

**05/09/21      The Meaning of Womanhood  
                     Various Scriptures**

Good morning, a special Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers here and to those who are watching online! If this is your first time here, my name is Adrian Garcia. I am the associate pastor of student ministries and missions here at Cornerstone.

We always tell our guests three things: First, we are really grateful that you are here. We consider you to be God's gift to us, so thank you for choosing to worship with us this morning. Second, you're in a place where the ground is level which means no one is any higher, better, or more significant than anyone else. The ground at the foot of the cross is level ground and we are all sinners in need of a Savior. And Jesus is that wonderful Savior.

While your salvation may be a personal matter, God never designed it to be a private matter. He wants us to live as brothers and sisters in the family of God. Which leads to the third thing I have to tell you: And that is that we love you enough to speak the truth to you. And that is Truth with a capital T. The truth about God's Word, about Jesus, His person, His works, and His words and how He will change your life from the inside out. He is the Cornerstone of our faith.

Pastor John Marc is at a wedding in Colorado, and I am thankful for this opportunity to preach. Last week John Marc preached on the Meaning of Manhood in the Home. This morning we will be looking at The Meaning of Womanhood in the Home.

Our world has high expectations for women. Today's "ideal woman" is the informed and skilled expert of everything while maintaining the charming veneer of external beauty. Look at her Instagram feed, and you'll see: she gets the job promotion, balances the budget, gets her kids to eat Brussels sprouts, and she can run a marathon, all without ruining her makeup.

Women are told that they can and should be all that the world tells them to be. They don't need to let traditional, outdated, patriarchal, and "oppressive" stereotypes of "femininity" define them. Yet, at the same time, many women in our culture feel trapped by these impossibly lofty expectations. To be successful, to have cute kids, be pretty, have a Magnolia Farms house, and have a life that is so put together it could be pinned on Pinterest.

Where can we go to think rightly about what it means to be a woman? Where can women learn God's design for them? Where can women learn of God-given roles and priorities? Where can men learn how to treat women?

Women have been given instruction by their Creator on how they are to express womanhood. And that is what we will look at this morning.

Usually, the doctrine of biblical manhood and womanhood is addressed within the marriage relationship. If you are here this morning and that is not what the Lord currently has for you, I would encourage you to not tune out. Although the outline is specific to the marriage relationship, you will find that fundamentally the aim is to be a mature woman of God. If God chooses for that to be within the confines of marriage, then praise God! If God chooses for that to be within singleness, then praise God! It doesn't change the goal. We are seeking to be more like Christ.

Purpose: My prayer leading into this morning was that I would be able to impart something to you that would encourage, strengthen, and build you up. I have to admit, I am no expert on this doctrine. And with a teaching like this, I will not be able to answer or address every issue. But I am thankful to share with you from God's word as a brother in Christ.

What does biblical womanhood look like in the home?

Outline:

- I. Helper of Her Husband
- II. Honor to Her Husband
- III. Keeper of Her Home

## **I. HELPER OF HER HUSBAND**

Whenever biblical manhood and womanhood are discussed, it is important to start where the Bible begins. With our created equality. Pastor John Marc did a great job last week laying that foundation for this series. By way of review, let's briefly cover the biblical truth of man and woman being created as equal image-bearers of God.

Genesis 1:27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Nowhere does the Bible say that man or woman is created more in the image of God than the other. Understanding this provides needed correction against the errors of male dominance or male superiority. Men and women are equally made in God's image. We are equally important and valuable to God. We have equal worth before Him for all eternity.

Why would I say that a godly woman is a helper of her husband? Doesn't being a helper imply one is inferior, or not equal? No.

To better understand this let's think through Genesis 1 and 2. Throughout the creation narrative there is this repeated phrase: "was good." God made the light, and (1:4), "He saw that it was good." God made the dry land and the seas, and (1:10), "He saw that it was good." He made the plants and the trees, (1:12) "He saw that it was good." He made the sun, the moon, and the stars, (1:18), "He saw that it was good." He made the sea creatures and birds, "He saw that it was good." He made the land creatures and the creeping things, "He saw that it was good."

