

**BIBLICAL MARRIAGE**  
***THE GODLY WIFE***  
**SESSION 3 (Video 4 of 6)**

Introduction

- A. Wives have a high calling in God's sight.
  - 1. This privileged role, however, is constantly being undermined by a barrage of secular, egalitarian assaults.
  - 2. Martin Luther affirmed, "What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. We should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and well pleasing to God, not on account of the position and work, but on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and work flow."
  - 3. Being a wife and mother is a *hard* job. Thankfully, God gives direction to an overwhelmed heart (Ps. 61:2).
- B. Different women will respond to these truths in various ways.
  - 1. Some genuinely want to grow but will merely look for a list of duties to follow.
  - 2. Some genuinely want to grow but will be easily overwhelmed and discouraged.
  - 3. Some will be tempted to shut their ears in resentment and resistance.
  - 4. Some will be tempted to indifference caused by hopelessness.
  - 5. The best response is to be drawn to our Heavenly Husband, which will bear the fruit of a teachable spirit and willing obedience. This includes differentiating between man's expectations and God's expectations, as well as accepting our Providential limitations.
- C. Please do not yield to the folly of comparison (2 Cor. 10:12).
  - 1. It is tempting to look around at other people to see what the perfect marriage or family might look like. This is not wise.
  - 2. A biblical marriage and family is going to look very, very different from house to house because we are different members of Christ's Body with different gifts, talents, interests, physical abilities, etc.
  - 3. We must conform to the specifics of God's Law and Word, but there is much freedom for variety. There are no universal, model families.
  - 4. Do not take your eyes off Christ. Comparison can result in the extremes of pride or debilitating discouragement. In every case, God says it is foolish.
- D. A word to husbands about love that suffers long (1 Cor. 13:4ff; Eccl. 7:8-9). Remember the patient longsuffering that Christ exemplifies toward his Bride (Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15; 103:8-10).

I. A Wife's Motivations

- A. A Christ-centered perspective.
  - 1. Look past your husband to Christ who stands behind him. "Wives, submit unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord.*" (Eph. 5:22).
  - 2. When your husband loves you, it should tangibly warm your heart to

Christ's greater love (Eph. 5:25).

3. Your personal submission to Christ has a practical impact on your marriage because you submit to Christ by tangibly submitting to your husband who Christ has put over you. Christ is worthy of such devotion even when your husband is not.
  4. Conversely, rebelling against your husband is rebellion against Christ, which is a heinous sin (1 Sam. 15:23).
  5. This Christ-centered approach explains why the consequences of a wife's disobedience are so significant.
    - a. It is not just the good name of the woman, but rather the Good Name of our Savior that is impugned. ". . . the young women . . . obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).
    - b. The Gospel is also distorted (Eph. 5:22-25).
  6. Your submission to your husband illustrates for him and the world the Church's submission to Christ.
  7. This Christ-centered perspective addresses one of the wives primary temptations: *fear*. Following your husband boils down to trusting God, and faith is the remedy for fear. Notice the connection between faith and fear in 1 Pet. 3:5-6.
- B. A husband-oriented perspective.
1. Your husband is not your Jesus. The relationship with your husband is temporary and secondary.
  2. Your earthly responsibility is to care for your husband and to please him (1 Cor. 7:34). A woman's focus and goal is to please her husband, not herself. This is not the same as being a people-pleaser because the motivation is Christ-centered.
  3. She must *learn* how to please him (his desires, goals, priorities, etc.).
  4. She is to do her utmost to create a happy haven of rest to do him good and not evil, which includes cultivating a peaceful and loyal relationship where his heart can safely trust in her (Prov. 31:11-12).
  5. The motivation for serving husband must not be self-serving (see Session One). It can be tempting to give in order to get.

## II. The Wife's Role: A Help-meet

- A. The woman was designed and created to be a help-meet to her husband (Gen. 2:18).
1. She was made out of man (1 Cor. 11:8).
  2. She was made after man (1 Cor. 11:9).
  3. She was made for man (1 Tim. 2:13).
  4. She is more easily deceived (1 Tim. 2:14).
  5. She is a bodily member, and her husband is her head (Eph. 5:23).
- B. Regarding a person's *status*, women stand on equal ground with men before the Lord (Gal. 3:28).

