

Entrust Biblical Masculinity Lesson 7 Masculinity & Marriage Part 3 1/12/23

6. Marriage, Femininity, and the Curse

a. Intro:

- i. We looked last week at God's call to masculinity in the home; in marriage, and the role of the husband.
- ii. A husband is to be a: Lover, Leader, Learner in the home
 1. Loving his wife like Christ loves the church (Eph 5:25)
 2. Leading her for the glory of God, not a selfish, unrighteous agenda (Eph 5:22-24)
 3. Learning about her so as to better lead and love her (1 Pet 3:7)

b. God's call to dignified biblical femininity

- Being the word of the God who made women in his image, Scripture alone upholds the dignity of women
 - Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 - See *10 Reasons Why the Bible Regards Women Higher than Any other System*¹
 - John Angell James: "Christianity has been the restorer of woman's plundered rights and has furnished the brightest jewels in her present crown of honor. Her previous degradation accounts, in part at least, for the instability of early civilization. It is impossible for society to be permanently elevated where woman is debased and servile. Wherever females are regarded as inferior beings, society contains within itself the elements of dissolution and the

¹ <https://thecripplegate.com/10-reasons-why-the-bible-regards-women-higher-than-all-other-systems/>

obstruction of all solid improvement. It is impossible that institutions and usages, which oppose and stifle the instincts of our nature and violate the revealed Law of God, can be crowned with ultimate success”²

“Wherever Christianity is understood and felt, woman is free. The Gospel, like a kind angel, opens her prison doors and bids her walk abroad and enjoy the sunlight of reason and breathe the invigoration air of intellectual freedom.”³

1) The creation order informs marriage

1 Corinthians 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.

2) Orderliness in churches

1 Corinthians 14:33–35 for God is not a *God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. ³⁴ The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

3) Marriage roles

Ephesians 5:22–24 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ 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. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

- “respect”: φοβῆται – from the Greek word, “fear” or “reverence.”
“to have such awe or respect for a person as to involve a measure

² *A Theology of the Family*, eds. Jeff Pollard & Scott T. Brown, 164.

³ *Ibid.*

of fear – ‘to fear, to show great reverence for, to show great respect for’ (Louw & Nida, 1:734).”

Nancy Wilson: “Some women are puzzled by this command to respect their husband. They think respect is simply an motion, and if they do not ‘feel’ it, then there is nothing they can do about it. yes, respect is a felling, but it is also something we choose to do...it is something that involves action on our part: ‘To feel or show honor or esteem for; consider or treat with deference or courtesy; to show consideration for.’”⁴

4) Dignified femininity & Christian maturity means modesty inside and out

1 Timothy 2:9-10 Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

The “likewise” of v. 9 means we must observe what precedes:

1 Timothy 2:8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

5) Leadership roles in the church

1 Timothy 2:11-14 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

6) Exemplary womanhood

1 Timothy 3:11 Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

⁴ *The Fruit of Her Hands*, 31.

7) God's design for older & younger married women

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,

⁴ so that they may encourage the **young women** to
love their husbands,
to love their children,
⁵ *to be sensible,*
pure,
workers at home,
kind,
being subject to their own husbands,

so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

John MacArthur: "The home is a wife's special domain and always should be her highest priority."⁵

8) Dignified femininity & wife's response to an imperfect husband

1 Peter 3:1-6 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, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. ³ Your adornment must not be *merely* external – braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴ but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

c. The Curse & Femininity

i. Genesis 3:16 and 4:7

⁵ *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Titus*, 86.

- We look at the curse and femininity so that we can understand the source of some of our problems.
- This is not asserting that every problem in marriage is a woman's fault. Both are equally infected with sin. We looked last week at the husband's responsibility.
- We understand that sin comes from the heart; the soul; the center of ruling desires and worship; and both genders have a soul.
- The other reason it's helpful to study this is because we are in a time in which it is often the men who are blamed for sin and problems.
- Due to the long-standing influence of the false doctrines of critical theory and standpoint epistemology, women are often assumed to be innocent in marriage counseling; more righteous than men.
- If there is an accusation, often, the woman is innocent until proven guilty and the man is guilty until proven innocent.
- In media, men are often portrayed as incompetent and aloof sluggards (e.g. Homer Simpson; see Lesson 1 of this study on the onslaught from media related thereto). Men are pictured as the idiots in the marriage; the wife is the competent boss; in charge. This is sin.
- This is an attempt to bring biblical balance to the situation.

The curse of sin:

Genesis 3:16

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."

*What is this "desire," which is a result of the curse?

- MacArthur Study Bible: "Just as the woman and her seed will engage in a war with the serpent, i.e., Satan and his seed (Gen. 3:15), because of sin and the curse, the man and the woman will face struggles in their own relationship. Sin has turned the harmonious system of God-ordained roles into distasteful struggles

of self-will. Lifelong companions, husbands and wives, will need God's help in getting along as a result. The woman's desire will be to lord it over her husband, but the husband will rule by divine design (Eph. 5:22-25). This interpretation of the curse is based upon the identical Hebrew words and grammar being used in Gen. 4:7."

