

The Perfect Wife

The Fruit of Godly Submission

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It's not without some trepidation that a minister of God ventures into the subject of marriage! Especially a sermon that is directed primarily at wives, and most of the trepidation is how the wife of one's youth will react to it once it is over!

But the modern view of marriage and particularly the subtopics that must be talked about when this comes up—roles and submission—puts church teaching at odds with the culture at large. The ideas we bring out of the world—oftentimes by just watching the things that are happening in the world—can creep into the church if we're attuned at all to the popular culture. By just observing what is going on out there, we can be influenced one way or the other to take on some of these modern ideas of the way a marriage should be.

I expect that in the listening audience, there will be people who have retained some of these ideas of the world. They may resist some of the things that I have to say, but I believe I'm taking all these things directly out of the Bible. Once I tell you, it is in your hands about how you want to react to them, and take them as your own.

Several factors contribute to this conflict between the world's ways of looking at marriage—particularly the wife's role—and God's way. I think though for us today the two most prominent are feminism, and modern critical thinking, which is post-modernism, relativism or humanism.

If you have read any of my past articles, listened to any of my past sermons and sermonettes, I think you will see that I am no fan of feminism. The movement at its origin or at its best was good in the sense that it tried to get equal legal rights for women. There is certainly nothing wrong with that. God shows in the Bible that there is an equality between men and women.

For a great many years now—many decades, at least 4 or 5—the women's rights movement has been hijacked by a much stronger anti-God cabal so that feminism has really lurched far beyond its original intent. It has gotten into areas that have had the effect of warping society. It has wrenched society off of its moral foundations.

I only have to mention a few things that feminism has directly influenced: Abortion Rights—"choice" that is. All "choice" amounts to—"choice" isn't whether you can raise

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your family as *you* see fit; "choice" isn't whether you can be a Christian or not, or follow a certain creed—is whether you can kill your unborn child or not. So when you hear people talking about "choice" out there, they are not talking about anything but abortion, because feminism is not willing to give choice for anything else.

You can see that when people who are pro-life go to an abortion clinic to try to let young women know the other side of the issue and are dragged off by the pro-choice people to court! They don't want people to hear the truth about abortion. The only choice is the feminist choice, which is to kill your unborn child.

Another one is gay and lesbian marriage. That's another offshoot of feminism. I won't go into that. I won't go much into the next one I have here either, the worship of the goddess. Many of you don't know about it, and that's just fine, but goddess worship has crept into mainstream Christianity under the guise of the goddess, Sophia—Wisdom.

They draw this out of the Proverbs where wisdom is personified as a woman and conclude that this is biblical backing for worshipping this female deity that has great similarity to deities like Ishtar, Isis and others of the past.

All of this is because of feminism. This is where feminism has crept into the spiritual realm of things, and warped it. Modern critical thinking has also changed society's views on biblical teachings and standards regarding marriage. And I could say biblical teachings and standards on anything. People no longer see the bible as authoritative or even take the Bible at face value.

Post-modernism rejects all absolutes. And so the Bible which claims to be the Word of God, and says, "this is the way, walk ye in it," is thrown out because it is domineering and patriarchal. "It is not authoritative, because how can you prove that God actually said these things?" This is them talking, not me.

And so they say that this must mean something else. There must be some hidden meaning behind all this. And so they deconstruct the text one way or another and (from whatever viewpoint they're coming from) make the text say whatever they want it to mean, rather than take the Book at it's word.

And so we have these forces swirling around out there, infringing on our thoughts and, in effect, telling us how we're supposed to act, and to believe. We put up a fight, but some of these things creep in.

It is good to go back every once in a while to see just what the Bible says about these

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things. In this church we don't do what the post-modern, higher critics do. We don't deconstruct. We don't make the text say what we want it to. At least we try not to. We try to take the Bible at its word and explain what it means.

We think God means what He says. And we preach God's doctrines straight forwardly. We don't have any ulterior motives, except your entrance into the Kingdom of God. That is the best ulterior motive that there can be.

