

**CHAIN OF
COMMAND IN
MARRIAGE**

DEVELOPING GENUINE LOVE

An important key to a successful marriage is the ability to see the hand of God in the attitudes, actions and reactions of the mate God has placed in one's life.

Failure on the husband's part to discern God's authority in his life and the responsibilities God has given him toward his wife and children increases the tensions and conflicts. Corresponding difficulties result when the wife fails to discern God's purposes in placing her husband over her.

1 THE KEY PASSAGE:

No other passage in Scripture is so rich and complete in dealing with this relationship between husband and wife as I Peter 2:19-3:9.

Peter emphasizes the fact that a union between two people can never be successful unless certain basic principles are a part of each individual's life.

INITIAL STEPS:

1 CLEARING PAST OFFENSES

*"For this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God suffers wrongfully."
I Peter 2:19*

In order to have effective communication between two people, it is necessary to clear all past offenses between one another. Many couples try to "turn over a new leaf" by trying to forget the past and go on from there. This is impossible. A lack of transparency toward the mate will be communicated by attitudes and "walls" between one another. (See materials on Gaining a Clear Conscience.)

2 A WILLINGNESS TO ACKNOWLEDGE WRONGS

*"What is it if you be buffeted for your faults and take it patiently?"
I Peter 2:20a*

Peter acknowledges there will be misunderstandings and offenses in the days ahead. Both partners must be ready to evaluate any criticisms and accusations (whether verbal or non-verbal) with total honesty, and acknowledge any personal wrongs toward the other.

☛ A NEW COMMITMENT

This step can be taken as both mates verbally commit themselves to stand by each other despite future offenses which are called to their attention by the mate, other people or the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

☛ TOTAL COOPERATION WITH GOD

*"But if when you do well and suffer for it you take it patiently, then you have God's approval."
I Peter 2:20b*

Responding to each false accusation by using it as an opportunity to show love to the one who offended is total cooperation with God.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE

☛ EACH OFFENSE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
COMMUNICATING LOVE

*"Indeed this is your calling. For Christ suffered for you and left you a personal example, and wants you to follow in his steps. He was guilty of no sin nor of the slightest prevarication. Yet when he was insulted he offered no insult in return. When he suffered he made no threats of revenge. He simply committed his cause to the one who judges fairly."
I Peter 2:21-23(Phillips)*

No one was more falsely accused than Jesus Christ, the sinless one who had every right to react to his accusers. But He didn't - He forgave them. Instead of becoming over-sensitive and "bitter", or insensitive so that He "shut them out", He gave only sensitivity (love) in return.

This is our calling as followers of Christ - to our mates above everyone else! When you are falsely accused or wounded, this is God's way of letting you know that your mate needs another dose of His love.

☛ A LOVING ATTITUDE AS WELL AS ACTIONS

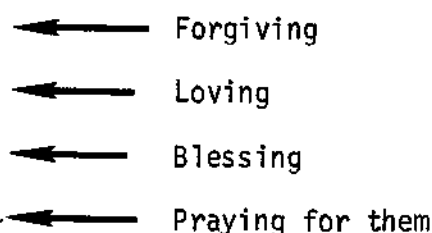
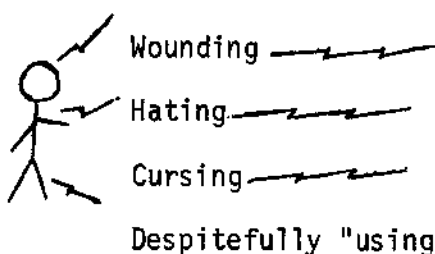
It is important that both your countenance and your words reflect the love of Christ to your mate in "rough" or "tense" situations. There are degrees of silence that communicate inward hostile feelings. Thus it is equally important that your lips and facial expressions communicate Christ's love.

CALLED TO SUFFER!

