

The Godly Woman

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Preface

Before reading this book, it is important to understand two basic presuppositions. The first one is that anyone reading this is already a born-again Christian. If you are not, the message contained within this book will be absolutely meaningless, if not ridiculous, to you. This whole study is an investigation into Scriptural teaching concerning women. As in all matters of Bible study, it is impossible for an unregenerate person to understand these things. The contents of the Bible are spiritually appraised. They cannot be comprehended unless the spirit of the student has been brought to life by the Holy Spirit. If you are not born again and do not understand what I am saying, please refer to the appendix in the back of this book before going any further.

The second presupposition is that this book is not a rule book. It is not a handbook or manual for behavior. It is not a "how to" book. The only "how to" book in the life of a Christian is the Bible. This book is simply an examination of the Biblical teaching concerning women. It is my desire that after reading this you will honestly evaluate yourself in the light of the Scripture and ask God to deal with you accordingly. I hope this will clarify passages of Scripture; and I hope it will open up new paths of obedience for you. But I do not want anyone to view this as a set of rules and then set about in their own strength to obey them. The Christian life is not a set of rules and regulations. Instead, it is the indwelling life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only as Christ abides in the believer and the believer abides in Christ that the Christian life is expressed.

Use this book to get yourself into the Bible. Ponder the verses mentioned and open your heart to their practical application. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you through these pages, and as He does, submit your will to the Lord so that obedience will follow. I, as well as you, need to move into these paths of obedience, so "forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Martha Goetzman, 1975

Chapter 1: The Woman's Place

"For man does not originate from woman but woman from man." (I Corinthians 11:8)

When God created the universe, He built into it an orderliness and harmony that exists today. He did not create chaos and then expect the creation to put it in order. With precision, God created an intricate universe, functioning in perfect harmony and balance. He instituted the "natural laws" upon which science depends for its calculations. He set in motion the cycles, seasons, and interdependent relationships in nature which are so vital to life. God's hand is evident from the microcosm of the atom to the macrocosm of the universe.

It is not surprising then, that God also established order within the human race; not to have done so would have been out of keeping with His character, for we are told "God is not a God of confusion" (I Corinthians 14:33). It is this divine order with which we are concerned, particularly the place of

women within that order.

The Woman's Place Was Established at Creation

When God created the parents of the human race He established His order by the sequence of creation. God created the man first. "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve" (I Timothy 2:13). God's initial dealings with humanity were with Adam. He created Adam first, in His own image. He gave Adam authority over the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it, and He gave Adam instructions concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:7-17). God did not create Adam and Eve simultaneously, nor did He instruct them both concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God gave the commandment to Adam because Adam was the head of the race and was responsible directly to God.

God's initial dealings with the woman were through the man. God created Eve out of a part of Adam. Before God created the woman, He instituted His order; during the act of creation He did not violate that order. He did not give Eve life independently of Adam; He went through the man to create the woman. Thus He established His order: man first, woman second.

God made the woman for the man. "For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake" (I Corinthians 11:9). God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He created woman to be man's helper and complement (Genesis 2:18). Adam was created primarily to have a relationship with God and to be in direct communion with God. Although Eve was also meant to have communion with God, she was created primarily to have a relationship with Adam. She was made for the specific purpose of helping Adam and fulfilling his needs.

God intended for women to be in a position lower than men. He established Adam as the head of the race and as His appointed authority upon the earth. Adam was under God's orders and was responsible directly to God. He created Eve to help Adam and to be in submission to him. Eve was under Adam's authority and was responsible to him.

Thus, the order established at the creation was: God, man, woman. With the advent of Jesus Christ, the order became more clearly defined as: God, Christ, man, woman. "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" (I Corinthians 11:3). This order of authority obviously does not imply degrees of superiority and inferiority since God and Jesus Christ are one and the same. The concepts of "superior" and "inferior" simply do not apply to God the Father and Jesus Christ. They are eternal, coequal, coexistent, and complete in their perfection. The order, then, is simply a line of authority or "chain of command."

It is important to remember that God instituted this order in the perfect state. God did not put woman in the place of submission to punish her; rather, God established this order because it was the very best arrangement possible. At the end of Genesis 1, after the entire creation had been completed (male and female, verse 27), God exclaimed that it was all "very good." Thus Eve's creation and her position were good. If there had been a better order God would have instituted it, but this was the best possible arrangement, because in God's eyes it was very good.

God also established His order by the method of creation. When God created Adam He formed him out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). At this point Adam became a living being, or a living soul (Genesis 2:7). This mysterious quality we call "life" was

imparted directly to Adam, by the breath of God. This life (or soul) is contained in the blood. "For the life [literally, soul] of the flesh is in the blood..." (Leviticus 17:11).

When God breathed into Adam the breath of life, He did something to Adam's blood. Some believe it was at this point that Adam's blood was created. Perhaps it was created, or perhaps the process of circulation was just then set in motion. Whatever the transaction, it was at this point that God infused into Adam's blood the soul of life.

When God created Eve He did not form her out of the dust of the ground, rather He built her out of a part of Adam's body. He took one of Adam's ribs and "fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22). Neither did God breathe into Eve the breath of life. Eve received her life from Adam. "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man" (I Corinthians 11:8). The soul of life which God breathed directly into Adam was transferred to Eve through Adam--she did not receive life apart from him.

It is significant that the first thing Adam said when he saw Eve was: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..." (Genesis 2:23). He was actually saying, "she is life of my life." The life of the flesh is in the blood and the site of blood production in a human body is the bone marrow. When God took one of Adam's bones for the creation of Eve, He was transferring the life-invested blood of Adam to Eve. He was insuring that the God-breathed life-blood He had given Adam would also flow in Eve's veins. But He did not give it to her independently of Adam. He went through Adam to create the woman and to infuse into her the soul of life. The order God had planned was not violated even in the creation.

If Adam and Eve are typical of Christ and the church, the analogy is perfect. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which secures the life of the bride (or the church). We receive our life through Him, specifically through His body and blood. Since the life of the flesh is in the blood, the life of God was contained in the blood of Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of the blood of Christ as being "precious blood" (I Peter 1:19). It was precious because it was God's blood. This miracle of transmitting divine life into blood was accomplished by the virgin birth of Christ. It is a known fact that the blood produced within an embryo is distinct from the mother's blood. There is no mixing of the mother's blood and the blood of the fetus. But blood production can only occur when the female ovum has been fertilized by the male sperm. There is no blood in an unfertilized ovum; blood appears only after the entrance of the sperm. Thus the male sperm is the carrier or transmitter of the soul of life, since the life is in the blood. For this reason, all human beings have inherited Adam's sinful nature. This fallen human nature has been transmitted from father to offspring for generations.

The only man to be born without a sinful human nature was the virgin-born Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20) so the blood which was produced within Him was divine blood. There was no taint of human blood within Him, therefore there was no sinful nature within Him. He was called from the first instant of conception, "the holy offspring [or holy thing]" (Luke 1:35). Jesus Christ was begotten of God; He was not begotten of Adam's race.*

In eternity past, when God was contemplating the creation of the human race, He planned a creation of perfection and harmony. He planned to establish within the human race an order and a symmetry [or balance] that would be the most workable. He designed the race to function perfectly, with maximum contentment and fulfillment. When He set about to perform the creation He did it in such a way as not

to violate this order. He created the man first and the woman second. He dealt directly with Adam--imparting life to him and instructing him about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but He went through Adam to deal with the woman. He created her out of the man and infused life into her from the man.

God's order was established by the sequence of creation and by the method of creation. And when He had completed His handiwork He stood back and exclaimed that it was very good.

The Woman's Place was Confirmed at the Fall

The beauty and perfection God built into the human race was ruined when Adam and Eve fell into sin. Their relationship suffered, and relationships between men and women have been affected ever since. If God's plan and order do not sound "very good" to us, it is simply because our minds are darkened by sin. The fall brought chaos into God's order and put rebellion into the hearts of His once contented and obedient creatures. The measure with which we reject God's perfect plan is just the measure with which we reject Him and His light into our darkened hearts and minds.

The measure of our acceptance of the life of Christ and His transforming power into our lives will also be the measure of our acceptance of God's plan. As we allow the cross to work in our lives and we become more conformed to the image of Christ, the divine order will begin to be "very good." John said, "His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3). Rather, they are joyous, when He is abiding within and doing the work.

The fall of Eve is a dreadful story, but it is one with which every woman should be thoroughly familiar. Every woman should review it frequently, for we are the fallen daughters of a fallen Eve. The nature which allowed Eve to be deceived, is the very same nature with which we are endowed.

The fall of Eve was occasioned by two things. First, she was deceived. "And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). The fall is generally referred to as the "fall of Adam" rather than the "fall of Eve" because Adam was the federal head of the race and therefore responsible for the act; but in addition to this, it is because Adam was not deceived. He deliberately chose to disobey God's command. Eve, on the other hand, was deceived. Satan beguiled her and caused her to eat the fruit. This should be a red warning signal for all women: **BEWARE OF DECEPTION!** A woman's nature lends itself to deception. In addition, the sinful human heart is "more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17:9). With this double tendency toward deception, women should be particularly alert to its temptation.

Eve entertained the doubt Satan put into her mind. "Indeed, has God said...?" (Genesis 3:1). Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44) and he began his attack upon Eve by lying about God's character. He caused Eve to question the veracity of God. "Has God said you will die? You will not die; you will become like God." Satan tricked Eve with a half-truth; but a half-truth is a lie. One of Satan's cleverest deceptions is to taint truth with just a tinge of error. It is the error that poisons the truth, but it is the truth that deceives the victim into swallowing the lie. Eve began to slip when she entertained doubts about God.

In addition to the doubts, Satan deceived Eve by beguiling her. We are told that the "serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1). It was his craftiness which Satan brought to bear upon Eve. "The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness..." (II Corinthians

11:3). Deception is rarely accomplished by a bold frontal attack. Deception is accomplished by sly wheedling and cunning maneuvering. Deception seems plausible because on the surface it looks good, but deadly poison is, nevertheless, buried within its fabric.

Why is it that most Christians expect Satan to announce his arrival with bands playing and banners waving? The Scriptures repeatedly describe him as crafty and cunning. He is an "angel of light" and a "wolf in sheep's clothing." Do not expect him to appear as a wolf in wolf's clothing--that would not be deception. Rather recognize him as being more crafty than any other beast.

Satan beguiled Eve by enticing her with the temptations of the world. He lured her with the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life" (I John 2:16). "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [the lust of the flesh], and that it was a delight to the eyes [the lust of the eyes], and that the tree was desirable to make one wise [the boastful pride of life], she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6). The tactic was simple: Satan made worldly pleasures seem more desirable than obedience to God. He lied to Eve and convinced her that worldly pleasures would satisfy. But the truth is: "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (I John 2:17).

The second thing which occasioned the fall of Eve was that she assumed the place of authority. Rather than deferring to Adam's authority, she took the situation into her own hands. The first thing Eve should have done when Satan approached her was to call Adam. God gave the initial instructions concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Adam and He gave Adam authority over the garden (Genesis 2:15-16). Eve's role was to be Adam's helper (Genesis 2:18). She should not have taken the place of authority. But Satan enticed Eve to come out from under Adam's protective headship and step out of her God-given place. She became her own authority by taking the situation into her own hands.

When this situation arose, Eve trusted her own perception. She put her feelings and opinions above God's command. She perceived the tree was good for food and a delight to the eyes so she trusted her perception and ate the fruit, but God had appointed Adam as the authority over Eve for this very reason. God knew Eve's nature was such that she would be easily deceived, so He put Adam in charge. Eve should have automatically consulted Adam and put the situation into his hands. When she trusted her own perception she fell into sin.

The consequences of Eve's fall were threefold. First, her pain in childbirth was multiplied. Second, her ability to conceive was increased. And third, Adam's authority over her was confirmed (Genesis 3:16). Before the fall, Adam was God's appointed authority over Eve, but now he would actually rule over her and she would have to be subject to him (Ephesians 5:22). A position which was once sweet and fulfilling now became punishment because of the entrance of sin.

In spite of the fact that childbirth would be an agonizing experience and the frequency of fertility increased, the woman would still desire her husband. She would be driven by a sexual urge to have relations with her husband, but would then suffer as a consequence. Frequent pregnancies and painful childbirth were the direct results of sin. God had intended child-bearing to be a pleasant, joyous experience, but He cursed it because of Eve's sin.

The beautiful relationship God had established at the time of creation was blasted by the entrance of sin. Instead of being happy and free in their God-given roles, the roles themselves became punishment. God strengthened Adam's authority over Eve and pronounced him as ruler over her. He sentenced Adam to a life of hard labor and back-breaking toil to earn his daily bread. (Genesis 3:17-19). The pleasure of bringing children into the world now became a time of sorrow and anguish; and the pure delight of marital intimacies became a driving force.