- Derek Kidner: "'To love and to cherish' becomes 'To desire and to dominate.' ... the pull of sin is always to it. An echo of the phrase, in 4:7b, conjures up still more vividly its suggestion of the jungle."

*The word translated, "desire," in Genesis 3:16 is the identical Hebrew word in Genesis 4:7

Genesis 4:7

If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its **desire** is for you, but you must master it."

- What is this "desire"?
 - Allan Ross: "These words show God's interpretation of "desire," the same Heb. word, in Gen. 3:16" (BKC, 1:34)
 - "desire": "desire to dominate" (DBL)
 - Kidner: "the striking metaphor of taming a wild beast"
- Therefore, one way in which the curse on the female gender manifests itself: a fallen desire to resist God's ordained roles for husband and wife, particularly rebelling against God's command to function as a "helper suitable" (Gen 2:18) who submits to the husband's leadership from the heart, in gentleness, respect, and humility, as unto the Lord (cf. Eph 5:22-24, 1 Pet 3:1-6).
- The curse has plagued her with a "desire" to dominate her husband; to overthrow the headship which God has delegated to the husband; to disdain her role as "helper suitable" (Gen 2:18) underneath his leadership, and instead to manufacture a mission independent of the husband, rather than conforming her mission to his, again, as a "helper suitable."
- Therefore, feminism is, in a sense, an embracing of this manifestation of this spiritual-moral degradation (i.e. the curse,

Gen 3:16), rather than a redeeming and crucifying of it by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Any failure to embrace God's design for femininity, the highest dignity for woman, is sin, rebellion against God, and a cherishing of the curse.
- This is the tendency of the modern woman
- Through faith in Jesus Christ, this rebellion is forgiven, cleansed, and transformed to embrace God's design for femininity.

ii. Femininity and the curse vs. blessing

- As with many things in life, whole-hearted subjection to God's law results in blessing, while rebellion results in cursing
- As Psalm 1 portrays (the "blessed" is a fruitful tree, the cursed like "chaff"), these two ways of life pose a stark juxtaposition

Proverbs 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames *him* is like rotteness in his bones.

1 Peter 3:7 "show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life"
vs.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. ¹⁴ And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

- John James captures the juxtaposition well⁶:

"Woman was the completeness of man's bliss in Paradise. Woman was the cause of sin and death to our world."

"She is either our companion, counselor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life; or she is our tempter, scourge, and destroyer."

"Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness or our bitterest draught of sorrow is mixed and administered by her hand."

⁶ *A Theology of the Family*, eds. Jeff Pollard & Scott T. Brown, 164.

“She not only renders smooth or rough our path to the grave, but helps or hinders our progress to immortality. In heaven we shall bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that blissful state; or amidst the torments of unutterable owe in another region, we shall deplore the fatality of her influence.”

- Thankfully, through repentance & faith in Christ, & biblical shepherding, a woman, like a man, need not be stuck in the bitter fruits of the flesh and the curse (cf. Rom 6:1-3, 1 Pet 2:24).

iii. The curse and a woman’s influence

- Generally speaking, women have great power to influence their husbands, for good and bad.
 - A godly, mature, regenerate woman through her biblical knowledge, restraint, submissiveness, humility, and quiet spirit can give uplifting, edifying counsel and comfort to her husband as befitting the need of the moment.
 - An ungodly, fleshly woman of the modern age, through her unsubmitiveness, pride, and individualistic and uncrucified flesh can negatively influence her husband by her contentiousness, nagging, unhelpful speech, opinionated demeanor, emotionalism/hurt feelings, and manipulation.

**In the latter situation of potentially harmful influence, a husband will need to be diligent to immerse in the means of grace, regular influence from Christian brothers, pray often for his wife, and seek to lead her carefully with a long-term view (cf. 1 Thess 5:14).

- Harmful influence
 - Abraham and Sarah

Genesis 16:1-2 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife had borne him no *children*, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. ² So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing *children*. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

- Samson and Delilah

Judges 16:15-16 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is." ¹⁶ It came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

- Ahab and Jezebel

1 Kings 21:25 Surely there was no one who sold himself to do what is evil in the sight of Yahweh like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.

➤ Contemporary examples

- A fleshly wife who colors her husband's opinion about biblical doctrines. As she repeatedly speaks negatively about a theological position, her husband can eventually allow himself to be influenced.
- A fleshly wife who colors her husband's view of others in the church. Not motivated by the glory of God and love of the brethren, and not matured by the practice of biblical communication and humility, subtle gossip and slander can, drip by drip, fill in her husband's mind and convince him.
- Dr. John Street: "A church that took years to build can be destroyed in an afternoon phone call between two fleshly, gossiping women."

➤ Caution:

- Our wives influence us in a way that, in some situations, may conflict with Scripture, the counsel of godly men, and the leaders God has put in your lives.
- We will have to be sure that we are living for God's glory in times like these, not for the glory a pacified wife or ease in the home.