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE EXCHANGE OUR "NATURAL" RESPONSES FOR JESUS CHRIST'S RESPONSES:

Offender's Attitudes
or Actions:

Our Responsibility is to Show
Love without Exception by:



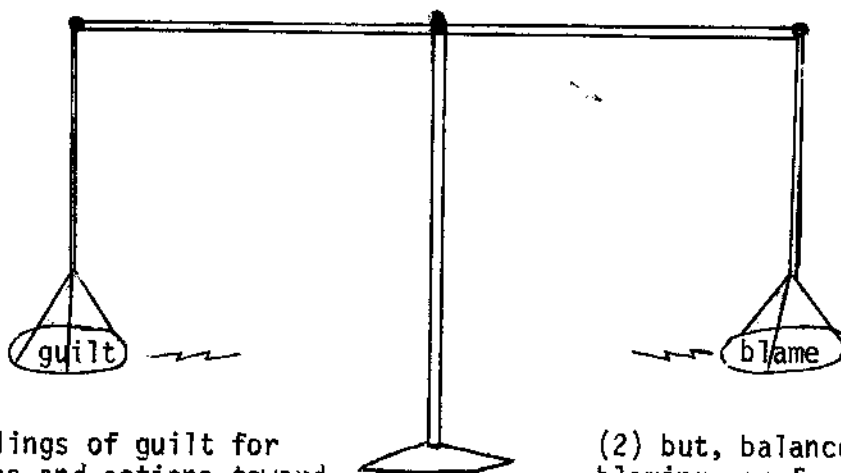
Offending
Mate

Suffering
Mate

This response is clearly taught by Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:43,44.

NOTE: WHEN YOU HAVE CLEARED YOUR CONSCIENCE REALIZE THE OFFENDER STILL HAS GUILT BECAUSE OF HIS ATTITUDES AND OFFENSES TOWARD YOU AND OTHERS.

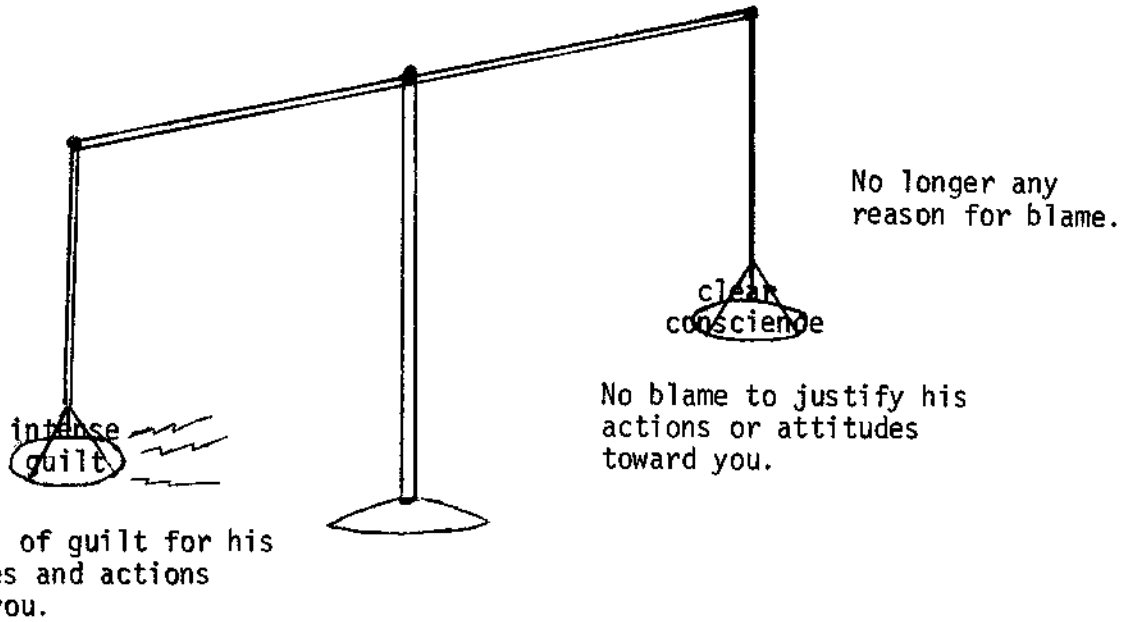
Before you clear your conscience the other person:



(1) has feelings of guilt for his attitudes and actions toward you;

(2) but, balances the scale by blaming you for legitimate offenses you've committed against him.

