

# 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 ones 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 it's 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 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 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, 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 & 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 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 head-ship 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. 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.

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, "*OK 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 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 verses 17 through 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 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.

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 head-ship 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