

## **RESPONSIBLE PARTY**

Whenever you take your child to the doctor's office and fill out paperwork, there's always a place where you have to say who is the responsible party – who will pay the bill if your insurance doesn't cover it.

This little example gave me some insight into the issue of authority and submission. God, as Creator, is the author of everything and so holds supreme authority over His creation. We are all to be in submission to Him. He also arranged the family structure with the father as head and the wife and children in submission to him. Ephesians 5:21-23 admonish us all to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ and then elaborates specifically to the family. Wives are to be subject to their husbands because the husband is the head of the family in the same way Christ is the head of the church.

I will note as further evidence of this structure the fact that Adam was the one held responsible for causing sin to enter the world, even though it was Eve who first took the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:17-19, Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21-22). Since Eve knew she was not to partake of that fruit, we may assume that Adam fulfilled his responsibility to instruct his wife about God's command. Why should he be held accountable for her disobedience? Also God judged the priest Eli because he did not restrain his sons from abusing the offerings to the Lord (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 3:13).

I was always perplexed as to why the Scripture says, "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife," when it is the woman (traditionally) who forsakes her surname and takes on her husband's. I believe the reason is because it is the son who steps out and establishes a new home, of which he is the head, while the daughter who becomes a wife simply goes from being under the covering of her father to being under the covering of her husband.

In another aspect of the issue, David had multiple opportunities to kill King Saul, but would not do so because Saul was God's anointed king (1 Sam. 24:6, 26:11). David knew Saul was in authority over him and, even though he knew God had told him he would be king one day, as long as Saul lived, he should be in submission to him. To rebel against God's designated sub-regent is to rebel against God.

I know there are many today who disagree with this system. They espouse egalitarian marriage and think women should be fully incorporated into all church offices. I am not here to debate the merits of either argument.

But there is one more example that convinces me even more that the hierarchy God established is for our good. Consider the unfathomable love of the perfect, holy, righteous, and just God, who would create a system of authority and submission, and then submit to it Himself. Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, became the responsible party. He paid the bill when no one else would.