The picture seems bleak, but there is a ray of hope. The grace of God is able to make us "overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). Just as His grace is sufficient to save us from the penalty of sin, so it is sufficient to relieve us from some of the consequences of sin. Even though men must work by the sweat of their brow to wrest a living from the earth, there is a Sabbath of rest for God's people (Hebrews 4:1). Man's toil is not unrelieved. Similarly, though the roles themselves became part of the penalty of sin, there can be joy and fulfillment in the roles today. Through submission and obedience to the will of God, the curse can be lifted and the blessing restored.

The woman's pain in childbirth can also be relieved if she depends upon the Lord for His sustaining grace. A godly woman who goes into the ordeal of childbirth with her faith fixed firmly on the Lord Jesus Christ and her deliverance committed to Him will find the experience not nearly so agonizing. "But woman shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint" (I Timothy 2:15). A woman will be delivered or protected during this time of giving birth. She will be eased through it if her faith, love and sanctity continue. If she is a godly woman and commits this trial to the Lord, just like any other trial, He will make His grace sufficient.

Eve's deception and insubordination reaped disastrous consequences. What the human race would have been like had the fall not occurred, we will never know. But it is certain that each woman has the potential of creating tragedy and calamity in her own "world" because of her nature. If she succumbs to the deception of her feminine nature and the deceitfulness of her human heart she is sure to create trouble. But if she submits to God's perfectly appointed place and defers to men's authority she is putting herself under God's protective covering and is safeguarding her own position and the consequences in her sphere of influence. She should recognize what calamity sin has brought upon the human race and flee to Jesus Christ for cleansing of her sin. By the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, some of the consequences of the fall can be counteracted and the peace and harmony of God's design restored

**For a thorough explanation of this concept see M. R. DeHaan, The Chemistry of the Blood (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971).*

Chapter 2: The Woman's Nature

"...male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27)

When God created the first human beings, male and female, He built into them certain basic differences. Physically men and women are different, of course; but beyond that, their natures are different. When God created men and women He did not make them just alike; rather He made them "complementary." He made their natures different from each other but able to complement and balance each other. Men and women are not like salt and pepper shakers; they are more like gears. They are made to fit together and mesh perfectly. Each is made a little bit different from the other, but they are designed to work in harmony and together to produce a functioning unit.

The Two Basic Natures

Women are basically emotional creatures. God has built into woman an emotional nature which supersedes her rational nature. This is not to say that women do not have a rational nature; they do, but it is not the dominant nature. Women have minds and are able to exercise their intellectual capacities, but the basic quality of a woman's nature is emotion. She tends to "think" with her heart. In making decisions she tends to be guided more by her emotions than by her reasoning capacities.

The corollary of this emotional nature is the woman's tendency to be easily deceived. We have already seen that Eve "being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). All women have inherited this tendency (some to a greater extent than others). But the inclination toward deception among women is universal because of their emotional nature.

Men, on the other hand, are basically rational. God has built into men a reasoning capacity which supersedes their emotional capacity. Naturally, men have emotions, but their emotions do not dominate. They are more likely to be guided by reason, and more prone to think with their heads. Their decisions are made largely on the basis of reasoning.

In conjunction with this, men are not easily deceived. "It was not Adam who was deceived..." (I Timothy 2:14). Men can be tempted, but not easily deceived. Adam's fall was not caused by deception, but by disobedience. He chose to sin. "By the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one....So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men; ...as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners..." (Romans 5:17-19). These verses indicate the sin was deliberate, rather than occasioned by deception.

It is wonderful to see God's plan in giving men and women different natures. He intended for them to balance each other. The warm and tender emotions of a woman balance the cold intellect of the man; and the calculated reasoning capacity of the man balances the deceivable nature of the woman. The two natures are not the same; instead each one fills up what is lacking in the other.

The Woman's Reminder of Her Nature

When Eve was tempted by Satan, it was her emotional nature which responded to the temptation. "The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness..." (II Corinthians 11:3). Without the tendency to be deceived, the serpent's craftiness would have been ineffective. But Eve's nature aided in the temptation and God punished her accordingly. He meted out a punishment which provided a constant reminder of her nature.

God increased Eve's ability to conceive. (You may think that has nothing to do with her nature, but bear with me, I think it does.) The literal rendering of Genesis 3:16 is, "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain and your pregnancy [or conception]; in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you' " God said He would not only multiply her pain in childbirth but also multiply her conception. Evidently God changed Eve's cycle of fertility. He made her cycle complete its revolution more frequently so that she would produce an ovum more often and therefore be capable of conception more often.

Perhaps God had intended human beings to experience only seasonal or infrequent periods of fertility. Or perhaps God fixed a small number of periods in a woman's life in which she would be able to

conceive. Whatever the previous plan, today we live under the "curse." God punished Eve (and all of her daughters) by speeding up her cycle and increasing her conception.

The tangible evidence of a woman's changed cycle is her monthly menstrual period. In this, God provides a constant reminder of Eve's emotional nature. It is during this time that a woman's emotions are most noticeable and most out of control. Many women experience great emotional upheavals at this time. There are peaks of ecstasy, but more often valleys of depression. Some women have "black" days of depression in which they actually contemplate suicide. For others it is manifested as the "blues" or just simply as their "flat side" in which they cannot get going. But all of this is mute testimony to the fact that woman's nature is emotional and that her emotions caused the human race trouble at one time, so she should be careful.

In the monthly period God also provided a constant reminder of Eve's deception. It was deception which caused the fall of Eve. "The woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). The instability of a woman's nature is most evident during this time of the month. She is most likely to be deceived then, or to succumb to faulty judgment. Her mind and emotions may play tricks on her so that insignificant things are blown out of proportion. Simple decisions seem complex and almost impossible to make. All of these signals should draw a woman's attention right back to the garden of Eden and caution her to beware because she is susceptible to the same deception which beguiled Eve.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life are still luring women today, but God has provided this monthly reminder so that women will not forget their potential for deception; and so they will look to Him for deliverance. Each time the cycle rolls around it should cause women to remember and to recommit themselves to God for His protection.

In the monthly period God also provided a constant reminder of Eve's sin. God did not want any woman to forget the tragedy of the fall. This monthly inconvenience is the direct result of Eve's fall. Each time it occurs it is like a whisper from God saying, "Don't forget, don't forget." Don't forget your potential for sin; don't forget your powers to seduce men and cause them to sin; don't forget the evil which can be occasioned by your choices and suggestions. Don't deceive yourself into thinking you do not have these powers--you do. Just make sure they have been "crucified with Christ" along with all the rest of your self-life.

Unless these powers to seduce and tempt have been dealt with at the cross, they will manifest themselves in the maneuvering and wheedling so many women practice. You may think, "I'm not a seductress, I don't wear revealing clothes nor act in a provocative way." But you may be pulling strings and manipulating, which is the same thing. Any time you try to "manage" men for your own benefit, you are being a seductress. When a woman is reminded of her nature during her monthly period she should also be reminded that sin need not have dominion over her. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Romans 8:2).

Although the physical aspects of the woman's punishment are fixed, the emotional aspects can be alleviated. Dependence upon the Lord Jesus will not change the woman's cycle, but it will change her attitude. She does not need to be mastered and defeated by these monthly emotional upheavals. The Word of God says: "When you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness"

(Romans 6:16). If a woman succumbs to her emotions during this time of the month and allows herself to be mastered, she will be defeated spiritually. She will be walking according to her feelings rather than by faith. But if she commits herself, emotions included, to the Lord Jesus Christ and asks Him to take control, He will deliver her from this bondage and defeat. He is able to do "exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20), so He is able to lift her out of this depression and give her victory over it. This must be a moment-by-moment commitment. It must be a deliberate effort to live by faith, but the power is available to see her through.

Satan's Temptation

Satan's character is repeatedly described as being "crafty" and his method as that of deception. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made..." (Genesis 3:1). "The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness..." (II Corinthians 11:3; see also Revelation 12:9, Revelation 20:3,8,10; Acts 13:10). But it is interesting that although Satan is cunning and crafty, his tactics have not changed much over the years. He is deceiving people today with the same lies he used before time began. He seems to know human nature so well that he does not need a whole bag full of tricks--he can keep using the same ones over and over again and people continue to fall for them.

The first tactic used by Satan to deceive Eve was to put doubt into her mind. "And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?"'" (Genesis 3:1). It was a very simple but insidious question. "Has God said?" It made her question God's character, His motives, His purposes, His veracity, His commands and ultimately God Himself. It undermined the foundation of trust which was vital to Eve's relationship with God. "Has God said?" It made Eve wonder if the commandment of God regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the very best. Perhaps there was something good to be obtained by eating from the tree, and God was keeping it from them. This thought was like a wedge which opened up her mind to questions and doubts. After the wedge had been driven in, it was but a short step to sin.

Satan is using this same tactic on women today. He is trying to deceive them by making them question God's commandments. "*Has God said* that women should be in subjection to men? Has God said women should be submissive?" He is jeering at women and provoking them to doubt. He is not saying, "Is it true that God said this to you?" He knows what God said. He is really saying, "*Why* did God say this to you? *Why* is God being so mean to you, why is He treating you unfairly, why is He putting you in the lower place?" Once again Satan is driving in that wedge of doubt.

Anytime Satan can cause a believer to doubt God, he has pretty much won the victory. Doubt and unbelief go hand in hand. Doubt refuses to believe that God is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do. It misconstrues God as a liar and a deceiver. "Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). Faith is the key to the Christian life because faith trusts God. Faith believes that God is who He says He is. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," because without faith it is impossible to perceive God correctly. If my perception of God does not conform to His revealed image, then I have constructed my own god and am worshipping an idol.

The second tactic used by Satan to deceive Eve was to make her covetous. He puffed up her ego and provoked her to vainglory. He lied to her and said that if she ate the fruit she would be like God. "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Satan tricked Eve into becoming dissatisfied with her position, and

persuaded her to seek a higher status. He planted within her an evil, covetous desire for self-advancement. He made her want to be like God.

Does this sound familiar? Was there someone else who wanted to be like God? Of course. This was the very temptation which caused the fall of Lucifer. He said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14). The pride and covetousness which caused Satan's downfall were the bait he used to cause Eve's downfall.

Since Satan's doom has already been sealed, his purpose now is to take as many people down with him as possible. Do not be deceived into thinking this is going to be one grand fraternity of happy sinners joining together in the bonds of sin. There is no love or comradeship in Satan. Once he has deceived someone and caused them to fall into sin, he shrieks in derision and leaves them to reap the results of what they have sown. There is neither companionship nor succor among Satan's followers.

Eve was deceived and said in her heart, "I will ascend." She was not content in the place God had given her, so she reached out to grasp a higher position. This is the exact deception Satan is using on women today. He is planting within them a dissatisfaction with their God-given position and prompting them to reach out for a higher status. Satan is deceiving women into saying in their hearts, "I will ascend." After all, it worked with Lucifer and it worked with Eve; why wouldn't it work on women today?

These two ancient but alarmingly successful ploys are still deceiving: "Has God said?" and "I will ascend." The first rings with rebellion. "Has God said I should be in subjection to men?" Defiance and contempt fling out this challenge. And the response? "I will ascend and be like men! I will not grovel and whimper like a child; I will be like men." The pride, covetousness, and self-assertiveness of a fallen heart incite this response. From the initial weakening of doubt to the total collapse of open rebellion is but a short step and Satan laughs in scorn every time he is successful at this deception.

To gauge Satan's success, just take a quick glance at the state of affairs in the world today. Women are advancing their status in all areas of society. Fashion, entertainment, and advertising have all cheerfully fallen into the deception. Though the human race professes wisdom and sophistication, it has not managed to avoid this oldest and most obvious trick of the deceiver.

It is the woman's nature which allows her to be deceived in this manner. The fact that she is basically emotional and easily deceived leaves her open to the wiles of Satan. When she is relying solely upon her own perception she is most likely to fall into deception. But if she remains in her place of submission and defers to man's authority, she will be protected by God. It is possible to avoid deception--God has made provision for it. Knowing that the tendency toward deception is ever-present should motivate godly women to continually remain in their God-given position.

Chapter 3: The Woman's Role

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him.'" (Genesis 2:1)

When God created the human race He established order within it and designated roles for both men and women. The woman's role is to be a helper; her place is one of submission. She is to submit to man's

authority. There are three aspects to this submission.

First, a woman must assume her place. She must recognize God's order and find her place within that plan. "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" (I Corinthians 11:3). The line of authority, then, is God-Christ-man-woman. The woman's place is a position lower than men. In order for God's purposes to be accomplished, all the members of this chain must submit to the authority God has placed over them. Authority has been established by God, not as a punishment, but to insure peace and unity. We are all admonished to live under God's designated authority: "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves" (Romans 13:1-2).

