



Roles & Responsibilities of Women

Premarital Counseling Session #5

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TITUS 2:4-5 (Amplified) - ... wisely train the young women to be sober of mind (temperate, disciplined) and to love their husbands and their children, to be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured (kindhearted), adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited).

David Ireland wrote *Letters to an Unborn Child* while dying from a crippling neurological disease. He wrote these letters to the unborn child still in the womb of his wife – a child he knew he might never see, hold, rock, kiss, or take to a ball game or a movie. A child he might never shoot baskets with, take to the circus, or comfort after a bad dream. He desperately wanted that child to know that, whether dead or alive, “Daddy loves his son or daughter.” With that in mind, David wrote the following:

Your mother is very special. Few men know what it's like to receive appreciation for taking their wives out to dinner when it entails what it does for us. It means that she has to dress me, shave me, brush my teeth, comb my hair, wheel me out of the house and down the steps, open the garage and put me in the car, take the pedals off the chair, stand me up, sit me in the seat of the car, twist me around so that I'm comfortable, fold the wheelchair, put it in the car, go around to the other side of the car, start it up, back it out, get out of the car, pull the garage door down, get back into the car, and drive off to the restaurant.

And then, it starts all over again; she gets out of the car, unfolds the wheelchair, opens the door, spins me around, stands me up, seats me in the wheelchair, pushes the pedals out, closes and locks the car, wheels me into the restaurant, then takes the pedals off the wheelchair so I won't be uncomfortable. We sit down to have dinner and she feeds me throughout the entire meal. And when it's over she pays the bill, pushes the wheelchair out to the car again and reverses the same routine.

And when it's over – finished – with real warmth she'll say, “Honey, thank you for taking me out to dinner.” I never quite know how to answer.

In our world, there are very few great examples for what love should look like in marriage and in the home, as well as other places. Instead of looking at Hollywood to check out who's breaking up with whom, or looking to those who are so ready to jump out of a turbulent marriage for an example to follow... How about remember this story? I have found the greatest picture of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, in the Amplified Translation.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (Amplified Version):

- 4 Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.
- 5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].
- 6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.
- 7 Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].
- 8 Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]

As you read this passage, ask yourself, “Do I live out this kind of love?” because Romans 5:5 says the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. God’s love is inside of you... we just need to activate that love by a decision of our will. Love is not merely a feeling, it is a choice. Choose to love today!

Passages in the Bible which speak of the woman’s part in marriage:

Proverbs 31:10-31 (TEV) ¹⁰ How hard it is to find a capable wife! She is worth far more than jewels!

- ¹¹ Her husband puts his confidence in her, and he will never be poor.
- ¹² As long as she lives, she does him good and never harm.
- ¹³ She keeps herself busy making wool and linen cloth.
- ¹⁴ She brings home food from out-of-the-way places, as merchant ships do.
- ¹⁵ She gets up before daylight to prepare food for her family and to tell her servant women what to do.
- ¹⁶ She looks at land and buys it, and with money she has earned she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She is a hard worker, strong and industrious.
- ¹⁸ She knows the value of everything she makes, and works late into the night.
- ¹⁹ She spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth.
- ²⁰ She is generous to the poor and needy.
- ²¹ She doesn't worry when it snows, because her family has warm clothing.
- ²² She makes bedspreads and wears clothes of fine purple linen.
- ²³ Her husband is well known, one of the leading citizens.
- ²⁴ She makes clothes and belts, and sells them to merchants.
- ²⁵ She is strong and respected and not afraid of the future.
- ²⁶ She speaks with a gentle wisdom.
- ²⁷ She is always busy and looks after her family's needs.
- ²⁸ Her children show their appreciation, and her husband praises her.
- ²⁹ He says, "Many women are good wives, but you are the best of them all."
- ³⁰ Charm is deceptive and beauty disappears, but a woman who honors the Lord should be praised.
- ³¹ Give her credit for all she does. She deserves the respect of everyone.

Ephesians 5:22-24, 33 (TEV) ²² Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord.

- ²³ For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Savior of the church, his body. ²⁴ And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ... ³³ But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.

1 Peter 3:1-6 (TEV) ¹ In the same way you wives must submit yourselves to your husbands, so that if any of them do not believe God's word, your conduct will win them over to believe. It will not be necessary for you to say a word, ² because they will see how pure and reverent your conduct is. ³ You should not use outward aids to make yourselves beautiful, such as the way you fix your hair, or the jewelry you put on, or the dresses you wear. ⁴ Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight. ⁵ For the devout women of the past who placed their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful by submitting themselves to their husbands. ⁶ Sarah was like that; she obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are now her daughters if you do good and are not afraid of anything.

Titus 2:4-5 (TEV) ⁴ in order to train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, and to be good housewives who submit themselves to their husbands, so that no one will speak evil of the message that comes from God.

