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UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

God's Plan of Authority for Marriage

Chapter One

God will help us to do His good word as we yield to His principles, and we will grow in the Lord with our families.

This chapter will deal with how wives can be helpmates to their husbands, for God has given wives a special way to show the love of Jesus Christ in their lives, a special way to express His love.

The Breakdown of Authority

The home is the place that exemplifies the relationship of Christ and His church. Our witness will increase as our marital relationship at home increases in love because it is where the true expression of Christ's love for His church is shown.

Understanding that, we can see where the enemy wants to attack. If he can tear apart the homes where the love of Christ is to be shown, he can destroy the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world.

It is in the home that the children are to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in the home that the husbands and wives are to be working together in the harmony of the Lord. You will see what havoc can be wreaked when God's principles aren't being worked in wives or husbands. The breakdown in authority in this country today is in the home. Children are not taught to honor or respect because many wives are not honoring or respecting their husbands.

There are four areas of authority: home, church, government, and employment. Satan wants to break down God's authority structure, and he wants to establish his own authority structure. It always works out of self, where one puts self above the authorities that God has given.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without

natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2nd Timothy 3:1-7)

You can see that all these qualities are present in our society today. Such things are happening in our homes and churches. *“Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”* There are people who say they are Christians, but they don't really care to take God at what He says in His word. They either don't want to receive it or they don't want to do it. That denies the power of God because God moves in power and in response to faith.

How does faith work? Faith works by hearing and hearing by the word of God. You need to take God's principles in His word and do them. We are not to be hearers only, but doers also. It is where the power of God moves – when God's people, in faith, and in response to God, take Him at what He says and do it.

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion [power or authority], and speak evil of dignities.” (Jude 8) We see this happening more and more in these latter days. The authorities of God, whether they are Christian or not, are still God's authorities according to the word of God, and God works through them. But they are being despised, they are not being given honor, they are not being held in esteem. This totally violates God's principles.

We need to be on our guard to recognize that all authority, Christian or non-Christian, is from God. (2nd Peter 2:9, Romans 13:1, 2)

The only one that will hold a marriage together is Jesus Christ. Spouses begin their time together with two different ways of life, two different sets of values, and two different desires. Nothing will hold them together unless they have the common denominator of Jesus Christ. It is very important that He remain so in at least one of the

parties, even though the ideal is both spouses. God will hold the marriage together as long as one is seeking Him.

Family Dynamics

There are two individuals in a marriage, and then there is the marriage relationship itself. Thus there are three relationships: the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, and the marriage.

As soon as you enter into a marriage, you are no longer your own person. You have a spouse, and you are not to be committed only to yourself. You have another person to think about, and you have to think about your marriage.

Once you have your first child, new relationships form: the husband to the child, the wife to the child, the child to the father and the child to the mother, the child to the marriage and the marriage to the child which equals seven relationships. Your second child increases the total amount of relationships to 15. If you have a third child, your relationships increase to 32. The dynamics of the family keeps growing. If you don't have the Lord Jesus Christ holding this marriage together with 32 personal relationships, you will have some difficulty. With three children and their parents, there are five people seeking their own directions, and they have their own wills and desires. Therefore, it is necessary that some practical principles be set up, recognized, and practiced.

We can't let 32 personal relationships go heading off in their own directions. There would be 32 different ways of doing things.

You can't do your own thing any longer. When you were single you could do that. You could come and go when you wanted to. It was fine to do what you wanted because there was nobody else necessarily involved. When the first child comes along, and mama is giving a lot of attention to the baby, sometimes the guy feels left out and not needed anymore. The child and the father may get close, and mom can start to feel forsaken.

"Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I deliver them to you. But I want you to understand

that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” (1st Corinthians 11:1 NASB)

“Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:20)

God’s Order Works

This is God’s authority order for the home:

1. God the Father
2. Christ Jesus (He was always under the Father’s authority during His life on earth)
3. Men
4. Women
5. Children

Christ is the head of the husband and He is the Lord of the family. The husband is the head of the wife. He is the chief authority of the children.

“And the Lord God said it is not good that man shall be alone. I will make him a helpmate for him [a helper suitable for him].” (Genesis 2:18)

A wife is a helper to her husband and the second authority over the children. She is subject to the man which means she is to submit to him, respect him, honor him, praise him, love him, adore him, and revere him.

This key principle of God is being thrown in the can and swept under the rug nowadays because of the rebellious movements that want to remove the authority that God has set up. A scripture to support God’s principle is in Genesis 3:16 *“And to the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”* This was the Lord God speaking to Eve after the fall. There was a definite order set up at that point as a consequence of her disobedience. She would be subject to her husband and he would rule over her.

Today, that statement causes all kinds of red flags to go up when women think somebody will rule over them. A man doesn't like having to be under authority somewhere either. It isn't in man's nature to be under authority.

What was the sin in the garden? What was Eve's desire? *That she might be as God.* She wanted to throw off God's authority and be on the same level with him. Why was Satan thrown out of heaven? *He wanted to be as God.* Nobody can be as God. God is sovereign.

From the beginning of time we have been in rebellion against God. Another definition of sin is rebellion against His authority.

Genesis 3:16 is part of the curse, but we have been redeemed from the curse of the law through Christ Jesus. We have become heirs to all the promises of Abraham which are abundance in every way and in every relationship.

However, in no way does it discard God's principles of authority. Being redeemed from the curse of the law doesn't establish a freedom to do whatever you want. Instead, you now walk in accordance with the principles that God set down because God set them down as a blessing for us. It is the purpose of the law after we had been given right standing by Jesus Christ and received Him as our Lord and Savior. The law becomes a guideline in order that we might have all of the blessings promised to Abraham. As we walk in obedience to what God says, His perfect life starts to fill and guide us. Then we have prosperity in our homes and families: financially, physically, and in every way as we trust Him to perform what He said He would do.

"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husband as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and He is the savior of the body. Therefore, if the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." (Ephesians 5:22-23)

In God's order wives are not subject to God. They are subject to their husbands. The husband is responsible to the Lord. The woman is responsible to the man.

This has been abused, and I can see where women have a right to be concerned about what has happened in the authority order. There is nothing wrong with the order because it is God's order. What is wrong is the way some men apply it and do it. I have seen husbands take this and say, "I'm the authority. I'm the lord and the ruler of this house." Then he runs roughshod over his wife. At that point, she reacts. What has happened is the man has forgotten who the real authority in the home is. He will be responsible some day to the Lord Jesus Christ for what he does with his authority. This is where the woman's hope lies.

God's Plan for Children, Husbands and Wives

As long as children are children they are under authority. We have noted that the man is to be the authority in the home as he follows the directions of Christ. To have authority coming from two or three different directions is totally disruptive to the children, for they no longer know who the boss is. They have to have but one authority. Here is where the woman as the helper helps the man do what needs to be done with the children.

God's principles will work when we are faithful to do them His way. You don't always see the results immediately, but as a wife is faithful and obedient, wanting to submit to her husband in all things, then God is the one who covers her – and she is under God's protection.

The husband is an umbrella or shield from the wiles of the enemy. His wife is under his protection as long as he is under Christ's authority, she is under the husband's authority, and the children are under the wife. Many times a woman will get out from under her husband's authority. In Ephesians 5 the husband is called to love his wife as himself, the reason being that men are basically selfish. That is why a man is called by God to love – to love his wife like himself because we love ourselves very much. The wife, in the wisdom of the Lord, is called to respect and honor her husband as to the Lord. Why? Because the Lord knows that the hardest thing for a wife to do is to respect and honor. She isn't content in being a helper. God created her to be a helpmate to the man, but she wants to run the show. When a wife runs out from under the authority of her husband, her husband will often say, "Okay, fine, go ahead" because he

doesn't want the responsibility. He will give her the responsibility if she wants to take it. There are a bunch of holes forming in the umbrella when the man gives it up. He will give his wife the responsibility of the children, and he will just go on his way. He will be the first to run.

When a wife gets out from under the authority of her husband, then the enemy can come directly on her with burdens and pressures that she was not created to bear, and she will be vulnerable at that point. Rebellion will form in the children because they will follow whatever their mother does. The mother is the key in God's plan because she is the one who has a very special place in God's line. She holds the husband and the children together.

The children are sanctified or made holy through the believing partner. (1st Corinthians 7) God says to a woman that He will respect His plan. Heaven and earth can pass away, but God's word will never pass away. This plan will last until the new structure is given when Jesus returns. If a husband isn't walking in the Lord, God will still honor His plan. A husband has been given to his wife as her authority whether he is of the Lord or not of the Lord. He is her husband, and as such, *"I have called him your husband,"* and the Lord has put him there as the woman's head. When a wife is faithful and obedient to her husband as to the Lord, He says, *"I will honor you,"* and by so doing the children are made whole.

This is very important to understand. Many times a wife will say, "My husband has all kinds of holes in his umbrella. He's so unspiritual. I just don't see how I can remain in this house with him any longer." There is a danger that a wife will take this sanctified attitude to run out from her husband's shield, thinking all along that he is not providing what she needs in the home as far as Christian leadership and headship. However, all the time God is recognizing him as the authority.

As a wife takes the responsibility and the authority, all of the burdens come on her. Next comes a nagging attitude towards her husband because she thinks he isn't doing anything right. She feels he is letting her down in regard to the children because she has to carry all the responsibility for them. He may be gone all the time. She will find

that he will disappear a little more often when she either pushes religion on him or looks down her nose at him (consciously or unconsciously), thinking he is no good. Before long this rebelliousness turns out to become a force for separation in the marriage. We have seen where women who are really desiring to follow the Lord's way just can't bear it any longer. Why? Because they have stepped out from under the authority by rebelling, and consequently all the pressures fall on them. Then they take off.

Interestingly enough, the word of God says that if the unbelieving spouse desires to stay, the believing partner should stay with the spouse. If the believing partner leaves, he or she goes alone.

These are God's principles and God's order which is where the blessing will really come. This is the plan according to the word of God.

Don't be in despair if you find that you have missed it because there is no perfect marriage. However, in a marriage you should be growing closer and closer as you follow God's plan.

Move in Mutual Esteem

The key to a marriage that is really moving in the Lord is mutual esteem and respect. *"Submit yourselves one to another."* (Ephesians 5:21) It is not saying that there is an equal authority being set up. It is saying the husband and wife are to move in mutual esteem and respect for each other in the Lord because Christ is the head. This order of God is not a power order. It is an authority and responsibility order that is intended to help the marriage function.

Thus a woman is able to develop herself into the woman that the Lord wants her to be. This order frees her up to be the kind of person that the Lord created her to be. She will see some creative things happen as this is done. This meets the needs of a man wonderfully too. The children will see a bond between husband and wife. It gives them even more reason to honor and respect Jesus. Children will have a desire to walk with Him. They will start to see how important Jesus is when their mom and dad are following Him.

When that happens, it is natural for a child to seek the faith of the Lord too.

Revere your mate because God calls him a husband. Men should revere their wives because God calls them wives. Many times women will say, "I just don't see anything in my husband that I can respect and honor." Husbands say, "There's nothing good about my wife. I don't see any reason to love her."

In a marriage it doesn't take a person deserving the love of another, and it doesn't take the other partner earning respect and honor. The principle of Christ is while we were yet in our sin, Christ died for us on the cross. The principles of God are in effect. In other words, while we were unworthy and apart from God, Christ died that we might be his own. If you want to win a husband or wife to the Lord, you love. A husband loves, and a wife respects and honors. You might not be worthy of it in any way, but the love of Christ says you are worthy because God calls you worthy.

Once a woman understands this, she will see that she is able to respect and honor her guy because God has put him as her head. I have heard, "I chose him, so I can leave him when I choose to." No!

Love Cannot Be the Basis for Marriage

Marriage is not based on love as the world understands it. I ask couples why they want to get married, and they often tell me, "Because we love each other." That is the worst reason to get married! I always look for something else because the love of the world is based on sex, physical attraction, money, position, social status, or infatuation. A spouse could be the opposite of you. If you are very timid and shy, you may want somebody strong whom you feel will protect you.

The love of the world is such that one day you love people, and the next day you hate them. It is based on emotions and circumstances. There is no substance to it whatsoever. Love cannot be the basis for a marriage. There has to be something firmer to hold it together.

Marriage is not based on love as the world understands it, but it is on the love of Christ and recognizing that God has given you your

spouse. You took him in marriage, you took him not just as your husband, but as God's representative for you in that family – for better or for worse, and it isn't going to be anything but for the better if you seek God first.

It isn't love that sustains the marriage. It is the marriage that sustains the love. This is a critical point. The only thing that will hold a marriage together is people seeking Jesus Christ and following his principles, wanting to do it at any cost. In other words, you are set on keeping the marriage.

What if you feel that you no longer love each other? I hear this often. People feel that they are not compatible anymore. Men say, "The woman I married 20 years ago (or 5 years ago or 2 years ago) is not the woman I once knew." In marriage, both parties will be changing. You can't base where you are now on what you saw five years ago in a person. Five years later, everyone has changed, and that won't hold it together anymore. If the husband says, "I just don't think I love you anymore," you'd better tell him, "I think it's time you start learning how to." We have a command from the Lord that says we are to love one another, and that starts at home.

Love is the outcome of a successful marriage, not the beginning. (1st Corinthians 13) When couples say that they love each other, we can say very truthfully at that point, "You have no basis for that statement. The only way a person is really able to love as 1st Corinthians 13 says is by going through daily life with each other and responding the way that God says to respond."

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails..." (1st Corinthians 13:4-8 NASB)

Those are the love qualities of God, and they are made in us by God as we respond properly to our partner. People who say they want to get married because they love each other have never gone through what it takes for God to build those qualities inside of them. When

you are courting someone, you have your best foot forward, and no matter what, you really don't know the other person. As marriage continues, then love is developed. You start to see the love of God moving in your home as you respond properly and know what the needs of your spouse are. You notice that innocent things you say may cause a reaction.

All guys basically respond the same way to varying degrees. All ladies basically respond the same way to varying degrees, though it is impossible to know exactly how a person will respond.

In conclusion, Ephesians 5:31-32 says, *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: But I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”* (KJV)

Marriage is a mystery. Reinforcing it in your daily life is the way you can chiefly express the love that Jesus has for His church, for the relationship between a husband and a wife is like the relationship of Christ and the church.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Outline for Chapters Two thru Six

I. UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND – OUTLINE

Titus 2 – Outline for life development message for women. The only way to love is to learn how to meet needs.

God's original design of a wife: a helpmate – aid to fulfillment. The wife shares equally in husband's achievements. (Genesis 2:18)

- A. **Your husband is to be respected as a man.** (Ephesians 5:33) Deep within, a man wants to prove his manliness. Society teaches a wrong view of manliness, like sexual immorality, etc.

Four Marks of a Man (1st Corinthians 6:13-14)

- Watchful
- Stands fast in faith
- Acts like a man
- Strong

You destroy your husband's manliness by:

1. Not letting him know that you need protection: in things physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or volitional. Men rise to the need of protection. (Numbers 30, especially verses 2, 10-15)
2. Not looking to him for basic needs, provisions, competing careers, not content with basics. (1st Timothy 6:6-8)
3. Showing greater interest and loyalty to another spiritual leader. For example, a pastor, a woman or man teacher, a Christian author, etc.
4. Not letting him make final decisions, reviewing past failures, and resisting his spirit by arguing. Submitting God's way is good.
5. Not submitting physically to him. Godliness is a guard against abuse. (1st Corinthians 7:4-5)
6. Not allowing him to fail and see God's character benefits in it.

B. Accept your husband as your leader and believe in his goals, ideas and achievements. (1st Corinthians 11:3, 1st Peter 3:5-6, 1st Timothy 2:12-14, Ephesians 5:22-24, Titus 2:5 – instruction for wives)

1. A leader assumes his instructions will be quickly obeyed.
2. A leader's carefulness in giving instructions increases with trust given him.
3. A leader whose instructions are resisted will become demanding or careless, or he will back away from leadership.
4. Leadership includes areas overlooked by wives. (Psalm 15) There are lots of ways to be a leader besides the few preconceived ideas.
5. Leadership is reinforced by specific praise. For example, "When you witnessed to that man, it caused me to thank God for your leadership." "When you told our son he should not be in that activity, it caused me to respect your leadership."
6. A leader's joy comes when his wife and family are excited about his achievements. Showing excitement for his goal is more important than sharing the work of reaching it.
7. A leader needs to be encouraged not to abandon God-given goals.
8. A leader is honored by his wife's attentiveness when he talks. Demonstrate attentiveness by looking at him when he talks to you and others.

C. Conform to your husband's image of inward and outward beauty. (Ephesians 5)

Areas of inward and outward beauty:

1. Hair

It is a symbol of being under his authority. Hair gives a message to people: self acceptance or freedom. It demonstrates positive or negative qualities. It can motivate men to become gentlemen. Ask your husband how he likes your hair. (1st Corinthians 11:15)

2. Dress

It is a symbol of his taste, his standards, his provision. It tells people what he likes, etc. (1st Timothy 2:4-10)

3. The care of dress is a symbol of gratefulness.
4. Home is the setting of his real treasures and message. Make an effort to fix it that way. (Proverbs 14:1)
5. Excess weight

Build hope by setting goals to lose weight. The motive to change besides pleasing your husband, is that your body belongs to God, and it is His reputation.
6. A meek and quiet spirit is the key to inward beauty. (1st Peter 3:4, Proverbs 21:19)
7. Poise is having godliness with contentment. (1st Timothy 6:6-8) Be in balance with dignity of manner. (Proverbs 12:4)

D. Lovingly petition to your husband when he is going beyond his limitations and wisely respond to those who question his ideas, goals, and motives.

1. Learn principles of submitting to God, and follow same principles in appealing to husband.
2. The results of submission.
3. If he rejects petition, give him room to fail. Don't say, "I told you so."
4. Learn your husband's frame of reference. Have you taken time to understand what your husband thinks, says, and does.
5. Stand with your man. Caution – Don't appease others' reactions by discrediting your husband's character, wisdom, or abilities. People do not expect you to be disloyal to your husband and will disrespect you. AVOID EMBITTERED WIVES!!!
6. Follow examples of Esther, Ruth, and Bathsheba.

E. A husband needs quality time to be alone with himself and the Lord.

1. Don't complain that he is taking time from the family or you.
2. The richer a man's fellowship with God, the sweeter will be the home. It should be secluded away from home if possible.

3. Every man needs his own Bethel (business with God). Look at Jesus' example.
4. Wanting to be alone is not rejecting wife.
5. He needs to "bear his own burdens" and share lessons with wife and children.
6. A woman must not always assume she caused his burden or be responsible to lift it.
7. What is the wife's part?

F. Be grateful for all your husband has done and is doing for you and the children.

1. If a wife is not grateful, her husband will stop giving to her because he doesn't want to spoil her.
2. A wife must not only express gratefulness for what her husband has done or said, but for the things he has rightly refrained from doing or saying.
3. List the things your husband is doing for you in order of priority to *him*.
4. Daily reset your expectations to God. The key to gratefulness is giving all expectations to God, not to husband. (Colossians 3:22-25)

G. A husband needs to have other people praise the qualities and good works of his wife.

Wives, be zealous of good works:

1. *"Her works shall praise her in the gates and her children shall rise up and call her BLESSED."* (Proverbs 31)
2. A wife is to be well reported of her good works to qualify as a godly woman. (1st Timothy 5:10 – no preventing a woman from becoming a busybody).
3. Titus 2:5 gives list of responsibilities for which a wife should be praised.
4. A wife's good works should not include trying to work out a solution to a problem that falls within her husband's responsibility, unless he approves it. Every wise woman builds her home. A foolish woman

destroys her home by taking matters into her own hands. (Proverbs 14:1)

5. A wife's good works should illustrate the sincere motives of her husband, like giving to others' needs without expectation of return.
6. Home standards: "Husband is law," "Wife is commandments."

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Respect Him as a Man

Chapter Two

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1)

“The aged women likewise, that they may be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (verse 3)

Titus, Chapter two, is our outline for life development and a message for women. The only way to love is to learn how to meet needs.

God’s original design for a wife, as we see in Genesis 2:18, is that she was called to be a helpmate. A wife shares equally in her husband’s achievements. She is an aid to the fulfillment of the husband. She is to work with her husband, and then she shares in what he accomplishes.