So, I will take this series one step further by trying to find out what the bible says about the Perfect Wife. The last time, I gave the sermon, *The Perfect Husband*. This time it will be *The Perfect Wife*.

Please turn back to the beginning, to Genesis 1, and we will start in verse 26. It is always good to get your foundation right from the foundational book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;...

Please notice this: He says "Man." But, we know it means Humankind. The very next clause says, "Let them." It is plural now. The pronoun is plural. So "man" means "mankind" or "humanity."

Genesis 1:26-28...let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...

I want you to notice here that it says, "God *blessed them*, and God *said to them*," and then He gives this command.

Genesis 1:28-30 "...be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth,

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in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

Now as I've explained, God speaks to man here—mankind. He created man as male and female. So everything that He says here is to them both. Right here, these first words are not just suggestions, but plain out and out commands—both men and women have the same responsibilities. They have the same powers. He says this to both as equals.

I want you to get this straight from the beginning. When God made man male and female He gave them both the same basic instruction. He did not give males more dominion than females. He did not tell just females to be fruitful. He told them both, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth."

So this instruction is given, from the very beginning, to them both on the same level. This is very important to understand. When God made man—mankind, humanity—He made them of two sexes. Both of them were created in the image of God. Males are in the image of God; females are also in the image of God.

Many have said that they complement one another. Together (as we see later in the second chapter), as one flesh, they come closer to being the full image of God because of the different strengths that they have—what they bring to the marriage—to the one flesh. Together they are a more complete image of God than just one of them alone.

Certainly, females are different than males. I'm not talking necessarily about the way we look. I'm talking about the different ways we approach things—our strengths. When we put a man and a woman together, they tend to complement one another—just in general.

Sometimes it doesn't work that way depending on the two people. But in general, a woman completes a man in the same way that a man completes a woman. We have this difference even while there is still equality under God. They are both in the image of God, but they are different; not completely different—different enough so that we complete each other when we are together.

Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

In a way, we're stepping back in time sequence before Genesis 1:26 —just a little bit

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before. This is God discussing together—God the Father and the One who became God the Son—the reasons for making woman. If we would go on, we would see that Adam could tell that there was no one for him out there that was already made. All the animals passed before him. He saw that they all had mates that were alike, but there was no being of flesh and blood that was like him.

And so we have this comment here from God that man should not be alone just like the animals are not alone. Man is to be a social being. Man is to have community. Man is to have a family. And so He says here that He will make a helper comparable to him. We see here a confirmation of what He said there in Genesis 1:26-30, that male and female are comparable.

But, He adds here, "A helper."—"A helper comparable to him..." (in the New King James). It is actually a pretty good translation of the phrase. It shows comparable worth, while interjecting that the wife is a helper—an aide or a suitable companion might be a nice way to put it.

Delisch, of *Keil and Delisch*, says that this means

"A helping being in which as soon as he sees it, he may recognize himself."

And that is exactly what happened when God wakes Adam up, and shows him Eve. Adam said, "Wow! This is someone just like me! Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!"

He recognized immediately that this being was a woman because she was taken out of man. He recognized immediately that this person was a human just like him. They had a lot more in common than anything else in the animal world. This was a person he could share his life with.

What we have here is a confirmation of what is said about their equality—being comparable to one another, being suitable together, like one another—but we also get the first hint of headship in the man, and a subordinate role for the woman (in terms of authority).

This idea comes from the word, "helper." If you have a painter, and he has a helper, who is in charge? The painter is. The helper is someone who gives him aid, who lends a hand, who helps him to get the job done. It is the same here in this particular verse. It is only a hint, but it is enough to give us the understanding.

Here, already, the foundational principles of marriage are being established, and we're not even at the end of the second chapter yet.

