

# I am Woman, Hear me Roar

*Dating, Sex and Marriage*

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5

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The LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said,  
“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.”

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.<sup>1</sup>

And then over to Ephesians chapter five starting with verse 21.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her,

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:18-25.

having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.<sup>2</sup>

The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord stands forever.<sup>3</sup> Amen.  
Amen.

One of the great joys and most hysterical things that you can enjoy when you are a parent is t-ball. It is a blast because the kids have absolutely no idea what they are doing. There is two leagues in [?] there is a Spring league which is—and this is going to sound a little bit silly when you are talking about t-ball—but it is a competitive league. Kind of like some of you all who are emailing me all the time and telling me that, you know, the dating game is not fair.

And all, like, yeah I hear. You know?

You know, you all are doing fine. Just go out and make friends.

But, you know, that is a competitive league where people are like screaming at their kids. And then you have the July league, the summer league which is the non competitive league where everybody gets to bat, you know, that’s what I like. Everybody just bats once. And when the entire team has batted it is the end of the inning. None of that out stuff and score stuff, just hit the ball and run after the ball.

So and what is really fun, though, is these kids will hit the ball and then basically have no idea what to do. And last summer this was so funny [?] hit the ball and, you know, he has got my athletic gene so he didn’t have much of a chance. I mean every opportunity he gets might be his last. And so he hit it pretty well. It went out into the outfield and he landed first base. And get this, absolutely... an absolute cacophony of noise. Do you like that word? Just, you know, you have got the kids running after the ball. You have got the parents yelling at the kids in the field to run after the ball. You have got kids in the dugout yelling just to yell. You have got, I think, at any one time you have about six coaches on the field telling them all these different instructions. And so [?] kind of gets on first base and he is... he knows he is safe there and so he wants to just stand there.

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 5:21-33.

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Peter 1:24.

The problem is he is the last batter, right, so it doesn't matter. You know, he is about to come in. I know that he is about to come in. And so I yell out over the cacophony—the roar, if you will—“Run.” And you just [?] run.

And he is, “Oh, ok, is that what I am supposed to do.”

And because he was able to make out my voice—it was really funny, too, because, you know, they go ahead and get the ball and then bring it in to the pitcher because the play is actually, but since somebody calling as he is going, “Run,” and he goes all the way and, I mean, he crosses home plate about the same time the other team is in the dugout, but in his little mind it is a homerun, so it was a homerun.

But the interesting thing is, you know, among all those voices he was able to distinguish one and he was able to listen to his father's voice and I told him what to do.

Well, when we get to definitions of gender, you live in a just roar of voices. And some of those are good and some of them are bad. Some of them are just kind of old fashioned conservative traditional family values—whatever that means—and it is just kind of this limited lock step, you know, this is what a woman does.

Ok, thank you. I did not know that.

And, on the other hand you have got kind of this voice saying, “There is no distinction between man and woman at all,” which isn't true either.

And you have some people who are just kind of bitter, you know. You have a lot of unbelievers and you all are surrounded by this if you haven't figured this out yet. You know, you are surrounded by people who are kind of shaking their head going, “Man, I wish I were in college. I would do it different,” and, you know, telling you, “Man, those are the best days of your life.”

And they kind of make you feel like, “Boy, I got a lot to look forward to. Thank you.”

And you saw a bitterness there because it never developed good relationships. And so their life isn't getting better every year like it could be doing. And that bitterness forms a lot of advice that you hear. And so a lot of times whether girls are told, you know, “Don't you do any thing until it makes you dependent upon somebody is going to, you know, disappoint you.” And or even worst advice about using your sexuality or using your appearance to kind of control other people. And there is a lot of bitterness in that advice.

And what I want to do is help you in some broad terms discern specifically what it means. What is God's voice in the racket? And give you some sense of what it means in a very broad way—because I am not a narrow definition kind of guy—but in a broad way what does it mean to be a woman and what are your opportunities that are there and how can you use that in a way that I hope is helpful.

And this is different. You know, last week I got on the guys and I got a lot of experience being a guy, you know. I have been a guy for about 35 years or so. And so, you know, I can't get on to them.