I. THE WIFE IS FREQUENTLY COMMANDED TO SUBMIT, TO OBEY OR TO BE IN SUBJECTION TO HER HUSBAND. (Eph. 5:22-24, 33; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Tim. 2:9-12; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

A. The idea of the wife's submission is not a very popular one in our day. Sometimes antagonism to wifely submission arises out of sinful rebellion against the will of God. Sometimes, however, it may arise from a false picture of what the wife's submission involves. To correct this false picture, I want to state some things biblical submission is not.

1. Submission is not merely a concept for women. It is a concept for all believers. (Compare Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 5:5; Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17.)

2. Submission does not mean that the wife becomes a slave. Actually, the wife is never more free than when she is in submission to her husband, for then she is free to become all that God intended her to become. (Study the description of God's ideal wife in Prov. 31:10-31.)

3. Submission does not mean that the wife never opens her mouth, never has an opinion, never gives advice. (Compare Prov. 31:26; Acts 18:26; Judges 13:21-23.)

4. Submission does not mean that the wife becomes a wallflower who folds up and allows her abilities to lie dormant. (Compare the full use that God's ideal wife made of her talents and abilities in Prov. 31.)

5. Submission does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. Jesus Christ was not inferior to Mary and Joseph, and yet the Scripture says that as a child, "He continued in subjection to them" (Luke 2:51).

B. Having stated what the wife's submission does not mean, we will now look at submission from a more positive point of view.

1. Scripture indicates that it is the wife's responsibility to make herself submissive. Nowhere is the husband commanded to force his wife physically into submission. Rather, the wife is commanded to make herself submissive. (Eph. 5:22 and 1 Pet. 3:1)

2. Scripture indicates that the wife's submission is to be continuous. The Greek verb in most passages about submission is in the present tense. Submission is to be the continuous lifestyle of the wife.

3. Wifely submission is mandatory, not optional. The Greek verb is in the imperative mood. Her submission is not to be based upon the way her husband treats her. Nor is it to be conditioned by the husband's abilities, talents, wisdom, education, or spiritual state. (Compare 1 Pet. 3:1; and Luke 2:51.)

4. Wifely submission is a spiritual matter. It is to be done "as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). The Lord commands the wife to be submissive. Refusal to submit to the husband is therefore rebellion against God Himself. Submission to the husband is a test of her love for God as well as a test of love for her husband. The wife then must look upon her submission to her husband as an act of obedience to Christ and not merely to her husband. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15), and one of his commands to wives is, "Be subject to your own husbands..." (Eph. 5:22).

5. Still further, wifely submission is a spiritual matter because it must be performed in the power of the Holy Spirit. The context in which submission is commanded indicates that it can be performed only by women whose hearts have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, by women who are being strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit, by women who are being filled up to all the fullness of God. (Compare Eph. 1:1-5:21; 1 Pet. 1:1-3:6.)

6. Submission is a positive, not a negative concept. Bill Gothard's definition of submission: "the freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority." Submission means that the wife puts all of her talents, abilities, resources, and energy at her husband's disposal. Submission means that the wife yields and uses all of her abilities under the management of her husband for the good of her husband and family. Submission means that she sees herself as a part of her husband's team. She is not her husband's opponent trying to outdo him. She is not merely an individual going her separate way. She is her husband's teammate striving for the same goal. She has ideas, opinions, desires, requests, and insights, and she lovingly makes them known. But she knows that on any good team someone has to make the final decisions and plans. She knows that the team members must

support the team leader, his plans and decisions, or no progress will be made, and confusion and frustration will result.

7. Submission involves the wife's attitudes as well as her actions. Jesus Christ was thoroughly submitted to the Father. He said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). But how did He serve the Father? In a spirit of resignation? No, He served the Father with gladness. He delighted to do the Father's will (Ps. 40:7-8). Likewise, the wife's submission to her husband is to be cheerful, not grudging.

Scripture declares that God's kind of wife "works with her hands in delight" (Prov. 31:13), finding great satisfaction in using all of her God-given resources to fulfill the needs of her husband and family. ***Ephesians 5:33, in the Amplified version says, "...let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly]."***

8. Wifely submission is to be extensive. She is to be subject unto her husband as the church is to Christ (Eph. 5:24). And how broad should the submission of the church be to Christ? Paul says, "the wives are to be subject to their husbands in everything." Submission is not to be an on-again off-again matter for the wife. Nor is it to be a selective, choose what you like, reject what you do not like proposition. Submission is to be her life style at all times, in all places, and in everything.

Certainly this does not mean that she must obey her husband when he commands her to do what God forbids or tries to keep her from doing what God commands. She is to be subject to her husband "as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3:18). Her husband's authority is a delegated authority. He has authority because he is under the authority of God. As long as he does not ask her to do what God forbids or forbids her from doing what God commands, she is to submit. Failure to do so would be rebellion against God as well as her husband. However, since her husband's authority is delegated to him, he loses his authority at those times and in those areas when his directives are CLEARLY contrary to the revealed will of God as it is found in the Bible. When the husband asks her to do that which is unmistakably contrary to the Word of God, the wife must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:28-29).

