

## **Marriage and Family**

### **Lesson 4 – The Christian Woman in Marriage**

There are a number of elements that make up an ideal home. It can be argued that one of the most crucial elements is that of the wife/mother role. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to have a Christian mother and/or wife, who honors Bible principles, certainly realizes what a valid argument that is.

There are only two issues we wish to look at in respect to the Christian woman in marriage:

1. What Bible based principles help a Christian woman understand her role in marriage?
  - 1.1. **Proverbs 31** displays for us the characteristics that all Christian women should strive for in their life.
    - 1.1.1. Virtuous (pure).
    - 1.1.2. Trustworthy (honest, faithful, loyal).
    - 1.1.3. Good to her husband.
    - 1.1.4. Wise (reasonable, rational).
    - 1.1.5. Benevolent (generous, compassionate, unselfish).
    - 1.1.6. Rightfully self-confident.
    - 1.1.7. Honorable (honest, ethical).
    - 1.1.8. Blessed and praised by her family (comes with living a Christian life).
  - 1.2. She must believe in and love God with all of her heart, soul, mind and strength.
    - 1.2.1. **Deuteronomy 6:5**
    - 1.2.2. **Hebrews 11:6**
    - 1.2.3. **Matthew 22:37-40**
  - 1.3. She must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. No woman who rejects Jesus can be the truly ideal wife.
    - 1.3.1. **John 8:24**
    - 1.3.2. **John 8:30-31**
  - 1.4. The wife is to be in subjection to her husband.
    - 1.4.1. While it is understood that the role of a Christian woman in marriage is vital, we must never forget that God has set forth a chain of command for us to follow. God is over Christ, Christ is over the church and man, and man is over woman. This does not mean that woman is inferior in any way to man or that she is to be a slave to man. The woman is to be treated with dignity, care and the utmost respect. The husband is to love the wife with the same love that Christ has shown for the church (**Ephesians 5:25**). Christ gave his life for the church and man should love his wife so much that he would be willing to sacrifice everything, except his soul, for her.
    - 1.4.2. In the society in which we live, the suggestion that a woman should be in subjection to her husband is considered male chauvinism and a denial of woman's equality. Even some within the Lord's Body suggest that those who teach that woman are to be in subjection to their husbands believe "that

women are an inferior order of humanity.” The principle of subjection is biblically based (**Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18**).

1.4.3. Wives are to submit themselves to the husband, as unto the Lord (**Eph. 5:22**).

1.4.4. What about a Christian woman married to a non-Christian man?

1.4.4.1. **1 Peter 3:1**

1.4.4.2. **1 Corinthians 7:13-16**

1.4.4.3. She must not assume leadership in the home. She must not be domineering. She must not act as though she were the head of the family.

1.4.4.4. Is she exercising authority over the man if she tries to get him to go to church?

1.4.4.4.1. Not necessarily. It is certainly right for her to encourage her husband to do and to be what God wants him to do and to be. But this encouragement must be in the confines of “a meek and quiet spirit”

1.4.4.4.2. A Christian woman will always strive to lead her husband to the Lord. She knows that the husband may be gained by her “chaste behavior coupled with fear” (**1 Peter 3:1, 2**). She will not nag or seek to domineer.

1.4.4.5. Can she discuss scripture with him?

1.4.4.5.1. The Bible does not forbid a woman to teach a man the word of God, for Priscilla taught Apollos (**Acts 18:26**). That which is forbidden is the kind of teaching that by its very nature involves dominion or authority over the man.

1.4.4.6. Who should lead the family in prayer at the dinner table?

1.4.4.6.1. Each member of the family should be encouraged to express his thanks personally, privately, and silently.

1.4.4.6.2. The Christian woman should **NOT** lead the prayer.

1.4.4.6.3. The Christian woman should not call upon the non-Christian husband to lead the prayer.

1.4.4.7. There might be times when the wife will have to be the “spiritual headship” in the family.

1.4.4.7.1. If the husband becomes mentally incapacitated

1.4.4.7.2. When the husband passes away

1.4.4.7.3. **2 Timothy 1:5**

1.5. She must understand the commitment which marriage involves

1.5.1. If you are not mature enough to leave your father and mother and make a separate home, you are not ready for a successful marriage. One of the biggest problems in new marriages is that one or both of the partners’ tries to be part of two households. They continue under the domination of parents rather than truly establishing their own home.