“And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate for him’.” (Genesis 2:18 KJV)

The Lord noticed that man wasn’t complete in himself. He said that it wasn’t good for man to be alone, so God made a wife to be a helpmate to complete and fulfill the man. Again, the way to love is to learn how to meet needs, and a husband has very definite needs just as a wife has very definite needs.

A husband is to be respected as a man. Ephesians 5:33 tells us that a woman is called to respect and honor her husband while he is called to love his wife as himself.

Deep within, a man has a need to prove his manliness, but society teaches a wrong view of manliness. It teaches sexual immorality, that kind of macho image where a guy has to be self-sufficient, and he cannot be weak in any way. He has to bear all things for himself.

He has to be the ultra-virile, sophisticated kind of person. This view of manliness promotes sexual immorality. He expects to be able to be free to go and do what he wants and take charge in every situation over every lady.

The bible teaches that there are four essential marks of a man, but many times women look for different traits in a man that God never intended. A woman may react out of her own needs, saying her spouse has to be a certain way to meet her needs. She may never tell him what her needs are, and the guy himself knows he can't be that way. When he doesn't live up to her expectations, a woman's respect for him goes down. She says if he is not going to be that way, then she will not respect him.

The Four Marks of a Man

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." (1st Corinthians 16:13, 14 KJV) Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1st Corinthians 16:13, 14 NASB)

- Be alert. This means being spiritually alert as well as physically alert. He is the protector, the guardian of the home from any spiritual influences or physical influences which would tear the home apart. He is to be the watchman standing on the wall, watching for anything that might hinder his family and his wife.
- Stand firm in the faith. He is to stand on the word of God, knowing how to discern between good and evil and being able to teach his family in the ways of the Lord. We are referring to Christian principles.
- Act like a man. He is to be the head of the family, the protector of the family, and the provider for the family. He is to take those responsibilities.
- Be strong. He has to be strong, not because society tells him he has to be strong, but because God tells him to be strong. God knows that all kinds of things will come against the family and will try to disrupt them. The wife will constantly try to usurp his authority. He has to be strong to stand because the nature of the man is to say, "Okay, go ahead and take it" as soon as his mate tries to take the responsibility. A man has to be strong to resist that desire because the woman is the weaker vessel.

The man has to deal with her in knowledge according to 1st Peter 3. That means no matter how strongly she may want to take the authority in the home, he has to stand strong to resist it. When a wife takes the authority, problems will come.

Here are six ways a wife can destroy her husband's manliness:

1. A wife destroys her husband's manliness by not letting him know that she needs protection in things physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or in the will.

Men rise to the need of protection. Most men today don't have anything they think worth protecting. They are told the country is bad, families are bad, etc. If he has nothing in you to protect, you are destroying his manliness. When manliness is gone, it opens the way for immorality, shirking of responsibilities, not providing, etc. A wife should tell him if she is attracted to another man or if she needs spiritual protection (when they're not having devotions, for example). She should tell him if she is worrying or fearing about something. Every woman is waiting for her knight in shining armor to come rushing in and swoop her up to carry her off. Her husband is that guy, so she needs to start looking at him as such. He is there to do all of these things in her behalf. However, unless he knows what her needs are, he isn't as ready to take it. He wants to protect, but if he sees that she is self-sufficient and does most things on her own (she doesn't really need him), then he will turn over his responsibilities and start to get involved in other areas.

Note, in the beginning when man was created, he was able to do all these things, like protect and love. When he fell into sin, then he became self-centered.

In the original creation, a wife was a complement to the man. She was created to fulfill his needs, to help him, and to encourage him in every way. When the fall came, she decided she wouldn't settle for second best, she was going to be the chief, and so striving arose between husband and wife. A wife is called to respect and honor because her fallen nature says she doesn't need to respect and honor unless he earns it. No man can ever earn the respect of a woman who says he has to earn it. She will keep putting more and

more on him because she wants to break down his authority and assert her own.

One of the ways a woman can really destroy his manliness is by taking away respect. A man needs respect. He doesn't need the protection, he needs to be honored. That is why God gave him a woman to help him.

Likewise, the body of Christ is created to give glory and praise to the Lord.

Danger comes when the guy no longer has anything to protect. It leaves room for him to go find *somebody* to protect. He begins to see his neighbors have needs, and he will run over there to help with their needs all the time. Watch for this. A woman can actually drive her husband away. A man will start to shirk his responsibilities too because his wife wants to run the show. She wants this and that done when she wants it done. The guy doesn't need it, and off he goes.

There is a danger when a wife is not letting her husband protect her, for it takes away from his manliness and sense of purpose, which is built into him. Whether he is in the Lord or not, he has a desire to protect. Many times women will say, "He's too protective." What should she do? She should thank the Lord that the guy is that way and use it to her benefit. That is why he was created, so thank the Lord, and get under that protection. Nothing but blessing can come.

An example of this is in Numbers 30 which deals with a wife and a vow she might make. People don't consider vows much these days, but the Old Testament gives some guidelines.

In Numbers 30:2 if a man makes a vow to the Lord, there is no getting out of it. He has to keep it and be faithful to his word. Verses 10 to 15 deal with a woman if she is under the authority of her father, and she makes a vow to the Lord. If her father hears about the vow, he has the authority and the power to remove it so that it is no longer binding on his daughter.

When a daughter leaves her father and mother and cleaves to her husband, and they become one flesh, she is now under the authority of her husband.

If a woman makes a vow to the Lord, and her husband hears of it, he has the authority to say something against that vow, in which case it would become null and void. (Numbers 30:10-15) If he keeps silent and lets her speak, then it is binding. God works through a husband to protect his wife. If she makes a foolish or hasty vow, her husband has the right in the authority of the Lord to disallow it.

Note, if a man makes a vow, it is binding. There is no getting out of it. It is done. Never rush into a vow before the Lord.

The purpose of this specific case shows how a husband can actually protect a woman from making a foolish decision, and he has the authority in the Lord to “dis-a-vow” it.

A wife cannot remain in God’s pleasing grace and be in rebellion to her husband, even if the husband doesn’t know the Lord.

2. The second way that a wife can destroy her husband’s manliness is by not looking to him for basic needs or provisions, having competing careers, or not being content with basics.

If you are wealthy, or a widow with money, don’t use the money to live on. Let him provide the basics. Proverbs 31 deals with the woman as a provider, but it is home related. In other words, she is helping around the house making clothing, providing for her husband in homemaking, making sure all of his clothes are in order, doing all the upkeep and work of the house, making it a pleasing place for her husband, herself, and her family. By so doing, the community looks at her and considers her a virtuous woman. (Proverbs 31:31)

Note: *“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”* (1st Timothy 6-8)

One of the things that springs up out of a woman is a lack of contentment with her husband's provision for her. She wants more, and right away her husband feels that he is under attack for not being a good provider. He wants to provide the best for his family in every way, but if his wife is not really content with basic needs or with what they have, he starts to feel inside (justified or unjustified) that he is not the man that he should be. It is one way that the enemy comes. When she is pushing for other things, it becomes a threat to the man's manliness because he wants to provide, and, as a protector, he wants to defend. Many times if a wife isn't content, he feels threatened.

3. A wife can destroy her husband's manliness by showing a greater interest in and loyalty to another spiritual leader. For example, a pastor, a woman (or man) teacher, Christian authors, etc. You can admire them, but not more than you admire him. It discourages him.

A man wants to be the center of attention for his woman in every area, whether he will say it or not. He wants to be the pride of her eye, and that he is "it." It is built into him. It is the way he is. Again, a woman was created to be the man's helpmate and to give him honor and respect. If he is not getting that, then he is no longer the pride of her eye and it makes him feel inferior. A man needs to have some nice words said to him, and he needs to know that she feels in her heart that he is the special one of God for her in every area.

If she comes in and tells him that someone else said this, and said that, and did this, and did that, right away the guy is thinking, *Oh, oh*. He will go on the defensive. She wants him to receive what someone else is saying, lifting him up, while her husband is going down the shoot. He will not receive what the other man shares because he is a threat to him and his home.

Would you like your husband to come in and start talking about other women? The guy feels the same way, but he won't necessarily tell you what he feels because a guy does not express his feelings most of the time. He can be hurt inside, but he may not say what is in his heart. He will rebel against everything his wife is trying to share from

the spiritual leader. He will react, and not receive it. Don't allow that danger to happen.

A spiritual leader's desire is to be able to come into the home and complement the husband, that the husband may be able to teach his wife and family. It is the desire of a true spiritual leader in the Lord Jesus. If a wife is working against the goal of the spiritual leader (there is a resistance), then the spiritual leader won't be able to lead. Be on guard against that.

A woman can share good things with her husband, but she doesn't necessarily need to say who is teaching them to her because the person isn't important. I don't believe in dealing in deceit. This is all aboveboard. If her husband asks, then she should share with him. If she is constantly pushing a teacher, for example, like Frederick Price, her husband is going to think, *I don't want to hear about this guy anymore*. She can share the content but not push the person.

Frederick Price doesn't want any glory. He wants you to share Jesus.

A husband may not feel that he is adequate to be the spiritual leader in the home. If you keep sharing about somebody else who is adequate, that discourages him. Not only may it be a threat, it is also a discouraging factor because he wants to do that.

If a woman talks about another husband who buys gifts for his wife, her husband may want to do the same thing, but he may not be able to at that point. That discourages him. A wife should never compare another husband or man with her husband. It will open wide the door for the enemy to come swooping in.

4. A wife can destroy her husband's manliness by not letting him make final decisions, reviewing past failures, and resisting his spirit by arguing. She can appeal in a godly way. Her freedom is submission. Her protection is godliness. This is not to say there won't be suffering. *"The spirit of glory rests upon you when you suffer for the word's sake, being obedient to Christ."* (1st Peter, Hebrews 2)

Somebody has to make the final decision. The word of God says that the head of the home should make the final decision. A wife is to complement her husband in the decision making process, like sorting out information. She is to work with him in every way. A husband needs to listen to his wife because she will uncover blind spots. She will be sensitive to needs and fears, and as the husband listens to that, he will be able to make a balanced decision (when he finally makes it). She has a very important role in that process, but the final decision for good or for bad is the husband's. The wife lays out all of the alternatives. A wise wife comes with five or six alternatives which are all good to her, and then she lets him pick out what he wants. This is a wise wife. She never demands anything. She never tries to make the final decision, and when the final decision is made, she sticks with it no matter what.

As she stays under God's order for the home, God is the one who will protect her. Even if her husband is not walking in the Lord, she should walk under him as to the Lord, and God will bless her through the man.

A biblical example is Sarah. Abraham went into the region of the Negev and realized he could get into trouble there. He could possibly lose his life because Sarah was such a beautiful lady. He thought that the king might take her to himself and then Abraham would "get the axe." To defend himself, he told King Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. (Genesis 20) In the Lord's eyes, she was his wife, so what happened? Technically, he gave up all his responsibilities just to protect himself. The king was ready to sleep with Sarah when the Lord came to him in a dream and told him he had better not go in there. He would receive God's wrath because Sarah was not Abraham's sister but his wife. Then the king went back to Abraham and said, "Why did you deceive me? In doing this you brought cursings on me."

God moved in because Sarah was obedient. Without reservation she went because Abraham, her lord, told her to go, but God stepped in with protection. He covered her and no harm came to her in any way. This is really an interesting example of freedom in submission. Her protection was her godliness. It isn't to say there won't be suffering in

godliness. Suffering for the Lord can happen in the home, but not because there is any rebellion in it.

What is a woman supposed to do when she is suffering for the Lord? “Count it all joy” because she is blessed in heaven.

5. A wife can undermine her husband’s manliness by not submitting physically to him. Godliness is a guard against abuse. When a man feels a wife is rejecting and condemning him, it creates pressures in him that are not godly.

A woman may feel that her husband is some kind of sex maniac or pervert because he always wants to have sex. The sexual act is simply one way that a man can really express his manliness and assertiveness (even without love). If a woman is resisting him in other areas that we have mentioned, and not giving him respect and honor, then he will treat her in an ungodly manner. He may treat her like somebody he just picked up off the streets.

We need to note that if he is not being treated properly in other areas, he will get it there. To resist at that point will bring out all kinds of ungodliness in him.

“The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband, and likewise also the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud you not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” (1st Corinthians 7:4, 5)

A wife doesn’t have authority over her own body when she enters into marriage. Her body (as well as everything else) become her husband’s. In the same way, the man no longer has power and authority over his body. It belongs to his wife when he enters into marriage. We are not to defraud one another or to resist or hold back from giving to the other what belongs to the other. *“Let Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”* Satan will come to destroy the relationship when there is a separation (in the physical act).

There are two things that really break up a marriage. Sexual issues and money. We see the most danger to marriages in those two areas. This would not happen if people began to recognize that their bodies are not their own.

This is a special time in the Lord for a husband and a wife. It is a blessed union that was made by God. To resist it would be taking away the blessing and would eventually lead to one partner or the other forming ungodly drives. It can cause a spouse to run off to someone who will meet those drives. A spouse can actually cause infidelity in the other by resisting. Even if you don't feel like doing it, do it.

Many times we don't feel like forgiving somebody, but the word says to forgive.

6. A wife can destroy her husband's manliness by not allowing him to fail.

There can be character building benefits in failure. A man doesn't want to fail, but if his wife is not behind him, he will make fewer decisions so he won't fail, and he will leave more to her. It is difficult for a man to admit to his wife that he is wrong. He does not want to show weakness.

A woman wants security. She wants to see everything going wonderfully and in place. She won't allow her husband to make a final decision that might be a bad mistake, and she will resist him because she doesn't want him to fail. Failure will blow up a man's pride because he will recognize that in himself he is not all-sufficient and he doesn't have all the strength that he thinks he has. If a woman steps in, she can cut off God's blessing and character building in her husband. The man will see that he needs the Lord to run his life and his home. If he doesn't see that she is backing his every decision, then he will make fewer decisions. That means somebody has to make them, so who is going to do it?

The responsibility will then go to his wife. Therefore, a woman should stand behind a man's decisions right down the line, for better or for

worse, and let the guy fall. Often a woman doesn't want to do that because of her desire for security and her fears.

What is more important? Where does your security really rest? In the Lord, in your godliness. Sarah's security was in her godliness as she responded to her lord.

It is most important that a husband receive the character qualities of God, even if that means he fails sometimes. A husband doesn't need his wife to say, "I told you so." He needs to know that his woman is with him whether he goes or he doesn't go. He needs to know that she will stick with him, which is a blessing. A man then recognizes that his wife accepts him and loves him right where he is, whether he is a success or a failure.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Accept Your Husband as Leader

Chapter Three

It is always a blessing when we apply God's plan and see it work. A wife's first love is always the Lord, but as an expression of her love for Him, she loves her husband. He is the one that she sees, and as Sarah honored and loved Abraham and called him lord, a wife is to honor, respect, and love her husband. God gives her the ability to love him.

A husband and wife often balance each other out. One will be able to meet the needs of the other, and they will complement each other.

You may not think you need the balance that comes from being with your husband. In other words, he may be a terrible thorn in your side about some things, but God is probably shaping some area within you, even though you may not think you need to work on it. An awareness that you have a certain problem may come to you again and again, but you just don't want to receive it because it tends to aggravate you. It may be a blind spot that you are not aware of that God is working on. Yield at that point and think, *Okay, what is it? What's the balance that is coming?* It isn't always what we would consider good points in a husband that balances his wife.

It is very difficult for a man to admit to his wife that he is wrong. He doesn't want to show weakness before her, of all people. He wants to appear to her as a knight in shining armor. He wants to be the guy that she honors and respects. For him to have any flaws or weaknesses before his wife is an awful thing to him. You may come to him and say, "You never think you do anything wrong." If you come to him that way, inside he knows that he is weak and wrong, but he doesn't want to admit it because he doesn't want to show any weakness before you, his special crown from the Lord. This has to do with the man's desire to be honored and respected, and in order to be honored and respected, he has to be right all the time.

Note, he recognizes inside that he has weaknesses and shortcomings, but he doesn't want to let down his guard. Of all things, he doesn't need to hear from his wife that he is wrong.

When you "lay it on him," it tells him that you know he is weak in that area. He knows you know, but you don't have to tell him. A man becomes tremendously aggravated because he wants to deal with it, he wants to correct it, but he can't if you are laying more on him. Back off and let him recognize it and deal with it. This is the time to go to your closet and pray.

He may go to someone else and talk to them about it, but if he doesn't come to you, don't feel it is a shortcoming on your part. He wants to give a perfect front, appearing to be all sufficient and caring. Don't take it as an affront if he goes to another guy to express himself. There is no problem in that.

The more understanding and accepting you are of his weaknesses, shortcomings, problems, and faults, the more he will come to you. If he sees that you are not accepting him as he is with shortcomings and difficulties, then he will go to somebody else to talk about it.

Above all, don't condemn him and tell him he is just a slob. In those little fits that we all have at times, we may let some comments fly. Watch it.

Accept your husband as leader.

A husband needs a wife who accepts him as her leader and believes in his goals, ideas, and achievements.

We have noted before that the husband is the one who is to be the leader in the Christian home. He is to set up the goals. He gives the directions as to how to accomplish it by working together with his wife on the planning. However, he makes the final decision and carries the responsibility. A wife doesn't have to carry the responsibility for the decision that belongs to the husband.

Why then, if this is God's order, does the man not want to carry the responsibility, and he wants to push it off on his wife? Or, why is it

that you want to give your husband the responsibility, and he doesn't necessarily want to take it? He may be reluctant to take on the situation.

1st Corinthians 11:3 shows that God has purposed a man to be the leader in the home. This has to be established before a woman will submit to his leadership and authority because a woman's drive (in the flesh) is to take the authority onto herself and be the leader. God has established the man to be the leader, not the woman. This has to be clear in a woman's mind, and she needs to be aware of the drive of the flesh within her to take on the leadership role.

“But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” (1st Corinthians 11:3) (And the children are at the bottom.) This is a responsibility or accountability order, not a power order. In this structure, a woman may feel that she is being pushed down and suppressed. That is not the intention of God's order. It is an order of responsibility. Man is equipped by the Lord to carry more responsibilities than a woman. In no way is God saying that Christ is inferior to the Father, the man is inferior to Christ, the woman is inferior to the man, and the children are inferior to the woman.

We have to begin thinking correctly by renewing our minds with the word of God to understand the way God's plan and order work. *“For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him, lord: whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”* (1st Peter 3:5, 6)

Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. *“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”* (1st Timothy 2:12-14) This is not saying that a woman should not teach. It is saying that she should not usurp authority over the man and teach him. She should

teach women and children, but not be in a position of authority over the man. This has to do with God's word in the home.

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:3)

The older women are to teach the younger women in the ways of the Lord and to teach good things, which also pertains to how to manage a home.

This order still applies. A woman always needs to be under authority someplace, which is a covering over her. The man has been given as a covering to protect. The reason is that it wasn't Adam who was first tempted in the garden. A woman is easily susceptible to outside temptations. She is usually the first one to worry about an issue because of her need for stability. The man is a covering to protect her. Somewhere along the line she has to be under authority. If she is not, then there is a principle being violated. We have dealt with many situations where a woman has not been under a covering and has reaped the consequences emotionally or physically because of it.

“Wives, submit yourselves 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: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything.” (Ephesians 5:22-24)

The husband is to the wife as Christ is to the church. The home is the best place to express the love of Christ to His church, with the husband representing Christ and the wife representing the church. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves His church. The wife is to respect, praise, and honor the husband as the church purposes to praise, honor, respect, and love Christ. This perfect plan that has been given will be carried out as we recognize it in the home.

“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” (Ephesians 5:25)

The Qualities of a Leader:

1. A leader assumes his instructions will be quickly obeyed.

If the husband is truly the leader in the home, he has the right to expect that his instructions will be carried out quickly. Just ask yourself how often you jump up and do what your husband asks you to do (or instructs you how to do it.) Do you let it go for a few days or weeks?

Many times a husband looks at your attitude in doing it, and how quickly you go about it, not just that you do what he says. He looks at that because he is wondering if you really want to follow what he says. He looks at the spirit in which something is done because that says to him how you look to him as a leader.