After you ask for forgiveness, if he does not ask forgiveness for his offenses toward you, you should expect his attitudes and actions to get worse:



When a person is living with guilt:

- He subconsciously seeks to get you to react negatively toward him so he can "balance" the scale again. This accounts for his frequent offenses to get you to go "beyond your breaking point."
- He may doubt your sincerity. If you have tried to "turn over a new leaf" many times before by some form of an apology, he will wonder how long this new change will last!
- Your godly response will allow God to put the right kind of pressure on the offender from other sources. This enables the Holy Spirit to bring real conviction for his past and present attitudes and actions.
John 16:8-11

BEARING ANOTHER'S SINS

- THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOUR LIFE WILL BE USED OF GOD TO HEAL THE OFFENDER IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BEAR HIS SINS (NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, OFFENSES, CONDEMNATIONS) IN YOUR OWN BODY (AT YOUR EXPENSE).

☐ UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls."

*"And he personally bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might be dead to sin and be alive to all that is good. It was the suffering that he bore which has healed you. You had wandered away like so many sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls."
I Peter 2:24-25 (Phillips)*

God is looking for Christians to unconditionally forgive all offenses others have committed toward them and toward others.

☐ DEVELOP REAL INSIGHT AND DISCERNMENT.

Regardless of how well one knows a person, he seldom knows the "real" problems in the other's inward life. Rather than reacting to negative attitudes and actions which he sees in a person's life, this should motivate him to discern what has caused this person to behave the way he does?

This will develop an attitude of discernment (using information as a means to seek a solution to the problem).

On the other hand, failure to discern in a Christ-like way will develop a critical and judgmental attitude (using information to condemn or lower the person's reputation in other people's eyes).

THE ROLE OF THE WIFE IN SUBMISSION

■ ■ All of the vast resources of God are at a woman's disposal when she visualizes and applies the principles of God's Word that allow God to work in the marriage and family in His way.

■ WHAT IS SUBMISSION?

"Wives, submit yourselves.."

☛ Submission is not an act of subordination in a difficult situation, but a deep confidence in the heart of a woman, in God's sovereignty over her husband's life. The result is an attitude as well as actions of obedience toward her husband; she realizes that the ultimate benefits of cooperating with God's chain of command will far outweigh any immediate or temporary losses.

- Submission does not mean that a wife has no right to her opinions nor the right to disagree with her husband. Nor is it necessary for her to change her convictions about an issue. But when a decision "has to be made" and there is a difference of opinion, she will respond with an attitude of cooperation. She is aware that if her husband is wrong, God will get through to him by failure. Her attempt to keep him from failing will only interfere and delay the lessons God wants to teach her husband. On the other hand, when the husband is right, the wife's confidence in God's ability to work through her husband also increases.
- God requires the man to LOVE and LEAD his wife and the woman to SUBMIT and REVERENCE her husband (Ephesians 5:25). To be loved and to be led are the most basic needs of a woman; submission and respect are the two most essential ingredients on the woman's part for a successful relationship between husband and wife.

■ GOD REQUIRES OF THE MAN:

- Lead your wife.
- Love your wife.

■ GOD REQUIRES OF THE WOMAN:

- Submit to your husband.
- Reverence your husband.

- The husband will by nature tend to be dominant in one of the two responsibilities. If he is strong as a leader he will be prone to be insensitive to the needs of his wife. If he is sensitive (loving) to his wife, more than likely he will fail to lead the household. This usually results in the wife justifying her failure to do what God

requires of her ~ in submission because "he doesn't lead"; or in respect because "he is indifferent and insensitive to my needs."

Conversely, a man will justify his failure to lead because "she won't follow" and to love because "she doesn't respect me."

The paradox is that when either mate gets his eyes off his circumstances and purposes to do what God requires of him as an individual, the respective responsibilities are able to be developed in the other mate.

● LEARN TO USE BAD ATTITUDES IN THE MATE AS MOTIVATION TO MEET HIS/HER BASIC NEEDS.

Note: Fortunately it is seldom that the husband and wife are both "down" emotionally at the same time. One usually has a bad attitude and the other reacts, thus causing a conflict. God has freedom to accomplish His purposes if the mate who is "not down" will love the other in the way God requires for the man or woman, thus ministering and meeting the needs of the other!

- When he LOVES → God is free to develop her respect for him.
- When he LEADS → God is free to bring to bear the various agents in key relationships for her to learn submission.