1.5.2. God intends for marriage to last a lifetime (**Romans 7:2-3, Matthew 19:4-6**).

1.6. She must be a good companion. She is to be the completion of man, not competition for him.

- 1.6.1. What passage in the Bible that involves human relations does not apply to the husband-wife relationship
  - 1.6.1.1. **Matthew 7:12** should first be applied at home.
  - 1.6.1.2. **Ephesians 4:32**, if applied at home, would solve much.
  - 1.6.1.3. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**
  - 1.6.1.4. A wife who exhibits this kind of love is totally unselfish. She does not demand her rights but willingly surrenders her rights when such does not compromise her God-given role in the marriage. She identifies with the words in **Romans 15:2-3**:
- 1.6.2. She shares the joys of life with her husband. When both husband and wife are Christians, they can live day by day in the hope which every faithful Christian has – the hope of everlasting life (**Titus 1:2**). Hope is desire, coupled with expectation. This means that she not only sincerely wants to go to heaven but she expects to go there when life is over. Thus living in this way, she can help her husband to also live in hope. She lives her day-to-day life in basic freedom from worry, anxiety and fear. She lives with the joy that passes understanding. (Ref. **Phil. 4:4-7**)
- 1.6.3. She shares the sorrows, trials, and tribulations of life with her husband. A wife who is a truly faithful Christian faces life in the light of God's word. (Ref. **II Peter 1:5-11, Gal. 5:22-23**) She will help her husband to truly trust God as good and holy, as a stronghold in times of trouble. Ref. **I Peter 4:12-16, I Peter 5:7**
- 1.6.4. She shares with her husband the great joys of both becoming and living as a parent. Sharing together the great experience of, first, bringing their children into the world and, then, of bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ref. **Ephesians 6:4**) She lets her children see - by what she says and by what she does – how much she loves them, her husband (their father), and God.
- 1.6.5. Learns to speak openly and honestly with her husband about their physical relationship.
  - 1.6.5.1. Each spouse has a very definite responsibility to the other. When love is present it leads each person in the marriage relationship to lovingly consider the other's desires and the needs of the other. Ref. **I Corinthians 7:2-5**
  - 1.6.5.2. Marriage counselors and doctors report that **almost 50%** of the women who come to their offices never or almost never get any pleasure out of the sexual relationship. This can lead to emotional and physical illness.
  - 1.6.5.3. Tenderness, kindness, and understanding must underlie and motivate the physical intimacy.
  - 1.6.5.4. It is intended as a means of expressing and growing love for and with your spouse.
  - 1.6.5.5. Do **NOT** assume your husband understands your feelings about your physical relationship. Christian husbands and wives should be able to talk freely and lovingly with one another about their needs.
- 1.7. She must honor her husband. She honors him by:

