attack. Our society loves to pit various "interest groups" against each other so that they can battle for the perceived political and cultural "rewards". What results from this "enlightenment" are poisoned relationships, broken homes and numerous evils that greatly add to the misery of all. The Apostle Paul described the rise of the practice of homosexuality and lesbianism, to the breakdown of the home and the general hatefulness in all human relationships that follows a rejection of God (**Rom 1:26-32**).

### The Current Culture

I can understand how a woman that was not a Christian would question why God would place man as the head of the home (**1 Cor 11:3**) as she may have experienced a self-centered husband that treated her like an inferior slave. Most people make judgments about their lives from their own experience and, as a result, often cannot conceive of the marriage relationship as God designed it. Jesus displayed what it really means to be a head when He gave His life for the church. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse

her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (**Eph 5:25-27**).

God's design for man, when implemented, will bring happiness and fulfillment. Under the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ men and women are on the same team. They have God-given roles of being subject to others in many relationships, but before God they are equals. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (**Gal 3:27-28**). From the role of Government, to business, to the local church, God has given an order, namely, that we all must be subject to rulers, bosses and a local eldership among the other relationships we may sustain. (**Rom 13:1-4, Col 3:22; Heb 13:17**).

Sadly, in the culture wars there are hurtful, mindless philosophies taught in the public schools that are being used as weapons to pit men against women. In a Waco, Texas newspaper it was reported that last November the parents of a 4 year old boy received a letter stating that their child was involved in "inappropriate physical behavior interpreted as sexual contact and/or sexual harassment" after

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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### Sick

Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Marion Vanhal (Paula Davis' Uncle)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Virginia Crawford (Hunter's Sister-In-Law)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Betty Bradford	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Carl Alexander (Hannah Alexander's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Melissa Walker (Chuck Hahn's Cousin)	Jerry Coleman (Jon Coleman's brother)	Caleb Dobbs (Melanie Smith's brother)

### July Birthdays

- 3 – Nathan Rouse
- 6 – Katie McDaniel
- 6 – Nathan Bradshaw
- 11 – Chase Winslett
- 11 – Madi White
- 11 – Clay Morris
- 12 – Aurie Adams
- 14 – Laurel Jerkins
- 15 – Bradley Seymore
- 16 – Nathan Smith
- 23 – Drew Haley Smith
- 25 – Yvette Rouse

### News and Notes

- ☒ - Suzanne Nichols' mother (Judy) had a good report that the tumor was benign! There likely will be some chemo treatments soon.
- ☒ - Let's continue to remember our expectant mother in our prayers, Terria Burton.
- ☒ - We will have a congregational meeting with the Elders today at 4!
- ☒ - Tam, Kitty + Paul are in China until July 23.
- ☒ - We will have our monthly singing tonight.
- ☒ - Allison Lanier will be moving to Birmingham this week.

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the boy hugged a teacher's aide. This child was suspended and a letter placed in his record! I wish that this kind of insanity was an isolated instance, but more and more in this country we are seeing purely gender-based stereotyping and attacks based on indoctrination rather than on a real understanding of men and women.

### How the Church is Being Affected

I believe the hostility of our culture towards authority in general and towards the role of man in particular has greatly affected Christians today. From the break-up of homes, to the bombardment of propaganda through television and movies, examples of real men, those who love God and selflessly serve their families as loving heads, are rarely seen. Brethren, we must give renewed emphasis on the role of men or future generations will be lost.

### What Does it Mean to be a Man?

When we are determined to allow God's word to mold our lives then we will diligently seek God's path for men. Consider this short list with the corresponding scriptures.

**A man is to be subject to God (1 Cor 11:3).** Respect for authority, brought about by knowing the love and grace of God, is the foundation that every man must stand upon.

**A man must be trained to be a spiritual leader.** God has by design placed men in leadership roles in both Old and New Testaments (**1 Sam 4:3; 1 Tim 3:2**). Leadership must be taught by word and also seen by example (**1 Cor 11:1; 2 Tim 2:2**).

**A man must develop maturity and courage to stand and face the hard issues of life.** It is my prayer that each of you had the example of such a father in the home in which you were raised. Real men serve and suffer while the cowardly pleasure-seekers of today abandon their responsibility and their homes. "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things" (**1 Cor 13:11**). "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (**1 Cor 16:13**).

### We Need More Men in Local Churches

There is a great dearth of leadership in many of the churches that I have been acquainted with. It is very rare to see qualified men serve as elders in local congregations. Without qualified men to serve as

elders, churches have correctly turned to a meeting of the men as a place to make final decisions. Unfortunately, the men's business meeting is also a place where the lack of real men is painfully seen.

How does the local church where you attend deal with problems? When a real problem is faced by a local church then real men will stand up while cowardly ones will disappear. A common, but sad experience, is for a faithful man to stand up and confront a well recognized problem only to find that he is standing alone. I have likened it to being in a "gunfight at the OK corral" with the wind blowing though your hair facing some fierce opponents while there are many "men" who are spectators content with doing little more than sitting on their hands and watching the conflict. In some cases the man who takes a stand is crushed and the status-quo of doing nothing is maintained. But something else also happens in this event. Future potential leaders are either taught what it is to be a man, or taught that it is better to be a coward. Is it any wonder why some older churches have never had elders?

