

Wife Sunday School Class: June 5

## Child of God in Marriage

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from The Exellent Wife, Sweethearts for a Lifetime, Feminine Appeal

Intro:

- I want to begin this class by saying that MB and I are honored to be in front of you, teaching you all that God has taught us; if it weren't for **His utmost grace**, we would have no right to be up here. There are so many ways that we fail, and we are here to learn with you and struggle with you through this most high calling of "wife". One woman was encouraging me about teaching this class and she told me to think of all that God was going to teach me by preparing for this class – she must have thought I have a lot to learn!! And I do.
  - Just the other day, I was getting ready to leave the house at the same time as Eric and I had my hands full of things to load in the car, the kids are standing in the doorway yelling for help with their shoes, Eric is trying to get in his car... What was my response? OK, everything needs to revolve around me for just one second! Not what a helper should have said!!!
    - And if you are a single woman joining us in this class, we are glad you are here! There are many ways you can apply these things to your life now, but I am not really speaking to you; just listen, learn, tuck it away.
- I want to make you aware that we are going to have this box and notecards where you can ask any questions that may come up as we teach; or that you have always had and not had a place to ask them yet. We will do our best to answer these questions the following week, or as they come up in a lesson. Feel the freedom to put in questions anonymously... we will do our best!
- I want to give you a roadmap/overview of where we will be going for the next couple of months.
- Some of the topics we will be covering in this class are:
  - Unity in marriage
  - Respecting your husband
  - Submission

- Self-control
- Love
- Sexual intimacy
- Responsibilities at home
- Conflict & communication
- Mothering
- Discipleship & serving together
- However, we have structured this study to build on 2 very important truths –
  - that you are a Child of God and
  - that you are called to be your husband's Helper.

Every other lesson is built upon these two truths. We want to give you the practical and principles you can immediately put into practice in your life & marriage, but we cannot do that until you understand that you are a Child of God and have, since your wedding day, been called to be a Helper.

  - Our driving theme for this class is: *Every woman will walk away **loving God** more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*
- That's what I want to explain today; this class is called, "God's Kind of Wife". While your role as a wife is extremely important, there are roles in your life that take precedence even above that. You are called a Child of God – **1 John 3:1** <sup>1</sup>See <sup>(A)</sup>how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called <sup>(B)</sup>children of God; and such we are,  
**1 Peter 2:9-10** <sup>9</sup>But you are <sup>(A)</sup>A CHOSEN RACE, A royal <sup>(B)</sup>PRIESTHOOD, A <sup>(C)</sup>HOLY NATION, <sup>(D)</sup>A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you <sup>(E)</sup>out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10(E)</sup>for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.
- Even before you came to be a Child of God, the Lord created you as a woman.

### Who am I?

- Woman
  - Read **Genesis 2:15-25**> As you know, God created you specifically and He created you specially as a woman.
  - **Genesis 2:18** <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; <sup>(A)</sup>I will make him a helper <sup>[a]</sup>suitable for him." >

- NASB - “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a *helper suitable* for him.’”
  - ESV – “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a *helper fit* for him.”
  - NKJV – “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a *helper comparable* to him.”
- You are what God created; you cannot be anything other than what you are.
  - God created you a woman; you are dependent upon Him.
  - He created you from man; you are deeply connected to him.
  - He created you to fill the job of a helper that is suitable, fit, comparable to your husband.
- Equal with Husband
  - **Genesis 1:27** <sup>27</sup>God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. > every person is created “in the image of God”
  - **Galatians 3:26-28** <sup>26</sup>For you are all <sup>(A)</sup>sons of God through faith in <sup>(B)</sup>Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>For all of you who were <sup>(C)</sup>baptized into Christ have <sup>(D)</sup>clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28(E)</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for <sup>(E)</sup>you are all one in <sup>(G)</sup>Christ Jesus. > “neither male nor female” all are in Christ
  - **1 Peter 3:7** <sup>7(A)</sup>You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with <sup>(B)</sup>someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. > “fellow heir of the grace of life”

### Something Happened

- Are you a Child of God?
  - You are made for God’s glory and His good pleasure
    - **Psalms 104:31** <sup>31</sup>Let the <sup>(A)</sup>glory of the LORD endure forever; Let the LORD <sup>(B)</sup>be glad in His works; > God’s works/creation should make Him glad and therefore should bring Him glory.
    - **Romans 11:36** <sup>36</sup>For <sup>(A)</sup>from Him and through Him and to Him are all things <sup>(B)</sup>To Him be the glory forever. Amen. > all things are from God, and are therefore responsible to glorify Him by pointing to Him.

- **John 1:12** <sup>12</sup>But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become <sup>(A)</sup>children of God, even <sup>(B)</sup>to those who believe in His name, > You are called a child of God if you believe in His name.
- Have you repented of your ugly, dead, sinful heart and your desire to only fulfill your selfishness and trusted Christ completely to pay the penalty for your rebellion against a Holy God? God is holy and deserves your worship; are you worshipping Him or someone/something else? There is no way for your worship to be acceptable to God except through Christ and His death on the cross that paid the penalty for your lack of worship and your rebellion. None of this class will be helpful or even make sense unless you are convinced you are God's child and have crossed over from death to life. > **John 5:24** <sup>24</sup>"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and <sup>(A)</sup>believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and <sup>(B)</sup>does not come into judgment, but has <sup>(C)</sup>passed out of death into life.
- It is only by faith that you are redeemed, it is only by grace you are given faith, and it is only by Christ that you are adopted as a child of the only God, our Father.
- **Romans 8:14-16** <sup>14</sup>For all who are <sup>(A)</sup>being led by the Spirit of God, these are <sup>(B)</sup>sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you <sup>(C)</sup>have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you <sup>(D)</sup>have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "<sup>(E)</sup>Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself <sup>(E)</sup>testifies with our spirit that we are <sup>(G)</sup>children of God, > received a spirit of adoption from the Spirit of God.
- **1 John 3:1** <sup>1</sup>See <sup>(A)</sup>how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called <sup>(B)</sup>children of God; and such we are, > we are called children of God;
- we call Him Father <**Romans 8:15** <sup>15</sup>For you <sup>(C)</sup>have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you <sup>(D)</sup>have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "<sup>(E)</sup>Abba! Father!", **Galatians 4:6-7** <sup>6</sup>Because you are sons, <sup>(A)</sup>God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "<sup>(B)</sup>Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup>Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and <sup>(C)</sup>if a son, then an heir through God

A Story = Your Story {optional}

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there was born a beautiful baby girl, a princess. Upon her birth, she was betrothed to a prince; that once she was mature/grown, she would marry him. But there was an evil one who, upon the baby's birth, determined to take the baby girl away from the King. This evil one placed a curse on the baby girl that she would be doomed at a later date – through a small act of her own, she would die. The King was horrified about this prophecy, but there was hope. There was one who came forward right after the evil one and changed the baby's future forever. This one changed the death to only a sleep, that the baby would sleep until she could be rescued by true love.

The baby girl was hid away, her name was changed, and she grew and matured in the safety of a small cottage where no one, especially the evil one, could find her. As this now young woman was out fulfilling her daily responsibilities one day, she stumbled upon a man that immediately stole her heart. He was everything she could ever dream of. But, sadly, on that very day, she was told that she was promised to another and could not pursue this one that her heart longed for.

This princess was led sadly back to the castle of the King to meet her betrothed. The evil one was waiting for her there, expecting her; the evil one trapped her and she did exactly as everyone had feared and she immediately fell into a sleep. Meanwhile, the man she had met earlier that day turns out to be none other than the prince she had been betrothed to; and he had come back to visit her, the evil one was there waiting for him as well. The evil one trapped him, but there came another to help him escape these traps. This helper gave the prince the sword of truth and the shield of virtue; armed with these, the prince defeated the evil one completely, made his way to the castle, and woke the princess with a kiss of true love. They lived happily ever after.

- This story was taken from Sleeping Beauty by Walt Disney, but it could have been taken from Snow White, your love story with your husband, or even Romeo and Juliet.
- Isn't it interesting that almost every great love story you could read is based upon the only True Love story; Jesus' love for you. His sacrifice to die upon the cross, His willingness to fight, give all of Himself, come after, and love you with a perfect love, if you are a child of the King.
- We, as people, long for love – true love – that will fight for us.
- While there are many ways that your husband might fight for you, if you are asking him to fill this role of Perfect Love, then you will be sorely disappointed.
  - There is no one that can fill this role but Jesus.

- There is no one that can give you this kind of love but Jesus.
- You have no right to ask your husband to come close to this kind of love because he is a sinful man, just as you are a sinful woman and could never love him in this way either.
  - The hope is that you would both seek and receive this kind of love from your One True Love, the Prince of Peace, the Redeemer, Jesus.
  - It is only as you both look to him will you have a happy and successful marriage that He intends for you to have.

### Your Husband

- **Isaiah 54:5**> “For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth.”
  - God is your first husband, your first love, the only One who deserves and receives all of your heart
  - God’s goal for marriage is another means to exalt and honor Jesus Christ; that you would effectively serve God better as a team than as an individual.
  - As such, He has provided for you to illustrate your relationship of love with Him here on the earth through your Marriage.
  - Ephesians 5:21-32> Christ is the Husband and believers are the wife
    - V.21- husband and wife act godly toward each other
      - **Do you act godly to your husband, even behind your closed doors?**
    - V.22- submit to husband, it reflects the way we think about Christ
      - **Are you willing to submit to your husband in the same way you are willing to submit to Christ?**
    - V.25-29- husband are to love wives
      - **Do you allow your husband to love you and appreciate his efforts, not squash them?**
    - V.30- being a member of Christ’s Body should be motivation for relating to your husband unselfishly
      - **How often does your selfishness come out toward your husband because he is honoring you?**
    - V.31- unselfishness is motivated by likeness to Christ and His desires

- **Are you unselfish at home just as you are unselfish when you are out with other people?**
- V.32- husband and wife relate to each other should be a visual example of Christ and the church
  - **Does your marriage cause others to think about Christ?**

### Your Heart

- So, what keeps us from fulfilling this beautiful picture that God desires for us to show His world?
- Idols of your Heart!
  - An idol is anything that you are willing to sin to fulfill (get).
  - You place its value above God and disobey your First Love in order to attain your “other love” – the idol
  - What are typical idols for women?
    - Good health
    - Physical appearance
    - Having a Christian marriage
    - Being treated fairly
    - Have a hurt free/pain free life
    - Worldly pleasures (drugs, alcohol, sex)
    - Children
    - Another person (man or woman)
    - Material things
    - An ideal (pro-life movement, green movement)
    - Money
    - Success
    - Others’ approval
    - Being in control
    - Having your “needs” met
    - Husband acting a certain way

### Application:

- You need this class!!!
- I am pretty sure that you cannot answer YES to every one of these questions.
- We hope that you are encouraged and convinced that you *will walk away loving God more and willing to serve your husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

# God's Kind of Wife: Helper

Lesson Materials Taken from Helper By Design

*That Every Woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

**Genesis 2:18** “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

God wants to use you and prepare you to be an instrument that might enliven your husband to God's call on his life.

A. Called to be a Helper --what is that?!

1. Definition of “meet” is: “suitable, comparable, fit or counterpart”.

In otherwords, she was God's finishing touch for Adam.

2. A Gift from God to her Husband. Genesis 2:18-20, 3:12

Proverbs 18:22 “He who finds a wife finds a good thing. And obtains favor from the Lord.”

3. A Reflection of the Trinity: an opportunity to reflect, mirror and glorify the Lord.

- a. God is our Helper. Psalm 86:16, 17; Psalm 37:40

Psalm 28:7 “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.”

Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Psalm 54:4 “Behold God is my Helper; the Lord is the sustainer of my soul.”

His help is Perfect, but ours is imperfect and weak (at best).

- b. Holy Spirit is called Helper. John 15:26, 16:7

John 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.”

Comforter.”



c. **Jesus Christ** helped man with his greatest need: **Salvation**

B. Why is a **Helper** necessary?

1. God's **call** to Adam Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7-20

6 R's: **Rule, Relate, Reproduce, Reflect, Rejoice, Rest**

2. **Companionship**: **aloneness** was not good.

3. **Support** and **Encouragement**, not needed for physical labor

C. How do I **become** a helpmate?!

1. Taking Steps to Understanding God's Call on my Husband's Life (see worksheet)

2. Reflecting God's **Character**

*"A wife who is reflecting God's helping character desires to sustain or uphold her Husband; she strengthens, comforts, and seeks to protect him. Because of her love for the Lord and for her husband, she endeavors to dispel his fears by being trustworthy and gracious. She leans for strength upon her Lord so that she might share that strength with her husband. In her heart, he finds shelter and protection from the world; he finds a companion who offers him what he really needs: help in his **God-given calling**." Elyse Fitzpatrick*

D. Biblical Examples of **Helpers**

1. **Proverbs 31** woman (verses 10-31)

2. **Phoebe** Romans 16:1-2

3. **Pricilla** Acts 18:18,19; Romans 16:3, 2 Tim 4:19

1 Corinthians 16:19 "...Aquila and Pricilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."

# Taking Steps to Understanding God's Call on My Husband's Life

*from Helper By Design by Elyse Fitzpatrick*

## ***RULE:***

In what specific ways has God called my husband to rule? What does he oversee? Where does he have authority? How can I help him fulfill that calling?

## ***RELATE:***

With whom has my husband been called to relate? What would helping him in these relationships look like? (may include hospitality, freeing him to meet with people, encouraging discipleship relationships)

## ***REPRODUCE:***

How has God's calling to reproduce been answered in our family? How can I help in mentoring and nurturing our children physically? How can I help him in mentoring and nurturing spiritually? How am I encouraging a good relationship with our children and helping them to honor and respect him?

## ***REFLECT:***

What does my husband spend time thinking about or reflecting on? What does he worry about? How could my help sharpen his thinking or cause him to be more productive?

## ***REJOICE:***

What can I do to bring godly joy into our relationship? How have I failed to help him discover the joy of intimate fellowship? What influences could I bring to bear upon him that would help him glorify God and reflect Him more fully?

## ***REST:***

How can I facilitate his development of fruitful rest? What could I do to make our life together a place of harmony and God-centered worship, especially on the Lord's Day?

Wife Sunday School Class:

## Unity

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from Helper By Design, Sweethearts for a Lifetime, The Excellent Wife

Intro:

- This is the first of our more “practical” lessons for this class; we have learned that our relationship with God as His child is the utmost preeminent relationship and that within that relationship, our call to be a Helper to our husband is next.
- One of the first things you are called to live up to in your marriage commitment is unity. It is called for on your wedding day, that you leave your father/mother and are joined to your husband.
- But first, let me remind you of one thing: that your relationship with your First Love, your Redeemer is the only relationship that is eternally permanent.
  - The Lord has given you this marriage relationship to be a picture of His relationship with you, that you would display this for the world to see... to see Him.
  - Your love and devotion to your heavenly Husband is the ground out of which your devotion to your earthly husband will blossom.

### Become One

- **Genesis 2:20-25**> God created us to be a helper to our husband, as we learned last week, so we are going to focus on verse 24 today!
- **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
- What is “One Flesh”? We all desire for  $1 + 1 = 1$ , but what does THAT mean?
  - Wayne Mack defines it, “Oneness is a lifelong, exclusive, comprehensive union of an entire man and an entire woman to each other. It is a type of relationship that is shared with no one else other than one’s mate. It is a partnership in every area of life for as long as both partners live.”
  - You, as a wife, have complete, unhindered access to every part of your husband’s life; as he should have with yours. No secret hiding

places. No locked doors. Nothing outside of the other's influence/knowledge.

- Being one flesh means being committed to unity in every area of life.
  - This does not mean uniformity – exactly the same in every area of life/personality/preference.
  - This does not mean domination – that one spouse covers over the other and demands they conform to them
  - This does not mean half & half. It is whole with whole.
- You have been called to love someone who was created completely different from you. It is not easy; it is work, and requires effort on your part.
  - We need to remind ourselves that the most important relationship you have in your life – after the Lord – is the one you have with your husband.
  - It is easy to relate to those that are created like you; those girlfriends are so easy to talk to because they are just like you, as a companion and a helper.
  - In order to be one flesh with your husband, you have to choose to love a nature that is different from your own.
- God has commanded this in **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” and in **Ephesians 5:29-31**<sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,<sup>30</sup> because we are <sup>(A)</sup>members of His <sup>(B)</sup>body. <sup>31(C)</sup>FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. , **Titus 2:4-5**<sup>4</sup> so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,<sup>5</sup> to be sensible, pure, <sup>(A)</sup>workers at home, kind, being <sup>(B)</sup>subject to their own husbands, <sup>(C)</sup>so that the word of God will not be dishonored.
- It is true that it is his obligation to love you, but it is also your obligation to help him love you.
  - You should desire to make his obedience to Christ easy.
  - View his calling as your calling
  - Use your uniqueness to help him.
  - Be willing to be vulnerable & open
    - Physically – because we are devoting 2 weeks to this area, I will leave it alone for now. Just know that God is talking of this area in His command just as much as every other area:

- Emotionally
  - Intellectually
  - Spiritually
- **Do you ask questions AND listen closely to the answers?**
- The greatest example of unity or oneness is the Trinity.
  - Each person of the Trinity works together seamlessly, bringing glory to the others; yet they are one like no earthly relationship can attempt.

### What about Leave & Cleave?

- Elyse Fitzpatrick in Helper By Design describes this as, “two lives being released from their former mooring and being joined together into one new person, one new household.”
- **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
  - This part of the verse is particularly pointed toward parents: Leave father & mother... be joined to wife.
  - **Ephesians 5:31-33** <sup>31(A)</sup>FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. <sup>32</sup>This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to <sup>(B)</sup>love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she <sup>(C)</sup>respects her husband. > your marriage should be a picture of the way that Christ relates to the Church, and the Church reflects back the glory of Christ.
  - You are called, as a wife, to do good to your husband
  - **Proverbs 31:11-12** “The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.”
- You are called to “forget” the previous ways you “always” did things, and make a new way of doing things with your husband.
  - This can be particularly frustrating for newlyweds, as you work out the daily responsibilities of the house, children, work, time together, time outside the home.
  - There are many preconceived notions of what is *expected* that may not naturally flow into your new home/relationship as you had thought.

- If you grew up in a single parent home, not having a man in the house by which to measure expectations, you may have more to overcome in expecting your new husband to be everything your father never was.
  - This is unbelievably unfair to him; only Christ can fulfill the needs your father did not.
  - Instead of fighting with your husband and asking him to fulfill your childhood dreams, be thankful for the husband the Lord has given you and look to Him for leadership, joy, and growth.
  - There is a point many of us come to in our marriages where we look at our husbands and say, “Really? This is it?! You – in all your weaknesses, shortcomings – are the one I married?”
    - We need to realize that we have weakness and shortcomings and sin also. We are not the standard for our husbands to fulfill.
    - Every man has weaknesses; God has given you personally, as well as you through your husband particular weaknesses to work through so that you will look to God with greater dependence and humility. < **2 Corinthians 12:9** <sup>9</sup>And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for <sup>(A)</sup>power is perfected in weakness " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather <sup>(B)</sup>boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

### They Left & Cleft

- You, as a parent/mother, are responsible to allow – no, encourage – your child to leave you and be one with their spouse.
- **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
  - This part of the verse is particularly pointed toward parents: Leave father & mother... be joined to wife.
- God has providentially joined together this woman & man. You, as a couple are commanded to not allow anyone, even your parents, or their ways of doing things, separate you two. < **Matthew 19:5-6** <sup>5</sup>and said, <sup>(A)</sup>FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND <sup>(B)</sup>THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH? <sup>6</sup>"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
  - You, as a mother, are commanded to allow your child to leave you, leave behind your influence and come under the authority of another.

- **God's pleasure is more important than mom's pleasure.**
- Do not allow your child to speak negatively about their spouse. Do not speak negatively to your parents about your husband... this can be especially tempting for women, as we love to talk about our lives with other women.
- Choose to live a life devoted to doing good to your husband. Push your children toward this goal with their spouse as well... that your children may rise up and call you blessed < **Proverbs 31:28**  
<sup>28</sup>Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her

### What if 1+1=0?

- There are marriages where you may be the only believer; or you may be the only one interested in preserving/deepening the marriage.
- Let me encourage you that God sees your heart < **Psalm 42:1-2** <sup>1</sup>As the deer <sup>[a]</sup>pants for the water brooks, So my soul <sup>(A)</sup>pants for You, O God. <sup>2</sup>My soul <sup>(B)</sup>thirsts for God, for the <sup>(C)</sup>living God; When shall I come and <sup>(D)</sup>appear before God?
- God sees your interest in serving Him
- You are not responsible for changing your husband's heart – only God can do that < **2 Corinthians 5:17** <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is <sup>(A)</sup>in Christ, he is <sup>(B)</sup>a new creature; <sup>(C)</sup>the old things passed away; behold, new things have come., but you are responsible for yourself before your Lord.
  - Be faithful to the Lord < **Psalm 51:12** <sup>12</sup>Restore to me the <sup>(A)</sup>joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a <sup>(B)</sup>willing spirit.
  - Be devoted to Lord and to your husband, no matter your husband's response < **James 4:8** <sup>8(A)</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you <sup>(B)</sup>Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and <sup>(C)</sup>purify your hearts, you <sup>(D)</sup>double-minded.
- See your own sin/weaknesses for what they are and repent. < **Philippians 2:3-4** <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from <sup>(A)</sup>selfishness or <sup>(B)</sup>empty conceit, but with humility of mind <sup>(C)</sup>regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
  - Are you daydreaming about intimacy with other men?
  - Are you disrespectful to your husband because he isn't meeting your expectations?
  - Are you throwing a pity party because of a lack of intimacy with your husband?
  - Are you resentful or bitter towards your husband?
- These are all areas where you have the ability to control your behavior and ask God to change your heart away from these sins and renew a

righteousness in you < **Psalm 51:10** <sup>10(A)</sup>Create in me a <sup>(B)</sup>clean heart, O God, And renew a <sup>(C)</sup>steadfast spirit within me.

#### Application

- Push in toward your husband; you chose each other above any other.
- Allow him to push in toward you, give him full access as you would give the Lord.
- Choose to love your husband and do good to him, just as you choose to love the Lord and give Him the glory for all good in your life.
- Allow your love and devotion to your heavenly Husband to be the ground out of which your devotion to your earthly husband blossoms.



# God's Kind of Wife—Loving My Husband

Lesson Materials taken from *Helper By Design* and *The Excellent Wife*

*That Every Woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Intro:

God has called us into a **covenant** relationship of **redemption**. Chosen in Him before the foundation of time, God called you—a woman made and being remade into His image—into a relationship with Himself because of His great **love**. Are we willing to **love** as the Lord **loves**? Are we willing to live as lovers?

