



SARAH'S CHILDREN

I Peter 3:4 - 6

For the holy women in former ages, who placed their hope and trust in God, used to clothe themselves in great beauty with the raiment of a gentle and quiet spirit which are imperishable qualities, precious in the sight of God, just as did Sarah..., and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

(Author's Paraphrase)

Joseph Herrin

Sarah's Children

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"Like a lily among the thorns,
So is my darling among the maidens."

Song of Songs 2:2

Introduction

We live in a most exciting day. Yahweh is preparing a Bride for His Son. He is washing her with the Word. He is removing every stain, wrinkle and blemish. He is clothing her in robes of righteousness, and one day soon He will call her forth to reveal her beauty to the world.

Yahweh has given us many earthly examples of spiritual truth. When Yahshua walked this earth He often spoke in parables, relating the realities of the Kingdom of God to things that were naturally observable to his audience. The Kingdom was compared to a mustard tree, to a vineyard, to a field of wheat. The members of the Kingdom were compared to servants in a great house, to virgins both wise and foolish, to a prodigal returning home.

As Yahweh prepares a Bride for His Son, He has similarly given us natural examples to reveal this spiritual process that is occurring. There is no clearer revelation of this preparatory bridal work than to look at what is transpiring in the lives of women today who were created to be the brides of men.

At first glance, one might wonder how women today could possibly be a picture of the Bride that is being prepared for Christ. Modesty is largely rejected today, having given place to sexual allure and sensuality. A quiet spirit has been replaced with ceaseless activity, clamor, and an effusion of words. Gentleness has been substituted for abrasiveness, forcefulness, an "in your face" attitude, and a demand that personal rights be honored. The clarion call of the woman's movement today is "We will submit to no one! We are equal to all, and we demand recognition!" The woman's movement seeks to convince all that there is no difference between man and woman.

Absent from the majority of women today is any trace of the humility that is pleasing to God. Gone is an understanding of Yahweh's original intent in creating Eve to be a helper and completion for Adam. Instead, the majority of women want to be like Adam. They want a world where there is Adam and Adam, not Adam and Eve. Even in the church, this trend is seen in women. There are women in the church who are pressing to be recognized as equals to men in every way. They want the same

authority as men. They want the same roles as men. They essentially want to be like men.

Yet out of this confusion and conflict there is a remnant of women who are coming forth in this day and they are finding Yahweh's purpose for their lives. They are coming out from a place of conformity to the world and they are being conformed to the image Yahweh has chosen for them. These stand as lights in a dark world, and it is in these that we can see the beauty of the Bride of Christ reflected.

It is an awesome sight to observe the women that are being transformed in this hour. The change begins within as the heart is softened by the Spirit's working. In their innermost being there is a keen desire to be found pleasing to God. The opinions of mankind do not weigh as heavily with them as does the witness of the Spirit of Yahweh. In humility they begin to adorn themselves with a quiet and gentle spirit. Even their external adornment changes. Many are rediscovering the marvelous testimony of headcovering. They are likewise covering themselves with modesty, seeking to convey an image of purity and righteousness, rather than desiring to attract attention through sexual allure. These women do stand out as lilies among the thorns.

Recently, my wife Tony was speaking with another sister in Christ. This sister was out with her husband, and as they came to the door of some establishment a woman approached the door. This woman was adorned in modest apparel and she was wearing a headcovering. Her appearance was in great contrast to that of most women in the affluent area in which they lived. By reason of her very appearance there was something that seemed pure and holy about her. The woman who related this story said her husband opened the door for this woman, and her husband's very manner and expression changed as if he were looking at someone who was holy. Although, this woman assured my wife that her husband loves her very much, she had never seen him look at her in that same way, and she desired that he should do so.

This writing is not focused specifically on how women should dress, but is it not true that a woman who is godly should stand out in the midst of a perverse, sensual, and wicked nation that is materially and physically obsessed? If people don't notice anything different in the appearance of a woman who aspires to be godly, then perhaps the woman has unknowingly conformed herself to the ways of the world.

In the past year my wife has begun wearing modest dresses and practicing headcovering. She has never before experienced the reaction she now gets in public. Men will hold doors for her, and she sees men purposely staring at her in public places. Yet their stares are not the stares of lust that many women attract by wearing

immodest clothing. The stares are from men who see something pure in the midst of a perverse society.

Even men who do not know Christ are drawn to the image of one who is adorned modestly and with humility. My wife has corresponded with a number of other women who are making the same life changes as they seek to be conformed to God's desire for them, and they are giving amazing reports about how they frequently encounter unusual and positive reactions from men young and old who are blessed just by seeing them adorn themselves modestly and humbly.

Some women have objected that adorning themselves in this scriptural way strikes them as vanity in that it draws attention to the woman. Yet what woman that goes clothes shopping does not consider how she will appear to others? Why choose to put on the fashions of the world that accentuate the sexuality of womanhood, when as Christians we are to demonstrate heavenly virtues to the world?

Yes, women who dress modestly and with humility will stand out and attract attention, but should not light stand out in the midst of darkness? Should not people be attracted to the light? A city set on a hill cannot be hid. We are not called to be invisible, we are to attract others attention that they might ask us the reason of the hope that is in us (I Peter 3:15). The Christian man or woman should stand out and be noticed, but what people are attracted to in us should be godly, not physical or carnal.

How many women would not truly like men to look upon them as someone who is holy, someone whom men regard with righteous admiration? However, due to the cultural resistance, the necessity of humility, and the need to crucify one's flesh, many women have opted instead to gain man's admiration through physical and carnal means. Yet the former admiration is holy and pure, the latter is sensual and defiled and it will eventually lead to the woman being treated in a manner devoid of all respect. Ironically, the excuse most women give for rejecting Yahweh's plan for their life is that they want respect and they feel that the Biblical teaching on womanhood, submission, humility, and a quiet and gentle spirit, would rob them of this respect. They fear becoming a doormat to men.

It is a paradox in the Kingdom of God that the path to respect is a path of humility. One must die to their soulish desires and crucify their flesh with its pride, but the one who humbles him/her self will be exalted. Many seek respect with pride intact, but protecting one's pride is the pathway to debasement in the Kingdom. We are told that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, I Peter 5:5). If we humble ourselves under His hand, in due time He will exalt us. These things

are a paradox, and many have failed to gain godly respect and admiration because they have rejected the path of humility.

Again, some would argue that we are not to be concerned about the opinions of others at all. This assertion does not bear up under the scrutiny of scripture, however. The scriptures reveal that the early saints had a very high reputation with those they dwelt among. They also reveal that such a reputation was desirable.

Acts 5:13-14

But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number...

NASU

I Timothy 3:7

And he [an overseer] must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

NASU

There are numerous scriptures that speak of the necessity of maintaining a good reputation. If people speak ill of us, they should do so without any justification that they might in time be put to shame for speaking evil of what is good.

A marvelous thing is occurring in the hour in which we live. A remnant of women are hearing and heeding the call to come out of the ways and patterns of the world and of a worldly church and to adorn themselves with that which is highly valued in God's sight. They are putting on the imperishable qualities that never decay and will never be out of fashion in the Kingdom of God.

There is an exceedingly high calling for women. This book will explore this calling. It will seek to portray faithfully an image that originates in the mind of Christ. This image is not popular today, nor is it likely to find approval with the majority of women in or out of the church. But there is a remnant who will heed the call and who will recognize the voice of their loving Shepherd. It is for these that this book is written.

The path and calling spoken of here will present great challenges. Certainly there are obstacles and objections that must be overcome. Fears will have to be faced and conquered. A life of faith will have to be embraced, but the prize before the woman

who overcomes self, Satan, and the world is beyond comparing with the temporary, light afflictions to be encountered. Those who prevail will be worthy to be called "Sarah's children."

"Many daughters have done nobly,
But you excel them all."
Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears Yahweh, she shall be praised.

Proverbs 31:29-30

The High Calling of Womanhood

Do you long to fulfill Yahweh's purpose for you? Do you want His will to be fulfilled in your life more than anything else? If you were told that only one out of a hundred thousand women fear Yahweh and seek to be found pleasing to Him in all aspects of their lives; if you were advised that His will would lead you to walk differently, speak differently, dress differently, and in very profound ways to simply live differently than all the women in the society around you, as well as the vast majority in the church, would you yet desire to obey?

To put a desire to please Yahweh above every other desire is to fear Him. Such a life will eventually lead to praise. The praise referred to will not be the hollow acclaim of a fallen world that is passing away. It will be the praise that originates in the mind of God and is everlasting. What better praise is there than the praise of the Creator who formed us? Yahshua heard the voice from heaven proclaim, "Behold, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This is the manner of praise of which we speak.

What is it that elicits the praise of Yahweh upon men and women? Is it not obedience? And what is obedience? Is it not conformity to the revealed mind of the Father?

Yahshua said He was always beholding the Father and He only did the things He saw the Father doing. He said He only spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak. He declared that He never did anything that had its origin outside of the Father's will.

John 8:28-29

So Yahshua said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

The world has many definitions for success. People who have great talents are viewed as successful. People who make lots of money, who make a name for themselves, or who excel in some field of endeavor are seen as successful. In the Kingdom of God there is only one definition of success. It is knowing the will of the Father and doing it. This alone will elicit His praises.

It follows, therefore, that the woman who desires to be successful in the Kingdom of God must know what the will of the Father is for her. Having come to an understanding of the Father's will she must then seek to be conformed to that will. As a woman, you can know for certain that the Father does have a specific desire and calling for your life.

Yahweh had a specific purpose in mind when He created all of His works. Nothing was created without a design and predetermined purpose that was fully formed in the mind of God. Yahweh had a specific design for the angels, and there are different ranks of angels. Among the heavenly beings there are archangels, seraphim, and cherubim. There are also many fantastic heavenly creatures that we find described in the pages of scripture. Some have multiple heads and many wings. Some speak with a voice that causes the pillars of the temple in heaven to shake. Yahweh has a purpose for each being.

Yet not all beings have been content with Yahweh's purpose for them. In Ezekiel we find the description of a magnificent created being. Its description is breathtaking.

Ezekiel 28:12-18

"You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you."

What an awesome being is described here! The seal upon this covering cherub was "perfection." Think of what this means. There was no defect anywhere. All was excellent and holy and pure. There was nothing to mar the appearance in any way. One could search for a lifetime and never find anything amiss.

Furthermore, this angelic being is described as “full of wisdom”. One translation renders this as “the sum of wisdom.” What marvelous breadth of mind the Father placed within. Not even Solomon was described in this way.

The description continues that this being was “perfect in beauty.” How can we even fathom what this description means. We have nothing on this earth to compare. How many people have been captivated by a beautiful sunset over the ocean, or the appearance of dew on the flowers of the morning? The Father has placed many wondrous and beautiful sights in creation, yet the creation suffers the consequences of sin. This angel was so breathtakingly beautiful that we would have trouble turning our gaze away from such a sight.

The garments with which this cherub was adorned were also appropriately magnificent. The purest gold was used and he was arrayed with the most precious of gemstones, themselves flawless and full of beauty.

Yahweh excelled in the fashioning of this magnificent being. He vested this covering cherub with characteristics that were part of His own nature. He gave it perfection, wisdom, and beauty. He also had an appointed purpose for this being to fulfill. We are told that this was the “anointed cherub who covers”. Some have suggested that this cherub stood in the presence of Yahweh and covered His glory. Yahweh says, “I placed you there”, speaking of His predetermined will for this being.

Yet we know that the being that is described is the same as the one we now know as Satan, the adversary. He was among the greatest angelic beings ever created, and his role before Yahweh was lofty and magnificent. What glory was his, and what responsibility? Whatever it means to be the anointed cherub that covers, we can be assured that the calling was equal to the being selected to fulfill it. To be in the very presence of Yahweh would be a calling that far exceeds the worth of any being of creation.

How then did Lucifer, the light bearer, begin to find dissatisfaction with his position and calling? Ezekiel continues the story with these words:

Ezekiel 28:17

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor."

The apostle Paul makes reference to the transgression of Satan when speaking to Timothy. When giving instructions for the appointment of ministers Paul states that they should not be a new convert, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the

same condemnation as the devil” (I Timothy 3:6, NKJV). At some point this anointed cherub took his eyes off the real source of all beauty, wisdom and perfection, which is Yahweh, and he began to gaze upon himself. He saw the magnificence of his own creation, his great beauty and splendor, and he began to find fault with his place in Yahweh’s order. He thought that he should walk in a greater purpose, a higher calling, and have more honor. Isaiah speaks of it in this way:

Isaiah 14:12-14

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your 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.'

What a tragedy befell this glorious being. By seeking to ascend to a place above that assigned to him, he fell to the very depths. Instead of receiving the praise of Yahweh, he became the adversary of God and torment awaits him.

Why did this have to happen? Was not the predetermined plan of Yahweh good enough for this being, that he should consider it lowly and unworthy of his person? Verse 11 of this same chapter of Isaiah tells us, “Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol.” Some have interpreted this to mean that one of the duties of this covering cherub involved music, and he led the creation in worship of Yahweh. Could there be any higher calling than to be Yahweh’s hand appointed worship leader? Great and awesome were God’s design and purpose for this cherub.

Lucifer did fall, however. He did corrupt his wisdom and he abandoned the role assigned to him by his Creator. Such was his beauty, wisdom and great splendor that one third of the angelic beings joined with him in his rebellion. These other beings considered his perfection and flawless beauty, his splendorous adornment, his breadth of mind, and they were carried away with his deceit. They too corrupted their wisdom and they worshiped the creation rather than the Creator.

What we all need to see in this is that through the corrupting of wisdom even the very highest calling can begin to lose its luster. There was possibly no higher calling in heaven, yet it became a detestable thing to Lucifer. It became a thing despised and loathed.

