



Approach to Headship-Submission Decision Making

How to Make Headship Decisions

When it comes to making headship decisions it would be easy to engage the process (i.e., pursue an outcome) more than the person (i.e., serve your wife). This is a common mistake that results in great damage to marriages. Here are five key things a husband should have done or known before asserting his role in making a headship decision.

1. Know your wife well.
2. Express honor in what you say and do.
3. Institute healthy home policies.
4. Establish an environment of trust.
5. Initiate important conversations.

Now we need to look at the process a couple should go through in a headship-submission decision. These steps are directed primarily to the husband. But they can be used by a wife to articulate what she is looking for in her husband as he leads the family in a way that honors her.

- Enact healthy individual and consensus decision making.
- Articulate clearly your wife's position or concerns.
- Articulate clearly why this is important to her.
- Vocalize about what you're weighing in the decision.
- Request for your wife's support in your decision.
- Only choose your preference if...
 - Moral Protection
 - Mission Drift
 - Life Balance
 - Issue Warranting a Trust Withdrawal

Distinction: Obedience vs. Submission – Children are called upon to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1). A wife is called to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22). There are many implications of this distinction, but one will be highlighted here. A husband does not have the authority to punish his wife for choosing not to submit to his leadership. Withholding finances, restraining social freedom, or other “grounding-like” actions are unbiblical for a husband to utilize with his wife. Whenever a husband-wife relationship takes on the quality of a parent-child relationship it creates problems that are greater than a lack of submission.

How to Respond to Headship Decisions

Here are five responses a wife should have to a healthy expression of her husband leading in a decision. These are not “steps” but they do have an intentional order. If it is difficult for you to fulfill one of the earlier points, it will be very difficult for you to fulfill the latter points in a way that feels genuine rather than forced.

1. Believe the best about your husband's motivation in leading.
2. Affirm the process even before you know the outcome.
3. Strive to make the decision succeed.
4. Speak and think of the decision positively.
5. Offer feedback without questioning his role.

Word to Husbands: You protect your wife in her ability to display these responses by (a) not over utilizing your role as head of the family, (b) patiently utilizing the process advised to ensure she has voice even in decisions where you exercise headship, and (c) inviting feedback when you do exercise headship.

- Invite a critique of the process.
- Invite a critique of your tone in leading.
- Invite a critique of the decision.