When the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon the earth He submitted Himself perfectly to God's order. He remained submissive to God, never doing anything that was out of God's will. "I can do nothing on My own initiative: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30).

This submission did not indicate inferiority. The Lord Jesus never hesitated to claim equality with God the Father (see John 10:30; John 14:9; John 17:5). He was completely God. "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness of deity to dwell in Him" (Colossians 1:19). Yet He was willing to comply perfectly with God's established order. It did not lessen His status to be in submission to God the Father. Every woman must learn that her place in God's order is a position lower than men and she must assume that position. She must voluntarily submit to man's authority and take the lower place. This applies to all women. The verses in I Corinthians 11:1-16 refer to "men and women." There is no mention in these verses of husbands or wives. This entire passage is referring to the general order of men and women regardless of their marital status.

The logic used by Paul in explaining the order stems from the creation. He does not appeal to the marriage relationship to justify the roles (he explains the marriage relationship in other passages); rather he turns back to the creation to illuminate the divine order. Since man did not originate from woman, but woman from man; and since man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake, the order is logical. Women should be in a place lower than men and submissive to men because they were created for men. They were designed and made for that purpose.

This reasoning makes it clear that the order is universal for all women. Single women must learn to be submissive before they marry and remain submissive after their marriage. If a woman never marries, she must still retain a submissive attitude and respect men's authority. If a young woman is contemplating marriage and has not yet begun to manifest a submissive spirit, there is no reason to assume she will be submissive after the wedding ceremony. This attitude must be evident before the wedding takes place. Men should look for this quality in a wife; without it, there is no possibility for a divinely structured marriage.

Submission is an attitude. It is possible for a woman to keep her mouth closed, be obedient, and yet not be submissive. She could be rebelling in her heart or secretly manipulating men while all the while keeping up an outward pretense of submission. It is also possible to be theologically sound or technically correct about the scriptural stand on submission, but not be submissive. True submission is

a matter of the heart attitude. It is cheerfully and willingly taking the God-ordered place. It is accomplished by obedience to the Word and commitment of the will. A woman must sincerely believe in her heart that this is the best place for her, and as an act of obedience to God commit herself to it.

Second, a woman must submit to her husband. The primary outworking of the divinely-ordered roles is in the marriage relationship. Men and women are given the maximum opportunity to practice their roles within marriage. That which was established generally for the human race becomes specific for the husband and wife. "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 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. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

A woman ought to realize that her husband is God's appointed authority over her. He did not assume this authority on his own, but God gave him this authority. The order that is true generally for the human race: God-Christ-man-woman, is now applied to a particular couple: God-Christ-husband-wife. It is not a matter of abstract theology, but becomes practical, applied theology. God established this order for every marriage. He did not say "Here is the plan; now you decide whether or not you want to follow it." He established the lines of authority at the foundation of the world and intends for every marriage to be patterned accordingly. If your particular marriage does not abide by it then you are out of God's order.

It is important for a wife to recognize her husband as God's appointed authority over her. She will then realize that submission to her husband is submission to the Lord's authority. In fact, submission to her husband is submission to the Lord. It is impossible to be submissive to the Lord without being submissive to His appointed authority. Likewise, by being submissive to the Lord's appointed authority, she is being submissive to the Lord. Ephesians 5:22 enjoins a wife to be submissive to her husband "as to the Lord." Her attitude toward her husband should reflect her attitude toward the Lord. He is the Lord's representative. She should obey and respect him as if the Lord himself were speaking directly to her through him.

The Scriptures have a good deal to say about appointed authority. Once God has selected someone to be His authority or representative, it is a dangerous thing to defy that authority. It is, in reality, defying God. Saul, for example, had been anointed king over Israel, and because of this, David persistently refused to slay him. The reason he gave was always thus: "Who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt? ...The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed..." (I Samuel 26:9,11). David respected God's appointment of Saul regardless of Saul's behavior.

There is an example in the Old Testament of defiance of God's appointed authority. It should be a sobering reminder that God does not take rebellion lightly. The story of Korah's rebellion is recorded in Numbers 16. When Korah and his followers assembled themselves against Moses it was an act of deliberate rebellion against God's authority. They accused Moses of taking authority into his own hands and exalting himself, when in fact Moses had been chosen by God to lead the people. God's judgment upon them was swift and their punishment severe. "Then it came about as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed

over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly" (Numbers 16:31-33).

This is indicative of God's attitude toward rebellion. Although He may withhold judgment today, His attitude is the same. He cannot sanction rebellion because it defies His authority. Any time a human being asserts himself above God's authority he is putting himself in the place of God. This is intolerable. Thus a wife must recognize God's appointed authority in her husband and submit to him as to the Lord. By doing this, she is really submitting to the Lord and is taking her place in God's order.

Third, a woman must defer to men's authority. A woman should not take a situation into her own hands, but should look to a man for his authority. Whenever possible she should avoid making major decisions on her own, but should consult a man and allow him to make the decision. She should be careful not to manipulate a situation to suit herself. Anytime a woman takes a situation into her own hands, she is asking for trouble. God has established His authorities in the home and in the church and expects women to remain submissive to them. In the home, the wife should defer to her husband's authority. She should look to him to make decisions and should be careful not to manipulate him.

Naturally a wife should be frank and honest with her husband. They should discuss major decisions and pray about them together, but in the end the decision is the husband's. A wife must wait for her husband to make the decision and then abide by it. This is particularly difficult for Christian women married to unsaved husbands. But it is of the utmost importance because it is the very thing God has indicated will win the man to Christ. "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" (I Peter 3:1). A wife's submissive attitude is the tool God will use to work in her husband's heart. God cannot use a wife if she is insubordinate and takes the husband's authority. She must retain a gentle and quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4) and genuinely submit to her husband. This attitude enables God's power to flow through her. If she takes a situation into her own hands, she has disobeyed God and has, therefore, checked His power in her life.

Within the church, God's authority resides in the elders. The women in the church (and the members generally) should be submissive to the elders and defer to their authority. The flock should not bypass the elders in dealing with any situation, but should put a situation into the hands of the elders for their decision. They are God's appointed authority. This is particularly important for single adult women. Young single women still living with their parents should remain in submission to their fathers. But adult women who are no longer living with their parents should place themselves under the authority of the elders of their church. These men have a godly concern for the members of their flock and "watch over their souls." They should be consulted in matters of Scriptural interpretation and in major decision-making.

Any woman who takes a situation into her own hands and becomes an authority unto herself is asking for trouble. She is coming out from under God's protective covering and is opening herself up for deception. She is a prime target for Satan's attacks. The Bible records instances in which women took situations into their own hands and indicates the consequences which accrued.

Eve was the first woman to usurp authority. We have already looked at the fall of Eve in some detail, so a quick glance here will be sufficient. When Satan approached Eve and enticed her to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she should have immediately called Adam. She should have deferred to Adam's authority. Instead, she took the situation into her own hands, made the decision on

her own, ate of the fruit and subsequently plunged the entire human race into sin. The consequences of her act were catastrophic.

Rebekah also took a situation into her own hands. Genesis 27 records the account of Rebekah's plot to secure the paternal blessing for her favorite son Jacob. Before her twins Jacob and Esau were born, God had promised Rebekah that the older would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23), but Rebekah was not willing to wait for God's solution. She took control and schemed a way for Jacob to secure the blessing.

Rebekah persuaded Jacob to deceive his father. She counseled him to lie to his father and trick Isaac into blessing him rather than Esau. Jacob followed the plan and received Isaac's blessing, but at a dear price. The unhappy consequences which resulted were more than Rebekah bargained for. Esau was immediately embittered against his brother Jacob and vowed to kill him. Jacob had to flee for his life, leaving Rebekah bereft of her favorite son. Hostilities between the descendants of Jacob and Esau continue even to this day.

Miriam was another woman who took a situation into her own hands. During the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, she and her brother Aaron began to criticize Moses and question his authority. They railed against Moses saying: "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" (Numbers 12:2). They also criticized Moses for marrying a Gentile woman. These accusations incurred God's anger.

God came down in a cloud and rebuked Miriam and Aaron for their sin. But the significant thing is that Miriam was struck with leprosy, not Aaron (Numbers 12:10). God was displeased with them both; but it was more heinous for Miriam to rebel against God's appointed authority than Aaron. She committed a "double sin," so to speak. She rebelled against the authority God had placed over the entire nation (governmental authority), and she rebelled against the authority God had placed over her as a woman (human authority). When she stood up to Moses she came out from her protective covering. Even though Moses was wrong in marrying a Gentile woman, it did not give Miriam liberty to criticize him and rebel against him.

The consequences of Miriam's act were quite severe. She was immediately afflicted with leprosy. As a result of the leprosy, "Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again" (Numbers 12:15). When she decided to take care of Moses herself, instead of submitting to him and letting God take care of him, she affected herself (she became leprous) and she affected the entire nation (they lost one whole week's journey).

Women should be careful to defer to men's authority and wait for men to act. Women have a tendency to become impatient and think "Something's got to be done!" They cannot stand to sit back and wait for men to make decisions or handle a situation. They feel compelled to jump in and take over. This may be the mothering instinct within them. They become accustomed to caring for and protecting their children and develop a habit pattern of "mothering." Pretty soon they are mothering not only their children, but anyone else who happens to cross their path--husband, friends, neighbors, church. It is this "super mother" compulsion that leads many women to take situations into their own hands and usurp authority.

Rather than mothering their husbands, women should submit to them and obey them. Rather than mothering their church, they should begin to learn in quietness and submission. Some women seem to think the Lord needs a crusading army of concerned mothers, marshaled into ranks and advancing for His cause. He does not. The Lord wants His women to be submissive, obedient, quiet, gentle, and not obtrusive. Instead of charging, He wants them to retreat. When a woman submits to the authority God has placed over her, she can expect God's protection and His blessing. It is when she is out from underneath her covering that she is asking for trouble. But when she is in the place of submission, she is also in the place of protection. Here again, the Bible records instances in which women submitted to the authority over them and God protected them.

"Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (I Peter 3:6). Sarah is the best example in Scripture of a submissive wife. She obeyed Abraham explicitly and trusted God to protect her. When they went down to Egypt, Abraham instructed Sarah to pretend she was his sister instead of his wife (Genesis 12:10-20). He did this purely out of selfish motives. He was more concerned about his own life than Sarah's honor, but she obeyed him and God protected her. Years later when Peter wrote instructions to women for living with their unsaved husbands, he honored Sarah above all other women by using her as his example of a holy woman. He exhorted women to follow the example of Sarah and thus become her "children."

It is important to notice in I Peter 3:6 that this verse puts a qualifying clause upon the injunction. "Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." Many women wonder just how far they should go in obeying their unsaved husbands. Should they do absolutely anything he tells them to do, or should they refuse to do some things? The clue seems to be contained in this phrase "without being frightened by any fear."

The basic principle of the Christian life is the principle of faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). But more importantly, "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). If a woman can obey her husband in whatever he asks, being confident that God is watching over her and will protect and vindicate her, then she should obey. But if she doubts, she is better off not to obey, because she is not assured of God's protection. He responds to and honors faith. A legalistic obedience accomplished in the strength of the flesh is sin, because it is not from faith.

Now, don't use this as a loophole. Don't just glibly think, "I cannot obey in faith, so I am not going to obey." Remember, whatever is not from faith is sin. Your object should be to get in faith so you can obey, not to excuse your disobedience. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). He wants you to obey as Sarah did; but more importantly, He wants you to trust Him. "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth, that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His..." (II Chronicles 16:9). It is not possible to trust God too much. He is delighted by faith and loves to honor an outrageous faith. Not presumption, but faith. Faith is built upon the facts in the Word of God; presumption is founded upon either ignorance or superstition. If you submit to your husband "as to the Lord," obey him, and trust the Lord with the consequences, He will surely protect you.

Ruth is another example of a woman who submitted to the authority over her. When she chose to follow Naomi rather than returning to her own people, she deliberately put herself under the authority of Naomi. She pledged her loyalty by saying, "Where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will

lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:16-17). Ruth could have gone her own way as Orpah did, but she chose to follow Naomi and obey her.

When Naomi instructed Ruth to go to the threshing floor and lie down at the feet of Boaz, Ruth obeyed implicitly. Coming from another country and another culture, this custom may have been strange to her, but she trusted Naomi and obeyed her. Ruth's response was simply, "All that you say I will do" (Ruth 3:5). At first glance, the act of lying down at the feet of Boaz while he slept seems to be a brazen display of seduction. But according to the custom of the time, Ruth was actually submitting herself to the authority of Boaz. She was tacitly affirming his authority, bowing to that authority and asking him to redeem her. When Naomi instructed Ruth to approach Boaz in this manner, she was relinquishing her own right to be redeemed, and giving that place to Ruth.