Lucifer’s calling was not lowly in any way. If we were to step into the arenas that this

angelic being walked in we would be immediately undone by the glory of it all. We would fall down as dead men and women and cry out “Woe is me. I am undone, for I am unclean and unworthy.” Like a homeless derelict that is suddenly brought into the greatest mansion on earth, filled with rich tapestries, parquet floors, marble columns, gilded ornaments, and many costly and rare furnishings, we would see the filth of our own array and say “I am not worthy to be here.”

This cherub's calling was so far beyond anything imaginable upon this earth that any comparison is feeble at best. Yet he began to view the glory of his appointment as a thing that was detestable.

It is my hope that you will now be able to receive my next statements. Satan has brought his deception to earth and he has caused women to revile the predetermined role and calling that Yahweh has chosen for their lives. Yahweh has a high and glorious calling for women, yet most women despise it. They view it as lowly and contemptible. They feel it is degrading and that it is beneath them.

Is God's calling and role that He has predetermined by His own counsel actually beneath the dignity of women? Do you suppose that Yahweh simply wants women to suffer in endless misery and to lack fulfillment? No! It is a high and glorious calling that has been granted to women, yet few see it as such. Satan has worked hard to deceive women everywhere. Look at the message of the following verses.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

I John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Satan deceives the whole world, and the whole world lies in his power which is rooted in deception. What deception do you suppose he would like to cover the world with? His own corrupted wisdom told him that Yahweh's calling, role, and purpose for his life were detestable. It is this same error he would seek to duplicate among mankind. AND HE HAS DONE SO.

Satan has deceived women everywhere concerning their position, role, and calling. In Genesis it is revealed that woman was created for man. Paul reiterates this in his epistle to the church in Corinth.

I Corinthians 11:7-9

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. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

Yes woman was taken from man. As man was created to be the image and glory of God, so woman was made to be the glory of man. Woman was created to be the helper of man.

Genesis 2:18

Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Many women look at the Biblical instructions regarding womanhood and they see them as being part of an outdated patriarchal society. They see no reason why men should be leaders in the home, in the church, in government, or any of the other forums of life. The woman's movement asserts that there is no difference between man and woman, that a woman is to be seen as an equal to man in all areas of life. In this is an echo of Lucifer's transgression, "I will ascend..., I will ascend..., I will ascend...."

Satan has worked tirelessly to destroy the order of creation that Yahweh has set in place by His own counsel and forethought. He rejected Yahweh's will for his life, now he seeks to cause all others to join in his rebellion. At some point Lucifer began looking at himself and thinking that he deserved better. He began to despise his calling. Now as Satan the adversary he uses the same corrupted wisdom on men and women.

Women have their minds buffeted with thoughts of, "Why should I submit myself to man? They are just common, rude, lowly, self-centered creatures that are no better than women." In every possible way Satan seeks to lower the image of man in the eyes of women. The lower man appears, the more unreasonable it seems for a woman to walk in submission and humility before man, and the more reasonable it seems that she has every right to seek to ascend above this role to a higher calling.

Satan's attacks have not just been to deceive women, however. He has been greatly effective in getting man to see himself as nothing more than an advanced ape. The man who sees himself as little more than a beast will act little better than a beast. By external observation there would seem to be little to distinguish man and to cause any to think highly of him. Men waste themselves in drunkenness, carousing,

fornicating, lying, thievery, selfishness, ignorance, slothfulness, and envy. The news is full of stories of men acting as mere brute beasts, killing and abusing one another.

Yes, the whole world does lie in the power of the evil one. His power is deception and he has deceived the whole world and now the world is living out of a deceived mindset. By looking at the world through our human senses it seems unreasonable to conclude that women should submit to man in any form, but we are not of this world and we are not to judge by appearances.

Though man has been deceived to see himself as an advanced beast, this is not his identity at all. Man did not evolve from a common ancestor of the lower primates, he was created to be the image and glory of God.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him...

John 10:33-36

The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." Yahshua answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, "I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming,' because I said, "I am the Son of God'?"

Satan has done such a masterful job of deceiving the world that even those men who have received the word of God consider it blasphemy to declare that they are as gods. Yet the scriptures declare that it is true. Yahweh's very intent in creating man was to make a being in His own likeness and image. What an awesome thought. Not even Lucifer, the covering cherub, was said to have been created in Yahweh's image and likeness, after His glory.

Furthermore, we are told that as men we will judge angels.

I Corinthians 6:3

Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

Such is Yahweh's high purpose in His design and calling of man that we are told that all of creation is waiting for the sons of God to be revealed.

Romans 8:19-22

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Man is a glorious and wonderful creation of Yahweh. He was created to bear the image of the divine. He was created to be the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God. Furthermore, we are told that redeemed and regenerate man as Christ is in this world.

I John 4:17

By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Man need not wait until he goes to heaven one day to be conformed to the image of Christ. The elect and chosen ones of God are as Christ is even now in this world. We are groaning in anticipation of this mortal body being put off and immortality being put on, of this corruptible flesh being removed and the incorruptible being put on. We don't know what our appearance will be like, but we know we shall be like the Son of God for we shall see Him just as He is (I John 3:2).

There are many scriptures that reveal the majesty of man's creation. The image has been marred through sin and deceit, but Yahweh has never changed His plan. He said, "Let us create man in Our image, after Our likeness" and one day all of creation will see man revealed in the very image and likeness of God. Yahshua, when disputing with the Pharisees, quoted from the Psalm that says,

Psalms 82:6

I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High."

Oh how Satan hates for men and women to understand these truths. Satan's desire is to debase man that he might continue to rule over him. How he fears man coming to an understanding of his Creator's design for mankind.

If women view man as some creature that is little better than a beast, then Satan is able to cause them to readily agree that it would be debasing and detestable for woman to submit to man. It would be little better than living your life to take care of a dog or some other animal. But when woman realizes that Yahweh did a marvelous thing in creating man and that He fashioned man in the very image and glory of His own person, then things appear much differently.

Does it not sound somewhat blasphemous to our ears when we hear a man proclaim, "I am a god and a son of the Most High God"? Yet this is the very thing Yahshua testified of man when he quoted from the Psalms. Does it not seem a bit presumptuous for man to say, "I am as Christ in this world?" Yet this is the apostle John's testimony.

Why does it strike our ears as blasphemy to stand and boldly declare "I am created in the image and glory of God?" It is because the whole world lies in the power of the evil one and he has diminished the knowledge of who we are through his deceit.

What if Yahweh God decided by His own counsel to create a magnificent being called man that would share His very nature and character, likeness and glory? What if he decided to place His own Spirit within these beings and to through these beings to eventually put every enemy under His feet and to share His very throne with them? What if these beings were so designed that they could walk as the very friends of God and He could have fellowship with them? What marvelous creatures they must be!

Can you begin to see the warfare that has gone on in this area? Satan has sought to cause women to view their calling as a helper to man to be a lowly and detestable calling, even as he abandoned his role and purpose due to the same error. Yet their calling is high and lofty. A woman is purposed to be the helper, companion, lover, and friend of the only beings created in the image of God. This is a high and excellent calling and it is not to be despised.

I am convinced that one of the things a woman is called to in her role of a helper to man is to help him recover the understanding of who he was created to be. When a woman treats her husband with reverence and respect she is affirming him and magnifying his own understanding of his high calling. When women fail to respect men they act as a drag and a weight upon the man. By failing to respect man, man is encouraged even more to not respect himself and he sinks lower and lower.

A part of the high calling of women in this day and hour is to help men to regain the understanding that they were created in the image and likeness and glory of God. This will ultimately prove to be to the woman's benefit. When a man sees himself as

created in the image of God, he will begin to act more godly. He will treat his wife with love, compassion, mercy, and understanding. His behavior in all ways will become more elevated. When man begins to see that he is in the image of God and not a mere beast, he will also begin to see that his wife is much more than a physical body to be lusted after or despised.

Man needs a helper. It was Yahweh's own declaration that it was not good for man to be alone. There has been no day when his need has been greater. May many daughters of Sarah come forth to elevate their husbands, to lift them up in the midst of a world that seeks to diminish them. May they by their very behavior, by their conversation and respectful demeanor, remind their men that they were created in the image of God and theirs is an exceedingly high calling.

Such is Yahweh's purpose and will for women. May none despise it.

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

Luke 9:23-24

Dying to Live

One might wonder, "If Yahweh's plan for women is so high and lofty, why do so many women despise it and fall short of His will?" The answer is revealed in the scripture above. The plan and desire of God for men and women involves dying to self. This is described as denying self and losing our life. It is compared to the image of one taking up a cross and following in the footsteps of Christ.

I don't know anyone who has had death by crucifixion described to them who would say that it sounded pleasant or desirable. To follow the path Yahweh has for us, everyone must come to the same place to which Yahshua came. We must all look at the course set before us and count the cost. A true and accurate assessment of what Yahweh is calling us to will most likely lead us to the same confession as Christ, "Father, if there be any other way, please let this cup pass from me."

We know that Yahshua followed up this plea with the words, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done." This is not the case with the multitude of men and women. Even among the saints of God, it is a remnant who will choose the path the Father has for them when they see the suffering and self denial that it requires.

Of necessity, the saint must have a heavenly vision in order to choose to walk in Yahweh's will for them on earth. We must see the joy set before us so that we too can despise the shame of our allotted path.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Yahshua, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A woman must see the joy set before her, a joy that is not of this present age, but of

the age to come. A woman must so desire to hear the words of Christ, "Well done, good and faithful daughter, enter into the joy of your Lord", that she will walk anywhere, and in any way, that He determines for her while on earth.

Not very many men or women have such a heavenly perspective. Most live their lives never perceiving anything but the natural world around them. Therefore, they want to receive joy, and happiness, and blessing now, and they seek to satisfy every human desire while they live here on earth. Much of the church sees Yahweh as a type of heavenly Santa Claus who exists to satisfy their every craving, to rescue them from every difficulty, to remove every hardship, and to make their way pleasant and enjoyable. Yet the invitation of Christ is "Come and suffer."

I Peter 5:10

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Reading this, you may think, "Is this really what I signed up for when I received Yahshua as my Savior and Lord?" Indeed, it is! Paul expressed it in this way:

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

This does not mean that we have to walk around experiencing misery and heartache every moment. It does not mean we will not know profound joy at times, or that we will be robbed of peace in our lives. What is indicated is that a death must take place within our beings if we are to enter into the true life of Christ. Peter gives us this further insight.

I Peter 4:1-2

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Our suffering comes about as we choose the will of God over the lusts of our own flesh. Certainly for a woman to willingly choose to submit herself to man requires a dying to the flesh. The flesh does not want to submit to anyone, not even to God. Many women have agonized over the will of God for them, and in the end they have

chosen another course that would not require their flesh to die. Yet there is no other path that will lead to a release of the life of Christ within. The hard shell of the outer person must be broken open in order for the life of Christ within to be revealed.

Romans 8:5-6

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...

Galatians 6:8

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

The message revealed throughout all of scripture is that when we seek to live according to the fallen nature of man, death will result. It is only in dying to self and the flesh that we enter into life. "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25).

Let us make this very practical. The scriptures reveal that woman was created for man, not man for woman (I Corinthians 11:9). The scriptures reveal that a woman should not teach a man, nor in any way seek to be an authority over man for this would be to usurp the position of man even as Satan tried to usurp authority that was not his (I Timothy 2:12). The scriptures state that a woman should not correct her husband even when he is being disobedient to the word of God (I Peter 3:1, 2). The scriptures reveal that it is the will of God for a woman to submit to her husband and to maintain a quiet and gentle spirit before man (I Peter 3:3-5, Titus 2:3-5). The scriptures even reveal that it is the will of Yahweh for a woman to treat her own husband as her lord (I Peter 3:6).

As an indication of how very difficult these things are for a woman to walk in, consider how many times you have heard a sermon, read a book or article, or had a conversation with someone, and the aim of the communication was to convince you that these scriptures do not mean what they say. To walk in any of these things requires a dying to self, and crucifixion is not pleasant. Because of this, most women simply prefer to deny what the scriptures state and to put a false interpretation upon them. Did you struggle within yourself as you read these things that are recorded in scripture? Did you think, "But you don't know my husband, or my father?"

It is often the case when we see something difficult and unpleasant to the flesh

revealed in scripture that we refuse to receive the clear meaning of the words. For example, we call Yahshua “Lord” all the time. We know what this implies. When we call Yahshua Lord we are saying that He is supreme over us. We are acknowledging that His will takes precedence over our will. We know our response to Him is to be one of obedience. Yahshua also indicated that this was the meaning of being called Lord.

Luke 6:46

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Why then do many women read the following scripture and interpret it altogether differently?

I Peter 3:5-6

For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

I do not know how Peter could have expressed himself any plainer. Objections to the teaching of scripture relating to a woman’s calling really are not based upon the scriptures being hard to understand, for in fact they are very plain. The objections arise because the revealed will of God is difficult. In fact, it is murderous, for it requires a death to walk in His will, and that death is our own. It requires taking up our cross and losing our very life. How incredibly difficult it is. But if it were not difficult, why would Yahshua urge us to count the cost before we proclaim we will follow Him?

Luke 14:27-33

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all he possesses."

Giving up all we possess is the cost of discipleship. Are we willing to lay down everything of our life and say, "Here I am Lord. My life is not my own. Use me as You desire?" Have we fully reckoned that when we proclaimed Yahshua to be our Lord that we were acknowledging that our life is not our own for we have been bought with a price? We no longer have any rights. We are bondservants, willing slaves, of Yahshua the Messiah.

Sadly, many saints have had their indoctrination into Christianity based upon something other than a total surrender to Yahshua. Many have had Christianity pitched to them like it was some enticing product that would satisfy every desire and bring them instant happiness. The presentation has been largely aimed at appealing to one's selfishness when true discipleship does just the opposite.

How many times have you heard Christianity presented with the opening words, "God has a wonderful plan for your life?" Yes, the plan is wonderful in the end, but if discipleship and death to self is not mentioned, if the person is not cautioned to count the cost of their commitment, then they will find out soon enough that the plan of God does not seem so wonderful at all. In fact, they will discover that it requires a crucifixion and a willingness to lose one's own life. Many will declare that such a wholesale surrender to the will of God is not what they signed up for, and they will begin to reinterpret the scriptures in such a way that death is not required.