Genesis 2:21-24 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made [In the Hebrew, He "built."] into a woman... [I guess that's why we sometimes say that some women are built, huh?] ...and He brought her to the man. And Adam 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." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Obviously the focus of the principle here is that a married couple are to be one flesh. This is what it all boils down to.

What we have seen in the past few verses was that just as a woman was made from the rib of the man, so are they to be joined back together in marriage. A man and his wife (once they have taken those vows) are to function as a unit. In a way, Adam gets his rib back—the one who should be at his side, helping him, being his companion throughout the rest of their lives.

We also understand here—from this idea that Eve was made from Adam—two things: The first is that she was not taken out of the dust of the ground. She was made from Adam himself. This shows that she is not a separate or inferior "species." God used the genetic or the core humanity of Adam to make Eve. She came from his side showing the equality.

Once again it comes out in what is written here. People have always remarked that the rib came from his side. She was not to be behind him. She was not to be in front of him. She was to be his companion at his side. The idea comes back to this equality between men and women. They are the same. They are both in God's image.

The second thing is Adam was made first—God gave him the head-ship (we will see this later) and because Eve was made second, she must be second to him in authority in the family.

Paul explains this several times in the New Testament. He mentions Adam was made first, then Eve, and then he goes on explain the principle that he is trying to get across.

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You will find that in I Corinthians 11 when he is talking about hair (of all things) and head coverings. He mentions first of all (in verse 3) that the husband is the head of his wife, and Christ is the head of man, and God is the head of Christ. There is a stepping stone of authority there. And then Paul goes on to say that Adam was made first, and thus Adam was made head over his wife.

So, there is this idea coming out already—here in the first two chapters of the bible—regarding the way that God has ordered the relationship between a man and his wife.

We can extrapolate that if God set it up to be this way, then there are certain roles that He has already assigned. Because of this particular thing that we're talking about here at the end of chapter 2, if either steps out of their position, then there is going to be problems.

God has set it up this way. If we go contrary to what God has set up, there's going to be some sort of disunity, some sort of problem that is going to come from it, because God knows what He is doing. He is the Maker. He set it all up. If we try to (in God's inimitable way of saying this) "kick against the pricks" then there's going to be stress at the very least.

So, this one-flesh principle that comes right here at the end of chapter 2 is the foundational principle of the marriage covenant. And, the reason I can say this is because that's the foundational principle of the New Covenant that we make with God.

What does Jesus say to His Father as He is praying there just before His arrest? He asks His Father that these people who believe in Him should become one with Them, just as He is one with Him, the Father. That's the whole point of what we're going through here. We are to be one with the Father. It is the New Covenant that establishes the relationships so that this could be made possible.

Do you remember Herbert Armstrong called marriage "a God-plane relationship." And it is! It gives us probably the most visible and understandable parallel to the relationship between a Christian and God himself. And then to take it one step up, between Jesus and God the Father.

And so we see that marriage is not just a physical union, but it is a Godly teaching tool or device—a way in which we grow and overcome; an experiment if you will; a school—in which we grow and learn to act like God does.

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We see this already in the second chapter of Genesis. God is setting all this up for our learning (as we come toward the end here) and for all humanity throughout all history.

Just as a Christian (in his role as disciple of Christ) would not take the prerogatives of God, and take to himself the position of God, so should a woman not try to take the prerogatives of a man—of her husband. And in the same way, neither should a husband take the wife's role. It isn't going to work. God has already set it up the way it will work. Like I said, when we step outside the bounds of the way it's set up, we're just asking for trouble.

We see here then that the marriage relationship is then a God-plane relationship, and it is a way that we learn to grow and overcome.

We're still not through with Genesis yet in all this. We must throw the monkey-wrench into the works!

Now all of this happened (in chapters 1 and 2) before Eve took of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Here in chapter 3, verse 16 is the "curse," that falls upon Eve because of taking of the forbidden Tree.