Genesis 2 provides specific details concerning the creation of man. We read in (2:18), "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.'" This is a literary device used to underline the vital contribution the woman provides to the man. It was not good for man to be alone, and so God created a suitable helper.

The word "helper" in Hebrew is (*ēzer*), and it is often used in Scripture to describe God. He is the gracious Helper of His people (Ps. 33:20; 70:5; 115:9). The word "helper" by itself doesn't fully explain what God intended the relationship between Adam and Eve to be.

To understand their relationship, and by extension, all husbands and wives, we must see the whole phrase, (18) "a helper suitable for him." The Hebrew text could be translated, "I will make for him a helper fit for him." Eve wasn't created to help Adam here or there. Instead, it says that God made Eve a helper, one who would function as a helper for Adam by virtue of creation.

In the NT, Paul reaffirms this truth when he writes (1 Cor. 11:9), "for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." The woman was created to compliment man and to be his companion. She was to use her gifts and abilities to help her husband.

This principle is referred to as the headship or leadership of man in marriage. In fact, Paul says in (1 Cor. 11:3), "But 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." Does this mean that men are permitted to mistreat their wives? Or that women are to be treated as second-class citizens? Absolutely not.

Here is a definition to help us understand male-headship and how women were designed to help. Biblical headship in marriage is *“the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, [and] the man bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction.”* God calls the man, with the counsel and help of the woman, to see that marriage relationship serves God’s purposes. Not the sinful inclinations of either spouse.

Men, we will all have to give an account for the way we have led our wife and our family. It is us who have the primary responsibility before God to lead them according to His word. Wives, it is God’s design that you support and assist your husband in accomplishing this endeavor.

When this is done well, it is an incredible sight. When a husband and wife embrace all that God intended for them to be, it resounds with honor and glory to God. God’s wisdom for marriage is put on full display. Marital strife is reduced because both spouses have the common goal of glorifying God. There is a deep companionship felt because both spouses are giving everything for this joint purpose. There is no confusion in the marriage because each partner knows their specific role and how essential their contribution is to the whole.

So, why isn’t everyone living out this God-intended purpose? Why is the man’s leadership and the woman’s submission in marriage seen as an oppressive construct today?

The answer is recorded for us in Genesis 3. There we discover that men and women have a far greater problem than the world acknowledges: the problem of our sin and rebellion against God. After Adam disobeyed God, the Lord pronounced a curse upon the man and the woman. Gen. 3:16 reads, “To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.”

In the Fall, sin entered the creation and corrupted God’s original design. Instead of Adam and Eve living in harmony, now Eve would desire to usurp her husband and compete with him for leadership. And Adam, also fallen, would resort to asserting dominance over his helper. Paradise was lost.

Since the fall, our disposition is the irrational rejection of God. We are prone to rebellion against God and His word. Pride has become our natural posture. Any authority outside of ourselves is resisted at all costs. Consequently we misunderstand, misinterpret, and misapply what the headship of the husband and the submission of the wife means.

But through the gospel, and in Christ what was lost can be, and ultimately will be restored. And this leads us to our next point, which is the instruction we see wives given in the NT...

## **II. HONOR TO HER HUSBAND**

Ephesians 5:22–24 reads, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”

Marriage was designed by God to be a visible representation of the relationship that exists between Christ and His people. This covenant relationship serves as an analogy. The man and the woman each have commands and responsibilities to obey to accurately reflect the bond between Christ and His bride. In this picture, the wife represents the church and is called to honor her husband by loving submission.

Submission is God’s (perfect, all-wise, all-loving) way of attaining and maintaining function and order. The teaching of submission is not limited to women. All believers are called to submit to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1). We are called to submit to our church elders (1 Tim. 3; 1 Pet. 5; Heb. 13:17). All Christians are

called to submit to one another in different ways that are appropriate for the context of those relationships. And this intentional order also applies to the home (Eph. 5; 1 Cor. 11:3).

