

Doctrine of Family

The Wife in Covenant

1. There are many hard passages in the Bible, and none more difficult than what is said to the wife in covenant.
 - *Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*
2. What makes this passage hard, is not that it is confusing, but that it is crystal clear.
3. The flesh and the world, unite to oppose the Biblical teaching of wives submitting to their husbands in everything.
4. We add to the Scriptures our “buts”, or objections, and our “exception” provisions, in order to justify disobedience, and non-submission in everything. Marriages die the death of a thousand qualifications.
5. The one Biblical qualification is found in the text, “as unto the Lord.” The church is called to submit to Christ. In like manner women struggle to submit to their husbands.
6. One reason for this struggle is the foolish decision to marry outside one’s faith, outside one’s value system, and against the known will of God.

Special Note.

A spirit of rebellion is brought into the marriage, and continues to manifest itself. A woman who will not submit to God, will find no real problem not submitting to a man.

7. Another reason for the struggle to not submit in marriage, is the worldly philosophy of egalitarianism.
8. Much has been made about male and female equality, with support from select Biblical passages.
 - *Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*
9. However, in the divine economy, there is no egalitarianism, when properly understood against Biblical ontology, or a Biblical world view of how life is to be organized.
10. According to Divine design, the man is the head of the wife, and thus the home, as Christ is the head of the church.

11. It is true that, in Adam, man and woman are equal in sin, and both need redemption. It is also true that, in nature, women can excel men in various facets of life. Nevertheless, according to the known will of God, according to Divine design, the wife has been assigned a subordinate position in order to manifest the design, and glory, of the relationship between Christ and the church.
12. If a Christian woman will embrace her place within the Divine economy, there will be movement towards spiritual maturity, and more harmony in the home.

Special Note.

While it is sometimes difficult for the wife to embrace her role in gospel obedience, the Lord knows the bent of the wife's heart in this matter.

13. Because the world is not clearly understanding the mind of God, nor can it, there is a misunderstanding, which is this. Women are led to believe, that because they assume a certain role, there is less value in that role. That is simply not true.
14. The Biblical analogy to rebuke this immature understanding of the Divine ontology, is the body.

- *1 Corinthians 12:14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*

15. The Genesis account of creation acknowledges the true status of the women to man. Paul's letter to the Ephesians states her role in relation to the man.

- Woman's status. Compatible, Suitable, and *Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

Special Note.

The word "help-meet" (Heb. 'ezer (ay'-zer), neged (neh'-ghed), a front, i.e., part opposite; specifically a counterpart), has been variously translated, "comparable", "suitable", "like", and "meet", meaning, "appropriate", and "fitting."

- Woman's role. *Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*
16. The woman is Adam's equal in dignity and status, but the woman is not equal in her role. For example, she alone is responsible for child bearing, though not for child rearing.
 - *Genesis 3:16 Unto 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.*
 17. The assigning of a distinct role to the women is part of the Covenant of Redemption.
 18. In the Covenant of Redemption, the Father gave to the Son the role of redeeming those whom the Father has given to the Son.
 19. The Holy Spirit was assigned the task of applying the work of redemption to the hearts of those who were to be the heirs of salvation.
 20. Then, moving to creation, the Father assigned the headship of nature to Adam, with Eve as his helpmate. Then, together, they were to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
 21. In the Covenant of Redemption it is the Father who is giving the order and assigning tasks. Christ, though being equal with the Father, did not mind being subordinate to the Father.
 - *John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*
 - *Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*
 22. Paul is not saying women are less important or of less value than the man. A woman's role in life is distinct from what a woman is in her essence.
 23. Wives are to submit to their own husbands. Not all men have all authority over all women. This does not mean that women cannot receive good counsel from other men, but her ultimate responsibility belongs to her own husband.
 24. By submitting to the known will of the Lord in her role, the wife takes her place within four divine institutions established by God.

- Individuals are governed by the conscience.
 - Families are governed by the father.
 - Churches are governed by Elders, who exercise church discipline.
 - States are governed by established authority figures, who exercise the sword of justice.
25. Of course, the problem with this Divine order is sin. Therefore, the Biblical counsel is to obey in the Lord. As long as the Lordship of Christ is prevalent, obedience is a spiritual duty to be performed.
26. If an authority commands anyone to do what God forbids, or forbids to do what God has commanded, then, *“we ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29).
27. As there is a difference in the role of the wife, so there are different duties in the Covenant.
- *Titus 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,*
28. The principle of the wife is to tend the “garden”, which is the home.
29. Mature Christian women can help in this role, by giving them godly counsel in specific areas.
30. Mature women are to be characterized by certain virtues in order to have the right to speak. Sometimes a person has the right message, but is the wrong messenger. Therefore, let the mature Christian woman be:
- Holy
 - Not a gossip, or a false accuser
 - Not given to wine
 - A capable teacher of good things
31. Specifically, Christian women must learn the following.
- How to be sober, or mature
 - How to love their husbands
 - How to love their children
32. It is the world who says that being a wife and mother is not glorious. It does have its limitations as far as being glamorous, until the end results of her labor is seen. Then it can be said,

“The hand that rocks the cradle,
rules the world.”

33. The wife gets to labor in building God's kingdom. What she does will last forever. In the process, she is loved back. She gets hugs, and hears, "Mommy, I love you."
34. When men foolishly devalue the role of the wife in the home, they are destroying the Divine design, and bringing ruin to themselves, and to society.
35. Let men and women do God's work, God's way, in order to advance together the kingdom of God, and in order to keep Covenant with the Lord.