Sadly, the whole organized, traditional church has so failed to count the cost of discipleship that there is now nearly universal denial of the true meaning of any scripture that would lead the saints to have to embrace a personal death. Women are taught that the writers of scripture were merely reflecting the patriarchal mindset of their society and that it is no longer necessary for woman to submit to man. Such concepts are regarded as outdated and unnecessary.

If one were to examine what is taught about women's roles in the church today they would discover that no death is required. Women are taught that they are equal to men in every way. Women are taught that they can pastor churches, even though this violates the scriptural admonition that women are not to teach men nor to usurp authority over them. Women are taught that their households are a democracy and that all decisions should be made by both husband and wife and that it is wrong for a man to make a decision unless his wife is in agreement. This violates the very order of God who revealed, "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).

In all of these things that the church teaches today, an accommodation has been made that releases the woman from the place of having to die to her own life. She is

encouraged instead to protect her life and stand up for her rights. This alone should be evidence that this is not Yahweh's way. His way is the way of humility and dying to self. He seeks to produce in us His own meek and gentle spirit, but due to Adam's fateful choice we must all go through death to enter into life.

For both men and women, Yahweh requires this humility and death process. Man must acknowledge Christ as his head and this means that the man can have no head of his own. He must die to his own desires and will. He must take up his cross, dying to self, that the life of Christ might be released in him.

A woman is called to have man as her head. She does not have Christ directly as her head. Man stands in the position of head for woman. This goes back to the order of creation. Man was created for God, but woman was created for man. This is a difficult thing to get people in our generation to understand. It does not mean that women cannot enjoy a personal relationship with Christ. Indeed they can. It is quite arguable that there was no one around Yahshua that had a more intimate and rewarding relationship with Him than Mary Magdalene. She always chose the better portion, and the Lord said it would not be taken from her.

In Yahweh's order of creation, however, He has set man to be the head of woman, and as we have seen in scripture, the godly woman will reverence her husband as her lord. In the law of God a woman was not permitted to walk out her relationship to God without considering her relationship to man first. For example, a woman could not make an oath to Yahweh, or bind herself to some type of commitment to Him unless her father or husband agreed. We find this expressed in the following scripture.

Numbers 30:2-16

"If a man makes a vow to Yawheh, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. Also if a woman makes a vow to Yahweh, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. "But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and Yahweh will forgive her because her father had forbidden her. However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself, and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears it, then her vows

shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand. But if on the day her husband hears of it, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and Yahweh will forgive her. But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her. However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath, and her husband heard it, but said nothing to her and did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and Yahweh will forgive her. Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it. But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them. But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt." These are the statutes which Yahweh commanded Moses, as between a man and his wife, and as between a father and his daughter, while she is in her youth in her father's house.

Much can be gleaned from this passage, but lest some should say this is Old Testament and it does not apply to the saint today, let me first include Paul's words on this subject.

I Corinthians 14:34

The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

Paul states that women are to subject themselves to men, just as the Law also states. The preceding passage from the book of Numbers is one of the scriptures in the Law to which the apostle refers. So let us examine what is said.

A man has God as his head. Therefore if a man makes an oath or a binding obligation to God he must keep it. There is none other who can annul it. Not even the High Priest had the authority to annul such an oath, for man relates directly to God and he needs no intermediary. In the New Testament we find this expressed in the phrase "Christ is the head of man."

A woman, however, is under the authority of man. She was created for man and Yahweh has established that she should not violate her relationship to man as she relates to His own person. Therefore, she could not make an oath to Yahweh without considering the will of her father, if she were young and unmarried. Similarly she had to consider the will of her husband if she were married. If her father or husband heard the vow that she made to Yahweh and they were not pleased with the vow, they could forbid it and the vow would not stand.

In this an incredible thing is revealed. Because of man's position as the head of woman, he could intervene in the relationship of the woman with God. Yahweh said that this was His will and His designated order for "these are the statutes which Yahweh commanded Moses" and which the apostle Paul declared to still be in effect.

Does it not require great humility for a woman to acknowledge these things today? In the day of Moses a woman had no alternative but to recognize these things. The very government of Israel declared these things to be true and they were enforced. Today, a woman has no such outward coercion. In fact, the society and governments of today declare just the opposite of the mind of Yahweh. It is widely declared today that a woman is independent of man. She is encouraged to usurp the authority of man.

A woman need not agree with the teachings of scripture today. She can cast off the authority of man and find the full support of the majority of Christian churches behind her while doing so. Acknowledging Yahweh's design for woman is totally voluntary today. There is no coercion. Consequently, there are few women who do acknowledge what is plainly revealed in scripture.

This situation is of the Lord. He desires that we respond with humility and that we take up our cross of our own free will. He loves a cheerful giver, not one who is compelled. Paul gives us this insight.

Romans 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

We began this chapter with the words of Yahshua where His true disciples are encouraged to take up their cross, deny themselves, give up their lives, and follow Him. This is of necessity something that arises from a willing heart. A person cannot be compelled to do these things. The Father wants a free will offering, not a mandatory offering.

In the Temple ordinances a person could bring a free will offering to the temple and present it to Yahweh. This is something that was not required, it arose as a spontaneous offering from the soul of a man or woman. The free will offering was mixed with incense and burned with fire and the fragrance of the offering arose as a sweet aroma in the nostrils of God. (See Leviticus chapter 2 for more information on this.)

A mandatory offering was one that was demanded and required by the Law. Because it did not arise of a free will, it did not hold the same pleasure to God. For this reason the mandatory offerings were not to be mixed with incense when they were burned. They did not bring pleasure to God.

In the same way, we are asked to present ourselves freely as an offering to God. This means we choose to be obedient to His revealed will for our lives even when it requires a death to our flesh. For a woman today to freely choose to conform herself to Yahweh's revealed will for her requires such a free will offering. There is no government agency that would require this of her. There is rarely ever a church leader or teacher who would even proclaim to her the truth in this day. To follow after God's will in these matters a woman must do so freely, but when she does her offering arises as a fragrant aroma in the nostrils of God.

It is Yahweh's will that a woman who aspires to godliness today would adorn herself with a gentle and quiet spirit. It is His will that she reverence her husband, submitting to his will and treating him as her lord, even as Sarah did unto Abraham. It is Yahweh's will that a woman quietly receive instruction from her husband and that she not correct her husband when he is disobedient to the word of God. Instead she is to entrust herself to the One who judges righteously and she is to allow Him to plead her case and deliver her in times of distress.

To live this way requires dying, but it brings forth life. The pride of the flesh wants to deny that these things are so. The flesh seeks another path and a multitude are walking this other path, but it is the way that ends in death. This false path seems right to many men and women, but there is nothing in it that pleases the Father. May we all have the grace to choose the narrow way that leads to life.

The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me,
They struck me and wounded me;
The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me.

Song of Songs 5:7

The Bitter Cup

One benefit of releasing this book in serialized form is that it gives me an opportunity to gauge the response of those who are receiving it. After announcing the book and sending out the Introduction I received much effusive praise and encouragement from many women.

The Introduction spoke of the high calling of women, and of women being viewed as holy. It made mention of the reactions godly women are getting on the sidewalks and in public places as men see something pure in them as they are adorned with modesty and humility. It spoke of godly women being viewed as beacons of light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. What I was sharing excited many women, and rightly so.

Yet as I have gotten into the next two chapters the response has changed. Instead of a gusher of praise and excitement I have found an eerie silence and a few questioning e-mails and I am hearing rumors of great discontent.

I am not surprised by this response. In the introduction of the book I spoke of the fruit of the life of a godly woman, and the fruit is exceedingly good. Yet the next two chapters spoke of the process of bringing forth this fruit. The process is not so glorious as the fruit. We have the words of our Savior that clearly reveal the path to fruitfulness and glory.

John 12:24-25

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

The last chapter was entitled "Dying to Live". There is one fact that often we would like to forget. To reach a place of fruitfulness in our lives we must first go through crushing and a process of death. The hard outer shell of our life must be broken open

to allow the life of Christ to come forth.

The message of the previous chapters is that a woman must come to a place of having no life of her own. She must give up her own life. She must die to self. She must embrace crucifixion of her flesh and all of its desires. I can hear the objections in the silence.

"Is there no other way?"

"Cannot this cup pass from me?"

"Must I truly take man as my head and become submissive to him, even calling my husband lord?"

"Must I truly remain silent, chaste and respectful even when he is walking in disobedience to the word of God, as Peter has said?"

"Must I refrain from usurping authority over man in anyway?"

And with every question the flesh of woman cries out for deliverance. "Must I endure the scourging, the crown of thorns and the nails? Must I really die in order for life and fruit to come forth?" Yet once again we hear the words of Christ:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Death comes before glory. The seed must die to bring forth fruit.

Know this, the objections that arise have nothing to do with whether these things be true, for they are, and they are exceedingly plain in scripture. The objections arise because the flesh seeks to avoid suffering and death. "The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5), and this warfare can be brutal. The greatest struggle in our lives is always at the crisis of decision.

Consider the suffering of our Savior. His greatest agony wasn't on the cross, it was in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is where He sweat drops of blood. This is where His soul was deeply grieved to the point of death (Matthew 26:38, Mark 14:34). Gethsemane means "olive press". It is here that the olives were crushed to separate the pure oil from them. It is the oil from the crushed flesh of the olive that was used as a continual light in the Temple.

For our lives to become as light in a darkened world we must undergo the crushing of our flesh. But if we crucify the flesh, if we surrender our lives and refuse to hold onto our will, then we will not abide alone, but we will bear fruit.

The greatest trial is always in the act of deciding. When we think we might escape the will of God by any other means our flesh yet has hope. When we hear the Father say, "This is the only way", it is like a sentence of death. We agonize and cry out, "Father, if there is any other way... please Father let this cup pass from me!"

I know there is much in the first two chapters of this book that seems dreadful and so very unreasonable. Why should woman be subject to man, after all? Yet, in this, please note that the Father is not so interested in woman being subjected to man as He is in bringing woman to the place of dying that life might come forth. What better way to bring forth death than to ask women to do something that seems totally unfair?

I hear the objections in the silence. What is required of woman is unfair. A woman has a perfectly good mind, why should she not be free to choose her own way? A woman is capable of making her own decisions, why should she have to submit to her husband's will? A woman can sense right from wrong very well, why should she remain silent when her husband is in gross disobedience? A woman has her own life, why should she not live to fulfill her own desires?

It is unreasonable and unfair, plain and simple. Yet it is the revealed will of God.

Remember, it was also the will of God that His perfect Son, who was well pleasing to Him in every way, should suffer for sins He did not commit. It was the Father's will for His only begotten Son to receive in His body the penalty for every sin of mankind when He Himself was a spotless and pure lamb. This was unfair. There is no reasonable law that demands that the innocent pay the consequences for the sins of the wicked. Yet this was the Father's will.

Isaiah 53:10

But Yahweh was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring...

It is the Father's good will to crush every one of us, and if we will allow it we will also see the fruit of our obedience.

There is no other way. The pathway to life is through the valley of death.

If you are debating right now whether the things written in the first two chapters of this book could possibly be right, if you have already concluded that the author must certainly be deceived in some way, I would have you to consider this:

What has been written will require every woman to go through a crushing process. Denying what has been written will free every woman from this same process. The will of the Father is that we all be crushed that the oil of anointing might overflow from our lives bringing life to others. There is a Gethsemane that lies between each one of us and an overcoming life.

Yahshua pleaded, "If there be any other way, let this cup pass from Me." Yet no other way was offered, and our Savior asks us to take up our cross and follow Him. He overcame, and in Him we also can overcome. Don't be surprised that the way seems exceedingly grievous and that our flesh cries out with everything it has to not go this way. When you come to this place of wrestling with the will of God, you can know with a surety that you are where the Father has led you. You are in the olive press.

I have heard the sincere questions of a number of women. "What if a husband asks his wife to do something she finds repulsive?" "What if a man physically and mentally abuses his wife or daughter?" "What if a man is not fulfilling his role as the spiritual shepherd in the home?" "What if the man is pursuing a course that is undeniably ungodly?"

These are not just rhetorical questions. These things actually occur, and they happen all too frequently. In my own spirit I feel sickened when I hear of the cruel and wicked things done to wives and daughters by fallen men. I feel anger rise up within, and at times I cry out, "Father, how could You allow this to happen?"

I remember listening to a woman speaking to a group about the abuse she suffered from her father when she was a young girl. This girl loved her daddy, and when her parents divorced she chose to go and live with her father. She was only about thirteen years of age at the time, and her dad would have her share the same bed with him so they could be close.

Over time, however, this girl's father began treating her as a substitute for his wife. He began to touch her sexually, and then eventually to have intercourse with her. This young girl described how tortured she was in her mind and how she felt guilty about the relationship, thinking she must have done something wrong to bring it about. For a number of years this father abused his daughter and he devastated her

life with his ungodly behavior.

I watched this attractive young woman share about these things as tears streamed down her face. I thought of an innocent young girl who loved her daddy, yet her daddy betrayed her love. Inside I cried out, "Why God?" "Why did you allow it to happen?"

This young woman told how she moved out from her father's house when she was of age, and how in the intervening years she dealt with great anger, guilt, and many other terrible emotions. She then spoke of how the Spirit led her to forgive her father, and to even go back to him and tell him that she forgave him. I saw a grace upon her that was uncommon, and it was evident that He who is Life was flowing through her being and bringing transformation.

Yet as I listened to her I was angry. I didn't want the story to go this way. I didn't want an innocent child to be abused and violated. It is one thing to hear about such a thing second hand, but it is another matter to see the victim standing before you telling you these things through tears and sobs. I left that meeting angry and dissatisfied. This woman had come to a place of peace in her life, but I was full of offense that these things should have happened to her. My offense was ultimately against God that He should have allowed a teenage girl to be so violated by her daddy that she adored.