During the night Boaz woke up and was startled to find a woman lying at his feet. He asked who she was and Ruth replied: "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative [redeemer]" (Ruth 3:9). When she asked him to spread his covering over her she was submitting herself to his authority and asking him to take her under his protective care. A widow during that time was quite helpless and vulnerable. She needed to be under the authority of a man in order to have "security" or rest (Ruth 3:1).

The reaction of Boaz when he discovered Ruth is quite significant. Had she been trying to seduce him, he would have reacted much differently. But when Ruth identified herself and made her request, Boaz blessed her (Ruth 3:10). She endeared herself to him by submitting to him. In addition to this, he called her an excellent woman (Ruth 3:11). The Lord protected and blessed Ruth. Her reputation remained unsullied. Boaz honored her and redeemed her. Instead of an impoverished widow gleaning in his fields, she became his wife. She was elevated, respected, loved and blessed. Ruth became the mother of Obed who was the grandfather of King David.

As we have discussed, it is most essential that a woman assume her place of submission, lower than men. She should submit to her husband. She should defer to men's authority. In addition, she also has two other roles. She is to be a helper and a complement.

A woman is to be a helper. After God had created Adam and placed him in the perfect environment, he looked at him and declared: "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:20). Although Adam was perfect, he lacked something. He was alone--he lacked a partner. This situation was "not good." And God did not pronounce his creation "good" until the woman had been created. At the end of Genesis 1, God surveyed His handiwork and said it was "very good." This was after the creation of woman in verse 27.

The specific purpose for which Eve was created was to provide Adam with a helper. It is unfortunate that the authorized translation of Genesis 2:18 calls the woman "an help meet for him." Most modern readers see that word "meet" and change it in their minds to "mate." They just think that is an old English way of saying helpmate. But it means more than that. The New American Standard translation gives the sense of the passage: "I will make him a helper suitable for him." The word "meet" really means suitable. Saying a woman is a helpmeet is just the same as saying she is a "helpsuitable"--a helper suitable for him. She is designed to be a helper, just exactly the kind of helper he needs. She suits him perfectly.

The primary relationship in which a woman lives out her role as a helper is in marriage. She was made for this purpose and is suited to it. For a woman to compete with her husband or try to be equal with him is completely out of keeping with God's plan. He did not create women to be in competition with men, but to work with them and help them.

Every wife has a tremendous potential for either good or evil. She can be a joy and blessing to her husband, or she can bring him shame. The book of Proverbs has a lot to say about wives. Solomon's wisdom rings true in the matter of the potential residing within each wife. A good wife is a treasure from the Lord. She is a blessing, one of God's dearest and most precious gifts to a man. "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14). The treasure of a good wife far exceeds any amount of monetary wealth. "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels" (Proverbs 31:10).

The old adage "This marriage was made in heaven" is scarcely heard today--probably because most marriages today are not made in heaven. But they should be. God instituted marriage. He ordained it, blessed it and honors it. "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). God wants to be the matchmaker for every one of His children. He does not leave this important matter to chance. He even promises a special blessing for the man who finds God's perfect choice. "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22).

A good wife can bring honor to her husband. She has the potential of bringing praise and glory to her husband because of the prudent life she lives. Remember that the woman is the glory of the man (I Corinthians 11:7) and she can radiate glory upon her husband by being the right kind of wife. The most outstanding passage in Scripture concerning the virtues of an excellent wife is Proverbs 31:10-31. For 21 verses the writer extols the qualities of an exemplary wife, and tucked right into the middle of this passage is verse 23: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land." Why is her husband known in the gates? Because of his excellent wife! All of the duties she performs in helping him distinguish him as an honorable man. She heaps praise upon his head because of her virtue.

You may wonder why he should get the praise and not her. It is because God designed her to be a helper. He did not make her a competitor. He made her suitable for a helper, and when she functions in this role she is praised for her worth and brings glory to her husband. The excellent woman described in Proverbs 31 is a helper. Everything listed in that passage is an act of service: she helps her husband, she helps her children, she helps her household, and she helps the poor. Her virtue is all wrapped up in the fact that she is living out the role God established for her.

Wives also have a potential for evil. A bad wife can bring shame upon her husband. As is the case with so many divine gifts, if it is used properly it is very good, but if it is used improperly it becomes very evil. A wife who assumes her proper role and functions in a God-appointed way is a source of joy, blessing and fulfillment; but if she rebels against her role and functions in a self-appointed way she is a source of misery, cursing and bitterness. The unworthy wife can heap shame upon her husband even as the virtuous wife can heap glory upon her husband. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones" (Proverbs 12:4). The excellent wife strengthens and builds up her husband, but the evil wife weakens and destroys him. She is like a cancer eating out his insides. She has the potential of wrecking his whole life.

God established marriage. He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him." He also said, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). If an individual is willing to wait for God's perfect choice in a mate, and if a couple is then willing to establish a scripturally-ordered home in which both parties assume their proper roles, they will find joy and blessing unspeakable. They will have a little bit of heaven right here on earth. Conversely, an individual who is not willing to wait for God's chosen partner is asking for trouble. To marry out of the will of God is to sentence yourself to a little bit of hell on earth. Marriage to the wrong partner, without scriptural roles or divine blessing, is destined to be unhappy, frustrated and defeated.

One way in which a wife can be her husband's helper is to be his friend. One of the best relationships established between husband and wife is that of friendship. It is one of the most enduring and endearing of relationships. It might carry the marriage through some rough spots where another relationship would not. The book of Proverbs hints at this relationship when it says, "The heart of her husband trusts in her" (31:11). A good wife is a confidante. Her husband knows he can confide in her and she will not betray his trust. She loves and respects him, but she is also his best friend so she will be loyal to him. She will share the joys and trials of his life as only a friend can, and will always be worthy of the trust he has placed in her.

A woman is to be a complement. After God had created Adam, He said that it was not good for Adam to be alone. The reason it was not good was that Adam was incomplete. In and of himself, he was only half of a unit. He was a perfect half, but he was still only a half. The whole human unit is "male and female." God intended for men and women to complete each other. Each one fills up what is lacking in the other. The woman's nature and talents should fulfill areas in the man's nature where he is lacking; likewise, the man's nature and talents should fulfill areas in the woman's nature where she is lacking. God made His creatures complementary in order to balance them.

God is balanced. His character is not lopsided. So He made His creation balanced. He built into each one strengths and weaknesses which perfectly offset each other. When the two are combined, they form a strong, united whole. Woman was made to be a complement to man. She was made to fulfill the man. Her nature is such that it balances the man; her role is such that it helps the man. Men and women were not created to be just alike in nature or in their roles. When human beings try to force women into men's roles they are pushing them into positions which they are not suited to fulfill. The result will be either frustration or collision. They will be frustrated because they are unable to live out that role and yearn for their proper role. Or they will collide with men as they compete with them on the masculine level.

Women should settle it in their minds--they are different from men. They were made that way and will only be content when they are in their proper role. Men and women were created to be analogous to each other and harmonious with each other, but different. Their natures are different and their roles are different. To find fulfillment and satisfaction in God's plan, a woman needs to accept her role as God's best for her.

Chapter 4: The Woman's Ministry

"Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak." (II Corinthians 14:34)

It is generally assumed that the only avenue of ministry available to a Christian is a vocal ministry. Anyone desiring to express praise and worship to God assumes he (or she) must do it verbally. But the Bible indicates there are two avenues of worship (or ministry) available.

The man's avenue of worship: The man has an avenue of worship available to him which is vocal, outward and authoritative. "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension" (I Timothy 2:8). God has instructed men to take the lead in expressing praise and worship. They are to express themselves verbally. In addition, they are to lift up holy hands to God. Their ministry is to be such that there is an outward manifestation of their inner attitude. They are to stand and pray aloud, to show their praise outwardly, and to lead the congregation in worship. Authority has been invested in the man and he should exercise this authority by taking his place as a leader. This is rightfully and properly his role.

The woman's avenue of worship: The woman has an avenue of worship available to her which is quiet, modest, inward and submissive. "Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness. Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (I Timothy 2:9-12). The emphasis in this passage should be put on the word "likewise" in verse 9. The verse just prior to this gives instructions for the man's avenue of worship. "Likewise," or "in the same way," women are to have an avenue of worship. Women are to express the same praise and worship to God, only in a different way. It is not a matter of men having a ministry of speaking and women not having a ministry. Rather, it is a matter of men and women each having a distinct ministry.

When women adorn themselves properly--with modesty and discretion--they are expressing praise to God. When they sit quietly and submissively they are worshipping God. They are accomplishing a ministry of silence. By their submissive and quiet spirits they are expressing the exact same thing that men express when they stand and pray aloud. The woman's avenue of ministry is one of quietness. Any woman can find complete joy and fulfillment in exercising this ministry because it is a God-given one.

The Word of God makes it clear that women are to keep silent in the church. "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says" (I Corinthians 14:34). Many people have concluded from this passage that women have no ministry in the church, other than singing. Since women are expressly forbidden to speak, it is assumed they are excluded from ministering praise and worship to God. But women do have a ministry in the church. It is a ministry of quietness. Instead of going to a church service with grim resignation just to sit there and do nothing, they should go with the intention of ministering. They should go modestly and discreetly attired and enter into a full ministry, viewing their attitude of quietness and submission as a way to praise God, instead of simply enduring it. By willingly giving themselves to submission and joyfully accepting their role, women are saying "Praise the Lord." They are saying "Amen" to God's order. A woman has the opportunity to say, "God, I love you, I agree with you, and I am willing to take my place. I will obey you and worship you in silence."

The Woman's Ministry in the Church

Women have an opportunity to minister to the Lord in a personal and private way. The worship they offer to God will never be heard by anyone else; it is reserved strictly for the Lord. Women can enjoy this intimate relationship and exercise it to the fullest. It is also a ministry which is precious in the sight of the Lord. The Word indicates the "imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God" (I Peter 3:4). Women need to recognize the wonderful opportunity that is available to them and take advantage of this ministry.

Some might be inclined to reason: "Since the woman's ministry is to sit quietly and say nothing, no one will know who is ministering and who is just sitting there." But God will know. Why should you care if anyone else knows you are ministering? The praise is going to God; the worship is directed to God. It will be that much more precious because it cannot be tainted by self-glorification. With no one to impress and no one listening in, you will be able to praise the Lord with a pure heart. No one will ever know what communion and service you are entering into. It will be a clear-cut case of praying in secret, and "your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (Matthew 6:6).

Women have an opportunity to minister to God through this avenue of quietness, but they also have an opportunity to minister to angels. The Word of God indicates "the manifold wisdom of God [is] made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). Watching the church causes the angels to glorify and magnify God. When they see the power of God manifested in the transformed life of a sinner, they fall down and worship God. When they see diverse and incongruous members of the body of Christ come together as a unit and function in harmony, they praise God for making this miracle occur. To see rebellious sinners regenerated and changed into obedient children, voluntarily submitting to God's order, is great cause for rejoicing among the angels. Therefore, a woman who submits herself to God's order and assumes her role gives the angels opportunity to praise God. When she covers her head she indicates to the angels that she is willing to take her place, that she is willing to obey God, and that she is voluntarily submitting to God's authority (see I Corinthians 11:10). This type of ministry blesses the angels and gives them additional cause to worship God.

The Word of God clearly teaches that all born-again believers are priests. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). As such, all believers are to offer up to God spiritual sacrifices. "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5). It behooves every believer to determine the type of sacrifice he is to offer to God and the manner in which it is to be offered. The Old Testament priests ministered in a way prescribed by God. They were not left to their own imagination to devise sacrifices or ways in which to present them. The entire ritual was dictated by God. It was rigidly and specifically outlined. God told Moses exactly which type of sacrifice was to be offered for each occasion. The priests simply obeyed and offered the specified sacrifice.

God also told Moses how He wanted the sacrifices to be presented. The priests then went about to perform their duties in the prescribed manner. There was no room for innovation or alteration. Any deviation from God's pattern was rejected. In one instance when a "strange" sacrifice was offered to God, He rejected the offering and consumed the priests who had brought it. Leviticus 10:1-4 tells the story. Prior to this, God had given the commandment of the law and ordered the priests to keep the fire on the altar burning continually (Leviticus 6:13). It may be safe to assume that the fire burning on the

altar was holy fire, and this was the reason it was to be kept burning. "Then fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Leviticus 9:24). Since God had started the fire which was burning on the altar, He did not want it to be replaced by human fire, so He instructed the priests to keep it burning.

When incense was offered to the Lord, it was to be burned with fire that came off the altar. On the day of atonement when Aaron offered incense inside the holy of holies he was to "take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil" (Leviticus 16:12). On another occasion when Aaron offered incense to the Lord to placate His anger, he was instructed to take fire from the altar for the incense. "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them..." (Numbers 16:46). God had instructed the priests to use fire from the altar when they offered incense, so any deviation from this commandment was disobedience.

Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, brought an offering of incense to the Lord, but they contaminated it by using "strange fire." Apparently they used fire that had not come from the altar. "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1). God totally rejected their offering and rejected them. "And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD" (Leviticus 10:2). It was a grievous sin in God's sight for them to ignore His commandments and serve Him in a self-appointed way.

You may think God overreacted. Surely Nadab and Abihu's sin was not severe enough to warrant this kind of punishment. But it was. Rebellion was at the heart of it. Nadab and Abihu put their own opinion above God's commandment. They did not treat God as God--they put themselves on a plane equal with God. He would not tolerate this. The Lord gave this word to Aaron: "By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored" (Leviticus 10:3). Refusing to give God His rightful place and submitting to His authority is a most grievous sin. It robs God of the honor and awe which are His because of who He is.

God has prescribed an avenue of worship for women. He instructs them to minister to Him by being silent and submissive. Women must minister in the God-appointed way or be in rebellion. God will not accept a "strange" sacrifice. The sacrifice I bring to God must be the type He has indicated, presented in the manner He has prescribed. It is impossible to minister to God in my way--it must be in His way.

The Woman's Ministry in the Home

The home is the place for a woman to minister verbally. While we have already noted she must minister silently in the church, she does have a full vocal ministry in the home and with other women. Does this mean she may minister only in her own home? No, she has liberty to minister in other homes as well. Any informal gathering of people (which is not a recognized meeting of the church) provides women with an opportunity to minister. However, she must never usurp authority. I Timothy 2:12 applies: "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." A woman must never teach men or usurp men's authority. She is permitted to speak, but must retain a quiet and submissive spirit.

Women are given a very important ministry of teaching. There are three aspects to this ministry:

First, older women are to teach younger women. "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage [i.e. train] the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored " (Titus 2:3-5). It is significant that the older women are first encouraged to bring their own lives into conformity with God's standards. An older woman is not in a position to teach younger women if she is living in rebellion or disobedience. The older women are first to teach by example.

Perhaps one of the reasons authority is so often rejected today is that those in authority have failed to bring their own lives into line. One can only teach what he (or she) is living. If an older woman is not reverent (holy), the younger women around her will not be reverent. If an older woman is a gossip, she will train the younger women to be gossips. It is impossible to raise the level of a student above the level of the teacher. You must first of all bring your own life into conformity with God's Word, and then teach.

This area of teaching seems to be sadly neglected today. Could it be that the older women have not learned to submit to their husbands? Could it be that they are not pure, kind, workers at home? If this is the case, it is certain they will never have an effective ministry teaching younger women. They must first obey God's Word and then teach. In addition to teaching by example, the older women are to teach by precept. They are to actually communicate these truths to younger women. Older women need to have contact with younger women so they can dialogue with them. They should have some informal way of getting together. It is important that the older women communicate to the younger women God's order, their place in that order, what is expected of them and how to perform. They should also share with the younger women the joy and blessing they have found in submitting to their husbands and living out their God-given role.

Young women today are bombarded by the philosophy and standard of the world. Satan is blasting the home and family. The divinely ordered roles are being ridiculed and discarded. It is vitally important that believing, godly women instill in the younger women God's standards, plan, and role for women. where will they learn these things if they are not taught? Where will they see examples of happy, satisfied women living out their divinely appointed role if it is not in the church? If you as an older woman are not in a position to teach these things because your life is out of order, then by all means set it right. There is a desperate need today for this kind of teaching. Apart from the need of the hour, the scriptural injunction of these verses should prompt women to obey: "...that the word of God may not be dishonored" (Titus 2:5). This really means "...that the word of God be not blasphemed."

When the foundation of God's order is out of line, it causes the Word of God to be defamed. Women whose lives are not characterized by holiness and submission dishonor God's Word. Thus it is imperative that older women bring their lives into conformity with God's plan. This is not an option, it is imperative.

Second, mothers are to teach their children. God entrusts parents with children for a temporary period of time in which it is the parents' happy privilege to train those children in the way they should go. It is a great responsibility to raise children, and every parent should look upon this task as a ministry from the Lord. It is the parents' duty and privilege to instruct their children about the things of the Lord: to instill in them a love for God's Word, to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ, to cultivate in them a high moral and ethical standard, and to break that stubborn self-will. It is a very important ministry and one

which requires much time, devotion and prayer. But it is also a very rewarding and blessed ministry.

Since mothers are usually with their children more than fathers, they have an almost constant opportunity to teach their children about the things of the Lord. Mothers will truly be able to "talk of them when sitting in the house and when walking by the way and when lying down and when rising up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). It is essential that the mother teach her children about the things of the Lord. Whether she realizes it or not, she is teaching her children something all the time. Her attitudes, values, standards and beliefs are transmitted to her children quite rapidly. If she is worldly and materialistic, these attitudes will soon become apparent in her children. But if she is a godly woman, her children will begin to reflect that standard.

In addition to the message the mother's life conveys, her lips must also carry a message. It is not enough to live a good life in front of her children; she must also teach them by sharing with them and explaining things to them. She must take time to read the Bible with her children and pray with them. She must explain to them the doctrines and principles of the Word of God. She cannot depend on someone else to do it.

Every mother ought to make it her responsibility to see to it that her children are grounded in the Word of God. She ought to mold their thinking and influence them for the Lord. The young years are quite impressionable; she should make sure the right impressions are being made. "Train up a child in the way he should go: even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

The book of Proverbs repeats an injunction to a wise son to respect the training of his parents. "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching; indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck" (Proverbs 1:8-9). "My son, observe the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck" (Proverbs 6:20-21). The teaching of the mother is mentioned both times. It is important for mothers to take this ministry seriously. What kind of teaching are your children receiving from you? Is it the kind that will "guide them when they walk, watch over them when they sleep, and talk to them when they are awake"? (see Proverbs 6:22). It should be. The mother's teaching is one of the most important influences in a child's life.

The New Testament gives the example of Lois and Eunice as two godly women who took this ministry seriously and trained up Timothy in the way he should go. They were Timothy's grandmother and mother and must have spent much time cultivating a holy life because they are commended for their sincere faith (II Timothy 1:5). They must also have spent time teaching Timothy the Word of God because Paul mentions in his letter to Timothy, "from childhood you have known the sacred writings..." (II Timothy 3:15). The burden of Timothy's training fell upon Eunice because Timothy's father was evidently an unbeliever. But she compensated for this and diligently taught Timothy the things of the Lord. The results of her labors are noteworthy. Timothy was one of the most laudable young men in the New Testament. Paul singled him out as the only one of a kindred spirit he could send to check on the condition of the Philippians. He commended Timothy by saying, "You know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father" (Philippians 2:22). What greater reward could Eunice have received than this type of praise for her son?

Third, women are to teach in their households. Although the primary meaning of this third type of teaching had to do with women teaching their servants, there is still an application today. The woman's

domain is her home. She performs most of her duties here and exerts the most influence here. She is in her proper place when she is at home and is at liberty to exercise a ministry. She is free to teach those who come into her household or come into her sphere of influence. This may be informal teaching, but it is ministry nonetheless.

The virtuous woman is to engage in this kind of teaching: "She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31:26-27). Where does she speak wisdom and teach kindness? In her home (or among her household). When guests come through her home, she is to have a word of wisdom or a word of encouragement to share with them. Perhaps she can open the Bible and share something the Lord has just taught her; perhaps she will be able to help or counsel someone who is in error. Priscilla was used in this way. She and her husband Aquila took Apollos aside and "explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). If this had been solely the ministry of Aquila, no mention would have been made of Priscilla. But the Scripture says Priscilla and Aquila both took him aside and talked to him. Perhaps they took Apollos home with them and spoke to him there. It is evident they did not accost him publicly, but they "took him aside." This was a legitimate opportunity for Priscilla to minister.

Women have a ministry teaching other women, children, and those of their households. Most of these areas of ministry are neglected today. Is it because women do not realize the opportunities that are available to them, or is it because women are not prepared to minister? Every Christian woman should realize she has an avenue of ministry available and should prepare for it. She should study God's Word to learn the precepts He would have her teach.

Women are also given a ministry of prophesying. Before explaining this ministry, it is necessary first to define prophesying. Literally, to prophesy means, "to foretell events, to divine, or to speak under inspiration." In addition, it means to speak "to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (I Corinthians 14:30). When an individual prophesies, he (or she) speaks God's word for the moment. It might be inspired speaking which is useful for general edification, or it might be some particular word which is sent from God to meet a specific need. A word of wisdom may be just one sentence of an entire discourse, which is like an arrow piercing right to the heart of an individual. It answers a question, solves a problem, provides divine guidance or convicts an individual in his particular situation.

Prophesying is not some mysterious, psychic phenomenon. Neither is it the hysterical ravings of a madwoman. Prophesying is sane, calm and Spirit-controlled. It involves giving a word of exhortation, edification, or consolation at an opportune moment by the urging of the Holy Spirit. It is neither to be feared nor exalted. It is the normal ministry of the life of Christ within an individual. Keeping these things in mind, let us examine the woman's prophetic ministry.

The only specific injunction concerning women prophesying is found in I Corinthians 11:5: "But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved." It is clear from this passage that a woman entering into a ministry of praying or prophesying should have her head covered. This is to indicate her submission to God's order; it is to be a sign to the angels; and it is to prevent her from disgracing her head. Since this word of instruction is given, it reveals the fact that a woman is permitted to prophesy. But where is this to be done?

The place of a woman's prophetic ministry may be deduced by noting the negative injunctions specified in the Word of God. Women must not prophesy in church because I Corinthians 14:34 clearly teaches women to be silent in the churches. Women must not prophesy to men in such a way as to dominate because I Timothy 2:12 forbids women from exercising authority over men. (This same passage, however, does indicate that a woman would be at liberty to prophesy with authority to other women.) By the process of elimination, it becomes evident that women may prophesy in the home. Just as with the teaching ministry, women are free to offer a word of prophecy in the informal setting of the home. She may speak a word of edification, exhortation or consolation as the situation dictates. The only requisite is that she have her head covered. (A word of caution: care must be taken that a woman does not exercise authority over a man. If a woman's husband is present, or other men are present, a woman should not usurp their authority. It is unlikely the Lord would use a woman to prophesy if there are capable men present.)

The Word of God mentions Philip's daughters as examples of women who exercised the prophetic ministry. "And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses" (Acts 21:8-9). The writer of the book of Acts makes a point of saying that Paul and his companions stayed at the house of Philip. They must have had informal meetings together at Philip's house. During this time, Philip's daughters prophesied. This was evidently acceptable since no mention is made of rebuke or correction. It is also apparent that these young women prophesied with men present. But they did not exercise authority over the men. When a word of authority was necessary, the prophet Agabus delivered it. (Acts 21:10-11). He traveled from Judea to convey this prophecy. It would have been out of order for the women to utter such an authoritative message.

Anna is another example of a woman who exercised the prophetic ministry. "She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers" (Luke 2:37). She also prophesied to the people who came to the temple. When Mary and Joseph came with the baby Jesus to present Him to the Lord, Anna spoke to them and prophesied concerning the Lord Jesus: "And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). "Speaking of Him" is the essence of prophecy. Anna devoted her life to a ministry of praying and prophesying.

Women are also given a ministry of prayer. It is perhaps the most important ministry available to women. Through prayer, women can move God on behalf of men. A woman who meets the conditions for prayer will be able to pray with authority and expect God to answer her petitions.

There are three basic conditions to prayer. Women must cover their heads when they pray. We have already noted that a woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head (I Corinthians 11:5). This same passage also asks, "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?" (I Corinthians 11:13). The answer is evidently "no." The reasons for a woman covering her head when she prays are the same as for when she prophesies. The covering indicates her submission to God's order; it is a sign to the angels; and it prevents her from disgracing her head. (A more detailed explanation of the head covering will be given in Chapter 5.)

Women must submit to God's appointed authority in order to pray effectively. God has established lines of authority within the human race and expects every person to submit to the authority above them. It is impossible for a person to be in submission to God and in rebellion against the authority

over him. Rebellion against God's appointed authority is in reality rebellion against God. Hence, it is vitally important to be in the proper place and in the proper attitude when praying. God does not hear an individual who is in rebellion against Him. "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if any one is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31).

It is impossible to be out of God's order and do His will. When beginning a ministry of prayer, every woman should examine her life to make sure she is in her proper place. "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" (I Corinthians 11:3). Women are to be in submission to men. "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands. "Obey your leaders, and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). Women are to be submissive to the elders and leaders God has put over them. When a woman's position is right and her attitude is right, she is then prepared to pray with authority. She has all the power of heaven available to her. She may enter into this ministry with the assurance that God will hear.

In order to have her prayers answered, a woman must pray according to God's will. "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (I John 5:14-15). Prayer never moves a reluctant God to do something against His will; instead it moves human beings to come into conformity with His will. Therefore, it is imperative to know God's will.

