

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXXVI

July 10, 2011

“The Christian Family”

Part Five: “The Biblical Responsibilities Of The Wife”

Introduction:

A. Observations About Women In The Modern World:

1. The "modern" world places intense pressure upon women.
 - a. What does it mean to be a woman?
 - b. How can a woman find personal happiness?
2. The contemporary "answers" given to these basic questions are not based upon Biblical Truth, but upon "secular humanism".
 - a. Biblical "truth" is revealed -- it does not originate from mankind as a source, but from God Himself!
 - b. Secular "humanism" originates from mankind -- it is the sum of man's human reasoning about human existence!
3. From a Biblical point of view, most women in the "modern" world are being deceived about . . .
 - a. What it means to be a woman: Since men and women are "equal", they should be the "same". In a "fair" society, there should be no differences in masculinity and femininity. The goal is a "unisex" society!
 - b. How to find personal happiness: Happiness for a woman is often defined as being "equal" with men in terms of "personal rights". Marriage and children are not "allowed" to stand in the way of personal achievement and advancement!
--The assumption is that, when women are as "free" and "successful" as men, they will be happy and fulfilled!
4. The Bible "teachings" about women are very offensive to many "modern" women!

B. Observations About Women From Scripture:

1. Men and women are of equal value to God, Genesis 1:27.
*"And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them."*
--Both the man and woman were required to reveal the "image" of God.
--Therefore, they share an equality of value before God.
(There is a "diversity" of responsibility, but "equality" of value)

2. There should be **no competitive jealousy** between man and woman, Gen. 1:26.

*"Then God said, 'Let **Us** make man in **Our** image,
according to **Our** likeness . . .'"*

a. What is God revealing about Himself?

--The Hebrew word, "**Us**" reflects the **Trinity** -- the fact that the Eternal God exists as **One God** in **Three Persons**! He is the great "**Three in One**"!

--**Notice:** There is no **jealousy** in the Trinity, the "Godhead"! Yet, there is great diversity!

- 1) The **Father** has never left Heaven, no man has ever seen Him, and no "sin" has ever come into His presence!
- 2) The **Son** left Heaven, took on "flesh" as a man, lived a sinless life, was falsely accused, unjustly convicted, and brutally crucified -- taking mankind's "sin" upon Himself!
- 3) The **Holy Spirit** ministered to the Son during His earthly life, came to "indwell" Believers at Pentecost, empowers, guides, convicts, and protects Believers until Jesus comes again!

--In the **Trinity** there is great **diversity**, but **no jealousy or competition!**

b. What implication does the "unity" within the Trinity have for the human marriage relationship?

--Because man and woman are made in God's "**likeness**", we understand that God has designed marriage with **equality** and with **diversity**!

- 1) Man and woman are **equal** in their value before God;
- 2) But, there is **diversity** in their **roles** within marriage!

--There should be **no competitive jealousy** between man and woman in marriage!

3. After the "Fall", women began to struggle with the "desire" to take the **place of leadership** within the family, Genesis 3:16.

*"To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your **desire** shall be for your husband, and he shall **rule** over you.'"*

--God created woman with a position of **great influence**!
Her influence can be either "positive" or "negative".

a. **Positive:**

--After the "Fall" of mankind into sin and separation, God chose for the man to "**rule**" over the woman.

--His sovereign design and purpose caused the woman to **"desire"** three things:

- 1) To have a man's **protection** -- producing "safety";
- 2) To have a man's **provision** -- producing "security";
- 3) To have a man's **passion** -- producing "significance"!

--It is, therefore, **legitimate** and **appropriate** for a woman to "desire" to have a man to fulfill these three basic needs.

b. Negative:

--However, after the "Fall", both the man and the woman were separated from the life of God by "sin" -- both now had a "sin-nature" which caused them to constantly **"desire"** to be free of God's will and control. Each now **"desired"** to control their own lives.

--This had a special effect or consequence in the life of the wife. Not only did she now **"desire"** to be free from God's control, she also wanted to be free from the man's control!

--Her **"desire"** was for the husband -- for his position of authority or control over her and the family!

--This interpretation of Gen. 3:16 is supported by the use of the same Hebrew word ("desire") in Gen. 4:7. In that verse, God is warning Cain that "sin" wants to control him -- to "master" his life! But, God reminds Cain that he has a choice in the matter. He does not have to be ruled by sin! He can be "free" by obeying God -- by bringing the sacrifice for sin that God demanded instead of the sacrifice he thought God should accept.

