

The title of this workshop is, “**Practical Application from Old Testament Relationships.**”

Now something I like to do when teaching the Bible is use the OT to illustrate the point or lesson that’s being made. I think this is one of the main purposes of the OT based on:

- **Rom 15:4 For whatever things were written before** [referring to the Old Testament] **were WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING.**
- **1 Cor 10:6 These things** (referring to the OT) **became OUR EXAMPLES...**
- **1 Cor 10:11 These things happened to them** (the Israelites) **as examples, and they were written for our admonition** (or instruction).

So the OT provides these great examples of what it looks like to obey – or disobey – God, including in the area of marriage.

## **LESSON 1: THE DANGER OF PASSIVE MEN AND CONTROLLING WOMEN IS SHOWN BY (PART I) ABRAHAM AND SARAH.**

First, please turn to the right a few chapters to **Gen 16**. Let me provide the context for these verses...

It’s been 10 yrs since God first promised Abraham and Sarah a child. When God promises you a child, you probably expect to wait about 9 months. You don’t expect to have to wait 10 yrs, say nothing about the 25 yrs they’ll actually end up waiting. Because of the wait, two things have crept into Sarah’s heart:

1. First, doubt and unbelief.
2. Second, a desire to control her husband.

Please look at verse 1...

**Gen 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no *children*. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2a So Sarai said to Abram, “See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.”**

Now right here, Abraham faces the exact same two choices Adam faced:

- Trust God and obey Him.
- Or trust his wife and obey her.

Look at the rest of verse 2...

### **2b And Abram HEEDED THE VOICE OF SARAI.**

You can circle these words and write, “**Gen 3:17,**” b/c it’s the same thing God said to Adam: “**Because you have heeded the voice of your wife.**” The exact same words are used in the original Hebrew.

There was a switching of the roles just like w/ Adam and Eve:

- Sarah gave in to the temptation to control her husband.

- Abraham gave in to the temptation to be passive and submit to his wife.

And here's the question...

How well did this go for them? It caused real problems!

And the lesson for us is it causes real problems for us when we give in to these temptations!

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## LESSON 1: THE DANGER OF PASSIVE MEN AND CONTROLLING WOMEN IS SHOWN BY (PART II) AHAB AND JEZEBEL.

Next, please turn to **1 Kin 21...**

We're not going to read all the verses, so let me explain the story...

Ahab is the king of Israel, and he's a wicked, spineless man. He happens to be married to a wicked, controlling woman named Jezebel. Ahab wants a vineyard that belongs to a godly man named Naboth, but Naboth knows God wanted land to stay w/in families. So even though Ahab offered him a lot of money and an even better vineyard, he declined. This made Ahab go home upset and pouting, and when his wife Jezebel saw him, he told her the whole story.

Look at **verse 7...**

**7a Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israel!**

Don't believe this for a second! Jezebel was the one who really exercised authority.

Jezebel continues...

**7b Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."**

What could Ahab have done right here?

- He could've said, "*No, you will not. God forbid him from giving me his vineyard, and it would be evil for you to take it from him.*"
- He could've led and prevented his wife from taking control of the situation, but he submitted to her instead.

Then in a tragic act Jezebel had Naboth murdered. Look at **verse 8** and notice the emphasis on Jezebel doing ALL this...

**8 And SHE wrote letters in Ahab's name** (she takes so much control of the situation she writes the letters as if she's him), **[she] sealed them with HIS seal, and [she] sent the letters to the elders**

**and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9 SHE wrote in the letters, saying** (as though she was Ahab the king), **Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; 10 and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, “You have blasphemed God and the king.” Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die.**

And tragically this godly man Naboth is murdered just like Jezebel planned. Look at **verse 16...**

**16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.**

Now here's the question...

Since this was Jezebel's plan...

- Since she wrote the letters...
- Since she sealed them...
- Since she sent them to everyone...

Is God really going to hold Ahab responsible for something his wife did? I mean it wasn't REALLY his fault, right?