The girls I am not going to get on to because you all are a lot nicer anyway, sweet and I feel very fatherly. So I want to just kind of be a fatherly kind of advice because I want to protect you. I am sorry if that is old fashioned for me to say that. You know, sorry, you are here.

So but that is kind of the way. It is not so much as a spanking as it is a... I don't know. It is kind of like the text we read in from Proverbs 31 of the mother speaking to her child of profession.

The first thing I wanted to talk about is the world's voice, how loud it is and some of the things the world is telling us. And one of the first lies that the world tells us about women is basically this. If you are not being paid for something you are not valuable. If you are not getting paid for it or publicity for it, then it is not important.

It is very interesting and the opportunity in all of the good things that the first generation of feminism did in the 60s and earlier which was getting women equal recognition and equal opportunity which is fully and absolutely deserved and I am for, but basically what they were doing in a lot of ways was giving in to the men's definition of things that what really mattered in the world is being paid for something. If you want to be important, if you want to be a valuable human being, you need to be getting paid for something. And that is very deep in our psyche. And I want you to understand that that is not a biblical understanding. It is just a wrong understanding.

Even without the Bible you will come to see at some point in your life that was wrong. But you see it everywhere, right? You see it came up this year in the presidential elections when Theresa Heinz-Kerry was criticizing Laura Bush for never having had a job. What was she saying? She doesn't have a voice to speak to women. She is not important because she has never been paid.

And that kind of simplistic mindset goes very far. I know several interns, girls that come and work for RUF and go into ministry who after two or three years are doing great ministry and very important things have been told, "Well, you know, it is really time for you to get a real job. You know, it is time for you to get into the real world."

And they'll go, "I can't deal with much more reality than this. I walk around with Ricky all day."

And that is very common. You are probably hearing that kind of stuff, too, that you need to get into the real world. And I want you to know you have been in the real world for 18 or 20 years and just because there is a world out there that pays people for the work they do, doesn't make it any more real.

And I want you to take a different perspective. Take a perspective of looking back and asking yourself the question: What will you be sorry that you did? I mean, do you really think that if you spend a year doing ministry that when you get to be 80 you are going to look back and go, “Man, I just spent too much time loving those people. I spent too much time listening to people.”

Barbara Bush said when she was speaking at a graduation for an Ivy League school. This was really interesting. She was asked to come to speak and there was a lot of, you know, controversy and madness because all she was is married and she is only famous because she is married to a famous husband.

And she asked the question. She said, “You really think you are going to get to work, you are going to retire from your job or whatever and you be 70 years old sitting around the house and going, ‘I wish I had spent more hours at the office. I really wish I had spent more time away from my children.’”

Take that kind of perspective. What is it you are going to be sorry that you did? You will not regret the relationships you develop. You will not regret the hours you spend nurturing and listening and loving people.

Take the perspective. Go into the future now and look back. Don’t listen to the voice that says, “You are not getting paid well for it, then it is not important.” Don’t listen to that voice.

Secondly, there is no voice that kind of comes alongside that one and it says, “You can get paid and have the important things.” It is just kind of... Mary Kerry is actually the person that I first saw kind of giving it, but it is everywhere now. It is kind of this you can have it all. Right, you can have the productive career and the perfect family. And it is this kind of idea that you can have everything and you don’t have to sacrifice anything.

And that is just an unrealistic life [?] Just count up the number of hours in a day. In order to do one thing you have to sacrifice something else. You just have to.

Look at you all. Most of you are sacrificing sleep. And that is obvious, but you can’t, you know, work 10 hours a day and sleep or have your children sleep 10 hours a day and be the most significant influence in their lives because at best you are spending four hours with them. You can’t have it all. You can’t do everything.

In order to do one thing you have to say no to something else. Every time you say yes to one thing you are saying no to something else. And I want you to know there is a world of opportunities and I want you to find the best one for you, but realize you are saying no to other things.

Katherine Hepburn was on an interview. Katherine Hepburn, a famous actor, of course, and she was a very famous feminist in the 50s and 60s and feminism kind of went off and

left her. And she said in an interview with Diane Sawyer she said, “You know, I am very for woman having a career. I had a great one. But if you want to have a career, don’t ruin your children’s life... If you want to do one thing do it. Decide what you want to do. You can’t... There is a very false lie out there that you can do everything. You can’t do everything. You can’t do everything.”

