

SOLUTIONS FOR A ROLE REVERSAL FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES

THE HUSBAND

Studies: *The Husband: Servant/Leader and Dismantling Control Strategies, The Home; Communication and Admonishing, CTO.*

1. Practice fearing the Lord and His consequences more than you fear your wife and her responses, rejection, or displeasure. Study: *Fearing the Lord, CTB*
2. Choose to believe that God has *already* placed you in leadership over your wife and that He will give you the grace and ability to fulfill that role. (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8,9)
3. Be willing to suffer for doing what is right rather than continuing to suffer because of your sins. (1 Pet. 4:12-19)
4. Realize that when you start taking the leadership reins, your wife will probably put up a good fight since you are assuming the role she has wrongfully claimed. Be willing to suffer unjustly. (1 Pet. 2:19-25)
5. Instead of ignoring or minimizing problems, potential problems and situations which require decisions, pray frequently that God would help you build a consistent awareness about them.
6. Realize that you may be soothing and numbing your conscience by believing you are a “nice guy”. Your sins are just as great as your wife’s. As long as you are defying your God-given position to lead, you are not a “nice guy.” (Eph. 5:23)
7. Realize you will fail when you make decisions, but that Christ went to the cross for your failures. You need to rely on the work of the cross daily.
8. Renounce your false identity of a *failure*. Instead, you are God’s child who fails at times. Do not use your negative identities as excuses to disobey God.
9. Step out in faith to admonish your wife and risk her wrath in doing so. Make this a repeated practice as needed. Study: *Admonishing, CTO* (Gal. 6:9)
10. Do not ask for her input on a pending decision until you have taken time to pray and to think through some solutions or outcomes. Turn your dependency on God rather than your wife. (Jas. 1:5-8)
11. When she tries to control you by convincing you, tell her in a loving but firm way that you have heard enough and she needs to be quiet. Firmness is not a sin. (Lev. 19:17)

12. Realize that you are controlled by fear when you have to make decisions. Turn to God through confession of the specific fears you are dealing with (i.e.: failure, rejection, conflict, your wife's responses, etc.) Utilize *Steps to Releasing Fears, Fear, CTO*.
13. Tell your wife (or children), "I will give you a decision by (date). Thank you for your input, which I am taking into consideration."
14. Do not procrastinate on decisions. By giving a date, you are establishing accountability with God and your family.
15. Do not procrastinate in taking action by ignoring responsibility, which fosters a cycle of sin-guilt-sin-guilt. Be willing to forsake immediate gratification of pleasurable pursuits or comfort, which you receive when your responsibilities are ignored.
16. Realize that even though your wife fights your leadership and tries to get her way, deep down inside she *really* wants you to lead her. There will be a growing respect for your character if she knows she can no longer control you, even though outwardly she may continue her rebellion.
17. Stand firm against her intimidation and manipulation. You can say, "It seems you are trying to intimidate (or control) me." or "I feel like you are trying to manipulate me with your way of relating to me. Please stop." Do not argue with her if she is defensive. Remain silent. (Phil. 2:14; Ps. 46:10)
18. Establish regular times to meet with your wife for Bible study and prayer.
19. As your wife's spiritual leader, you should encourage her individual time with the Lord, ask what God is teaching her through the Word and prayer, and share your own pilgrimage with God. (Eph. 5:25-27)
20. Quit withdrawing and using "escapes" from spending quality time relating to your wife and family.
21. Find ways to engage with your wife and family. Make plans. Become an initiator.
22. Establish a weekly time to meet with your wife to discuss the upcoming week: what needs to be accomplished, family situations, compiling a "to do list". That will help both spouses to be on the same page.
23. Develop the habit of praising your wife's appearance, character, spiritual growth, or accomplishments daily. Praise her for progress in not trying to convince or control you. (Heb. 3:13)

THE WIFE

Studies: *The Wife Serving/Submitting; and Dismantling Control Strategies, The Home, Communication and Admonishing, CTO*