“This love-filled life doesn’t start with my contemplating my own **goodness** or the **goodness** of my husband. It begins with my remembering my great **need** and God’s indescribable **love**.” Elyse Fitzpatrick

*1 John 4:9-11 TLB “God showed how much He loved us by sending His only Son into this wicked world to bring to us eternal life through His death. In this act, we see what real love is: it is not our love for God, but His love for us when He sent His Son to satisfy God’s anger against our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us as much as that, we surely ought to love each other too.”*

*Matthew 22:37-39 “And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love our neighbor as yourself.’”*

1. Love for my husband begins with a passionate **love** for **God**.
  - a. It should dominate my **heart**, my **attitude** and my **actions**
  - b. All other passions should **bow** before it
  - c. Loving my husband cannot crowd out my **love** **for** the **Lord**.
  - d. Loving my husband cannot be **equated** with my love for God or my husband becomes a **god** and **idol** of my heart.
  - e. I am to live to **love** the Lord and focus my life on **pleasing** Him and **exalting** Him alone. 2 Corinthians 5:9
2. My husband is my **nearest neighbor** (and I am to love him as I love myself)
  - a. It is not based on the **merit** of the one loved
  - b. Vine’s Expository Dictionary: “Christian love...is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Christian love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any.” Romans 13:8-10, 15:2
  - c. My expectations of love have to be **realistic**.

- d. I need to love him as I love myself. We naturally love ourselves most. No one has to teach us this kind of love.

Are you waiting to love your husband the way that God commands YOU to love UNTIL your husband loves you as you want to be loved?!?!

3. I need to love my husband as Jesus Christ, who died for me, has loved me.

Ephesians 1:3-14:	My response:
He has <u>blessed</u> me with every spiritual blessing	Do I seek to bless my husband? What does blessing him look like?
He <u>chose</u> me before the foundation of the world	Do I choose him above all others? Do I long to spend time with him? Does he know that no matter how he fails or what hardship comes into our marriage, I will stand by him and STILL choose him?
He called me to be <u>holy</u> and blameless	Do I encourage personal holiness in my husband before the Lord? Do I spur him on? Do I lovingly point out sin and point him to sanctification?
He predestined me to be adopted as His <u>child</u>	Do I help him make his walk a priority? Do I remind him of his calling?
He has freely lavished <u>grace</u> upon me in Christ	Do I accept my husband and give him grace when he fails?
He <u>redeemed</u> me through his shed blood	Do I personally sacrifice for my husband? Am I willing to set aside my time, goals, pursuits, interests and desires?
He <u>forgave</u> me	Do I forgive my husband when he fails? Am I open and honest about my own struggles? Do I seek forgiveness when I fail?
He revealed His <u>will</u> and kind <u>intentions</u> to me	Do I have kind intentions for my husband? Do I reveal my desires, plans and goals to my husband? Does my girlfriend know me better than my spouse?
He gave me an <u>inheritance</u> in Him	Am I helping my husband to leave an inheritance for the kingdom that will live on after us?

4. I need to love my husband practically and “put on” love whether he deserves or whether I am loved that way in return.

1 Corinthians 13:4-13: LOVING....	(PRACTICALLY)
<b>PATIENTLY (James 1:19-20, 1 Thess. 5:18)</b> Am I easily aggravated if things don't go my way? Do I take it out on my husband?	A wife who is impatient or easily frustrated is someone who is thinking selfish thoughts and is choosing to let circumstances dictate her obedience to the Lord in her attitude and outward response.
<b>KINDLY (Romans 2:4)</b> Does my voice and countenance reflect KINDNESS in how I interact with my husband?	Being kind is a key to creating a proper atmosphere in the home. It is shown in a gentle tone of voice and in kind actions. Kindness draws people to us whereas criticism and harshness pushes them away.
<b>WITHOUT JEALOUSY (2 Cor. 10:5)</b> Does my husband dread coming home when he's worked late? Do I act with jealousy if he has opportunities I don't have? Am I glad for him, or self-focused and self-concerned?	Jealousy is a fear of being displaced by another person or thing. It may be a valid concern or a vain imagination. Jealousy is always self-focused.
<b>WITHOUT BRAGGING (Prov 27:2)</b> Do I try to make things look better than they really are? Do I think so highly of myself that I think I deserve nice things from my husband? Do I pout if my husband doesn't rave about my meal or notice things I have done during the day?	A wife shows love for her husband by boasting about him in front of others and recognizing his character, achievements and efforts to please her instead of throwing her own accomplishments before him to be praised.
<b>WITHOUT ARROGANCE (Prov. 16:5)</b> Am I opinionated and defensive when disagreed with, reproved or corrected?	An arrogant heart is filled with self-importance. A wife can show love for her husband by considering the possibility that she may be wrong or misinformed.
<b>NOT ACTING UNBECOMINGLY (Titus 2:3)</b> Do I shame my husband by my behavior? Do I act in an improper manner? Do I respond based on my mood? Are my clothes revealing, immodest or inappropriate?	A loving wife acts properly and in a manner that is fitting, consistent and not based on her mood. Her husband can count on her to respond in love and not embarrass him by her behavior.
<b>NOT SELF-SEEKING (Phil 2:4)</b> Am I selfish? Do I want my own way? Am I more concerned about receiving than giving?	A wife can show love for her husband by giving into his wishes as long as he is not asking her to sin. A stubborn, selfish wife provokes him to frustration and discouragement.
<b>GENTLY (1 Cor. 10:13)</b> Does my husband walk on eggshells around me? Am I moody, intolerant and demanding? Do I use my monthly cycle as an excuse to be difficult to live with or to sin?	Showing love means that a wife controls herself even under difficult circumstances. Some wives are provoked even with the circumstances aren't difficult. A godly wife shows love by exercising self-control. Our husbands need homes of haven and peace from stress and difficulty they may encounter in their jobs.

<p><b>BY NOT KEEPING SCORE (Ephesians 4:31)</b> Do I rehearse the wrongs I have suffered? When conflict arises, do I deal solely with the issue at hand, or do I bring up my husband's past failures and escalate it?</p>	<p>A wife can show love for her husband by not holding on to bitterness, by forgiving, not bringing up the past and not replaying bitter thoughts to herself. We can show love when we catch ourselves and correct our thoughts. We show love by dealing with issues as they arise and resolving them biblically.</p>
<p><b>BY REJOICING IN TRUTH AND NOT UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (Hebrews 10:24)</b> Do I tempt my husband to sin? When dealing with issues, do I lie when confronted? Am I dishonest about my spending? Do I cover my husband's sin instead of addressing it?</p>	<p>A loving wife is one who not only deals properly with the sin in her life, but also does not entice, influence, or provoke her husband to sin. She tells him the truth. She also encourages him and supports him to be godly and do godly deeds.</p>
<p><b>WITH FOREBEARANCE (2 Cor. 1:6)</b> Can my husband trust me? Do I give up when times are difficult? Does he know I am committed to him regardless of our circumstances?</p>	<p>A godly wife can show love to her husband by standing with him no matter his job, his health, his attitude, or his walk. She will do what is right before the Lord, and her husband can trust her to make sacrifices, if necessary, out of her love for him.</p>
<p><b>PROTECTIVELY (Rom. 8:28)</b> Do I air my husband's faults and tell everyone about his failures? Do I paint him in the best light? Do I believe the best even when words or attitudes suggest other motives?</p>	<p>A godly wife shows love by giving him grace in front of others and sharing only the best about him. She gives him grace to fail and believes the best about him when he does, because that is how God deals with her. She trusts God's sovereign hand and that He has a purpose in all circumstances.</p>
<p><b>HOPEFULLY (Romans 10:11, Phil 1:6)</b> Do I place my trust in God and have confident expectation in what He will do in my marriage? Do I give into thoughts that my husband will never change or that he is beyond repentance?</p>	<p>A godly wife will hope in Jesus Christ and not just wishful thinking. Her hope is rooted in the Eternal King of Glory, the all-powerful Creator of the Universe who brings all things to pass. She shows love by praying for him and allowing God to complete the work He's started in her husband. She believes God can transform and redeem all areas of her marriage.</p>
<p><b>WITH PERSEVERANCE (Rom. 5:3,4)</b> Do I complain about difficult things in my marriage? Am I quick to give up on my husband, my marriage, or entertain thoughts of leaving?</p>	<p>A godly wife can show love to her husband by seeing the trials and pressures of their life as an opportunity to become more like Jesus. She will see circumstances as seasons of growth and trials as blessings that will produce good fruit. She can love her husband by not giving up when things are hard, disappointing or when he is hard to love. She recognizes that by God's grace she can endure and empty herself out of love for God to overflow in love for her husband.</p>

# A PICTURE OF GENUINE LOVE

God's kind of love is an active love - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**Exercise directions:** Fill this out using specific examples of what each characteristic of love would practically look like in your marriage. Give the second copy to your husband, and have him fill it out from his perspective.

What does God's kind of love look like through a wife who wants to please her husband?

A wife who is patient will
A wife who is kind will
A wife who is not jealous will
A wife who doesn't brag will
A wife who isn't arrogant will
A wife who doesn't act unbecomingly will
A wife who doesn't seek her own will
A wife who isn't provoked will
*A wife who doesn't keep record of wrongs will
A wife who doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness will
A wife who rejoices with the truth will
A wife who bears all things will
A wife who believes all things will
A wife who hopes all things will
A wife who endures all things will
A wife who never fails will



# God's Kind of Wife—Respect and Self-Control

Lesson Materials Taken from *The Excellent Wife and Sweethearts for Lifetime*

*That Every Woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Respect is, first and foremost, all about the attitude of my heart toward my husband and his God-ordained position in our home.

1. God calls me to respect the person of my husband

Ephesians 5:33 “However, let each of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see to it that she respects her husband.”

1 Peter 3:1-4 “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the Word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.”

Respect defined: to be in awe of, to revere or treat as special.

- This is a command from God.
- It begins with a heart assessment of my attitude toward him.
- It is not based on my husband’s merit or character
- It is not based on his obedience before the Lord first.

Practical Snapshot: Helping him not to look foolish; not putting him down in front of our children; not disagreeing with him or arguing with him in public; making suggestions to help him make decisions; making appeals in a gentle, thoughtful manner; not airing his failures to friends or my/his parents; not being critical or making fun of him in front of others; being constructive in private; not treating him like one of my children.

2. God calls me to respect the position of my husband

1 Corinthians 11:3 “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, the head of Christ is God.”

God has established authority in the family. My respect for my husband and reverence for his position honors God in and through my obedience to the Lord.

- My husband may fail. He may not be a leader in my home.
- My respect is not based on his merit of the position. God will deal with my disobedience and humble me if my pride dictates my obedience or disobedience to the Lord.
- I can show my respect by being my husband’s cheerleader and being thankful.
- I can show my respect by honoring him when he is not present.
- I can show my respect by not questioning his ability to lead but rather encouraging and submitting to it, and giving him opportunities to lead.

Practical Snapshot: Talking positively to my children about their father; not keeping “secrets” with the kids that go against his wishes for our home or child rearing; not undermining his authority; not second-guessing every decision he makes; not “redo-ing” something he’s done simply because he doesn’t do it the way I would; following thru on things that he has asked of me and making his desires a priority.

3. God calls me to behave respectfully and be self-controlled

1 Corinthians 13:5 "... (Love) is not rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful." ESV

"... (Love) does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered." NASB

Proverbs 25: 28 "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."

- a. My words are a reflection of my heart. Matthew 12:34
- b. My actions can show disrespect.
- c. I can please God regardless of my feelings. 1 Cor. 10:13, Phil 4:13
- d. My words should be gentle and kind. Ephesians 4:29, Gal. 5:23
- e. My failure to communicate can harbor discontentment and disrespect for my husband.
- f. I can behave respectfully when I disagree with my husband.