There are no nice, pat, theological explanations that will bring us peace about such matters. There is no argument or justification that will bring us to say, "Now I see that it was really okay." These things are not okay. They are tragic, they are unfair, they are abominations, they should bring us to weep and cry when we hear about them. But in all things Yahweh is just and without fault. His ways are higher than our ways and we cannot impute wrongdoing to Him.

The scriptures say that Yahweh was pleased to crush His Son and to put Him to grief. This young lady I have spoken of seemed to me to be an exceptionally fine person whom any dad would be glad to claim as a daughter. Yet Yahweh had a Son who was far more praiseworthy than anyone born of Adam. His Son was perfect in obedience and love. This Son lived to do the will of His Father. This Son was the exact representation of His Father's nature. It was testified of Him that the Father was "well pleased" with Him.

Yet the Father was also pleased to have Him suffer at the hands of evil men. The Father was pleased to crush Him and to allow Him to undergo grief so great that He sweat drops of blood in His agony, and in a final moment of perplexity He cried out,

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

There are no theological arguments that can bring me to declare that the experience of Christ in following the path the Father had for Him was fair. It was horrendous. This Son who was perfect in obedience was put through things that make me tremble to think upon. He was abandoned by His closest friends. He was falsely accused by the very nation of people He came to save. He was beaten, spat upon, insulted, mocked, and ridiculed. He had His beard plucked out by the handfuls. He was scourged until His flesh was left in ragged tatters and He was unrecognizable as a man. He was subjected to the torments of Roman crucifixion. And worst of all, His Father hid his eyes away from Him as all the guilt for all the sins of mankind were placed upon this spotless Lamb.

“And it was the Father’s good will to crush Him.” His path led through Gethsemane, where the olives are crushed and the oil flows.

It was the Father’s will that He should know this experience that the word ‘grief’ seems too small to express.

It is also the Father’s will that we should share in the sufferings of His Son. Notice in the following scripture how one thought flows into another. Peter did not write his epistle with chapter demarcations. It was all one message with the same flow of thought throughout.

I Peter 2:21-3:2

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 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; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. 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, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Peter speaks of the horrendous sufferings of Christ, sufferings that were part of the cup that the Father determined He should drink from. Peter states that Christ has

left us an example to follow. We are to endure suffering while uttering no threats. We are to endure being reviled, but we are not to revile in return.

Peter then says, "In the same way, you wives...."

What a weight of revelation and instruction are in these few words. In the same way that Yahshua suffered, wives are to suffer. In the same way that He was reviled, you can expect to be reviled. Even as He did not revile in return, wives are not to respond with reviling. In the same way that He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges righteously, wives are to entrust their very lives to their Heavenly Father. In the same way that Christ drank the bitter cup prepared for Him, wives are to drink of the cup of bitterness prepared for them.

Yahshua sought no escape from the will of the Father. He could have sought escape had He desired it. He told His disciples, "Do you not know that I could request of My Father more than twelve legions of angels and He would put them at My disposal?"

Women today also have many avenues of escape. They can divorce a spouse for any perceived violation, or with no violation at all. They can take a spouse to court over the abuse they are suffering. They can seek refuge in the legal systems, or governmental institutions. They can call on the church to intervene. They can simply flee.

Or they can entrust themselves to the One who judges righteously. They can suffer while uttering no threats. They can be reviled and not revile in return.

In my heart I would like to show women that there is another way. I would like to spare young girls and women from all suffering. I would like to keep them from being abused and violated. I would like to deliver them from the whole rotten cesspool of this fallen world. Yet I know this is not the Father's way.

It was the Father's good pleasure to crush Him...

The Father takes the evil actions of men and He uses them for our good. There was a young man many years ago who suffered such calamity as he drank of the cup presented to him. In the end he understood the ways of Yahweh.

Genesis 50:19-20

But Joseph said to [his brothers], "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people

alive.”

The Father uses the evil of others to bring forth pure gold, refined gold, in our lives.

I would like to tell women, young and old, that there is a way of escape from all of the suffering of life. I will still weep when I hear them share with me the agony of the things they have had to walk through. I will still ache inside when I hear of innocent hearts that are betrayed and lives subjected to ruinous circumstances. I will still marvel at the unfairness of it all. But I cannot tell them that they need not drink this bitter cup.

There was no other path for Yahshua. There was no other path for Joseph. There is no other path for you and I.

In the Introduction to this book I spoke about some of the honor and glory that attends women who choose the narrow path before them. There is an even more glorious heavenly reward that awaits those who overcome all as they pursue the One who has laid hold of them. After suffering Yahshua was glorified and exalted. So too was Joseph. We have these words written for us:

I Peter 5:10

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

This book on Sarah's Children must of necessity begin with these things. Certainly many will be offended and fall away as they read, but the Overcomers will go forward. Nothing will turn them from the course before them. They will drink the bitter cup, they will take up their cross, they will love not their lives, and they will enter into realms of glory.

Such is the good will and pleasure of the Father.

But Peter and the apostles answered,
“We must obey God rather than men.”

Acts 5:29

Obeying Authorities

The previous chapter leads into a great and often troubling question. What should a woman do when she is commanded by a husband or father to commit sin? We know that the abiding principle in all relationships involving authorities that Yahweh has established is to obey. But what do we do when the authority of man contradicts the authority of God?

The opening verse of this chapter should give one answer enough, but more should be said about this matter. There is always a tendency to go to extremes in one direction or another. Some have mistakenly declared that if a husband or father is walking in disobedience that he is no longer to be considered an authority at all, and some have used such thinking to justify rebellion and the casting away of all earthly authority. Others have gone the other direction and have declared that a woman must obey her husband or father even when instructed to commit sin. We will see clearly from scripture that both of these views are in error.

Let us begin by looking at the latter error. It has been taught by some that a woman must ALWAYS obey her husband or father, even when commanded to sin. Some have used the example of Sarah as an illustration to support this conclusion. Since Sarah is given as an example for godly women to emulate in I Peter chapter 3, some have supposed that they are to imitate everything in Sarah's life. However, Peter is quite precise about what aspect of Sarah's conduct should be imitated. He states:

I Peter 3:5-6

For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

It is evident that Sarah's reverent and respectful attitude toward her husband is the characteristic Peter is praising. He is not saying that women should do everything that Sarah did in her life. We are told on one occasion that when Sarah heard Yahweh declare that she would bare a child in her advanced age that she laughed.

When Yahweh asked her why she laughed she replied that she had not laughed, lying because she was afraid (Genesis 18:12-15). We know that lying is wrong, so we cannot say that women are to emulate every action of Sarah. Wives are not justified in lying when they are afraid.

There were two occasions when Abraham journeyed into a foreign land when he asked Sarah to join him in deception. Sarah was very beautiful and Abraham was afraid that the rulers of the country would kill him in order that they might take his wife. He therefore requested that Sarah declare that she was his sister, since indeed she was his half sister. We find these accounts recorded in Genesis chapters 12 and 20. In both instances the deception of Abraham resulted in shame being brought upon him.

Genesis 12:13-20

"Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you." It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? "Why did you say, "She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

Can you picture this prophet and friend of God being escorted out of Egypt in shame due to his deception? Abraham had a greater fear of man than he had confidence in God's ability to take care of him on these occasions, and his lack of faith rightly ended in humiliation. Did Sarah also act in fear, agreeing to participate in deception to save her husband, or did she act in obedience to her husband's authority while manifesting faith in God to protect her?

It is often difficult to understand the motives of a person when the Scriptures remain silent on a topic. However, my own thoughts concerning Sarah's actions in this matter are that she acted honorably while looking to God to protect her when her husband was experiencing a lack of faith in God. I cannot declare this to be the case definitely, but this understanding is attended by a peace in my spirit.

Consider again Peter's words concerning wives, and his usage of Sarah as an example of a godly role model for women. Peter declared that Christian wives should manifest a chaste and respectful attitude toward their husbands even when the husband was walking in disobedience to the word and will of God. He instructs wives to let their husband be won, or persuaded back to a course of righteousness, "without a word," without nagging, or verbal reproof, as they observe a continued attitude of honor and respect coming from the wife.

Peter declares these things in the midst of a passage on suffering. He says that a woman should be willing to suffer for the sake of obedience and righteousness even as Christ did when He went to the cross. Peter had also spoken about servants obeying masters who were unreasonable, and exhorted them that it would find favor with God if they bore up patiently when suffering unjustly.

This is the context of Peter's words to women. It is also in this context that he mentions that Sarah is an example of one who did what "was right without being frightened by any fear." I can think of a number of occasions in Sarah's life spoken of in Scripture that would support such an understanding of her life in the mind of Peter. She followed Abraham obediently when he left Ur of the Chaldees to travel through foreign lands as an alien and a stranger. She also continued to honor her husband when his faith was wavering and he asked her to declare to others that she was his sister, rather than his wife.

What could Sarah's motives in this matter have been? There is no doubt in my mind that Sarah loved her husband, otherwise the Scriptures would not elevate her as an example of a godly wife. I suspect that in observing the fear in her husband, and understanding his motives for asking her to declare that she was his sister, that her love for him played a part in directing her to obey his directions. I also suspect that her understanding of God's will for women to honor their husbands also contributed to her decision.

In submitting to the will of her husband in this matter Sarah would have to look to God to protect her. She could confidently cast herself into the care of God if her own conscience was clear in the matter, and I believe it was. There are certainly some gray areas here that are difficult to discern. Was it transgression for Sarah to participate in her husband's deception in this instance, or was the responsibility completely upon Abraham's shoulders? After all, Sarah was not lying when she said she was Abraham's sister. Did God look at the motives of each person's heart and find error in Abraham while finding reason for praise in Sarah? Is it possible for two people to be involved in the same action for different reasons and be judged vastly different in the eyes of God? I think it is.

Lest we go too far in assuming that a wife should always go along with the counsel of her husband, we need to look carefully at another testimony provided for our instruction. The book of Acts speaks in detail concerning another husband and wife who entered into a deceptive practice and both were judged as transgressors by God. It is therefore not always the will of God that wives obey their husbands. The story of Ananias and Sapphira reveals the consequences of joining with another in sin, even if the person is your husband.

Acts 5:1-10

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

There is much to be gleaned from this account. We are told that it was Ananias, the husband, who decided to hold a portion of the money back. It was the husband who initiated the sinful behavior, but his wife Sapphira was fully aware of his actions. Ananias' sin was not in holding back a portion of the money. The money was his to do with as he desired. He was under no constraint to give any of it. His sin was in being deceptive. He wanted to appear generous in the eyes of the church, so he gave the false appearance that he was giving the full amount for which the property had sold.

I am sure that before going to present the money to the apostles that Ananias asked his wife to agree with him in this deception, even as Abraham asked Sarah to agree

with him. Abraham's deception resulted in shame and humiliation for him. With Ananias and Sapphira the consequences were even more severe.

Because Ananias lied to the apostles and attempted to deceive the church about his gift, the Spirit of God judged him and he was struck dead on the spot. Later his wife Sapphira came in, not knowing what had happened to her husband and she told the same lie. When asked if they sold the piece of property for such and such an amount, she declared affirmatively that it was so, when it was not true.

Peter's next question to Sapphira gives us great insight:

Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."

If it was the teaching of the church that a wife should *always* obey her husband, even if he asked her to commit sin, then why would Peter find fault with Sapphira for agreeing with her husband? Why would the Spirit judge her as a transgressor equal to her husband? The answer should be obvious. There is no command of God that a wife or daughter should commit sin when requested to do so by man. We should always obey God when we are brought to a decision of whether we should obey God or man. In the opening scripture of this chapter we read Peter's words:

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Some have innocently argued that God would protect a wife if their husband asked them to sin and they were to follow submissively in a desire to obey their husband. They refer to Sarah and they point out that Yahweh protected her when she was taken into another man's house to be his wife. Yahweh did not allow either Pharaoh or the King of Gerar to have relations with Sarah. However, it would be wrong to imagine that she was completely protected from the consequences of sin. Sarah, along with Abraham, suffered great embarrassment in the presence of rulers and kings, and in the presence of royal courts as their deception was exposed. They were even forcibly escorted out of Egypt in deep humiliation.

We should keep in mind that the passage from Peter's first epistle is written to inform the saints that there are times when they must suffer for the sake of righteousness. Sarah suffered, and I believe she did so for righteousness and has a reward from God. Yet Sapphira suffered for unrighteousness, and does not share the

same reward. Peter goes on to contrast the suffering of righteousness and unrighteousness.

I Peter 4:15-16

By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

It is difficult to build a set of rules by which we might judge every action of a man or woman. It is possible for two people to outwardly perform the same action while inwardly their hearts are vastly different. God looks on the heart, and judges the thoughts and intentions. Man often judges by sight and hearing and comes to a conclusion altogether different from that of God. It is necessary for the people of God to always be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and to be directed by the Spirit in all that they do.

It is quite possible for two women to ask the counsel of a minister concerning some decision they are facing, and although the outward circumstances may appear very similar, the inner life of the women may be vastly different. God will not always provide the same counsel to every woman. We should always wait patiently before the Father until we are confident we have heard His voice and understood His will in a matter.

Some have also argued that if a wife is walking in obedience and submission under the governmental order of God that her husband will never ask her to do anything sinful, that Yahweh will restrain the husband from making such a request. This is merely wishful thinking. Ananias asked his wife to join with him in sin. God has not promised a woman that she will never be asked by a husband or father to sin if she is walking in submission to them. It can, and very well may, happen.

Sapphira could not argue that she was merely being obedient to her husband's request. This did not absolve her of the consequences of her participation in the sin of deception and lying. The Spirit judged her just as surely as her husband was judged. She could have, and should have, refused to violate the command of God. She may have suffered consequences in her home, but she would have been justified before the Father.

This leads us to our next point: when we are brought to a place of obeying God rather than the command of men to sin, we must yet submit ourselves to the authority of man and receive the consequences of our obedience. Often we must suffer for the sake of obedience. When Peter and John told the Jewish leaders that they must obey

God rather than man, they then had to suffer for their obedience.