A wife is to obey her husband like Titus 2:5 says so that the word of God will not be blasphemed. It doesn't have anything to do with the husband or wife but with the word of God. A violation of God's principles will only wreak havoc in the home. You cannot have anything but havoc where God's principles are being blasphemed.

2. A leader's carefulness in giving instructions increases with the trust given him.

Husbands will become demanding or back away when instructions are resisted. The more obedient a wife and children are, the more responsibility and carefulness he will have in what he asks or instructs. Don't belittle his ideas by saying that they are silly or that you don't need to do them.

This has to do with why a husband won't take responsibility in the home.

It is important that we recognize two things. First, a mother should bring up her son to be a man. She should instruct him how to be a leader to begin with. When he becomes a husband, his wife should

then encourage him to be the leader. A wife needs to learn how to make her husband into the leader that God intends him to be.

God has already given him the potential. Every man has the potential to be a leader because it is built into him. How does a wife bring it out? A wife may say, "My husband doesn't want to take the responsibility for these things." Don't blame him, but ask yourself how you can help him take responsibility. In addition, you can pray on behalf of your husband.

If you are expecting your husband to take responsibility with the children, with discipline, or with meeting your needs today, and you look back at the past two weeks where you have resisted everything he has asked, you cannot expect him to take responsibility at this point.

A husband will watch how his wife has helped him discipline the children too. If she is leaving all of the discipline to him, he won't go along with that. If she is there all the time with the children, she is his agent. She has a responsibility that was delegated by her husband, and he is where the buck stops. If she cares for the children all day long, and her husband sees that she is neglecting those areas, then he will resist.

A husband will become demanding. He will either demand that things be done, or he will back away when his instructions are not obeyed. He will shirk his responsibility. You may see him take an overly responsible role, where he tries to lord over you in the situation (which is not God's intent or plan), but it will happen as a wife rebels. A husband may act in an ungodly manner in a situation (and lording it over you is ungodly), but it has been brought on by his wife's resistance. On the other hand, he may run the other way and say, "Okay, take care of it," and out the door he goes. He will throw it all on you. The more obedient a wife and children are, the more the responsibility and carefulness he will have with what he asks or instructs.

As your husband starts to see you trusting him to make the decisions and responding to what he says as the leader, and you are trusting him in the situation, then he will be very careful about the instructions

he gives you. A wife has a drive for security (out of the flesh), and she needs to be stable. If he sees that you really are following him, he will be even more careful about watching over you and protecting you. He will be very precise in giving his instructions because he knows you will do exactly what he says, and he doesn't want you to fall on your face either, because the woman is the crown of the man.

A woman may think if the guy falls on his face, it is a reflection on her. No, it is a growing point. Let him fall. You are his pride and joy, and so he wants you to be the best you can be. He will be very careful with his instructions to you as he sees you doing exactly what he says. He will watch what he is telling you.

In no way belittle his ideas, absurd as they might be, because he is working out of a desire to protect and cover you. Guys do some crazy things in your behalf. In our hearts, we really think that we are doing the best for our wives, so strange as it may appear, he is looking out for you. You really have to know that in your heart. You really have to know down inside that he does care for you, although it may appear that he doesn't. He wouldn't be married to you if he didn't.

Remember, the first commitment is the marriage, and it isn't based on the level of love. He wouldn't have made that commitment if he didn't care for you. He wants you to be with him.

3. A leader whose instructions are resisted will become demanding or careless, or he will back away from the leadership.

If you see him not taking responsibility, check to see if there may be some resistance on your part. He may have tried to take the responsibility at some point and it wasn't good enough for you. If he makes an endeavor to take responsibility, don't belittle him. Some of us guys can't pound two nails together into a board. If a guy tries to do that, and it doesn't really work, you don't have to tell him so. He knows it. Encourage him and thank him, and praise him for what he attempted to do.

The funny thing about the ladies is they want the husband to do all these things for them, but then they criticize them. Any attempt he

makes on your behalf to show his love, praise him, thank him, and love him for it because you want him to do something big for you. It starts with little things, and all those little things add up to big things. If you want a husband to take big responsibilities, then he has to know that you really appreciate what he is doing.

When a man's attitude changes, the women's attitude will change too, but it isn't for a woman to wait around for her man to change. Nor is it for the man to wait around for his woman to change. A wife shouldn't tell the man that, and the husband shouldn't tell his wife. Men and women have to decide for themselves that they will do what God says, out of love for God, and they will expect God to do the changing in their spouse.

Get yourself out of the way. As soon as you get *in* the way, you will say, "I'll do this and this so he can do this and this and this." No.

Don't try to lay guilt on your husband, "I did this and this, and you haven't done anything."

The godly goal of men and women is to bring out God's qualities in their spouses. By so doing, they will have a home where the people are walking in faith and in Christian virtue. Virtue is what is often needed in homes today. The wife and husband should be honest with each other, and they are not to play games to try to get what they want. Selfishness isn't their motivation. They have everything out on the table and are working together to bring out the best in each other.

A man's ego is fragile and he needs the praise, respect, and honor of his wife. That will bring out God's qualities in him. We are not exalting the man, but we are lifting him into the position that God has established. A wife really establishes her husband in the home.

When a woman understands that she really establishes the man in the leadership role that God has foreordained for him, she should understand she is the one who is working from the bottom and God is working from the top. Together they are lifting the man into his place. When women understand that, then their husbands will start to take

the responsibility and the leadership that their wives want them to take.

4. Leadership includes areas usually overlooked by a wife. Some qualities women are looking for in their husbands are guidance, courage, protection, teaching, wisdom, security for them and the children, counseling, love, understanding, compassion, and giving.

If you had a situation where you wanted your husband to take the responsibility but he backed off, were you feeling rejected, unloved, and unprotected?

There are many ways for a man to be a leader besides the few preconceived ideas in a wife's mind. She may think for a man to be a man he has to be able to build his own house, grow his own garden, and be the almighty supreme counselor. Even if he measures up in all these things, she will try to think up something else where he isn't a man, the reason being there is a desire in a woman to belittle him (this is the flesh). She wants to rule the roost, and this desire will creep out again and again. He may be supreme in 89 areas, but that won't matter because she will think up 11 other things to make him bat a "B" average instead of an "A" average in the home.

Psalm 15 is a psalm that demonstrates what qualities of leadership God looks for in a man. 1st Corinthians 16:13 & 14 are the four marks of a man, but Psalm 15 tells us what God looks for in a man that qualifies him for leadership. All of these qualities are able to be brought out by a wife as she encourages and reinforces her husband.

- *"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and works righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart."* He doesn't play games, but he speaks the truth in his heart.
- *"He that backbite not with his tongue."* In other words, he isn't talking behind your back about you.
- *"Nor does evil to his neighbor. Nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor."* He will not receive what somebody else says

about his neighbor. He won't believe the bad report. If you want to stop back-biting tongues, you tell them a leader will not take anybody's word for anything until he himself checks it out.

- *"In whose eyes a vile person is condemned, but he honors them that fear the Lord. He that swears to his own hurt and changes not."* In other words, when he says he will do something, he does it, and there is no changing.
- *"He that puts not out his money to usury."* He doesn't blow his funds on crazy things.
- *"Nor takes reward against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved."* In other words, God will establish him. These are God's qualities for leadership.

This describes honesty, integrity, and respect for the ways of the Lord. All of these things are found vividly in Proverbs as being marked qualities of blessing. *"He that does these things shall never be moved."* God will establish them forever. The works that will be done by a leader will be established also, and he will prosper.

Don't go with your own preconceived ideas because God has created every man differently as He has created every woman differently, and there are qualities in every man that are different. Therefore, what makes a man in one guy is totally different in another guy. This is why you should never compare one man with another. Guys should never compare one woman with another woman. God has made each of us very special in our own right. The goal is to bring out the best in each other. Bring out the good qualities that the Lord has put in each person. That is Christian love at work.

Just because one guy can do certain things, and your husband can't do it doesn't mean he is not a man. Not at all. Start looking at what your husband can do and encourage and praise him in those areas. Encourage him and praise him when he attempts to do the things that he doesn't know how to do.

Many times we base value on works. Accept the guy just as he is for who he is. That is how God looks at him. God doesn't base anything

on our works. God accepts us in grace, and by faith we receive. Love takes people right where they are and accepts them, loves them, and honors them. If you do that, then you will wake some other things within them, and you will be blessed. Nothing but blessing can come.

5. Leadership is reinforced by specific praise. For example, “When you witnessed to that man, it caused me to thank God for your leadership. When you told our son he should not be in that activity, it caused me to respect your leadership.”

You can use any example that you want in your own situation. Point out some specific thing that your husband did and express specific praise about it. Let him know it caused you to respect his leadership, and it really blessed you in the Lord when you saw it happening.

Just like God inhabits the praise and the adoration of His people, man is created to have praise, and when a wife is giving out that praise, it is the same thing that is happening in the heavens when we are praising the Lord. Blessings can't help but happen in that situation, but it has to be from the heart.

If many things are lacking, you need to encourage a little more with specific praise, but don't run around expecting praise. It will be voluntary. It will come out as you look for the good qualities in each other. Never expect it. Rejoice when you get it.

6. A leader's joy comes when his wife and family are excited about his achievements. Showing the excitement of his goal is more important than sharing the work of reaching it.

A leader needs to have the joy of his family, knowing that they are excited about what he is doing and that they are supporting him. Your excitement about his goal is even more important than the working together to get that goal. When the guy understands that you really support what his goals are, and you're excited about them, it lifts him up and blesses him. Even if the whole thing falls apart, if he knows that you are with him all the way down the line, it means so much to him. It is also an incentive for a guy to accomplish the goal, knowing that his woman is right there.

If you say your husband doesn't share his goals with you, have you asked him what he is looking for in life for himself and his family? Have you ever asked him what his goals are? Not in a nagging way. Just say, "I love my Lord, and I love you, and I want to encourage you in your goals and what you're looking for in life. God has put me here as your wife to encourage and help you, and I'd like to know what your goals are." If he doesn't have any goals at that minute, let him think about it. Then let him get back to you because many times guys may not have thought about goals. Let them think about it. They don't always have them itemized.

You want to encourage him in these and approach him that way. You want to support him in every way, so let it be known to him, and he will start sharing with you. Back him up all the way and work with him.

Many times a guy doesn't want you to work with him in accomplishing the goal. Don't feel slighted. This is something he wants to do himself, and by doing it, he wants to bless the whole family. Encourage him in it.

It is important that couples set down what goals they have for their marriage. People can spend all their lives working and "storing everything up in barns." When the barns are full, the Lord may take them home, and then there's nothing. You need to find out what the goals are for your marriage, so the way to approach it would be, "Dear, I love you, and I'd like for you to lay out your goals for our marriage." Let him lay them out, and then you fill in. What things can you be accomplishing together in this marriage? This is an opportunity for a wife to express her needs too. Many times the guy can't meet the needs if he doesn't know what they are, and women don't always tell their husbands directly what they are. A wife might say, "Don't you know what my needs are by now?" You have told him in a fit of anger, or you've huddled up in the bedroom and sulked. The guy can't read your mind, and if you are furious, he won't receive one word you say anyway, so he never really heard what your needs are. Express them to him. Just lay them out. One, two, three, four. If you haven't laid them out, do so. That is the only way the guy is

going to be able to meet them. Don't expect it to happen right now because filling many of our needs is a life-long process.

7. A leader needs to be encouraged not to abandon his God-given goals. He needs encouragement especially if the goals (this applies to a Christian or a non-Christian) are what are set forth in 1st Corinthians 16:13-14, the marks of a man. He has a goal of protection, provision, and shelter. Even a non-Christian can have God-given goals for the home, but he needs to be encouraged in what he is doing.
8. A leader is honored by his wife's attentiveness when he talks. Demonstrate attentiveness by looking at him when he talks to you and to others.

This is something that all of us need to work on a little more when we are communicating with each other. Look at each other. If your husband has come in with a need, and he is talking to you while you are busy in the kitchen, you might pick up fragments of it. If you see him just walk off, then say, "I didn't get what you were saying." It wasn't because he didn't say it, it was because you weren't paying attention the first time he said it. I think if we look at ourselves, we have all probably done this before. It is an area that really needs to be worked on. We are to be attentive to each other.

As you express your attentiveness, you show you care about what your spouse is saying to you. Especially when you are dealing with your husband as a leader, he wants to know that you care about what he says.

When a sergeant in the army says something to the infantry men, he expects them to look at him and respond. You don't need to make your home into a military field, although it may appear to be at times, but the same principles apply. Be attentive to what is being said. This works for both husbands and wives.

"You reap what you sow" applies to many things. If you want attention, then be attentive.

However, you can give for only so long. You have to be filled up yourself. *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* is where the strength to be the kind of wife or husband that the Lord wants you to be. The strength comes through the Word as you meditate on it. This is vital. If nothing else, read 1st Corinthians 13 every day. First Peter 2:18-25 and 3:1-6 are important too.

First Corinthians 13 expresses what love is. You have been made the love of God in Christ. You are a shining light in a perverse and crooked generation that doesn't know the Lord, and by your love you will draw people to yourself. By doing so, you are drawing them to Jesus Christ because *“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”* As it is happening, God's transformed nature in you will go out to those you come in contact with.

Let us daily thank God for His love for us in Jesus Christ. It has transformed us. Let us praise His holy name and thank Him that His blood was shed for us on the cross, that we might no longer be the people that we once were. The word of God says that we have been made new creatures, and that old things are all passed away. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us remember also that as we live in this life, we are daily living in relationship with our families, friends, and neighbors. We are not to seek glory from them, but we are to do all these things to the glory of God because we are His children through faith in Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

The Woman as His Crown

Chapter Four

Conform to your husband's image of inward and outward beauty.

"... and to present her to himself a radiant church without stain or wrinkle..." (Ephesians 5:27)

This scripture refers to Jesus presenting His church to Himself without spot or wrinkle. In the same way a husband is to present his wife to the Lord someday.

The question you need to ask yourself is how you can become more of the wife of your husband's dreams. It is exciting when a woman understands this dimension of her relationship because the man looks at her as his crown. He chose her, and he chose her to be his complement and his crown. Whether he says it or not, how his wife looks at herself and how others look at her will reflect upon him. A wife needs to come to grips with this.

"For a man need not cover his head since he is the image and glory of God." (1st Corinthians 11:7) Man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For man was not of the woman, but woman was of the man. The woman was taken from Adam's side. Man is created for the glory of God and woman is created for the glory of men.

"For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power [authority] on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." [They are a team that the Lord has made.] *"For as the woman is of the man even so is the man also by the woman, but all things are of God."* (1st Corinthians 11:8-12 KJV)

Man was created for the glory of God, woman was created out of the man for the glory of the man, but without each other, there is an incompleteness. They are a team when they are together in the Lord. *“For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman.”*

Is the woman saved through childbearing? The Amplified Bible explains it very clearly. The purpose of a woman was to provide sons and daughters. A woman fulfilled her purpose in the childbearing act.

One of the curses of the law is barrenness. One of the blessings of obedience is fruitfulness of the womb. This brings to light that there would be no men if women did not bear them.

God wants a man to conform to His image. In the same way a man wants his wife to conform to his image of what a woman should be for him.

There are seven areas to consider:

1. Hair

“For this cause ought the woman to have power [a covering is a sign that she is under the power of her husband] on her head because of the angels.” She needs to be under authority, and the covering in this case is her hair. It is a sign of being under authority. At Corinth the women of the streets didn't have any covering on their heads, so it was a sign of what kind of a women they were in that day. Women were to wear some kind of covering. For a man to have long hair is a shame, but for the woman to have long hair is a glory to her. (verse 15) Her hair is given to her for a covering, or a veil, to protect her.

It is a symbol of being under his authority. Hair gives a message to people, one of self-acceptance or freedom to concentrate on countenance. It demonstrates positive or negative qualities, like whether a woman is vain, disorganized, masculine, defiant, sensual, feminine, elegant, or under the protection of someone. Hair should motivate men to become gentlemen.

It says a lot to a guy how a woman thinks of herself through her hair. *“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering [veil].”* (1st Corinthians 11:15)

Since you are created for the glory of the man, ask your husband how he likes your hair. Let him determine it. Show him several styles that would be good for you. Present them to him and let him choose from them. You can't go wrong that way.

It is never vain to spend extra time and money on your hair if you are doing it for your husband's benefit. If you are doing it for somebody else's benefit, then it is vain and, in the Lord's eyes, a terrible waste of time. There will be no blessings from it. If you are doing it for your husband's benefit, then you're doing it as to the Lord, and it is pleasing to Him.

Many men like long hair. Most men don't feel it is necessary to change your hairstyle because they hardly ever do. They have it one way, it stays that way, and they are not going to mess with it. To a guy, it isn't very important, but a woman likes to do different things with her hair. A man recognizes that, although he sometimes thinks it is silly. He comes out of his own frame of reference that says he never does anything with his hair, so why should his wife? Every now and then your husband will want you to do something different with your hair. He may like it up, he may like it down, he may like it long, he may like it short, but at this point, we are talking about the fact that he is looking for some change.

Is a woman willing to change? You may like your hair the way it is. Are you willing to conform to his image? Hairstyles are different for work or at home, casual events, special events, or recreation. There are many different ways to fix your hair from time to time.

“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.” (1st Corinthians 11:15, 16)

There is a freedom, if your man likes you with long hair, to have long hair. If he likes you with medium or short hair, have it that way. The

authority she is under is the man's. For a woman not to be under any authority and not have the veil (as it says) puts her in danger to the angels. What it is saying is that she is vulnerable to the enemy by not being under some authority. There are myths about the various gods coming down and taking women who are not under authority and taking them to themselves.

There are many influences in the world at this time that are anything but godly. To be out from under authority of any kind is dangerous. That is what that passage is getting to. We keep our daughters home until their knights in shining armor come and swoop them away.

They need to be under some authority. Many times when girls go off to college things happen because they are totally vulnerable. Sure, there are guidance counselors, or a lady in charge of the dorms, but they don't watch them like a parent would.

2. Dress

Dress is the symbol of his taste, his standards, his provision. It tells people what he likes, etc.

This may go against the grain because a lady has very definite opinions as to what she likes and what she feels she looks good in. There is a way to approach your husband concerning this, but recognize that your dress is a symbol of his taste, his standards, and his ability to provide. It tells people what he likes. If your husband doesn't like the way you are dressing, don't get offended. Seek to find out what he would like to see you in, and ask his opinion, because you are reflecting him by your appearance. It says something about his ability to provide for you too. If he is concerned about the way you dress, then there is something happening inside of him that he wants changed. Many times a guy may not even come out and say it, but he may be disgruntled about other things. Be aware enough to ask his opinion and let him go shopping with you to pick out your clothes. If he doesn't feel like it, encourage him, and ask him what he wants. Get exactly what he wants. Guys don't always like to go shopping, especially with the ladies, because the ladies go to this store and that store, and back to this store.

The man picks out clothes for his wife because he thinks she will look tremendous in them. Other times a guy may feel a little reserved about picking something out because of his concern that she won't like it. If he hasn't given you something, it isn't necessarily because he doesn't want to. It might be because he has a reservation about you liking it. Honor that, and approach him with, "I'd like you to go with me and pick out something that you'd like me to wear."

He doesn't want to get something that is too big or too small because then he has to take it back. Just note that it is a symbol of his taste, his standards and his provision, and you should make an effort to get him involved in it. It is a reflection on him, and he may not come out with it, but there is something within a guy that wants you looking your best.

"In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel without shamefacedness and with sobriety, not with embroidered or plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but that which becomes women, professing godliness with good works." (1st Timothy 2:9, 10)

Some women like glitter and extravagance. If they could have them, they would. A woman needs to learn that these things are fine in themselves, there is nothing wrong with them, but there should not be an emphasis on it. How you dress or decorate yourself does not make you a woman. The Lord recognizes that godliness with good works is what makes a woman. I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with all these things. In fact, your husband may like you to be like that.

3. The care of your dress is a symbol of your gratefulness to him.

Whether you buy the dress or he buys it, it all came from his provision. How you take care of your clothes will show him your gratefulness, which will carry over to any gift he may give to you. You can either be grateful about it, or you can say, "Oh, no!" It is a gift of love, whatever it is, and the response should be one of gratitude, no matter how ugly or beautiful the thing is.