1. As a Christian person, there is no distinction between the ability of a man and a woman when it comes to grace and gifts. Women can be equally godly, talented, and intelligent.
  2. The biblical distinction pertains to the *role* assigned by God for expressing those gifts and grace.
- C. Regarding a person's *role*, women are in subjection (1 Tim. 2:11-12).
1. To gladly assume the role that God assigns is to embrace God's design and wisdom, which always works best. The injunction to submit, far from being harsh, is beautiful in its godly expressions.
  2. This marital subjection is unique. A wife is to submit to her *own* husband, not to all other men (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18).
  3. The husband is the head who lovingly leads. The wife is the help-meet who submissively follows.
  4. That entails deferring to his judgment, supporting his decisions, and promoting his priorities in the home (Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

### III. A Wife's Pursuit: Submission

#### A. The biblical injunction:

1. *Submit* to your husband (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18)
2. Be in *subjection* to your husband (Eph. 5:24; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5)
3. *Reverence* your husband (Eph. 5:33)
4. *Obey* your husband (Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:6)

#### B. The wife is to *submit* to her husband.

1. This submission is a reflection of the Church's (Christ's bride) relationship to Her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus (Eph. 5:22-24, 33). The wife is to submit to her husband as to the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:18).
2. Submission is not conditional on the husband doing his part to love as Christ loved his Church. You cannot say that if your husband loved you more, then you would be a more submissive wife. This is the precise idea that God refutes (1 Pet. 3:1ff). This submission is to be expressed even in undesirable circumstances. Even if the husband is an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:13-17) or disobedient (1 Pet. 3:1-2) she is to be in subjection to him. Sarah proved that unlovable husbands are no excuse for lack of submission (1 Pet. 3:1-6). We are responsible before God our own behavior. Blame-shifting began immediately after the Fall and continues to the present (Gen. 3:12-13).
3. The reason this submission is not based on the husband's action or inaction is because your submission is directed ultimately to Christ who is always loving and faithful.
4. This submission is rooted all the way back in Creation (1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8) and in the Law (1 Cor. 14:34).
5. This submission is inescapable. You are always saying something through your life – either truthfully or erroneously – about the Gospel and relationship of Christ and the Church. (Eph. 5:24).
6. This kind of woman is priceless (Prov. 31:10-12; 28-29).

#### C. A wife is to *obey* her husband (Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:6).

1. This is rooted in the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment (Ex. 20:12). See *Larger Catechism* 123-133.
2. She is to obey him in all things (Eph. 5:24). Wives are as obligated to respect and obey their husbands as children are to respect and obey their parents. The same language employed for the relationship of children to parents is used for the relationship between the wife and the husband.
3. All human authority is derived authority with God ordained parameters. Consequently, she is not to submit to him if asked to sin because her first allegiance is to Christ (Acts 4:19).
4. From the time of the Fall it has been a constant temptation for a woman to rebel against her husband (Gen. 3:16/4:7). The entrance of sin at the Fall made it unnatural to desire submission (cf., the husband loving his wife). It is grace in the gospel that makes it desirable.
5. A contentious wife is a curse (Prov. 21:19; 27:15). A godly wife is a crown (Prov. 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-12; 28-29).
6. Obedience to the husband, like to Christ, is to be willingly, cheerfully, quickly, fully, and from the heart.
7. The motivation for obedience is not duty but love for the husband.
8. A wise woman builds up her house rather than tearing it down through nagging, criticizing, belittling, dashing dreams, neglecting, etc. (Prov.14:1).

