

A Test of Faith: Wives Helping In Submission

Franklin Church of Christ Edwin Crozier January 25, 2004 AM Worship
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Introduction:

I have no doubt that every one of us believes in God. The question that we most often have to deal with is whether or not we believe God. According to **Isaiah 55:8-9**, God's ways are higher than our ways. As such, we may not understand them. When we do not understand them, we sometimes do not trust them. However, the Bible offers us God's resounding command, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (**Proverbs 3:5**).

Our faith is tested when our ideas and desires come into conflict with God's command. Is there any place where this occurs more than in the home? How easy it is to make our marriages and families all about ourselves instead of submitting to the Lord's will. During our last lesson, the husbands learned that headship is not about being served, but about serving. They are to lead with love. In this lesson, we focus our attention on the wives. Their role can also be summed up in two words *Help* and *Submission*.

Discussion:

- I. "I will make him a helper comparable to him" (**Genesis 2:18**).
 - A. Wives, do good to your husbands (**Proverbs 31:12**).
 1. The virtuous wife does not hinder or harm her husband. Rather, her help is so great that according to **vs. 23**, her husband will be known in the gates and will sit among the elders in the land. In **Titus 2:5**, older women are to teach younger women to be good or kind to their husbands. Regrettably, women are not taught this by today's society.
 2. To modern feminists, the wife is not her husband's helper. She is his competitor. Her goal is to prove that anything he can do, she can do better. In contrast, the virtuous wife says, "Anything you can do, I can help you do better." Modern feminists do not want wives to act in such a way that their husbands will be "known in the gates". They want wives to usurp that position, showing that they should have that honor and praise. However, while the virtuous wife does not compete for honor in the gates, she receives it anyway (**vs. 31**). She receives praise by helping, not competing. Feminists fail where the worthy woman will win.
 - B. Wives, help your husbands get to heaven (**I Peter 3:1-2**).
 1. While we have learned that husbands are to take the lead regarding getting the family to heaven, the scripture is clear that the wife is also to help her husband get to heaven. This is one of her governing motivators for the way she acts. As Peter further said in **vs. 7**, Christian husbands and wives are joint heirs of grace. They help each other as any Christians should.
 2. **Galatians 6:1** says that the spiritual one should restore the one overtaken in a sin. Wives, your role of subjection does not mean you must sit silently while your husbands sin. Rather, your role of helper means you must help restore them. Keep in mind, Paul and Peter both agree in these passages, that this help is to be given in gentleness, with a quiet and meek spirit. Your role as helper on the journey to heaven is not to be administered by berating and blistering. Rather, by gently reminding your husbands of the scriptures and admonishing them to do better and by leading an exemplary life—even if he does not.
 - C. Wives, manage your homes (**I Timothy 5:14**).
 1. One of the main aspects of the wife's role as helper in the family is to manage the house. This aspect is not about who makes the money. Regardless of who makes the money, the wife is to make sure the affairs of the home run smoothly. She is to make sure the family has food and clothing. She is to make sure the family's needs are provided. She is to make sure the home is a place where all of the family, including herself, wants to be.
 2. Look again at the virtuous wife of **Proverbs 31:21**. The wife was not afraid of snow. She would be ready because she did not just think about the moment, but about what emergencies might possibly come up in the future. How often have we ended up in emergencies and dire straits, when the real issue was not so much what had happened to us, but the fact that up to that point we had lived as if nothing would ever happen to us? Wives you must help by managing your homes, preparing for the future.

D. Wives, guard your homes (**Titus 2:5**).

1. While the NKJV says “homemakers” the term translated here literally means a “house guard.” The wife’s job is to guard the home from the ravenous wolves that would come in and destroy the home. She is to guard the home from evil influences that would destroy the purity of her children and her husband.
2. Husbands, note this carefully, your wife is given this role. I believe it is because women, in general, are more sensitive to what is inappropriate than men. We must allow our wives to establish the standards of decency in our homes (so long as it fits within God’s word). Those times when we think she may be “going overboard” or being a little extreme. The truth probably is that we are simply not in line with God’s strict standards for decency. Wives, you are to be the guards. Husbands, you are to let her be the guard.