Each guy is different and each will reflect what he is looking for in his lady. One woman may wear only dresses, nylons and high heels, for that is the way her man wants her to dress. Another lady will wear

slacks and jeans, sweaters or sweatshirts because that is the way her guy wants her to dress. There is no negative or positive about it, as long as the wife is dressing the way her husband wants her to. If he wants her in dresses, nylons and high heels, and she is running around in sweatpants and a sweatshirt, it will reflect something. If they are going out, and he is expecting casual attire but she is all dressed up, he looks at himself and thinks, *Oh, man, I'd better change*. Then when they get to where they're going, they are both dressed up and the occasion is casual attire. Be sensitive to what the guy is looking for.

A man may not consider how attractive an outfit looks on you because he is thinking, *This is warm, and I want her to be warm*. He wants you to be comfortable. He will sacrifice beauty for functionality. Guys are very practical most of the time, and they are more concerned about that than something you may think is beautiful.

4. Home

Home is the setting of his real treasures. Make an effort to make it his castle, and fill it with things that he wants to have, whether they match or not. Men have some wild schemes sometimes, but this is a reflection of his place and his fortress. When he comes home, he wants it to represent him. His wife may complain because her husband has such awful taste, and he wants some crummy, old reindeer horns hanging in the kitchen. She is thinking she wants her home to look dainty and elegant. Some guys like that. Then do it that way. Other guys might not, but at least give him one room that is his.

"Every wise woman builds her house, but the foolish one pulls it down with her own hands." (Proverbs 14:1) If you want to build your house, then you do it the way your man wants it done, and you encourage and support him. That way you will have a strong home. Even when you are not dealing with your personal relationship (but you are dealing with the physical things of the house), they all have a part in your relationship to your husband. You may think it really isn't a big deal, but it is because it is one facet of the whole marriage. You need to recognize that. You can either build up your house or your can tear it down by the way you deal with a situation.

A husband wants to come home and relax, but his wife may have a group of ladies in there. He wants to rest but there is something going on and he can't rest. He won't like it whether he says something or not. He wants what goes on in his home under his guidance and with his consent.

When he comes home the place may be a mess, and he wants his home clean and in order.

If he gets ornery about a meal not being on the table on time, understand he is not intending to treat you like a slave or a servant, he is just setting down guidelines for how the house should be run.

My wife, Diana, always calls a housewife a domestic engineer, which is really true. You are the engineer to carry out your husband's blueprint, and you are the one who is at home, and you are the one who can do this. He isn't home all the time, so he delegates to you, for example, the care of the children in his absence. This is a vital role.

You can do some things you want to do, but you should include these into your husband's plans. Let him know your thoughts, and then let him make the decision. "Okay, we'll do that, we'll go out and get that," when he sees the need for it. Many times a wife is more sensitive to the needs of the home, but a man will become sensitive to the needs as you put them out there. Then let him fit them into his plan for the home.

This is really key because it shows what his real treasures are. Your house may be full of trains or big bear rugs, which you may think are totally absurd. You think you have walked into a toy store, but that is what your guy likes. It could be almost anything because every guy is different. What will be in the house will reflect what he likes. Whether you approve or disapprove, you're not going to change him by nagging him about it. You need to intercede in his behalf if it is something that is immoral, but in no way look down on him or tear him down. Just encourage him with the things that are godly.

One thing that a man wants at home is peace and quiet. If there is going to be noise, then he will make the noise, and you will all be sharing in it. One thing he doesn't need is to come home and find strife. There is enough strife in the world around him. That includes the children too. The guy expects the children to be in line, and he doesn't want to have to contend with them when he gets home. Children can be wound up. If they are under authority during the day it will be easier at night. Evening time is critical for a husband and wife to be together, and they shouldn't have to deal with the children all evening long. It may sound cruel and heartless, but the first responsibility is to the husband and the wife. When it is time to go to bed, the children go to bed, and there are no if's, and's, or but's about it. It has to be this way. They will start to understand that, but it has to be practiced before they ever understand it.

5. Weight

Excessive weight needs to be dealt with. Your body is the temple of the Lord. Your body is also the glory of the man. Build hope by setting goals. Unless you set this as a part of your program, you won't do it. The hardest thing in the world is to set your mind to do sit-ups or exercise, but this should be a part of keeping your outward appearance in order. Set goals for yourself. Don't go on extreme diets where you are starving yourself, and you become so nervous and irritable that the guy can't stand to have you around. Then your health goes down the tube. Eat balanced diets, do exercise, and be clean. Keep the features that the Lord has given you. The Lord has made you the way you are, but the Lord never added excess weight on anybody. We add that on ourselves. When we start looking sloppy and pudgy (this goes for us guys too), we need to watch it because this is a reflection. If you really care about yourself, then you will set goals for yourself in these areas. It is an opportunity for you both to set up guidelines and to grow together through your goal.

In other words, this is an area where husbands and wives can be together, exercising together, meeting goals as well as spending time together.

Don't be defensive or react if your husband says, "Aren't you putting on a little weight? Those pants don't fit you very well anymore, do

they?” Or, “That dress just doesn’t look right on you anymore.” Right away your temperature goes up and you start making excuses or lashing out. Don’t be that way. At that point, he is expressing love to you.

Say you were a size 10 before you had the baby and now you are a size 12 or 14. You change, and you won’t wear the same things you did in high school. When you become a woman, you broaden out in places, but it isn’t an excuse for your figure to be out of line. The dimensions may change, but that doesn’t say that the figure has to change.

There are many wonderful exercise programs coupled with the proper diet, like high protein that will build, shape, and also add weight to your figure, but it won’t do anything to disfigure your body.

The motive for dealing with excessive weight (or any other thing that has to do with physical, overall health), besides pleasing your husband, is your body belongs to God, and it is His reputation you have to think about. When the people of the world see you, and you say you’re a Christian, but you look like you’ve been run through the wringer of an old washing machine (you look bedraggled and sloppy), it is a horrible witness. It says something about how you look at yourself. One thing that a husband wants is for you to look good, even in the house. If you think your husband is a slob, give him some incentive by dressing up for him.

If he comes home and he finds dishes throughout the kitchen, the kids running all over the place, and you look like something the cat brought in, he wants to head out the door. He doesn’t want to come home to confusion, chaos, and mess, so he will respond. You might say, “I’ve been here all day long, and I’ve had this and that happening and the kids have just been going bananas, and this broke, etc.” The guy will understand that, but we are talking about it happening all the time. He doesn’t need that, and he doesn’t want that. There are days when everything breaks loose, and the guy will understand it, and he will comfort you as you share with him. We are talking about consistent behavior, where you don’t take care of yourself. That says to him that you don’t really think too much of him either.

6. Have a meek and quiet spirit.

This is what the bible calls a key to inward beauty. You may think that you can't say anything, that you have to be a mousy wife who stays under his thumb all the time. That isn't what meekness is. Having quietness doesn't mean you can't speak what is in your heart. Nagging, ranting and raving is just the opposite of a quietness in which you are resting in the assurance of God. If a woman is standing in faith on behalf of her husband, her children and herself, she doesn't have to nag because she is expecting God to do the work. It is done in quietness, and it is done in rest, and there is a peace in her spirit. She doesn't have to make commotion. Meekness is yielding to God as you yield to your husband in a situation. A meek person is a very strong person, not a milquetoast. Your rest is in Him, which is what God says counts as a beautiful woman – one who is meek and quiet *in spirit*.

We note here that 1st Peter 3:4 says to wives that they are not what they adorn their outward selves with. *“But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”* (1st Peter 3:4)

No matter how much gold or fancy dresses you wear, what is really priceless in God's sight is a woman who is of a meek and a quiet spirit. This is the godly quality that is being looked for.

It is listed in the Proverbs in varying forms. For example, *“It is better to dwell in the wilderness [in the land of the desert] than with a contentious and an angry woman.”* (Proverbs 21:19) The continual nagging of a woman is like the continual dripping of a faucet. It just gets on your nerves. The Lord is not pleased with a woman who nags and is angry. What it really gets down to is she is blaspheming the word of God (Titus 2) because she is not working in faith in the Word. She is usurping authority through her own rebelliousness. Anger, nagging, and contentiousness come from a rebellious spirit and will drive a man right out of the place.

I seriously question whether a woman who is moving in this kind of a spirit wants her marriage to work. She can tell me anything she

wants to tell me, but a woman who has that kind of attitude in the home really doesn't care about her marriage, and she will be the first one to say, "My husband is a jerk, and he can't do anything right."

God looks at a meek and quiet spirit as being priceless in his eyes. The husband that has that kind of a wife will be busting his buttons over her because he will be proud of her, and he knows that she will not disgrace him. The woman is the crown of the man. Her attitude and behavior, also stated in the Proverbs, can bring shame upon her husband. This is serious business. This is the difference between a crown of glory and a crown of thorns. A man can bring shame upon his Lord, but a woman brings shame on her husband.

7. Poise

The definition of poise is godliness with contentment. To be poised means to be in balance, with dignity of manner. No matter what happens to you, you are like a ball in the water – you always come back to the top. There is stability no matter what is happening with your husband, your children, the house, or anything. There will be balance – not a woman who is joyful one minute and down in the pits of depression the next. There is no poise working in a woman who is happy only when she gets her way, and pouts when she doesn't.

Godliness with contentment is the key to balance in one's life. Seek the principles of God, be content with what you have, whether you have much or you have little. Circumstances may interfere with a woman's stability, but poise means your stability rests in your Father being able to provide through your husband. If he is providing with little or with much, you have much. The emphasis is not on the physical things but on the fact that you have been supplied all your needs by your God.

It is not that you shouldn't want other things, but remember, where your heart is is where your treasure will be. If your heart and treasures are on acquiring more, and you're pushing your husband to get him to provide for it, then there is no blessing because there is no contentment.

God is concerned with contentment, not whether we have much or we have little. He is concerned about the attitude in our hearts coupled with godliness.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” (1st Timothy 6:6-8 KJV)

Here is the balance on the other side of the laws of prosperity. No matter how prosperous you are, if you don't have godliness and contentment with it, you won't be content with just food and raiment, and God is not pleased in the situation. Whether you have little or you have much—this is what God looks for – you are content and you are resting in His sufficiency.

This danger needs to be reflected upon. I believe with all my heart that my God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I believe that I won't lack for any good thing, and I will prosper in all my ways. If I don't have contentment and godliness in the whole process, the laws of prosperity will turn against me.

As soon as you start moving in discontent, then you are moving in fear and worry, which will violate the laws of prosperity, and you will end up losing all that you have. It will turn back on you. I can't emphasize this enough. This character quality of God (that you are resting in faith in God) breeds contentment and godly behavior as a product of faith. As you are resting in that fact, then you will be stable, and you will not push your husband for things that bring pressure on him in that way.

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that makes ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.” (Proverbs 12:4)

You can be your husband's crown, but if you go the other way, and you make him ashamed, it is like rotting his bones. You are to be his crown of rejoicing, his crown of glory, and you are to be his helpmate. Working against him is a shame to him, and everyone else around will see it.

In actuality, a husband isn't blasphemed if you go against him, but the word of God is blasphemed. You may want your husband to take responsibility, yet if you're not submitting in all areas, then that is a shame to him, especially in public. For a man to have his wife talk back to him in public (or belittle his ideas) causes rotting within.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

A Wife Who Submits God's Way, Time Alone with God, and Gratitude
Chapter Five

Lovingly appeal to your husband when he is going beyond his limitations and wisely respond to those who question his ideas, goals, and motives.

1. Learn the principles of submitting to God.

There is a way to approach God, as Abraham did, and there is a way to approach your husband. There are many examples of godly submission in the bible. The person in submission always recognizes that he or she is not the authority in the situation, but somebody else is.

If you are going to follow God's principles in the home, you have to recognize that the authority in the home is the husband, whether he is a believer or an unbeliever.

If your husband is the authority, then you need to submit to him. You are not to go around him to accomplish something. You can appeal to God at that point, but God won't recognize it because the channel is in this order: God, husband, wife.

God recognizes the husband as the authority and the shield. God has given the husband as the umbrella to protect his wife and children. What happens if a woman gets out from under the shield God has put there? She becomes vulnerable to the fiery darts of the enemy.

A wife can get out from under the umbrella by usurping the authority of her husband and stepping out to manage things her own way apart from her husband's guidance. Seeking fulfillment in other ways apart from him when he disapproves is violating God's standards. By violating (not following and obeying) your husband, you are blaspheming God's word. When you bring your children up in this way, you are blaspheming God's word and you are outside of His protection.

Go through God's channels (authorities) to God. He will recognize your appeal as you work through them. If you have difficulty with your husband and you don't go to him, but you go somewhere else to appeal, that will not be blessed.

The nearest example of manifesting your witness for the Lord Jesus in this life is between your husband and yourself. As Ephesians five states, it is an example of Christ with His church.

The husband is called to love his wife as Christ loves His church. The wife is called to respect and honor her husband as the church respects and honors Christ. A woman who uses an appeal recognizes that there is an authority over her, and until she understands that her husband has been given by God as her authority, she won't be able to respond. If she doesn't recognize that he is the authority in the home, then these principles will not work.

A wife makes requests of her husband after recognizing that he is the authority in the home. She is to build her home around her man because it is his place. Don't put your husband down by what you say or with an attitude that is written all over your face. Even in your heart, you cannot violate God's principles. How then can you appeal in a godly manner to your husband?

You can approach from different angles:

- The aspect of the children's welfare
- The aspect of what it produces in you

You are petitioning to your husband on the basis of what is in your heart, on the basis of his authority in the home, and on the basis of your position under him as his wife to remove those things.

The final decision rests with the husband. You don't tell authorities it's going to be this way or else. No authority will recognize that no matter what kind it is – government, home, or church. You have to appeal, recognizing the authority as the authority and that you will accept the decision for better or for worse. At that point, you do not

just sit silently and not express yourself! God never said that wives were to be mute. He said they are to have a meek and quiet *spirit*.

After you make your request, you are to accept the outcome. You have freed God to move into the situation, and God will be the one who brings pressure on the authority. Nagging and playing little mind games (conniving) won't do anything but turn him the other way. Many women have thought that they were suffering for Christ when they were really suffering for their own ignorance and the violation of God's principles.

2. The results of submitting

At various points in our lives we have to refocus and make sure that our needs stack up the way the Lord would like them to. The appeal will help bring pressure from God on a husband to see that perhaps something isn't really the best. It will come down to that because you are the one who is appealing out of love and honor to him, and he wants that more than anything else. When he understands this, he will start to reevaluate his priorities. But it isn't for you to bring pressure.

A wife, by being obedient to her husband, is really being obedient to God. As a man sees that his wife is desiring to be under his authority and headship, then he will be more giving and understanding. Everything will take on a different dimension.

God will do just what He says. This is where the faith in God's word can transform a home. A woman is the key, standing in faith, believing that God will do exactly what He says, and she doesn't have to worry about it or try to run the show and take the responsibility. As she sits under the shield, God will continue to bless. He will patch up her husband and bring pressure on him. It doesn't say that the woman is responsible to God, but the man is responsible to God. So God brings the pressure on the man.

A husband may bring pressure on his wife, and that is God's order also, because a wife is to be under that authority. If the man sees that she is not under his authority, he will bring some pressure. This is in direct contrast to the world.

If one spouse is a believer and the other one isn't, the one that isn't a believer is going to watch the spouse for a response. He won't be won over unless he sees Christ.

Here is the importance of submission and appeal. A woman who is able to make a godly appeal is held in high esteem because she is recognizing her place in God's plan and she is acting on it.

Some of the godly women in the bible are good examples of this, and the Word says you have been given the mind of Christ also. Start to use the mind of Christ in your position. Until a woman recognizes what her position is (and she is still trying to be the man), she won't have any contentment, peace, or joy. There will be nothing but confusion and frustration.

As you renew your mind in this area, God will transform, and your home will be a spiritual castle.

3. If your husband rejects your request, give him room to fail. Don't say, "I told you so." He has made the final decision, and it frees God to minister directly to him because you are out of the way. God will bring the pressure, and God will build the character qualities in his heart.

The worse thing in the world is for somebody under authority to tell the authority, "You blew it, and I told you so." If you have appealed in a godly manner, they know, and they will respond. For you to say something at that point would erase the appeal. It would appear to them that you are lording it over them. The next time you want to petition, you might as well think twice about it because he will get to the point where he doesn't even listen to you.

4. Learn your husband's frame of reference.

Have you taken time to understand why your husband thinks what he thinks, says what he says, and does what he does? A wife needs to understand that a husband, whether he is in the Lord or out of the Lord, is basically concerned about his wife and his family. He is

concerned about other needs as well. A wise wife needs to find out where her husband is coming from.

If he comes in and finds fault with something (and you know that everything is perfectly in order), you might have an immediate reaction in the flesh. “Everything is fine, I’m doing exactly what I’m supposed to be doing in the house, and he has a bee in his bonnet about something.” Right away you put up a defense.

Instead, find out where he is coming from. Find out what is bothering him, if he wants to tell you. As communication develops in your marriage, he will become more willing to tell you, but a guy doesn’t always lay out exactly what is on his mind. Why? He may be trying to protect you, and you don’t need to know about it. He is trying to shield you from needless grief at that point. He may feel that he needs to take care of it and he doesn’t need to expose his wife to the problems. A woman may blow up because of her need for stability. If something threatens her stability, fears creep in, worries come in, and commotion begins.

As your husband watches the way you respond to situations, he will learn when to tell you and when not to tell you something. You have to understand where he is coming from.

Your husband may be wanting to please you, but a man won’t come out and say that. Guys have an image you need to understand and support, as phony as it may be at times, but you are meeting needs. You don’t have to talk to him about this, but just watch him. God has given you a mind and a heart of wisdom. If you lack it, ask for it. God will help you to understand your husband. You don’t necessarily have to talk to him about it, you can just observe, and then you will know how to respond. If you throw up a defense (*Why are you attacking me?*), then you are going to lose him. Get yourself out of the way, and be a wall – he will come and bounce the ball off of you. Let it bounce back to him. Don’t put up a net that will catch it because he won’t learn from it. If you complicate it, he will react to you. That is how knocked-down, dragged-out fights start.

Let the remark go out in the air, don't respond to it, he will hear it, and it will register back within him. This is a real key for a woman (or a man) to learn to let a comment go up and out.

5. Stand with your man.

Caution. Don't discredit your husband's character, wisdom, or abilities. Be loyal. People do not expect you to be disloyal to your husband, and they will disrespect you.

If you are in a situation where your husband does something off-color or in bad taste, you may try to talk it over and justify it, but in so doing, you tear down your husband. This will violate you before others. It is a good opportunity for your knight not to be as shiny in some parts as he could be, and people recognize this. This is why men don't let their shields down very often. As soon as there is a weakness, a woman will use it in her behalf to usurp the authority of her husband. She will go out and talk to somebody else about her husband, downgrading him to build herself up. The only thing that will come from that is that those people will disrespect her. If you are not respecting your husband, you reap what you sow, the word says, and you will reap disrespect.

Here comes a warning to avoid embittered wives because the more you are around them, the more you take on their qualities. You will start to find fault with your husband as well. Be sensitive to this real danger. Women say, "I have to get out amongst the people of the world to save them." The Word says that you are to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. When you go out among people of the world, doing the things of the world, then you will be just like them, for the world has a way of eroding you. No matter how spiritual and strong you are, before long your mind will work with what you put into it. If you are around people who are embittered, you will become embittered too.

If your husband does something to a neighbor, and you try to cover up for him, appeasing that person and trying to make things right, you are out from under the authority of your husband. Later when things work out it will come back to your shame because your husband will remember it and your neighbors will remember it.

Don't try to cover up or apologize for your husband. You will find that this will become a blessing to you. You are under him, and God will respect that. Avoid those embittered wives like the plague.

Stand with your man. If the world stands against you, you have to stand there with him, because it is like the relationship of Christ to His church. No matter what the world may think, the church has to stay with Christ.

By sharing about their husbands, embittered wives want others to be in the same boat. Then they are justified in their bitterness. The old adage is, "Birds of a feather flock together." They are looking for somebody to agree that they are right, but they are in rebellion against God because they are in rebellion to their husbands. They have blinded themselves to seeing it. They think they can be in right standing with God and be in rebellion, but they are totally violating God's principles. They will try to suck in as many others as they can.