#### IV. A Wife's Goals.

##### A. A Wife's Chief Priorities.

1. A wife's number one priority is cultivating her fellowship and relationship with Christ. The more she is growing in intimacy with and obedience to Jesus, the more she will be growing in the depths of intimacy and obedience with her husband. She must first fear the Lord (Prov. 31:30). Without this first priority all else will fail.
2. Her first priority after the Lord is to be a helpmeet to her husband (Gen. 2:20ff). This means organizing her decisions throughout the day in terms of meeting her husband's goals and desires for the family (Prov. 31:10-31).
3. This priority also entails loving her husband first and then her children second before the rest of the world (Titus 2:4).
4. This is why the Bible says she is to be a "keeper (or worker) at home" (Titus 2:5). This text applies to all wives, with or without children. The passage is not talking about the impermissibility of women working or making money (Prov. 31). Rather, it is saying that a wife's world and priorities are to be centered in diligently fulfilling her responsibilities at home.
5. She is to be her husband's chief disciple (1 Cor. 14:34-35).
6. After a woman's priorities at home, her next priority is ministering to other women in the church (Titus 2:3-4). The empty nest is replaced with discipling and serving younger women. This involves taking the lessons that she has learned in applying the Scripture, and teaching that to other

ladies.

B. A Woman's Godly Character and Demeanor.

1. She is industrious (Prov. 31:10ff).
  - a. Caring for her family's clothing (vv. 13, 21-22, 24)
  - b. Caring for her family's food (vv. 14-15)
  - c. She is generous to those in need (v. 20)
  - d. She supports and furthers her husband's success (v. 23)
  - e. She is financially prudent (v. 16)
  - f. She uses her tongue for wisdom and kindness (v. 26)
  - g. She is diligent (vv. 27, 31).
2. Respectful to her husband (Eph. 5:33; 1 Pet. 3:2). This is especially manifest in the way that she speaks to him and of him (1 Pet. 3:6).
3. She is not an idle busy-body (1 Tim. 5:13).
4. She is to exemplify chaste and reverent behavior (1 Pet. 3:2).
5. Her godliness is expressed in modest dress (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3).
6. She is to be sensible, pure and kind (Titus 2:5).
7. She is to adorn herself with, "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4).
8. She is prudent (Prov. 19:14).
9. If she has children, she raises them in fear (Prov. 6:20-21).
10. The heart of her husband safely trusts in her (Prov. 31:7)
11. Above all, she fears God (Prov. 31:30).

Conclusion

A. First things first. Relating to your earthly husband is just one more way of walking with your Heavenly Husband.

B. Who is sufficient for these things? We are full of bankruptcy, neediness and dependence. We must be led to live upon Christ's love and grace. Hold fast to him and live for him.

C. In all of the many distractions we must remember the "one thing needful." It is tempting to be an excellent Martha but a poor Mary.

D. I have included the helpful anecdote below as a stimulus to wives who seek to walk in fellowship with Christ amidst very busy lives

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### THE DOMESTIC SERVANT'S PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

A number of ministers were assembled in the home of one of them for the discussion of difficult questions, and it was asked how the command to "PRAY WITHOUT CEASING" could be complied with. Various suppositions were stated; and at length one of the number was appointed to write an essay upon it to be read at the next meeting; which being overheard by a plain sensible servant girl exclaimed,

"What! a whole month waiting to tell the meaning of that text? It is one of the easiest and best texts in the Bible."

"Well, well," said an old minister. "Mary, what can you say about it? Let us know how you understand it. Can you pray all the time?"

"Oh, yes sir!"

"What, when you have so many things to do?"

"Why, sir, the more I have to do, the more I can pray"

"Indeed! Well, Mary, do let us know how it is; for most people think otherwise."

"Why sir," said the girl, "when I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray that the Lord open the eyes of my understanding; and while I am dressing I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness; and when I have washed me, I pray for the washing of regeneration; and as I begin to work, I pray that I may have strength equal to my day; and when I begin to kindle the fire, I pray that God's work may revive in my soul; and as I sweep out the house, I pray that my heart may be cleansed from all its impurities; and while preparing and partaking of my breakfast, I desire and pray to be fed with the hidden manna, and the sincere milk of the Word; and as I am busy with the little children, I look up to God as my reconciled Father in Christ, and pray for the Spirit of adoption that I may know myself more assuredly as His child; and so on all day; everything I do furnishes me with a thought for prayer."

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed the old divine, "These things are revealed to babes, and often hid from the wise and prudent. Go on, Mary, pray without ceasing; and as for us, my brethren, let us bless the Lord, for this wonderful practical exposition, and remember that He has said, "The meek will he guide in judgment." After this, the essay was considered unnecessary.