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## Faithful and Fruitful Marriage – The Wife’s Duties (Eph 5:22-24, Titus 2:3-5) - A Redeemed Culture #11

**Introduction** – As we turn to the duties of being a wife, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of remembering all that we have been teaching through this series, especially the fundamental gospel-truth that all doing must proceed from being. None of us are able in ourselves to keep God’s Law and when we turn to His commands for us, they are always to be received with evangelical faith (faith that is rooted in the death and resurrection of the God-man, the second Adam, our Lord and Savior). Otherwise, you will only find yourself under a spirit of condemnation (Rom 3:20, 5:20).

With that in mind, remember as well, we are not trying to encourage wives to honor God by determining to be a traditional housewife (whatever that is). We want Christian marriages, not scrubbed-up, middle-class marriages looking like something out of *the Stepford Wives*. God hates cups that are only cleansed on the outside (Matt 23:25-26). We don’t want to be perfectionists or hypocrites. We are called to be Christians.

And how do we avoid this ditch? Of course, by going back to the Word over and over again. And as we consider what the Word teaches, we are to constantly remember that wives are called to see themselves in Eve – coheirs with their husbands in the subduing of all things on earth to the glory of God and in covenant with God, all by grace through faith. But this means a biblical wife must be a redeemed Eve herself.

**Biblical Submission** (Eph 5:22-24) –

**United to Christ/Subject to Christ** – In order for the wife to follow these commands, she must herself know the love of Christ, what it is to be united to Him in His death, and what it is to find her life in Him as a member of the body of Christ (Gal 2:20-21). Her life is a life of faith, and in that faith she can submit to her husband as to the Lord.

**Responsive/Respectful Submission** – With her eyes on Christ, the wife is told to now look to her husband as well and obey him, respect him, and submit to him. Just as God was commanding to the husband’s general weakness (to love his wife), so he is commanding to the wife’s general weakness to neglect these things. Even the godly wife is likely to struggle here, because she so wants to help her husband and often can see where he is going wrong. But God gave you an imperfect husband, just as He gave him an imperfect wife.

**Qualifications** – This needs to be stated regularly. A wife’s submission to her husband is never absolute. Because it is “as to the Lord,” there are times when a woman submissively declines to follow her husband and even goes to other authorities. But it must also be said that this is rarely where the problem of applying these verses resides.

**Learning from the Older Women** (Titus 2:3-5) – Women are to learn wisdom from older women, and they can see from Paul what kinds of lessons to look for. The older women are first instructed themselves against any of their own temptations (they are to be “*reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things,*” – with an eye to admonish the younger women). Paul seems to be generalizing what kinds of temptations older women may need to remember to continue to mortify.

**Home-Centered** (v4-5) – You can see in these verses and in Prov 31 that the wife is to have her priorities towards the home, which is different than saying that her ‘place’ is in the home. She is to learn great skills in dominion and management of the home. She oversees the spending of the home budget (Prov 31:14), but she might also make decisions in the purchase and sale of property and goods (31:16, 24). She brings these things into the home to make the home a glorious place of feasting, rest and ministry (vv15, 20-21, 27-28). “*She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.*” (v26). The idea that this is not a *real* vocation is proof that this culture despises women and the office of a wife.

**Husband-Centered** – Titus 2:4 reads literally “husband-lovers.” Eph 5:33 calls wives to respect their husbands. Together, this means more than not showing disrespect, although it does mean that. She is to have a positive display of admiration, honor, and reverence to and about her husband (“*Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons.*” – Songs 2:3). It also means that her honor is displayed in a responsiveness to him (Songs 2:3), welcoming his advances and even drawing him to herself (Songs 7:10-13) in the intimate honor of the marriage bed.

**Children-Centered** – Titus 2:4 also reads literally “children-lovers.” And this means, that as God grants the opportunity for children, her day-to-day activities will be filled with them. Too often, this busy time for young mothers is dismissed by Christians with “*well yes, but do you have a ministry?*” What? These are your disciples. These are the ones God has given you (and your husband) in that cultural mandate to “fill the earth.”

**Obedient To Her Own Husband** (Titus 2:5) – Submission is not something you have to think about doing unless it is in a time when you differ with your husband. Obedience is something that only has to be admonished when the wife would rather not. In the little things and in the big things, she is to honor her head in this way. Husbands must teach submission by example. They must provide an

atmosphere where their wives are their best advisor, co-heir with the King, and sister in the Lord. But he will make mistakes, and she must listen to her Lord, and He says “submit to Him, respect Him, honor Him – I know what I am doing.”

**A Pleasant Home** – And what is the Lord doing? Through the duties of an obedient wife, a home is filled with wisdom and kindness (Prov 31:26). Wisdom, kindness, and respect, will bestow, by God’s grace, greater respectability in your husband. The world’s culture despises the office and duties of the wife because the world’s culture hates the Giver of life, and she is the one who brings forth life. She is like Eve, the woman from whom men would come (1 Cor 11:12). But they will always hate life when they hate the Giver of life and the Giver of new-life. And Jesus has sent you, wives to your husbands and followers of the God of heaven and earth, to see a culture redeemed.

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