

Entrust Biblical Masculinity Lesson 7 Masculinity & Marriage Part 4 1/19/22

INTRO:

7. Considerations for Responding to a Rebellious Wife

a. Test Case

i. Esther 1:10-22

- ii. V. 13 – There are wise men in Persia who are said to have “understood the times” and “who knew law and justice.” Ahasuerus consults them
- iii. V. 16. The wise men observe that Vashti has wronged: 1) the king, 2) all the princes (the king’s staff and leadership team), 3) “all the peoples who are in all the provinces.” Now, in what way has she wronged those 3 parties? V. 17 explains:
- iv. Vv. 17-18. We are not told that the top wise counselors of Media & Persia are reading Scripture. Nevertheless, what do the wise men observe about Vashti’s behavior? What do they recognize will become a great temptation to all of the wives in the empire?
- v. What is it that the counselors observe to be a common tendency and temptation among women?

1. Something of Gen 3:16/4:7

Yet your **desire** will be for your husband, and he will rule over you (3:16)

sin is crouching at the door; and its **desire** is for you, but you must master it (4:7)

2. The rebellious, modern woman, who gives in to the Gen 3:16/4:7 curse:

- The word “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); to manufacture a mission independent of the husband, rather than conforming her mission to his, again, as a “helper suitable.”
- So then, feminism is a rebellion, not against men, though they may think of it that way. Far worse, it’s a rebellion against God: 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.
- The modern woman is the photo-negative of the dignified, mature, humble woman in Scripture. The Proverbs 31 woman degrades to the Proverbs 21 woman (cf. 21:9, 21:19).

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.

➤ What's the point?

To observe the unique way in which the curse affects women and wives.

To observe that this unique manifestation of the curse must be dealt with in wisdom. It is not helpful for men and husbands to stand by idle.

- vi. So, the Persian counselors have observed something that is a command of God for the marriage: the husband's headship; the wife commanded (Eph 5:33) to respect her husband.
 1. Recall the 3 roles of the husband: Leader, lover, learner
 2. And the role of the wife: to respect (Eph 5:33), submit (Eph 5:22-24), love (Titus 2:4)
- vii. These are roles in marriage which God created for his own glory, and, they are roles which reflect His love and wisdom in what other relationship?
 1. Christ and the church
 2. One reason it is important for husbands to exercise godly headship in the home is because marriage is, albeit imperfectly, a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride, the Church (Eph 5:22-33)
 3. So, to attack or forsake the biblical roles of the leader, lover, learner of the husband and headship is to attack the gospel and Christ's headship over his church
 4. And, to repudiate the idea of a wife extending deep respect to her husband & submission is to repudiate the design of the gospel; & the church's respect & submission to Christ

b. Now, considerations for responding to a rebellious wife; who tends more towards the modern woman. A few considerations in no particular order:

i. He must regularly pray for his rebellious wife

- No husband can produce the change of salvation and sanctification needed in a wife
- He must regularly implore the only One who can

Luke 11:8-13 “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹ So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹² Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

ii. He may need to revisit God’s role for husbands

1. Leader (Eph 5:22-24), Lover (Eph 5:25), Learner (1 Pet 3:7)
2. At times, a wife may sin in response to her husband’s failure to embrace his roles.
3. This does not mean that a wife is permitted to sin. A husband’s disobedience to God is not a permission slip for the wife to follow suit (cf. 1 Pet 3:1-2).
4. However, humility behooves a husband to examine if there is an area needing repentance as it concerns his roles in the home (Matt 7:3-5).
5. Generally speaking, leaders are called to set the example. A poor example can bring temptation to sin.

iii. Living with a rebellious wife is a form of suffering

1. Being married to the Proverbs 21 woman is a trial

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

Proverbs 21:19 It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman.

- Living in a corner of a roof, and in a desert land, meant exposure to all sorts of wretched circumstances: scorching heat, sunburns, the attack of wild beasts, scorpions, rain, wind, lack of food and water, etc.

Nevertheless, Solomon tells us that it is “better” to be in those unpleasant circumstances than dwell with a “contentious” and “vexing” woman. Therefore, it is a form of suffering to live with a rebellious wife.

2. In this sense, a husband will need to apply God’s wisdom on suffering:

- a. God is sovereign over suffering. He is not asleep at the wheel (Eccl 7:13-14)
- b. God uses suffering for our good (e.g. sanctification) (Rom 8:28)
- c. Suffering is not permanent (Rev 21:3-4)
- d. Suffering seasons us to better minister to others (including other husbands) (2 Cor 1:3-4)
- e. Suffering produces spiritual endurance (Jas 1:2-4)
- f. Suffering matures us towards greater dependence upon Christ (2 Cor 12:9-10)

iv. God uses a rebellious wife for the good of our sanctification (Heb 12:5-11)

- Martin Luther: “Marriage is the school of character.”

- The husband can trust God that He is using this for his good and needed sanctification
- v. A rebellious wife means a husband will have to practice waiting on the Lord (Ps 62:1-2)

- See Entrust study, *Brief Survey on Waiting for the Lord*

- He waits for God to save and/or sanctify his wife

Psalm 62:1-2 My soul *waits* in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. ² He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

Psalm 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.