Practical Snapshot: Not giving looks that can "kill", rolling my eyes, huffing; asking for help and communicating my desires; not getting upset when my husband doesn't read my mind and know what I want from him; not throwing temper tantrums, pouting or being manipulative

4. God calls me to reprove my husband respectfully, as well as, be reproved respectfully

Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."

- a. I should thoughtfully and prayerfully prepare and respond to sin in his life. James 1:19,20
- b. I need to think objectively about his sin, rather than emotionally. My ultimate desire has to be to see my husband in a right, pleasing relationship with the Lord. 2 Cor. 5:9
- c. Sin always separates, therefore I must not dwell on personal hurts but handle it biblically so I don't allow a root of bitterness to separate us.
- d. I need to respond in mercy, grace, and gentleness before giving a biblical reproof.
- e. I need to respond in kindness, the same way God is kind to me when I fail.
- f. I need to be open to correction and instruction from my husband, even when accountability may be embarrassing, humiliating or humbling.

My response to my husband is a reflection of my level of commitment and maturity to Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 15:28 "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."

Proverbs 12:4 "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is like rotteness in his bones."

God is not finished with my husband. My response to him can never be about his worthiness or his leadership. Instead, it is about obeying the Lord and pleasing HIM in all that I say and do. God can use my imperfect husband in my life to sanctify me, grow me, change me and draw me to Himself.



# Respecting Your Husband...A Self-Assessment

*Taken from The Excellent Wife by Martha Peace*

Rate Yourself from the Following scale : (A) Always, (O) Often, (S) Seldom, (N) Never

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Do you speak to your husband in a condescending “put down” manner?

For Example: “What’s the matter with you?”

“Anybody could have done it better than you did”

“My Dad would never have done that.”

“I should have known better than to depend on you.”

“Don’t be stupid” or “What you just said is ridiculous”

“You old fool!”

“You are so slow, I’ll just do it myself.”

Proverbs 21:19 “It is better to live in a desert land, than with a contentious and vexing woman.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Do you treat your husband in private as respectfully as you do your pastor, neighbor, or friends in public?

1 Peter 2:17 “Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Does your countenance show your disrespect by angry looks, looks of disgust, crossed arms, rolled eyes etc?

Genesis 4:6-7 “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?’”

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Do you talk for your husband or interrupt him?

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 “Love is patient...does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own (way).”

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Do you try to intimidate or bully your husband by making threats, verbally attacking him, crying or in some other way manipulate him to get your own way?

Proverbs 14:1 “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Do you bring up his shortcomings to others?

Proverbs 31:23 “Her husband is known in the gates...”

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Do you inappropriately contradict him in front of others?

Proverbs 31:12 “She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do you compare him unfavorably with other men?

Phil 4:11 “...for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do you listen carefully to your husband’s opinion, trying to understand him?

James 1:19 “Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak...”

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do you respect his position in the home so much that he can depend on you to do as he asks even when he is not home?

Proverbs 31:11 “The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.”

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. Do you respect his requests by trying to do as he asks, even if it doesn't seem important to you?

1 Peter 3:5 "For in this way in former times, the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands."

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. Would your husband say that you have a meek and quiet spirit? If you do, it will be apparent in how you treat him.

1 Peter 3:3-4 "And let not your adornment be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. Are you obeying God by being respectful to your husband?

Ephesians 5:33 "...let the wife see to it that she respect her husband."

If you have checked any of the above with an "always" or "often", then you are not as respectful to your husband as God would have you be. If you have checked any with a "seldom" you are on the right road, but still have room to grow! Confess any of these to God as sin, realizing He will be faithful to forgive (1 John 1:9) and ask your husband's forgiveness as well. Be clear about what you have done wrong. Ask your husband to hold you accountable and to tell you when he perceives you are being disrespectful.

Circumstances come and go, husbands succeed and fail, some merit respect and others do not, but whatever your situation, you can by an act of your will, show Biblical respect to your husband and love to God in the process.

# God's Kind of Wife: Communication, Conflict and Forgiveness

Lesson Materials taken from "Communication and Conflict Resolution" and 2008 Faith Biblical Counseling Training session on "Forgiveness"

"Communication is the vehicle that is used to accomplish many responsibilities and relational aspects of marriage. One can neither address issues without it, nor resolve conflict without it. How we communicate with each other will either produce good or bad consequences. Good communication is essential to a good marriage relationship." *Stuart Scott*

My communication reveals what's in my heart. Matthew 12:34

## Pre-Req's to Good Communication:

1. You must want to please God more than anything else. 2 Cor. 5:9
2. You must be humble. Ephesians 4:1-3
3. You must recognize that you are accountable to God. Matthew 12:36
4. You must know how to listen. Proverbs 18:13, James 1:19
5. You must recognize communication involves more than just words. James 4:17
6. It may take time. Romans 12:10-12

## How should I communicate?

My communication should be like Christ's, whose communication was always Holy, Purposeful, Clear and Timely.

- A. HOLY Ephesians 4:25: Completely True, Filled with righteousness
- B. PURPOSEFUL (For God's Glory) 1 Cor. 10:31b and (Other's good) Eph 4:29
- C. CLEAR Matt 5:37, Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 15:28

Principles: Pray about what to say, think carefully about what needs to be said, speak concisely, refrain from withholding information, say what you mean.

- D. TIMELY Proverbs 25:11

## What to do when conflict happens?!

Ephesians 4:1-3 "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace."

- A. Most conflict begins with some sort of offense. 1 Cor. 10:31-32, Romans 12:21, Matthew 5:44-45
- B. Conflicts are escalated out of differences, pride, the flesh, and our lusts. Prov. 28:25, Prov 13:10, James 4:1-3

## AVOIDING CONFLICT

Sinfully: Keeping quiet or avoiding, staying away from each other, changing subject, hiding information

God-Honoring: Seek to understand spouse's perspective, gather info, pray and study before speaking, listen

## RESOLVING CONFLICT:

1. Confess any sin you are aware of before God. Psalm 139:23-24
2. GO ...to your spouse. Eph 4:32, James 5:16
3. Set a time to communicate. Proverbs 34:14
4. Come together in a spirit of unity. Psalm 34:14
5. Pray together. Proverbs 16:32, James 1:5
6. Communicate in a God-honoring way. Eph 4
7. Confess sin that hasn't been already confessed to GOD or each other Eph 4:32, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9
8. Discuss the issues that caused the conflict.
  - Preference issue—How can we prefer one another? Phil 2:3-5
  - Sin issue—Discuss repentance plan. Eph 4:22-24
  - Conscience issue—Study and get counsel. Rm. 14:23
  - Wisdom issue—gather facts and info and input from both spouses. Wife should then submit to her husband and trust in God's sovereignty. PRov. 2:3-6, 12:15, 2 Tim 2:15

## FORGIVENESS

Biblical Forgiveness is a requirement for getting problems solved. Two battling people can have joy, a settled relationship, and renewed fellowship. It is not feeling – oriented. It is not a lapse of memory. It models God's forgiveness of man.

A. What does God do when he forgives Man?

He determines not to hold our sin against us. Eph. 4:32, Jer 31:34, Isaiah 43:25, Heb. 8:12, 10:17.

B. What is Biblical Forgiveness?

1. It is a declaration.
2. It is not feeling something, it is saying something.
3. Feeling is not a pre-requisite.
4. It is a promise not to remember.

C. Content: A 3-fold Promise

1. I will not bring it up to that person again, as evidence against them.
2. I will not bring it up to anyone else, and gossip about it.
3. I will not bring it up to myself and dwelling on it.

D. How is forgiveness accomplished?

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Biblical forgiveness is a TRANSACTION!

E. The Process of Forgiveness:

1. State clearly what you did wrong
2. Request forgiveness. (Actually say it!!)
3. Use simple, factual terms. Proverbs 10:19
4. Don't destroy good words with wrong attitudes. Proverbs 25:11
5. Don't confess accusingly.
6. Get your mate to grant forgiveness.

"As in most other areas of life, improvements and success in marriage require effort. Therefore, we must be willing to commit ourselves to perspiration—a willingness to put forth strenuous effort. Good marriages don't just happen; they exist only when people are willing to roll up their sleeves and put effort into making their marriage what God wants it to be." Wayne and Carol Mack, Sweethearts for a Lifetime

Wife Sunday School Class: July 17

## Submission

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from Feminine Appeal, Sweethearts for a Lifetime, Helper By Design

### Intro:

- Why are we talking about this subject?
- The “S” word?!

“We all desperately need God’s grace. We require His strength without which we’ll fail miserably. But this strength isn’t available unless we first humble ourselves by submitting wholeheartedly to His good will. Until we humbly say to God (and mean), ‘You’re wise, you’re loving, You’re all-powerful, and Your way is right,’ we’ll never have the power (or desire) to submit to our husbands’ leadership, and our obedience to them will be lifeless drudgery at best. Before you can embrace the creative, enlightened, and willing submission you’ve been called to, you must answer one heart-stopping question: *Have you been purchased by Christ as His bride?* If so, then you’re His, and you (and I) no longer have the right to choose how we’ll live or whose will we will follow. Once this question is genuinely settled, then God will enable us to embrace and grow in submission to our husband.” ~ Elyse Fitzpatrick, Helper By Design p.153

- We have some theme verses for this class, and in each of these passages (Gen 2, Eph 5, Titus 2, 1 Peter 3) submission is there, if not spoken of clearly & directly. Obviously, God has some things to say about wives submitting to their husbands.
  - God commands it

Genesis 2:18, 22

Ephesians 5:22

**Col 3:18** <sup>18(A)</sup>Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

**1 Tim 2:11** <sup>11(A)</sup>A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

**Titus 2:3-5** <sup>3</sup>Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, <sup>(A)</sup>not malicious gossips nor <sup>(B)</sup>enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, <sup>4</sup>so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup>to be sensible, pure, <sup>(C)</sup>workers at home, kind, being <sup>(D)</sup>subject to their own husbands, <sup>(E)</sup>so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

**1 Peter 3:1-2** <sup>1(A)</sup>In the same way, you wives, <sup>(B)</sup>be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be <sup>(C)</sup>won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

### Not just for husbands:

There are many areas where we as women/men submit to authority < **Eph 5:21** <sup>21(A)</sup>and be subject to one another in the <sup>(B)</sup>fear of Christ.

What are these areas?

- Employers
- Pastors/Church
- Civil Government
- Family
- Christ

**Heb 13:17** <sup>17(A)</sup>Obey your leaders and submit to them, for <sup>(B)</sup>they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. > All these authorities are for your protection, not because they're perfect. Submission is not based on superiority, but on obedience to a command.

- Command to drive correctly
- Command to work with integrity
- It comes in many forms, but carries the same principles with it
- What are those principles? Let's unpack it!

### Definition:

- Submission is defined as
  - Humble obedience
    - This is probably the definition that makes some of you cringe... if you are going to cringe in this class – this is it!