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Like I said, this is where the trouble in understanding begins. We call these curses from God, but they are not really curses (like "abracadabra, you're going to turn into a frog"-type curse). God is basically telling them the results of their sin. Because they have chosen to defy Him, and break off their relationship with Him by believing the snake, and taking of the Tree, this is how their life was now going to turn out—the woman was going to have some pretty hard times.

Now there may have been something that God did. But we can see that these things are the natural result of sin. God didn't have to do much in order to bring these things about.

He does say, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow." It could be that what He means here is that He won't give them the understanding of how to make it easier. Instead, He would leave them to find out for themselves. There might have been natural ways or Godly ways that these things could have been avoided. But now that they have sinned, and cut themselves off from God, things were going to be tough.

If we look at it that way then, the pain that it says here, and the sorrow, the desire (which we will get to and explain), and this man ruling over woman will come as a natural consequence of what she did. Sin is now a factor in the relationship not only with God, but between the man and the woman.

So, if we look at it that way, it is understandable. God was just telling them, "Now that you've done this, I can see that your future is going to be like this: You are going to have sorrow. You are going to have pain. Your desires won't be proper, and you are going to end up being dominated by your husband, because you have decided to do things your own way, and not My way."

This is how it has been throughout history. The life that we could have had, if sin had not entered the picture, has degenerated because of sin into a battle of self-interests. Everybody wants his own. It is a struggle, one against the other, rather than a cooperative effort.

I mentioned in an article that I wrote a few years back that this is the beginning of the battle of the sexes. That is exactly what the last part of this verse says, "Your desire shall be for your husband, but he shall rule over you."

That's why I want to explain this. This word here translated "desire," is *tesuqah*. It does mean desire (It is a literal translation of the word). But, if you look in *Strong's Concordance*, it is also "a longing." And also it goes beyond that to what we would call "a craving."

Now, *Brown, Driver and Briggs*, a well regarded Hebrew lexicon, calls this word "unusual and striking."

It only occurs three times in the entire Old Testament, and twice here in Genesis. The other time that isn't in Genesis is in the Song of Songs (Solomon), and the idea is a sexual desire because in the picture there, the Beloved has a desire for the Shulamite. So, that is very easy to understand.

But, the second place it is used in Genesis is just across the page, when God is talking to Cain just before the killing of Abel. And He says there,

Genesis 4:6-7 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Now sin's desire for Cain was to overcome him, and conquer him. And, that is the same idea that God uses here in Genesis 3:16. When He says to Eve, "Your desire shall be for your husband," He means, "You will desire to dominate your husband, but he will rule over you."

A modern paraphrase that I came up with might be, "You shall desire to overthrow your husband, but he will dominate you."

It has been that way throughout history up until the last half century—men have had the authority given to them by society to domineer and dominate—autocratically rule their families. And it is only because of the equal rights movement that this has been turned around at all in Western countries.

In many countries of the world today, the women still don't have the rights that they have here. The men in those societies dominate their women much as they have through the centuries. We have to look no further than the Muslim countries like Afghanistan under the Taliban where the women could barely go outside. And if they did they had to be covered from head to foot, and there were all these restrictions on their activities, and their movement.

What God is showing here in this prophecy, is that this is how things would work out. Women would have a life of pain and sorrow. They would try to get the best of their husbands, but they would lose, because they are the weaker sex—the weaker vessel. They don't have the strength to dominate their husbands normally. There have been a few times where that hasn't been so, but this is a general prophecy.

In my own way of thinking, this is a prophecy rather than a curse. This is how it would now normally be. Ladies, you don't have a chance if you try to win in a man's world, normally. This then sets the stage for the way the rest of the Bible deals with the marriage relationship.

Yes, we had (in chapters one and two of Genesis) God's foundational way that it should be. And then reality comes in because sin is in the world. So, the rest of the bible is showing people how to overcome this problem. That's important. Please understand that. All the instruction in the remainder of the Bible is trying to take us back to the way it should be.