The only way to know God's will is to know God. He has told us He does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We change, but He does not. Neither is He capricious. He does not tell us to pray according to His will and then hide His will from us. He wants us to know Him and to know His will. But first we must seek Him. "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). If you truly want to know God's will in order to do God's will, He will make it clear. But if you only want to know God's will to decide whether or not you are going to do it, you will never know it.

Once a woman begins to know God's will and understand His dealings with human beings, she is in a position to pray effectively. She can expect answers to her prayers. She will have the joy of seeing God move in human lives.

There is a word of warning concerning the prayer ministry. Beware of the deception of gossip. Many times women share bits of news, details of a problem, or confidential matters with each other and then top it off by saying, "We must pray about this." That last comment is supposed to sanctify everything that has been said and make it permissible. Most of these kinds of conversations are nothing more than gossip sessions.

There are only two persons with whom the details of a problem should be discussed: the person involved, and the Lord. If someone takes a woman into their confidence and sincerely asks her to pray about a matter, she should take it to the Lord and no further. If a woman knows a problem and knows something needs to be done, she should go to the Lord and ask Him to work. There is no need to discuss the problem with other women. True godly concern pushes a woman to her knees, not next

door or to the telephone. If she is so burdened about something that she feels she must talk about it, she should go to the Lord and unburden herself. If women spent as much time talking to the Lord as they do talking to each other on the telephone, there might be revival fires sweeping the world.

It is significant that many of the passages in the New Testament pertaining to women also include an admonition about gossiping. Women are prone to this, and must constantly be on the alert against it. The wives of deacons, or deaconesses, are not to be gossips: "Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things" (I Timothy 3:11). Older women are not to be gossips: "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good" (Titus 2:3). Younger widows are to get married and have children, not spend their time gossiping. Otherwise, "they learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention" (I Timothy 5:13). It is clear from these passages that the Lord is not pleased with women who spend their time indulging in gossip. Be careful that your prayer requests and prayer meetings do not turn into gossip sessions.

The Lord has provided women with a full and rewarding ministry. They have the privilege of worshipping God through the avenue of quietness and submission. While in the church they can express their love and obedience to God through a meek and quiet spirit. While in their homes they have the opportunity to raise their children in the admonition of the Lord. And when in the informal setting of someone's home they may prophesy. Every woman should take these ministries seriously and should prepare herself to enter into them.

Chapter 5: The Woman's Adornment

"And let not your adornment be external only." (I Peter 3:3)

Adornment is basically decoration. To adorn means to add beauty, splendor, honor, or distinction. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to adorn or decorate Christian women, but His standard of beauty is much different from that of the world. It is important for every Christian woman to understand the biblical principles concerning adornment. She will then be able to move in the right direction and begin reflecting God's beauty, rather than the world's.

Adorning the Inner Woman with a Gentle and Quiet Spirit

One of the most outstanding passages of Scripture concerning feminine adornment urges women to be concerned with adorning the inner person. "And let not your adornment be external only...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" (I Peter 3:3-4). The most precious adornment in God's sight is a gentle and quiet spirit. This is the type of beauty or splendor He would like to bestow upon Christian women. He is not interested in hanging decorations upon the outside of a woman, but would much prefer to transform and beautify her on the inside.

A gentle and quiet spirit cannot be purchased or manufactured. There is no imitation for it in the world; rather, it is the natural outworking of the life of God in the heart. As a woman beholds the glory of the Lord, she is changed into the same image (II Corinthians 3:18).

A gentle and quiet spirit is precious in God's sight because it is the same spirit which characterized the Lord Jesus. He said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matthew 11:29-30). Adornment of the inner woman begins when a woman takes the Lord's yoke upon her and submits to Him. As she yields to Him, His nature is manifested in her. She is then made beautiful by the precious and eternal qualities of the Lord's nature.

Instead of putting on outward decorations and apparel, women should "put on" inward graces and characteristics. The Scriptures exhort women to put on various qualities; but do not misunderstand the term "put on." This does not mean to imitate divine qualities, neither does it mean to concentrate upon behaving in a certain way; rather, it means to submit completely to the Lord Jesus so He can manifest these qualities in you.

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Romans 13:14). To put on the Lord Jesus is to be controlled by Him. It means the self-life is reckoned dead so the life of the Lord Jesus can shine forth. It is the same as abiding in Christ. You are in Him and He is in you. Your life is so absorbed in Him that it is His image which becomes evident. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ means to give Him first place in everything. Instead of putting on yourself and living for your own selfish pleasure, it means to give Him priority and live only for Him.

"And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Colossians 3:14). Here again, this does not mean to work up love. It is not speaking of an artificial love. It means to put on Him who is love. Allow the Lord Jesus to love through your heart. Be so controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ that His responses spring from your heart. "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love and we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (I John 4:8 and 16). Abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ is abiding in love; when this happens, a woman's life will be adorned by the precious fruit of love. "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12). It is impossible for a human being to work up these qualities. They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit and can only be produced by the Holy Spirit. It is, therefore, imperative for every woman to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Putting on a new dress or trying on a new hat is a simple matter, but putting on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience involves the process of sanctification. It takes time. It also takes exposure to the Word of God and obedience to the Word. One does not try on compassion one day and work at it for awhile; and then try on humility the next day and work at it. The Holy Spirit must be allowed full sway in an individual's life so that these graces will be produced spontaneously. Those selfish tendencies of impatience, anger, bitterness and criticism must be dealt with at the cross and replaced by the life of Christ. "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Since the old self died with Christ, it must be reckoned dead. The new life is hidden with Christ and will, therefore, allow the image of Christ to be made manifest. It is then that a woman is "putting on" these qualities. As she yields to the Lord Jesus, He produces the results. He adorns her life with the imperishable qualities of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Put on wisdom. "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding. For its profit is better than the profit of silver, and its gain than fine gold. She is more precious than

jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her" (Proverbs 3:13-15). Outward adornment usually consists of silver, gold, and precious jewels; these things are considered treasures and are highly valued by the world. But the Word of God indicates that wisdom is of far greater value than earthly treasure. Not only does wisdom bring pleasantness and peace (Proverbs 3:17), but it is a type of adornment. "So they [wisdom and discretion] will be life to your soul, and adornment to your neck" (Proverbs 3:22). Instead of collecting expensive jewelry to decorate the outer person, godly women should be desirous of attaining wisdom which will provide lasting beauty for the inner person. It is actually described as adornment for the neck. It adds a beauty and splendor to the woman who possesses it which far surpasses the fleeting beauty of diamonds or rubies.

Wisdom is one of the few gifts we are permitted to request. The Scripture exhorts: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). Isn't it wonderful that this precious quality is ours for the asking? While we might work hard for many years to buy an expensive piece of jewelry, the most beautiful and most valuable adornments possible are gifts bestowed upon us by the loving hand of God.

Instead of focusing attention upon clothes, jewels, and accessories, godly women should focus their attention upon the precious and imperishable qualities mentioned in the Word. They should be anxious to accumulate these graces and adorn themselves with them. Peter's admonition is clear: "And let not your adornment be external only...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" (I Peter 3:3-4).

Women can spend much time acquiring, arranging and changing outfits. "What shall I wear?" is a comment frequently made. It is a subject which occupies their time, attention, and much of their conversation. But the Lord would like His women to be characterized by a different spirit, a different attitude. He would rather they be occupied with decorating the inner person. He would rather they spend time, energy, and thought in cultivating the lasting qualities of the spirit. Instead of thinking, "What shall I wear on the outside?" He would rather they be concerned with, "What am I wearing on the inside?"

What spirit do people encounter when they talk to you? Are they immediately impressed with your gentleness, kindness, love and wisdom? Or are they so preoccupied with your outer garments that they never notice you? Have you been so preoccupied with your outer garments that you have failed to adorn the inner woman? Is there any adornment on the inside? Those clothes and accessories will perish with time, but the inner adornment is imperishable. It will last for all eternity. Of what sort is it?

Adorning the Inner Woman with Good Works

Another outstanding passage of Scripture concerning feminine adornment urges women to be adorned with good works. "Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness" (I Timothy 2:9-10). When the inner woman is properly adorned, the outward manifestation will be good works. True godliness will produce results in an individual's life. These qualities are not baubles to be heaped up and admired for one's own glory, but channels of the life of God. As God works in a life and manifests His character, it will be the means of blessing for others. Truly beautiful women will be characterized by a gentle and quiet spirit and by good works.

The Scriptures abound with examples of good works, so we will only consider a few. Hospitality is one. "Be hospitable to one another without complaint" (I Peter 4:9). "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2). Any woman can be given to hospitality. Most women like to invite friends into their homes to entertain them. But the implication of these verses is that a woman must love to entertain strangers, and be actively involved in pursuing strangers. This is the reason it is to be done without complaint. Perhaps it would be more enjoyable to just entertain friends, but the godly woman is to go beyond that and open her home to strangers. This is not primarily a "getting" ministry, but more of a "giving" ministry. While the fellowship might not be as much fun as that with her close friends, she will have an opportunity to share the love and kindness she has received from God.

Visitation is another example of a good work which should adorn the life of a godly woman. "This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27). Women have the advantage of having a little more free time during the day than their husbands. Some of this time can be utilized by visiting and encouraging those who are sick, bereaved, discouraged or elderly. Some of that compassion and gentleness with which the Lord has been adorning the inner woman can be allowed to flow out and touch the lives of others. Here is also an opportunity for ministering a word of wisdom or sharing something from the Word. The godly sister can encourage those who are in distress and pray with them. Here again, be on guard against gossiping. These visits could easily turn into gossip sessions and the concerned sister could turn into a busybody. Be sure the Lord is in control.

Simply doing good whenever the opportunity presents itself is an example of a good work. There are two women mentioned in the Bible who were known for this kind of ministry. "Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did" (Acts 9:36). Evidently she used every opportunity available to do good and help someone. Although this type of service does not draw much acclaim, it is, nevertheless, noted by God.

Phoebe also served the Lord as a helper. "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well" (Romans 16:1-2).

Some of the gifts of the Spirit fall into the category of good works. Women should check to see if the Holy Spirit has given them any of these serving gifts. If He has, then they should stir up that gift and allow the Spirit to use it. There is a gift of helps (I Corinthians 12:28), there is a gift of service (Romans 12:7), and there is a gift of showing mercy (Romans 12:8). All of these gifts lend themselves to the type of ministry provided for women. It seems likely that the Spirit would give some of these gifts to the women in the church. If He has, it is important that they be exercised for the common good. "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all" (I Timothy 4:14-15).

It is important to know what your gift is and to exercise it. God has given gifts to the church for the building up of the body. If you neglect your gift you are cheating the body out of some of the ministry God intended it to have. The gifts are not for self-edification or for self-glory, but for the common good. Each member of the body is to be a good steward of their gift. "As each one has received a

special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10). It is wrong to hoard your gift or to squander it. You must be a good steward of your gift and allow the Spirit to control its use.

Instead of decorating yourself with costly garments and jewels, decorate yourself with good works. Be willing to be used by the Lord to spread a little kindness and compassion. Be willing to forfeit a little "primping" time and turn it into serving time. It is a more beautiful adornment and its quality is lasting.

The contrast between outer adornment and inner adornment in Scripture is the contrast between physical beauty and spiritual beauty. The one is easy to obtain, but is a shallow type of beauty and only fleeting in its value. The other is more difficult to obtain, involving a time-consuming process. But the results are profound and breathtaking. This spiritual beauty is a reflection of the life of Christ and can only be described as being exquisite. The process of obtaining this type of spiritual beauty involves complete commitment and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves time and effort, but is well worth it since the results are of eternal value.

Producing Spiritual Beauty

Producing spiritual beauty involves beholding the Lord and developing in character. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:18). To behold the Lord means to be completely absorbed in Him. It is not a matter of conjuring up a mental image; rather it is dwelling upon His character as revealed in the Word of God. It is a well-known fact that whatever we dwell upon and think about is what we are becoming. In order to be transformed into the Lord's image we must put Him uppermost in our minds and yield our wills to Him. In this way, miraculously and effortlessly, His image is reflected in us.

Producing spiritual beauty involves putting down roots and growing in grace. "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, Christian love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-8). It is not sufficient to have a shallow experience with the Lord Jesus. In order to be a healthy, fruit-bearing Christian, it is imperative to put down roots. As these roots go down, the moral fiber of your being will be improved and you will begin to grow in the right direction. Be desirous of having moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and Christian love evidenced in your life. When the opposites of these qualities appear, ask the Lord Jesus to apply the cross to them. Ask Him to manifest Himself in your life. It is not sufficient to wish for these qualities, you must earnestly desire them and ask the Lord to produce them in you.