- I would assert that this “cringing” has more to do with a negative, warped, defective picture of submission (and yourself and God) that you witnessed; NOT with the true picture of Biblical submission that God presents in His Word.
- To voluntarily place oneself under
  - It is my job
  - I volunteer for it
  - It is a picture of soldiers cooperating... but that doesn’t really resonate with me. So,
  - It is a picture of pillars supporting a building. A picture of support or service for a greater goal. Example: old Victorian home
- Submission originated with God
  - Wayne Grudem “The idea of headship and submission never began! It has always existed in the eternal nature of God Himself. And in this most basic of all authority relationships, authority is not based on gifts or ability; it is just there... The relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit....” ~ The Key Issue in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy p.61
    - Submission is a picture of the Trinity
    - You have the opportunity to show a picture of the Trinity through your marriage by willingly submitting to your husband.
- Submission glorifies God < **Eph 5:22-23** <sup>22(A)</sup>Wives, <sup>(B)</sup>be subject to your own husbands, <sup>(C)</sup>as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For <sup>(D)</sup>the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the <sup>(E)</sup>head of the church, He Himself <sup>(E)</sup>being the Savior of the body.
  - 
  - We are all called to submit to God in **1 Peter 2:13** <sup>13(A)</sup>Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,
  - We as wives are then called to submit to our husbands in **1 Peter 3:1** <sup>1(A)</sup>In the same way, you wives, <sup>(B)</sup>be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be <sup>(C)</sup>won without a word by the behavior of their wives. This is the submission we are going to explore here today.
  - Each wife is called to submit to her own husband. When God is talking about a “wife” submitting to a “husband”, there is a reason He doesn’t say that “every woman” should submit to “every man”.



- Every person is created equal in God's sight, in value & dignity < **Genesis 1:27** <sup>27</sup>God created man <sup>(A)</sup>in His own image, in the image of God He created him; <sup>(B)</sup>male and female He created them.
- We are heirs together < **1 Peter 3:7** <sup>7(A)</sup>You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with <sup>(B)</sup>someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.
- This is essential to Submission – we have different roles, which are equal in worth and importance
- God placed the command of submission heavily in an intimate marriage relationship. Why? There is a love and unity and respect that doesn't exist in any other relationship you have.
- **Can you see how your submission to your husband is actually a submission to the Lord, your Heavenly Husband, who loves you more than you will ever understand?**

Only/If:

- We are only exempt from submission if a moral issue is at hand
  - God commands us not to follow our husbands into sin.
    - **Acts 5:29** <sup>29</sup>But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."> we should not put our husbands into the place of God.
  - "Submission does not mean that wives should do nothing to protect themselves from unreasonable husbands... If a husband is abusive or leading inappropriately in some way, anything the wife does – talking to him, getting counseling – should be motivated by love for her husband, not concern for herself. A man who abuses his wife is certainly not glorifying God, and it is right that his wife should want him to change. As long as her motivation is a desire to do what would please the Lord most, then she should use whatever resources God has given her to influence her husband and protect herself." ~Sweethearts for a Lifetime p.226
    - Abuse is a big problem
    - Use the resources of this Body -- TELL someone: me, MaryBeth, our husbands, the elders, elders' wife. Seek counsel out of love
- Your husband is not God. < **Exodus 20:3** <sup>(A)</sup>You shall have no other <sup>(B)</sup>gods <sup>[a]</sup>before Me.", **Acts 5:29** <sup>29</sup>But Peter and the apostles answered, <sup>"(AK)"</sup>We must obey God rather than men."

- So, do not put your husband in God's place.
  - Do not allow your husband to “carry” you spiritually; He is not your Savior. You must have a personal (on your own) relationship with Christ, which your husband leads and – hopefully – encourages.
- God has not called us to be “yes” ladies – that is not a helper. So, how do you say no??
  - But we are to make a godly appeal when he is wrong to persuade him < **Proverbs 15:1** A <sup>(A)</sup>gentle answer turns away wrath, But a <sup>(B)</sup>harsh word stirs up anger.
  - We should offer respectful counsel < **Proverbs 27:9-10a** <sup>9(A)</sup>Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend. <sup>10</sup>Do not forsake your own <sup>(B)</sup>friend or <sup>(C)</sup>your father's friend,
  - His decision may fail, but the wife must remember that her husband's failure is within God's providence.
    - Pray that God changes your heart (or his) and that He will use this circumstance for His glory, bring you closer to Him and bring you closer to each other
  - **Do you believe God is able to use your husband's decisions for His glory and your good?**
  - We will talk more about conflict resolution in a few weeks

### Let's Get Real:

- Selfishness is a major reason we back away from Submission
  - We don't *want* to do something our husbands ask us to do.
  - Why? Pride, selfishness, the curse:
  - **Genesis 3:16** <sup>16</sup>To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will <sup>(A)</sup>bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And <sup>(B)</sup>he will rule over you."
    - > “desire will be for your husband” This means:
      - Desire to manipulate, control, have mastery over, dominate
      - Every woman has the ability within her – God says so here in the curse – to manipulate a man
      - This is not a good thing! It is a curse. It was not God's original design.
      - **Luke 11:28** <sup>28</sup>But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are <sup>(A)</sup>those who hear the word of God and observe it." > obey God - for true happiness & fulfillment in Marriage is

obedience, not complete freedom – this means you do what your husband might ask you to do.

- **Do you willingly surrender this power so that your husband can lead you with a gentle touch?**
- Your husband's role is a BIG responsibility before God!
  - Sometimes I want my own way, but I don't want this responsibility
  - Illustration: fully leaning on someone with all body weight, as Submission puts godly pressure on husband to lead the family.
- There are some places scripture is unclear and we must make convictions BASED on God's Word that apply to our own lives. However, in the area of Submission, God is as plain and practical as possible:
- Submission should be evident in our lives in:
  1. attitude
    - a. selfish
    - b. I must choose to submit myself (Remember the definition: choose to place myself under)
    - c. Submission is a lifestyle: continual & comprehensive
    - d. submission originated at creation < **1 Cor 11:8-9**<sup>8</sup>For <sup>(A)</sup>man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; <sup>9</sup>for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but <sup>(B)</sup>woman for the man's sake., **Gen 2:18** <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; <sup>(A)</sup>I will make him a helper <sup>[a]</sup>suitable for him."
    - e. Submission is a positive thing! You & your husband are a team, you put all of your talents, resources, energy at your husband's disposal – all toward the effort of building a God-honoring, encouraging family. **What is your husband's calling? Have you adopted that in order to put all of yourself toward it also? (Unity!)**
    - f. Submit with joy, as submitting to the Lord < **Ps 40:8** I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." Respectful, appreciative, undemanding
  2. words
    - a. Your words have great power
    - b. **Proverbs 21:19** It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman. > contentious woman = always looking for an argument, irritating, hard to understand, annoying

- c. **Proverbs 10:20** The tongue of the righteous is as <sup>(A)</sup>choice silver, The heart of the wicked is worth little., **Proverbs 31:26** She <sup>(A)</sup>opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. > wisdom & kindness should fill your words, because it fills your heart < **Luke 6:45** <sup>45"</sup><sup>(A)</sup>The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; <sup>(B)</sup>for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

3. action

- a. Your actions have even greater power than your words < **1 Peter 3:1-2** <sup>1(A)</sup>In the same way, you wives, <sup>(B)</sup>be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be <sup>(C)</sup>won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
- b. **Ephesians 5:22** <sup>22(A)</sup>Wives, <sup>(B)</sup>be subject to your own husbands, <sup>(C)</sup>as to the Lord. > submit “as to the Lord”
- i. Serve your husband as you would serve the Lord.  
**Have you asked God to glorify Himself through your submission?**
  - ii. Part of serving the Lord is disciplining your children & keeping your home, ... this is directly related to submitting to your husband
  - iii. Is there any part of your life as a woman & wife that does not relate to submission to your husband? NO. Because your husband deserves and should have full access to your life and your heart.  
**Is that true in your life?**

## Responsibilities

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from Feminine Appeal, The Excellent Wife

### Intro:

- Whether you work at home or you work at home as well as work outside the home... every woman is **called** to work at home, by God, as a helper to her husband.
  - I was out shopping with E when one of the kids suddenly had to go potty and I asked him to take them both because it is highly likely that the other one will need to go soon as well... he refused. I said, “why not?” and he said, “I just can’t. I wasn’t made for that.”
  - There are things your husband *just can’t* do. He wasn’t made in that way. Yes, of course, he can be taught to physically turn on the washing machine, but it is highly unlikely that he will think about the upcoming week and the specific clothes that are dirty that need to be washed for each person in the family – especially he will not do it as you can do it!
  - We all have tips/tricks and we *love* to share and hear them, but I want to try to give you some principles behind what you do.

### It is a calling & a desire

- God calls every woman to be a worker at home
  - **Proverbs 31** > almost all of the duties she performs would require for her to be at home. There are 9 out of 22 (almost half – 41%) verses that talk about her at home
  - **1 Timothy 5:14** <sup>14</sup>Therefore, I want younger widows to get <sup>(A)</sup>married, bear children, <sup>(B)</sup>keep house, and <sup>(C)</sup>give the enemy no occasion for reproach; > “keep house” = to rule or guide the house
  - **Titus 2:3-5** (verse 5) <sup>3</sup>Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, <sup>(A)</sup>not malicious gossips nor <sup>(B)</sup>enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, <sup>4</sup>so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup>to be sensible, pure, <sup>(C)</sup>workers at home, kind, being <sup>(D)</sup>subject to their own husbands, <sup>(E)</sup>so that the word of God will not be dishonored. >

“workers at home” = guards the dwelling; a keeper of the household

- Part of a calling as a wife is to run her household in a way that is pleasing to God
  - When you said “I do” you accepted God’s call on your life as a wife. You are called to be a helper to your husband, and this is an area where he tends to be weak, so it is a major area of your ministry to him. You are a team, and a big part of your contribution to this team is responsibilities in and around your home.
  - Seek to glorify God.
    - **James 3:17** <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom <sup>(A)</sup>from above is first <sup>(B)</sup>pure, then <sup>(C)</sup>peaceable, <sup>(D)</sup>gentle, reasonable, <sup>(E)</sup>full of mercy and good fruits, <sup>(F)</sup>unwavering, without <sup>(G)</sup>hypocrisy. > people are more important than a clean house.
    - Make it a place where it is impossible to keep from thinking of God.
    - Make it a place of outreach
    - Make it a place of care to others, your family being first priority.
    - **Micah 6:8**> Be faithful in the little things.

#### Call it what it is

- What are the responsibilities in a home?
- What is involved in guiding/guarding the household? (**You tell me...**)
  - Organized rooms
  - Clean house
  - Laundry
  - Thoughtful grocery shopping
  - Planned meals
  - Children
  - Gardening
  - Smells fresh
  - Inviting atmosphere (décor)

#### Be motivated!

- It is not very often that I get up in the morning, jump out of bed, and run around the house in great glee saying, “today is laundry day!” Actually, that never happens.
- So, what is the motivation for keeping a house clean & organized?

- Trying to please the Lord <**Colossians 3:23** <sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, do your work heartily, <sup>(A)</sup>as for the Lord rather than for men, It is work to maintain a home!
- **Philippians 4:11** <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be <sup>(A)</sup>content in whatever circumstances I am. > learning to be content in my role & responsibilities to God's glory. It draws others out when I am content in my role.
- **1 Corinthians 10:31** <sup>31</sup>Whether, then, you eat or drink or <sup>(A)</sup>whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. > doing it all for God's glory. If God has called me, and He has commanded me, then I should seek to be obedient to Him
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18** <sup>18</sup>in everything <sup>(A)</sup>give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. > being thankful that I have a home to care for and things that God has provided that require maintenance and attention
- **Philippians 2:5-6** <sup>5(A)</sup>Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in <sup>(B)</sup>Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, although He <sup>(C)</sup>existed in the <sup>(D)</sup>form of God, <sup>(E)</sup>did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, > Love for my husband, serving him. It would not be the same without me.
  - Have you ever been to an all-boys' house/dorm? It would not take more than trying to live in that environment as it is about 24 hours before most of us would begin cleaning, dusting, and some of you even decorating!