- 1.7.1. Wanting him as a friend.
- 1.7.2. Being proud of him.
- 1.7.3. Putting her trust in him.
- 1.7.4. Accepting his relatives.
- 1.7.5. Being concerned about her appearance and actions.
- 1.7.6. Wanting to please him.
- 1.8. She must assume her role in the home.
  - 1.8.1. The Bible does not condemn woman's part in contributing to the family finances, **Proverbs 31:16**; but the man is the primary provider and the woman's role outside of the home, as it is accustomed to do, lessens her effectiveness as a homemaker and mother. The Holy Spirit describes man's responsibility to provide in such terms as to indicate that it is an obvious responsibility which should be recognized almost intuitively. The role a woman takes outside of the home must **NOT** inhibit her ability to carry out the responsibilities God has given her (**Titus 2:3-5**).
- 1.9. 10 needs wives tend to not share with their husband but should
  - 1.9.1. She Needs Security and protection
    - 1.9.1.1. Not just physical, but emotional and spiritual
  - 1.9.2. She Needs Undivided Attention
    - 1.9.2.1. Quality time with her
      - 1.9.2.1.1. Eye contact, true listening
      - 1.9.2.1.2. Let her understand your relationship is important by how you spend your time with her
  - 1.9.3. She Needs Open and Honest Communication
    - 1.9.3.1. Your wife loves you, and she wants to know everything about you, even stuff you consider insignificant; even if the news is bad!
      - 1.9.3.1.1. The wound is more severe and takes longer to heal if she finds out the truth regarding a situation instead of you telling her. It sends a message of lack of trust and commitment.
    - 1.9.3.2. Communication is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship.
  - 1.9.4. She Needs Help with Daily Tasks
    - 1.9.4.1. Marriages don't have assigned tasks, except for child-birth.
    - 1.9.4.2. Be a servant and help your wife around the house.
  - 1.9.5. She needs a break
    - 1.9.5.1. Husbands, you should understand the important expectations on your wife
    - 1.9.5.2. Be sympathetic to them.
    - 1.9.5.3. Look beyond the words. Don't ignore them, but don't accept them either.
      - 1.9.5.3.1. Watch her.
      - 1.9.5.3.2. Study her.
      - 1.9.5.3.3. When you notice her struggling, step in and give her a break. Encourage her to sit down or get out of the house.
  - 1.9.6. She needs a leader to lead the family
    - 1.9.6.1. She lives life unafraid of failure
      - 1.9.6.1.1. Does she live with courage?

- 1.9.6.1.2. Does she use her gifts?
  - 1.9.6.1.3. Does she live as someone empowered?
  - 1.9.6.2. Relationships are healthiest when Jesus is made the top priority, the husband takes their role seriously, and they serve their wife.
  - 1.9.6.3. Husbands are the bedrock of the home. Selfish, passive husbands create unhealthy marriages (and families).
  - 1.9.7. She needs intimacy
    - 1.9.7.1. This comes in many different ways.
      - 1.9.7.1.1. Undivided attention
      - 1.9.7.1.2. Holding her is another
      - 1.9.7.1.3. Caress her
      - 1.9.7.1.4. Conversations where it's obvious her input/opinion matter
      - 1.9.7.1.5. Sex
    - 1.9.7.2. For women, sex is emotional, as well as physical.
  - 1.9.8. She needs thoughtfulness - thoughtfulness means you think about her
    - 1.9.8.1. Make her feel valued
    - 1.9.8.2. Texts, notes, phone calls, planning a special evening/time together, e-mails, flowers, etc.
  - 1.9.9. She needs space to be imperfect
    - 1.9.9.1. She needs a space where she doesn't have to put on a mask and pretend everything is ok.
    - 1.9.9.2. This means listening, especially when she talks about her feelings. You might think her issues are trivial. You'd be wrong. If you write her off, eventually she will stop sharing
  - 1.9.10. She needs to have fun
    - 1.9.10.1. Time together outside of the mundane.
    - 1.9.10.2. The husband's attention to and interest in their marriage.
      - 1.9.10.2.1. Spontaneity
      - 1.9.10.2.2. Adventure
    - 1.9.10.3. Real togetherness.
2. Does the feminist movement offer any insight to help the Christian woman understand her role in marriage?
- 2.1. What is the feminist movement? There are four different categories:
    - 2.1.1. Secular feminism – Attacks traditional family structure, promotes acceptance of homosexual life styles and generally rejects the Bible as anti-feminist.
    - 2.1.2. Goddess feminism – Parallels secular feminism closely but varies in its attempt to center itself in a religious and/or spiritual context. The religion of the Bible is rejected in exchange for pagan goddess worship.
    - 2.1.3. Liberal Theology – Has religious aspect but does not regard the Bible as the inspired and authoritative word of God. They want women to be able to fill any role man can in the church.
    - 2.1.4. Evangelical – Claim to believe in the inspiration and authority of the scriptures, but they argue that the biblical texts teach the feminist agenda. These feminists claim to accept the Bible fully and to be true conservatives but they interpret **1 Timothy 2**, **1 Corinthians 14**, and other passages in

such a way as to advance feminist ideals in religion. Our discussion will center on this category.