God sent Elijah the prophet to Ahab. Look at **verse 19...**

**19 You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Have YOU (Ahab!) murdered and also taken possession?”’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick YOUR (Ahab’s) blood, even yours.”’**

God held Ahab completely responsible for Naboth's murder.

It's similar to Adam and Eve: Eve ate first and gave the fruit to Adam, but God still held Adam responsible.

The fact is, whether it's Adam, Abraham or Ahab, God expects men to lead and we can't turn around and say, *“Well, my wife made me do it”* or *“It was my wife's fault.”* God is going to hold us responsible for what takes place in our marriages and families. We can't be passive and lazy.

Look at **verse 25...**

**25 But there was no one like Ahab** (that's pretty bad when you're so bad God says there's nobody else that even approaches your 'badness'...) **who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, BECAUSE JEZEBEL HIS WIFE STIRRED HIM UP.**

This should be sobering to men and women...

Ladies, this shows the great influence you have in your husband's life. Circle the words **stirred him up**, and write, "*What I can do.*"

- You have the potential to stir your husband up to do good.
- And you have the potential to be like Jezebel and stir your husband up to do evil!

For the men, we have to see how even though Jezebel stirred Ahab up to do evil, God still held Ahab responsible.

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## LESSON 2: HUSBANDS MISTREAT THEIR WIVES WHEN THEY RESPOND (PART I) IN ANGER.

First, please turn to **Gen 30**...

Here's the situation...

Jacob had two wives: Rachel and Leah. That right there is part of the problem. Having two wives is obviously inconsiderate and sinful; that's how you DON'T dwell w/ your wife – or wives – in an understanding way.

Sometimes people wonder why men in the Old Testament had multiple wives, but it's *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*. In other words:

- It's describing something that took place.
- But it's not prescribing what we should do.

Whenever polygamy took place in the Old Testament it always caused serious problems. There are no examples of polygamy accompanied by peace and harmony – every instance is characterized by turmoil and strife - and there's no place where it's condoned by God.

Chapter 30 begins right after Leah gave birth to four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. But Rachel hasn't been able to have any children. And in the Old Testament there weren't many things worse for a woman than not being able to have children. Many women today would say the same thing. So how do you think Rachel's feeling, considering her sister, who's also happens to be her husband's wife, just had four sons?

**Gen 30:1** Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister (Leah), and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!"

One of the reasons I like this example is it has instruction for husbands and wives...

Like we discussed earlier, women are generally more emotional than men, and this is a fairly melodramatic statement from Rachel: not having any children was terrible, but she shouldn't have been talking about dying b/c of it.

Second, who does she hold responsible for her suffering? Her husband!

- Was it really Jacob's fault she couldn't have any children? It clearly wasn't his fault since he'd been able to have children w/ Leah.
- Rachel shouldn't have talked to Jacob like this; she shouldn't have blamed him. She should've taken it to the Lord.

Here's the application for wives...

- Do you hold your husband responsible for your suffering?
- When you're upset do you get upset w/ him?
- If you're having a bad day, are you going to make sure your husband – or the rest of your family – has a bad day too?

Some wives and mothers do this!

Plus much of her anger stemmed from her sister Leah having children. So her anger wasn't motivated by something her husband did: it was actually motivated by her own sin...her jealousy. It says she **envied her sister**.

Ladies, are you jealous of what other women have?

- Their homes?
- Their lives?
- Their children?
- Their husbands?

If so, do you take it out on your husband? Is it planting a root of bitterness in your heart like it did w/ Rachel?

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Now w/ all that said, Jacob has the opportunity to be a loving, understanding, sensitive husband. So what is he doing to do? He's going to pick up his insert and say:

- *How can I dwell w/ my wife w/ understanding?*
- *How can I give honor to her, recognizing she's the weaker vessel, and that it's reasonable for her to be so upset?*
- *She's a female and part of her femininity is a desire to have children.*
- *I know what I'll say, I'll say...*
  - *I am so sorry you haven't been able to have any children.*
  - *This must be really difficult.*
  - *Let's pray about this together.*

That's what he could have said. Look at verse 2...