### Shirk it

- What happens when you let go of these responsibilities? Or have wrong motives?
- Chaos and disorder create tension and contention
  - Drains your energy to work on your relationship with your husband
  - Drains your energy to enjoy and discipline your children
  - Contentious woman <**Proverbs 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15** <sup>9</sup>It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
  - Easy to become lazy <**Proverbs 6:9-11** <sup>9</sup>How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? <sup>10</sup><sup>(A)</sup>A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest"--

<sup>11(B)</sup>Your poverty will come in like a vagabond  
And your need like an armed man.

#### What can you do?

- A godly wife is organized and works hard to operate her home with the least possible chaos.
  - She creates an optimistic, joyful atmosphere for her family  
<**Proverbs 31:13, 25**<sup>13</sup>She looks for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight. <sup>25</sup>Strength and <sup>(A)</sup>dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future.
- Be teachable, willing to be an available helper
  - Ask your husband each day, “What can I do for you today?” *And then do it!*
  - Ask yourself, “What will most help my husband today, this week?” *And then do it!*
  - **Philippians 4:4-5** <sup>4(A)</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. <sup>(B)</sup>The Lord is near. > rejoice always; let your gentle spirit be known
  - **1 Peter 3:4** <sup>4</sup>but let it be <sup>(A)</sup>the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. > become a woman with a meek & quiet spirit
  - I am not trying to ask you to add on more responsibilities or jobs, but to choose JOY in them unto the Lord.

#### Take it home

- Love your husband in and through your home
- Fulfill the call God has given you with joy
- Love your husband in front of your children – with or without him there



# God's Kind of Wife: Lover

*Lesson Materials Taken from Intimate Issues, Helper By Design, and Love that Lasts*

God, the author and creator of sexual intimacy, has much to say about it in His Word. God wants us to think about, talk about, and take part in this act of marriage in light of His Truth.

## 6 Reasons God created the gift of Sexual Intimacy:

1. God gave the gift of sex that you might create life. Genesis 1:28

Adam was created from dust and Eve from Adam's rib, yet God didn't choose to use either method to continue populating the earth.

God crafted our bodies in a manner to mold and fit together.

2. God gave the gift of sex for intimate oneness. Genesis 2:24, Eph 5:31-32

The intimacy of sexual union is that God looks at 2 separate beings: two different minds, spirits and bodies as no longer two, but one.

Our physical union with our spouse is a picture of the intimate spiritual union that Christ has with his Church.

3. God gave the gift of sex for knowledge. Genesis 4:1

Carol Mahaney, "Marital sex is the pinnacle of human bonding. It is the highest form of the communication of love. It calls forth the deepest, most powerful emotions. It creates intimacy within marriage like nothing else. In fact, as we give and receive the gift of lovemaking, this intimacy will grow stronger and more precious as the years go by. Each encounter will lead us to a deeper "knowing" of the one we love."

Elyse Fitzpatrick, "The sexual relationship is wondrously unique because it is unmasked, unclothed whispers of surrender and intimate self-revelation accompanied by an embracing acceptance of another."

4. God gave the gift of sex for pleasure Proverbs 5:15, 18-19

Elyse Fitzpatrick, "That women are to enjoy sex is evident by the fact that they were created with an organ that has no other use but pleasure."

God created us with bodies that can give and receive pleasure.

5. God gave the gift of sex for defense against temptation. Prov 5:15, 2 Cor 7:2,5

Many women recognize they don't have sex as often as they should, but fail to think about this abstinence as SIN.

When we refuse our husband's attentions, we're actually robbing him and stealing what is rightfully his. (Elyse Fitzpatrick)

Men are surrounded by woman in the workplace that strive to look their best. If you want your husband to desire you, be desireable.

6. God gave the gift of sex for comfort. 2 Samuel 12:24

When there are no adequate words, this is a way a wife can show care and comfort for her husband.

## GODLY and SENSUOUS: Learning from Solomon's Bride

1. She is responsive Song of Solomon 4:16

She makes herself available to her husband.

2. She is Adventurous. Song of Solomon 7:11-13

She initiates lovemaking. She recognizes each spouse has equal responsibility and privilege.

3. She is uninhibited. Song of Solomon 2:6, 7:1-3

She lets her husband touch and look at her body.

4. She is Expressive. Song of Solomon 2:16, 1:16

She verbally communicates her desire and attraction.

5. She is Sensuous. Song of Solomon 5:10-16

Her thoughts are prepared to act out her sensuousness with her husband.

## **Growing to be Godly and Sensuous**

*Questions taken from Wayne Mack's Sweethearts for a Lifetime*

### **7 Day Prayer Plan:**

Pray one of the following prayers as it applies to you:

“Lord, give me a desire for my husband...”

“Lord, give me a new mind to reprogram my thinking with your view of sexual intimacy...”

“Lord, give me an undivided heart so as to not separate my spirituality and my sexuality...”

“Lord, help to continue to grow to be the sensuous lover you created me to be...”

### **Psalm 139:14**

Spend time in front of your bathroom mirror praising God for all the ways you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

### **Evaluating My Attitude About Sex:**

1. When you think of sex, what words come to mind?
2. Do you recall any specific events that may have affected your sex life?
3. What did you learn from your parents about sex? What was their attitude? Did they enjoy sex?
4. What stirs up sexual guilt or shame in you now?
5. What were your expectations regarding sex, lovemaking and intercourse before marriage? What are they now? What are your husband's expectations? How are they being fulfilled in your marriage now?
6. Do you seek to please your spouse?
7. Do you anticipate and enjoy sexual relations with your spouse?
8. In what ways do you need to grow and change in this area of sexual intimacy in order to please God (2 Cor. 5:9) and better please your spouse?

## God's Kind of Wife: Lovers and Overcomers

Intro: God is the Creator and Author of everything good and perfect. God is the Creator and Author of sexual intimacy. We heard that last week. We're all coming from a different place regarding this issue in our marriages. For some, the thought of intimacy with our spouse is exciting, it is wonderful and it is often. For others, it's a drudgery, a task to be completed or avoided or a duty. There may be some in this room that have closed the cabinet on that area in their marriage and don't want to deal with it at all—maybe there is hurt or betrayal and there no longer is intimacy. Or maybe there are some that feel like it's a means to an end...trying to have a family, and it's now become a task or a job or very ritualistic. There may be some that struggle with health issues that make this area in their marriage difficult or infrequent.

I am so glad that God wants to grow us into the image of His Son. That He never leaves us where we are. No matter where you fall when it comes to intimate issues, God has answers. God's design for marriage is that we be intimate and consistent with our spouses. That we enjoy each other and please our spouses, and in so doing, grow in our relationship and protect it from destruction. Wherever you are today, God wants to grow your relationship into something that is beautiful—or more beautiful than you ever imagined possible.

According to Dr. Ed Wheat, author of *Intended for Pleasure*, the average couple spends no more than one hour a week in lovemaking. Dr. Wheat says, "Sexual intimacy can be a joyful affirmation of the life two people share, or it can be a revelation of the defects in their relationship. IT will either draw a couple together or push them apart. Because your sexual relationship will tend to reflect your emotional relationship, it is important to realize that every meaningful, fully enjoyable sex act really begins with a loving, attentive attitude hours or even days before. When both partners assume the responsibility for giving of their total selves—physically, emotionally and spiritually—sexual interaction becomes a dynamic way of fully expressing love for each other. It is your daily behavior toward each other that will measure the extent and depth of the pleasure you find in making love sexually."

This is why we didn't start off talking week 1 about being lovers to our spouses. First and foremost, we cannot get away from the fact that as children of God, our goal and our pursuit has to be—2 Cor. 5:9—to make it our ambition to be pleasing to Christ. When that happens, then we are able to die to ourselves, work toward unity in our marriages, love when it is hard to love, submit when it is hard to submit, respect, and communicate rightly.

But, the health of our marriages really can be seen in our sexual relationship. When I talked with Ernie and Carolyn about these lessons, they said that a couple rarely ever comes for counseling and says, "our sex life is great, but everything else is falling apart." When we fail to deal with issues, most often, where we notice it pop up is in our bedrooms...in our desire for each other and in our taking part of the gift of marriage that we talked about last Sunday.

I asked you last week to spend some time evaluating what your attitude is regarding intimacy. Linda Dillow says that an attitude is an inward feeling expressed by an outward behavior.

### What is my attitude toward intimacy with my spouse?

---

Sex is something I do b/c  
I have to....

Sex is something I do b/c  
God says I have to...

Sex is a way I can give love to my  
husband and minister to him....

### Recap: What's God's Attitude?

1 Cor. 7:3-5 "Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

--Duty carries with it the idea of an unpleasant task. But the message conveyed by the Greek word is actually that of a "debt." (Dillow, Int. Issues)....It's not a favor (ok, I'll accommodate you) but payment of something that is owed. There is a principle in this passage of need, authority, and faithfulness.

-God gave us both a sexual need. Sexual passion is a God-given gift like good health and children. Our relationship will be blessed when we meet our husband's need thru physical pleasure.

-In marriage, we participate in a "gift exchange". My body is his, his body is mine. Each person has equal responsibility and equal privilege.

So, we have the principals...the application is...DO IT! But, this morning, you may be sitting here with a big "but" hanging over you. We are going to spend time talking about our butts this morning....and I am not talking about the ones you examined this past week as you stood naked in front of your mirror.

BUT #1: "But we're designed so differently!?!"

-Linda Dillow says that men are like microwaves and women are like crockpots.

-God did not make us the same!

- Proverbs 24:3-4 "By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

**-We must seek wisdom, understanding and knowledge about the ways our spouse is different and then use the info to regain oneness and dissolve differences.**

Genesis 2:7, 15, 17-21

-Man was formed from dust, woman was formed from flesh

- Man was placed in garden alone; woman was brought to the man so they could be together
- Man was created with a need, woman was created to fill a need
- Man's job was to work; woman's job was to help man with his work
- Man's job was cognitive/task oriented (name the animals); woman's job was emotive/relational (meet the need of the man)
- Man's body was created to give seed; woman's body was created to give life.

God created man and woman with different physical features, abilities and different roles, but in the intimacy of sexual love, the differences faded away and the two became one flesh (Genesis 2:24).

- These differences are an asset and not a liability.
- When sin entered, Adam and Eve's oneness was slashed. As their eyes were opened, they were naked and became ashamed and hid their bodies. They weren't grateful for one another, instead blamed one another. Their differences did not unite them, but divided them.

*How are we different today?:*

- Man is wired to be singularly focused, while a woman is designed to be able to think about multiple things and do three things at once. My husband told me a story the other night about his friend who said its not possible for him to look out the window while his wife tells him a story because his mind goes directly to what he's looking at.
- Hormone levels are constant and steady in a man (river) while they ebb and flow in a woman depending on where she is in her cycle. Her desire might be high in the early parts of her cycle when the estrogen levels are high.

-Her body is designed to have sexual longing triggered in many spots, while man's sexual glands and stimulation points are located in one specific area.

-Men are designed to be more physical, while women naturally more emotional. Women are used to discrediting and dismissing their physical needs. We put value on emotional needs. I had the stomach flu recently and spent an entire day getting up and down, feeding my children, wiping bottoms, changing diapers...when all I really wanted to do was sleep. We as women can deny our physical needs.

*Celebrating and Overcoming differences:*

- Sex is a time to be singularly focused. My mind has to be in sexual gear. (Romans 12:2) I need to transform my mind and prepare it to love and desire my husband.

-Ride the wave...when hormones are high, pursue your husband! When you feel it, don't resist it!

-Use your verbal skills to your advantage. Describe what feels good to you and where it feels best. Be specific and affirmative.