- He walks with his good, sovereign Father as he waits on God's timing in the transformation of his wife (Ps 23:1-4)

- vi. A husband will need to shepherd his rebellious wife (Eph 5:25-32)

- Shepherding his wife, so far from an intrusion, is loving her; presenting his bride with "no spot or wrinkle"

- A husband must not stand by passively while his wife "runs the house" with an unbiblical attitude, emotionalism, or manipulation.

This is sin against God and her family. It is rebellion against the roles and peace God has commanded for the home. It also hinders her relationship with the Lord and her family (and others, since spirituality cannot be compartmentalized).

- Christ commands believers to come alongside one another when one is in sin, thus, the husband must do so

Matthew 18:15 If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Proverbs 27:5–6 Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. ⁶ Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Hebrews 3:12–14 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end

- Though a rebellious wife may reject the idea, God has designated the husband as her leader and authority within the marriage (1 Cor 11:3, Eph 5:22-25).

She is to submit to and obey him, as long as he is not requiring sin (Eph 5:22). It is both a failure to love (Prov 27:5-6) and a failure to lead when we will not bring biblical correction to those in sin (cf. Lev 19:17, 1 Cor 5:2, Gal 6:2).

- A husband must not fear a rebellious wife.

Doing so is to forsake leading her. A husband cannot love his wife and fear her simultaneously (1 John 4:18)

- Considerations for shepherding a rebellious wife:

- Gentleness

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Galatians 6:1–3 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- Unruliness requires admonishment

1 Thessalonians 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly

- Faithfulness as the greatest goal

This is first about faithfulness to God, despite results
A husband might not see the results he hopes and prays for.
He must remember that he shepherds her for God's glory,
regardless of results (1 Cor 4:2).

- If she is sinning in the moment:

A husband may lovingly tell her things like:

"I care for you and our marriage. We need to grow in honoring God together. This will bring more joy to the marriage. But, I'm not going to talk with you about this when you are disrespectful / sinning against the Lord / continue to pressure me to get your way."

"We can make a time where we can sit down, I can hear you out in a godly way, then we can pray, I can seek some counsel, and we can make a wise decision. Please pray for me."

"It is not honoring to the Lord for us to discuss this in a sinful way. I want to live with you in an understanding way, so we'll address this another time when we are displaying fruit of the Spirit so that we do not continue to sin against God and each other. That will not solve things."

"God says that you are to respect your husband. [Probably better to not say things like, "God says you have to submit to me and respect me!" Make it about God and his command].

- At times, there may be some unpleasant responses, or wrath to endure. This is not out of the ordinary. In the face of wrath, God instructs us accordingly:

Ecclesiastes 10:4 If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

- A husband cannot force his wife to obey God's commands.
 - It might be helpful to discuss with her how the husband will respond and attempt to biblically shepherd her rebelliousness during a time when not in conflict.
 - There may be times where it is necessary to involve others in the local church for additional shepherding. This is nothing out of the ordinary. A failure to do so could unnecessarily propagate sin in the marriage, cause further fallout with the onlooking children, prolong sorrow in the family, hinder discipleship opportunities, and be a poor witness of the gospel.
 - A husband may discuss (outside of conflict) the option of involving a godly woman in the church godly enough to not let her slander her husband for accountability (cf. Titus 2:3-5). For example, when she is tempted to sin against her husband, she can text another sister in Christ, asking for prayer, and help (Jas 5:16).
 - Additional steps of church discipline may be necessary (Matt 18:15-17). If, after patience, prayer, humility, and a little more patience, a rebellious wife is unwilling to repent, it is necessary to obey the Lord by proceeding to subsequent steps of church discipline. This is the process which God has commanded for situations involving an unrepentant professing believer.
- vii. The husband with the rebellious wife must guard his heart against bitterness

Among other things, meditating on Christ will help this: If anyone has faced understandable temptations of bitterness, it is the Lord Jesus Christ. No one in history has been as unjustly bombarded with sin as he has.

He was constant perfection being barraged with constant imperfection. People regularly believed the worst about him,

suspected him, misjudged him, lied about him, betrayed him, and hated him. And eventually, they murdered him. Through it all he *never* sinned.

We might understand if our Lord thought things like, “Don’t you humans know what I have done for you?! I created you. I am sustaining your breath, lungs, heart, biochemical bodily processes, your family, and, I am about to die on the cross!”

Yet, incredibly, Jesus always obeyed God the Father by avoiding bitterness. “For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:20-21).

- viii. The husband with the rebellious wife must guard his heart against covetousness (Ex 20:17)
 - 1. Other wives
 - 2. “If only she could be like so-and-so’s wife...”
- ix. The husband with a rebellious wife should seek counsel from other brothers, while refraining from slandering her (Jas 5:16)
- x. The husband with a rebellious wife can practice thankfulness for her (1 Thess 5:18)
- xi. The husband with a rebellious wife can deepen his relationship with the Lord for strength
 - 1. Robust times of private worship (Ps 1:2-3)
 - 2. Reading meaty material from faithful saints (1 Tim 4:6)
 - 3. Fellowship with other men in the church striving for godliness (2 Tim 2:22)