### How Can We Help to Raise Up More Men?

Godly men can teach their sons by both word and deed how to be men (**Eph 6:4**).

Godly wives can have a great influence when they show respect towards their husbands. This will bring out the best in them. "Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband" (**Eph 5:33**).

Christians must insist that local churches face and solve the spiritual problems that will come over time. It is in this process that a church can maintain its work of building men up. When a local church delays or ignores problems then it will guarantee not only future strife, but also teach a cowardly approach to all problems (**Heb 13:15**).

May we have more examples of faith and courage as Paul described in his letter to the Thessalonians. "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (**1 Thess 1:5-8**).



# Are Grace and Law Mutually Exclusive?

By Jonathan Perz

An oft-repeated, though poorly-conceived, notion is that Christians must relate to God through an avenue of grace, rather than law. Says who? Are grace and law mutually exclusive? Are grace and law an either/or proposition? If so, by what standard do we make this claim?

First of all, is it possible to relate to God through both grace and law simultaneously? I wholeheartedly believe it is not only possible, it is necessary.

Under both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, in every age of man, grace and law are interdependent. Law teaches us right from wrong (**cf. Gen. 2:16-17a; Deut. 11; Rom. 3:20; 7:7**). Law teaches us the consequences of right and wrong (**cf. Gen. 2:17b; Lev. 26-28; Rom. 2:5-11**). Law is the standard of judgment (**cf. Gen. 3:8-24; Ex. 24:3-8; John 12:48-50**). Whereas, grace is that free, but conditional, gift God gives us to atone for and find forgiveness of our sins so that we will not have to face the consequences of them (**cf. Gen. 3:21-24; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:6-10:10; also Rom. 5:9; Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 4:7; Heb.8:12; 10:17**).

Grace and law are both given of God. The very idea of justice is rooted in law (**cf. Prov. 31:5; Isa. 51:4-5; Hab. 1:4; Matt. 23:23**). The very idea of God's grace is rooted in justice (**cf. Rom. 3:24-26; Tit. 3:7**). They are not independent, but interdependent. To suggest we must view God through one and not the other is like accepting only the goodness of God, while rejecting the severity of God (**Rom. 11:22**). It is like accepting Jesus as full of grace, but rejecting that He is simultaneously full of truth (**John 1:14**). It is like accepting Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord (**2 Pet. 3:18**).

Without law, how would we know God's grace? Where there is no law, there is no sin (**1 John 3:4; Rom 5:13**). It is law that not only teaches us how to obtain grace (**cf. Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:8-9**), it is the violation of law (sin) that causes us to appreciate God's grace (**Rom. 6:1, 15, 23; 1 John 2:1-2**). If we only view God through the prism of His grace, we will find that grace pretty bland because we won't

Thus, rather than trying to draw a line between law and grace, we need to view grace and law as symbiotic, or having a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence. For the righteous, God's law brings joy, peace and salvation.

see or appreciate our need for it. But then again, we would not find God's grace at all except by the law, for it is there that God instructs us about His grace and the conditions of obtaining it.

Nevertheless, in light of all of this, someone might still be foolish enough to argue, "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law: you have fallen from grace" (**Gal. 5:4**). Is Paul telling us in this passage to view God through the avenue of grace and not law

(generally)? Or is Paul actually talking to a group of first century Christians who are trying to find justification by the law of Moses? The context suggests that Paul was not speaking of all law, but a law—the law of Moses (see **Gal. 5:1-6** in light of **Acts 15:1-5**). To generalize this passage is to twist it, and it is not even a difficult passage to understand in the first place (**2 Pet. 3:16**).

The reason they could not be justified by the law of Moses was because the covenant that Moses' law was a part of is no longer in force (**Heb. 9:16-22**), since Christ fulfilled it (**Matt. 5:17-18; cf. Gal. 3:19-29**). The blood of animals could not save them because God always intended for His Offering to save them (**Heb. 10:1-10; John 1:29**). The law could not save them because they would not live by all of the law (**Gal. 3:10-14; 5:3; Jas. 2:10**). So, it is a false doctrine that suggests from **Galatians 5:4**, and passages like it, that grace and law (generally) are mutually exclusive, and that Christians must learn to view God through an avenue of grace, and not law!

Thus, rather than trying to draw a line between law and grace, we need to view grace and law as symbiotic, or having a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence. For the righteous, God's law brings joy, peace and salvation. For the unrighteous, God's law brings fear, turmoil, and condemnation. For everyone, God's grace brought Jesus His Son, and the continual, but conditional, cleansing of His blood (**John 3:16; 1 John 1:8-9**). Praise God for His wonderful gift of grace and His amazing law that is light—that lamp unto our feet (**cf. Prov. 6:23; Psa. 119:105**)!

