

**A WIFE
AFTER
GOD'S
OWN
HEART**

A WIFE AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

October 7, 2012

Sermon in a sentence: As a wife and/or mother, God has given you the opportunity to reflect Christ's humility and His quiet, gentle, submissive spirit to those around you.

Scriptures: Gen. 2:18, 21-23; Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; John 14:16-17; Titus 2:3-5

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. **22**The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. **23**The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Gen. 2:18, 21-23 NASB)

Genesis 1 speaks to us of God's creative power and describes how fish, birds and animals were created and commanded to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth. God looked at it all and said it was good.

Then God made human beings in His own image, male and female, with the responsibility to take dominion over all the rest of His creation.

When we get to chapter two, more detail is provided. Man was created before woman, not by God's word, but by His hands and His breath. He then commented on the situation facing Adam and said: "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18).

A helper to do what? To help him in establishing dominion over God's creation!

The man needed a partner, a helper, one of his own species – made in the image of God, able to help him in areas of need and do things he couldn't do. So God created woman – a sign of His favour and blessing to man. She was a gift and a reward from God, (as are his children and his work) (Ecc. 9:9; Ps. 127:3).

We all need a good understanding of our various roles in God's divine order, as outlined for us in 1 Cor. 11:3:

3But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1,3 NASB).

This is not a scripture or a concept we should shy away from. Jesus Christ, God in flesh, submitted His human will and desires totally and completely to the will of the divine Spirit dwelling within Him.

Men are required (and privileged) to live in submission to the authority of Christ, and women are required to live in submission to the authority of their husbands, as a sign of their submission to God's divine order.

Nothing in this concept speaks of superiority. It *does* however speak about responsibility and accountability. God, the eternal Spirit was not superior to the man Christ Jesus. However, there was a role for His spirit to play and a role for His flesh to play – (the same reality we experience in our own lives and bodies).

A man is not superior to his wife, nor is a woman inferior to her husband. They perform different *roles*, and the woman's honour is to act in her God ordained role as

“helper”, submitted to her husband and committed to her family.

Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23**For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. **24**But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. (Eph. 5:22-24 NASB)

Why do we have so many problems in hearing and obeying this teaching? When squabbles arise within a couple’s relationship, the man will sometimes reach for the “submission stick” to use against his wife, thinking this should bring a quick end to any argument.

Even though that is probably the worst tactic for him to employ in the heat of the moment, many wives immediately get angry and bristle against any talk of obedience and submission. **Although most women seem to have little trouble with love, forgiveness, caring and nurturing, submission is not very high on their ‘how to live’ list.**

(As this is such a huge issue between spouses, let’s give it a longer look.)

To understand this conundrum, we have to go right back to the beginning of human history where Adam and Eve, (and all of their descendants), fell into a lifestyle of disobedience and rebellion against the word of God.

Genesis 3:16 tells us that God’s punishment for Eve’s sin was pain in childbirth, and being ruled by her husband. The nuance the NLT brings out more clearly than other translations is in His statement to her:

... “you will desire to control your husband, but he will

rule over you” (Gen. 3:16b NLT, (emphasis added)).

So we crack little jokes like: “you know who wears the pants in *that* family!” or “if momma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy”.

This verse goes beyond simply speaking of a woman’s yearning for a husband and describes the desire of many to *control* their husband when they get one. But as no human body can function properly with two heads, neither can a church, a company, a government, or a family. The husband needs to fulfill his role as the godly leader and head of his home, just as his wife needs to fulfill her role as his godly helper and partner.

Ladies, pause for a moment and think of things you have thought or said concerning the “changes” you intended to make in your fiancé, who is now your husband.

These desired changes can easily become the thin edge of the “control” wedge that can quickly and efficiently destroy a marriage if it is not brought under control.