It's not that we can just push sin aside. Sin is a real thing for human beings. Human

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nature is something that we have to deal with all the time. So, the instruction in the bible is pointed directly at us with this reality in mind that there is sin, and that we have to work hard to get back to the point where God wants us to be. And so the instruction is often rather jarring. It is difficult. We are repulsed by it in some cases because our human nature is still warring with us to do what comes naturally.

Doesn't it say there in Romans 8:7 that man has an enmity towards God's Law? That includes all of His instructions. We all have a natural enmity towards God telling us what to do, and how to get back to the way it was before sin entered the world, to a life without sin.

It is natural that if God tells women "Submit to your husband," the first thing that lights up in a woman's mind is, "I will not!" For a man to be told that he must love his wife, "Who are you to tell me what to do? I'll do as I please."

If we would go through Genesis 3:17-19, you would see that the instruction to Adam was basically, "You are going to spend your life working, and working, and working, and working until you die!"

This is why Paul has to say, "Husbands, love your wives! Quit working every once in a while! Spend some time with your wife and your children! Quit trying to grab the 'brass ring' and come back to your family."

This is only one aspect of it. You see, the curses here—prophesies here—are the reality of life with sin—the normal way we run our lives. Go, go, go, go, go, go, go! That's the men. And the women are, "What can I do to get him back for this?" Whatever "this" happens to be.

The instruction of the Bible is saying, "Men! Women! Push that all aside and do what is right! Women, submit to your husbands! Men, love your wives!" That is what God wants you to do.

What I've done is set the stage for what is given in the New Testament. The apostles were very aware that we're all struggling against human nature, and that is no minor foe. These are not suggestions. These are the inspired instructions through the apostles as to how to get back to godly relationships.

It is not going to be a "walk in the park." Let me just put that out here right now. These are not easy instructions. Even though they might be said very simply, putting them into practice is very difficult because we're trying—struggling—against everything that has

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been built up over 6000 years of human history, and our own baggage too.

Just understand, I'm with you in all of this. I feel for all of us. I'm going through this myself. Every man has a desire to work, to provide for his family. We can have the best of intentions to do these things, which are good things. It is good for a man to work. It is good for a man to be tired when he goes to bed because like Solomon says, "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet." It's good to be able to put food on the table, and clothes on your children's backs. It is good to be able to take a vacation. It is good to be able to do all these things.

But, if you overdo even the things that are good, you end up warping them. We have to overcome and find the balance. The proper way that's going to work the best for not only doing the necessary work—speaking as a man here—of providing for one's family, and giving the family what they need, but also showing the proper love for one's wife, and children, and getting those other priorities done.

I could probably give some examples from the women's point of view of how hard the struggle is, but I think that you all know. It is hard for a woman who oftentimes has more "on the ball" than the husband to place herself in what seems like an inferior position—to give in without compromising, saying, "OK. That's fine. We'll do it that way," when she knows good and well that her way would actually produce a better result.

He's made the decision from his way of looking at things and she doesn't argue the matter. That takes a great deal of patience, and humility, and love, and faith—not in him, but in God.

I wouldn't want to be a woman. I don't think I would have it in me to be a woman. (That's true! Dad just said that I don't!) It is true! A woman's need, under God, to submit is just as hard as anything God tells a man to do, because of the way that a woman is.

I've known a lot of people where the woman has so much more going for her than her husband, and that just makes the matter worse—harder, more difficult. That's an area of overcoming and growth. She will probably have a great place in the kingdom if she can work through all of that.

Let's see this in the New Testament. Let's go to I Timothy 2. I don't want to spend a great deal of time here. This is a particular section that is about men and women's roles in the church, but it has also to do with their roles in the family. There is an analogous way of looking at this.

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This is a very difficult scripture. Feminism has made this verse seem to say what it does not say. Feminism only sees the negative sides here. There is a great deal of positive teaching that when all is said and done is going to produce a wonderful family and a very strong church.

I Timothy 2:11-13 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. [Ooo! I can just hear it now.] And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

All right. Here we pick up one of those places in the New Testament where Paul reaches back to Genesis 2 and tells us the godly order of things.