Thirdly, and this one is even bigger I think today because the homemaker has kind of come back in. Martha Stewart has made it cool. And, well, she is making her home in prison, but that’s another issue. She’ll get out soon and be back on top.

It pictures that you can have everything. I’m sorry. That’s what I thought. That you have to be absolutely perfect at everything, that if you could have possibly have done it better you should have.

And for some reason I don’t understand what it is that is making me so hot right now. I don’t understand what it is about girls, ladies that seem to... you know, people say that guys are more competitive and we are very competitive. I mean I haven’t had a single girl writing me in and saying the rules for playing [?] are unfair.

But so when things are like dumb and absolutely irrelevant, you know, like halo. Guys are terribly competitive. But on the things that kind of nag at you at life, I think girls are far more [?], you know, far more aware of what someone else is wearing or what someone else has done and who is getting more attention and who is better friends, you know. So and so said that someone else is her best friend. I wanted to be their best friend. I thought I was the best friend.

And I don’t have those kind of conversations with many guys. I really don’t. I mean, think about it. And there is just this tension that to be the best at everything. If there is anything out there that needs to be doing I think it is part of this [?] desire to serve and desire to nurture that just kind of goes to seed, this almost guilt of I didn’t do everything I could have done.

You know, I have been doing this 10 years. I have had five different interns, three girls and two guys. In all that time I have never once, not one single time have I had to look at my guys and go, “You must take a day off,” never, you know?

So I mentioned day off to Ryan and he was out of here. “When do you want me back, boss?”

He kind of calls up, “Hey, I am not going to make that meeting.”

But with every girl I have ever had you must take a day off and let me tell you exactly what a day off means. It means you go to bed. You wake up. You don’t call students. You don’t talk to students. You don’t pray for students. You don’t think of students. You live that day. You go to bed and then you go back to work. Seriously, because if you don’t this desire to always be doing more because there is one more thing I could have

done that could have been better. And at some point you are going to have to realize that you cannot justify your existence by doing everything as good as it possibly could have been done. At some point you are going to realize that at the most important things of life you are never going to have a teacher there saying that was an A, you get a four point.

On the most important things in life I am never going to go to bed and go, “Hey, I was a 4.0 father today. I was a 4.0 husband today.” That one never even crossed my mind.

One of the most important things you are going to have to decide when have I done what I could do? When am I going to have to stop making myself feel better by telling myself I have done everything I should have done? You are going to have to live by faith and take that to the Lord and trust him and trust him to do enough.

A final kind of false voice out there in the din of noise is that the false voice about your appearance. And be honest with you that is like a broad topic that I [?] for now on it. But I want to tell you a thumbnail sketch kind of heading. There is a danger of paying too much attention to it and using your appearance as kind of a scheming thing to be a tease, to get attention. There is an extremely dangerous tendency to equate your value as a human being with what you look like, an extremely dangerous tendency to do that.

And there is a tendency to not care about it enough.

And all I want... and all that we have time to go into is to say this. The Lord God who loved you enough to give his only Son for you made you, ok? And he knew what he was doing. And he has done a fine job of it. And that is not just me. I mean, I am a guy and guys... girls, you need to know this. Guys think every girl is cute. We really do. I do.

Don't get grossed out. I am married. And I believe that if you have a sense of stewardship at all of just kind of taking care of yourself, it is easy to bring that out. But I want you to be content with the Lord who loves you and with the body that he has given you. And I don't want... I hate. It absolutely tears at me to see when there is this kind of godless, pagan standard that is set up of what is beautiful and thinking of yourself less if you don't meet it. That's just silly.

Please find your value in what the Lord has created you to be. There is a beautiful passage in Matthew chapter seven where he says, where Jesus says, “Look at the lilies of the field how God has dressed them in splendor.”<sup>4</sup> They are here today. Tomorrow they are thrown into the fire. You are much more valuable than they are. And God has given you a much deeper beauty than that. And I want you just to be happy with that and content with that.

So the first thing I just want to kind of go over is to not listen to the false voices in the world that are out there telling you that you are not valuable if you are not doing enough, you are not valuable if you don't do everything perfectly, you are not valuable if you are

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<sup>4</sup> See Matthew 6:28.

not beautiful enough, you are not valuable if you are not getting paid for it. That is [?] soft lies and I want you to get over those and acknowledge that those are the voices of the other team, ok? Don't listen to them.