2.2. The ignorance shown by those holding to the feminist beliefs laid out in the teachings of the first three categories does not warrant our time or attention in this lesson. It is not possible to discuss what the scriptures teach with those who do not regard the scriptures as authoritative.

2.3. How evangelical feminists deal with biblical texts.

2.3.1. **1 Timothy 2:11-12**

2.3.1.1. They contend that Paul was dealing with a situation that was unique to his culture, and that the principles do not apply to the culture in which we live now. Paul himself anchored his teaching, however, to creation, not culture (**1 Timothy 2:13-14**). He placed his instruction regarding the role of women in a context that makes it impossible for feminists to establish that it was merely cultural

2.3.2. **1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

2.3.2.1. Some feminists have claimed that these verses do not belong with the remainder of Paul's discourse. Others have claimed they were given as a compromise to Corinthian culture to avoid reproach on the church. Even among our brethren, it has been strenuously argued that these passages belonged with the miraculous age and that they should not be cited pertaining to the role of women today.

2.3.2.2. Is it correct to say that **1 Corinthians 14:34, 35** governed the conduct of women only in a very limited first-century setting and that it has no application today?

2.3.2.2.1. **A special meeting** – It is noted that “brethren spoke in tongues, prophesied, and exercised the gift of interpretation.” A meeting of that type is no longer held. If we deny the applicability of a passage because miraculous gifts were exercised, are we willing to apply that principle to other meetings in the New Testament? On the day of Pentecost, the apostles spoke in tongues ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance’ (**Acts 2:4**). Who would rule out Peter's teaching and instruction on that day?

2.3.2.2.2. **For brethren only** – Some suggest that this was for brethren only-no outsiders present in this meeting. But note the statement of verse 23: “If the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? (out of your mind)” Paul makes clear that this was not a meeting in which unbelievers were excluded. There is no reason to assume that it was not a regular assembly of the church.

2.3.2.2.3. **Women bound by absolute silence** – It is alleged that the words for silence (*sigao*) and speak (*laleo*) demand absolute silence on the part of women; therefore, if these passages apply today, women cannot sing in the assembly, confess Christ, or confess their faults one to another. This is perhaps the most common argument employed against the present-day applicability

of **1 Corinthians 14:34, 35**. This argument is seriously flawed. The meaning of any New Testament word is determined not only by its definition, but also by its context. First, with reference to *laleo*, the meaning of the word is to say or speak. Paul says twice that it is not permitted for women “to speak” (v 34, 35). The meaning in this context is to address the assembly, to speak publicly. It has just been used in that manner in verse 29. The idea here, then, is public speaking, and that is what women are forbidden to do. As for *sigao* (keep silence), the meaning is restricted to the subject under consideration. Women are to keep silence in the assemblies; that is, they are to refrain from public discourse. That is the matter under consideration with respect to the role of women. You would note that in verse 28 and 30 relate that there were situations in which men were to keep silent also. There were women in the New Testament who possessed the gift of prophesy (**Acts 2:17; 21:9; 1 Cor 11:5**). Many people assert that prophesying was preaching, therefore, women of the first century preached. Several unwarranted assumptions are made in this argument. First, it would have to be established that in a sexually integrated assembly, women prophesied in a leadership/teaching capacity over men in those passages under consideration. There is no justification for that in any of the texts cited. Second, we must understand that the word “prophesy” comes from two Greek roots, *pro* (forth), and *phemi* (to speak). It is a very general term and may mean “to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort (**1 Cor. 14:3**). It can simply suggest the idea of “giving thanks and praising God” **1 Chronicles 25:3**). Furthermore, Paul limits the extent of woman’s teaching in **1 Timothy 2:12**. The negative conjunction used here is explanatory in force, suggesting that the kind of female teaching prohibited is that which exercises dominion over the man.