In each of these horizontal examples there is not a hint of inferiority or devaluing of the one submitting to the other. Instead, this brings clarity and harmony regarding within the social structure. In fact, this order is merely a reflection of what we see within the Trinity.

Let's again read (1 Cor. 11:3), "But 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." In this verse, "head" (Greek, *kephalē*) refers to one who is in a position of authority over another. Paul is here referring to a relationship of authority between God the Father and God the Son. He highlights a parallel between that Trinitarian relationship (divine economy) and the relationship between the husband and wife. This is an important analogy, because it shows that there can be equality and differences in relationships between persons at the same time.

The Father and Son are equal in their deity and in all their attributes. Yet they are distinguished in their personal relations with each other and us. So too a husband and wife are equal in dignity and value as image-bearers, but different in the roles God has given them. Just as God the Son is subject to the authority of God the Father, so God has planned that wives be subject to the authority of their husbands, which in no way diminishes their shared value.

Scripture regularly speaks of the Father-Son relationship within the Trinity, a relationship in which the Father "gave" his only Son (John 3:16); "sent" the Son into the world (3:17, 34; 4:34; 8:42; Gal. 4:4); The Son obeys the commands of the Father who sent him (John 12:49) and says that He came to do "the will of Him who sent me" (John 4:34; 6:38). All of Scripture asserts the equal deity of the Father and Son, yet they still teach a distinction of the persons in terms of roles.

And these relationships are never reversed. Never does Scripture say that the Son sends the Father into the world, that the Holy Spirit sends the Father or the Son into the world, or that the Father obeys the commands of the Son or the Holy Spirit. So when we think of the marriage relationship and the design of God for men to sacrificially lead and women to humbly submit, we can't allow the world's influence to skew our view. This is something that finds its very origins in our Triune Creator.

What does this submission look like? It is demonstrated in commitment and dedication to her husband. The wife provides wisdom and counsel as his companion. She diligently labors with him as his partner. She encourages him as his teammate. All of this benefits the husband in his pursuit of a God-glorifying home. The wife does everything she can to support and foster godly leadership within the husband.

This assistance isn't based on the husband's worthiness. Instead, the wife offers this encouragement to her husband in obedience to God. The wife's motive must be pure. She shouldn't be ultimately driven by a desire to see a change in her husband change.

Let's be honest here for a moment. All of us have room to grow. Husbands have weaknesses in their leadership. Wives, you must look beyond your husband's shortcomings. You must find your greatest delight in doing that which is pleasing to the Lord. As you faithfully love and support your husband and submit to his leadership, rejoice that you are glorifying Christ and living a life pleasing unto Him.

Like all commands in Scripture, submission is both an act of the will and a matter of faith. There is a need to choose and embrace this role submission. Knowing that you are not simply serving your husband, you are ultimately serving the perfect Husband, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This means that in thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes, the honor of your husband before your family, before your friends, and before the watching world must be consistent with God's desires.

To be clear, we also need to discuss what submission is not. The wife's submission to her husband does not mean that the husband replaces Christ. She isn't expected to give in to every demand. As in every other context of submission, we as believers submit only in as far as what we are being asked is not in violation of God's word.

Just as Peter and the apostles said before the religious leaders in Acts, wives may have to say, "[I] must obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29

Wives should not submit to their husbands if he forbids them to go to church. Christ has commanded that we gather for corporate worship. We cannot forsake the gathering. A wife cannot submit if the husband prohibits her from evangelizing their children. That is a God-given responsibility to parents. If a husband asks her to lie, cheat, or commit any form of immorality, she cannot submit. Additionally, the wife can never be expected to cover up for his sin or violate her own conscience.

Submission doesn't mean that a wife gives up her intelligence. The contribution of her intellect and wisdom is crucial. This is part of what it means to be a "helper." Yet, the counsel that a wife gives isn't in an aggressive or condescending form. It comes in a gentle and humble (Proverbs would call "wise") manner that honors the husband.

The wife is expected to have a godly influence on her husband. This influence isn't just through verbal counsel. Wives should be striving for all aspects of spiritual maturity in their lives. In turn, this will bear fruit by having an effect on her husband as well as children. Prayer is one of the most powerful weapons that believers have, and yet we all tragically forget this. A praying wife is an indispensable source of godly influence on her family.