What are the voices that you should listen to? What is it that God has made especially for women? And I want you to see the great powers that you have and Genesis two is an interesting passage, isn't it, where God has made Adam and he made him specifically for the garden and he put him in the garden to tend it and to rule over it and he brought Eve specifically for relationship, for Adam, not as some kind of subservient thing, but for him in the sense that relationship would be what she was about. And you see that, don't you? Even in the sin when they sin in Genesis three Adam is cursed in his work, "By the sweat of your brow will you eat. The ground is going to bring forth thorns and thistles."<sup>5</sup>

And Eve is cursed in her relationships. "Your desire will be for man who will rule over you. In pain you will bring forth children."<sup>6</sup> And that is not just the birthing of them. It is the raising of them. Trust me. The pain goes on long after the birthing.

And women are created with an unbelievable ability for relationships and a power within them. And you see that all over, right? You see it from the time of early childhood. When is it that... what do kids do on a playground? Right? The boys are all running around with swords or playing football, not really playing football, just kind of throwing around a football and making of scores at the end. And the girls are talking, right? And it is always just this nurturing that is always coming out with, again, it is a general rules. But I want you to see three really special things that women have.

One is that women have the power to heal, an amazing ability to heal, a power of empathy, a power of comfort.

Think back when you were a kid and you had to stay home from school sick. You remember that? You remember breaking a sweat? Your fever breaking and you wake up and it is just terrible. And you get up and your mom draws a bath for you. You come back and she changed your bed and she put the cloth over your head and she is bringing you food. Isn't it weird? I mean, some of you are having those memories right now. And it is odd. You think being sick you wouldn't think of that as a good memory. But, you know, if you got the flu last week you probably really missed your mom, didn't you? You didn't miss your dad.

I mean, [?] you know a couple of days ago or yesterday, I guess, he fell down and got a big old scratch on his knee, you know. It was like, "That is a pretty bad cut there, son. Time to get up, ok? You are kind of in the middle of a game here, bud."

And it goes beyond, you know, [?] to mom, of course. And there really is an ability there. There is an ability that women have to draw people out, to get them to speak. That's why I have got to have a female intern, somebody who can listen without waiting for

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<sup>5</sup> See Genesis 3:18-19.

<sup>6</sup> See Genesis 3:16.

something to... you know, waiting to say something. It is a great ability and I want to encourage you to use it. I really want to encourage you to use it.

Some of you feel like you are unable to do evangelism and the reason why you feel like you are unable to do evangelism is you want to do it like a man. You want to go in and talk and say something and that fixes everything and then you leave because that is what I want to do. I don't want to know you and get in and with your problems. I want to say something, go home, play on my computer and let you be better. That is my plan for evangelism, right?

But how do women do evangelism? They do it by listening, by getting people to open themselves up and providing a comfortable and safe place and then in that comfortable and safe place sharing the hopes that you have.

It is a powerful thing I have told you about 87 times by now about Liva Dean. Liva, who had a wonderful ministry. She was the headmaster of the local Christian school in Cleveland, Mississippi, had a great ministry, diagnosed with a degenerative arthritis and was told, you know, that she was going to get worse and worse so it killed you and it took about 20 years. Isn't that good news?

And the thing that depressed her the most about it was she was losing her ministry. She would have no ministry. And it was amazing to be there for six years of Liva's ministry. And she lived in long term care and she shared with her nurses and she shared with everyone that came around her and then she just listened and as she drew people out and as I have told you before, as she... at her funeral nurses and interns and janitors from the hospital came to the funeral. And more than one of them came to my pastor saying, "I want to know the God that Liva Dean knew." Not because she was a preacher, because she was loving them.

Women have the power of empathy. Women also have a power of environment. Women turn places into homes. Men take places over and kind of make them, quote, unquote, and then pretty much ruin them. But women, they bring civility and peace and beauty. And you know that, right? I mean basically any guy that has been married for three months can't stand to go back into a bachelor house. You kind of walk around and go, "You al live here? It smells. You know that, don't you?"

And the answer is usually, "No. I didn't notice. I thought it was you."