The best thing you can do is tell embittered wives why you are staying away from them, and if they really want change, you may have won them over. If they don't, you probably won't see them again. The solution is found in the proverb, "*An angry countenance turns away a backbiting tongue.*" A wife can backbit with her tongue, but an angry countenance will turn that away. It will either refocus her into proper priorities, or you will lose her. You have to stand for what you believe on the basis of God's word at an expense. Later, she may see the error of her ways and repent.

You can say, "In my own heart I can't go against my husband. I can't talk about my husband because I would be violating what my Lord has told me I am to be with him." That will turn it around. An embittered wife will either change the conversation to something else, or she will be very uncomfortable and try to sneak out the door. You are actually giving her a blessing.

God's principles never change. The dynamics are different in each marriage because everyone is created differently. Each one is special, but God's principles stay the same and will work. If somebody desires to do them, God will bless it.

6. Follow the examples of Esther, Ruth, and Bathsheba. They are three positive examples.

Watch your laughter because you don't want your husband to think that you are laughing at him. It will make him mad. You have to be very careful that your husband senses what is really in your spirit. Expressing love as you're laughing is one thing, but if he isn't sensing any love in your spirit and you are laughing *at* him, that can be bad news. Just be careful.

A husband is to have quality time alone with the Lord.

Adam had fellowship with God before he had a wife. This is the ideal. If your husband did not learn this before you were married, let him learn it now.

Here are some points to remember:

1. Don't complain that he is taking time away from the family or you. Adam had fellowship with God before he had a wife. This is the ideal. If your husband did not learn this before you were married, let him learn it now.
2. The richer a man's fellowship with God, the sweeter the home will be. His quality time with God should be in a secluded place away from home if possible.
3. Every man needs his own place to conduct business with God. We have Jesus as an example. Jesus spent much time going off by Himself in prayer, in a time of communion with the Father.
4. A husband wanting to be alone is not a rejection of his wife. She needs to understand that her husband should have time by himself because he is carrying many of the pressures and responsibilities of the home. He needs to sort those out whether he is in the Lord or out of the Lord – especially if he is not in the Lord because he is carrying all of the weight of it. He can cast his care upon the Lord, for God cares for him, and he will have a richness of fellowship.

If he doesn't have the Lord, it is important that you are interceding for him and that you give him time to work things out. Don't step in and try to help him because he isn't looking for that. Just give him time by himself. Since he is gone all day long, when he comes home, you want to be with him. However, he needs to be by himself, even though you've been waiting for him. You can appeal about that. If you are sensing a real need that you want to share with him, you can appeal, but make sure that he has time away from the children and away from you so that he might be able to think things through when spending time with the Lord.

You might express to him too that you would like him to have time by himself if he feels he needs it, and you want to be willing to give it to him. Make it available to him, and tell him you understand that he is carrying the responsibilities, the pressures, and the burdens. You want to be the best wife you can be, and you want to help him, so if he needs time, it is his.

5. He needs to bear his own burdens and share lessons with his wife and children. God makes a man with a resistance to the pressures of life, and his wife should not assume she caused it if he is under pressure. She should not continually ask, "Did I cause it?" Still, the husband should tell his wife and children what is wrong so that they won't assume they are responsible.

Many times a husband won't want to share lessons he has learned, the reason being he thinks it shows weakness. Before his wife or all people, he wants to stay strong.

If he does share with you at times, he is not expecting you to carry the responsibility of it. He is looking for you to work with his ideas, plans, and goals of meeting the responsibility. He is letting you know so that when it happens, you will know what is going on.

He is not looking for you to carry the responsibility because it is his responsibility. If you start to take it, and he senses that you are taking it, he will back off, and that will create pressure. You can say, "Yes, I did cause it," but just because he is sensing pressures does not necessarily mean that he is troubled with you. A wife who is working out of feelings of defensiveness says, "Yes, I must have

caused it.” That is not the case many, many times. You didn’t do anything.

As a wife grows in her relationship with her husband, and is applying God’s principles, her husband will become sensitive and attuned to her needs. If she cherishes her husband, and she cherishes what she believes and is doing what she believes, he will respect those principles. Whether he agrees with it or not, he will respect it because it is part of his wife, but if she is putting anybody else before him, he will resist.

Many times we have told a woman to stay home, and then the husband saw that she was sacrificing something very special for him. He may turn around and say, “Okay, go.” You may be surprised when he starts going with you before long.

The world, and even Christians with unrenewed minds about the principles of God, will think, *That must be totally absurd*. But here is where the appeal comes in.

One thing that turns a guy off is “pouting.”

6. A woman must not always assume she caused his burden or be responsible to lift it.

When the guy is down, his wife wants to jump in and help him to lift whatever is on his mind. The best thing that you can do is intercede in prayer in his behalf because God is the only one who can really lift burdens. If there is a burden that needs to be lifted, you can’t lift it, and he can’t lift it himself. God has to be moved in. Pray a simple prayer:

Father, in the name of Jesus, I ask that you would lift the burden from my husband. As you say in your holy word, we can cast our care on you, for you affectionately care for us, and I thank you that it is done.

Jesus said, “Come to me you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) God gives us rest as we give Him our cares. You are responding to your husband by praying that the Lord take his burden. You don’t need to know what it is. You

don't need to think you caused it. (If you did cause it, go and ask for forgiveness.)

Women will try to take the care and the responsibility, whether knowingly or unknowingly, for they are trying to take the authority. Many women have such big hearts that they try to take the whole world upon their shoulders – all the neighbors, all the family, and all the friends.

Who is intended to take the pressure? Who is the shield? The husband. The wife was not intended to take those. A man was built with those resistances, but his wife wasn't. You are under your husband as to the Lord. In 1st Corinthians 7 it says that Christ is responsible to God, the husband is responsible to Christ, the wife is responsible to the husband, and the children are responsible to the husband. The wife is the husband's helper in managing the children, but the husband is the manager.

A wife is her husband's agent when he isn't there. This teaches the children to respond to authority. As they see their mother under authority, then they will be responsible to the authority too.

In many homes the children have no authority figure, so they are allowed to do what they want to do, and that is the way they grow up. There is no respect for authority in the schools, in the churches, in government, in the home. The authority structure is disregarded. It is one of the signs of the last days.

A husband is to share the lessons that he has learned from carrying the burdens and pressures with his wife and children. He will start to do this as communication is strengthened.

A husband needs to tell his wife and children what is wrong so that they won't assume they are the cause.

Here is the importance of asking him "What is wrong?" You can tell him that you might pray about it. You want to know what is wrong that you might go to the Lord with it. If he doesn't want to share, don't take offense. Just go to the Lord and pray about it. There is a

burden and the Lord knows what it is, so as you are interceding, the Lord will deal with it.

The enemy likes to put pressure on you so that you think you are the one who is responsible for the problem. If it is you, you want to know about it so that you can ask forgiveness, but if it isn't you, you want to know so that you might intercede to the Lord on your husband's behalf.

If your husband isn't in the Lord at that point, here is an opportunity to ask Jesus to give him the strength to do whatever needs to be done. Jesus is the strength. Share with your husband, "Honey, I know you will be able to do what needs to be done in the situation." If he asks you why you are so confident and bold, and you know he is able to do it, then you have an opportunity to witness for the Lord Jesus.

When a wife responds the way God wants her to respond, the husband can't help but wonder what is going on. There is a transformation happening, but it won't happen overnight. They will test you and prove you on this, too, whether you really want to do it.

Your husband is watching, and you will see him respond. It is God's promise in 1st Peter 3:1. You have the strength to do what needs to be done because Jesus is living within you, giving you not only the mind of Christ but also the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit as you respond to God's word. As you are moving in faith, in the spirit, then God is moving to perform His word. You are not performing it.

Philippians 2:6-11 shows a wonderful example of Christ giving for the people of the world, where He humbles Himself.

Just before that, the scripture says "Count others more important than yourselves." Count your husband as more important.

"For it is God which works in you both to will [with the mind] and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13) The desire is produced by God out of your new spirit as you are obedient to His word. It renews the mind which makes God the One who enables you to want to will it, and then He will accomplish it. It is He who does the work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.

7. What is the wife's part in it?

You definitely have a part in it. Your part is to trust and obey. *“Be not hearers only but doers.”* Resisting quenches the Spirit. As soon as you start to resist (you know to do good, but you don't do it), you have sinned. At that point you are rebelling against God.

God is able to do all things on our behalf if we believe on His word and we don't resist. Otherwise, we cut off God's power. He has never cut it off. He is continuing to move in our behalf, but we can cut off from receiving it by resisting.

God is the one doing the work in each of our homes. He is already doing it. As you start to apply God's principles, you will see some wonderful results.

God wants strong husband/wife relationships and families. The shining light of this witness will go to the world when husbands and wives are living like Christ and His church.

God speaks to us in different ways, sometimes through an audible voice, but most of the time with a peace in our hearts. In any situation you can have that peace in your spirit, and when the word of God says something, it will happen.

Take any of the seven thousand or so promises of God, and as you apply them, God will do them. I always test what I hear on the basis of the word of God because it is the sure test. You can hear all kinds of voices, and you have to test them. This one is confirmed: 1st Peter 3:1, for God is responsible to fulfill His word.

Stand fast to what God says in His word and do it. As you do it, God will transform.

A husband needs a wife who is grateful for all he has done and is doing for her and the children.

One of the things that God desires from His people is praise and worship, and to be faithful, obedient, loving, and thankful. The Lord

really wants to hear our thanksgiving, and this is why things are often lacking when there is an unthankful spirit.

In the same way a husband desires to see gratefulness from his lady as to what he is doing, has been doing, and will do for her. He needs to see that she is grateful to him for doing things, whether they are small or great.

Our Lord desires our praise and our thanksgiving, and we are to let our requests be made known to Him with thanksgiving in our hearts. Then God moves and surrounds us with His peace which surpasses all understanding. He will guard us and keep us. Similarly, women should show this kind of appreciation to their husbands.

1. If a wife is not grateful, her husband will stop giving to her because he doesn't want to spoil her (since she has wrong attitudes).

If a husband sees an ungrateful spirit in his wife for what he has tried to do, then he will slow down giving to her. He feels that it doesn't mean that much to her. If she is not sowing any gratefulness or thanks to him, he will not do it anymore. He would rather see her grateful and thankful with a few things than be ungrateful with more things.

What does a woman want her husband to do for her? Love her, give to her, provide for her. The desire of most ladies is to have things done for them. An unthankful and ungrateful spirit on her part can hinder that. If she wants somebody to give her something and do things for her, she should be overtly grateful. She will find that her husband will do more for her. Express your thanks.

We should want people doing things as to the Lord, not for us. When you receive, you pray blessings and you tell the people that you are thanking the Lord and praying a blessing on them for the love and concern they are showing in their action toward you.

2. A wife must not only express gratefulness for what her husband has done or said, but for the things he has rightly refrained from doing or saying, like not looking at Playboy magazine. A wife

doesn't think it is okay. "*Where iniquity abounds love grows cold.*" (Matthew 24:12) Don't approve of it in any way because it is iniquity (sin). However, there is a way to approach it. You will actually see changes because God will replace these things of the world.

The key is for a wife to express gratefulness. You can approach this as a godly wife by thanking him for areas where he has backed off and done something to stand for good.

Praise your husband for standing up for godly principles. As you do that, you are reinforcing in him that this is something his wife really shows appreciation and thanks for. Then he will want to stand for those kind of values.

Don't compromise your witness, but praise the things worthy of praise. Never praise something that is not worthy of praise because you are reinforcing ungodliness at that point. Stay quiet and intercede in prayer and the appeal.

3. List the things that your husband is doing for you in order of priority *to him*.

You would normally list things that he is doing for you in order of priority to you. Look at how he is thinking and see if you can list according to his priorities. When you see where he is coming from, you will become grateful for what he is doing. For example, a priority for you may be to have the kitchen sink fixed, but he is out putzing around in the yard, then he tinkers on the car, repairs something on the ceiling, and last but not least, he gets around to fixing the sink. It is a priority to you because you have dishes all over the place and there is a big mess, but he takes care of it last.. You may start to build up resentment towards what he has been doing (even though they are all things that needed to be done), but his priorities are a little different.

Once you start to understand his priorities, you can be thankful that he works in the yard, fixes the car, secures the ceiling, and gets around to repairing the sink. This is really important. In many cases, a wife may take the responsibility for the sink and it becomes her big

project. At that point she is taking more responsibility than she needs to take. She is out from under the shield and will start feeling the weight of the world on her shoulders. The bitterness and hostility will well up inside her towards her husband.

She has taken too much care upon herself (that she didn't need to take). If she has stated to him that the sink needs to be fixed, it is all that needs to be done. If she *doesn't* mention it, she shouldn't expect that his seeing stacks of dishes and the kitchen in disarray will register in him that the sink is in need of repair. Many times he will see something, but it won't register. She should tell him, and let it go at that. Then let him work his priority schedule out.

It is a matter of breaking down and clarifying the issue – what needs to be done and who will do it.

A man will protect and organize as his wife lets him do it, but she is the key to its accomplishment. Until she says something needs to be done, in a spirit that is not ordering him to do it, then she will see results.

4. Daily reset your expectations to God. The key to gratefulness is giving all expectations to God, not to your husband.

This will provide balance because your husband is not God. He is given to you by God, but he is not the provider, he is not the source of strength and refuge, he is not the all-supreme counselor. He is a man. He may have Christ living within him or he may not. But he is still just a man. This needs to be recognized. He still has a mind and body that need to be renewed, and he has some weak points. God is your source of all things, and God will move through your husband to you.

As you thank your husband, you are thanking the Lord for him. The thanks always goes to the Lord for him and what he is doing on your behalf because God is the one who is enabling him to take care of you. It also frees him up because you don't put expectations on him that he is not able to perform. This will enable you to become grateful to your husband for everything that he sends your way.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

People to Praise a Wife's Good Works

Chapter Six

There is a certain way to live which we would call "Living the Word." The Word is God's gift to us. It is Himself, it is life, it is living, it will train us to be everything that we need to be to receive abundance from the Lord. We are not to be hearers or studiers of the Word only, we are to be doers of the Word. As this happens we are freed from bondage.

There is a tendency for people to allow themselves to feel they have to be doing many things. If they are not doing them, then they think they are not measuring up. Many times Christians put themselves back into a "works" or "righteousness" frame of reference. Christ has freed us from that kind of bondage. It is a matter of receiving the things of God by faith. Obedience then comes with it, and you are really doing the Word.

The key to meeting the needs of a man is that you desire to put the Lord first. It is the only way that you will be able to respect and honor your husband. In addition, you will be able to do the things that need to be done around the home as far as management, keeping it clean and presentable, and everything else. The tendency is to think, *I'm a housewife, and I have to vacuum the carpets, clean the drapes, scrub the floors and do the dishes, prepare the meals, be ready as soon as my husband says go, and be prim and proper.* You start to think, *I must be some kind of slave. I could get a scrub lady to do this stuff.* You demean your position when you think this way. You are looking at your husband as a guy with a big whip, forcing you to be a servant. Then you get fed up with doing the things that need to be done. This is a tendency that will occur if you are working to please men rather than the Lord. This attitude pervades all areas that we have been teaching. I am not, in any way, setting up a man as God. He is God's representative, but he is not God.

Everything you do is to be done as to the Lord God of Hosts. This is the only way you can do the things that we have been sharing. Do them as to the Lord. The Lord says He will provide you with the

strength for it. *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* You will be able to do it, and gratefulness will abound. You will look at your husband differently, and you will look at yourself and your position differently. This is really important because you are the queen in your household. This needs to be recognized, and then you are free to do what the Lord says.

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever you do [cleaning the floors, doing the dishes, making the beds] do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:22)

“...he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respecter of persons.” (Colossians 3:25)

Your real reward is from the Lord, not from your husband, not from your children, not from your employers, friends, or neighbors. This is the key to the grateful spirit that the Lord wants in us. The contented spirit receives its reward from the Lord. We don't have to run around trying to please people. I'm trying to please my God, and since my God has already accepted me, I'm not here to please anybody. I am trying to love.

Everything you do, whether it is for your husband, your children, your neighbors, or your friends, you are to let God's love flow through you to them. It is an expression of God's love going through you. That makes you a valuable agent for the Lord.

“The joy of the Lord is our strength,” so joy has to be present in everything that we do if we want to have strength to do it. Joy and faith go together. When you do things as to the Lord, the joy is there because you believe that God is faithful to perform His word. It says *“knowing that of the Lord, you shall receive the reward of the inheritance for you to serve the Lord Christ.”* (Colossians 3:24)

You are serving the most high God by doing the things that you do in the home. Consequently it frees you from the burden of having to receive thanks for what you do.

Have you done something really nice for someone, but he never thanked you? How did it make you feel?

When you do these things for your husband, you are not expecting any thanks for doing them. If you are expecting thanks, your motivation is wrong. It is ungodly because God says that you will receive the reward from Him. If you are expecting thanks and praise from people, you lose your blessing from God.

This is important to recognize because it frees you to really do what you are doing as to the Lord.

When you get thanks from people as well, rejoice because they have received what you are doing. However, they received it whether you get the thanks or not. It is important that you focus them on the Lord when they thank you, "I receive that, and I'd like you to thank the Lord."

There was a time when I wouldn't receive any thanks for anything that I did. That is the other side of the coin. The Lord sent me into many situations in order to teach me how to deal with it. He said I should receive thanks as people give, but I should always focus on Him. Yes, they are thanking you because you are God's representative, but where is your heart? If I am doing all these nice things expecting other people to think highly of me, then my heart is not pleasing to God, and I receive man's blessing. Man's blessing is a far cry from God's blessing because man's blessing will turn to a curse, and you will be left with nothing.

A husband needs to have other people praise the qualities and good works of his wife.

Wives, be zealous of good works. The ultimate security for women should not be the family but the church. (1st Timothy 5)

We want to note that the husband needs to have other people praise the qualities and good works of his wife because she is his representative, for he needs to have praise and thanks just as the Lord needs to have them. The more a husband sees that she is

focusing on him and thankful to the Lord for him, in his spirit he recognizes that she is thanking the Lord for everything that he does in her behalf, and things start to change.

When you get up early and fix him a fine breakfast, and you are showing your appreciation to the Lord for him, you are letting him know that you have done this for him as to the Lord, and you are thanking the Lord for him. You want to get up and do those things for him because you are grateful. You will see a change in him because he will think, *I'm thankful to the Lord Jesus for this lady and for what He is doing in her.* Therefore it is important that you be consistent. Consistently do this to the Lord on behalf of your husband and family.

In these ways, wives are to be zealous for good works:

1. *“Her works shall praise her in the gates” and “Her children shall rise up and call her blessed.”* (Proverbs 31:31)

The only works that are pleasing to the Lord are those that proceed out of faith. Whatever is not done in faith is sin. You can do all kinds of works, trying to earn acceptance from the Lord or from people, but it will not cut the ice with the Lord. He says that all our works are not worth anything apart from faith. *“Faith without works is dead.”* If there are no good works proceeding out of faith, then there must not be any living faith to begin with. A woman who is in the Lord is doing everything as to Him. These are works that are proceeding out of faith that God is the One who has provided everything you need. You don't lack for any good thing, you are content, and you are resting. You have an opportunity to fulfill the calling that the Lord has for you, and you don't have any cares at that point because you have turned them all over to your husband as God's representative and to the Lord. You have freed yourself from ungratefulness because you are doing these things as to the Lord God of Hosts. Now you are free to do what He created you for. This is where the interesting part happens. You will be able to fulfill the creative part. God made women to be very creative, and every one of them has different ways of expressing it.

You were created also to pray. You now have time to pray. After you get your work done, you can meditate. It is amazing that you can

even meditate when vacuuming or doing other chores. You will also have time for the Word. You should take daily time for it, but don't lock yourself into *I have to spend this amount of time*. God doesn't care whether it is 30 seconds or 5 hours. His concern is that you care about His word, and that you set that as a priority. When it starts to become a priority over doing your other responsibilities in the home, God is not pleased. It is truth out of balance. Truth out of balance is heresy.