The wife's submission to her husband then is to be extensive but not necessarily total or unlimited. She is to obey him in everything except that which contradicts the Word of God. And even then she is to disobey in a loving, submissive fashion, explaining calmly and clearly her reasons for disobedience, assuring her husband of her love and loyalty, and seeking to demonstrate that love and loyalty in a variety of continuous and tangible ways. She is to be her husband's helper (Gen. 2:18), and this she can never be if she manifests a contentious, inconsiderate, uncooperative spirit.

II. THE WIFE IS REFERRED TO AS HER HUSBAND'S HELPER. (Genesis 2:18-22)

A. God made the woman to be man's helper. Without the woman, man, even in his perfect condition, was incomplete.

B. God made the woman to be a suitable helper. None of the animals could provide the kind of help that man needed. Only woman could do that. Prov. 18:22 and 31:10-11

C. God created the woman to correspond to man. She is similar to man, yet somewhat different. She is man's complement, not his carbon copy. She is to man what a key is to a lock and what a film is to a camera – indispensable (1 Cor. 11:11).

D. According to Scripture, the wife was made to fulfill the needs, lacks, and inadequacies of her husband. She was made to be her husband's unique helper. She is to "do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:12). She is to be like a fruitful vine in her husband's house (Ps. 128:3). She is to be "one flesh" with her husband, and this will happen only as she accepts and fulfills her God-appointed role in the marriage relationship.

1. This does not mean that everything she does must have a direct connection to her husband. Nor does it mean that she should never do anything for her own benefit or for the benefit of others, or that she should never become involved in activities or ministries outside the home (Prov. 31:10-31).

2. It does mean, however, that she ought never to do anything which would be detrimental or harmful to her husband or that would cause her to neglect her primary ministry of helping her husband (Prov. 31:10-31).

E. Becoming very specific, I want to suggest some ways in which a wife may help her husband. She may help her husband by:

1. Making the home a safe place – a place of encouragement, comfort, understanding and refuge (Prov. 31:11, 20). Do not use jokes about him or make cutting remarks to him. Do not constantly remind him of his faults, mistakes, and failures. Correct him only if it is absolutely necessary. Avoid the danger of allowing the home to be in shambles and full of disorder and confusion. But also avoid the danger of making the house a show place where everything must always be neat and immaculate. Husbands want homes to live in, not show places to visit.
2. Being trustworthy and dependable (Prov. 31:11-12).
3. Maintaining a good attitude (Prov. 31:26, 28, 29, James 3:13-18, Phil. 4:4)
4. Discussing things lovingly, openly, and honestly (Eph. 4:25).
5. Being satisfied with her position, her possessions, her tasks (Phil. 4:6-13; Heb. 13:5, 16).
6. Being longsuffering, forgiving, and forbearing (Eph. 4:2, 31-32; Col. 3:12-14).
7. Showing an interest in his problems and concerns (Phil. 2:3-4).
8. Being an industrious, frugal, diligent, ambitious, and creative member of the team (Ps. 128:3; Prov. 31:10-31).
9. Offering suggestions, advice, and corrections when needed in a loving fashion (Prov. 31:26).
10. Keeping herself beautiful, especially in the inner person (1 Pet. 3:3-5).
11. Maintaining a good spiritual life (1 Pet. 3:1-2, 7).
12. Cooperating with him in raising children (Eph. 6:20; Prov. 31:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:13-14).
13. Building loyalty to him in the children. The wife's attitudes toward the husband are quickly picked up by the children. Lack of respect or confidence in his leadership, complaints about what he has or has not done will have a debilitating influence on the children. She must avoid taking sides with the children or anyone against her husband. She must support and cooperate with him in discipline. All differences of opinion about discipline should be settled away from the children.
14. Be grateful to him. Appreciation should be expressed freely and in many ways (Rom. 13:7).
15. Showing confidence in his decisions. Disdain, lack of confidence, anxiety, or strong opposition over his decisions may cause him to become indecisive, defensive, or reactionary. If the wife doubts the wisdom of important decisions, she should ask questions in a non-threatening way, assuming that there are some facts she does not know and that he really does want what is best for them both (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

EXTRA: WHAT ARE GOOD FAMILIES DOING RIGHT? (Dorothy Patterson)

1. The establishment of rituals and traditions that mark you as a family.
2. Mothers and fathers model a living example of a strong and loving relationship with each other.
3. Parents are to pattern a disciplined lifestyle and control the environment in which their children are living.
4. A loving family majors in communication and will respond with sensitivity.
5. A family has fun. They affirm and encourage one another.
6. The family demands respect for each member of the household.
7. The family shares responsibility. Children must be taught to serve others.
8. Families should have a shared religious faith.