

# God-Ordained Wives

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”  
Ephesians 5:22 NAS

Perhaps more than any other, the role and responsibility of the wife has been perverted by the enemy. Even broaching the subject from a Biblical standpoint is difficult because much of the role is laden with culturally sensitive terms, what I call “land mine” terms. It is hard to get to the root of the discussion because we can’t get beyond the “words” to an understanding of relationship. As a result of the sensitivity of the subject I ask that you take special care in reading this article and going back to scripture to discern the truth about a wife’s role and responsibility before God. Be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11), carefully search the Scripture before you agree or disagree with what I have said.

## Begin At The Beginning

Before we can begin to understand the role and responsibility of the wife we must go back to the book of Genesis and identify why woman was made. Yahweh, God, said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:18-19 According to God, man was incomplete without woman. God took a rib from Adam and hand fashioned a helpmate suitable for him. Having brought woman to man, God declared, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24 Woman, therefore, was made to complete man, to be a helpmate for him, to be one with him. Being a helpmate should be a wife’s primary focus. Being that helpmate requires her to understand her position in the marriage and the God-ordained authority in the home.

## Authority

The authority of a husband over his wife is established in Genesis 3:16, as God declares the consequences of the first sin of mankind. This is not a statement of superiority but one of authority. Man is to rule over woman. By itself that statement would rankle a lot of people in our culture. Taken in the context of Scripture in light of the role and responsibility of the husband (discussed in our last newsletter), we see this command is a statement of God’s governing through man instead of the capricious, heavy-handed rule of man. Man’s rule is not to be based on his personal preference, the way he thinks things should be done or his desire to “shape up” his wife. His rule is to be reflective of God’s purpose for man, wife and household. The husband is God’s representative in the household. His authority and the honor due him is a direct result of who he represents, not how well he is doing what he is suppose to do.

The role of the wife is thus described in Ephesians, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” Much to the consternation of modern woman, there are no conditional or descriptive phrases around this command. It is important to affirm, at this point, that this is a command, not a statement of preference, a suggestion or merely a cultural norm. What she is to do and how she is to do it is clearly described here.

## Be Subject

The word “subject” used in Colossians 3:18 and Titus 2:5 literally means to subordinate, to come under or obey. In our culture we don’t like that phrase in conjunction with an employer, let alone a personal relationship. However, we can’t ignore the command without invalidating the whole of Scripture.

Ephesians 5:33 says the wife is to be subject in “everything.” This, coupled with verse 22 clearly teaches that submission is unconditional. In the American mind that is not a pretty picture, especially coupled with the manner in which a wife is told to submit.

## As Unto The Lord

How does one submit as unto the Lord. It is really not a hard explanation. Jesus is worthy of all we

have and are. He is worthy of our complete and total submission in every conceivable way. There is nothing for which Jesus could ask or demand from us which He has not already paid for with His life blood ([1Corinthians 6:20](#)). This, according to Scripture, is the manner in which a wife is to submit to her husband.

How can this be?! All logic, reason and human dignity seems to scream “This cannot be!” Husbands come in so many different shapes, sizes, temperaments and spiritual maturity. How could God demand of all wives that they submit to their husbands as unto the Lord?

### Worthy

The strongest argument against this Scripture, from a human sense, is that no husband is worthy of such honor and submission. This cannot be disputed. No husband, regardless of how gentle, kind, thoughtful or Spirit-filled is worthy of having his wife submit to him as unto the Lord.

Read each word carefully. The command is not based on how worthy the husband is of a wife’s submission. The command is clearly void of any mention of the husband at this time at all. Only the wife and the Lord are mentioned. As such, there must be a reason other than his worth for a woman to submit to her husband.

Submission is to be as unto the Lord for the Lord **IS** worthy. Each husband is in the chain of command from God, to Christ to husband. Each and every husband represents the God-head in each home. Each husband has as his God-given first priority for the family their spiritual growth. His worth for a wife to submit only comes through him from Christ.

### Yeah-But

I am sure the Scriptures discussed above are not new to you. They have faithfully been taught down through the ages. However, they have not been taught or modeled as being an inviolate command from the living God. The woman’s role in the home, society and church has been under attack for a very long time. The Scriptures are too often taught with a “Yeah-But” framework.

A “Yeah-But” acknowledges the general truth of Scripture but exempts the person currently discussed as though they are an exception to the command. Some “Yeah-Buts” would include: having a husband who is non-Christian, hasn’t earned the right, spiritually less mature, has a dominate nature, isn’t good at (fill in the blank), hasn’t earned my respect, is generally not as wise as the wife (evidenced by past experience) and the consequences of following this command would be **catastrophic** for the wife and children. Each of these take a variety of forms, leaving us with an endless list of reasons for the command not to be fulfilled.

Sadly, the exceptions to the command far overwhelm those living by the command. And there are, and have been, atrocious examples where the husband has abused this responsibility given to him. I believe the “extreme” cases are to be handled by the elders of the church within the framework of teaching and discipling God has established.

Too often husband and wife are seen, even in the church, as separate individuals, with separate lives, separate goals, separate priorities and individual purpose. In American today, we don’t have marriage, as God has ordained is, as much as we have legal co-habitation.

### Godly Perspective

God has established no other authority in the house than that of the husband. Were all the “Yeah Buts” valid we would be left without an authority structure which is God-ordained.

We could run down a lot of rabbit trails at this point regarding the mess we are in overall regarding the family structure, single family households and the like. God has given us the answers to all these situations. Space does not allow me to address them here. For right now, let our focus be the God-ordained wife.

A wife submitting to her husband as unto the Lord is the true authority structure for the home. In every household there can only be one “final authority.” There cannot be two authorities and have a smooth running home. The wife and the children are in subordinate roles and responsibilities. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “**I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.**” Even Christ, was under authority. So too is man and woman as ordained by God.

### Appeal to Authority

I have yet to meet a perfect husband. Try as he may husbands will respond in less than perfect ways. As such, I believe a wife needs to learn the way to humbly appeal to her husband’s authority. The manner of appeal, I believe, is shown to us by Daniel ([Daniel 1:8-13](#)) in the Old Testament and by Peter and John ([Acts](#)

4:18-20 in the New Testament. In both cases they made known that a problem existed between what was being requested and what the person believed they were compelled to do before God. I am confident both appeals were bathed in prayer and both responses were directed by God. I believe learning to appeal in this manner is vital to a Godly home.

### Consequences

As with every other Biblical command, there are consequences for not living under the order as established by our maker and God. I believe the disintegration of civilized society is, in part, a result of the disharmony of authority in the home. Because submission is not learned in the home, modeled by wives, submission is not practiced in society. Even divorce would be significantly reduced were the Godly balance of authority learned and applied.

### Balance

God willing, I will address the God-ordained marriage combining the husband and wife roles. Until then, I pray that God will grant you the time and inclination to read this with “God-Ordained Husbands.” From the two articles I believe you can get a sense of how God would have things operate in the home.

Next Issue:

### **God-Ordained Children**

Feel free to comment on this article at:

<http://Newsletter@GrowLeaders.org>