You need to recognize this especially if you are concerned about your family being a godly family. You can study the Word all day long, but if you are not doing the Word, it doesn't mean anything.

God looks at the heart, and He knows where He is. Do your work, and then you are free to minister. God sees that you are doing everything as to Him, whether it is studying the Word or doing the dishes. There is a place for all of these things in your day.

Many times ladies have an image of what a godly woman should be (that God doesn't have). They are putting expectations on themselves that God never saw. They think, *I have to be a Katherine Kuhlman, I have to be a great missionary to my neighborhood, I have to run everything at church. I have to be in prayer for 45 minutes a day. I have to be in the word for an hour, or two*. In other words, you have to be the one who is the stalwart Christian of the family. You have to hold the family up in strength. You have to go to three or four bible studies a week.

Then others lay expectations on you. If you aren't able to attend a group meeting, they look at you as if you are some kind of inferior Christian or something. Quite frankly, I don't allow my wife to go to many different events. She doesn't attend many bible studies, but she is in the Word and in prayer, and she is doing what I want her to do. You don't have to go all over the countryside, from this group to that group, in order to be a godly woman. Don't let anyone lay any expectations on you that God doesn't put on you. Don't lay expectations on your husband that God doesn't put on him either.

Once you realize that, you will start to be the godly woman that the Lord wants you to be. When you are a godly woman, you will see

your family transform. You will be God's vessel to minister to your husband and children, and you will see nothing but blessing. Note, there is a religious way of thinking (that makes me sick) that says: not only do you have to go to church every Sunday, but you have to go to a certain number of meetings a week, you have to do this, you have to do that. No. Your first devotion is to the Lord, and as you are devoted to the Lord, you will be in His Word and you will be praying. Nobody needs to tell you that you have to be in the Word more. Even though you are ministering around your home, they may come in and lay this on you.

Yes, there was Martha and Mary. Martha was busy around the house and she got after Mary because she wasn't busy working. Mary was doing the thing that was needful by sitting at the feet of Jesus. Jesus was only there for a time, and if anybody wanted to profit from his teaching, they had to be at his feet. We have Jesus with us now all the time, all day long. He promised He would never leave us. This provides freedom to do what needs to be done. All day long your thoughts should be on the Lord, praising Him and thanking Him. Then everything you run up against is going to be a little ant hill, not a big mountain. You will look at things a little differently, with the freedom to be the godly woman that God intended you to be and not what religious people lay on you. They will put you back into bondage, like saying you have to pray before every meal. In your heart you are thankful for everything that God has given you, you don't have to have a formal prayer or put on any show.

If your husband and yourself are working together on something, that is a whole different ball game. We were referring to a wife going out on her own.

God wants us to encourage each other in the Word because it is where faith and strength come. The body needs food and the spirit needs food, and we have to keep it strong. When you get out of the Word, you start getting spiritually weak.

It is terrific if a husband and a wife are ministering together, but a husband may decide that he wants his wife doing something different (so she doesn't have to minister). She is a minister right where she is (where he wants her to be). Get away from religiosity, which is an

image of a godly woman that God doesn't have, and where she goes out on her own (apart from God's plan).

We are in no way giving permission for a lady to cop out on her faith. A woman once told me, "My husband doesn't really want me being involved in this." When I asked her husband, he said, "Sure, I'd love to have her doing something like that." She was saying she didn't really care to, which would be good if she were putting herself under her husband's covering. Otherwise she would feel remorse about saying no. The way it should be done in the church is if you want something done, you ask the husband whether his wife can do it. Then if you have the wife's consent, you go ahead. That is the way it should be done for protection.

Many times a wife is eager for her husband to grow, and so she wants to start a group in the home right away. He may not be ready to do it, even though he will say to go ahead. Since he isn't ready, he feels his wife is starting to infringe on him. She should back off. She can't use gimmicks to try to get him. The Spirit will bring him in as she is at home, being the wife that the Lord wants her to be. That will bring a husband in quicker than anything there is. That is a promise for a wife.

That type of woman does all kinds of things. She doesn't sit sheltered in a closet in her house. She is special. Everything she does is related to the home, even ministering. Her husband and everyone else praise her.

In Proverbs 31 the man sits in the council, and his wife is the one who has dressed him up and is running his home. He is as content as can be. A wife's good works are to qualify her as a godly woman.

2. A wife is to be well reported of her good works to qualify as a godly woman.

1st Timothy 5:10 deals with qualifications of widows. The only widows to be accepted into the church were those who did good works and had godly character. They were the ones to be received in the list given in 1st Timothy 5.

A woman was not to become a busybody or to leech off the church. In that day the church would take them in and pay for their food, housing, clothing – they would take them under their wing. We don't do that as much today in the church.

If a woman did not have the necessary qualities she was not to be received, the reason being that she was probably in rebellion and could tear down the community.

The book of Timothy also says families are responsible for their widows rather than the church. If people neglect their extended family, then they are condemned by the Lord because they aren't taking care of their own.

God looks at your heart as you do the works. That is His concern. Whether or not you do it, he is looking at your heart. It is better not to do any works than to do works out of a wrong spirit.

A woman should keep in the faith whether she is allowed to go to church (or other groups) or not. She should study the Word at home. This is vital. If your husband says, "I prefer you didn't go to church," be under his covering, but we are not saying to get out of the Word. You have a bible, you have the Holy Spirit, and he might allow you to have recordings to listen to at home, but at that point he is not allowing you to go out. There will come a time when he will go with you. It is guaranteed in the Word. It is better that you go under his authority if you want him won to the Lord. The Word is where your strength will be.

The ultimate security for a woman should not be the family but the church – (not the organized church as we understand it, but the people of God). They are the encouraging factor to help you at home. They encourage you in the things of God and in the Word. This can be done over the phone or in visits during the day. Many husbands will not (flat out) say, "You can't go." In fact, they may allow you to go. Other times they may say, "Don't go." The main thing is the attitude of your heart and that you are seeking the things of God. God will recognize it and reward you. You can count on it.

3. Titus 2:5 gives a list of responsibilities for which a wife should be praised.

We need to remove the false image of a godly woman and take a look at what a godly woman really is according to God's way of thinking.

Titus 2:4-5 *"The aged women are to teach a wife what is worthy of praise in the Lord's eyes."* It gives a list of responsibilities for which a wife should be praised. Verse 4 says that the older women are to teach the younger women to be sober (or wise), to love their husbands and children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, and obedient to their own husbands that the word of God be not blasphemed.

God considers these to be godly qualities. Combine them with a meek and quiet spirit. A meek and quiet spirit is one that is walking in faith. The only way you can be of that spirit is if you are trusting God. The young women are to be taught to be wise and to love their husbands. How does wisdom come? By asking for it from the Word of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Honor the Lord first and then love your husband – that is wisdom. Love your children, be discrete, chaste, keepers at home (not gad-abouting the countryside with your missionary endeavors) or have your husband's approval to go out. Be good and obedient to your own husband that the word of God be not blasphemed.

You can say you are a godly woman and you do all these endeavors for the Lord and for the church, but if your husband doesn't agree with it, you are blaspheming the word of God, and you are a liar. You are not a godly woman, but a rebellious woman.

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace in all churches of the saints," referring to the ministering of the gifts *within* the order of service. *"Let your women keep silent in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."* (1st Corinthians 14:33-34 KJV)

A woman who is not under authority will cause division and confusion as she starts to usurp responsibility in the church. The same order for the home applies for the church too. A wise leader in the church will not let a woman who is not honoring the principles in the home to take on authority in the church.

I am not putting down women. I am just saying the same principles apply for the home as well as the church. Understand that a woman needs to be under authority. A godly woman will appreciate what I am sharing. When she is under authority, then she is free to pray and to do creative works. Look at the lady in Proverbs 31. She didn't have a care in the world. She was doing as to the Lord in behalf of her husband and her family. As soon as a wife starts to take on too much responsibility, then she will take on the cares and everything else that goes with them. God intends for her to be free to do the ministry that she has, which is a very important ministry.

4. A wife's good works should not include trying to work out a solution to a problem that falls within her husband's responsibility unless he approves of it. Every wise woman builds her home. A foolish woman destroys it by taking matters into her own hands. (Proverbs 14:1)

A wise woman is free from worries, cares, and responsibilities that she wants to take on, and a wise husband will hold her down. This would include church or secular functions. If the husband is saying no, he may be looking at something else that she is not considering. "It's a religious function, it's a church thing. I should be doing it," but he may be protecting her from running herself ragged. He is more concerned about protecting her than her doing some fine religious endeavor.

It is difficult for a woman to say no, especially one who is trying to be a godly woman. A godly woman wants to do these things as to the Lord, but her husband is the watchdog that the Lord has given to keep her from getting overtired, having needless fears, or putting herself in a position where she feels bitter turmoil because she doesn't really want to do something (but she feels she has to). A woman who is out from under authority will be in that spot all the time and it really rocks her inside. There is no peace.

If your husband tells you, "I want you to make a phone call to someone for me," you are doing something that he is directing. As we have noted earlier, the more you are obedient to him, the more concerned he will be that he gives you only the things that you will be able to handle and that you will be blessed by.

5. A wife's good work should illustrate the sincere motives of her husband, like giving to needs without expectation of return. A wife's good works should not be done for her own glory, but they should be illustrating the good will of her husband.

You are his representative. You are like his ambassador in these good works. You go in his place, and you are a team. The thanks goes back to your husband, and it frees you from giving without expectation of return. It frees you to give without a concern that they will like it, or if you are doing the right thing, or if they might not be thankful for it. It frees you from getting upset inside about any ingratitude towards you.

When you give, expect nothing back. In fact, do things for those who cannot repay you for the prime reason that you are not seeking your reward from them, you are seeking it from the Lord. (Luke 14:12-14) *"But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you for you shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."* (Luke 14:13, 14) It is important to get rid of an expectancy of thanks from others.

The home standards are these: A husband is the law, the lamp, or the source of the light. The wife is the commandment. The lamp is the illuminating source.

As a wife does good works proceeding out of godly faith, she is lighting up the lamp. What is seen? Light. The husband is law and the wife is commandments. She is the one who carries out the law.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Submitting God's Way, part 1

Chapter Seven

“Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil. Wherefore you must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” (Romans 13:1-5)

The older women are to teach the young women *“to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:4, 5)*

In the Greek language the word obedient means to be in subjection to. As God's woman, you are under the authority of your husband. Recognize that all authority, according to Romans 13, is from God.

How to Submit in a Godly Way

All authority is from God. We may not be in an authority position, so there has to be a way of dealing with authorities when we are asked to do something wrong, or there is an injustice of some sort. God has provided a balance to the authority with the appeal. As a husband recognizes that the Lord is over him, he is accountable. There is an accountability structure that is set up. There is also a way to hold up God's standards against an ungodly situation.

Here you have an opportunity to present your thoughts about a situation, but the ultimate decision, one way or the other, rests with the authority. In other words, you will be able to present what is on your mind and heart, but whether it is received or rejected does not matter. You will accept whatever the authority says one way or the

other. Your request cannot be misconstrued to be something that you use to get your way. A godly appeal is always based on God's standards, and you accept whatever happens because you are trusting yourself to God's protection. In regard to attitudes, you would not be petitioning in a godly way with an attitude of hostility. Do you receive the authority's decision if they reject what you say?

The appeal helps balance the authority. In other words, you do have a say. You are not a doormat to be continually stepped on.

The petition is geared towards producing some change in the authority's decision. It is intended to give him more input so he might make a decision based on the views of all concerned.

God communicates through the authority, and the receiver needs to be alert to the responsibility of appealing when asked to do something wrong. You need to be aware and alert to the responsibility that you have to say something at that point. You don't just accept everything that comes. This is the other side of the coin. If it is something evil, you have a responsibility to say something. We will show you how to say it in a godly way so that your feelings and words are in line with what God says.

Submission vs. Rebellion

God communicates to us through our authorities to show us any attitudes that may be out of line. God ministers through His Word, and He will minister through authorities to help shape us into the image of Christ. What may happen when dealing with God's authority structure is the major sin of pride (which goes hand and hand with rebellion). Our attitudes towards all authority, God being the ultimate authority, reflect our relationship to Him. Our relationship to all worldly authority will say something about our relationship to the authority of God over us.

If I am rebelling against the earthly authority I can see, how am I able to be under God who I cannot see?

1st John 4:20 says that if you don't love your brother whom you can see, how are you able to say you love God whom you cannot see? The same principle would apply here.

Anything done out of rebellion in the heart is evil before the Lord. To disagree with an authority is not wrong as long as the attitude of your heart is that of love towards them and a concern to help them rather than to help yourself.

The authorities won't be a harm to those who are doing good. Those who are rebelling will be a problem to them. That applies to employer/employee relationships, husband/wife relationships, and government relationships. What is your outlook towards a police officer or the speed limit? Do you look at it for your good, or do you look at it as a threat to your individuality and rights? One attitude is that of good, the other is that of rebellion.

When you are under authority, you are to have a spirit of submission. At that point you are qualified to make an appeal. The motive must be to encourage wise and just decisions based on the principles of God's word. It is not to right yourself or other people or to change the authority. Your motive is that God's principles stand supreme. In other words, you are out of the way.

People will use others and say, "I'm doing this for you" when they are really doing it for themselves. It sounds better, though, if you are doing it for other people. Your motive has to be that God's principles are being upheld.

Here is Satan's delusion and deception to a woman: If she submits to her husband's authority, she will no longer have freedom to follow her best judgment in situations.

When does the freedom for a woman actually come? When she is under her husband and submitting to his authority. The freedom does not rest in her making the decisions. This is a lie based on pride, saying that she should be the one calling the shots or that she must be an ignoramus who doesn't have any judgment.

The enemy comes and tries to delude her so that she will get out from under submission to her husband (where the protection is) and she is out on her own and vulnerable.

The opposite is really the case. When a woman truly has a submissive spirit, she has far greater power to appeal. A quality necessary in obedience is that you know the wishes of the human authority and the purpose of fulfillment. In other words, know why they want you to fulfill it. To truly be obedient you need to know what they want done and the purpose in doing it.

It is important to know the wishes of the authority, and it is only on things that are evil that you ask the purpose. For everything else, work out of the frame of mind that the authority is there for your good, and the purpose is intended for your good. Even if it is an evil authority, they are intended for your good because they won't do anything to you unless you provoke them. Then they will be quicker to act. The important thing is they are intended for your good. A desire to know what to do is a servant's spirit.

Obedience to God's Principles

You need to know the principles of God and purpose in your heart not to violate them, whatever the consequences. Obey the wishes of the human authority, and purpose to fulfill those wishes. That is obedience.

There is to be no rebellion present. Rebellion is never of the Lord; it is always the enemy. So, it is important to sort out your motives – why you are doing what you are doing.

Do you resent people telling you to do this or that? How do you respond towards them? That is what you need to look at. Do you have hostility toward them, expressed or unexpressed?

Something to understand is that the wrath of man does not accomplish the purposes of God, so the foremost thought in our hearts should be to accomplish the purposes of God. Our wrath will in no way accomplish the purpose of God, and we need to use other means to do that. Here is where the appeal comes in. The motive is to accomplish the purposes of God in a situation. I would say that 9 ½ out of 10 times wrath isn't righteous anger. Something comes out of us because we are hurt and we are lashing back. It is important that the petition comes out of a godly heart that is not concerned with whether we are right or wrong.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Submitting God's Way, part 2

Chapter Eight

BIBLE EXAMPLES OF MAKING PETITIONS

Power for Good:

1. Esther 4:8 – Mordecai's instructions to Esther. Esther 5 – Her appeal to the king
2. 1st Kings 1:11-31 – Nathan's instructions to Bathsheba and her appeal to David
3. Ruth 3:1 – Naomi's instructions to Ruth

Power for Evil:

1. Genesis 3 – Eve to Adam (most innocent man falls)
2. Judges 15 – Delilah to Samson (strongest man falls to weakness)
3. 1st Kings 11:1 – Solomon's wives (wisest man falls)
4. 1st Samuel 25 – Three appeals: David's, the servant's, Abigail's.

In a truly godly appeal you are willing to accept the consequences for or against you. People are always willing to accept the consequences in their favor, but what if the authority rejects the appeal? Are you willing to accept the consequences of it? In a truly godly appeal you are willing to go to the lions' den as Daniel did.

The Power of the Petition for Good

1. Esther to King Ahasuerus

The account is found in Esther chapters 4 – 10. The appeal itself is in chapter 7, verses 1-5 and chapter 8, verses 3-6.

Ahasuerus was temperamental, unpredictable, and ruthless. Not too many husbands are ruthless. One time a father came to Ahasuerus and appealed to him about his son because he didn't want him to go into the upcoming war campaign. He told the king he would be willing to give a sizeable contribution to the campaign if he would permit his boy to stay home. Ahasuerus called for the son to come into the room, and he had his soldiers cut him in two. He placed one half of the boy's body on one side of the road and the other half on the other side of the road, marching the army down between the two halves. This is the kind of guy that Esther made her appeal to. This is probably one of the greatest appeals in the Old Testament.

Mordecai was Esther's uncle, and they were Jews. Hamen was an ambitious man who had risen to a high position under King Ahasuerus. He was seeking recognition and power for himself, and he had issued a decree that the Jews were to be slaughtered. The edict had gone through, and the slaughter was going to happen. Esther was asked by Mordecai to go and speak to Ahasuerus about the situation. Esther not only had to have been very beautiful, but she had to have possessed other good qualities because she was held in very high favor with the king. When Mordecai asked her to appeal, at first she was hesitant about doing it. (You didn't just approach the king unless he called for you.) After her immediate reluctance, she did go, and she found favor with the king.

Esther requested that there be a banquet because she needed to set up a prime time to appeal to the king. The king and Hamen came to

her banquet. On the second day of the banquet of wine, the king asked Esther again, *“What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee; and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.”* Esther answered, *“If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king’s damage.”* (Esther 7:1-4)

What qualities do we see in her appeal? How did she come to the king?

Verse 3: *“If I have found favor in thy sight.”* If she was in rebellion towards him, you can guarantee she would not have had any favor with this kind of man. *“And if it please the king.”* Then came her request: *“Let my life be given to me at my petition, and my people at my request.”* She was appealing on behalf of herself and the Jewish people who were scheduled to be killed under the decree of Hamen.

At that point King Ahasuerus did not know that she was a Jew, nor that Mordecai was her uncle. Mordecai had saved the king’s life by preventing a rebellion, and he had just been honored. (Before Queen Esther’s appeal, the king had asked Hamen what he should do with a man who had done good in his behalf, and Hamen, thinking it was himself, told him how he should be exalted and ride through the city and be proclaimed. Then the king ordered that to be done to Mordecai. Hamen hated Mordecai, and every time he saw him it made him angry. Mordecai wouldn’t recognize Hamen because Hamen wasn’t the king. This got under his skin even more.)

“For we are sold, I and my people to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.” (Esther 7:4) She told King Ahasuerus what the decree actually was. Note, *“If we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue.”* A bondman or bondwoman is a servant who willingly put themselves into commission under authority. In this case, if she had been a bondwoman to Ahasuerus the king, she wouldn’t have said one word (submission). She was a queen and she would have been willing to become a servant without saying

a word, lose her title and the whole works. However, in this case her people would all be killed. There was her first appeal.

“Then king Ahasuerus answered and said to Esther the queen, ‘Who is he and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?’ ” (Esther 7:5) In other words, the king did not know what Hamen was up to. Hamen was doing it apart from the king’s knowledge, and Ahasuerus at this point wondered who was doing it.

“And Esther said, ‘The adversary and enemy is this wicked Hamen.’ Then Hamen was afraid before the king and the queen.” (Esther 7:6) Hamen and his family lost their lives, and all his goods were turned over.

The second appeal occurs in chapter 8:3-6.

“And Esther spoke yet again before the king and fell down at his feet and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Hamen the Agagite and his device that he had devised against the Jews.”

Note her attitude. She fell down at his feet, which is that of reverence, and besought him and wept.

2. Bathsheba’s appeal to David (1st Kings 1:11-31)

There is some interesting background to this situation:

Nathan was the prophet of the Lord who suggested that Bathsheba go to David, and he showed her what to do. In this case (and in Esther, chapter three), there were authorities who showed the women how to appeal and instructed them to do it. The purpose here was to hold King David to the promise that his son, Solomon, would be the next ruler. His other son, Adonijah, was presuming upon his position and was going to set himself up, getting all the people to follow him because David had not publicly proclaimed Solomon as the next king.

