

WHAT WINGER PRESENTLY GETS WRONG:

MALE HEADSHIP: IS IT REALLY BIBLICAL?

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Our full article takes up Mike Winger's kind invitation to give feedback on the Part 8 video in his Women in Ministry series. We hope you will enjoy reading it. Here's a quick summary in less than two pages.

QUICK SUMMARY OF ARTICLE ON MALE HEADSHIP by Andrew Bartlett and Terran Williams

The question in the title of Mike's Part 8 video is: Male Headship: Is it REALLY Biblical? From considering the topics in this video, our response is that Mike has not shown that male headship, in the way he understands it, is biblical.

Mike makes four claims about headship. On examination, all four prove to be mistaken or misleading.

Claim 1 is that common medical thought in NT times supports the metaphorical meaning of 'head' as connoting 'authority over'.

This claim is misleading, because it is an over-simplification. The factual picture is much more complex, offering multiple possibilities. The head was understood to have a number of functions, including the supply of nourishment to the body.

Claim 2 is that Paul's metaphorical and contextual use of 'head' in relation to both Jesus and husbands implies authority.

Not so. Paul's metaphors are not uniform. In the five examples from Colossians 1-2 and Ephesians 1 and 4, authority is associated with Paul's 'head' metaphor in some instances and not in others. No firm conclusion can be drawn from this about Paul's uses of 'head' for the husband in Ephesians 5:23 or for the man in 1 Corinthians 11:3, which have yet to be examined in detail (see the Part 9 and 10 videos and our responses).

The part of Mike's video that argues in support of this claim involves a radical misunderstanding and mis-reading of egalitarian scholarship.

Claim 3 is that church history totally supports headship implying authority.

This claim is not correct. Even a very brief review of what Greek church fathers wrote shows a division of opinion.

Claim 4 is that lexical study of *kephalē* (Greek for 'head') strongly supports the authority implication.

This claim is not correct. Mike's analysis loses sight of the purpose of consulting lexicons in this context, which is to review metaphorical uses of *kephalē* prior to Paul. The meaning 'source' for a 'head' metaphor definitely exists in Greek prior to Paul. We say more about that in Postscript (3) to the article.

And anyway, this is a side issue, since Paul's metaphorical usages in 1 Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5 are new.

In sum, Mike's teaching in each of the four parts of his video is distorted by major errors and omissions. The four topics do not demonstrate that Paul's 'head' metaphors in Ephesians 5:23 or 1 Corinthians 11:3 are about male authority over women. *The way to determine the meanings of those metaphors is to examine in detail the passages where Paul uses them.*

We have a question for Mike.

He believes it is very important that husbands should exercise leadership authority over their wives. He says this is of great practical importance. We agree that it has big practical impacts, though in our view they are negative – see our Postscript (1).

Our question to Mike arises from the fact that there is no instruction in the Bible which says that husbands *ought to* exercise authority over their wives.

Since there is no such instruction, why does he teach it, and why does he teach that it is very important?