You may well argue that you are smarter than your husband and know better than he does what should be done in most situations. And you may well be right. However we have to come back to the central theme of Gen. 2:18, that a wife’s chief responsibility is to *help* her husband, not just to demonstrate intellectual, practical or operational superiority.

As a godly wife, you must HELP your husband become the kind of man that God, he and you want him to be!

This issue of submission is actually extremely important in scripture and shows up repeatedly: **submission being the act of yielding to the power, position, role and authority of**

another, in obedience and compliance.

It is not just about wives submitting to their husbands, (Eph. 5:22,24; 1Pet. 3:1,5-6; 1 Tim. 2:11), but also:

- **the young submitting to the old: 1 Pet. 5:5**
- **children submitting to parents: Heb. 12:9**
- **servants submitting to their masters, kings, etc.: Col. 3:22-24; 1 Ch. 29:24; Titus 2:9; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:18; Rom. 13:5; 1 Cor. 16:16; Gen. 16:9; Gen. 41:40**
- **men submitting to Jesus: 1 Cor: 11:3**
- **saints submitting to each other: Eph. 5:21**
- **demons submitting to Jesus' name: Luke 10:17**
- **saints submitting to church leadership: Heb. 13:17**
- **the earth submitting to Christ: 1 Pet. 3:22**
- **all of us submitting to God: James 4:7; Heb. 12:9; Jn. 14:15**
- **Jesus the son of God submitting to the will of His Father: Luke 22:42; Heb. 5:7-8**

Submission is a critical characteristic for every individual to develop, and one of the most important keys to success in *all* aspects of life!

The “win” for a wife is this: If you have married a man, (of reasonably good character), who loves you and honestly desires a mutually beneficial life covenant with you, your submissive spirit will be hugely important in drawing him into a place of safety and trust with you. It will cause him to open up and be vulnerable to you – if he knows you are truly desirous of helping him and facilitating his growth. *(Don't forget, you are often dealing with a very fragile male ego that is easily wounded!)* As you do this, and move away from a “command and control” mode, you will get back to the place God originally created a wife to occupy – a helper

at your husband's side, neither before him nor behind him, but as his loving covenant partner.

It is important to live this way with your husband – even if he does not yet know the Lord as you do. Submit to his leadership, (unless he is leading you into sin), just as you would submit to Jesus himself! In fact, your submission to your husband demonstrates your submission to Christ.

This principle is laid out as follows:

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:20 NASB).

Likewise, if you cannot submit to your own husband who you can see, how can you submit to God whom you cannot see?

1In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, **2**as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. **3**Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; **4**but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with **the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.** **5**For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; **6**just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear (1 Pet. 3:1-6 NASB).

Practicing the lifestyle described above has great drawing power – the power to influence your husband toward Christ.

However, please understand that whether or not your husband is a fellow Christian, you will need the almighty power of God to help you succeed. Just as you were created to be a helper to your husband, the Lord has also provided someone to help us all do what is right and pleasing to Him – wives included. Jesus told His disciples:

16“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17***that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

The power to be a wife after God’s own heart, reflecting His humility, gentleness and submissive spirit comes through the infilling of the Holy Spirit of God.

For those of you who are elderly wives and mothers in Zion, there is a job description for you also. Paul told Titus:

... teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. **4**These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, **5**to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be **submissive to their husbands**. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God. (Titus 2:3-5 NLT)

In a well ordered home, wives have every opportunity to excel in their areas of skill and expertise as King Lemuel’s mother taught him. (Proverbs 31 was a quotation of the words of a woman about women, and is a detailed manual for becoming an excellent wife, mother, businesswoman and leader.)

Despite the obvious injustices and repression so many wives and/or mothers face, often due to repressive, demeaning cultures and unbiblical male domination, God has a much better plan. He desires that women flourish in the role He has designed for them, allowing their Christ-like humility, gentleness and submissive spirit to be their main character traits. This will be a wonderful foundation upon which each woman, wife and mother can build a life of service and personal accomplishment.