2.3.2.2.4. **Wives of prophets** – Some have concluded that where the KJV states “your women”, it is in reference to the wives of prophets. The passage nowhere states that the women under consideration were the wives of prophets. The ASV says, “ Let the women.” **Acts 2:17** where Peter is quoting the prophecy of Joel that says “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions.” This did not necessarily suggest family relationships. The text here is clearly dealing with those who possessed spiritual gifts. In verse 27 and 28 Paul speaks of the tongue-speakers, verse 29-32 the prophets. The context both before and after (v 37-39) deals with those who possessed spiritual gifts.

2.3.3. **Galatians 3:28**

- 2.3.3.1. Feminists state that this scripture supercedes all other statements in the scriptures and that all gender differences have been abolished in the church. Again, they fail to look at the context of this scripture.
- 2.3.3.2. Paul's apostleship was being denied by some because he was not one of the twelve apostles chosen during the personal ministry of Christ. His enemies wanted the Galatians to believe that the gospel Paul was preaching was false. The purpose in the Galatian letter is laid out in chapter 2. 1) Was it necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep to the law to be saved; 2) could they enjoy full fellowship; could a Christian Jew eat with an uncircumcised Gentile? How were the Gentiles children of God? By circumcision and the law? Did the Gentiles become children of God when they were circumcised? (*Answer:* verse 27) Now that the Gentiles are children of God, must they be circumcised to enjoy full fellowship? (*Answer:* verse 28, 29) Paul is talking about spiritual blessings. The oneness in Christ was not dependent upon changes in the social system. They became one in Christ upon their obedience to the gospel and enjoyed spiritual equality.
- 2.3.4. **Submission**
- 2.3.4.1. If the evangelical feminists had their way, the Bible would refer to nothing more than submission to God. But the language of submission occurs in many passages, which deal with human relationships. For example, **Luke 2:51** says that Jesus, as he grew, was obedient to his parents. **Romans 13:1** teaches Christians to be subject to the authority of human government. And wives are instructed to submit to their husbands who are to love and to cherish them (**Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Pet. 3:1-6**). Other scriptures could be cited, but these are enough to reveal two essentials of the principle of submission. First, a willingness to obey is a hallmark of the Christian spirit. Second, Christians have a responsibility to submit not only to the Lord himself, but also to God-ordained leaders in the home, in the church, and in the world at large.
- 2.3.4.2. Does submission mean that the one who obeys is inferior to the one who leads? No, submission does not imply inferiority. In fact, the Bible provides several examples. The most obvious is the relationship between God and Christ (**Phil. 2:6-8; John 1:1-14; John 6:38**). Headship does not imply superiority.
- 2.3.4.3. Does the principle of submission extend to every sphere of life? Yes and no. A meek and obedient spirit is basic to Christian character. On the other hand, there are only two areas in which women are called upon to be in subjection to men: in worship (**1 Tim. 2:11-12**) and in marriage (**Eph. 5:22-24**). The recent movement of women into the workplace has made women supervisors and managers a common feature of our society. While there is nothing inherently wrong with women directing men in the workplace, they must not neglect what is directed of them in **Titus 2:3-5**.