-Understand that cuddling for a woman accomplishes an emotional need, while the same emotional need is accomplished for the man thru sexual intercourse. Both say, "I love you. You are important to me. I love being near you." Sexual intimacy creates an outlet of expression where a man will be more open afterward to share emotional communication as well.

-Embrace the differences. Think about your sexual desire. Then multiply it times, like 7. Can you imagine what it would be like for your desire at that level to be running thru your body constantly, at all times? We'd never get anything done if we were wired like our husbands. Praise God...but, that being said, allowing him the release he needs is not altogether really that time consuming gives him release from all that testosterone flowing thru him.

-Rejoicing in the differences (E. Fitz)---Sexual intimacy gives us the opportunity to learn to embrace unity in the midst of diversity. We both learn how to serve and submit to each other. The husband learns to care deeply about his wife's well-being, even when they're not intimate. The wife learns to care deeply about her husband's well-being and take more of an interest in intimacy, even when she isn't experiencing a heightened libido caused by hormone fluctuations."

-We want to be careful that we don't try turn our husbands into girlfriends. Embrace and rejoice in differences.

But #2: "But what if I just don't feel like it?!"

-I said last week that the place to enacting change is first on your knees before the Lord. Changed actions are the result of changed attitudes. And changed attitudes begin with prayer. We need to examine our hearts to see if there is a reason that we want to withhold or that we don't desire our spouses or don't feel like it or don't want to. We are designed differently, so it is natural that our sex drive might not be the same as our spouses'.

In Love that lasts, the author says, "Ladies, when your husband initiates lovemaking, what's on the line is nothing less than his heart, his leadership and his perception of your respect for him. Consistent refusal and rejection could tempt him in ways you could never imagine! Next time you are not in the "mood", consider not looking at your own circumstances, but God's Word and cry out for the grace to serve your husband."

So...how do I shift into sexual gear when I don't feel like it?

Linda Dillow says to ask God to strike you, in that moment, with a severe case of the willies:

I WILL DENY MY SELFISHNESS AND RESPOND TO MY HUSBAND...

I WILL GIVE MY BODY AS A GIFT...

I WILL ENJOY SEX AND PRAISE GOD FOR CREATING THIS BEAUTIFUL WAY TO RELATE TO MY HUSBAND...

I WILL MINISTER TO MY HUSBAND AND THINK OF HIS NEEDS RATHER THAN MY OWN...

Can I say “not tonight?”

--Be careful in how you say it and why you are saying it. Men are vulnerable in this area and sensitive because rejection is rejecting them as a lover (his masculinity is wrapped up in being a lover). He is vulnerable when offering himself to her.

--Offer another opportunity. Time to unwind, a shower, ask for help with the children to allow you time to get in the mood.

--“I rarely said no in the past, I’m not saying no for the future, I’m saying no for this moment.”

--Pray regularly “Lord, give me a desire for my husband.” (BEGIN IN TRANSFORMING YOUR MIND)

--Submit to the Lord...choose to honor God and make this a priority. If you have to, plan a night and prepare yourself all day for it. Pursue your husband...ask him for intimacy (even if this means in your planning to choose a day of the week to do this). My friend at work ate chinese food and had sex every Wednesday. We made fun of her about it, but there were weeks that the busyness of life preventing intimacy with my spouse...but she never missed a Wednesday.

--Die to self and pray that God would change your attitude.

-If it is a health issue that keeps you from wanting to...if something is medically wrong or you have physiological problems, see a doctor! If medical help is needed that could alleviate pain, infections, discomfort, ect...get help!!

BUT #3—“BUT I HAVE ALL THESE KIDS, and I’m Exhausted”

Murphy’s Law says, “sex makes little kids, and kids make little sex.” Linda Dillow says that if we don’t make sex a priority when our kids are 3 and 5, we will not make it a priority when they are 13 and 15. We cannot postpone lovemaking until our kids are at a better stage or until everything is crossed off our to-do list.

There is a reality here...80 percent of husbands and wives surveyed by Parenting magazine said their sex lives suffered as a result of having children. I have 3 children myself. And I often feel overwhelmed and exhausted. But, if I am honest, I usually find time to put dishes in the dishwasher before I head off to bed. Or occasionally stop to fold the load of laundry...or, inevitably I can fall asleep on the couch watching tv and then go to my room to wash my face...and as I doing so, I might notice that my eyebrows have grown up like wildfire and might spend 30 minutes plucking them before I actually get in bed. Or, as I am plugging my phone in to charge, can spend 30 minutes on facebook lying there on my pillow...but when my husband looks at me with those eyes, something inside me often says, “why can’t he see how tired I am!”



If this applies to you and you want some of Linda Dillow's practical suggestions without reading her entire book...I have a sheet you can pick up before you leave that is entitled: "Creative Home-Cooking". It is simple ideas for pursuing intimacy with your spouse in the midst of the spit-up, car pool years.

But #4—"But His Sin is disgusting to me..."

Sin always separates. It separates us first from God and then from one another. In a church our size, it is probable that there are some wives who have husbands that deal with secret sins, or marriages that are reeling from past sexual sin...or have unrepentant, unkind, unloving husbands. Satan attacks Christian marriages, and I am sure that there are some of us who know that deeply and intimately, and while they are hanging on...hurt and bitterness have destroyed something between the two spouses.

Marriages that are in trouble can be transformed as God breathes life back into them and shines the light of Jesus Christ into the darkness. Psalm 18:28 says, "For it is you who light my lamp, the Lord my God lightens my darkness."

If this is where you are, I don't want to make light of it. There is hope. If you feel like your marriage is dying, by the grace of God, He is able to make all things new. I know this because my husband and I at one point sat in front of Ernie with the "help...we are in trouble!" plea. God can transform any situation, and any marriage.

No matter what your situation is, there is no shame in asking for someone else to come alongside you...It is best if you and your husband do this together, but there are Godly women in our church who do counseling that can help you move toward your husband.

Dillows book gives a few things to think about:

-Do I have any behaviors or attitudes toward sex or my husband that have been harmful to our marriage relationship. Job 34:32 can be a prayer "teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again."

-Am I judging my husband or looking down on him for this sin? If your husband has fallen into sin in some area, remember that there is no temptation that has taken him that is not common to man....(REFERENCE). Chances are there is sin in your life too that makes you undesirable and unlovable.

-Am I withholding forgiveness. We need to be willing to have an attitude of forgiveness where we are ready to grant forgiveness in the same manner that God has forgiven us.

-Is God pleased with how you are handling the situation? Pray Psalm 19:14 that the words of your mouth and meditation of your heart would be pleasing in God's sight.

NO Buts about it...we can reclaim passion in our homes...

In the Song of Solomon 8:6-7, Solomon says the secret to the passionate love he and his bride share is that God is the source—a burning flame of the Lord, that many waters cannot quench

or floods drown. Linda Dillow says that this word passion is the same word that is used in the Old Testament of God that at other times is translated zeal, or jealousy. She says, "God's zeal, His passionate and jealous love for his people, is an all-consuming passion that is both intense and invaluable."

Jeremiah 31:3-4 says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love..." God loves us with a true, holy passion that pursues us while we were unworthy of it and while at times, we are still unworthy of it.

To recapture love and passion in our homes, we have to **make it a priority**. If you today would say, "MaryBeth, I just don't have time for it...." My response to you is that you will have time for whatever is important to you. For the last three years, Juston and I have had the opportunity to go on a totally free vacation with another couple. They need his pilot skills, and in return, they bring us along and pay for everything as payment for his flight time. The husband, on this last trip said this... "we have 7 children, and the reason we do things like this is because I don't want our kids to grow up and leave our home and us just then realize that we don't know each other and don't have a marriage anymore."

Couples are eager for the fruitful harvest of intimacy in their relationships, but sadly, many don't want to take the time planting and nurturing.

Secondly, we need to set an atmosphere for passion. What does your bedroom look like? What feeling does it evoke when you walk in? Recapture your bedroom. Set the stage. Very often, my bedroom looks like a tornado came thru...when we have small group at our house, it becomes the dumping ground where everything else we fail to pick up in the course of a week gets dumped and thrown into that room. Linda Dillow says that sex isn't an event, it's an environment.

3. prepare your mind and body for passion. Your sense of sensuousness begins before your husband ever even enters the room. Allow yourself time to get into a passionate frame of mind. God gave us the gift of our 5 senses, so use them. Invest in lotions that smell great and help you unwind...candles that flicker—everyone looks better by candlelight!—soft music...be creative about how you can use taste and touch.

And 4...try new things. Linda Dillow says that she thinks about sex in terms of food. Sometimes you want appetizer sex, sometimes home cooking, and other times a gourmet meal. Some of you, tongue in cheek, have asked me if I am going to give you new ideas or tips. A few of your husbands are expecting you to get great things out of this class...so, if that's you, I have a take home sheet for you too. I didn't put these at the back b/c I didn't want you just reading them the entire hour...and, secondly, if you don't need this kind of information, or don't want this kind of information out of Sunday School, you don't have to be offended by the materials.

I want to close with a story that ran a few years back in Ann Lander's column. I think it sums up what we've been talking about these last two weeks. We can talk about tips and ideas, but in

the area of sexual intimacy, we have to be willing to make passion with our spouses a priority in our lives. Here's the column and story of a couple who did just that:

"Last weekend, we celebrated my parent's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. This morning, they left on a long awaited trip to Hawaii. They were excited as if it were their honeymoon. When my parents married, they had only enough money for a 3 day trip 50 miles from home. They made a pact that each time they made love, they would put a dollar in a special metal box and save it for a honeymoon in Hawaii for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Dad was a policeman and mom a school teacher. They lived in a modest house and did all their own repairs. Raising 5 children was a challenge, and sometimes money was short. But no matter what emergency came up, Dad would not let mom take any money out of the Hawaii account. As the account grew, they put it in a savings account and then bought CDs. My parents were always much in love. I can remember Dad's coming home and telling mom, "I have a dollar in my pocket," and she would smile at him and reply, "I know how to spend it." When each of us children married, our parents gave us a small metal box and told us their secret, which we found enchanting. All five of us are now saving for our dream honeymoons. Mom and dad never told us how much \$ they were able to save, but it must have been considerable, b/c when they cashed in those CDs, they had enough for airfare to Hawaii, plus hotel accommodations for 10 days and plenty of spending money. As they told us goodbye, dad winked and said, "tonight we are starting an account for Cancun. That should only take 25 years."

# Serving Together

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from Sweethearts for a Lifetime

Announce:

- Ladies Studies for fall
  - Precepts study
  - Ladies morning Bible study
  - Merri Davis dessert night
  - Sign up for a small group
  - Adopt a college student early September
  - Opportunity to share
    - Audible
    - Brief
    - Christ-centered
    - Delightful

Intro:

If I am being completely honest, I have been more than a little disappointed by the lack of material written in the marriage books we have been using on this particular subject! Not only is it a small chapter in some books, it is completely overlooked in most books; I realize not every book can cover every area, but this could be an area that becomes a real marriage-builder and source of spiritual life to a couple.

Serving together, ministering together is a point of mutual collaboration, toil, prayer, love, sacrifice so that others may benefit from what is, hopefully, the center of all that you are together as a couple – pointing toward Christ.

I have had the great privilege of ministering with my husband since we met. I know this is not the case for every couple; and our get-together story is very awkward compared to most... I would love to share it with you some other time. However, there is something fantastic about seeing your husband lead others and working through circumstances together involving service and sacrifice.

Many of you may have had the same experience with your own husbands, or have admired from afar other couples that seem to do it so easily. Just like

any other area in marriage, it takes work: sacrifice of time, energy, resources, attention.