1. Ask the Lord to help you find ways to promote and affirm your husband's leadership.
2. Fear the Lord more than you fear your and your children's suffering because of your husband's decisions or lack of decisions and responsibility. Study: *Fearing the Lord, CTB*
3. Realize that continually modeling a role reversal in your marriage is more destructive for your children's future lives and marriages than their suffering the consequences for his individual wrong decisions or lack of decision.
4. Renew your mind that you are submitting to God and His design for marriage when you relinquish leadership to your husband. Study: *Decision-Making, CTO; Authority Structure* diagram (Eph. 5:22,33; Col. 3:18)
5. Submit graciously to his decisions.
6. Realize that when your husband makes "no decision", you must wait quietly and not rush in to make the decision for him or to take action. You must be willing to suffer the consequences of his lack of decision and action, as his helpmate. (Ps. 27:14; Is. 40:31)
7. Realize that your submission includes developing a gentle and quiet spirit, free from anger and bitterness. (1 Pet. 3:1-6)
8. Quit using the excuse that "he won't lead so I must." Step back and be willing to suffer when God delivers His consequences for your husband not taking leadership. (Gal. 6:7-9)
9. Put your hope in **God** to give you the resources to suffer in turning around the role reversal, rather than hoping in God to change your husband. (1 Pet. 3:5)
10. Send your children to your husband for decisions concerning their lives rather than making them yourself. Point your children to him as leader.
11. Be careful not to form alliances with your child(ren) against their father. Don't form a sinful dependency on a child to be your "sounding board" about his/her father or look to him/her to be your emotional support. Be aware that women who have husbands who are emotionally absent often turn to a child to fulfill that role in their lives.

12. Ask your husband's permission for decisions concerning your life rather than continuing to live a life independent of his authority and interaction.
13. Pray before approaching your husband with appeals or admonishments. Pray that God will set a guard over your mouth. (Ps. 141:3; Eph. 4:29) Study: *Communication, CTO*.
14. Set guidelines for your admonishments or appeals. For example, commit to using 3 sentences or less. He may have learned to "tune out" your many words of the past. Study: *Admonishing, CTO* (Prov. 10:19)
15. Do not argue with him if he gets defensive. You may say something like, "I shared my admonishment, but I'm not going to argue about it or try to convince you." Then be silent. (Phil. 2:14; Ps. 46:10)
16. Instead of nagging, mentally establish a time to approach him again with a gentle reminder, such as every two or three weeks. For example: "Have you given more thought to how you would like to handle _____?" Learn the discipline of waiting.
17. Ask him for his input instead of *telling* him what he should do. Example: "What do you think should be done about our child's attitude?" "How would you like to handle this situation?" "Have you plans for _____?" Then wait for his answer.
18. If he asks for your input before giving his, quietly say, "Since you are the leader in our relationship, I'd like to hear yours first." Then be silent. Don't ridicule or "put down" his input. Take time to pray about it before you disagree. Disagree with a respectful attitude, saying that you will submit to whatever he decides on the matter. (Eph. 5:22,33; Col. 3:18)
19. Bridle your tongue. When you want to criticize, ask God if the admonishment is really important or needed. Most are not. Practice the *1-2-3-4-5 Memory Outline, CTO*. (Prov. 19:11; Jas. 3:5-11)
20. Get rid of your "tunnel vision" that there is only one way to do things, one right approach or decision, and it is yours!
21. Be prepared that when he begins to make decisions, he *will fail* at times. Allow him to fail without your condemnation. Don't squelch his small forward movements, but rather encourage them. Keep in mind the greater goal of submitting to God's design for marriage.
22. Don't remind him of his failures with *words or attitudes* like, "I told you so!", "You never do anything right.", etc. Learn to wait on God to show him and teach him. (Eph. 4:29)

23. Break the cycle of negativity by *daily* finding things to encourage him with and praise him for such as his appearance, accomplishments, character, spiritual growth, decisions he makes and action he takes. (Heb. 3:13)
24. As a helpmate, come alongside him to implement a decision with which you do not agree, unless the decision violates God's Word.
25. Don't rescue him or enable him to continue in irresponsibility.
26. Give your and your husband's reputation to God to do with as He pleases. Do not make reputation an idol.
27. When you have usurped his role as leader, remove yourself from that position by seeking forgiveness for doing so and then turn the responsibility over to him. See *The Wife: Serving, Submitting, The Home* for details on when this is appropriate action on your part.
28. If he totally relies on your input and makes decisions in accordance with it, step out of giving input for a season until he takes the leadership.
29. Don't "mother" him by telling him *how* to do things, such what to wear, how to drive, what route to take, speaking for him, correcting him in front of others, etc.
30. Confess and renounce the goal of trying to change him. It is not a biblical goal.