SIMILAR RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED:

- When she SUBMITS → It forces the man to assume his responsibilities and begin to develop the leadership ability he needs to lead his family.
- When she REVERENCES (RESPECTS) → It is God's means of creating an appreciation and sensitivity to her needs and the key to allowing God to bring His conviction with regard to the man's selfishness and insensitiveness.

There are many "ideas" and "theories" propounded today about the role of the woman. For the woman, the key question is not what she thinks a woman should be, but WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE?

☞ *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;
But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a MEEK (submission, respect) and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

I Peter 3:3,4

☞ THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE WOMAN TO APPLY GOD'S CHAIN OF COMMAND IN HER LIFE:

☞ LEARN TO DIFFERENTIATE POSITION FROM PERSONALITY.

☞ REALIZE THAT GOD IS BIGGER THAN HER HUSBAND.

- Women often object to the idea of "submitting" to their husbands because "he just doesn't know how to lead," or "I can't respect him." This attitude clearly indicates a failure to distinguish the position God has given the husband as head of the wife from his personality inconsistencies.

☞ THE HUSBAND CAN'T LEAD IF THE WIFE WON'T FOLLOW!!

- The Two Major Passages of Scripture Deal with the Woman's Role in this Order:

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the

The natural tendency is for the woman to think that if she submits to her husband, he will take advantage of the situation and use her

church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
Ephesians 5:22-25

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands..."
I Peter 3:1

"This was the secret of the beauty of the holy women of ancient times who TRUSTED IN GOD and were submissive to their husbands. Sarah, you will remember, obeyed Abraham and called him her lord."
I Peter 3:5,6 (Phillips)

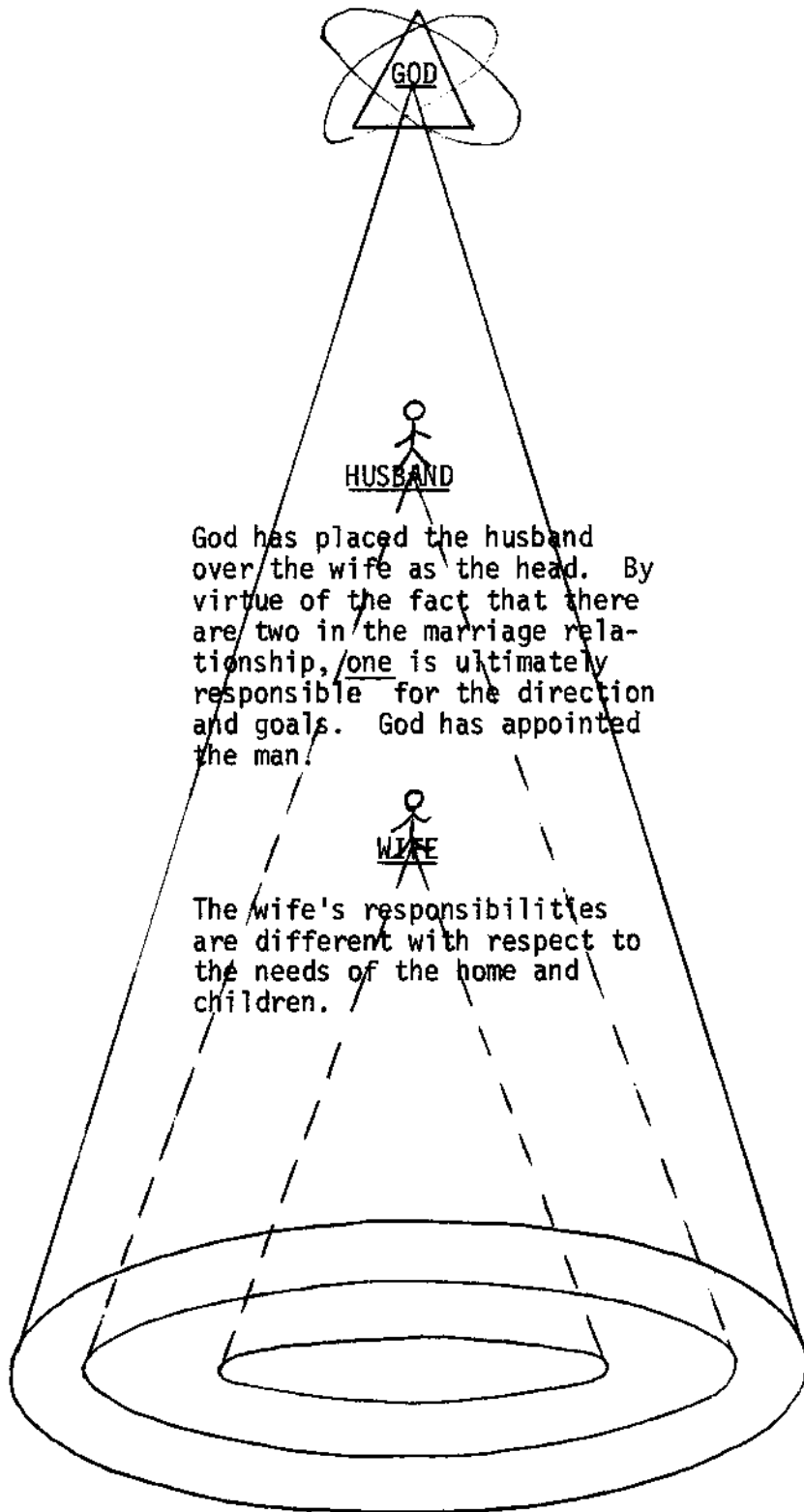
as a doormat. This attitude clearly indicates that her focus is on her circumstances, rather than her commitment to the Lord and His ability to work in her life.