--A woman must understand that her sin nature can at times "desire" to control her husband in defiance of God's design. This is a sin!

--The "influence" of a wife on her husband is powerful – for the positive or for the negative!

Biblical Guidelines For The Wife

I. The Wife Is Commanded To “_____” To Her Husband.

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything." Ephesians 5:22-24

A. The "Command": Look At The Key Words In These Verses.

1. **"Be Subject"** = Greek hupotasso = "to place in an orderly fashion under".
 - a. It is the combination of two words:
 - hupo = "under";
 - tasso = "to order".
 - b. Therefore, it means "to place in an orderly fashion under".
 - c. Originally, it showed one's relationship to superiors, either compulsory or voluntary submission.
2. **"Head"** = Greek kephale = "the head, the top, the superior."
 - a. This is the designation of the position of authority.
 - b. This same word is used earlier in this letter, Eph. 1:22.

"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church."
 - c. No Christian will argue with the fact that Jesus Christ is **"head"** over His Body, the Church. In the same way, the husband is **"head"** over the wife in the Christian family!
3. **"In Everything" →**
 - a. This word defines the extent of the wife's submission -- it is to be in "everything" -- in every part of the marriage!
 - b. The only exception to this command is when a husband asks his wife to "disobey" God -- to sin!

--Biblical submission never means a wife is to commit "sin"!

B. The "Meaning": What Is Submission?

1. It is an **"Attitude"**:
 - a. This Biblical attitude is expressed by the statement:

"I recognize my husband to be the **"God-appointed leader"** in our marriage and family."
 - Key: God "appoints" the husband with His authority!

- b. This Biblical attitude is expressed by the statement:
"I believe God will **"use"** my husband to give **"guidance"** to our marriage and family."
--Key: God "directs" through the choices of the husband."
- c. An Illustration: The "Chair" of God's appointment!
As a Christian who lives in America, I must honor the person who has been elected to serve as the President of the U.S.A. -- even if I do not like him! I must honor the seat in which he sits! I must honor the authority God has given him!
--A Christian wife must honor the seat her husband occupies -- even if he is not the husband he should be. This is to be her attitude!

2. It is a **"Choice"**:

- a. This Biblical choice is expressed by the statement:
"I **choose** to allow my husband to make the "final" decisions for our family."
--Note: A Christian husband should be "wise" enough to ask his wife's opinion **before** he makes a final decision!
- b. This Biblical choice is expressed by the statement:
"I **choose** to allow God to be the "point of pressure" in my husband's life -- God will correct him when he is wrong!"
--Note: A husband will normally **blame** his wife when he makes a wrong decision if she has been "on his back" about the decision!

3. Summary: **Biblical "submission" is part of a Christian wife's faith!** She believes what God says about her husband! She trusts God to use him as He has promised -- to bring guidance and protection to the family! She is not asked to be in "submission" to her husband on the basis of her thinking or her "feelings", but on the basis of her trust in God!
--Biblical submission is a step of faith and obedience!

C. The "Results": What Will Happen When I Obey God?

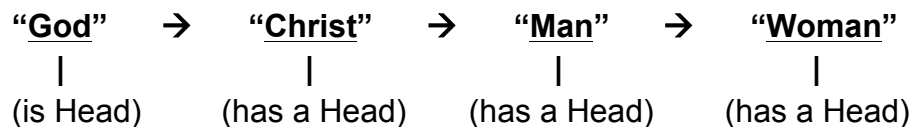
1. The wife will **grow spiritually!** (See Hebrews 11:6)
--Since "submission" requires faith, every woman who learns submission will be growing in her faith!
2. The wife will experience **personal peace!** (See John 14:27)
--Inward, personal "peace" always comes as the by-product of faith. So, rather than being controlled by anxiety or anger, God's peace will control!
3. The wife will be **protected** from a **"root of bitterness"**!
--Her choice to be in "submission" will stop the progression of bitterness.
--"Hurt" will be cast upon the Lord, rather than moving to "Anger", a "Wounded Spirit", and then a "Root of Bitterness"!