- For God's glory, we may have to do the hard leadership thing by being willing to shepherd her.
 - A husband may need to bear a bit of wrath he decides to live before the Lord by siding with God's glory and word, rather than his wife's emotional state or unrighteous persuasions
 - It is possible to over do it when it comes to "living with your wife in an understanding way" (1 Pet 3:7), if doing so involves going against the biblical counsel of godly men whom God has put in our lives.
- We ought not go getting the idea that all sin is the woman's fault. But neither should we get the idea that the woman has little influence over her husband to sin.

iv. The curse and manipulation

Because of the curse, some women use manipulative tactics to accomplish their will and control their husbands

- Sexual manipulation
- Some women, understanding that a man's God-created sexual desire can be strong, use sex as a tool for leverage
 - A sinning wife may threaten to withhold sexual intimacy if her husband does not cater to her desires
 - "I'm not going to be intimate with you if you don't_____."
 - A wife who does this is sinning against God and her husband, and she must repent
 - Sexual intimacy in marriage is not given by God to be used as a devious bribe to hold someone prisoner to a sinful, self-exalting, self-centered, proud desire.
 - Some critical-theory influenced tendencies in evangelicalism now assert that if a husband suggests intimacy when his wife does not feel like it, he is emotionally or spiritually abusing her or sinning. This is

not true. Any such idea is, ironically, manipulative and an abuse of Scripture. Regardless of a biblical command, we often must obey when we do not feel like it (cf. Luke 9:23). Further, Scripture teaches that the wife's body belongs to her husband and the husband's body to his wife (1 Cor 7:4).

➤ Emotional manipulation

- A wife may use "hurt feelings" as a tool to influence her husband
- Some may use their hurt feelings as leverage for their will
- Excessive emotionalism may be employed when a husband seeks to shepherd his wife
- A husband who loves his wife and seeks to live with her in an understanding way may give in to the manipulation and cease attempting to move to shepherd her, move the family in a righteous direction, etc.
- Even if the husband has been "disobedient to the word," a wife is to win her husband over "without a word" (1 Pet 3:1-2)
- Like sexual intimacy, a wife is sinning if she uses her "hurt feelings" and emotionalism as a means to control her husband and subject him to her will

➤ Additional considerations on manipulation

- Manipulation can harmfully influence a husband towards idolatry. In other words, a husband may make sex or getting her to cease excessive emotional displays as his greatest goal.
- The idol of peace in the home can also be quite powerful.

- A wife can make the home a miserable place to be if she wishes, through the aforementioned manipulative tactics, harmful influence, and rebellion.
- Please seek out church leadership whom God has placed in your life to come alongside you and your wife if needed. Through this means of grace, these things can be sanctified and transformed.

v. The modern woman and the curse

- The modern woman is the photo-negative of the dignified, mature, humble woman in Scripture

Instead of a tender and humble desire to “respect her husband” (Eph 5:33), she is competitive and disrespectful.

Instead of seeking to demonstrate humble, willing, unified submission to her husband as unto the Lord, she tends towards contention, opposition, and playing the devil’s advocate (Eph 5:22-24).

Instead of seeking to be modest, reverent, and trusting the leadership God has placed in her life (in the home and church) (1 Tim 2:11-12), she is wise in her own eyes, has a high view of her opinion, and does not invite criticism from godly believers who know her.

Instead of a gentle, quiet spirit that wins her husband over without a word (1 Pet 3:1-6), she is opinionated, independent, and uncooperative with her husband’s headship.

- The modern woman is the photo-negative of the Proverbs 31 woman

- Proverbs 31:11-12 The heart of her husband trusts in her...¹² She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Instead of being trustworthy, supportive, and honorable, the modern woman tends towards unpredictability, emotionally driven, and not always out for her husband’s good. She cannot be trusted with things like sensitive information. She is manipulative and controlling.

- Proverbs 31:26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Instead of opening her mouth in gentle, dignified wisdom and kindness, she voices her unsolicited and unbiblical opinions, uncharitable evaluations that are quick to conclude without asking more questions, and a tendency towards believing the worst

- Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *but* a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

Instead of seeking to grow in applying and living out a reverent awe, fear, and reverence of God, she fears man and desires to be exalted and exhibited before others.

➤ Contention and the modern woman

Proverbs 21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

Proverbs 25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

Proverbs 27:15-16 A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike; ¹⁶ he who would restrain her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand.

➤ A definition

The modern woman tends to be the woman who does not fight the curse of the fall; who typically lives in the flow of the flesh, instead of against it; who rejects God's design for dignified biblical femininity as taught in Scripture (e.g. 1 Cor 14:34-45; Eph 5:22-24, 33; 1 Tim 2:9-11, 3:11; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-6), who rejects it and embraces a degraded version of femininity.

vi. Conclusions:

- Though the modern woman desire something of a biblical man, they betray the desire by refusing to become a biblical woman

- The modern woman may suppose that she has evolved out of virtues like submission, keeping home, respecting her husband, restraint on opinions, refusal to gossip, and giving herself to loving her husband and her children. However, a refusal to embrace God's biblical dignities of femininity is not a step up but down. The only direction to go from the biblical woman is backwards; regression.
- By God's grace, through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, the indwelling power of the Spirit, the teaching of God's word, and the fellowship of mature saints, husbands and wives can grow to repent of sin and embrace their respective roles in marriage so as to please God and bless one another