

Christ's Culture: Wife As Helper

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

Two major concepts of marriage, for the most part abandoned by modern society, establish the entire framework for marriage. In our last newsletter we looked at the importance of the two becoming one flesh. In this article we will look at the wife as a helpmate.

Men and Women are Different

God made Adam but found that Adam was incomplete. God “. . . formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky . . .” Genesis 2:19 As every beast of the field and every bird went by, Adam gave them names. But after all the animals paraded before Adam God still determined, “. . . there was not found a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:20 It was at that time that God put Adam to sleep, took a rib from him and made woman.

What was it that God was looking for which could only be satisfied by the exceptional creation of woman? God made a “help meet” for Adam, one who would complete him, a counterpart, which would make him whole. One of the definitions of counterpart in the American Heritage Dictionary is: “One of two parts that fit and complete each other.” Is it any wonder that God describes marriage as the two becoming one flesh? Why didn’t God just make another man? Adam wasn’t lonely, he was incomplete. He didn’t need a friend, he needed a counterpart. He needed one who brought him balance, a perspective not common to his understanding. He needed a woman. (Note that God made only one woman. If Adam had needed more than one God would have made him more than one.) The differences between man and woman, therefore, is in creation, not in culture.

Note: there was not discussion about equality, it simply wasn’t an issue. God made man for a purpose. God made woman for a purpose. One was not created superior and the other inferior. That discussion is fairly recent. As culture changes, the nature of man and woman, husband and wife does not. Who God has made a husband and a wife to be has been, and currently is, built into the very fiber of their gender. John Piper notes, “Differentiated roles were corrupted, not created, by the fall.” The attempt to make man and woman the same is a direct rebellion against who God has made man and woman to be.

Rebellion Revealed

The longer a lie exists the more difficult it is to see the Truth. The independent spirit of Americans has been nurtured and fed until it has become indisputable. As we saw in the last article, that spirit is not from God and works contrary to being who God has made us to be in the marriage relationship. Once the concept of independence is put to death you must come to understand the God-ordained role He has given you in the marriage relationship.

Understanding Helpmate

I spoke with a couple not long ago about the role of each person in the marriage. Out of sheer frustration the wife expressed, “I just can’t see myself submitting to my husband! I can’t see

myself jumping at his every command!” I assured her there is a significant difference between submitting to her husband and jumping at his every command.

Misconceptions

I believe most misconceptions about the relationship between husband and wife fall into three major categories:

Husband as god: According to this perception, all rule and authority belongs to the husband because he is the head of the house, woman is commanded to submit to him and what he says goes. He speaks, she jumps and all is well with the world! This perception allows a man to be capricious, arrogant and dogmatic.

Wife as goddess: With this perception the husband is the head of the wife but he must love her as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. This means the husband’s main responsibility is to keep the wife happy, if at all possible. The husband speaks, the wife agrees or disagrees, and then the husband submits in “love” to what his wife wants and all is well with the world.

We are all gods and goddesses needing to work in harmony. In this view marriage is more like a business partnership in which the husband and wife are equal partners. The object of the marriage is to come to agreement on all things with the focus on unity. Often one party or the other is the dominate, decision-making, partner while the other acquiesces. The “best case ” scenario in this situation is that both parties arrive at a “method” of negotiation, give and take. That works until a “major” decision arrives at which point the negotiation strategy fails and one of the previously mentioned strategies are employed; often both are attempted. The husband attempts to usurp his authority over the wife and/or the wife calls on her husband to “love” her and give in to her wishes.

Truth

Without Christ as your personal Savior, you won’t be able to understand the role He has made for husband and wife. God has made man and women to be one. The fulfillment of that requires each to deny themselves and give themselves completely to God. The giving of themselves to each other is through their relationship in Christ. Only through self-denial can oneness be achieved and the concept of the wife being a helpmate be understood.

The role of the husband is to be the spiritual leader of the home, the role of the wife is to be his helpmate and submissive to the decisions he makes before the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22-23) Man is not given headship because he is wiser, but because he is the one God has ordained to lead the family.

Woman has her God-ordained role as well. Righteous decisions are made when husband and wife fulfill their role in Christ. Neither the husband or the wife is sufficient to make the righteous decisions the family needs to be made.

Knowledge of the Truth is easier to accept than it is to implement. What does the relationship of husband and wife look like when the wife is a helpmate?

The Role of Husband

When you look at the God-ordained role for the husband there is no more difficult role for mankind. He is instructed, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless." Ephesians 5:25-27 The love of the husband is to be selfless, unto death, focused on the spiritual realm through the Word of God, not the temporal, and is to be with the purpose of presenting his wife to God in all her glory, without spot or wrinkle that she should be holy and blameless. Each husband is, above all else, the spiritual guardian for his wife.

When the husband recognizes his role as spiritual guardian rather than temporal dictator, it opens avenues for blessings which cannot be achieved by any other means. It also makes the role of the wife easier for her.

The Role of Wife

Without Christ as Lord and Savior, a wife can never be the helpmate her husband needs; first because she won't be able to get beyond her own selfish desires and second because her "help" is to be in the spiritual realm. Temporal "help" must flow from spiritual obedience.

In what way does a wife help her husband in presenting her to God "sanctified, washed in the water of the word, having no spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless?" Scriptures are not silent here, they are just neglected.

First, she must an intimate personal relationship with Christ (John 15:4-5). Without that relationship she won't know the manner in which she is to submit to her husband, since Christ is the example.

Second, she must submit to her husband as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22). Submitting in this way puts the entire weight of responsibility for leadership on the husband and his relationship with the Lord.

Where the wife believes the husband is making a spiritually unwise decision she must appeal to her husband the same way she would appeal to the Lord, with submissive respect to the decision needing to be made and the willingness to follow once the decision is made.

Modern View

Few married couples I have met discuss matters of any kind from a Scriptural perspective. Most discussions are based on human wisdom, "Does it make sense in light of what we know?" or human lust, "Is it what I want?". The real "spiritual" couples throw *scriptureze* at the topic but don't go to the Bible to find the principle(s) by which the decision needs to be made.

Seeing the role of the husband as the spiritual guardian of his wife and the wife as a spiritual helper in that regard is contrary to the focus of most Christian couples. As such, there is no Biblical understanding as to how the wife is to be a helpmate for the husband.

The focus of most couples is temporal, not spiritual. Food, clothing, shelter, transportation and toys are often the focus of married couples. When kids come along and schedules are more complicated things get added to the list regarding child rearing. It is often at this point that the husband and wife disconnect because their focus is altered. Mom often focuses on the kids and dad focuses on his career, or what he thought his career was going to look like and what he thought his

life was going to look like . . . often leading to discontentment and “mid-life crisis.” This focus on life does not differ from that of the world. As such, in general, Christian marriages don’t impact their community with the gospel of Christ.

Conclusion

Husbands and wives view things differently, even in looking at Scripture. A husband tends to put more emphasis on God’s laws and judgment. Wives tend to emphasize God’s mercy and grace. Between them, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, decisions are made with balance.

To make a spiritually wise decision every husband needs to hear from his wife. He does not need to hear her opinion, he probably already knows that. He needs to hear the Biblical principles she believes apply to decision needing to be made. He needs to hear from one as close to the decision as he is with *the freedom* to then take what he hears to the Lord for the direction they need to go.