Then Bathsheba went in to see David. David was about ready to die. In hopes of bringing him back a little stronger, they sent a young woman in to keep him warm. This in no way affected Bathsheba as

she went in there. There was no jealousy present in her heart because she was in total submission to David as her lord.

“And Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance [prostrated herself] unto the king. And the king said, ‘What do you want?’ (verse 16) And she said to him, ‘My lord, you have sworn by the Lord thy God unto thy handmaid, saying, “Assuredly Solomon, thy son, shall reign after me and he shall sit upon my throne”.’ ”

First of all she stated what the king’s words were. When the king’s word was given, it was law, and it would not change. She was not coming in presumption or her own wishes, but the king’s word and promise.

“And now [stating the other facts], behold Adonijah reigns, and now, my lord the king, you don’t know it.” In other words, his other boy was setting himself up as the king, and David didn’t know it.

The appeal was based on the fact that the king’s words stand, although there was a movement amongst the people to violate the king’s word. Therefore she brought that knowledge to him so that he might take the action necessary to maintain his word.

...“and he has slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and has called all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, Joab the captain of the host, but Solomon thy servant has he not called.” (verse 19)

If you want to set up power, you get the priests and army behind you. This is what Adonijah had been doing.

“And now, my lord, my king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord, the king, after him.” (verse 20)

She was saying that David should tell them who was to be the next king. It was not for Abiathar to set it up because he was not the king. It was for David to say who would follow.

This was where the godly submission came, and she was asking that the king's word be maintained as the law. He had given the promise to her before the Lord that her son, Solomon, would reign.

“Otherwise it shall come to pass when my lord shall sleep with his fathers that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.”
(verse 21)

Anybody who would oppose the kingdom that was being set up would be turned in as rebels and be killed.

Then Nathan came in and supported exactly what she had said, confirming it. Nathan was held in high esteem by the king as God's prophet. We see a confirmation with her appeal, and David responded to it.

“Then king David answered and said, ‘Call me Bathsheba’ and she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. And the king swore and said ‘As the Lord lives that has redeemed my soul out of all this distress, even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon my son shall reign after me and, he shall sit upon my throne in my stead, even so will I certainly do this day.’ ” (verse 28)

Note her response. *“Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth and did reverence to the king and said, ‘Let my lord King David live forever.’ ”*

The appeal was based on what the king wanted, and she was helping him to get that. That was her motive. That was her goal. In so doing, she was following God's principles by working through the authority.

3. Ruth to Boaz

This is found in Ruth, chapters two and three, and the appeal itself is chapter 3:3-13.

Notice that if the women hadn't been in right standing with the authority, they never could have done the appeal.

Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, was the one who instructed her. Outside counsel is beneficial in helping to know how to approach someone. Note, Ruth was open to counsel.

Ruth's husband had died and she had come with Naomi, the mother of her husband, to Israel. Ruth was a woman of great hope. *"Where you go, I will go, and your God shall be my God."* In other words, she desired to submit herself to her mother-in-law, to help her, and to go with her, and they went to Israel where they met Boaz. Boaz was a land owner there, and he was one of the next of kin to Naomi's family. He allowed Ruth to pick grain and barley from his fields. In fact, he asked his servants to leave extra for her. (Ruth 3:3-13)

Naomi told Ruth what to do in the appeal. *"Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself, and put your raiment on you, and get down to the floor, but make not yourself known to the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall mark the place where he shall lie, and you shall go in and uncover his feet, and lay down, and he will tell you what you shall do. And she said to her, 'All that you say to me I will do.' "* Ruth did exactly what Naomi had told her to do. *"And she went down to the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law had told her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly and uncovered his feet and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid and turned himself: and behold a woman lay at his feet. And he said, 'Who are you?' And she answered, 'I am Ruth, your handmaid. Spread therefore your skirt over your handmaid, for you are a near kinsman."* A near kinsman had the right to redeem her. *"He said, 'blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, for you have shown more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as you have followed not after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not, I will do to you all that you require: for all the city of my people does know that you are a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am your near kinsman: Howbeit there is a kinsmen nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning that if he will perform to you the part of a kinsmen, well, let him do the kinsmen's part: but if he will not do the*

part of a kinsmen to you, then will I do the part of a kinsmen to you, as the Lord lives: lie down until the morning.”

This sounds like a strange custom, but Deuteronomy 25:5-10 gives us some insight into it.

“If brethren dwell together and one of them die [this was the situation with Ruth – her husband had died], and have no child [she didn’t have any children], the wife of the dead shall not marry without to a stranger:” In other words, as Boaz was pointing out, she didn’t go after any young rich men. She went to her kinsman. *“Her husband’s brother [or next kinsman] shall go into her and take her to him to be a wife and perform the duties of a husband’s brother to her.”*

So this was a custom of these people, but this was not Ruth’s custom. Everything that Naomi told her to do was in accordance to the custom, and she followed it. Because of that, Boaz counted her as a godly woman. She went and made a godly appeal based on what their laws were.

“And it shall be that the firstborn which she bears shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead that his name be not put out of Israel.” (verse 6) The family line was very important in Israel. The first child would be given the name of the husband who had died.

“And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife” [if he doesn’t choose to take his brother’s wife], *“then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel. He will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother. Then the elders of the city shall call him, and speak to him, and if he stand to it, and say, ‘I like not to take her’ [I don’t want to take her], then shall his brother’s wife come to him in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from off his foot, spit in his face, and show an answer and say, ‘So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house. And his name shall be called in Israel the house of him who has his shoe loosed.’ ”*

Ruth’s appeal was that of a godly woman following the principles. Once again, note that these weren’t her customs. She had come from a foreign land, but she was following the customs of her

husband who had departed (and her mother-in-law). Before Boaz she was counted as a godly woman, and the whole city recognized this. She made her appeal in the godly way it was to be done, and Boaz responded to it. He noted also that there was a nearer kin whom he went to see the next day. That fellow was not able to take her, and so Boaz took her as his wife.

Ruth became one of the predecessors of the descendant line of Christ.

The Power of the Petition for Evil

The power to do good or evil in the petitioning is why it is so important that it be based on godly principles.

The following women had the power to influence men to do evil, which shows you how an appeal can work towards evil.

1. Eve to Adam (Genesis 3)

Eve, the first woman, convinced the most innocent man that ever existed to do evil just by her appeal.

Adam didn't know any sin. There was no pride in his heart, for he was a godly man in every way. Her appeal caused him to fall.

2. Delilah to Samson (Judges 16:1-22)

This woman's appeal caused the strongest man that ever existed to lose his strength, and she caused his ruin.

3. The wives of Solomon (1st Kings, chapter 11)

These wives appealed to their husband, convincing the wisest man that ever existed to do evil. This is the man who wrote that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The appeals of the women caused him to put other gods before his God.

Women often think I am saying they are to be doormats because of the authority structure. No, that is not what we are saying. The

appeal has been given to balance the authority structure. It will be blessed as it is done God's way. The power of the appeal can work for good or it can work for evil depending on who is doing it.

4. Here is an example of someone who should have appealed to her husband but didn't:

Abigail has been hailed as a great, godly woman of the Lord. We will take a look at her in another light and examine what she did. Was it right or wrong according to God's principles?

The lie of the enemy is that a woman doesn't have anything to say under the authority, her husband can say and do anything he wants, and she doesn't have any way of dealing with him in the situation. It is not true.

Was there a godly response in Abigail appealing to David for her husband, Nabal? On the surface it looked like a heroic deed for her to step out and move in behalf of her husband to save his life. Look at the real issues and consequences of what she did in 1st Samuel 25.

The background was that David and a large following of men were running away from Saul. Saul was in pursuit. An edict had gone across the land that David was a refugee, and he was being sought by the king (he was wanted). The entire land knew about it. David had camped near Nabal's land, and he made sure that none of Nabal's sheep, or any of his goods, were stolen or hurt in any way. There came a time when David and his troops ran out of food so they went to Nabal to ask for some supplies.

Look at the three appeals listed in 1st Samuel 25.

The first one is David's appeal to Nabal. (1st Samuel 25:5-6) *"And David set out ten young men and David said to the young men, Get you up to Carmel and go to Nabal and greet him in my name: and thus shall you say to him that lives in prosperity, 'Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that you have. And now I have heard that you have shearers; now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there*

anything missing unto them, all the while that they were in Carmel. Ask your young men and they will show you. Wherefore let the young men find favor in your eyes: for we come in a good day: Give, I pray you, whatsoever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.”

This is what David told them to say to Nabal. They went to him, but Nabal rejected what they offered (the appeal).

Concerning David's appeal, which was dealing with a rich person or a person in prominent authority, such people do not like dealing with underlings because it shows disrespect to them. David himself did not go to Nabal. He sent some of his troops to bring the appeal. Nabal as an authority could take this as a sign of disrespect because the one who was asking did not appear.

When you are dealing with dignitaries, you don't send subordinates. The best goes to meet them. When Queen Sheba appeared before Solomon, she brought the best the country had to offer, herself, and all her goods. You don't send in the second best.

Note also that there was something to preface David's appeal. His appeal is a tremendous appeal in itself for what it contains. The facts are there, and it was from a humble spirit. It was a request, leaving it all up to the individual. But there was something missing. First, David himself didn't go. Second, he prefaced it with, verse 6, *“And thus shall you say to him that lives in prosperity.”* This is an attitude that could cause problems among those who are bringing the appeal. In other words, this guy was prosperous, and “We don't have anything; we were protecting your goods. Now you owe us something.” David projected the attitude to his followers that this guy owed it to them. That wasn't in his appeal, but it was an attitude that was implied and conveyed.

If I convey something to you, it will be increased in you. I am sure David didn't have in his heart what was conveyed. It was magnified in those that went, and they brought that attitude in appealing to Nabal. They were the ones that were making the appeal, so the attitude was prevalent in them that they expected a reward.

Undoubtedly there was a lack of gratefulness that was expressed because they felt that they had earned it and deserved it.

You can't be grateful if you believe that you have it coming to you. Consequently, when it was rejected, there was bitterness and hurt.

The servant is the second appeal. This was Nabal's servant. He went to Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "*Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master and he railed on them [he turned them away] but the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall to us both by night and day all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.*" (They protected Nabal's servants. This is one of the servants bearing witness to this.)

"Now therefore know and consider what you will do; for evil is determined against our master and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him." (verse 17)

David had vowed before the Lord that if anyone did evil to David, the Lord would take the revenge. The report brought by the servant was that something evil would happen to Nabal because he had turned away David.

Notice that the servant went to Abigail, the wife of the authority. He didn't go to the authority himself. Why did he do this? The key is in verse 17. He called his master a son of Belial, a son of the devil, an evil, wicked man. A man cannot speak to him, this guy said.

He had the attitude that he could not go, and if he had gone to Nabal with that kind of an attitude, it wouldn't have been received anyway. We see the appeal went to a secondary source.

Instead of appealing to the person that can actually do something about it, many people go to somebody else. Consequently, it sows a seed wherein others fall into the pit too. This is why you don't take up somebody else's offense. The latter end is that you are left with terrible feelings towards someone. The two people over there make

up, and you are on the outside. Never take up someone else's offense.

In verse 15 and 16 the servant gave a tremendously good report about David. Why couldn't he do the same thing concerning his master (the authority that God had given over him)? The appeal was effective, but it was effective to the wrong person.

The third appeal was Abigail's appeal to David. Abigail quickly got everything together and went off to David to save her husband's life. *"And when Abigail saw David, she hastened and lighted off the ass and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be'."* (versus 23, 24) In other words, she was taking the responsibility for her husband's actions. You can see the extremity of the mistake. A wife should never apologize for her husband. It belittles her husband before other people.

Although Abigail's goal was to save her husband, her action was disloyal. *"Let not my lord, I pray you, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal [she called her own husband a son of the devil], for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him [his name means he is a fool]. But I, your handmaid, saw not the young men of my lord whom you did send."* (verse 25)

In other words, "If I had have been there," she said, "I would have responded differently."

The effect now on Nabal is found in verse 37. *"But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone."* And ten days later he died.

Why was there such an effect? David had received the appeal of Abigail, and David spared his life. Why then did this happen to him?

Nabal knew that David was an outcast. Nabal answered David's servants and said, *"Who is David and who is the servant of the son of Jesse? There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master."* He recognized that David had broken away

from Saul, and he knew that David was being hunted down by Saul, his master, and the master had every right to do it.

Nabal also knew that a priest had aided David by giving him a few loaves of bread. The priest and his entire association of priests were slaughtered for helping David! If Saul, the king, did this to the priests for a few loaves of bread, how serious were Nabal's actions? Nabal was the authority, and he was accountable for everybody under him. What would Saul then do to him for bringing food to David? *"Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, a hundred clusters of raisins, two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses and took them to David."* (verse 18) Can you understand the seriousness of what Nabal was facing? His life had been spared by David and his followers, but he was going to have the wrath of the king upon him. He would lose his life for sure. There was no getting around it. The priest and all the association were killed. Just think how serious Abigail's actions were to Saul. Nabal was the one who would lose his life because of it.

"Then Nabal's heart died within him" when he heard these things, *"and he became as a stone."*

On the surface it looked like Abigail did a wonderful thing, but she sentenced her husband to death by what she did.

The question you need to ask is, why couldn't Abigail revere her husband in the same way that she revered David? She fell down at his feet and honored him as lord. She had heard that he was to be the king, and she recognized this. Why couldn't she appeal to her husband in the same way that she appealed to David?

First, she listened to a bad report about her husband, and then she acted on it without even talking to him.

How many times do wives act on a bad report about their husbands in the same way? Without talking to them, they think, *The old blanketty, blank, blank did it again.*

There was no respect there. In fact, Abigail was believing that it was her husband's nature. Because of her attitude towards him, she couldn't come to him with an appeal and with reverence. She said that her husband was the son of Belial, the son of the devil, and that his name said what he was.

Jesus said if anyone calls someone a fool, the judgment of God will come upon him. You don't run around defaming authorities (that God has given over you), even though they are wicked, fools, or ready to bite the dust. Think of the seriousness of it.

Abigail could not revere her husband because of her attitude. There was no way that this woman could ever appeal to her husband and have him respond when he knew her attitude towards him.

If you are telling other people about it, it is certain the person you are talking about knows your attitude towards him.

Again, it says that if a woman takes things into her own hands, she destroys her own house. (Proverbs 4) This was a perfect example.

What should have been done?

1. She should have gone to Nabal immediately when the servant came with this report.
2. She should have shared the facts with Nabal about what really happened.
3. As she was doing this, she should have brought the servant with her to confirm the facts that David had befriended them, and by befriending them he had protected Nabal's goods. An authority will respond to somebody looking out for his interest.

If somebody is looking out for an authority's interest, the authority will bless that person. Nabal thought this guy was a run-a-way servant and under the judgment of the king. If he aided him in any way, it would bring judgment upon his entire household. Nabal knew this when he rejected David's servants.

4. She should have changed her attitude and her servant's attitude. Their attitudes towards Nabal had to change before they ever went to see him. You cannot appeal in any way if you are not already submissive to the authority (and they know it). You have to be in right standing under them.
5. If Nabal had refused her, she should have requested permission from him to appeal directly to David, but not bring all the goods. On what basis could she appeal to David?

“Abigail was a woman of good understanding and of beautiful countenance, but the man, Nabal, was churlish and evil in his doings, and he was of the house of Caleb.” (1st Samuel 25:3) An attractive lady, coming with a good understanding and a good spirit, can do many things as far as an appeal goes. Esther was a perfect example of that.

“And it shall come to pass when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning thee, it shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel.” (verse 30) She knew that David was to be the next king. That came out clearly.

She knew that David spared Saul's life because he was the anointed king of Israel. She would appeal to David on the basis of his response to his own authority. David didn't take Saul's life. In the same way, Nabal, by not giving David those goods, was honoring the king he was under. He was honoring the same authority that David was honoring. Saul had given the decree that anybody who helped David would be wiped out. Although Nabal was a churlish and a wicked man, he was honoring the king's edict. Although he probably feared for his own life, he was still honoring the king.

Nabal was in right standing under authority by doing what he did. The question is, would David have listened?

David said, *“So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisses against the wall.”* (1st Samuel 25:22 KJV) In other words, “If I let them live tomorrow, so let God do.” This is a reverse vow. He is not

saying that he will kill them. He is saying that if people are enemies of David, let God go in and kill them.

This needs to be recognized. They were alarmed that David was going to go in and kill him, but that is not what David said. He said, "If I let them live, let God kill them."

That is exactly what happened later. Nabal died. David didn't kill him, but he was killed, and we note that he was a wicked and a churlish man. He was totally wicked in every way.

However, Abigail was a rebellious woman, responding to a wicked husband, being out from under his authority, and trying to lift herself up. This is a woman who should have appealed to the proper authorities. In this case, her husband.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Submitting God's Way, part 3

Chapter Nine

The secret to obedience is found in John 19:11. Jesus told Pilate that he would have no authority to do anything to him if the Father had not given it. All authority has been given from God, for His purposes. None of the authorities of this world would have any authority unless God had given it to them. It is always for His purposes because He is the author of authority, and all authority will be working for His purposes.

Romans 13, Ephesians 5 and 6 are about the husband and wife relationship, and the end deals with children and servants. In 1st Timothy 6 we also see the outline of God's authority. Anyone who teaches these authority principles to the contrary, let him be considered false. He is vain, he is full of pride, he is empty, and he is not moving according to God's standards.

God's Character is Formed through Obedience

"Likewise the younger, submit yourselves to the elders. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time..." (1st Peter 5:5, 6)

God's character is formed in us as we obey and submit ourselves to the authority which God has given. By so doing, we are humbling ourselves under the Lord and He will be the one responsible for exalting us, or lifting us up in due time.

Joseph was a man who humbled himself. When he was put into prison in Egypt, the Lord gave him insight into the dreams of his cellmates, the baker and the wine taster. He asked them to remember him when they got out. It wasn't until two years later that the cupbearer told the Pharaoh that there was a guy sitting in the prison who could interpret his dreams. In due time God exalted Joseph to second in command to the pharaoh, and he basically ran

the country. God exalted him in due time as he was under submission.

...“though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedeck.” (Hebrews 5:8-10) Note here that God’s character was formed, and we are to be conformed to the image of Christ. He was a Son, and we have been made sons through Him. Yet He learned obedience by the things which He went through in our behalf. He learned to be obedient to the Father in every way, shape, and form – even obedience to the cross.

He was not obedient to sickness or anything that was rooted in the enemy, but He suffered for the purposes of God. He had to go to the cross that we might have life. He was obedient to the Father, even to the fact that He was crucified. This is a humbling in itself that God’s purpose was accomplished there. God’s purpose is not accomplished in sickness.

The Lord Jesus said that we will be persecuted for His namesake as He was persecuted (without cause) for standing for God’s purposes in this world. The world hates Christ, and the world will hate us because it is He who lives in us. If we are standing as a clear light for the Lord, there will be times when we will be persecuted for the name of Jesus, but we will not be defeated. We will still have the abundance of God in victory in the situation, and it will be a witness of God’s love in behalf of His people. There will be no rebellion as we suffer for Christ just as there was no rebellion in Christ when He suffered.

God’s wisdom is formed in us as we learn to apply the appeal and to use the appeal. We can be submissive to all authority because we recognize that the authority is also accountable to God.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account that they might do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

“Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” (Colossians 4:1)

We can submit to authority because we know that they also will be accountable to the Lord someday for the way that they use their authority. It is not for us to judge how they are using their authority. That is up to God. We are called to submit to them.

Stand for God’s Principles

There should be a balance between the obedience and the appeal. We want to note that many times a woman feels like she is a doormat when she is under authority. It is because she has a spirit of resignation. In other words, whatever the authority says will go and she submits to it. The scale is tilting way down when a woman doesn’t have much of herself anymore, and everything is for the authority. She fades into oblivion, and her husband has all the authority while she is stepped on.