Acts 5:40-42

And after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Yahshua, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Yahshua as the Messiah.

The apostles kept on doing that which Yahshua commanded them, but they also submitted to the punishment of wicked rulers. Not only did they submit themselves, but they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Yahshua.

It will happen on occasions that a woman or daughter will have to suffer for their obedience. A wife may be beaten even as the apostles were beaten. Many stories have been told of a daughter or wife who committed their life to Yahshua in some Muslim or Hindu nation and they were killed because they would not renounce their Savior. The Heavenly Father may not always spare us the consequences of obedience, but there is great reward to those who suffer in this way.

Matthew 5:10-12

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

I suppose that we can really not imagine the reward that awaits those who suffer for obedience in the name of Christ. There have been some awesome rewards given by men to other men due to some act of bravery or great service. But all the rewards of this earth pale in comparison to the reward that flows from the hand of the Creator of the Universe. When He bestows honor and reward it is something of such far surpassing value as to render the recipient speechless and to have them sink to their knees declaring that they are not worthy. Such is the reward of the Overcomer.

There has been a tendency to look at the above scripture and to think that it only applies to missionaries or evangelists or some Christian worker who is persecuted for their testimony of Christ. The scripture states, "blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness." This is speaking of much more than

evangelism. It is speaking of any occasion when we choose obedience to God over conformity to this world and the will of sinful man.

When a woman is put in a position of deciding whether to obey God or man, and she chooses obedience to God, she is a candidate to receive the blessing and reward spoken of here. Whenever suffering results due to a choice to remain faithful to Yahweh, there will be reward.

In the preceding chapter I spoke of the tragedy of a young girl whose father sexually molested her. A young girl should not willingly go along with such ungodliness. She should not be a willing participant. However, she may be forced by a man who is much stronger than she. When we take a stand for righteousness, we cannot always know the effect of our decisions. In some instances a wife or daughter declaring that something is evil and that they cannot participate in it may be enough to dissuade the authority they are under to not pursue this course. On other occasions it may simply infuriate the authority and lead to violent and abusive behavior. In all things we must entrust ourselves to the care of the one who judges righteously.

I mentioned previously the example of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who are more commonly referred to by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When they were instructed by the ruler of Babylon to bow down and worship an idol, they refused with the following words.

Daniel 3:16-18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Such must be our own attitude when faced with a similar crisis. We must entrust ourselves to a loving Father who is well able to deliver us, but even if He does not deliver we must remain true.

We mentioned that there is another extreme when considering the issue of obedience to a sinful request. On the one side is a tendency to do anything that is requested, even if commanded to sin, and we hope that it is now evident that this is not the will of the Father. On the other hand there is an even more popular tendency to simply rebel against authority and to cast off all government. This is the mindset that is

pushed by society at large and it has become very popular within the Christian church.

We need to be reminded that obedience to authority is the norm, and only in cases where sin is being commanded should we ever disobey authority. An authority can be walking in sin, but they are still an authority. In demonstration of this truth Peter gave wives the following command.

I Peter 3:1-2

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, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

If a husband or father is walking in sin then the wife and daughter must give room for Christ to correct them. Christ is the head of man and correction must come from the head, not from those under authority. There is too much of a temptation to enter into rebellion and insubordination when those under authority try to correct. We will look more at this issue of government in the following chapters.

A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

Proverbs 25:11

The Speech of the Godly Woman

This is the chapter that excites me the most to write about thus far. Those women who grasp the message here and walk in it will be set to transform their worlds. What awesome power is in the tongue, and how incredibly positive this force can be when employed by a godly woman.

In an earlier chapter I spoke of a woman's high calling as a helper to man. Let me elaborate a little bit upon this. I am convinced that one of the things a woman is called to in her role as a helper to man is to help him recover the understanding of who he was created to be. When a woman treats her husband with reverence and respect she is affirming him and magnifying his own understanding of his high calling. When women fail to respect men they act as a drag and a weight upon the man. By failing to respect man, man is encouraged even more to not respect himself and he sinks lower and lower.

A part of the high calling of women in this day and hour is to help men to regain the understanding that they were created in the image and likeness and glory of God. This will ultimately prove to be to the woman's benefit. When a man sees himself as created in the image of God, he will begin to act more godly. He will treat his wife with love, compassion, mercy, and understanding. His behavior in all ways will become more elevated. When man begins to see that he is the image of God and not a mere beast, he will also begin to see that his wife is much more than a physical body to be lusted after or despised.

Man needs a helper. It was Yahweh who declared that it was not good for man to be alone. There has been no day when man's need has been greater. May many daughters of Sarah come forth to elevate their husbands, to lift them up in the midst of a world that seeks to diminish them. May they by their very behavior, by their conversation and respectful demeanor, remind their men that they were created in the image of God and that the calling of man is an exceedingly high calling.

A woman's tongue holds within it a tremendous power. It can build up, or tear down. It can produce life, or bring forth death. So much has been written about it. Have you ever wondered why so much of the writing in scriptures concerning women involves their tongues? Let me give you a small sampling of these scriptures.

Judges 16:16

It came about when [Delilah] pressed [Samson] daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

Proverbs 6:23-24

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life to keep you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue.

Proverbs 31:10, 26

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels... She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Proverbs 19:13

A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

Proverbs 27:15-16

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

Proverbs 21:9

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

I Corinthians 14:34

The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

I Timothy 2:11-12

A woman must 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 Peter 3:1

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...

Over and over throughout the scriptures the woman and the tongue are linked together. There is good reason for this. There is power in the tongue of a woman and man is greatly impacted by it. The first sin of man occurred when Adam's wife spoke to him and described the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as being highly desirable. Men have been enticed through the flattering tongue of an adulteress and have been brought to ruin. Kings have been persuaded to commit great evil through the seductive words of their wives as is seen in the relation between Ahab and Jezebel. Men have turned their back on Yahweh and followed the urging of their wives times without number.

Yet men have also been persuaded to a course of godliness by the tongue of a woman. Cities have been delivered at the counsel of a wise woman. The weary souls of men have been refreshed as choice words have been spoken from the lips of women in a moment of great need. The anger of man that would have led to rash and regrettable acts has been cooled by the choice fruit of a godly woman's tongue. Men who have been lacking in courage have been emboldened by the words of faith and confidence that have arisen from the tongue of a wife, daughter, mother, or some other woman.

If a woman will die to the fleshly impulses that want to control her tongue, and she will surrender her tongue to the purposes of God, she will find herself wielding a tool of great life-giving power.

An event happened early in my marriage that showed me the incredible power of the tongue of a woman when it is used wisely. It often happens that when a woman sees her husband doing something wrong that she will take it upon herself to correct him. This is never to be her role. A woman should not nag her husband or seek to correct him with a word of reproof or rebuke. It is unseemly and inappropriate for those under authority to do such a thing. Yet a wife or a daughter can, with wisdom and restraint, speak in such a manner that the authority will desire to change from a course of disobedience or ungodliness.

My wife demonstrated this principle to me in a very graphic and moving way. Not long after we married, my wife and I purchased our first home. I was working as a painting contractor at the time and one day I decided to paint the bathroom in our home. When it came to painting around the bathtub I placed a small ladder in the tub to reach up near the ceiling. Because a bathroom is a room where moisture is

ever present I chose to use an oil base paint due to its greater immunity to water damage.

As I was standing on this ladder in the tub the ladder rocked and the can of oil base paint fell and landed in the tub spilling its contents everywhere. Oil base paint cannot be cleaned up with water, it has to be cleaned up with paint thinner or mineral spirits. This was a major mess and as soon as the spill occurred I was immediately infuriated. I was greatly upset at the prospects of having to clean up the mess all over the bath tub. In a fit of anger I picked up the closest thing to me, some sort of container one would find in a bath tub, and I hurled it with all of my strength out the door and down the hall where it ended up in some far room.

As the projectile exited the doorway I looked and my wife had just come to see what the commotion was. Fortunately I missed hitting her, but I saw her stare with mouth agape as this object flew past her and she saw the obvious anger that I was demonstrating. Tony never said anything about my outburst, wisely remaining silent. She did not even give me so much as a disapproving glance. I think she was simply in shock.

As I mentioned, we had not been married very long at this time. I think there must always be some concern in the mind of a woman about what kind of a man they are marrying. Many men seem to be Prince Charming when they are dating, but they turn into an ugly toad after the vows are said. Many are the women that find out that their husbands have a violent streak after the marriage ceremony, and many endure beatings and worse.

I am not sure what worries my violent outburst caused my wife, but her response was a study in the awesome power of the tongue when it is used with discretion and wisdom. Tony said nothing to me about the matter concerning my outburst. The next day, however, when we were together and we were embracing she looked me in the eyes and she said, "I am so glad that God gave me such a gentle and loving husband."

Tony said this with great sincerity, and the moment the words came from her lips I was reminded of my action the day before that seemed anything but gentle. I felt instant conviction as I looked at my bride and I wanted to be that good thing that she confessed about me. I wanted to be gentle and loving. I wanted to be worthy of my wife's confession and praise.

Tony never had to scold me or offer a word of reproof about my uncontrolled outburst. She did something far more powerful and effective. She became my cheerleader and I saw that she was rooting for me. I wanted to prevail in godliness

because I saw her as being my advocate and not my adversary.

Over the next days and months I thought greatly about the dynamics of what my wife had done, and how she had elicited from me a desire to become more godly. I thought about how most women would have handled it and how they would have scolded or reprimanded their husband and how it would not have borne the same fruit.

One dynamic that I discovered was this: a man by his very nature hates to disappoint someone whom he knows thinks highly of him. If a man knows that someone is standing behind him as a cheerleader and they are rooting for him, pulling for him, and wishing that he will be victorious and successful in the things of life that really matter, that man will exert supreme effort to not disappoint such a one. If a man knows that a woman reveres him and holds him in high esteem, the man will seek to be worthy of her opinion.

I also saw another dynamic. If a woman chooses the lower course and she begins to correct her husband and to speak to him of all that he is doing wrong, then the man will see her not as a cheerleader, but as a critic. A man has no such drive to appease a critic. A man might be hounded into changing his behavior in some matter, but his relationship with the woman who criticizes is invariably altered. Rather than seeing her as a supporter, he will view her as an adversary and contention will result. He will have no inner drive to rise up to her high and lofty opinion of him because he does not perceive that she has such a mindset. Rather he sees that she finds fault with him and has deemed him to be deficient and lacking.

Had my wife scolded me when she observed my action, I might have apologized, but more likely in the state of anger I was in I would have said something unkind to her. However, by choosing the course of restraint and encouragement, she produced within me a desire to attain to a place of gentleness that was not yet mine. There is a world of difference between the man that is goaded into a course of righteousness and the man who eagerly pursues the course. My wife produced in me a desire to be more gentle and to control my anger, and she did it by revealing that she admired me and thought highly of me.

It is little wonder that so many marriages today find the husband and wife pitted against one another, arguing, fighting, threatening. In all of these marriages the wife has taken the role of a critic and she has determined that it is her responsibility to tell her husband when he errs, and to correct and condemn him when she disapproves.

In a ball game the cheerleader is on the same side as her team and she is rooting and

pulling for her team. The players want to prevail that they might be worthy of those who are rooting for them. This should be the relationship between the wife and her husband. But when she chooses to criticize she crosses the field and becomes an adversary. The house becomes divided and a battle ensues. No longer does the man find an inner desire to excel that he might not disappoint the one who adores him, for there seems to be little adoration.

I have spoken of these things in common terms, but there are great spiritual principles involved. There are numerous scriptural examples of women who have pursued the same course demonstrated by my wife and they have changed the hearts of men. One of the clearest examples is found in the encounter between David and Abigail. I have been amazed as I considered the wisdom of this woman and how she changed the heart of David and kept him from a path he would surely have regretted.

During the time that David had to flee Israel to escape the wrath of King Saul, he had about six hundred men join themselves to him and they became a traveling band of warriors who would fight against the enemies of Israel. At times, however, they would attempt to settle down in one location, and during one such time they found themselves in a region where a wealthy man by the name of Nabal pastured his flocks. Shepherds at the time were always in danger from marauding bands who would seek to come in and steal flocks and kill or chase off the shepherds. David's men, however, not only restrained themselves from stealing Nabal's flocks, but they protected his shepherds and flocks from others.

At the end of the year when it came time to shear the sheep, Nabal gave a huge party and celebrated for many days. David sent a couple of his young men as ambassadors to Nabal anticipating that in his prosperity and great celebration he would desire to reward David and his men for their service in protecting his flocks and servants. However, Nabal acted foolishly and he insulted David and his men and he sent David's men back empty handed.

David was enraged when he heard of Nabal's insults (Nabal even accused David of being a rebellious servant that had broken away from King Saul). David, whose actions were typically very humble, responded in pride and swore that he would not leave a single male living in Nabal's household to see the light of day. He and his men proceeded to go to Nabal's home with the intent of slaughtering everyone.

This would have been great sin had David done what was in his heart. Yahweh has said, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay" (Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:19). We are advised to give place unto wrath and to not take vengeance into our own hands. Fortunately, the Father sent a woman to dissuade David from his course, and her

words are a study in wisdom and humility.

I Samuel 25:23-35

When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, since Yahweh has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for Yahweh will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil will not be found in you all your days. Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when Yahweh does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When Yahweh deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant." Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. Nevertheless, as Yahweh God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light as much as one male." So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

Undoubtedly, the people of the area knew the things that had been spoken of David. It was no secret that David had been anointed by Samuel to be king and that Saul was seeking his life due to jealousy. Nabal preferred to put his own twisted interpretation on this, and it was this that infuriated David so much. David was

suffering tremendous things. He was the most faithful of servants to Saul, yet he was treated as an enemy. He had to leave family and home, and even go and live as an alien in a foreign land. Many times he remained just one step ahead of Saul and certain death. His life was a life of peril.

