

Introduction: The Wife: "A Respectful and Submissive Helper"

Genesis 2:18

- God's evaluation – "It is not good." The first time something called this; up until now everything has been "good" and "very good." What is not good is that "man should be alone." This is perhaps shocking at first, because in one sense he isn't alone. In the garden he is there with the special presence of God. But God Himself identifies that He will not be to Adam what is needed, but created Him with a need for a special kind of companionship only fulfilled by another.
- God's response – I will make him a helper comparable to him. Helper – one who assists, gives aid, contributes. This is used of God Gen49:25 Ex18:4 Dt33:7 Ps30:10.
- Comparable to – in front of, answering to, straight in front of, opposite of, parallel to; English: comparable = similar or equivalent to. For man to fully accomplish this, he needs the woman as a helper. Illustration: a tool that matches a certain kind of screw head.
- v.20 None of the animals (nor anything else) were adequate to meet the need. She is made "of" him, taken from man-kind. The others had been of animal-kind. 1Cor11:9 woman [was created] for the man. v.24 The two become one flesh.

What does man need a helper for? What is he trying to accomplish that he needs such a companion?

- 1.) Exercise **dominion** over God's creation – Genesis 1:26; one thing necessary for this is to multiply by having children (1:28). This means to rule, bring into subjection, keep in order. This includes all the earth. Man is a steward, which is why things like care for the environment should be a legitimate topic of conversation among Christians. There seems to be at this point almost an anticipation of it becoming unruly or disordered.
 - 2.) Do this while reflecting the **image** of God – Genesis 1:26. Dominion is not accomplished in any way. It is not to be done in tyranny, treating the creation as a commodity to be expended and wasted as one wills. But it is to reflect a loving Creator's care for what He has made.
- It is no one man's responsibility to exercise dominion over the whole earth. God calls people into certain aspects, and there are many legitimate vocations and callings. Both men and women have a part in this.
 - In a marriage, there is the recognition that the woman's primary calling is as a helper of her husband. In a Christian marriage, this is to be recognized.
 - There is also a parallel here in regards to dominion between Christ and the church. Jesus will build His church, exercising the dominion of His authority over creation. How does He do this? By taking to Himself a bride who will be His helper to fulfill that task. He will guide her and direct her in this task, motivating and giving instruction in His absence. She "births" children, instructs them, and then send them out.

What Are Some Of The Primary Ways In Which The Woman "Helps" Her Husband?

Titus 2:4-5 - The Older Women Instructing the Younger Women

- A primary responsibility for the older women to instruct, not the pastors. A mentoring relationship within the church.
- 1.) **Affectionate toward husband** – "love their husband." A specific term meaning "husbandlover." Having loving affection. This includes physical affection 1Cor7:3, and desire to please 1Cor7:34.
 - 2.) **Affectionate toward children** – "love their children." "Childrenlover." Loving affection.
 - 3.) **Sober-minded** – sensible, self-controlled, thoughtful. Not giddy and naïve. She is to learn wisdom, and to teach others by it (Proverbs 31:26).
 - 4.) **Holy** – "chaste." A woman of purity, modesty, and uprightness. To instruct younger women on things like dress that they may be oblivious to.
 - 5.) **Management of the household** – "Homemakers." Devoted to home duties; preoccupied with the home; "one who works in the home" (Louw-Nida). This is her primary sphere of labor.
 - 6.) **Good** – living righteously according to God's Word.
 - 7.) **Submitted to headship of husband** – "obedient to their own husband." Recognizes his headship as we previously saw, and will look more into in future study.
 - 8.) What is at stake? That the Word of God may not be blasphemed!

1Timothy 5:9-10 – The support of widows by the church

- 9.) **Devoted to her husband** – "a one man woman." Does not disqualify widows who have remarried or abandoned. She has been dedicated to him, not unfaithful.
- 10.) **A good reputation** – "well reported for good works." She has a "good name." Her diligence brings is a crown of honor to her husband (Proverbs 12:4 31:23).
- 11.) **A committed mom** – "brought up children." "to raise a child to maturity by providing for physical and psychological needs" (Louw-Nida) "rear a family" (Friberg). This includes not only physical care, but home education (of whatever sort).
- 12.) **Hospitable to strangers** – "lodged strangers." "to receive and show hospitality to a stranger, that is, someone who is not regarded as a member of the extended family or a close friend" (Louw-Nida).

- 13.) **Hospitable to the church** – “washed the saints feet.” Not a reference to “foot washing”, but rather serving the church in practical and “mundane” ways. Could also refer to hospitality to the saints (Robertson).
- 14.) **Care for the hurting** – “relieved the afflicted.” A helper/assistant/supporter of those who are afflicted physically, impoverished, in need. Not just those of her own house.
- 15.) **Devotion to what is good** – “diligently followed every good work.”
- 16.) **Care of widowed mother** – (v.16).
- These last couple remind us that it isn't just a “my family” ministry, where a woman is only absorbed with her own household (an extreme).
 - We also remember that these likely reflect a variety of things done over the years, not something done at every stage. It is a woman 60+ years who is in view.
 - We see an intelligent, diligent, wise, compassionate, devoted woman. Not the stereotypical
 - This all conveying honor on her husband – Prov12:4 31:23.
 - This is in stark contrast with the “adulterous woman” in Proverbs 7:10

APPLICATION

- Wives – In asking “what is God’s will for my life?”, you have some clear answers today. These are your primary ministry. This is your purpose and what you have been created for.
- Your husband cannot fulfill all that he is called to do without you. It is the honoring of you to see the noble calling that you have received from God. You do not have to buy into the lies of feminism and egalitarianism that tell you that unless you have your own independent career that you are wasting your life. That doesn't mean you can't have tasks or callings that are supplemental or secondary to that primary call, but that you should not neglect the primary for the secondary.
- There is the recognition of various stages in life, with freedom to do things at certain periods which could not be done in others. What a joy to be able to look back on a life and see how God has enabled you to fulfill your purpose.
- For hopeful future wives – Are you preparing now?
- Parents - How are we preparing our daughters? What are our plans for them? If this is God's ordinary pattern for them, then how can we prepare them to fulfill those roles? While it is true that there are exceptions, and that there will be some who God calls to a special calling of singleness, but we should focus on what the ordinary is unless we can say for sure that we know their call is otherwise.
- Husbands – are we enabling our wives to fulfill their roles? Are we encouraging them in it? Are we thankful, and do we praise them? (Proverbs 31:31:28). Do teach our children to praise them?
- This is something a man should think about when choosing a vocation and planning for the future. Am I going to enable my wife to do these things? Is the lifestyle we are choosing to live going to keep her from this?
- We live in a “segregated” culture, and some of it may be due to the fact that wives work and are not able to have this kind of home based ministry. This will flesh itself in many particular ways, but there are still general principles.
- For hopeful future husbands, is this what you are looking for? What are your standard? What if you had to choose from such a woman who did not fit an air-brushed expectation and one who displayed such character? Remember Proverbs 31:30.