**<sup>2</sup> And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"**

His anger was aroused against her?

- **NLT Jacob became furious**
- **ESV Jacob's anger was kindled**

- **NAS Jacob's anger burned**

When wives are upset and emotional it can be tempting for husbands to get angry in return, but God commands us to dwell with our wives w/ understanding, consider why they're upset, think of them as the weaker vessel, show them compassion, and generally be strong for them.

Now the irony associated w/ Jacob's words is...he's right. Everything he said is true! He's not in control of whether his wife has children.

But he's still wrong b/c of the way he responded to his wife. As husbands, we can definitely be right...but still be wrong.

While it wasn't right for Rachel to talk to Jacob like this, it wasn't right for him to respond this way.

## **LESSON 2: HUSBANDS MISTREAT THEIR WIVES WHEN THEY RESPOND (PART II) PRIDEFULLY.**

Now **please turn to 1 Samuel 1**. Let me explain this situation..

A man named Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, and between these two wives, one of them, Peninnah could have children, and Hannah couldn't. Are you noticing a pattern here?

But there's something about Hannah's situation that makes it even worse, and that's Peninnah's cruelty toward her. It's bad enough not to have children, but it's even worse when your husband is married to another woman who IS able to have children and she throws it in your face...

Please look at **verse 6**...

**6 And her (this is Hannah's) rival (referring to Peninnah) provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. <sup>7</sup> So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she (Elkanah) provoked her (Hannah – you're told the same thing twice so you can see how bad it was); therefore she wept and did not eat.**

Now there's a difference and similarity between Jacob and Elkanah:

- The difference is Jacob was angry w/ Rachel and responded w/ anger, but Elkanah will actually try to encourage Hannah; he'll try to cheer her up.
- The similarity between Jacob and Elkanah, is Elkanah didn't pick up his insert and look at it first either.

Look at verse 8...

**8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"**

Husbands, if your wife is upset, don't try to cheer her up: **Pro 25:20** *Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, And like vinegar on soda, Is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.*

But if you still decide to try to cheer up your wife, please don't do it like Elkanah did w/ Hannah...

He basically said:

- *"Why are you crying?"* Remember husbands I told you not to say this...and I know not to say it b/c I used to say it!
- *"Why aren't you eating? Why is your heart grieved?"* He knew why, but it wasn't a good enough reason for him. Talk about not treating your wife as the weaker vessel: he told her, *"You shouldn't be upset about this!"*
- Then the king of all insensitive, prideful things to say, *"Am I not better to you than ten sons?"* Basically, *"Isn't being married to me better than having ten sons?"*

He rebuked her for crying and mourning, and then tried to encourage her by saying, *"Why are you upset about not having any children when you have me?"*

- This is a man who really didn't understand his wife.
- This is a terrible response to a woman who's hurting.

What does it look like today for husbands to be like this?

- *Look at me! You get to be married to me.*
- *Aren't you glad you're not married to so-and-so?* As if I'm so much better than other husbands.
- *Look at what I give you.*
- *Look at all I've done for you.*
- *Look at how I take care of you and provide for you.*

All these statements scream of pride and basically say, *"You are so lucky to be married to me!"*

So husbands, when our wives are upset, let's make sure we don't:

- Respond to them in anger b/c we lack patience.
- Or respond to them in pride and tell them all the wonderful things we've done for them.

### **LESSON 3: (PART I) MICHAL SHOWS A WIFE CAN LOVE HER HUSBAND WITHOUT RESPECTING HIM...**

Listen to **Eph 5:33**...

**33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**

Because most of us are pretty familiar w/ this verse, we lose some of the impact of what it's saying. So let me try to establish what we would EXPECT it to say if we weren't so familiar w/ it...

Since Paul just finished commanding husbands to love their wives, so you would expect **verse 33** to say...