Blind obedience is truth out of balance. A woman can follow submission to such a great extreme that she will no longer stand for God’s principles and purposes. Note here that there is a need to establish God’s principles in our lives, and to purpose not to violate them even if the authority says to violate them. That is the point where the appeal comes, on the basis of God’s principles and the fact that you want to honor the authority. Watch for some examples of how to do this.

Suffering for Christ can come when the authority says, “Okay, because you won’t do it, you have to go through the fiery furnace (or the lions’ den, etc...).” There will be consequences. However, you are honoring God’s purposes at that point. There are many cases where people honored God’s principle rather than be rebellious to the authority or to God. For example, Daniel submitted and had to accept the consequences, which meant he went into the lions’ den (but the Lord lifted him out).

Another example is Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. The Lord delivered them out of it. There wasn’t any rebellion in their hearts, but they could not violate God’s principles. Then God worked the blessing. In the final outcome, the whole

country bowed down to their God. Today, this can happen in the home.

Suffering for Christ

In other countries people are suffering for what they believe. Watch when somebody suffers for trying to overthrow a government. They are suffering in the flesh, not in obedience to Christ because rebellion is never of God. There are places where people are being persecuted for being Christians, just because they are Christians, and they have to choose to suffer for it.

At home a wife can be submissive to a husband who is going the other way. Rather than be in rebellion, she submits, but she has to stand on God's principles. Consequently, she may have the wrath of her husband for a period of time. As long as she can stay in there, and she will be able to because God will give her sustaining strength, a husband will turn around.

A spirit of rebellion is the other side of the coin, where a woman puts too much emphasis on the appeal to the authority, which breeds a spirit of independence and rebellion. In other words, the scale is tipped the other way. Instead of not saying anything and submitting with resignation, she takes the appeal to the extreme. The authority is on the light end of the scale, and the appeal becomes the heavy end. There is the seed of a spirit of rebellion (and the development of an independent spirit) for the person asserting his or her rights rather than seek the goals of the authority.

There will be times when you will appeal (and should appeal) but the authority will reject it, and you can count on it being rejected. Here is where obedience to Christ and the authorities comes in. You may have to suffer for what you believe, but God will accomplish His purposes as you are in obedience to Him.

You will suffer for Christ like the disciples suffered for Christ. There will be an act of suffering for Him. It could be at home or any place else.

Titus 3:10 and 11 has to do with an authority who rejected the truth. He purposed to do evil, and he believed a lie. In that case, you

should appeal, but you can count on the authority rejecting it, having rejected the truth. The authority has purposed in his heart to do evil, and he has believed a lie, so he will not receive any truth.

1st Peter 4:16 and 19 deals with refining us, being conformed into the image of Christ through persecution of our faith. We are not talking about sickness (or suffering because you got yourself into a mess by your rebellious or independent spirit). We are talking about persecution, where you have submitted to the authority and to God's principles (you cannot violate them), and because of that choice (you have to obey God rather than men), you bear the suffering which will then come.

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian..." (1st Peter 4:16, 19) Note, a Christian should not be suffering as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a busybody in other men's matters. *"...let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."* Verse 19, *"Therefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls in well doing as unto a faithful creator."* These are people suffering according to the will of God because they are standing in obedience to the principles of God. (Many people who feel that they are suffering for Christ, running around with a martyr complex, are actually suffering because they have an "attitude" or they have done something wrong.) Because the world persecutes Christ, it will persecute Christ who is in us. As the world sees that we are different, they will start talking about us. Maybe they will start throwing rocks at us.

You should appeal to the authorities, but if they won't go along with God's principle, then there will be a point when you will suffer for Christ. He prepared us for it in John 15 and 16.

"...the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort by which we ourselves are comforted of God." (2nd Corinthians 1:3, 4)

As we go through tribulation for Christ, God will comfort us through it all, and for what purpose? So that we might be able to comfort and counsel others who are in similar situations.

People who have been through something in a home or job situation are able to counsel and comfort somebody else in that place. It is where you use the third area of the appeal. It will be rejected, but as a result you will be able to counsel or comfort somebody who is going through the same problem you went through.

There are reasons we sometimes go through these things, but God will comfort and sustain us through whatever it is, and He will deliver us. He will also use that situation to deepen our message to share with other people that they might have the same comfort we had.

Steps of Disloyalty

It is important to examine our attitudes in order to be able to discern when we are moving toward having a disloyal spirit.

1. The first step is an inward attitude. People begin to have an independent spirit. The outward evidence is they will start to list their rights. They have expectations, using others for their own ambitions. An authority will be well aware when an independent spirit is working. Authorities expect a person under authority to be looking at what their expectations are rather than demanding rights. They will expect us to be thankful for the rights that are granted.

Philippians 2:20 has some insight into this. Paul gave the example of Timothy: *“For I have no man like minded who will naturally care for your sake. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ.”* The authority will recognize people who are seeking their own. Paul noticed that Timothy sought the rights of Jesus Christ and not his own. In love he preferred others to himself.

2. The second inward attitude that will indicate a seed of disloyalty is a wounded spirit. When people have been hurt, for whatever reason, they begin to distrust the authority, and apathy towards the authority begins to develop. They will need detailed instructions for everything they are to do. Many times the authority will recognize this, and he will say it over and over again because the person needs detailed instruction. In other words, a rebellious spirit is coming forth: *Okay, you want me to do this. Now show*

me how – right down the line. There is an attitude that begins to creep out. In most cases the authority would just give it over to the person to do, but he or she will turn back on the authority and say, “Okay, show me how to do this.” It isn’t done out of ignorance but out of a rebellious spirit.

People like this won’t follow through with what the authority said to do, or they will delay doing it. They are supposed to have it done by Tuesday, and they will have it done by Saturday or Sunday. There will be a lack of follow-through in the authority’s instructions.

A conflict in priorities will develop in a wounded spirit. They will not have the priorities of the authority in mind. They will put up their own order (against the authority) so that a conflict will well up inside of them. Consequently, they will often hesitate to come into the presence of the authority because in themselves they are working out different priorities. When they come into the presence of the authority, the authority will simply demand what the authority wants and there will be a conflict. Thus, a person with a wounded spirit will suddenly stay away.

Here is some insight into it: *“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, ‘Go and sit down to meat?’ Will you not rather say to him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me till I have eaten and drunken and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?’ Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him?’ No. So, likewise you, when you shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.’ ”* (Luke 17:7-10)

A wounded spirit is often the result of an ungrateful spirit or a spirit that is expecting something from the authority when the authority owes nothing. A servant that is out of line will expect rights, expect gratefulness, expect thanks, expect to be honored. Many times an authority will honor a faithful servant. A faithful servant is one who is not expecting anything, but is simply obedient and looks out for the best interest of the authority.

3. The third attitude toward disloyalty is an alertness to discontent. The person who is disloyal will listen to bad reports about the authority they are under.

Proverbs says if we listen to bad reports, we have an evil heart. People who are moving in disloyalty towards an authority will be open to hearing bad reports about him because it justifies them in their stand. There will be sympathy and encouragement towards others who are discontent, and they will sow discontent and bitterness towards the authority. Their goal is to tear him down and build themselves up.

I warn you concerning wives who are disgruntled and rebellious towards their husbands because they will be sympathetic. They will encourage you to be the same way as they are, out from under authority and in rebellion. A person who is alert to discontent will also take up offenses for somebody else.

Let's say you and I have an attitude towards an authority, so I will say to you, "I'll help you because I have the same problem. We'll stand together." Then we get others involved, and before long, the mob is formed and the rebellion has started.

4. The fourth inward attitude toward disloyalty is a judgmental spirit. There will be magnified reports of discontent. There may be only four or five who are discontented, but the person will say there are 150 people who are upset at the authority.

There is an inability to restore the people's hearts because they want to expose the authority, and they don't want to restore peace. They want to expose and tear down (and they might set up their own regime).

Psalm 15:1-3 gives some insight: *"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that backbites not with his tongue nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor."* Such a person will grow in the Lord, totally healed.

Here is some insight into the judgmental spirit: *“And Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.’”* (Matthew 12:24-25) The Pharisees had said that Jesus cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Jesus responded, *“A house divided against itself will not stand.”* In the same way, a judgmental spirit will work against the authority, and evil will be the result of it.

Absalom is a perfect example of this, for he applied every one of these steps. People think that they are setting up something better by being disloyal, but disloyalty will breed disloyalty. If it is not set up on God’s principle, whatever it is you are doing will not stand. It will breed evil to you, and it will always come back to haunt you.

Absalom ended up getting hung from a tree.

On the other hand, David would not lay a hand on God’s anointed authority. A wife who is disloyal to her husband, a husband who is disloyal to his employer, people who are disloyal to government or church leaders are being disloyal to God. This is a manifestation of ultimately being disloyal to God because God is the one who put those authorities there.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HUSBAND

Submitting God's Way, part 4

Chapter Ten

STEPS FOR A GODLY APPEAL

“Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.” (Matthew 12:25)

Preparation Steps:

1. Examine yourself and sort out your attitudes and motivations (ungodly attitudes vs. godly attitudes – 1st Peter 2:8-12, Philippians 2). Why am I making this appeal?
2. Be in right standing with God.
3. Discern basic intentions of authority.
4. Design creative alternatives.

Action Steps:

5. Make the appeal. Daniel 1:4-14 – a living example: Daniel's request not to defile himself with royal food and wine.
6. Give God time to change the authority's mind.
7. Gladly suffer for doing what is right.

Preparation Steps

1. Check your own attitudes towards the authority. Make sure that they are mature attitudes.

It is important when we are asked to do something wrong (based on God's Word) that we check our attitudes or motivations first. Why am I going to make this appeal?

- The independent spirit uses rights, expectations, and people for its ambitions. An independent spirit is disloyal and condemning.
- The attitude that is involved in a condemning or criticizing spirit is self-righteousness: "I'm good, and you're bad." How can you be entirely right and the other person entirely wrong?
- With an ungrateful or unfaithful spirit, pride is the attitude that is present.
- Where a person has a lazy spirit, there will be dishonesty and poverty.
- Where a person has a bitter spirit, there will be selfishness.
- People with impure spirits will be self-indulgent, getting everything for themselves. Their motivation is to build themselves up along with wanting self-gratification and pleasure.

We are responsible for our attitudes towards the authority. God uses the people who are the hardest to get along with to develop and mature us (out of concern for our response). He is not concerned with the situation itself, whatever the circumstances may be because He is greater than any situation. He is waiting to see how we will respond. Will we respond according to His principles of submission, obedience and respect, or will we respond in rebellion? Will we respond in faith, or will we respond in fear? God wants our attitudes to be like Christ's.

"...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps..." (1st Peter 2:21) He is our example. He is the one

we are to follow as far as our attitudes and behavior. *“Who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again...”* (1st Peter 2:22-23) When He was attacked verbally, He didn’t respond. When He suffered, He didn’t threaten. He suffered in submission, but He committed Himself to the Father that judges righteously. He was treated unrighteously, with false witnesses right down the line, yet He committed His cause to the Father who judges righteously, so in the end He would be vindicated.

In many public protests, the people say they are standing up for godly principles. We are to stand up for the things of the Lord, but how do we do that?

“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1st Peter 2:24, 25)

Philippians 2 describes how we are to have the mind which is in Christ Jesus. We humble ourselves, and we count others more important than ourselves. This is having the mind of Christ. God’s principles are to be lifted up, and our part in it is insignificant. We are just vessels, servants to God’s glory, not our own glory. We can count it more important to love and to give to others than ourselves.

“Humble yourself before God, and He in due time will lift you up.”

Intercede in prayer, encourage, help in any way, and try to accomplish the goals of the authority.

In regard to our attitude in preparation for the appeal, we can come to the point where we even thank God for troublemakers. God is working in our lives to bring us into conformity to the image of Christ.

As King David was traveling along one day, a man in the street started cursing him. David’s “lawyers” wanted to kill the guy for blaspheming the king, but David said, “Leave him alone, God has allowed this man to say these things to me for some purpose.”

When somebody is persecuting you or speaking evil about you, God is in control.

2. Clear the conscience. Be in right standing with God.

This means we correct our attitudes toward the authority. Go and make amends, and if there be any unfulfilled wishes and unfinished directions, we fulfill whatever it is they have asked us to do. We acknowledge to the authority that we were wrong and ask forgiveness for whatever it was, and we make any necessary restitution. That clears our conscience. We can't make an appeal if we have all kinds of garbage in the back room. Any bitterness, hostility, or shirking of their commands or requests that we have put aside, we need to make right and take care of it.

3. Discern the basic intention of the authority.

Many times this is critical because if we have a spirit that is under submission to the authority, we will recognize that the authority is looking out for our own good. Otherwise they wouldn't ask us to do what they are asking us to do. Many times people question the authority about what they are doing. An authority may be looking beyond today as far as what is good for us. Some children will be in rebellion towards their parents because they can't see the consequences of their decisions beyond their noses. When their parents clamp down on them, they feel that they are being unjustly treated in every way. They don't see the attitude of their authority. If children are moving and believing that their parents love them want the best for them, they will be blessed. As wives are believing that their husband are looking out for the whole family and not just for himself in his decisions, then the wife and the children will be blessed.

Discern the intention of the authority in asking you to do something. It is especially important when you are asked to violate God's word.

There are three reasons why an authority asks us to do something:

- a) It has to be done.

- b) To correct a wrong attitude that might be in us. For example, if your husband is doing what he can in your behalf, but you are never grateful or contented about it, then he stops doing things in your behalf. He will ask you to do things for him because you are unthankful.

People might say, “That’s ridiculous; he’s acting like a baby.” No, he is trying to bring out that you have been ungrateful about what he has done for you. Once it is recognized for what it is, then it can be dealt with.

- c) To do something to increase our skill for future tasks. There might be an undisclosed future task that they want us to do, so they are asking us to do something beforehand to prepare for it. We are to ask what the goal and wishes of the authority are, and ask them to point out our attitudes which need improving, and to look for God’s greater goal through the situation.

Looking down the line, what is God’s greater goal in the situation? God will move through His authorities with a vision in order to help us to grow. Authorities are here to help us to grow and to protect us. We need to find out what their goals and wishes are and then ask them to point out any attitudes that we might have in our hearts that they see we need to improve.

Why is this important in preparing an appeal? We need to be in right standing with the authority. We need them to know that we are desirous of meeting their goals and wishes.

4. Design creative alternatives. In other words, when you are getting ready to make an appeal, design creative alternatives that will meet the authority’s goal.

- a) Remove any resistant spirit in yourself. Get directly under God’s authority and your authority. If you have a conflict with him, then you have some resistance. To make an appeal in a right spirit, the resistance has to be removed. There should be no problem between the two of you, and you will seek the building up of the authority and his goals.

- b) Gain insight into the difficult situation. God's insight can be found in Proverbs. Search out His alternatives so that you have something with which to appeal to the authority.
- c) Design an alternative which is purposed to reach the authority's goal.

Actions Steps

5. Make the appeal to the authority. The first four steps are for preparation, then comes the appeal.

As you come to the authority, you should have the spirit of a learner and servant. You don't come in as a preacher, teacher, or authority. Explain your personal beliefs without a spirit of condemnation. This is important that you don't condemn them for their wrong decisions or wrong behavior. It is not your place as a learner and a servant. An authority will often be condemning if you are coming in a condemning way, for you are not moving in love at that point.

Condemnation is never love. A condemning, criticizing spirit, we noted, was that of a self-righteous person. So, if you come with a self-righteous attitude, you can count on it, your appeal will be thrown out the window. The authority will come down hard on you. They are well aware of the attitude you have, especially if they look at the way you have responded to them before. This is why steps one through four are so important — that we are in right standing with the authority even before we go to them, and everything is amended, forgiven, and taken care of.

Next, explain your personal belief. Present your alternative to the authority, and explain how it will reach his goal (not your goal), and then leave the final decision to the authority. Whether for you or against you, the final decision is up to the authority.

A Living Example

Steps 1 through 5 are illustrated in the book of Daniel, which presents the story of Daniel and a few of his followers under king Nebuchadnezzar and other kings. Daniel and the captives were described as "*children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and*

skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge and understanding science, and such has had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” (Daniel 1:4)

These men were picked from the captives of Israel. They were taken into the king's court to be trained for Nebuchadnezzar and his purposes.

“And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end they might stand before the king.” (Daniel 1:5)

Then they would be prepared to stand before the king. He provided his meat and his wine to get them in physical and mental condition, ready to serve.

Verse 6: *“Now among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar.”*

Verse 8: *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: Therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”* By eating all of this food and wine, Daniel recognized that he would be defiling himself according to his Jewish beliefs. He purposed in his heart not to violate God's principles concerning this.

Immediately he went to the prince of the eunuchs, the guy set over them to take care of them.

Verse 9: *“Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.”* He was in right standing, undoubtedly, because right attitudes were prevalent. Consequently the authority's requirement would put him in a high position.

Verse 10: *“And the prince of the eunuchs said to Daniel, ‘I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your meat and your drink...’”* He did not have the authority to grant Daniel's request whatever it might

be because he was under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar who was the one who had ordered the meat and the wine. *“...for why should he see your faces worse liking [sadder looking] than the children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king.”*

In other words, when those three years were up and all the people stood before the king, if Daniel looked saddened and weak, then whose head would be on the block? The eunuch would be in trouble because he was the one responsible to take care of them.

Verse 11: *“Then said Daniel to Meltzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ‘Prove your servants’.*” In other words, test your servants. “I ask you for ten days.” He recognized the attitude of the king in providing all of this for their good, but he said he would give a test for ten days. “Vegetables to eat and water to drink.”

Verse 13: *“Then let our countenances be looked at, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou see it, deal with your servants.”*

In other words, “We recognize that you intend this for our good. There are other principles that we cannot violate at this point. Just give us a short period of time to test this. Then compare us with the others who have been fed the king’s food. As you see, deal with your servants. If you see that we look worse than those who are on the other food, then take us off of the diet and do whatever you think best.”

Verse 14: *“So he consented to them in this matter, and he proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. Thus Meltzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse [vegetables].”*

The first two steps were in correct order to begin with; Daniel was in right standing with them because he loved, respected, and honored them. Daniel and the others were captives, but they were respected

as God's people will be when they are in obedience to the Lord. His conscience and his attitude were right.

Thirdly, he discerned that the basic intention of the authority was for his good – that he be healthy and strong, mentally and physically. There was no resistance in his spirit when he brought the appeal. He gained insight on the basis of what God's word had said – that their appearance would prosper if they would do certain things: if they would stay away from the wine and rich foods. Their appearance would show them to be healthier and stronger. He had wisdom from the Lord.

Fourthly, he designed an alternative which would meet the authority's goal. "Okay, you check it out, in ten days, if we're not in better shape than the other ones who are eating rich food, then we will go ahead and do whatever you choose best," the goal being that they be in the best shape that they could be in.

The appeal came fifth. He had the spirit of a learner and a servant. You can see there was no pride, for there was no listing of rights. There were no expectations. He left it totally in the hands of the authority to make the decision. He explained his belief, there was no condemnation, and he presented the alternative. ("Give us ten days; check it out.")

When you appeal, explain how it will reach the authority's goal, and then leave the final decision to the authority. It is up to him to check out the alternatives and make the decision.

6. Give God time to change the authority's mind – once you have made the appeal. Expect God to bring outside pressure upon the person. Expect him to respond with extra pressure on you. In other words, the authority during that time will come down harder on you because God has put pressure on him.

Realize that God will use pressure for our ultimate good. Hold up under the pressure, respond lovingly to give them a basis for their changed decision. Authorities have changed their decisions because they see a loving, obedient, submissive response when they bring more and more pressure. When a person responds submissively and

obediently to the Lord and to the authorities, God will cause them to change their decision.

7. Gladly suffer for doing what is right. That is the bottom line, the last thing.

After you have lovingly gotten yourself out of the way, and you are seeking the goal of the authority, but they reject your appeal, the bottom line is to joyfully suffer for not doing wrong. The disciples were ready to be rejected by their families rather than deny Christ. Disciples have willingly proclaimed the gospel even when forbidden by the church and state. Daniel was willing to be killed rather than cease to worship God.

Suffering gladly is true suffering for Christ. You suffer under obedience to the authority, and not for your wrong attitude or behavior.

There are many promises from the Lord concerning this, for as you suffer for Christ, it is persecution for Him. *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”* (Matthew 5:10)