I Timothy 2:14-15 And Adam was not deceived [Genesis 3], but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Now the key here is verse 13. Adam was formed first, and then Eve. Paul says, "This is what God has set up." Paul, could say, "I am innocent of this pronouncement!"

He had just given them two broadsides. "Woman, you be silent in the church, and you be submissive." And then he says, "This is what God says in Genesis 2: Adam was formed first, and then Eve." We get back to headship again.

Verse 14 explains Genesis 3. As a general pattern of how men and women handle spiritual knowledge, he says here, "Adam was not deceived." He just plain sinned, folks. Eve, however, was deceived, and then she influenced Adam.

Paul says that in the church God has ordained that men speak. Men handle the teaching duties because frankly—and science has proved this—men handle knowledge from a logical viewpoint, rather than an emotional viewpoint. And when you mix a heavy dose of emotion and the doctrine of God, you can sometimes have a volatile result.

Look at the Pentecostals. Great deals of emotion in Pentecostalism and a great deal of deception as well. They can't understand tongues because they are all caught up in this emotionalism of the spirit that they got totally wrong too. They don't look at it in a reasonable, logical way.

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And so, Paul says that generally men are better suited to process God's word, and teach it.

When God's word is filtered through emotionalism, things tend to get skewed.

I'm not saying every woman is going to be an emotional wreck if she were to get up here and preach God's word. But, I'm saying that generally God says that men are able to teach this more straightforward than a woman would.

I'm trying to give you a general "this is the way that it normally is." And if you go into any scientific study of these things, you would find that they have found this to be true. Men and women process knowledge differently. And this was known way back then. God inspired Paul to judge that it is better for women not to teach in the church.

Now we know that there are men that have been deceived, and have yet preached, and have been real emotional about things and have led people astray. That's true. It does happen that way. But, this is a generality, again, so understand it that way. God is protecting His flock here. He is not putting women down. He is just giving a general instruction for making sure that the amount of deception that goes on within the church is narrowed as much as possible.

This doesn't mean that a woman can't teach her children. God, through Paul, is talking about teaching in the church. It is narrowed down to that specific thing.

But, in verse 15, he brings in the home when he says here that she will be saved in childbearing. That sounds awfully sexist, doesn't it? But, it is the way that it was translated here that gets us confused. Now this "saved" here means exactly what it says. This is part of her salvation—in "childbearing."

But, it is the word "childbearing" that gets us all messed up. The word childbearing in Greek is *teknogonia*. And it is only used here in this one place in the whole bible. It literally *means* "childbearing," but it doesn't necessarily mean the bearing of children.

It is a word that covers a larger category. Strong's and Vine both say that this should probably be translated as "maternity." I believe it was Vine that went on to say that it should become the phrase, "duties of motherhood." I have even seen some that will say "womanhood."

I Timothy 2:15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing [in her womanhood]...

Meaning that a woman's salvation depends on how well she is a woman—how well she does at being a woman. And we could say this about men. A man's salvation depends on how well he is a man. This comes out in the roles that God has given a man and a woman.

A man is to be a son, a husband, a father, and in this case a teacher and leader in the church. A woman is to be a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a teacher of her children, a keeper of the home, and all the other things that the bible shows to be a woman's role. And, it is those things that God is going to watch to see how well she is doing. This is the place that He has put her. Her judgment will be in how well she does in the role she has been given. Make sense?

I Timothy 2:15 ...if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Of course! That's what everybody is supposed to do.

So, if you are a man and you have a family, you are supposed to be a husband, and a father, and are supposed to exercise faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

And if you are a woman (and you have a family), you are supposed to be a wife, and a mother, and are supposed to exercise faith, love, holiness, and self-control. It is that simple.