4. The Husband will come "**under God's hand**"!
 - The wife's "submission" will free God to deal with the husband -- even when he makes poor or wrong decisions!
5. The Husband will be **attracted** to the "inner spirit" of the wife who is controlled by God's peace!
 - A woman's true "attractiveness" is brought out in her by a submissive spirit!
6. The children will see proper **role models** in the home!
 - The spirit of submission will allow the children to see real "femininity" and "masculinity" in the parents!

D. Two Helpful Observations:

1. God Does Not Ask The Wife To Do Something He Has Not Asked The Husband To Do!

- Many women "object" to the teaching of submission because they think God is asking them to do something He has not asked the man to do! They say, "I have to submit to my husband, but God doesn't say anything about submission to my husband!"
- This statement is wrong! God does not ask the wife to do something He has not **already** instructed the husband to do!
 - a. The Passage: I Corinthians 11:3, 7-12 → God's Design For **Authority**.



b. The Principle:

Both man and woman have a "head" in God's design for marriage!

2. God's Word Gives Every Wife The "Key" To Submission:

- Note: The "command" to submit is given in Eph. 5:22;
 The "key" to submission is given in Eph. 5:33!

a. The Passage: Ephesians 5:33.

" . . . and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband."

--Key Word: "Respect"

The Greek word = phobeo.

In its positive usage, it means to "reverence" or to "fear" out of respect.

b. The Principle:

A Christian wife is to have "respect" for her husband. This is a "faith" **choice** – to see her husband as God instructs and enables!

c. Helpful Diagrams:

--**Positive:**

Notice how "respect" for the husband is the foundation of what God asks a wife to do!

"Respect" → "Emotional Feeling" → "Submission" → God's will!

--**Negative:**

Notice what happens when a woman loses "respect" for her husband.

No "Respect" → No "Emotional Feeling" → No "Submission" → An "Independent Spirit"

II. The Wife Must Develop "_____".

"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external -- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God." I Peter 3:1-4

A. A Powerful "Promise":

1. A Family Situation: A Christian wife is married to a man who is "disobedient" to the Word. The wife desires to see her husband "won" to the Word.
2. The Question: How does she see him "won" to the Word?
--**Note:** Most wives give the wrong answer!
3. The Answer: She "wins" him "**without a word**"!
". . . Even if any of them are disobedient to the Word, they may be won without a word."
I Peter 3:1
--**Note:** Most wives attempt to "win" their husbands to the Word by using "words"!
--**Note:** "Words", no matter how sincere, usually drive the husband away!
4. The Solution: God's way to "win" the husband is totally different from a wife's "human" thinking. (See Isaiah 55:8)

--God instructs the wife to focus on her "**behavior!**"

*" . . . they may be won without a word by the **behavior** of their wives."*

I Peter 3:1

5. The Promise: A wife's Godly "behavior" will prove to be **powerful!**

*" . . . **they may be won** without a word by the behavior of their wives."*

I Peter 3:1

B. The "Powerful Behavior" Of A Christian Wife :

--Notice the exact instructions given by God through Peter.

1. No "Verbal Abuse":

a. "Verbal Abuse" is one of the most common "sins" that a Christian wife can commit against her husband!

b. "Verbal Abuse" is the sinful use of the tongue to hurt another person.

"There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Proverbs 12:18

--Negative: The tongue can be used like a "sword" -- to hurt or to kill!

--Positive: The tongue can be used like a surgeon's knife -- to heal!

c. "Verbal Abuse" is unavoidable when a Christian is not "walking by the Spirit", Galatians 5:16. The sinful "deeds of the flesh" will control us -- "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions," Galatians 5:20.

2. No "Outside Interests":

a. When a wife's relationship with her husband is not what it needs to be, she will be tempted to turn her emotional attention, or even her physical attention, to another man or relationship!

b. This "outside" interest or relationship can develop in many ways, in many places, even in the Church!

c. The second verse of this passage instructs,

" . . . as they (the husband) observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

I Peter 3:2

d. A Christian wife "sins" against her marriage when she allows herself to enter into any "emotional" or "physical" relationship outside her marriage that takes the place of her husband!

3. Develop "Inner Beauty":

a. Verse four says that a wife's **power** does not rest in the "external" adornments of her life -- like "dresses", or "jewelry", or "braiding the hair"; but, in the "**hidden person of the heart**"!