**Let each one of you in particular love his own wife as himself, and LET THE WIFE LOVE HER HUSBAND AS HERSELF.**

That's what you'd expect the verse to say, but notice it doesn't say anything about wives loving their husbands. Even though husbands are commanded to love their wives, wives are not commanded to love their husbands.

Now unfortunately there are plenty of men walking around feeling loved by their wives, but not respected by them. I can't think of a husband I've ever spoken w/ who said he felt like his wife didn't love him, but I've spoken w/ plenty of husbands who felt like their wives didn't respect them.

Now there is a PERFECT PICTURE in Scripture of a woman who loved her husband but didn't respect him. The picture is SO PERFECT, listen to this:

- She is the ONLY woman in Scripture said to love her husband!
- And amazingly, she also put on what I consider to be the strongest display of disrespect in Scripture toward a husband.

Any guesses?

Please listen to this verse: **1 Sam 18:20 Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David.**

There you have it: under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit you're told Michal loved David. Michal has the unique distinction of being the ONLY woman in Scripture having a verse saying she loved her husband.

Now it's not to say other wives didn't love their husbands – I'm sure there were plenty of wives in Scripture who loved their husbands – but it's never emphasized. And why is that? I admit I'm being a little speculative, but I think b/c Scripture commands wives to respect their husbands, that's what it chooses to emphasize.

In the New Testament, who is the woman set down as the example for wives? We know this from a previous message: Sarah.

There are more verses about Sarah than any other woman in Scripture, and none of those verses mention her loving Abraham.

My point is she clearly isn't set down in Scripture as the example for wives to learn from b/c of her love for her husband. Instead, it was Sarah's submission and respect that made her the example.



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Now even though Michal is the wife who loved her husband, why isn't she praised? Please turn to **2 Samuel 6** and I'll show you.

Here's the context...

David has recently become king, and one of his first actions was bringing the ark into Jerusalem, his capital. The first time he tried, it was a disaster: Uzzah touched the ark and died. David tried to bring the ark in a second time and was successful. It was probably the most joyful moment of David's life. I say that b/c there's no other recorded instance of him celebrating like he did when the ark was successfully transported.

But unfortunately David's joy was ruined...and it was ruined by his wife...

**16 Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD;** (See, I told you he was happy: he was **leaping and whirling**. That's excited! But now listen to this...) **and she** (this is Michal) **despised him in her heart.**

Michal didn't like David, the king of Israel, doing what she considered to be very embarrassing. She's the king's wife, so she becomes furious w/ him for acting like this. Remember she's Saul's daughter, so she grew up w/ a father that would never do this! Saul was all about appearances and not substance, and unfortunately that rubbed off on Michal. She thought it was WAY below a king to act like this, even if David was acting this way for the Lord.

Now skip to **verse 20**...

**20a Then David returned to bless his household.**

David was happy and he wanted to return home and share some of that joy w/ his family, but...

**20b And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David,**

She couldn't even wait until he got in the house; she had to run out and confront him, that's how mad she was.

You almost picture a mother coming out to discipline a child and give him some lecture about his behavior.

So ladies, are any of you like this?

- Do you pounce on your husband when he does something wrong?
- Do you make him feel like a little boy who's in trouble?
- Do you chastise him like Michal is about to do?

**20c and said, “How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!”**

Michal mocked David. She ridiculed him. You can hear the scorn and disrespect in her words.

**21 So David said to Michal,** *“I know you love me because 1 Sam 18:20 says so...so it’s okay when you treat me like this. It really doesn’t bother me, because I know how much you love me. I don’t really need your respect, I just need your love.”*

Now just to let you know before we read what David actually said, Michal wasn’t the only person wrong in this situation. David is not going to respond loving or gently toward his wife!

