

A Wife's Goal

A few weeks back, I delivered a sermon titled "A Husband's Goal." Another request came in (actually two for this one) asking to focus on a women's goal in marriage. Listen, it's more natural for me to challenge my brothers in Christ. I don't hold back. That lesson resulted in some positive discussion among some of you women. That tells me that we discussed things that are helpful to you in marriages. In other words - you were in agreement. I was genuinely encouraged to hear that. Sisters, I'm going to return the favor this morning - haha. I'm going to challenge you the same way I did my brothers. My hope is that it is fair, accurate, and helpful. Brothers, being in the same position as you, I pray it also blesses your marriage.

Ephesians 5:22–24, 33 "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands . . . However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- I'm surprised this portion didn't begin with the husband's role seeing as how he's been given the lead. But then you realize - he will only succeed if he's supported. It didn't take long to realize the common denominator in the marriage passages. Men are to love and understand their wives. Wives are to submit to and respect their husbands. Why? Because it supports their role. Imagine having to submit and show respect to a man you feel doesn't love you or want to understand you. On the flip side - imagine trying to lead and sacrifice for a woman you know doesn't respect or trust your leadership. Imagine having to fight for your role. It just doesn't work. So, Paul is giving sound advice.
- So, there's no need to apologize to women for their role. It sets the wrong tone and hints at criticizing God's order. Does it come with its challenges? Yes, it does. **Jesus knew a little something about submission to the Father, and it cost Him His life.** No, you'll hear no apologies from me this morning. Jordan said the martyrdom mentality won't work if you're trying to model the Lord. She said that making a show of our hardships is no different than a Jew who wanted everyone to know he was fasting for the Lord. He didn't play that card. So, *let's move past that. You already know that you're loved and equally important. You have a different role.* Your role is supposed to be challenging, too. Consider **Genesis 3:16**. Not to be too dramatic, but let's be clear: the women's abandonment of her role led to the fall. God's rebuke to Eve reiterated her position: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." You did not commit Eve's sin. You are not the reason women have birth pains. However, you (like us men) have transgressed. You are subject to God's order. And, to be fair, you often struggle with your role, just like Eve did.
- This isn't cafeteria-style subjection, either. If your husband is transgressing, you do not travel the same road. If he pressures you to disobey, you follow God rather than men. But outside of that, sisters, you are in subjection in everything.
 - **Colossians 3:22** Bondservants, obey *in everything* those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

- **Titus 2:9** Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters *in everything*; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,
- Marriages are not master-slave relationships, are they? Yet, if a bondservant could have enough faith in God to live in such a way, don't you think a wife could find it in herself to live with and submit to her husband in such a way? Especially when your husband is doing his best to love you?
- Ultimately, you are behaving in such a way "as to the Lord." That's the key to the whole thing because, as we'll see in the following passage, you may not have a believing husband or one that's kind.

1 Peter 3:1–6 "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. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening."

- Sisters, your role requires great patience and maturity. Let's be honest - not all husbands are equal. Nor are wives. Some men and women will completely give themselves in marriage because it's the right thing, and many won't. This directly connects to the kind of person you are and your faith in God. You cannot say that you love God and hate your brother. You certainly cannot say that you love God but despise your husband.
- The woman was made to be a helper. Has not God been our helper? Does that make God less than because He helps? Is Jesus less than because He obeyed God at the cost of humiliation at times? What was the Holy Spirit called by Jesus? What a beautiful picture of Christ. That's the point Peter is making. We look at Jesus and the abuse He endured and think, "How He loved me." We look at such a woman and think, "How she loves Jesus."
- Women don't love their husbands because of how kind or gentle they are. They don't love them because they're so lovable. What kind of love did Jesus have? **Romans 5:6–11**. Someone has to give. Someone has to swallow their pride. I can't imagine a man who doesn't change after seeing a wife that loves him so much after he's been a jerk. Again and again. However, at the end of the day, you do it because it's the right thing to do.

Titus 2:3–5 "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."

- My older sisters in Christ - the body needs your help. This doesn't affect the younger women in Christ from time to time. It affects most of her time. They need to hear things from you because men's counsel doesn't hold the same weight. God wants you to teach younger women how to love their husbands and children. He's asked you to teach them their roles. He's telling you they need help with submission and kindness.
- Kindness: don't give all your heart to those who don't live with you full-time. Don't pour all your kindness out to those who haven't devoted themselves to you. Save some for us. And

may I say this - yes, do it first and foremost for God, but let a little of it be done because you also love us men. Older sisters in Christ - we need you to lead in this area and help your younger sisters.

- Bring joy into the house. Give us something to rejoice about when we get home. Show the children what love looks like. Kiss us. Hold us. Speak kindly of us. Dote on us. Follow us. Believe in us. Please support us. Not because we're so good, but because you're seeking the goodness of Christ. Are we asking for a lot? Yes, we absolutely are because we need help in only a way you can give.
- Jordan's help to me over the past 15 years has been tremendous. I've found that when someone is dealing with extreme hurt or disappointment, the best approach is to love them rather than give an answer to their struggle. "Why is this happening? If God is good, why are things so bad?" I can personally speak as one who has experienced this. Jordan's role can't be described in words. Her actions of love have always been more powerful than her words (though they are also wonderful). I have experienced God's wisdom in my wife, which leaves me speechless. She performs her role beautifully. How much power do you think she holds in my life? **Yet, she's the helper.** Wives, you can build us up or break us down because of how much you mean to us. Sometimes you need to build us up, and sometimes you need to help us see ourselves for who we are. This leads me to another point in the text.
- You'll agree that the world our devotion to these roles until they experience their own marriages void of its blessings. They do so until they see it in action in you. As Paul would say - they're really not learning something about us as much as they are seeing a model of Christ and His body.