- b. Her **power** rests in her "**inner beauty**"!
--Note: Every woman can have "inner beauty"! It has nothing to do with "outer beauty"!
- c. **Definition**: "Inner beauty" is the attractiveness and appeal of a woman when she is controlled by the love of Jesus Christ! His attractiveness becomes her attractiveness!
--**Every Christian woman has the beauty of Christ living within her!**
- d. **Key**: This is a Christian wife's "**secret weapon**"!
- e. **Development**: How does a Christian woman develop "**inner beauty**"?
- 1) "**Inner beauty**" is Christ Himself! To see Him is to see the most attractive Person who lives!
--**Spending time with Christ in His Word enables us to see Him and others to see Him in us!** (See II Corinthians 3:18)
 - 2) "**Inner beauty**" is the natural by-product of spiritual growth.
--**Spiritual growth requires drawing upon His life as the source of life!** (See Galatians 2:20)
 - 3) "**Inner beauty**" is the result of "**walking by the Spirit**", Gal. 5:16, which produces the "**fruit of the Spirit**", Gal. 5:22-23.
- f. **Summary**: Every Christian woman should use her natural beauty to glorify God, her Creator! But, her natural beauty is not the source of her greatest **power**. Her greatest power is the "**hidden person**" within her heart! It is the **inner beauty** of Christ living His life in her!

4. Develop "A Gentle And Quiet Spirit":

- a. I Peter 3:4 talks about an "**imperishable quality**"-- a "**gentle**" and "**quiet**" spirit!
--An "imperishable" quality is something that never loses its quality or power!
--A "gentle" and "quiet" spirit **never** loses its power!
- b. **Question**: "What did your husband see in you in the **beginning** of your relationship?"
--Did he see a "gentle" and "quiet" spirit?
- c. **Question**: "What does he see **now**?"

C. The Biblical "**Illustration**": Sarah, wife of Abraham.

1. To illustrate the principle of "**powerful behavior**" on the part of a wife, Peter is led by the Holy Spirit to the Old Testament story of Abraham and Sarah.
2. Peter calls Sarah a "holy" woman who "hoped in God" -- she had a personal walk with God -- a walk of faith!
3. Sarah also has a spirit of "submission" toward her husband. (See I Peter 3:5-6)

4. What was the result in Sarah's life? Was her submissive behavior **powerful**? Did she have **inner beauty**?
- In Genesis 12, Abraham left the "land of Canaan" because of a famine and went into Egypt. As they came into Egypt, Abraham asked Sarah to "lie" about him -- "Say that you are my sister!" Why did Abraham ask Sarah to tell a lie? Sarah was so "beautiful" that he feared the Egyptians would kill him and take her! (See Genesis 12:10-20)
 - How old was Sarah when this happened? She was **65 years old**! (See Genesis 12:4 where Abraham was 75 and we know he was 10 years older than Sarah)
 - In Genesis 20, the same thing happens again! Abraham decided to go into Philistia to settle in Gerar near King Abimelech. In fear that Abimelech will take Sarah away from him, he deceives the King, saying, "She is my sister." Only by God's gracious intervention did Abraham escape from this serious deception.
 - How old was Sarah when this happened? She was **89 years old**! (See Genesis 17:1 where Abraham was 99)
 - How do you explain her "beauty" being so great at ages 65 and 89?
 - The only acceptable answer is to suggest what Peter is saying in his illustration -- **Sarah had inner beauty**! It is powerful at any age!

D. The "Consequences" For Failure: What Happens When A Wife Does Not Develop "Inner Beauty"?

- She will progressively drive her husband away!
 - Her inner hurt and bitterness will cause her to lose her "inner beauty"!
- She will open her life to "spiritual" dangers!
 - She will often be attracted to follow wrong spiritual leaders and movements. Her husband will not be free to provide spiritual protection.
- She will open her life to "physical" dangers!
 - She will often be found at places where she should not go and doing things she should not do. The choice to "be" with her husband brings a special measure of God's protection.
- She will lose her influence and testimony!
 - In the home -- her children will not learn this principle for their future.
 - In the Church -- she will limit the potential for ministry with younger women and girls who need a role model of Biblical femininity.

--Nothing conforms a man to the "image of Christ" more than learning to "LOVE" his wife!

--Nothing conforms a woman to the "image of Christ" more than a faith based "SUBMISSION" to her husband!