When the woman is cooperating with the Lord, the Lord has the freedom to bring conviction on the husband through the wife's godly responses.

DISTINGUISHING POSITION FROM PERSONALITY

☞ God always operates within the sphere of delegated responsibility. It is important for the wife to distinguish her husband's authority over her from his personality traits and deficiencies.

ONLY GOD CAN SEE ALL
OF LIFE IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE.



▪ **THE HEAD OF EVERY MAN IS CHRIST.**
I Corinthians 11:2

▪ **THE HEAD OF EVERY WOMAN IS THE MAN.**
I Corinthians 11:2

▪ This is clearly emphasized in Proverbs 6:20-23.
"The commandment (father is source of direction) is a lamp; and the law (mother) is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

▪ *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church..."*
Ephesians 5:23

▪ *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands..."*
Ephesians 5:22

▪ *"For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power (authority of husband) on her head..."*
I Corinthians 11:8-10

▪ *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*
Genesis 3:16

POSITION

● In learning to relate and respond to her husband's personality traits and deficiencies, it is important that the wife evaluate the following questions and apply the corresponding insights to her own life.

● WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE FOR RESPONDING TO YOUR HUSBAND?

Too often a wife will make the statement, "I did what I was supposed to and my mate hasn't changed; in fact things have been worse!" or, "I've given up because it hasn't worked!"

● GOD HAS NOT PROMISED A PROBLEM-FREE OR TROUBLE-FREE LIFE, BUT THE POWER TO RESPOND TO EACH SITUATION.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

II Corinthians 4:8-11

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the

● This statement truly reflects the fact that her obedience to God was for an ulterior motive - to lighten the burden and have a better relationship in the marriage, rather than to please the Lord and demonstrate love for Him by obedience to His Word. That the mate changes, or when he changes, is an added blessing from the Lord. The purpose in responding God's way is for the wife's personal benefit - that she might have peace in the midst of turmoil, joy in difficulty, and hope in despair.

sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1,2

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:2-5

🗨️ THE RIGHT MOTIVE AND EMOTIONAL FOCUS:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength and mind."
Luke 10:27

🗨️ HAVE YOU PUT A TIME LIMIT ON GOD?

The husband's total spiritual needs are far greater than the disharmony experienced in his relationship with his wife. When her motive for his spiritual improvement is selfish she tends to focus on the situations and attitudes which upset her. However, these negative attitudes are only symptoms of the real problem, which is deeper.

▪ FOR EXAMPLE:

TRYING TO CHANGE ONE ANOTHER

A husband was very critical, accusing and condemning his wife during the early years of their marriage. The couple engaged in reacting to one another, each trying to change the other and "playing Holy Spirit" by pointing out attitudes and actions that needed to be changed.