This is not something that is esoteric. Just because a woman has a child doesn't mean she's going to be saved. It means that if a woman does what a woman is supposed to do—a godly woman—she's going to be saved. She has fulfilled what God has set forth for her to do. And, these are the areas in which she is most likely to come across areas in which to overcome: How she treats her children, how she responds to her husband, etc.

This isn't really anything terrible. Paul isn't putting women down. He is just saying that this is how God has arranged things. And, we should do our best where He has put us.

We could use the same analogy from I Corinthians 12 about the way that people are put into the church. This is the same teaching. If you are the ear, don't take over the eye's job. If you are the big toe, don't take over the index finger's job. It won't work that way. God has placed each person where He sees fit. That's where they work the best. That is where their judgment will be decided—in that place where He has put them.

So, Paul is saying nothing different here in I Timothy 2 than he said in I Corinthians 12. It is the same principle.

There is nothing here that we need to worry about, or get on our high horse about, perhaps thinking that Paul was some sort of misogynist—that he hated women. He is just looking at it from reality. This is what God has ordained from Genesis 2, and this is how we're going to best please God.

So, he is really just trying to return the church to the original intention of God. Jesus said we're the light of the world. Only the true church has the ability to show the world what the best way of life is—the way that life should function.

This is the way that reverses the effects of the "curse" of Genesis 3. We are to accept where God has put us and then exercise faith, love, holiness, and self-control in that position. And then we reverse that "curse" and he says here that we will be glorified. Isn't that what salvation is ultimately? Glory and exaltation?

So, he is not putting women down at all. He is saying this is the quickest route to glory. You want to have power? Do what God says to do in the position you are in. He says this in other places. He says that if you came into the church as a servant, fine! Be the best servant you can be! If you came into the church as a master, fine! Be a great master! That's where God has put you. Don't try to get out of it necessarily. Just practice faith, love, holiness, and self-control and God will lift you up. That is the way that it works.

Simple, isn't it? Hard to do!

Often, the best things are this way. Simply said, hard to practice. But, that's why we get however many years we get in our converted life to become perfect. We're not all just going to turn on a switch after the sermon and be perfect husbands or wives, or whatever. It is going to take a lot of overcoming and growing.

Human nature is out there trying to dissuade us, get us down, and make us go the other direction. But, if we work on this over the long haul, what it is going to lead to is salvation, and glorification and exaltation. So, why not do it?

Please turn with me to Ephesians 5. I don't need to spend much time here. We've already gone over these principles. This is where the big bad word—"submission"—comes in.

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything

Ephesians 5:33 . . . and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

In context, these come at the end of the book after the middle part of chapter 4 where Paul starts applying the principles that he had already laid down at the first part of the book into practical application.

So, he's going through the different parts of life here: Wives, husbands, parents, children, servants, masters, and finally gets down to the general things, the armor of God in the last part of the 6th chapter. He's telling us that these principles need to be put into practice, and he said to the wives here, "submit." This is the command to wives that Paul feels is most necessary at this juncture.

Now, if we would go through, we would see his general instructions to all Christians in the verses before this. (Like, be kind to one another and tenderhearted.) Of course we're to do all these things. But, specifically, he turned to the wives and said, "The chief thing you can do as a wife is to submit to your husband as to the Lord."

Now, it is very sad that the feminists have jumped all over this word "submission" or "submit." Submission is a basic principle of God's way of life. You will not be a Son of God without submission. Mr. Armstrong used to say that God will not have anyone in His kingdom whom He can't rule, or anyone who will not submit to His rule. When feminists and others say that this is a wrong teaching—that women don't have to submit—they are basically telling people that they don't have to do what God says. They don't have to do one of the key things that is going to get them into the kingdom of God. And that's abominable.

Do they have more wisdom than Paul? He said, "Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." That's the chief thing you can do. Why is this so? Why is submission so important?

Submission is the outworking of—the physical act of—humility, of esteeming others better than oneself. That's how we do it. We submit to them. We place ourselves under, in a subordinate position, to those people. And so, it comes out in things like service. We put ourselves under them, and give them our service. Or, give them our

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acquiescence. Or, we do what they tell us to do. Because we don't esteem ourselves better than them, we are voluntarily placing ourselves under their control and authority.