I am sure that David often wondered if God would truly fulfill what He had promised to him. Living in caves and foreign lands as an outcast must have caused his heart to doubt and question what God had promised. Nabal's words accusing David of simply being a rebellious servant to Saul must have struck deep to his doubts and insecurities.

Many men have doubts and insecurities about their call and election. Many who have been called to minister in some capacity endure great torments when they find themselves walking as outcasts and rejected by the mainstream. Often these doubts can be such a weight of reproach that they lead the person to sin, even as David would surely have sinned had Abigail not interceded.

Look at Abigail's words. She knows the distress in David's heart. She is a wise woman and she perceives the issues that are warring within David. She understands what is necessary to raise him back to a place of faith so that he will not act out of his desperation and frustration. She begins by speaking of the surety of his calling and she declares with great confidence that David will certainly see all that Yahweh has spoken to him fulfilled.

This was really the heart of David's anguish. The promise of Yahweh had tarried. It had been many years since the oil was poured over his head by Samuel and the years had driven him far from a place where he expected to see the promises of God fulfilled. These thoughts tormented his heart and were like a goad in his spirit. Abigail proved herself to be a cheerleader of David, rooting for the fulfillment of God's purposes in his life with these words:

Yahweh will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil will not be found in you all your days. Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when Yahweh does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When Yahweh deals well with my lord,

then remember your maidservant.

David needed someone to understand what had been promised to him. He needed someone to encourage his heart when all the circumstances around him were discouraging. He needed to hear from the lips of another person that his situation was not hopeless, but that Yahweh would perform all He had spoken. Abigail's words were like a healing balm to David's aching heart. She encouraged him with words of faith and hope, and as she did so David's desperation and pain was washed away to be replaced with calm and peace and with the patience to wait upon Yahweh.

What perception was in the heart of this woman! She did not go out and scold David for wanting to destroy her family. She did not tell him that the course he was on was wicked. No, she affirmed him and encouraged him and lifted him up. She brought back hope in a time when he desperately needed hope. And in the end she turned the heart of the man who would be the greatest king to ever rule Israel and she kept him from grief.

David, did give place to wrath. He accepted Abigail's gift and he and his men returned, and Yahweh did exact vengeance for Nabal's wickedness. We are told that about ten days later God struck Nabal and he died. David then took Abigail to be his wife.

Is it any wonder that David took this woman to be his wife? Man needs a helper and Abigail had already proven herself as one who was a great help to David. When he was desperate she brought him hope. When he was in pain she eased his hurt. When he was doubting that he would see the word of Yahweh fulfilled, she spoke words of great confidence as one who saw the promises already accomplished.

This is the awesome power of a godly woman in the life of a man. Yahweh has placed such influence within this creation He has called woman. She can help man to reach the goal before him and to achieve the prize. She can encourage man when he faints, and lift him up when he falters. She can produce in him a desire to be better than he has ever been before. Blessed are the Abigail's, the women of wisdom who use their tongues to build up and not to tear down, to bring forth life, and not to spread death.

The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

Proverbs 14:1

Homemakers

Shortly after our daughter was born my wife Tony quit her job at a local lumber company where she oversaw the distribution of the payroll. Ever since that time Tony has not worked outside of the home, but she has definitely worked. Each year when I fill out our tax forms and it asks for the occupation of my spouse I put “Homemaker.” Besides this being a general title given to women that do not work outside the home, it is also a scripturally correct identification.

The scripture above states, “The wise woman builds her house.” Certainly this scripture is not speaking about a woman physically constructing the building in which she and her family dwell. A woman does not have to be a building contractor to be wise. Building one’s house goes far beyond anything that can be accomplished with a hammer and nails and saw.

We have already seen that the scriptures declare that a woman was created for man, and that she is intended to be man’s helper. This is a critical matter to keep in mind as a woman seeks to build her house. A woman will find her greatest fulfillment in accomplishing that purpose for which God created her. This does not mean that all women must get married, but whether they are married or unmarried they will benefit greatly by understanding the purpose of woman’s creation and the order of authority and government established by God.

In the last chapter we saw that women can produce life and godliness in the lives of their men as they surrender their tongues to be used of God. A woman can elicit from her husband, or other male figure, a desire to rise up to higher realms, to pursue godliness, to avoid evil, to put away anger, to be conformed to the image of Christ whose image he was originally created to bear. She does this as she affirms man and speaks godly words of encouragement, faith and hope to him.

One of the woman’s chief tools in building her house is her tongue and it should be governed by love. The foundation of any home must be love, for love must be the

motivator of every action. If our words and deeds are not arising out of love, then they must be finding their source in some other, inferior motive such as selfishness, bitterness, anger, envy, malice, etc.. The very height of love is laying down one's life for the good of another. Yahshua stated, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

In the previous chapters we spoke much of taking up the cross, of losing one's life. At its very essence, such an action is a demonstration of love. To deny yourself in order to obey Christ is an act of love. Yahshua said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

What we have spoken of thus far is very difficult, yet we will be led to perform extreme and sacrificial actions that love may not be denied. If a woman has not embraced the cross and a death to self as has been described, it could be asked of her whether she has truly ever loved. There are many who confess their love and devotion, but when a choice arises that requires dying to their soul life, many choose to keep their life rather than lose it. This is not love, it is self-interest and self-protection.

It is common to think of love as some sort of infatuation with another being, and there is some truth to this. There is a romantic love of the sort that we see described in the Song of Songs. Yet this romantic love would be hollow and false if it was not wedded to the love we have described that will lay down its own life for a friend. Even Yahshua's love would have been lacking if He told His disciples that He loved them, but then He had refused to go the way of the cross.

A home must be built upon this type of unselfish love. Each member must seek the welfare of the others above their own welfare. A wife must lay down her own desires, agenda, and goals, to seek to help her husband fulfill the call upon his life. Some have depicted a woman who loves in this way as simply being a doormat for her husband's feet, but this is simply pride speaking, and true love is absent in those who hold to this view. Pride does not want to subject itself to the will of another. Pride wants to seek its own personal fulfillment.

In the last chapter we saw how Abigail turned the heart of David with her wisdom and humility. If we had read a little further we would have seen that she also chose to lay down her life and live her life for another.

I Samuel 25:40-42

When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you as his wife." She arose

and bowed with her face to the ground and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants." Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

There are many women today who would describe Abigail's attitude in a very unflattering way, yet she was demonstrating great godliness. In her comment, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants" she was expressing the height of love. She was proclaiming that she would lay down her own soul life with its ambitions and desires that she might seek the welfare and benefit of others. It is questionable whether she spent much time actually washing people's feet, for she had five maidens of her own to attend to her, and later she lived as the wife of the king in the king's palace. She was expressing her heart attitude, however. She was not entering into a marriage relationship with David to get out of it what she could. Instead she was seeking to give of herself.

Yahshua demonstrated that this should be our attitude when He washed His disciples' feet. He also demonstrated it when He went to the cross, laying down His life for others. All that we have looked at in this matter of taking up the cross is a demonstration of love. This must be the foundation upon which a home is built. The woman should demonstrate this love if she wants her house to rest on a sure foundation. The scriptures speak of love as being a foundational matter. In Ephesians 3:17, Paul prays that the saints might be "rooted and grounded in love." To be rooted and grounded are both foundational matters.

Walking in such love should be the first priority of a wise woman who seeks to build her house. Secondly, a wise woman will seek to restore the proper governmental order in her home. If love is the foundation of a home, then government is the framework on which the building rises. It is what supplies order and structure, and it provides safety and security to those who allow their lives to be governed by it.

Speaking negatively, we are told that a foolish woman will tear down her home with her own hands. She does this first by not taking up the cross and denying self. She does it by insisting on her own way and demanding that she be able to live her own life. Secondly, a foolish woman tears down her house by seeking to overturn the governmental order of Yahweh. This will destroy a home as surely as if she went out and began removing the supporting beams that hold up the framework of her house.

However, this book is written for the godly woman who seeks to be a homemaker, not a home destroyer. A godly woman will seek to affirm her husband's or father's

role and calling in order that her entire household might be afforded protection, comfort, and peace. She seeks to instill in her children an appropriate reverence and respect for the delegated authorities of Yahweh. She seeks to bring honor into her home.

Have you noticed how absent honor is from homes today? It seems that honor is viewed as being as archaic and as outdated as the concept of a wife calling her husband 'lord.' I see great dishonor in families today. Even in Christian homes I have observed children cursing their parents, yelling at them, pushing them, and treating them with great contempt. I have seen sons and daughters willfully disobeying their mother and father, often with the parents trying to placate the anger of their children by giving in to the child's tantrum. I have seen wives publicly correcting their husbands and reproofing them without any shame. I have heard adult saints boasting about harshly reproofing their elderly parents for some decision or action.

In all of this the honor that is due those who are to be honored is missing. Paul instructed the church in this way.

Romans 13:1-2, 7

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves... Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The civil governments of this world would fall into anarchy if there were no honor given to the authority they wield. Similarly, in the home chaos ensues when honor is lacking. A wise woman builds her home by instilling within it a sense of honor.

It is all too common today for a woman to speak criticisms of her husband publicly. It is also very common to hear a wife making her husband the butt of a joke, or of some jest. I have sat in a home church group and listened as the wife of a pastor mimicked how her husband would whine and cajole and urge her to obey him in some manner. This woman thought it was some type of sport to poke fun at her husband and to embarrass him publicly. It was no coincidence that I observed this same woman speaking harshly, and in a condemning manner, to her mother in the presence of others.

There is an appalling lack of honor among the saints today, on the job, in their

homes, in relation to the civil governments, in the churches, and in every realm of authority which Yahweh has established. But perhaps nowhere is the damage seen as clearly as in the home. A wise woman will build her home by doing everything she can to ensure that honor is present.

Restoring honor, first and foremost, must begin with the woman's own relationship to her husband or father. The following scriptures depict what the manner of the godly woman should be.

I Peter 3:1-6

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands... Your adornment must not be merely external... 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. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

Titus 2:3-5

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior... so that they may encourage 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, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

Ephesians 5:22

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

In the society we live in such instructions seem preposterous. In a society that lampoons its presidents and government officials, in a society that places buffoonish caricatures of government leaders on the editorial pages of its newspapers, in a society where the patriarchal family is viewed as antiquated and backward, these instructions to the women of the Christian church are largely viewed with scorn and rejection. Yet there are godly women who desire to be all that the Creator made them to be. They desire to find in their own being a conformity to the revealed word of God.

How very much is revealed in this one command, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord." How are the saints to be subject to the Lord? They are to obey without complaining. They are to show reverence and godly fear. They are to lay down their own lives that they might fulfill the desire of the Lord. They are to

always honor Him with the words of their mouth.

We have looked at one circumstance in which wives are not to obey, and that is when they are commanded to sin. In every other instance they are to follow the principle of, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord." This is the revealed will of Yahweh, for man is the head of woman even as Christ is the head of man.

Can you imagine how households would be transformed as women began to practice these things? Quite often children are encouraged to rebel simply because they see a rebellious attitude in their mother as she relates to her husband or other men. How awesome and transforming it would be for the children to see their mother remain chaste and respectful even when her husband is disobedient to the word of God. The children would see demonstrated before them the principle that rebellion is never justified, and honor is always required.

Often children are loud, self-willed and rebellious because they have observed their mother or father also being self-willed. They have observed that their mother has her own life and is very assertive in her independence. They have not seen in her a gentle, quiet and submissive spirit. Therefore the children also lack these same things.

We often see in movies or on television the stereotype of a meek man who is wed to a strong and assertive woman. She may be disappointed that her husband does not take a firm stand in some matter. She may consider him to be too lenient with a repairman or salesperson. She may nag her husband to be more forceful and assertive, or she may simply take things into her own hands and assert herself with strong words and forceful actions as she deals with the repairman, the salesperson, the neighbor, the friend, the mother-in-law, etc.. Yet every time a woman resorts to this type of behavior she dishonors her husband and she promotes a spirit of dishonor in her family.

If you are dealing with rebellion among your children, ask yourself if you have been perfect in submitting to your husband as to the Lord. Have you revered him by being content with his judgment or actions in some matter, or have you usurped his authority by taking things into your own hands to make sure things are done to your satisfaction? Our actions and attitudes bear fruit in the lives of others. My own bride was led to begin practicing headcovering when the Spirit spoke to her through the rebellion and disobedience of our son.

I have taught and written about the matter of headcovering, and from the beginning of our marriage relationship I told my wife that headcovering was something I

desired for her to practice. I did not hound my wife about the issue, but she understood my desire in the matter. One day as Tony was dealing with our son and he was not obeying in a prompt manner, she became angered by his recalcitrant attitude.

As she was considering what her next response should be to our son, the Spirit spoke to Tony and reminded her of her own hesitation to obey in the matter of headcovering. The Spirit so convicted Tony about her own reluctance to obey, and He revealed to her how this behavior was mirrored in our son, that she began covering from that time forward. The awesome thing is that even as our disobedience bears results in the lives of others, so too does our obedience. The godly example of one person has often persuaded many others to a walk of godliness.

As a woman demonstrates honor toward her husband or father, others will take note. A climate is set that encourages a response of honor from others. This is just a beginning, however. There is much that has been lost that must be restored in this day and hour. Never has the honor in the home been at a lower ebb. The tide has gone far out and it must return.

A woman can instill a sense of honor in her home through her speech. We are told that Sarah called Abraham 'lord.' In this way she honored her husband. It is a telling example of how far we have fallen that this sounds absurd to most women today. How does it make you feel? Would you feel silly or ashamed calling your husband 'lord'? Why does it sound so abnormal?

We cannot say that using the title 'lord' is what sounds strange, for the church predominantly uses this title when speaking of both Yahweh and Yahshua. What strikes us as awkward and inappropriate is addressing man by this title.

Satan has done such a complete work of replacing honor with disrespect, and submission with independence that the word 'lord' when applied to man sounds wrong to our ears. But if the whole world is saying one thing and Yahweh says something else, we must agree with Yahweh. Sarah called Abraham lord and she is lifted up as an example of a godly woman for other godly women to emulate.