But women this is taking dominion, to bring beauty.

There is a great story out of *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom when her sister and they were put in the concentration camp and they were thrown into, you know, these barracks. And one of the first things her sister did was take her scarf out of her hair and went and hung it in front of the little window so she could have a curtain, to make a beautiful place, to bring stability and environment and peace.

And, thirdly, women have a power of encouragement. Women have a power to bring things to fruition.

It is amazing. Pregnancy is an amazing thing. [?] the entire time [?] was pregnant, four times, [?] watching it going, “You are producing a human being.” You know there is something in there. I can see it moving around. It is alive. It is getting 100% of its sustenance from you. You are creating it and producing it.

And that is really a metaphor for what women do everywhere. They bring life out. They draw it out. They reenact that a million times over. They take children and they produce adults. They bring into fruition visions of what they see.

This isn’t a good time to ask this, but as an example, if you think there is any... by any definition if you think I am a good public speaker and if you think I am a good preacher, there is only one reason. And that is because my wife is telling me that I can do it and she brought it out. And as she drew it out she created what she saw. And then unbelievable ability to be everything.

G.K. Chesterton summed it up by saying, “Men are one thing to the entire world. Men are one thing: preachers, doctors, lawyers. They are one thing and everyone sees them as that one thing. A woman has the power to be the entire world to a few people, the entire world, queen for a day, the introducer of beauty, the introducer of peace, of harmony, to be an entire queen unto herself for a few people.”

The powers of women.

But I need to, of course, warn you that wherever there are strengths, there always are weaknesses. Your strength will always be your weakness. Any strength can be perverted. And so I want to quickly go into those and then we will finish.

First of all, the strength of relationship obviously is very easily perverted into a cliquishness, into a, you know, just a cruelty. You have to be very aware of that. You have the right... I saw... we watched the movie *Vanity Fair* last night. It was fair, I could say. But [?] lines... I didn’t mean to do that. There was this line, “Women hold the door to society.”

And it has always been true and it really is true. Women tend to dominate every community. And so if the women are warm and speaking then it is a warm community because guys are always going to be standing around by the desk.

And I want to encourage you to use that. You have the freedom. In Christ you have the freedom to be nobody’s best friend. You can... you have the freedom to be no one’s best friend, to be openly and actively hospitable. You have the freedom to actively and make an effort to be aggressively kind and love people.

Women have a very dangerous desire or ability to make an idol out of relationships. And I want to encourage you to be gracious, that you are not half a person when you are not in a relationship and to be fulfilled by Jesus and to love him and put your confidence in him and to get your identity in him so that you can hold on to your relationships loosely, so you can love them and serve them while you wait upon the Lord just to show you where and if you are going to be a wife.

And women have an ability to pervert their desire for empathy into what turns out to be a very kind of backhanded form of gossip. And what happens is this. When you are around... again, it is that empathic ability. It draws you out. You want to share whatever is hurting. And so if somebody hurts you, well, you want to share that. And all you are doing is just telling your struggles, but in telling your struggles you are talking about everybody who has hurt you and all the bad things they have done. And you don't want to be hurtful, but you are.

And I want to encourage you to be aggressively... to aggressively seek reconciliation and to learn to show people love.

How do you do you do that? How do you do that? First of all if you are obsessed, if you are parent, I am going to ask you to run to one who dressed the living of the field. And he cause is to beautify the meek with salvation.

And if your security is in your friends and you want to... your security is not in that close knit group, I want to encourage you to follow after the one who welcomed tax collectors and prostitutes and sinners and who called out to all those who were weary and heavy laden.

And if you are killing yourself, always wanting to do more and by not being as perfect as you want to be, then I want to encourage you to come to the one and put your faith in the one who says his burden was easy and his yoke was light.

I want you to be free to use your ability to love by finding yourself, by repenting of your sin, repenting of your fear, acknowledging your weakness and burying yourself in your Father.

Please pray with me.

*Lord Jesus, we pray that you would give us the grace to come to you, to find our ultimate maturity in that your promise to never leave us and never forsake us. And I pray that you would satisfy our hearts and satisfy the longings we have for intimacy, that you would enable us to love others we pray in Jesus' name, in your precious name. We would think you want it. Amen.*