

## THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF THE WIFE

**Key Words - Submission, Helper**

**Key Verses:**

***Genesis 2:18 - "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him".***

***Ephesians 5:22 - "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.***

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In the last lesson we studied what the Bible has to say about the husband. In this lesson we shall turn to the woman as we learn what it takes to be a normal Christian wife.

#### **I. THE PART OF THE WIFE**

The role of the wife in the family has significantly changed over the past century though God's Word has not changed.

Let's look at what God has to say about the wife's relation to the husband.

##### **A. Submission**

1. The Southern Baptist Convention had to vote on whether a wife was to be submissive to her husband, yet the Scripture is so plain on the subject.
  - a. Can man vote on what Scriptural doctrine to accept or reject?
    - (1) ***Ephesians 5:22*** says, - ***"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord"***.
    - (2) Peter writes, - ***"ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands"*** - ***I Peter 3:1***.
    - (3) NOTE: ***I Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5***.
  - b. Even outside the home, in the church, women are not to usurp authority over the man - ***I Timothy 2:12***.
2. Clearly, the duty of the wife is to be subject to the husband's will and observe his decisions and commands.
  - a. The wife ought to obey the husband as she would obey the Lord Jesus Christ!
  - b. Submission means no resistance.
  - c. A woman that is not obedient to her husband is like a rebellious child and is in direct disobedience to God.

3. One of the strongest objections that women have to this doctrine is based on ability.
  - a. No doubt there are many women that are very capable leaders.
  - b. There are many wives that have far more education than their husbands do.
  - c. Yet, God's command has nothing to do with ability.
    - (1) part of God's curse upon Eve for her part in the original sin was - **"thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" Genesis 3:16.**
    - (2) according to - *I Timothy 2:13-14*, the woman's role of subjection is due also to Adam being created first and because Eve was the one deceived in the original sin.
  
4. Is there a limit to the wife's obedience to her husband?
  - a. Perhaps one of the most difficult issues with this doctrine centers round the limits of this subjection.
  - b. For example, what if the husband will not let the wife go to church or forbids her to tithe?
    - (1) first, let us note that in the **Ephesians 5** passage God says, - **"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" - V:24**
    - (2) this passage implies that there is no case when the wife should disobey her husband.
    - (3) for the unmarried woman, let this be a strong warning to you - before you marry, you had better make sure that your future husband is someone you will be fully ready to obey!
  - c. Now, what if the husband asks the wife to do something against God, such as renouncing her faith in Christ? Let us consider two truths that need to be applied together.
    - (1) first, when Peter was told by the leaders in Jerusalem to stop preaching about Jesus he replied, - **"We ought to obey God rather than men" - Acts 5:29.**
    - (2) If a husband asks a wife to do something that absolutely contradicts God's direct command for her, she ought to obey God.
      - (a) Now this must be exercised with extreme care for this does not apply to every situation.
      - (b) The wife must remember that the husband will be held accountable for the home - **Numbers 30:13-15.**
    - (3) For example, the wife is not responsible for whether the family tithes or not.
    - (4) The other truth is that the wife must take into consideration - **I Peter 3:1** and her testimony, - **"they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives".**
      - (a) don't preach God,
      - (b) then live like the devil!

B. **Respect - *Ephesians 5:33*** - says the wife is to reverence her husband.

1. The Bible does not say whether the husband deserves this or not, only that this is the duty of the wife.
  - a. The wife's subjection to the husband must be done with honor and respect.
  - b. The wife should think and speak well to her husband.
  - c. The wife must be careful about laughing at her husband or embarrassing him.
2. Peter presents Sarah as a prime example in - ***I Peter 3:5-6***. Sarah had such an admiration for her husband that she was not ashamed to call him Lord.