That is a hard thing for a person with human nature to do. But, it is the one thing that Paul chose to tell wives to learn to do. And he tells them to learn this because this is the way the church acts and reacts toward Christ, always in submission to Him.

That's the analogy that we need to always remember—as the church acts toward Christ, so should a wife act toward her husband. Especially when the thing that a husband asks a wife to do is perfectly good, Christ-like.

Now in certain cases where a husband would tell the wife to do something that the Lord would not want her to do, she is not under any obligation to do it, but she should refuse to do it in a very humble and submissive manner as unto the Lord. This really isn't that hard to understand, although it is hard to do.

He actually only takes three or four verses on it and he encapsulates it in the word "respect" in verse 33. "See that she respects her husband." If she respects him properly in the fear of the Lord, then things are going to go well.

Let's quickly go to I Peter 3 and just pick up a few things there. Peter basically says the same thing that Paul does.

I Peter 3:1-6 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Notice that this begins with "likewise." This is in a series of things that Peter instructs the church. He says to be submissive to government. Servants, be submissive to your masters, just as Christ was submissive all the way to death and secured our redemption and healing.

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So, "likewise, wives submit to your husbands." This is a government issue in a way. God has set up the man as head. And so a woman is required under this headship to submit to her husband. It is a Christian duty just as it is a Christian duty for the husband to submit to Christ, and to submit to his employer, and to submit to this, that, and the other person who may have authority over him in certain areas of life. It is no different for a woman.

Then, Peter jumps to the opposite of submission, which is this vanity and adorning. He's trying to show the other side here. This is the way we don't want to be. What God really wants is not that we dress up nice, we wear all this jewelry and have our hair perfectly coifed, etc. That's not what God is looking for.

It is very pointed, the way he puts it. He says that God wants a gentle and quiet spirit. And then He says, "which is very precious in the sight of God." It means a lot to God to have this gentle and quiet spirit. And then he shows us the example of Sarah, and the holy women.

He is not saying here that a woman needs to call her husband "lord," even though most husbands would think that would be cool. That's not what he is saying at all. It was the attitude that Sarah did this in. She recognized his headship, is what he is saying. And so, she submitted to Abraham's lead.

She's an example of one of those gentle and quiet spirits (and she laughed in the tent, too). She is the example of the submissive wife, and Peter extols her for all time here. And then almost as an afterthought, he adds that they should do good, and not give in to their anxieties. That's basically what it means. They are not afraid with any terror.

I wanted to mention this because I understand that it is a very fearful thing to give up control to another person. I think that's what Peter meant here. He said that if you do as Sarah did, continuing to do good, and if you don't give in to your anxieties thinking this is going to turn out badly because you are not in control anymore—then it is going to turn out well. Be calm and do what's right.

So this last part (here of verse 6) is the way Peter comforting—"Look, this is the way that God has ordained it. Don't worry." And so it comes back again to what Paul said back there in I Timothy 2:15, that women should do this in faith, in love, in holiness, and in self-control. God is going to back you up if you do it right. So don't worry.

Let's finish in Proverbs 31. Obviously, I'm not going to go through Proverbs 31. But, I want to just read some verses, and then close. I had no intention of going through

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Proverbs 31—that has been done before. I want to just go there as a capstone for this message.

Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Proverbs 31:25-31 Strength and honor are her clothing; [notice the positivity here. This is along the same lines as we've gone through so far. And, I want you to see that this woman is not downtrodden. She is not the dust of the earth here. She is a woman who does things God's way] she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all. Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

This section reveals that the worldly view of a biblical wife as some oppressed slave is utterly false. This paints a picture of honor, and praise; of worth beyond measure; of opportunity and blessing; of great fulfillment and satisfaction. Here, if we follow God's instruction, is God's view of a perfect wife.