Let me give you some biblical examples of couples who did ministry together...

### Examples:

1. Adam and Eve were to care for the garden together.

Gen 1:28 <sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the <sup>[a]</sup>sky and over every living thing that <sup>[b]</sup>moves on the earth.”

2. Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and explained God to him more.

Acts 18:26 <sup>26</sup> and <sup>[c]</sup>he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

### Whom do you serve?

- In order to serve together, you first must choose to serve him
  - That is, serve your husband to make him successful
    - Philippians 2:3-4 <sup>3</sup> Do nothing <sup>[a]</sup>from <sup>[b]</sup>selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
  - Serve Christ to exalt your Lord and bring honor to your husband.
  - Become his crown
    - Proverbs 12:4 <sup>4</sup> An <sup>[a]</sup>excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames *him* is like rottenness in his bones.  
> a valuable treasure to her husband
    - That he may be proud and thankful to have her as his wife because of the way that she submits to him and helps him.
- Are you happy to do your part in order to make him (your husband) happy?
- Proverbs 31:28-29 <sup>28</sup> Her children rise up and bless her;  
**Her husband *also*, and he praises her, *saying*:**  
<sup>29</sup> “**Many daughters have done nobly,  
But you excel them all.**”
- By making Christ the focus of your marriage, your relationship with your husband will be enriched and enhanced.

- Proverbs 31:30 <sup>30</sup> Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *But* a woman who <sup>[s]</sup>fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
- 2 Corinthians 5:9 <sup>9</sup> Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to [the Lord].

When we choose to marry, we take on the responsibility of a partnership. You become 1+1=1. You commit to walk through life together – sometimes it is intentional/active, to buy a house together, to start a family together; sometimes it is by default/passive, to ride in the same car together, to play with your children together.

I want to encourage you to become intentional/active as you go through life together, particularly in those areas where ministry happens, whether you want it to or not.

Ephesians 5:15-16 <sup>15</sup> Therefore <sup>[i]</sup>be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup> <sup>[k]</sup>making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

### Work Together

According to the book I've read, I picked out just a few places in your home, as you are guarding and leading your home; you are actively or passively serving with your husband.

- **Training your children**
  - Passive: Do it because you have to, without research, wisdom, prayer, or communication.
  - Active: Make a plan together, follow through consistently
  - Do you obey your husband's rules when he is not around?
  - Do you support your husband's decisions in front of your children when he is around?
  - Have you implemented "chicken time"?
  - Does your marriage cause your children to think about Christ? The ones who see you at your best and at your worst....
- **Budgeting the finances**
  - Passive: Knowing there is a limit and resenting it
  - Complaining about your husband's provision for you/your family is really complaining about God's provision for you.
  - "We can't afford it" every time can look to children as a lack of provision. Find a way (notebook) to hear and consider requests in order to thoughtfully decide the importance of the item.
  - Active: Make a plan together, be thankful for the ways God has provided.

- **Leading Spiritually**

- Passive: Hope that he will one day initiate with a perfectly laid out plan including wisdom, research, and probing questions with examples.
- Active: Make a plan together, choose to leave dirty dishes, gather the troops, be personally ready to contribute.
- Make family devotions easy – suggest the time, even the material and make it happen. Who manages/guards the home? So, make it part of your plan and *help* him make it happen.
- Pray for your husband regularly
- Pray together for your children/family

- **In your husband's workplace**

- Passive: Ask him about his day while holding a child and cooking dinner and setting the table and talking on the phone.
- Active: Make yourself available, empathize with the challenges and encourage the easier days.
- No matter the occupation, choose to be involved in helpful, supportive ways.
- Ask about his day, go to events without complaining.
- Carve out time to listen. Not just like you would listen to a girlfriend or fellow momma, but listen with your whole face! Men communicate and listen different than we do, so we must be willing to listen to them different than others.
- Make time and arrangements to meet coworkers if possible.
- Be as involved as he will allow you to be.
  - Make an effort to remember names, descriptions of people.

- Are you using your marriage as a vehicle through which Christ is honored and served and eternal work is accomplished?

Ephesians 5:15-16 <sup>15</sup> Therefore <sup>[i]</sup>be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup> <sup>[k]</sup>making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

- Are you exalting Christ?

Psalm 34:1-3 <sup>1</sup> I will bless the LORD at all times;  
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

<sup>2</sup> My soul will make its boast in the LORD;  
The humble will hear it and rejoice.

<sup>3</sup> O magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt His name together.

Great! We are ready to serve together in our homes, but if you remember at the beginning of this lesson, I gave you an example of a couple – Priscilla and Aquila who ministered together outside of their home/family.

Let's think of some places where we can minister to others *within our family of believers*: (because if we opened up this list to the world, then the list is endless...

Just Do It!

- Hospitality
- Teach Sunday School
- Lead youth activities
- Prepare meals
- Visit sick/newborn
- *Evangelize your neighbors*
- Sing in the Christmas program
- Counsel others
- Disciple other women
- Every year, if you are involved in a small group, you are given and fill out a ministry sheet to indicate what areas of ministry you would like to serve. Fill this out, and say "yes!" if possible when someone calls.
- Just last week during the worship service, Pastor Ernie mentioned that there are people at other churches who are calling the church to ask where they can serve... are there needs in the nursery or in the Sunday School classes?
  - **Which of these are you going to volunteer for this week?!**
  - I am here to tell you that our church has a great need in our Sunday School classes.
  - There are circumstances that are currently preventing regular teachers from serving in some of these classes.
  - It is not enough to think that IF someone were to call you, you would think and pray about maybe saying yes. You call, you serve, you minister with your husband!



This is a lot of opportunity to minister, how can you bring it down to something that I can truly make happen in my life... how do I know when to say “yes” and when to say “no”?

- Make a mission statement
  - Simple – one memorable thought, can grow
  - Scriptural – based on God’s Word, He knows what is best for you!
  - Sustainable – attainable, reachable goals
  - Supernatural – something that could not happen aside from the movement of the hand of God

I will worship God and serve Him with humility so that others also will praise Him.

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And let us exalt His name together.

v.1 – worship God

v.2 – personal commitment to humility

v.3 – multiply, bring others with me.

# Discipleship

*Every woman will walk away loving God more and willing to serve her husband more in the role of being a helper suitable.*

Taken from Spiritual Mothering, pink journal...

Intro:

God has given some of you a passion for youth, some a passion for kids, some a passion for the physically needy, some a passion for the addicted. My passion is women and seeing the Lord glorified in and through their lives.

***How would you define discipleship?***

I think I might have shared last week about being a little disappointed by the amount of material offered in marriage books about serving with/alongside your husband.

This week we are talking about discipleship. And there is little or nothing said in marriage books about discipleship. Perhaps I am keenly aware of this as it is so close to my heart, but it is simply glaring to me that we – as “the Church” – tend to classify discipleship as ministry and marriage as family. I hope to give you a small vision of changing that paradigm that we tend toward **into** *Family is discipleship and marriage is ministry*.

Are you pouring into your husband spiritually?

Are you challenging your children spiritually? Are you willing to study in order to continue to teach them from God’s Word?

We have talked for 11 weeks about marriage, today we are going to be focusing in on discipleship specifically.

If we are going to change this paradigm, then we need a working definition of discipleship.

Discipleship is:

- Titus 2:3-5 > <sup>3</sup> Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, <sup>4</sup> so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup> *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.
  - Why should the older women be reverent? To teach the younger.
  - Why should they teach the younger? To glorify God.

- Susan Hunt's def: A woman possessing faith and spiritual maturity enters into a nurturing relationship with a younger woman in order to encourage and equip her to live for God's glory.
- Preeminently focused on God's glory
  - Psalm 34:1> <sup>1</sup> I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- The Lord is the well out of which all else must flow
  - Psalm 1:3> <sup>3</sup> He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- Jesus is the reason, the motivation, the center of your marriage, your family, your ministry and your discipleship.
  - Just as in every other area we have discussed in this class: Child of God, Helper, Unity, Respect, Communication, Submission, Responsibilities, Intimacy, Serving Together (discipleship)
- A woman's overarching desire to help another woman glorify God in her life.

#### Discipleship is not:

- A mere mechanical formula
- A relationship handed over because the one needs "help"
- Finding a person at the antithesis of life from you
- Requiring biological birth nor chronological age

How do you become a part of this? Discipleship sounds great, but where do I fit?!

#### Who is a younger woman?

- Psalm 34:2> <sup>2</sup> My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.
- Willing to listen
- Follow the advice/wisdom

#### Who is an older woman?

- Spiritually mature
- Life experiences
- Manifest virtues of Titus 2:3
  - Reverent – Biblical view of life

- Not gossip
- Not addicted
- Teaching good doctrine
- Knowledge of sound doctrine that produces faithful living
- Seeking to grow & live obediently

“Too often today, older women are an untapped resource in our churches, while younger women are searching for Proverbs 31 women whom they can emulate. God’s answer solves both problems.” ~ Julie Garland (St. Louis)

I believe that most of you in this room are both a younger woman as well as an older woman. Are you willing to be humble, teachable, learn from another? Do you have experiences, knowledge that you can give to another?

You only need to be one thought more advanced than another to give them something they don’t already have.

As God created us female, He gave us relational strengths that make spiritual mothering easy/natural/nurture; we are relational, we have been given Christ-like characteristics to nurture, and obedience to selfless living brings out the best in us.

Spiritual mothering has more to do with demonstrating and modeling godliness in life – lived out – than with teaching lesson plans.

You do not need the perfect “program” in order to teach someone what the Lord has taught you.

**Multiplication Chart:** As you teach what the Lord has taught you, they can turn around and teach the same to another, and then another. This happens physically (passively) within the family, and God designed for it to happen by design within His family also.

“Not every woman can give biological birth, but every Christian woman can enter the high calling of spiritual reproduction and motherhood.”

~Susan Hunt

I truly hope that through this class, you have been highly encouraged and slightly more equipped to love your Lord more and serve your husband more. By a loose definition, MB & I have been discipling you for several (11) weeks. You’ve been committed to the class, you’ve been teachable, we’ve read & studied.

*Family is discipleship and marriage is ministry.*

- Are you pouring into your husband spiritually?
- Are you challenging your children spiritually?
- Are you willing to study in order to continue to teach them from God's Word?

There is one more extremely practical tool I have that I would like to teach you that you would be able to teach others also, that the Lord would be glorified.

OIMA: 2 Cor 5:21

<sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Observation:

*What does it say?*

- Paul is talking about reconciliation with God (2 Cor 5:20)
- God made Jesus to be sin.
  - Why? So I can become the righteousness of God
  - How? In Him

Interpretation:

*What does it mean?*

- There is hope for me to have a right relationship with God in Christ
- Shows me the lengths God has gone to in order to redeem me
  - Taking me from my life of sin (Col 1:13-14)
  - Put me into His family, with His righteousness
- I have a responsibility to tell others about this hope

Meditation:

*Have I thought about it?*

Regurgitating the things I already know, already have written  
Josh 1:8 thinking of these things throughout the day

Application:

*What am I going to do about it?*

- Preach the gospel to myself today
- Praise God for my position in Him
- Make decision to discipline in gospel of grace

Last week, we talked at the very end that a mission statement should be:

- Make a mission statement
  - Simple – one memorable thought, can grow
  - Scriptural – based on God's Word, He knows what is best for you!
  - Sustainable – attainable, reachable goals
  - Supernatural – something that could not happen aside from the movement of the hand of God

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v.1 – worship God

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HW: share lessons learned by way of ABCD