C. **Love**

1. The husband is told several times that he is to love his wife, but only one time do we find God dealing with the wife on this matter.
  - a. ***Titus 2:4***
  - b. The older women were to teach the younger to love their husband and children.
2. Apparently the husband's most common problem has to do with loving his wife, while the wife's primary problem is obedience.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE WIFE

A. **Satan Got To Man Through A Woman, But He Got To The Woman Through Her Dissatisfaction.**

1. One of the great sources of problems in the home is because so many women are either ignorant of, or disobedient to their purpose in life.
2. The one and only thing that was not good with God's creation was that Adam had no companion - ***Genesis 2:18***.
  - a. Thus God decided to make a **"help meet"** for him.
  - b. This was the purpose for the creation of woman - to be a companion and helper to the man.
3. In fact, ***I Corinthians 11:9*** says this plainly, **"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man"**.
4. Many a home could be happier and more productive if the wife were to remember this. - Lest men become too proud over this, read - ***I Corinthians 11:11-12***.

B. **Now Let Us Consider For A Moment What It Means To Be A - "Help Meet"**.

1. First, we may say that as a helper, the wife's ambition ought to be what her husband's are.

- a. How can the wife be a helper if her goals differ from that of her husband?
  - b. Not only will she not be able to help her husband, but she will also be in a constant struggle with subjection.
2. Second, as a helper, the wife must be a worker. If she is constantly idle, she could not be considered to be a - **"help meet"**.

### C. Should A Wife Work Outside Of The Home?

1. Next to submission, this is perhaps the greatest issue with the modern wife.
2. Again, let us consider what God's opinion is. God's purpose for the woman says a lot on this question.
  - a. If the wife is to be a helper, it is up to the husband to determine how the wife can help.
  - b. For example, if the husband needs his wife to work outside the home, then she will be fulfilling her purpose as - "help meet".

### D. Having Said That, There Are Some Important Considerations That Ought To Be Made, For Such A Decision Should Not Be Made Lightly.

1. Keepers at home
  - a. Paul exhorted the older women to teach the younger to be - **"keepers at home" - Titus 2:5.**
  - b. In God's plan for the normal Christian family, the wife's primary responsibility ought to be taking care of the affairs of the home.
    - (1) this does not mean though that she can do nothing else but keep the home.
    - (2) however, if her work outside distracts from keeping the home, there is a great potential for disaster.
    - (3) what will be the outcome when the wife cannot cope with the combined work
      - (a) of fixing meals,
      - (b) cleaning the house,
      - (c) and an outside job?
  - c. Thus, a husband ought to carefully consider whether his wife's work outside the home will interfere with the work in the home.
2. The role of bread winning
  - a. It is the husband's responsibility to do the bread winning.
  - b. When the wife enters this role, there will be a strong temptation to exercise the prerogatives of the provider: authority and leadership in the home.
  - c. In addition, contention over money and spending will most likely result.
    - (1) the marriage can suffer great stress too when the wife's income exceeds her husbands.

- (2) a husband may have to choose which is more important: money or his marriage.
3. Temptations outside the home
  - a. When the weaker vessel leaves the home and enters the workplace, she has left her place of security and safety.
  - b. She may be exposed to all manner of hurtful lusts and temptations in the office or plant.
  - c. Strong feelings about her career may soon overwhelm her loyalty and subjection to her husband.
  - d. Then, what may happen when an attractive and sensitive male co-worker begins to pay more attention to her than her husband?
  - e. The husband and wife must be very careful to watch for these problems if the wife is to work outside the home.
4. The care and nurture of the children
  - a. Though it is the duty of both the husband and wife to raise their children, it is the natural place of the mother to be with the children.
  - b. **Proverbs 29:15** says, "**a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame**".
  - c. Again, the decision for the wife to work outside the home must be sought with much prayer and apprehension.

### III. THE PATTERN FOR A WIFE

- A. **Proverbs 31:10-31** - Offers The Pattern For A Godly Wife - The Virtuous Woman.
- B. We Find:
  1. That she is precious - **V:10**
  2. She is trustworthy - **V:11-12**
  3. She is industrious and cares for her household - **V:13-19**
  4. She is charitable - **V:20**
  5. She clothes her household well - **V:21-22**
  6. She brings honor to her husband - **V:23**
  7. She is resourceful - **V:24**
  8. She is a woman of honor and wisdom - **V:25-26**
  9. She remains busy caring for her home - **V:27**
  10. And her works are truly praiseworthy - **V:28-31**