"Never could it be possible for any man to estimate what he owes to a godly mother. Certainly I have not the powers of speech with which to set forth my valuation of the choice blessing which the Lord bestowed on me in making me the son of one who prayed for me, and prayed with me. How can I ever forget her tearful eye when she warned me to escape from the wrath to come?... How can I ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, 'Oh, that my son might live before Thee!'"

As a wife grows in Christ, her very conduct becomes a winsome beauty to her husband. 1 Pet. 3:1-2 "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." Through her quiet and pure conduct, the fear of God is demonstrated. When she is sinned against, she doesn't return evil for evil but instead overcomes evil with good (Rom. 12:17-21).

God's wisdom in her is displayed when she doesn't escalate a conflict but instead turns away wrath with her soft answer (Prov. 15:1; 25:15). In fact, whenever she opens her mouth, she speaks the truth in love. When the family sees this kind of woman, the impact and influence are far-reaching.

To be sure, submission isn't being fearful or timid. Because it is motivated by a faith and trust in the Lord, it is actually an immense strength. This is the same type of strength that Jesus displayed (1 Peter 2:23), "and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." When I say women should trust God and submit without fear, I don't mean that a woman should do nothing to protect herself from an unreasonable husband. Tell your elders, tell the authorities, get help if you are in an abusive situation. Male-headship is never an excuse for abuse. Biblical male-headship always maintains the dignity due to a female image-bearer.

The wife is never a doormat, but always should be treated with love and esteem. She is a fellow heir of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7), and pillar within her home. And that leads us to our next point...

### III. CARING AND NURTURING KEEPER OF HER HOME

Lastly, as we look at the biblical portrait of womanhood, we come to the responsibility to be the caring and nurturing keeper of the home. This is the primary ministry given to wives. We see this in Titus 2:3–5, “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

The home is the sphere in which the woman fulfills her God-given responsibilities. A brief survey of Proverbs 31:10–31 shows all the ways the woman masterfully makes her home a place of robust ministry. The heart of her husband trusts in her because she is diligent and dependable with her tasks and responsibilities (11–12). It is a delight for her to be timely, organized, and productive, serving her household's needs (13–15).

She is resourceful, ambitious, and entrepreneurial about her work (16–19). Her husband and family are constantly amazed by her creativity and ingenuity. She is a blessing to her neighbors and generous with the provision God has given her (31:20). She opens her mouth with wisdom and kindness, modeling and instructing her children in godliness.

When a woman seeks the Lord and regularly communes with Him. When she, by grace, lives out all that she is intended to be. She is a beautiful display of all that God designed her to be. People can't help but appreciate the worth and value of women when they see women living and operating in this way. We can understand why the Proverbs say (31:10), “An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.” And (31:28–31), “Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.” Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.”

When women live out God's purpose for womanhood not only is it a glorious display of His wisdom and design, but it also has gospel implications. Let's read Titus 2:5 again, “so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

Earlier, we talked about the reasons why this is commonly rejected. Genesis 3 tells us there is a problem, and that problem is sin. In it resulted in the curse upon creation and humanity. But even in the fall, there was a pronouncement of hope. Hope in the form of a Savior. One who would take our curse upon Himself and satisfy the judgment of God in our place. One who would restore us back to a right standing before our Maker. In the gospels, we behold the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, the faithful One. In Him, there is true life. Only in Him can the curse be reversed, and the created order be restored. And the day is coming when the fullness of this will be accomplished at His return.

### CONCLUSION

(Summary and Final Exhortation/Encouragement)

- Loving Honor to Her Husband
- Faithful Helper of Her Husband
- Caring and Nurturing Keeper of Her Home

Ashley's value to me, and the women of Cornerstone's value to my family.

All of us still have room to grow until we go home to be with Christ or until He returns.

Provide and encouragement for the men to pray for the women to be all that God intends them to be and also that the women would pray for us men that we would be all God intends us to be. And husbands and wives praying together.