II. “Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (**Ephesians 5:22**).

A. Wives, submit to your own husbands (**Ephesians 5:22**).

1. The term for “submit” was primarily a Greek military term, which referred to arranging troops under the command of a leader. In a non-military use, it was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden. This term says absolutely nothing about the relative importance of the one submitting to the one in authority. This is simply a term of roles on a team. We need to understand that God’s system of having one in authority and one who submits is very much a practical issue. As with any group that is working together to accomplish goals, someone must be in the lead and have the final authority. Others must follow. It is that way in the church, in the business world, in sports teams and in our families.
2. Some order had to be established, else families would be full of dysfunction. God gave the role of headship to the husband and the role of followership to the wife. Since our world has summarily dispensed with God’s order, families are typically full of dysfunction.
3. Please, note two things. First, wives you are to submit to your own husbands. You are not to submit to other men. You are not to submit to your girlfriends’ ideas of how your family should be. You are not to submit to popular opinion. You are to submit to your own husbands. Second, the only exception to this rule is found in the principle of **Acts 5:29**. You are to obey God rather than man. If your husband’s lead is taking you into sin, then you are not to follow.

B. Wives, submit as to the Lord (**Ephesians 5:22**).

1. Paul is quite clear and really leaves no room for equivocation on this point. Not only are you to submit to your husbands. You are to do so as to the Lord. In other words, how would you treat God almighty if He were the one standing there making the decision? That is the way you are to treat your husbands.
2. Of course, someone will say, “If God almighty were standing here, He would not be acting the way my husband is acting.” That is most certainly true. Remember what Peter said in **1 Peter 3:1-2**. Even if your husband is not obeying the word, whether a Christian or otherwise, your responsibility is to be submissive. Amazingly, Peter points out that in this way, husbands will be won, that is, through a wife’s submission many ungodly husbands will be turned to godliness. Regrettably, most wives today do not take this approach. Rather, when their husbands live in an ungodly fashion and treat them abominably, they rise up and rebel, laying down ultimatums and threats. In my experience, I have seen the submission of wives work wonders in husband’s lives, though not always. I have never yet seen the rebellion of a wife who has finally had enough ever bring a husband to repentance.

C. Wives, submit with obedience (**Titus 2:5**).

1. Submission means obedience. As we discovered earlier, in all institutions, someone has to have the final right of authority to make the decision and then the others are to step in line and follow through. The wife’s role, once the decision has been made is to obey.
2. We may ask, “But, what if the wife does not agree with her husband? What if she is certain her husband’s choice is wrong and is not the best?” We need to understand that this command is not really followed until the wife is put to the test in these kinds of situations. If someone is obedient to God, only when they agree with God, but then they do their own

thing when they disagree with God, who were they really obeying all along? The same is true in marriage, if the wife only follows the husband's lead so long as he is going the way she wanted to go all along, then she is not really obeying or submitting to her husband but to her own will.

D. Wives, submit with respect (**Ephesians 5:33**).

1. Wives, you are to revere and honor your husbands. Far too many wives decide they will submit obediently, but then spend their whole time arguing about it. Then, if the husband's decision does in fact turn out to be incorrect, they take that opportunity to say, "See, I told you so." This is not honor, respect and reverence.
2. Interestingly, in **Titus 2:5**, when Paul told Timothy that the older women ought to teach the younger women to love their husbands. He did not use the same term as when he told husbands to love their wives. Instead of using "agapao," he used "phileo." From past studies we have learned that this love is the relational love that says, "I esteem and adore you above all others." This is another aspect of the respect wives need to have for their husbands.
3. But I have known many unrespectable husbands. Their wives consistently ask, "How can I respect, revere and honor this man?" The answer is simply to find something, anything, even if it is only small and start demonstrating your respect and honor for him in that area. At the same time, stop verbally and visibly disrespecting him for the things he does that are not so pleasing. You will be amazed what impact that will have on your husband.

Conclusion:

Wives, as we told the husbands in our last lesson, your role is mutually exclusive of whether or not he is fulfilling his. You are not allowed to forsake your responsibilities in the home and say, "Well, he started it." This is faith's test. Do you really believe God's way is best, even when your husband does not always do things God's way? **I Timothy 5:14** demonstrates the importance of wives fulfilling their roles. If they do not, the adversary has a cause to speak reproachfully. That is, Satan will have an accusation to make against us before the judge. The way we behave in our homes, will affect our standing on the Day of Judgment. As we learned last week, husbands, you must lead with love. Wives, you must help in submission. Let us all work together to pass these tests of faith.