- 2.4. Acceptance of the feminist movement challenges the wisdom of God when he made them “male and female”
  - 2.4.1. It challenges God’s purpose – the issue is no longer equal pay for equal work, but identity. Shall the distinction in male roles and female roles be destroyed in the home?
  - 2.4.2. It presents a challenge to the church in the area of the woman’s role in the family, marriage and the church itself.
  - 2.4.3. To ignore God’s way relative to life and godliness, or to devise our own substitutes, is to invite disaster here in this life and the loss of our souls in the hereafter.
- 2.5. Women gain nothing from the feminist movement.
  - 2.5.1. How has the woman gained in regards to military involvement? Rape, sexual harassment, shared facilities, and death.
  - 2.5.2. What has the woman gained in regards to common sleeping quarters in college dorms? Rape, sexual harassment, shared facilities.
  - 2.5.3. What has the woman gained by laws being passed that allow homosexuals to teach your children in the school and you have little or no recourse regarding that situation.
- 2.6. Feminism has no biblical basis and no biblical support.
- 3. The Worthy Woman
  - 3.1. In **Genesis 2:23** Adam is expressing both the closest kind of kinship to the woman and at the same time is giving expression to the great value and worth that belongs to her.
  - 3.2. The worthy woman and her marriage
    - 3.2.1. **Genesis 2:24** teaches that the new relationship of marriage is stronger and more permanent than the relationship with the mother and father. God created one man for one woman. This new home is a permanent home for the earthly life of the man and woman (**Matthew 19:4-6**).
    - 3.2.2. The worthy woman realizes that God saw in the beginning that it was not good for man to be alone. She will strive to fulfill her divine obligations to her spouse. She will recognize and respect her husband and his authority as the spiritual head of the family (**Ephesians 5:22-23**). Wives and mothers follow the spiritual leadership provided by the husband and work within the family to accomplish the great goal – heaven for each family member (**1 Peter 3:1, 7**). We see all too often families that give little or no concern about their spiritual well-being and have no desire to go to heaven but rather are filled with a desire for more and more material possessions. In addition to this, the worthy woman, as a loving and faithful companion, works to create an atmosphere of warmth, joy, love, and security at home. She, like no other family member, creates a home atmosphere where it is a joy for father and children to come home from the difficulties of earning a living and growing up in this world. Further, she, through patience, perseverance, and prayer, so lives and works as to help lead each family member to Christ. Many men have entered into marriage only to be won to Christ by respectful and pure behavior of a worthy Christian wife.
  - 3.3. The worthy woman and her children

- 3.3.1. She is to love her children (**Titus 2:4**). If she truly loves them, she will do all in her power to bring them to love God and obey him. Children are a sacred trust from God (**Psalms 127:3**).
- 3.3.2. Normally, children trained properly will not depart from God (**Proverbs 22:6**), but they can allow evil companions to corrupt good morals (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). The way to respond to the challenges of life and the answers to the questions of young minds are often first given by a loving mother (**2 Timothy 1:3, 5**).
  - 3.3.2.1. Be an example (**1 Timothy 4:12**)
  - 3.3.2.2. Begin to train them properly while they are young (**2 Timothy 3:15**)
  - 3.3.2.3. Worship together as a family (**Hebrews 10:25**)
  - 3.3.2.4. Discipline your child (**Proverbs 29:15**) and restrain him from wrong.
  - 3.3.2.5. Teach your child respect for authority (**Titus 3:1**), for the rights and property of others (**Deut. 5:21**) and for honest labor (**Ephesians 4:28**).
- 3.4. The worthy woman and the church
  - 3.4.1. Her work is to be done to the glory of God (**I Cor. 10:31**).
  - 3.4.2. She is hospitable (**Acts 16:15**).
  - 3.4.3. She is charitable (**Acts 9:36**).
  - 3.4.4. She is concerned for the welfare of the sick as she strives to relieve the afflicted (**1 Timothy 5:9-10**).
  - 3.4.5. She continues with her work and being a godly example even into her elderly years (**Titus 2:3-5** and **1 Timothy 5:13**).
  - 3.4.6. She does not gossip, judge others, backbite, is not conceited, or caught up in worldly gains. (**2 Cor. 12:20**)

A home is not Christian because the parents are members of the church of Christ. It is Christian because the father sets the example and works to support that home, and the mother works in the home to make sure that his labor is not in vain. We need Hannahs to rear Samuels. We lack vision in this area and people's souls are perishing. We live on a dollar standard; and while we do, our homes, and our morals are depreciating. A woman humbled before God, serving in her various capacities within the realm God has prescribed for her, is, indeed, a worthy woman.