By your own speech, do you create an atmosphere of honor toward your husband or father that is noticeable to others? In the introduction to this book we spoke of how godly women are appearing as beacons of light in a darkened world. We spoke of how a woman dressing modestly and practicing headcovering attracts the attention of others. In the same way, the very speech of a godly woman should stand out in a darkened society. It should be so noticeable as to turn heads.

In this day of rebellion and dishonor, the wife or daughter that demonstrates submission and reverence in their speech will stand out as a bright, flashing, neon sign. Is your speech attracting such attention? Do those who observe your conversation note that you are not speaking in the same manner as the ungodly society that you live in? They should. It should be visible to all. It should be especially visible in your own home, and if you have children it should be very visible to them.

A wise woman will build her house, but a foolish woman will tear it down by exhibiting dishonor in her attitudes and speech. The tongue has such power in it. There is a tendency to not be careful about our words. If we are engaged in conversation a lot there is great room for error. Have you ever visited a home where the wife dominated the conversation? There is a tremendous danger in being too talkative. I have never seen a person yet who was known for their talkative nature who did not frequently say things that were better left unsaid.

Proverbs 10:19

**When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,
But he who restrains his lips is wise.**

Ecclesiastes 5:2

**Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in
the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth;
therefore let your words be few.**

During the Passover season one year I was looking at a cross that was lying on the floor of a church in front of the pulpit when the Spirit began speaking to me. He began revealing to me what it meant to be crucified with Christ and conformed to His image. I was reminded of Yahshua's words:

John 14:10

**"The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the
Father abiding in Me does His works."**

In several places in the Gospel of John Yahshua is recorded as saying that He did not speak a word of His own initiative, but He only spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak. The Spirit began ministering to me that this was the calling for each one of the elect and chosen of God.

As I looked at the cross I was somewhat incredulous that such a high calling could actually be attained. Could I actually come to the place where all of my words were Yahweh's words, where I did not speak a word of my own initiative? The Spirit

confirmed to me that this was my calling. He reminded me that the expressed desire of the Father is to conform His children to the image of Christ. Christ never spoke a word of His own initiative, and this is the Christ to whose image we are all being conformed.

For this reason we should let our words be few. As I looked at the cross I prayed that the Father would teach me to set a guard over my mouth. I also considered how much more powerful my speech would be in its effect if it was not a mixture of Spirit and flesh, but if it was Spirit only. How profound would be the effect upon others.

Often our witness and testimony is greatly diminished because we exhibit such a corrupt mixture in our speech. I sat and listened to a couple speak of the necessity of holiness in the lives of the saints one day. They shared scriptures that the Spirit was bringing to them and what they shared was quite profound, yet less than a half hour later the conversation had degenerated into coarse jesting, sexual innuendo, and foolish speech. James asks the questions:

James 3:10-12

From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Even as the Spirit challenged me to elevate my goals and to desire to become perfect in speech, the same challenge awaits every woman who aspires to godliness. What does godliness imply? It implies being like God, and we have Yahshua's own confession that He never spoke a word of His own initiative, but He spoke just the words the Father commanded Him to speak. How much less speech there would be in the world if we all practiced this same obedience?

My wife read a book where the woman author spoke of her efforts to be more godly in her speech. She began trying to avoid unnecessary and frivolous conversation. She would get up in the morning and enter into communion with God before she spoke to anyone else. She would also set her answering machine on her phone to answer all calls, and she chose to return calls at certain times of day when she knew people would be less likely to want to ramble in conversation. She would call people back when they were preparing dinner, for example, for she knew that there would be less of a tendency for the person to try to engage her in a lengthy conversation. She knew the truth of the scripture that states "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise."

When you bring this area of your life into conformity to the will of God you will see that people begin to perceive you differently. People will place a higher value upon your counsel and your words. People will sense a greater conviction when they hear the truth spoken from your lips. You will stand out from the crowd of careless talkers. In Proverbs we are told that “even a fool appears wise when he does not open his mouth.”

Are you known to others as a person who is talkative? Do you find yourself speaking all day long, jumping from one issue and topic to another? Often I have found that the most talkative people are oblivious to how others perceive them. It is those who restrain their speech that are accounted as wise. The foolish person will let everything inside come forth as a gusher of words. There is no guard over their lips.

For a woman to build her house she must be wise in her choice of words. One careless remark can undo months, or even years, of prudent speech. It does not take much leaven to thoroughly leaven a lump of dough. It does not take but a little saltwater to spoil a fresh water source.

When one sets out to instill honor in their home they must be consistent in their speech. They should not demonstrate a submissive and humble spirit one day, and rebellion and pride the next. You do not want your house built with some good lumber and some rotten.

The tongue is the chief tool of a wise woman who will build her house. Like a hammer, it is skillfully used when it is applied to what needs nailing, and it is likewise skillfully used when you don't use it to strike that which should not be struck. Many are the women who are going around knocking holes in the walls of their home. They have not yet learned the power of restraining their speech.

In order to build honor into your home you must choose carefully your words. You must begin the practice of setting a guard over your lips. If you are in the habit of letting everything inside come out freely, then when you are in a moment of anger or fear you will find it difficult to hold back words that you will later regret. However, if you have already learned the discipline of the tongue then such moments will not catch you unprepared.

If this is an area that you experience difficulty in, then ask Yahweh to teach you obedience in it. Ask Him to instruct you in how to set a guard over your lips. Ask Him to make your lips a fountain of love and honor. Then you will truly find that you are a homemaker, building something that will withstand all the assaults of life.

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...

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.

For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

I Corinthians 11:3, 7-10

Headcovering and Government

It is a wonderful thing to see so many women coming into an understanding of headcovering. It may yet be a trickle in comparison to the number of those who do not cover, but this little flock of obedient women are getting noticed. Headcovering is an issue that is central to the life of the godly woman for it stands as a visible witness to the profound changes that are taking place in her life.

There is much misunderstanding about headcovering. Of those who do not practice it, many have written it off as a practice that was simply a part of the time and place in which the Corinthian church found themselves. It is often treated as a historical relic with no relevance to our day. As we will see, this is not true at all. Others have tried to interpret this passage of scripture as meaning that a woman's hair is the covering spoken of, and that her hair is all she needs to cover herself with. In the next chapter we will look at this misconception.

Among those who do cover, there is yet some misunderstanding for some do not realize fully what the headcovering testifies. Some have supposed that it is simply worn for the purpose of modesty. They recognize that a woman's hair is her glory and they believe it should only be let down and unveiled in the presence of her husband. Viewing the practice of headcovering as simply relating to modesty is a misconception, for the apostle Paul's instructions regarding headcovering reveal plainly that it is given as a witness of the governmental order of Yahweh and it is a statement of the woman's acceptance of this order.

It is not just the woman who must have her head covered, so too must the man, and so too must Christ. Yet it is given only to the woman to wear a symbol of this authority upon her head. The woman alone is given the privilege of standing as a visible testimony to the government of God. In practice woman is to have no head of her own before man, man is to have no head of his own before Christ, and Christ is to have no head of His own before the Father.

I think I can best bring insight to this matter as I relate my own experience of coming to understand the government of Yahweh. Let me begin by sharing how the Father led me to a life changing understanding in 1993. From that date forward the course of my life has been altered as the revelations I have gained have brought me both a tremendous peace born of understanding what Father requires of me, as well as bringing me into tremendous conflict with those who have not discerned these same things. Ultimately I was ousted from my place of ministry in the mainstream church because Father would not allow me to compromise the truths He had revealed to me, but this separation was also of the Father and He continues to use it in various and magnificent ways.

I came to salvation in Yahshua when I was a child, being baptized at the age of ten. My upbringing was largely in Baptist churches, first in Oregon, and later in Georgia. I experienced a tremendous awakening to the things of God when I was in my mid to late teens, and I was very zealous for truth. I sought diligently to know the will of the Father and to walk in it. Often my zeal was not according to knowledge, and I knew much personal failure and frustration as I sought to walk in a manner pleasing to God.

From my teen years I was very active in the activities of the Christian church. I was in attendance every time the door was opened, and from my late teens I was involved in teaching Sunday School, participating in prayer meetings, and doing door-to-door visitation. This was an incredible thing, since I had grown up with a tremendous sense of inadequacy and low esteem. As a youth I would rarely look people in the eyes when I spoke to them due to my feelings of unworthiness and timidity. It was just an overwhelming desire to please the Father that led me to participate in things of which I was mortally terrified, such as door-to-door evangelism.

I was involved in churches that often asked me to perform some service, and I was eager to comply. I was constantly searching the scriptures to see if I could discern the will of the Father for myself and for the churches of which I was a part. I would frequently see things that would cause me to question why the church was doing certain things. As the churches I attended had an open door policy when the elders were meeting, I would often show up to ask them why we were doing some particular

thing. I must have been a source of irritation to many men who were set on doing things because it was a tradition handed down by men.

Sometimes my questioning would lead to difficulties, particularly if I was convinced that the practice of the church was in opposition to the teaching of scriptures and if I discerned that our traditions were having a negative impact in the lives of people. I never could understand the mindset of people who did things because it was the way Baptists, or some other group, did it. My sole authority was the word of God and the revelation of the Spirit.

To give you one example, in my early twenties I was given the position of Sunday School Superintendent at a Baptist church. This was quite a responsible position for one my age, but due to my zeal I was as Paul, “advancing beyond many of my contemporaries.” At the time the Sunday School program had no oversight and was a real mishmash of uncoordinated activities of differing individuals. I began to diligently look into this issue to know how to improve it.

I looked at the overall objective of Sunday School, which I discerned was to make disciples of Christ, and I looked into how we could better accomplish this goal. I read books on the principles of teaching. I addressed issues of a lack of coordination between classes. I wanted to design a progressive Sunday School where consistent and systematic growth in the teachings of Christ would be attained. After spending considerable time looking into these things I wrote a paper to share with the church elders, listing my recommendations. Right as I was about to seek an opportunity to share these things with the elders, Father spoke to me.

Father asked me again what the goal of Sunday School was, and I answered that it was to take children and to make disciples of Christ out of them. He then asked me to whom He gave that responsibility in scriptures. As I contemplated this I had to answer that it was to the parents that He gave this charge. He showed me multiple scriptures where He gave the charge to parents to train up their children and to teach them the ways of Yahweh.

Father had me take another look at Sunday School and I found that it started out as an outreach to street children and orphans, and later it began to include children whose parents were in the church. I was reminded by the Spirit of something Bill Gothard had shared during a Basic Youth Conflicts’ seminar. He said, “Once men begin to share a God given responsibility, it is not long before they abandon that responsibility altogether.” I saw how this had happened in the church in relation to the training of children.

It used to be common practice for families to sit down together and for the parents to teach the scriptures to their children. When the church began to share this responsibility, it wasn't long before parents began to rely solely upon the church's instruction of their children, and the mothers and fathers ceased to instruct them.

Father then revealed to me some other tragic results. He told me that when He gives someone a responsibility, He also gives them the authority to carry it out. Because the church was not given the responsibility to train up children, they lacked the authority to achieve lasting results. They were endeavoring to do something without the authority to carry it out.

He also showed me that with responsibility goes honor. When parents train their children they receive the honor that goes with their position of instruction. When they give away the responsibility they also give away the honor that attends it. The children instead give the honor to their teachers, and in times of conflict between a parent's advice and a teacher's, the child will often side with the teacher for they honor them more in the realm of instruction and insight than they do their own parents.

As Father began to show me all of these things I was appalled. I saw how the church had developed a tradition that began with good intent, and how it had developed into something that had far reaching negative repercussions in the body of Christ. Many of the parents in the church I was in spent no time at all instructing their children. The results were very evident.

As the Father finished speaking to me of these things I had to tear up the paper I had formerly prepared and write a new paper. Whereas I was confident the church leadership would have received the first paper well, I was very guarded in my optimism of how they would receive the revelations Father had given me. I knew that, although the elders of this church said they wanted to be a New Testament body of believers, they actually only wanted to do so in so far as they did not have to give up any traditions that they found to be to their liking.

I shared my findings with the church leadership, and it was totally rejected. I shared with the elders that according to scripture, the chief focus of the church in making disciples of its children should be in encouraging, equipping, and releasing parents to fulfill their divinely given responsibilities. I shared with them that this is where the efforts of leadership should be focused, and that the Sunday School should be phased out, as it existed in its current forms.

Everything I shared was resolutely rejected. Some of the elders refused to even

consider that such a sacred cow as Sunday School should actually be done away with, or that it could be having a detrimental impact upon families. My tenure as Sunday School Superintendent was very short lived, and the bad fruit of our traditions was seen in the breakdowns in the families of the church.

This is but one example of a conflict I found myself in due to my zeal to walk in the revealed truths of God. There were many others and I would have earned frequent flyer miles for attending elders' meetings, if there were such a thing. In none of my efforts, however, did I ever see the leadership of the church change in even the least way. I became a pariah to different congregations and I found myself leaving more than one body frustrated and disillusioned.

When I experienced these separations I was very torn. I had a zeal to walk in truth and it grieved me when churches chose tradition, human reasoning, or their own ways, over the ways of Yahweh. Yet something was nagging at the back of my mind telling me that these separations could be handled differently, but I had no clue as to what I should do differently. I was often reflecting on Yahshua's high priestly prayer recorded in John 17 where He prayed that we would be one, even as He and the Father were one. Yet I could not reconcile my zeal for truth and this oneness.

I continued in this state for about a whole decade, and my frustration grew. When I was in my early thirties, and married for some time, I once more found myself in a situation where I was very active in a body, and I was discerning some grave errors that the church leaders were making. My wife became caught up in it this time, for a couple she was very close to were being badly treated by the pastor of this church. They were the music ministers of this body and they lived in a house the church owned. The pastor had aspirations to start a counseling ministry and he considered that their home would be the ideal location, precipitating this couple being run off so their house would be vacated. (Of course, it wasn't as simple as this, and there were faults on many sides.)