REALIZING HIS PROBLEM

When the husband learned about the principle of gaining a clear conscience, he was surprised to discover that his subconscious guilt about money he had stolen as a teen, undesirable dating patterns and rejection of advice from those in authority had been the root cause of the critical attitudes toward his wife. ALL OF THESE THINGS SHE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT!

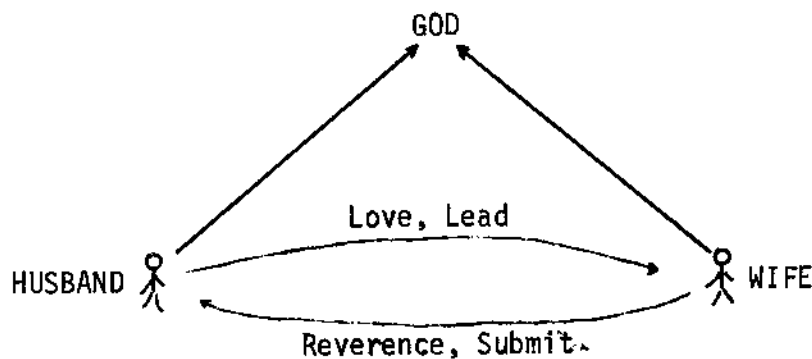
When the mate will cooperate with the Lord, then the Lord has the freedom, IN HIS OWN TIMING, to bring the right pressure and conviction to bear on the individual and get to the root of the real problem!

When we suffer we are privileged to share in the sufferings of Jesus Christ - we have an opportunity to be like him! •See I Peter 4:12-16

- You must be fully confident that God is working, and allow Him to take His time to produce permanent and lasting results.
- One lady shared a glorious testimony when she said, "After I committed myself wholly to the Lord and made things right with my husband, from a human point of view I went through hell for two years. But to have the changed husband I now have -it was worth it!"

PERSONALITY

☛ "SUBMITTING YOURSELVES ONE TO ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD." Ephesians 5:21

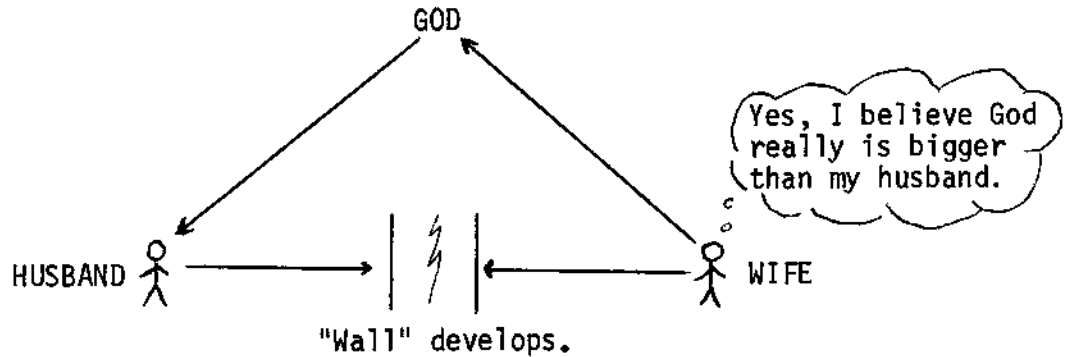


- Throughout the marriage, the wife will be faced with decisions to follow which instinctively appear wrong, imperfect attitudes, idiosyncrasies, misunderstandings, and wrongs to be made right.

Therefore, it is imperative that a couple's focus and goals be on the Lord. The closer they each get to the Lord, the closer they will be drawn to one another in spirit.

- When a "wall" or disagreement develops between husband and wife and the wife feels the husband is wrong, God wants the wife to settle in her mind, first of all, the basic questions:

1 IS GOD BIGGER THAN MY HUSBAND?



- A woman's intuition is often more accurate than a man's logic. Often she can't put her feelings into words on the spur of the moment, but this should not be the basis for her to disregard her own opinions.

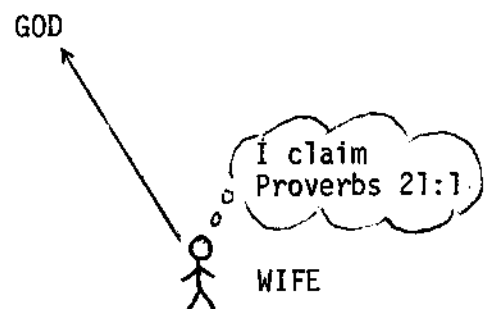
"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any OBEY NOT THE WORD, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."