Producing spiritual beauty involves abiding in the Lord and producing fruit. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Once you have put down roots into the Lord and have that vital connection of life, you must abide in His life. All of your sustenance must come from Him. Your spiritual health and vitality are dependent upon His life. If you recognize your utter dependence upon Him and draw heavily from Him, you will begin to produce fruit. It is not a matter of working or striving, for He says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." It is a matter of tapping the resource that is available to you. By

opening yourself up completely to the Lord you will become a channel for His life, and as His life flows through you, it will produce the precious fruit of righteousness which is adornment for your spirit.

The scriptural principle is that we should be primarily concerned with adorning the inner woman. The adornment which is precious in God's sight is a gentle and quiet spirit. We are also exhorted to adorn our lives with good works. When these things abound in our lives, they will produce a spiritual beauty which emanates from within and is of lasting value.

The difference between physical and spiritual beauty is similar to the difference between an artificial and a real flower. The one is easy to obtain and has a similitude of beauty, but attracts only fleeting admiration. The other is difficult and time-consuming to obtain. It must be planted, watered and cultivated. It must be exposed to the sunlight so it will grow. It must send down roots to obtain nourishment and then it must be allowed to grow into a full-blossoming flower. But when the flower is produced it is a delight to behold. It is a thing of exquisite beauty and obtains lingering admiration. The delicacy of its beauty and fragrance is a testimony to God's creative genius. Only He could make such a treasure. Likewise, in a woman, only God can produce that precious and eternal beauty of spirit which glows from within. No cosmetic can imitate it, and no adornment can compare with its splendor.

Adorning the Outer Woman with Modesty

The basic principle of Scripture concerning outward adornment is modesty. Regardless of a woman's taste or culture, she should be guided by this cardinal rule of modesty. Her selection of clothes should be in keeping with God's standard of holiness. The dictates of fashion have no bearing upon a Christian woman. Her guideline should be God's Word and His standard. Anything that is not becoming to holiness must be rejected.

"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments..." (I Timothy 2:9). The word here translated "modestly" means "orderly" or "of good behavior." It implies more than just adequate covering (although that is important). It implies that the garments worn must be suitable for a woman making a claim to godliness. They must cover the body adequately and also convey the message that this woman is living according to God's order. Her good behavior is demonstrated by her adornment. She is not aggressive, loud or domineering, so she does not wear loud, flashy clothes. She is dressed in a subdued manner because of her submissive attitude.

Modesty also implies humility. Instead of showing off, a godly woman desires to remain in the background. She does not want to push herself forward or attract attention. She would prefer to be a little shy and retiring. Her clothes should reflect this attitude. Modest apparel is indicative of her humility and shamefacedness.

A godly woman must not be sensuously attired. Modesty precludes any expression of sensuality. It is important for every Christian woman to understand the male tendency to be sexually aroused by sight. Touch is unnecessary to stimulate a man; he can be aroused simply by looking at a woman's body. For this reason, women should take care to dress modestly and cover themselves adequately. Far be it from any Christian woman to cause her brother to stumble by dressing in a sensuous or provocative way. "It is good not to...do anything by which your brother stumbles" (Romans 14:21). Let love be the key here.

Dress in such a manner as to demonstrate love for the Lord Jesus and love for your brothers in Christ. Do not let fashion take a higher place than Christian love. "For if because of [fashion] your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your [fashion] him for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15).

Adorning the Outer Woman with Discretion

Christian women should also be guided by the scriptural principle of discretion. I Timothy 2:9 admonishes a woman to be both "modestly and discreetly" attired. Discretion essentially means to be dressed carefully. It means thought and care should be given to the selection of garments so that they convey a proper image. Godly women must dress in a manner that is becoming to holiness.

Discretion also conveys the idea of "fitness" or "taste." There are certain types of clothes and accessories that are not "fitting" for a Christian woman to wear. Perhaps they do not reveal the body, but their appearance carries the message of the world, rather than the image of Christ. The importance of this kind of taste is expressed in Proverbs: "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion" (Proverbs 11:22).

A godly woman should be dressed in a subdued manner. She should not deliberately draw attention to herself by her attire. She should not be ostentatious. "Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments..." (I Timothy 2:9). Christian women should not be characterized by the extravagant, costly outfits they wear. Attention should be attracted immediately to inner qualities, not outer.

If the first impression and the most lasting impression you create is one of being stunningly and impeccably clothed, you have given top priority to the outward adornment and ignored the inward adornment. It is worldly and extravagant to try to keep up with fashion and always be found wearing the most up-to-date outfit. Your attention should be going in the opposite direction. You should strive for a subdued, almost neutral appearance. Rather than attracting attention, your attire should be scarcely noticed. The lasting impression you make should be that of a gentle, quiet, godly woman.

Just a note here about color: a quick glance at nature reveals God's appreciation for color. He did not create a drab, monotonous world. Instead He splashed it with vibrant colors. However, it is all done in perfect taste. There are no clashes or excesses in nature. Accordingly, it seems unreasonable to assume God would want Christian women to dress in a drab, colorless way. A tasteful use of pretty colors seems quite in keeping with the character of God. It is the excess which should be avoided. Loud, clashing colors which scream out for attention might not be suitable for a godly woman, but do not forbid the use of colorful accents or bright colors when they are worn with discretion.

A Christian woman should not draw attention to herself by being too dowdy. A deliberate attempt to be "unworldly" by being shabby or slovenly dressed attracts as much attention as being flashy. If the flesh cannot satisfy itself by being extravagant, it will go to the other extreme and become ascetic. Drawing attention to the great sacrifices made for Christ is simply pride in reverse. Dressing in an eccentric way in order to demonstrate Christian devotedness is to advertise one's own spirituality. There is no need for this. Dress simply, modestly and discreetly, and the Holy Spirit residing within will manifest the image of Christ effortlessly.

A Christian woman should not draw attention to herself by being too heavily decorated. "And let not your adornment be external only--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses..." (I Peter 3:3). I believe the spirit of this passage is that a woman should not be characterized by the decoration she wears. Her adornment should not be so lavish as to attract attention. There are some who feel this literally means a woman should never wear any type of jewelry. I respect this, and would never argue with them. I believe it is always safer to be too literal with the Scriptures than too liberal. However, I do not believe a wedding ring, watch, or simple piece of jewelry is taboo for a Christian woman. The emphasis is on the extreme. Do not be heavily or noticeably adorned with jewelry.

Here is an example in Scripture which gives the extreme in ornamentation which is displeasing to the Lord: "In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, dangling earrings, bracelets, veils, headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, finger rings, nose rings, festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans, and veils" (Isaiah 3: 18-23). This kind of extreme is certainly not in keeping with holiness. But a simple pin or necklace does not seem to me to be in this category.

Covering the Head

A godly woman should be adorned with submissiveness. The outward evidence of this attitude is the head covering. The scriptural teaching concerning God's order is given right within the context of the teaching concerning the head covering. These two teachings have a vital connection. The woman indicates her submission to God's order by covering her head. "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. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head" (I Corinthians 11:3-6).

The woman's hair is her glory. "But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her. For her hair is given to her for a covering" (I Corinthians 11:15). A woman's hair is a covering in the sense that it is a mantle thrown around her. It is given to her for her glory and should be long enough to tell she is a woman. The woman is the man's glory. "For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God but the woman is the glory of man" (I Corinthians 11:7). When a woman is praying or prophesying she should shield her hair so that the glory of her hair does not outshine the glory of the man, which is herself. This is a voluntary act of submission. It indicates that the woman is willing to humble herself and take the lower place. She is not going to outshine the man.

A woman's attitude should be submissive. The head covering is simply a symbol of her heart attitude. It is a mockery for a rebellious woman to wear a head covering. She is saying one thing by her attitude and another by her covering. Since the Scriptures indicate that a woman should cover her head when praying or prophesying, it is imperative that she first get her heart attitude straightened out. She cannot use rebellion as an excuse for not covering her head because continuing in rebellion is far worse than neglecting the head covering.

When a woman's attitude is submissive and her head is covered, she is ministering to the angels. The covering testifies to the angels that she has voluntarily taken her place in God's order. "Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels" (I Corinthians 11:10). This means she is wearing a symbol of the man's authority and is not trying to usurp his authority. She is to wear the covering when praying or prophesying so that her ministering is not misinterpreted as insubordination. Although she is speaking or taking a leadership role, she is not trying to seize the man's authority. She is still submissive and is covering or protecting herself to indicate that submission.

The question naturally arises: "Should a woman cover her head every time she prays?" Basically, yes. Whenever a woman knows she is going to be praying, she should take some sort of covering with her. If she is at home in her prayer closet, she should slip something on her head. If she is going to a prayer meeting or Bible study where she knows she will be praying, she should take a covering with her. Every woman knows there are unexpected times and unplanned situations in which her heart turns to the Lord and she is moved to prayer. When she is standing at the sink washing dishes, when she is driving down the highway, when she is taking a shower, her heart turns to the Lord and she wants to pray. Should she stifle herself because she doesn't have her head covered? I think the spirit of this dilemma is handled in a passage of scripture concerning circumcision: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" (Romans 2:28-29). Also Jeremiah 4:4: "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD and remove the foreskins of your heart." These passages indicate that the heart attitude concerning circumcision was as important as the physical act. God wanted men to be circumcised in their hearts as well as in their bodies. This did not mean they were to ignore the literal circumcision--God commanded them to be circumcised in their bodies--but He also wanted their hearts to be right.

It is a similar situation with the head covering. God wants women to have their heads covered in their hearts. This does not mean they ignore the literal head covering. It means they are to have their heads covered both in their hearts and on their bodies. But if a woman is caught in a situation where she did not plan to pray and does not have a head covering, she can appeal to God that her head is covered in her heart and then go ahead and pray. If a woman's attitude is right and her head is covered in her heart she will want to cover her head as much as possible; she will not use this as an excuse for neglecting the head covering. If she shrugs off the literal head covering and says her head is covered in her heart, this is a good indication that her head is not covered at all. She still has the wrong attitude. Real submission will want to obey.

In connection with the head covering, it is important to remember that we have liberty in Christ. He has not put us back under law and imposed upon us a set of rules and regulations. Rather, He has set us free to obey Him. Our obedience in these matters must spring from a loving and responsive heart. We are not to put ourselves under bondage. "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). There is always the danger of becoming legalistic. Instead of demanding that women obey, it is much better to encourage them in love. If there are women who are not submissive or who do not understand the head covering, be patient with them, love them, pray for them, and teach them the scriptural roles. But do not be critical or judgmental. True submission will want to obey, so it is most important that the attitude be set right.

God's Love Brings Unity

When it comes to adornment, dress, and the type of head covering, the basic rule to follow must always be love. Every individual must obey the Lord's commands in these areas, but must not judge others. It is up to each woman to work out these principles in a way that is most suitable for her, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. She must come to a solution according to her tastes, convictions, lifestyle and budget. If her solution is different from yours, you must respect her decision, love her, and esteem her better than yourself. You cannot be critical of another woman because she dresses differently from you. It is up to her to follow the Lord's guidance and it is up to you to follow the Lord's guidance. Then you must love each other, cooperate with each other, and unite with each other. You are members one of another.

It is a very simple thing to create unity out of conformity. That is the old "birds of a feather flock together" principle. But God is doing something more wonderful than that. He is creating unity out of diversity. Although the members of His body are different (having different tastes, backgrounds, and personalities), He is giving them a supernatural love for each other that will amaze the world. It is simple to love someone who looks and acts just like you, but it is divine to love someone who is completely different from you, especially if he thinks he is right and you are wrong. That takes grace. But "God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (II Corinthians 9:8). This kind of love is a testimony that will shake the world.

The godly woman's adornment is to be, first of all, inward. She is to adorn herself with a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in God's sight. She is also to adorn herself with good works which are the outworking of a beautiful spirit. These qualities will provide such splendor and beauty that outward adornment will scarcely be noticed. They will draw attention to the life of Christ indwelling the woman. In addition to this, the outward adornment should be neutralized so as not to attract attention. It should be modest and discreet; it should be in keeping with holiness. The godly woman's primary objective in adorning herself should be to bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6: The Woman's Power

"...power is perfected in weakness." (II Corinthians 12:9)

There is a principle of power in the New Testament which is directly opposite to the human perception of power. Human beings express power by great strength or might, but God's power is so great that He expresses it through weakness. "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong" (I Corinthians 1:27). God takes weak, base, despised things and transforms them by His power into mighty instruments. It is to the godly woman's advantage that she is in an almost constant position to be infused with God's power. Her position naturally is the place of submission or the lower place. As the weaker vessel, she is a constant candidate for God's power as she looks to the Lord Jesus Christ for her example and is conformed to His image.

The Lord's Place

Women should take the Lord's place of submission. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth He constantly put Himself in the place of submission. The scriptural admonition to Christian women living with unsaved husbands is to submit to their husbands even as the Lord submitted to His accusers. "And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept

entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously...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" (I Peter 2:23 and 3:1).

