

Providence Presbyterian Church

October 2008, Trish Luber

## Flesh of my Flesh, Lesson two

### “She Does Him Good and not Harm”

Proverbs 31:10 – 12 says “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.”

What does it mean to do him good? What is good? Scripture tells us repeatedly that God is good and that Christlikeness is good. Doing good to your husband is in how you behave toward him and in the kind of attitude and behavior that you encourage in him.

Micah 6:8 says this: “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” Justice, kindness and humility are good. Obedience to God is good.

In Genesis 3:17 we see the results of Eve encouraging Adam to sin, as God tells Adam “because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘you shall not eat of it’ cursed is the ground because of you....”

We are in a unique position to encourage and influence our husbands – and that contains both problems and opportunities. The husband is to be the leader in the home, the wife is to be submissive to her own husband and is to be a helper suitable to him.

Before we talk about what that looks like, I want to talk first about what submission is not and what godly headship does not look like.

#### (Handout on Abuse)

Submission to a beating or to verbal abuse is not just not necessary; it’s actually encouraging him to sin. Abuse is wrong because it is not a reflection of the character of God and not what God commands in a Christian marriage. Abusing others is sin.

The other detour from godly submission and encouraging godliness is engaging in a power struggle and attempting to take over control. Let’s look at Eve again as we examine our own desires to control our households –

Genesis 3:16 says this “...your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

To understand the meaning of this, let’s look also at Genesis 4:7 where God speaks to Cain “...If you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

When we consider that the Hebrew words used in both texts are the same and have the same meaning (for either your desire for your husband or sin's desire for Cain) what then do we learn about what every woman - from Eve forward - desires in her fallen nature?

The purpose of Godly submission is always to show reverence to God – to obey Him. Let's look at our homework questions for this week:

A. We live in a culture that opposes submission or humility in any form. Read through Philippians 2:3 – 15 and answer the following questions:

1. What does it mean to “have this mind” or “attitude?”
2. What was Christ's attitude?
3. How did He reveal this attitude?
4. What instructions are given for our own humility?

B. Read Ephesians 5:1 & 2, and Ephesians 5:20 – 23. In light of these passages, how do you think verses 21 and 22 are related?

Submission to our own husbands is required of us by God. One of the ways women can fail to do this is outright rebellion against his authority – often combined with either attacks and criticism, or simply by ignoring and dismissing his leadership. A very common method of attempting to control the household is by manipulation. Secret manipulation can be masked as outward submission. How do you know if you are doing this? Do you continue to go back multiple times to try again to convince him? Are you really coming back with “new” information that he did not have when he made the decision or are you just determined that this is going to go your way? Are you using any unfair verbal weapon (manipulation) to get compliance?

When your husband is making a decision for your family, have a reasonable discussion – I always consider that Howard has the “benefit” of my opinion. Once the decision is made – get onboard with it – it becomes OUR decision.

Pray that God will enable you to dismiss from your mind any fears and misgivings about this decision –

1 Peter 3:5 & 6 says “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”

God gives grace to the humble, it’s not about building yourself up – it’s about adorning the Gospel with your life. It’s about bringing our husbands good and not harm.

You can do this by praying for wisdom for your husband as he leads your household. Pray also for the other men God has put in authority over you – the pastors and elders of our church. If you are a married woman, God created you to do your husband good by being a helper suitable for him.

Undermining, ignoring or countering the proper authority of your husband is disobedience to God. Being a supportive, compassionate, affirming partner to him is obedience to the God who ordained this man as your husband and the leader in your home.

Let’s examine Titus 2:3 – 5:

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior , not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

What qualities do you see here that are helpful, how can failure to do these things, failure to have this attitude, be bringing our husbands harm?

Bringing him good means helping him lead, encouraging him by our own behavior and attitude and encouraging godliness in him. Being a helper must be preceded by the recognition that God has ordained him as the leader.

It is helping him to fulfill the work God has for him.

Bryan Chapell in his book Each for the Other, records this event:

“It was in my first days as a seminary professor. He was in his last days as a seminary president. Still, though his days on earth were nearing completion, Dr. Robert G. Rayburn, founding president of Covenant Theological Seminary invited Kathy and me to dinner. Though it was his custom to welcome new professors in this way, the cancer Dr Rayburn was fighting made this invitation particularly meaningful to us – and difficult for him. Seated at the head of the table, President Rayburn remained the unquestioned authority in the house despite the weakening of his body. His bearing was almost regal though his hands quivered as he served our meal. His habit at dinner was to serve his guests and his wife from a side table. Now the cancer made this service painful and awkward. The custom continued only because Mrs. Rayburn had rolled a cart with serving dishes next to Dr. Rayburn’s chair. He served us because she helped him to do so. ....Throughout the evening...she preserved his dignity through deft and subtle gestures...the steadied hand...the slight movement. The dignity she provided him became her own since only by her aid did he fulfill his purposes.”

**In this way, the “heart of her husband trusts in her and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not harm all the days of her life.”**

**What is Abuse?** (Condensed from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)

Coercion and threats:

Making or carrying out threats to injure the spouse (Proverbs 3:31)

Threatening to leave the marriage or to commit suicide

Threatening to take away the children

Making the spouse do anything illegal

Intimidation:

Deliberately causing fear by looks, actions or gestures

Smashing things

Abusing pets

Isolation:

Controlling what the spouse does, limiting outside involvement

Using jealousy to justify actions

Minimizing, denying and blaming

Making light of abuse or saying it did not happen

Shifting responsibility: blaming the spouse for causing it

Emotional abuse:

Name-calling

Humiliating and attacking

Making the spouse doubt his/her sanity or value

**On Submission – From Susan Hunt’s The True Woman:**

1. Every woman is not to submit to every man, but every married woman is to submit to her husband. 1 Peter 3:1, Titus 2
2. Women are not to submit to sin.
3. The Biblical commands about women not usurping authority have reference to the home and church, not society in general.
4. All believers, men and women, are to submit to the ordained leadership of the church.

5. As members of the body of Christ, we are to submit to one another regardless of gender.

#### **HOMEWORK –**

**From Susan Hunt's book The True Woman:**

**“God said that man needs a helper. The true woman celebrates this calling and becomes affirming rather than adversarial, compassionate rather than controlling, a partner rather than a protagonist. She becomes substantively rather than superficially submissive. The true woman is not afraid to place herself in a position of submission. She does not have to grasp; she does not have to control. Her fear dissolves in the light of God's covenant promise to be her God and to live within her. Submission is simply a demonstration of her confidence in the sovereign power of the Lord God. Submission is a reflection of her redemption.”**

**Make a commitment to pray for the men in your life. Don't give God a list of ways to change them. Rather select a Scripture such as Philippians 1:3 – 6 or Colossians 1:9 – 12, and pray this for them.**

**Preparation for next week's lesson – “let the Wife Respect Her Husband:”**

**Ephesians 5:33 in the Amplified version says this:**

**“Let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband – that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly.”**

**1 Peter 3:1 – 4 – What kind of behavior is to be observed by our husbands? How could this attitude and conduct be used by God in the life of a husband?**