**21 So David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, (now notice this...) who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. (David even made sure to point out that God chose him over her father Saul!!!) Therefore I will play music before the LORD. 22a And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight (Basically he says, “You think this is bad? I’ll act way worse than this!”) But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor.”**

You can circle the words **held in honor** and write the word “*respect.*” This is probably one of the simplest and clearest definitions of respect in the Bible: **holding in honor.**

David said that even if Michal doesn’t respect him, she can be sure plenty of other women do. That’s like saying, *“You might not like what I did, but there are plenty of other women who were impressed.”*

Now here are the 3 reasons we’re looking at this:

1. First, ladies, this gives you an example of how not to treat your husbands.
2. Second, gentlemen, this gives you an example of how not to treat your wives.
3. Third, this shows that women can love their husbands w/o respecting them.

The fact is wives love their husbands BY respecting them. A husband who isn’t respected won’t feel loved.

If we take **2 Samuel 6** as an example, I can tell you Michal might have loved David at this moment, but he sure didn’t feel loved b/c of the the way she was disrespecting him.

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Now here’s something else I want you to see too. Please look at **verse 23...**

**23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.**

**LESSON 3: (PART I) MICHAL SHOWS A WIFE CAN LOVE HER HUSBAND WITHOUT RESPECTING HIM (PART II) WHICH CAN CHANGE HIS FEELINGS TOWARD HER.**

I take **verse 23** to mean David no longer had relations w/ Michal. Now let me be clear about a few things:

- I am not defending David's actions.
- I think he was at fault too.
- This was as much a low point for him as it was for Michal.
- I've said husbands are supposed to love their wives unconditionally – that's what *agapaō* means – and David definitely didn't do that.
- When a husband wants to be cruel to his wife, all he really needs to do is neglect her:
  - In fact, that's how some men CHOOSE to be cruel to their wives, and that's what David did w/ Michal.
  - It's as bad for husbands to punish their wives like David punished Michal as it is for wives to disrespect their husbands like Michal disrespected David.

So hopefully I'm perfectly clear that I'm not defending David's behavior...but I want you to see how dramatically this one event changed David's relationship w/ Michal.

I don't want to throw out too many names, so I'm going to ask you to please listen carefully as I show you something important...

Michal was Saul's daughter. When Saul became jealous of David, he took Michal and gave her to another man.

Saul had a general named Abner that defected and wanted to join David. David told Abner he could join him under one condition: he had to get his wife Michal back for him. Look at **2 Sam 3:12**...

**2 Sam 3:12** Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "*Whose is the land?*" saying *also*, "*Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you.*"

David isn't king over Israel yet, and Abner offers to help make him king over **all Israel**. That would be a pretty wonderful offer for David to hear after waiting almost 20 yrs to be king.

**13** And *David* said, "**Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face.**" So David said, "*You can't join me unless you bring me Michal!*"

Now here's why I'm telling you this...

David wants nothing to do w/ Michal at the end of **2 Sam 6**, but there was a time when David really wanted Michal; there was a time he really missed having her as his wife...and it was only a few chapters earlier! He loved her so much he said the only way Abner could join him was if he got Michal back for him.

But when Michal disrespected David like this, he lost all interest in her! He resented her. It wasn't right, but it's true.

And I'll tell you this: when husbands are strongly disrespected by their wives...

- They begin to resent their wives.
- They begin to distance themselves from them.
- They begin to want nothing to do w/ them.

It's not right, but it's true.

A wife can be so disrespectful to her husband, it can change the way he feels about her. We've talked extensively about husbands loving their wives, and wives can treat their husbands in such a disrespectful way, that the husband will start to feel like David did toward Michal.

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Last thing I'd like to say to the wives...

Your husband is commanded to love you unconditionally. It doesn't say, "Husbands, love your wives IF..."

But the same is true for you regarding respecting your husband. It doesn't say, "Wives, respect your husband IF..."

Wives, you want your husband to love you even when he doesn't feel like it, and he wants you to respect him even when you don't feel like it.

For husbands and wives, we all need to remember the moment any marriage becomes conditional

- The moment the husband says, "*I'm not going to love my wife b/c she...*"
- And the moment the wife says, "*I'm not going to respect my husband b/c he...*"

That's the moment the marriage goes south; that's the moment marriage becomes miserable.