The Lord Jesus does not expect wives to endure a situation which He never experienced. "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). It is because He has already lived a life of perfect submission that He exhorts Christian wives to be submissive. He has proven His capability to be victorious in this situation, so He can provide the grace to enable a wife to be victorious. If she is willing to submit to her unsaved husband and not revile when she is reviled, the Lord Jesus will enable her to do it. If she is willing to utter no threats when she is threatened, the Lord will work this miracle through her. It is the life of Christ flowing through her that provides the power to live a submissive life. His capability to provide this power is beyond question since He already lived a life of perfect submission.

A power shortage occurs in a Christian woman's life only when she cuts off the flow of power by her will. As long as she is willing to be submissive, as long as she is willing to have the Lord live out His life in her, there will be sufficient power and grace to do it. God never commands Christians to do something He does not enable them to do. If His commandments seem grievous or impossible, it is only because we are living on our own power rather than His power. The Christian life is Christ's life in us. It is not our imitation of Christ's life. He enables us to live the Christian life, but He can only do it if we will let Him.

A Christian woman must submit to God's will in the same way the Lord Jesus submitted to the Father's will. "And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, 'Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done'" (Luke 22:41-42). The Lord Jesus deliberately and voluntarily submitted His will to the Father's. Even though it was an agonizing experience, He did not rebel or demand release from the Father's will. In just the same way, women must submit themselves to God's will. At times it may seem difficult, but the indwelling Christ is present to make it possible. When the Scriptures say, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness" (I Timothy 2:11), a woman must say in her heart, "Not my will, but Thine be done." With this type of attitude the Lord will make it not only possible but also pleasant to do His will. Just as David said: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God..." (Psalm 40:8).

There is power in submission. Although the Lord Jesus submitted to human persecutors and submitted to the Father's will, He was, nevertheless, invested with power. He said, "All authority [or power] has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). The place of submission only enhanced or confirmed His power. He did not need to be a brute in order to be powerful. He could be "the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world" and still be invested with all power.

A Christian woman can also find power in submission. She does not need to dominate or usurp authority in order to have power. Instead, she can be quiet and submissive and allow the dynamite of the Lord Jesus Christ to express itself in her life.

There is resurrection power in the life of the Lord Jesus. If a woman is willing to die to self, she then becomes a candidate for resurrection life. However, there can be no resurrection if there is no death. "I pray that...you may know...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. [This

is] in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:18-21). The "surpassing greatness of His power" is what brought Christ to life in the tomb. It is available to any believer who will likewise take the place of death and reckon himself crucified with Christ. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you" (Romans 8:11). When a woman takes the place of submission and does God's will, she is putting herself in the place of power. He will bring resurrection power into her mortal body and give her the ability to be more than a conqueror.

Women should take the Lord's place of obedience. The Lord Jesus came for the specific purpose of doing the Father's will. "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God'" (Hebrews 10:7). Throughout His entire earthly ministry He lived in complete obedience to the Father's will. He said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative: as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just; because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). Although Jesus was God, He laid aside His divine privileges and lived a life of obedience.

When the Lord Jesus comes to live within a human being, He lives the same life in them that He lived on earth. Since He always obeyed the Father's will while on earth, He will always guide the believer in paths of obedience. There is no rebellion in the Lord Jesus. He complied perfectly with the Father's will and obeyed implicitly. He will, therefore, give each believer the power to obey God's will. We have already noted that God's will for women is to be in submission to men. It is also God's will for women to be adorned with a gentle and quiet spirit. When the life of the Lord Jesus is allowed full sway in a woman's life, these are the paths of obedience into which He will lead her.

The Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience by suffering. Obedience was something He had never known prior to the incarnation. When He became a human being, He had to learn to obey, and this was accomplished by suffering. "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Is it any wonder that rebellious human beings must also learn obedience through suffering? "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master" (Matthew 10:24). But take heart: "After you have suffered for a little, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (I Peter 5:10). This suffering is not unending. It will soon be over and then it will yield the "peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11).

If your circumstances are difficult and obedience to the Word of God seems impossible, allow the Lord Jesus to work out obedience in you. It may cause some suffering, and it will cause death to self, but this is necessary. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). The Lord Jesus himself became "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). We must likewise be willing to reckon ourselves "crucified with Christ."

The result of obedience will be fruitfulness. The qualities we have discussed earlier (gentleness, quietness, meekness and love) will be produced. In addition, obedience to the Word may win a woman's unsaved husband to Christ. If she is willing to forsake her own life and die, the fruit produced may be the salvation of her husband. A wife's submissive and obedient attitude unleashes God's power. A man is smitten as his sweet, godly wife submits to him and obeys him. This kind of life is a powerful

weapon God can use in breaking down the husband's resistance. It is stronger than the constant hammering of preaching. It is stronger than self-righteousness or piety. It is the quiet power of a disarming love. It has the ability to melt the coldest heart and break down the staunchest self-will.

Women should take the Lord's place of humility. Although Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, He was a humble man. He did not come blazing down to earth on a bolt of lightning; instead He was born in the lowly surroundings of a stable. He did not flaunt His superiority and expect the crowds to swoon at His appearance; instead He made His triumphal entry seated upon a donkey. The Lord Jesus said, "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart..." (Matthew 11:29).

The human heart is proud and arrogant. Human beings want to be exalted, admired and praised. We constantly vie for the prominent place, the best office, the most noteworthy job. Very few of us are competing for the lowest place. But the Lord said: "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). Humility is actually the pathway to power. Whoever is the least becomes the greatest. The weakest is the strongest. It is a paradox that God's power is greatest when the human vessel is weakest.

Make no mistake about this humility, though--it is strictly from the Lord. There is nothing so disgusting as false humility. A human attempt to be "humbler than thou" is really pride. Since most Christians know they are supposed to be humble, many try to work it up in themselves. Of course this cannot be done. Genuine humility must come from the Lord. It is only as His glory is reflected in the life of a believer that real humility is produced. And chances are, the most humble saint will be more conscious of his own unworthiness than anything else.

Throughout the New Testament, humility is taught as something dear in God's sight. It is the mark of a truly holy man or woman. "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility..." (Ephesians 4:1-2). "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself" (Philippians 2:3). "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

The evidence of genuine humility--meekness and gentleness--is highly prized by the Lord. "The imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit...is precious in the sight of God" (I Peter 3:4). He can do much with this kind of an attitude. It is the pride of self-sufficiency which hinders His work.

The Lord's Pattern

Women should follow the Lord's pattern of a servant. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth He said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). His ministry was serving and ministering to the needs of others. He was neither self-centered nor self-seeking. He came to pour out His life as a ransom for others.

The ultimate sacrifice the Lord Jesus made was His death upon the cross. But just prior to this, He established His pattern of serving by washing the disciples' feet. "Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:5). Right to the end of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus was willing to take the lowest place and perform the most menial task. He did not expect His disciples to do anything He had not done. After He washed their feet He instructed them to wash each other's feet. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example

that you also should do as I did to you" (John 13:14-15).

The Lord gave us this pattern of serving so that we should do as He did. He did not wash the disciples' feet simply as a display of His great humility; He did it to give us an example. In other words, if you want to be a follower of Jesus Christ, here is the path to follow. Take the place of serving and ministering to others. Be willing to take the lowest place and the worst jobs. Do not seek to exalt yourself, but rather humble yourself.

The divine paradox in this pattern of serving is that it is the pathway to power and greatness. "Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44). The Lord's perception of greatness is the exact opposite of a human being's perception of greatness. He considers it a stupendous and noteworthy act when one human being stoops down to help another. He rates a menial task much higher than a prestigious one. The Lord's values move on a declining scale of notoriety. Thus the greatest of all is the slave of all. The way to be first is to be last. The way to be really great in God's eyes is to be insignificant in men's eyes. "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). In God's sight it is greater to become as a little child than to be wise and sophisticated. "Let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant" (Luke 22:26).

It behooves every woman to seriously consider these verses and to ask the Lord Jesus Christ to make her willing to fit into this pattern. This is not some morbid asceticism, but the life of faith. It is predicated upon the death of self so that the life of Christ can be manifested. It is truly losing your life so that you may find it (Matthew 16:25). The only way to genuinely serve in lowliness of mind is to allow the Lord to do it through you. He is humble and gentle in heart, so He will be able to manifest that nature through you. He established this pattern of a servant, so He will be able to live it out in your life. The prerequisite is your willingness. You must relinquish the reins to your life so that He can take them up and live in you the life He desires.

The Lord's Power

Women must understand the Lord's power in order to be energized by it. His power is perfected in weakness. "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12:9-10). The power of God is so great it can be demonstrated in weakness. The weaker the human vessel, the greater the divine power. The only thing that checks this divine power is a vessel that is too great. When the human vessel is strong and capable, the power of God recedes. The Holy Spirit will not compete. He will come to the aid of an individual only when the individual has acknowledged his own helplessness so that "the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves" (II Corinthians 4:7).

God uses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. He does this "because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:25). He can use absurd, ridiculous things to demonstrate His power because He is so great. There is no need for humans to try to "help" God; He does not need our help. In fact, He can take our weaknesses, our blunders and our embarrassments, and use them for His purposes. He is omnipotent! God also uses base and

despised things to demonstrate His power. "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God" (I Corinthians 1:27-29).

It is to the woman's advantage that she is the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7). She is in a constant position to have the power of God flow through her. A woman does not need to be domineering, authoritative, or bossy in order to be powerful. She can be strong by being weak. She can be great by being the least. She can be first by being last. She can be master of all by being servant of all. The woman's place of submission is one of her greatest assets. It is the very place which is blessed and honored by God.

If a Christian woman is married to an unsaved man, she has the opportunity of conquering him by submitting to him. If a Christian woman works with unsaved people, she can be the channel of God's power by being weak and base and despised. She need not try to argue them into salvation or impress them with her spirituality; rather she can simply be their servant and win them over with gentleness. If a Christian woman is put into a situation where she must submit to domineering, insensitive men, she does not need to tell them off or set them straight. She can simply submit to their authority and be victorious in the situation by being the slave of all.

If a woman desires to have a ministry in the church, she should consider this matter of divine power very seriously. If she is tempted to speak out or take a position of authority, she should recognize that more power is available to her through submission than through rebellion. By speaking out in church a woman is coming out from under God's protective covering; she is taking a situation into her own hands and is opening herself up to deception. In addition to this, she is bereft of divine power. However, if she takes her proper place and is quiet, she is in a position to wield tremendous power. Her weakness will be the channel of God's strength. She can pray effectively and change situations through God's power rather than her own strength.

The woman's place of submission is a place of power. The woman's role of servant is the role of the Master. The woman's physical weakness is the trait of strength. The woman's lower position is the position of greatness. Is there any reason to desire anything else? Is there any reason to covet the man's place? Why not be grateful for what the Lord has given you and ask Him to maximize its use? Be the godly woman the Lord intended you to be.

Appendix

Two Kinds of People

The Bible clearly teaches there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who have been born once and those who have been born twice. All people fit into the first category. This birth is the natural or physical birth. Only some people fit into the second category. This is the spiritual birth. It means to be born from God or to be born from above. The reason all people do not automatically fit into this category is that this birth must be accepted by the conscious choice of every individual. It only occurs when you ask God for it.

Why Do I Need This Second Birth?

Everyone needs to be born again because it is the only way to have eternal life. Jesus said: "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). It is essential to be born again in order to function properly as a human being. When God created human beings, He intended for them to have a relationship with Him and to live in dependence upon Him. However, this relationship has been broken because of sin. All people are sinners and therefore separated from God. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Because of sin, all people who have only been born once are dead spiritually. They need to be born again so they will be brought to life spiritually. "Even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5). Only the person who has been born again is a child of God. Only the person who has been born again can understand the Bible. Only the person who has been born again will go to heaven.

How Can I Be Born Again?

You must first acknowledge that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself. You must then confess your sins, ask Jesus Christ to cleanse them with His blood, and forsake them. God will then forgive your sins. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

You must believe that Jesus Christ is God, that He died on the cross for your sins, and that He was raised from the dead. You must ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and be your personal Savior and Lord. When you receive Christ you will be born again and become a child of God. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). At this point your relationship with God will be established and your life of dependence upon Him will begin.

When Jesus Christ comes into your heart He does not just save you from hell; He comes in to give you a new life. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away, behold new things have come" (II Corinthians 5:17). When you are born again, a transformation takes place in your life. Although you were dead spiritually, you now come to life. Although you were alienated from God, you now become His child. Although you were in rebellion to God, you now submit to Him and live according to His will. Everything in your old life is put away and you now begin a new life in Christ. He is the Master of your new life and as you submit to Him, He will guide you into pathways of joy and blessing you never knew existed.