

WHAT GOD WANTS HIS WOMEN TO BE LIKE

By Paula and Nate Wilson

Week 2 – Submission - Leader's Notes

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, Greek and Hebrew word definitions are from Strong's concordance.

Romans 2:11

I Corinthians 11:11-12

Galatians 3:26-29

I Peter 3:7

Spiritually-speaking, how does a woman's status differ from a man's status in God's eyes?

- From a spiritual standpoint, there is no difference between men and women. This is different from the Mormon religion, which only allows women to ride into heaven on her husband's coattails. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that men and women have equal standing before God.

I Corinthians 11:8-9

I Timothy 2:13-14

I Peter 3:7

"Anything a boy can do, a girl can do better." What does the Bible have to say about this?

- Woman is the "weaker vessel" and as such more easily deceived than man. (This is implied in I Tim. 2:12 by the general prohibition on woman teaching based on Eve's deception.)

Genesis 3:16

Is the curse PREscriptive (a command) or DEscriptive (just a description)?

- I think this is an intriguing question ☺. If we view the curse as merely a description, then we are free to come up with ways to overcome these things, i.e., use painkillers to avoid pain in childbirth and strive for equality between the sexes. If we say that the curse is actually a mandate from God, then we agree that man is to rule over his wife, but then what about childbirth? I do find it interesting that there are potential problems and side effects with the various drugs that are used to relieve pain in childbirth, although they often work with no apparent problems. I'm certainly not ready to say we should abandon all efforts to ease the pain! I just think it's interesting to think about ☺.
- Eve was made FOR Adam, so there was already a hierarchy of sorts before the Fall.
- Gen. 3:6 indicates that Adam was standing right beside Eve when she ate the forbidden fruit. He apparently was not exercising any sort of rule over her at this point. Perhaps he failed in this regard, or perhaps things were a bit more "equal" before the Fall. Either way, man's rule over woman becomes somehow stronger after the Fall.
- The Hebrew word for "rule over" is "mashal" – to rule, reign, govern, have dominion, manage, cause to rule. (Side note: There is a different Hebrew word used to express oppressive rule – "radah" – to tread down as a winepress with the feet, to subjugate, to crumble, to subdue, to oppress, to walk on a person, to prevail against." This word is used in Gen. 1:28 to describe our relationship to the earth.)

- Part of Eve’s punishment was submission to the appropriate leadership of her husband.
- “Her desire shall be for her husband” is understood by some to mean that she will desire to lead, but instead her husband will be the one in charge. It’s easy to see that women tend to want to lead rather than to submit. In fact, the preposition “for” in the KJV is actually “to” or “toward” in Hebrew and can also be rendered “against,” as in pushing against something. So, this could be loosely translated, “You’ll want to do the opposite of what your husband wants you to do.”
- “Her desire shall be towards her husband” could also mean that she will desire emotional intimacy or that she will desire physical relations despite the fact that it will result in painful pregnancy and childbirth.

Romans 12:10

I Corinthians 10:24

Ephesians 5:21

Philippians 2:3-8

Mutual submission is a popular idea in the Church today. Many people want a “50/50” marriage. “We both work outside the home, and it’s not right for me to have to do all the housework while he sits in front of the TV.” What does the Bible teach about mutual submission?

- We are to defer to each other, showing honor as we humble ourselves like Jesus did. This is as far cry from demanding our husband wash the dishes while we take out the trash!
- As brother and sister in Christ, each spouse should seek the best for the other. (Side note: This includes how we speak about our husbands to other people.)
- When our husband makes a decision that seems off/wrong/harsh to us, we should remember that he is making what he believes is the best decision for all involved. Assume he is trying to honor you above himself rather than just seeking his own good pleasure. It may help to think of this in terms of a parent/child relationship. The child may think it is absolutely unfair that he cannot play in the street, but the parent is actually honoring the child by making rules for his protection.

Ephesians 5:18, 22-24, 33

Colossians 3:18

Titus 2:3-5

Hebrews 13:17

Where does mutual submission end and wifely submission begin?

- Ephesians 5:18 says we are to be filled with the Spirit. The rest of that section (through verse 21) gives examples of being filled with the Spirit, ending with submitting to one another. The next section (Ephesians 5:22 – 6: 9) expounds on this idea. Wives are to submit to husbands, children to parents and slaves to their masters.
- If a wife is practicing the principle we examined in the last section, that of humbling herself and honoring her husband as more important than herself, she will never have to ask the question, “Where does mutual submission end and wifely submission begin?” When there is a disagreement or a final decision to be made, she should be happy for her husband to lead. “The buck stops” with the husband, and according to Hebrews 13:17, God will hold him accountable for how he leads his wife.
- How are we to submit to our husbands? “As unto the Lord.” Wow! If it were Jesus asking you for a cup of coffee, would you say, “Just a minute – let me finish washing these dishes,

ok?” What would the Church look like if she submitted to Jesus the way you submit to your husband?