I Peter 3:1

2 DO I BELIEVE THAT IF MY HUSBAND IS ABOUT TO MAKE A DECISION THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY DESTROY GOD'S PURPOSES FOR OUR MARRIAGE OR FAMILY, GOD WILL CHANGE MY HUSBAND'S MIND?

"The king's heart (one in authority) is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Proverbs 21:1



A BASIC WAY GOD GETS THROUGH TO A MAN IS THROUGH FAILURE !!

"After this manner the holy women of old who trusted in God adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands." King James

"The women of old looked to God... and Sarah called her husband lord."

(See I Peter 3:5,6 Phillips)

The average wife tries to keep her husband from failing when he is set in his ways and not open to advice.

The husband's pride and authority are threatened and he will do just the opposite to have "his way."

When He Doesn't Change His Mind and He's Wrong,

GOD WANTS THE WIFE TO BE WILLING TO GO WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAILURE WITHOUT SAYING, "I TOLD YOU SO."

A \$4000.00 SWIMMING POOL AND NO MONEY!

A wife came to my office on a Tuesday morning in grave concern stating, "My husband has his mind set on buying a \$4,000.00 swimming pool. Our home has been upset for three months over this issue!!"

SHE WAS TRYING TO PREVENT A DISASTER!

"I've tried to tell him we can't afford it and if he buys it we'll be ruined financially! We're having a hard time paying our bills as it is." I asked her, "What has been your response?" Did you talk back?" She answered, "Well, yes, but he's not a Christian and somebody has to be responsible for our family."

WOULD YOU TRY GOD'S WAY?

I shared the preceding insights with her and challenged her to try God's way. "Would you make things right with your husband and tell him that if he feels the family ought to have a pool that you're with him and will support whatever he decides?" She said she would.

SHE ASKED HIS FORGIVENESS FOR FAILING TO ALLOW HIM TO LEAD THE FAMILY AS HE THOUGHT WAS BEST.

Saturday morning she called and exclaimed, "You'll never believe what happened! I did what you suggested. After I asked his forgiveness, I sensed he really didn't believe me. For the next two days he kept bringing the subject up, and I assured him of my willingness to do whatever he thought best."

HE DECIDED.

He returned home from work on Friday and casually mentioned, "Honey, we're going to get the pool, but I've decided we don't need it right now. Maybe next summer."

THE RESULTING STABILITY!

- When the husband doesn't change and he's wrong, the wife → can understand that God is working through the husband's failures.
→ can visualize areas and issues that God must deal with in the husband's personal life first, before He can develop the marriage relationship.
- When the husband doesn't change and he's right, the wife → has a new confidence in the Lord's ability to lead through her husband.

WHEN DECISION ISN'T IMMINENT:

Unnecessary friction is caused in many marriage situations when the husband and wife fail to discern God's purpose in a lack of agreement between the two concerning issues that do not yet call for a final decision. Too often pride in a man, a threat to his position, or impetuosity destroys the potential of making decisions together. The following are guidelines to discern God's purpose in these situations.

WHEN BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE SEEKING TO PLEASE THE LORD AND THEY DISAGREE ON A MATTER:

If a decision isn't imminent and there are differences of opinion - don't act or decide ! The Lord may be postponing action for these reasons:

1. It isn't the Lord's time to act.
2. God wants to give further insight to the husband.
3. God wants to amplify the wife's insight.
4. Time will change things and you will drop the idea.
5. Time will change the situation and a better or different course of action will be taken.

- WHEN A DECISION IS IMMINENT AND THEY STILL DISAGREE, the wife must apply the principle of chain of command in marriage, and experience the joy of having her husband - if he is wrong and he discovers it - say, "Honey, I was wrong; you were right. Thanks for your love and patience in praying for me. I love you."

"CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED?" Amos 3:3

"THE TWO SHALL BE ONE." Genesis 2:24

"LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY. LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE AS THOUGH YOU HAVE ONLY ONE MIND AND ONE SPIRIT BETWEEN YOU."

Philippians 2:2-4 (Phillips)