- A wife who is not submissive to her husband causes the word of God to be dishonored. What happens in your own home has far-reaching consequences!
- A submissive wife can win her husband for the Lord!
- The Greek word for submission (“hupotasso”) indicates a voluntary placing of oneself under the authority of another. “Hupo” means “under” and “tasso” means “to arrange in an orderly manner.”
- It is true that a woman does not need to be submissive to every man but only to her own husband (or father if she is unmarried). However, if you are dating or engaged to a man to whom you cannot submit, you need to do some serious thinking. You do not suddenly learn the discipline of submission on your wedding day. In fact, it is often easier to submit to a boyfriend than to a husband, since the dating phase is all about putting on your best face - his and yours.

Colossians 3:22

I Peter 3:1-2

I Thessalonians 5:12-13

Is outward submission good enough? “I’m sitting down on the outside, but on the inside I’m standing up!”

- Is that how God wants us to obey Him? I teach my children to obey “quickly and cheerfully,” and that’s how we should obey our husbands as well. I Peter 3:2 says that submission includes “chaste and respectful behavior.” Gal. 3:22 says that slaves should obey their masters “with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.” No, I’m not saying that women are slaves to their husbands, but considering the parallel nature of this passage – wives submit, children obey, slaves obey, I believe the reverence for the Lord and sincerity of heart apply to wives and children as well as slaves.
- The specific actions of submission will look different in every marriage. Different husbands will have different ways of “ruling.” Some will allow their wives more freedom than others, and some will welcome input from their wives when others may not. It is a beautiful thing when a husband and wife are so in tune with each other that he gives her much leeway and welcomes her advice. Prov. 31: 11 says, “The heart of her husband trusts in her.”
- We are to submit to our husbands “as unto the Lord.” Again, what if you were married to Jesus? How quickly would you seek to respond to His every whim? Would you anticipate his needs & desires and try to meet them before He even asks? Would you obey only the letter of the law or seek to understand the spirit behind His desires and act in accordance with that even when His eye is not on you (as if that were ever the case!)?

I Corinthians 14:33-34, 40

What reason is given here for a woman to be “in submission?”

- The fact that God says to do it should be enough. We Christians should be in the business of unquestioning obedience. But God is kind enough to give us some reasoning for this command.
- Women are to be in submission, because “the Law says” and because all things should be done “in an orderly manner.” It is not orderly to have more than one person in charge. It is true in business, and it is true in the family as well. This is clear when two older brothers are

left to babysit several younger siblings. In the same way, someone in the marriage relationship has to have the final say, and God says that someone is the husband.

- In his commentary on I Corinthians, Christian philosopher Gordon Clark says, “The Levitical law seems to contain no explicit prohibition of women speaking. However, Paul deduces this consequence from (1) the provisions of the law which put all the conduct of the service in the hands of men, and (2) the general principle of Genesis 3:16, ‘Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’”

Romans 13:1-2

I Peter 2:18-22

I Peter 3:1-2, 6

What happens to the concept of submission when the husband in question is not a Christian?

- Romans 13 states that all persons in authority were put there by God. You do not have the option of saying, “I married the wrong man, so I don’t have to submit to him.” If you are married to him, it is a work of God, and he is your authority.
- God does not make a distinction between submitting to a Godly husband and submitting to a jerk, except to say that a non-Christian husband might be won over to God by the “chaste and respectful behavior” of his wife. This means you do not “absolutely refuse!” to do something your husband asks of you. If he asks something that is clearly unScriptural, pray hard and respectfully present your case to your husband. If you must disobey, do it as meekly and respectfully as possible!
- In submitting to our husbands, we are not to give over to fear – that we will lose our respect, status in society, financial stability, independence, freedom, etc.
- Again, I’m not saying a woman is to be a slave to her husband, but I think there are definite parallels and that the idea of suffering unjustly applies to a wife who may endure hardships because she is married to a nonChristian. I Peter 3:1 begins with a key word: “Likewise.” In what way is a woman to be submissive to her unbelieving husband? In the way that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example to follow. (See I Peter 2:21.)

Ephesians 6:1-3

Colossians 3:20

How do daughters practice wifely submission?

- If you cannot submit to and obey your own father, you will not be able to submit to and obey your husband. God has given you this time as an opportunity to practice for marriage!
- If your father is not a Christian, you should honor and obey him just as you would an unbelieving husband and pray for the results mentioned in I Peter 3:1-2. If your father commands something contrary to Scripture, PRAY hard and respectfully present your case to your father. If you must disobey, do it as meekly and respectfully as possible!

Conclusion:

I once heard a Christian counselor say, “Don’t trust your husband. Trust what God is doing IN your husband.” Committing to practice submission to your husband can be a scary step. It can be painful at times, but God will bless a woman who is chaste and respectful in her behavior towards her husband. Next week we’ll begin discussing how such a woman should dress.