My wife became so distraught that she no longer wanted to attend this church. My own words to the elders and pastor were rejected and I too was not entirely desirous to stay. I asked permission of the elders to leave, in order that my wife and I could get some emotional distance and better hear from the Father. We were given permission, yet in my heart I neither had peace about staying or leaving. My wife and I ended up leaving for a period of six months, and during that time in 1993 the Father revealed some profound things to me that have changed the course of my life.

During this time of separation from the body a brother gave me a copy of Watchman Nee's book "Spiritual Authority." Little did this brother realize how profound an

impact that book would have on my life. As I read the book the Spirit quickened passage after passage and I began to see scriptures fall into place like dominoes falling in a long chain. I knew that something critical that I had been missing was being revealed to me, and that the Father had waited until I was so conflicted and hungry for understanding that I would receive what He wanted to show me. Happily I received His instruction and correction.

Watchman Nee states, “Authority is a tremendous thing in the universe - nothing overshadows it. It is therefore imperative for us who desire to serve God to know the authority of God.” He further states, “To offend God’s authority is a rebellion far more serious than that of offending God’s holiness. Since it is a matter of conduct, sinning is more easily forgiven than rebellion, the latter being a matter of principle. Satan’s intent of setting his throne above the throne of God was the thing that violated God’s authority; it was the principle of self-exaltation... In serving God we must not violate authorities, because to do so is a principle of Satan. How can we preach Christ according to Satan’s principle? *Yet it is possible in our work to stand with Christ in doctrine, while at the same time stand with Satan in principle.*”

This is exactly what the Father showed me that I had been doing. In my zeal for the truth I had been standing with Christ in doctrine. I loved the truths Father was revealing to me. I desired to see them walked in. I desired to see error eschewed. I longed for the benefits of seeing the children of God walking in the truth. Yet Father showed me that my approach of contending with the church authorities over these issues of doctrine was in actuality practicing the principle of Satan, which is rebellion.

How my eyes were opened when I saw this. I understood that as it says in Romans 13, “Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resists the power, withstands the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive judgment to themselves.... Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.”

As I read through this book, and as I studied the scriptures, I came to comprehend the principles of God’s authority and our right response to all authorities, including those in the church. God never honors rebellion in any form. Rebellion is the principle of Satan. Submission is the perfect principle of Christ. Even when people are under ungodly authorities, the Father never honors those who lift their hands, or wag their tongues against those authorities. David is a case in point.

David was subject to the ungodly authority of King Saul. David was completely

faithful in the discharge of his duties, and he never failed in loyalty to Saul. Even when Saul sought repeatedly to kill David, and even when Saul killed the priests of God, David refused to lift a finger against him. David was presented opportunities to strike Saul, even when Saul was in the process of seeking to take David's life. Yet David said, "Who can lift his hand against God's anointed and remain guiltless?"

When David had opportunity to slay Saul in the cave, he instead merely cut off the corner of Saul's garment. Yet even for this small act we are told that "David's heart smote him" and he repented of it. Watchman Nee states that cutting off the corner of the garment may not be as serious as murdering someone, but in the church it can be equated to murmuring against an authority, or speaking against them to others. Our hearts should convict us in these matters.

David always sought to cover the transgressions of Saul. He even wept for him, and sang a song eulogizing him when he heard he had been slain. When others thought they would win David's favor by stating that they had been instrumental in Saul's death, David had them put to death, being condemned by their own words.

Another example of covering the sins of one in authority is when Noah became drunk and fell asleep while naked in his tent. His son Ham failed to see the dignity of the authority of his father and he went out and reported his father's ugliness to his brothers. "When Ham saw his father's improper conduct he did not have the slightest sense of shame or sorrow, nor did he try to cover his father's fault. This reveals that he had a rebellious spirit." Shem and Japheth, however, managed the situation quite differently. They entered the tent backwards - thus avoiding seeing their father's nakedness - and they covered their father with a garment they had laid on their shoulders.

We are told by Paul that "love covers a multitude of sins." Yet how common it is to revile those in positions of authority when we see them in error. We should be grieved for them, and we should seek to cover their transgressions and to ask the Father to restore them to righteousness.

My own error was not so much being a spreader of slander or gossip, nor being a malcontent seeking to expose the sins of another. My failure was in not seeing how the Father would have me to address the situation of seeing a leader in sin. My response had been to consistently go to them and to tell them of their error. The Father spoke strongly to me and showed me that my proper response was found in trusting Him to deal with a wrong authority. The testimony of all of scripture is that Yahweh will vindicate Himself. He both establishes authorities, and He disciplines and even removes authorities that sin against Him. He does not ask for those under

authority to correct those over them, for this leads to rebellion.

Father particularly gave me the following passage as my pattern.

I Peter 2:18-3:2

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. 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, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Father told me that, as I had no place of authority yet in the church, I was to be as the wife of which Peter spoke. I was to be submissive to those over me in authority, and when the occasion came that I found them to be in sin, I was to let them be won without a word, with my behavior remaining respectful and chaste.

The principle is this: if a woman has a husband who is disobedient to the word of God then she has two options. She can correct him herself, telling him of his transgression, and possibly persisting in speaking of it to him until she sees a change. If she chooses this course then Father will remove His hand from the husband and He will delay in correcting him for there is rebellion in the house. However, if the woman understands that Yahweh will correct those whom He places in positions of authority, and if she will refrain from speaking to the husband and correcting him, if she will instead trust that God will correct him, then Yahweh will act decidedly to bring correction to the husband. This latter course is the only way to maintain peace in the household when the husband is in sin and the wife discerns it. For her to put out her hand to bring correction will loose striving and conflict in the household.

Father showed me that this same principle is at work in the body of Christ. When I would discern that there was error in leadership, it had been my habit to tell them of their error. I would stretch out my hand to offer correction. I was not malicious in this, but the principle I was following was wrong. Authority must always be corrected from above, not from those beneath. Father showed me clearly the course set before me. He told me to go back to the church I had left and to apologize to those in

leadership for my actions, even though the pastor was still in sin. He told me to offer no correction to the leaders, nor to even open my mouth regarding anything they were doing. I was to say nothing good or bad. I was to trust Father to deal with the wrong authority.

Yahweh assured me that if He found one saint so submitted in this way that He would assuredly deal with the wrong authority. He revealed to me that the reason there was so much wrong and sinful authority in the body was that He could find no one under these authorities who was truly submitted. Because there was rebellion in the house He delayed to correct the wrong authorities.

Churches are full of rebellion. The members of the body are constantly going around and speaking words against leadership. Some are actively rebelling and calling for removal of a pastor they do not like. Others seek to split congregations, being factious and submissive to no one. It is the rarest of saints that looks to God to correct a wrong authority. Like Ham, the churches broadcast the nakedness and shame of those in authority over them.

Father spoke to me and said that if He could find a person in submission, and bearing up courageously under a wrong authority, that He would move heaven and earth on their behalf. He would correct the wrong authority and restore godly leadership.

In my own situation, I went back with my wife and met with the pastor. I shared with him what the Father had revealed to me, and how I had been thinking I was advocating the doctrines of Christ, yet I had been practicing the principle of Satan which is rebellion. This pastor graciously forgave me and then told me that if I wanted to share anything with the body on Sunday regarding this, that I could.

Sunday came and I was given the opportunity to address the whole body. I shared the same with them, confessing that I had been practicing the principle of rebellion when I thought myself in agreement with the purposes of Christ. I was given great grace to share, feeling no embarrassment, being greatly aided by the Spirit, and the people were visibly moved.

Father honored my attitude of submission, and this pastor who was in sin and who had been at this church for 14 years, suddenly resigned. Thus Father removed the wrong authority because He had found one who would look to Him to correct the leader who was disobedient.

For another three years Father told me to walk in the place of the submissive wife

and to not open my mouth saying anything good or bad to the church elders. He told me I was to pray for them. For three years I did not attend a single elders' meeting. I prayed for these men and for the body.

At first I was still focused on the sins of those in leadership, and they were not walking by faith, nor by the leading of the Spirit. I prayed that God would fix them or remove them that the body would not be hindered. Father stopped me abruptly, however. He said, "If you are going to pray for these men as I asked you to, then you must pray according to My will and desire for them." He then asked me, "Do you know how long I have longed to correct some things in your life? By the judgment that you judge others, you shall be judged."

Needless to say, my prayers changed immediately. I began to pray, "Father, have mercy on these men. Father, be patient with these men. Father be gentle in your correction of them. Take all the time You need to bring them to obedience and righteousness."

My own calling to intercessory prayer took off at this point and what had once been a labor became a passion. I began to pray that Father would give me His heart to pray for others. I asked that I would know His heart and feel His emotion for those I prayed for. I longed for these times of prayer before the Father. I relished these times. They were the highlights of my life.

Immediately after Father gave me this understanding of authority, the gift of writing that had lain dormant came alive within me. For years I knew I had a calling to write, yet I was able to bring nothing forth. I attempted to walk in this ministry many times, and I would write pages and pages. At the end, however, I would read what I had written and I sensed no anointing upon the words. I sensed no approval from the Spirit, even when I knew what I had written was correct. Over and over, I would end up trashing what I had labored on.

Immediately after I came rightly under authority, Father opened up this area of my life. I sat down to write a piece of correspondence to a minister of another church who had counseled me during my time of separation and, as I wrote, out flowed an article that I had not even intended to write. This article is the very earliest writing upon which I recognized the seal and approval of the Spirit. The writing had an anointing on it, and it was distributed among many churches at the time.

Father gave me understanding of why I was now released to write. He told me that He could not advance anyone in the kingdom who did not know and practice His principles of government and submission to authority. Once I learned these things

and began to walk in them He was able to bring me into my calling.

I cannot stress how vital this topic is. Let me share a few more words from Watchman Nee's book.

Please take note that Satan is not afraid of our preaching the word of Christ, yet how very much in fear he is of our being subject to the authority of Christ. Never should we who serve God serve according to the principle of Satan.

We preach the gospel in order to bring men into God's authority, but how can we establish God's authority on earth if we have not met [understood] authority?

The controversy of the universe is centered on who shall have the authority, and our conflict with Satan is the direct result of our attributing authority to God.

[When we look at men] let us not see the man, but only the authority vested in him. We do not obey man, but God's authority in man... We are on the wrong road if we meet man first before we obey authority. The opposite is the right way. Then we will not mind who the man is.

The greatest of God's demands on man is not for him to bear the cross, to serve, to make offerings, or deny himself. The greatest demand is for him to obey... Why did Samuel say, "obedience is better than sacrifice"? Because even in sacrifice there can be the element of self-will. Obedience alone is absolutely honoring to God, for it alone takes God's will as its center.

For authority to be expressed there must be subjection. If there is to be subjection, self needs to be excluded; but according to one's self-life, subjection is impossible. This is only possible when one lives in the Spirit. It is the highest expression of God's will.

To serve God we are not called to choose self-denial or sacrifice, rather are we called to fulfill God's purpose. The basic principle is not to choose the cross, but to obey God's will. Should the principle on which we work and serve include rebellion, then Satan will obtain and enjoy glory even through our sacrifices.

As God's servants, the first thing we should meet is authority. To touch authority is as practical as touching salvation, but it is a deeper lesson. Before we can work for God we must be overturned by His authority. Our entire relationship with God is regulated by whether or not we have met authority. If we have then we shall encounter authority everywhere.

In Matthew 7:21-23 we find our Lord reprimanding those who prophesy and cast out demons and do many mighty things in His name. Why are they disapproved? Because they make self their starting point; they themselves do things in the name of the Lord. This is the activity of the flesh. Wherefore our Lord pronounces them evildoers instead of His laborers. He emphasizes that only the person who does the will of His Father shall enter the kingdom of the heavens. This alone is work in obedience to God's will, that which originates in Him. We are not to find work to do, rather we are to be sent to work by God. Once having understood this we shall truly experience the reality of the authority of the kingdom of the heavens.

This issue of authority and submission is such a vital element and the church has largely neglected it. Did you note Watchman Nee's words earlier? He said that it is possible to offer sacrifices to God, it is possible to preach the gospel, it is possible to perform miracles, and in doing all of these things to bring glory to Satan. The only requirement is that we have not submitted to the will of the Father in these things. Satan does not fear the active saint who is doing great exploits in the name of Yahshua. He fears the one who is submitted to the authority of Yahshua.

This is indeed the greatest and deepest principle in the kingdom of God. Deeper even than salvation. Truly, a person can be saved and still fail to walk under the authority of God, failing to recognize authority in the places Father has delegated it to man. The issue of covering is central to this issue.

I think at times that Western men and women are at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding issues of government, authority and submission. We have been altogether steeped in democracy which turns the whole pattern of divine government on its head. In the kingdom of God all authority flows from Yahweh down to those whom He entrusts it to. In democracy, authority is determined by the people as they choose through election who the authorities will be over them. In the kingdom of God, all authority is established by God. In democracy it is "of the people, by the people, for the people."

We know little of submission in our Western society. In our government we can

impeach, or recall a leader whom we do not like. In most of our churches we can do the same thing. In marriages it has become all too common to divorce a spouse that is viewed as unreasonable or hard to live with. On our jobs we have many different paths to go over a boss' head if we don't like the things they are doing. In the church, if people don't like a particular minister they are free to go church hopping, looking for the one that is appealing to them. There is very little submission practiced in any realm of Western society.

Israel is considered an Oriental culture, and Watchman Nee also being from the Orient has an advantage in discerning Paul's instructions. However, it is not to his culture that he always relates back, but to the testimony of the scriptures themselves, and the witness of the Spirit of God. I have gained much from the teaching of this man whom the Father continues to use years after his death as a martyr in a Chinese prison. The following excerpts are from the chapter entitled "Head Covering" which is found in Watchman Nee's book "Love One Another."

God's Two Universal Systems

I would like to view this matter of head covering from far off; otherwise, it will not be easy to understand I Corinthians 11. To comprehend this chapter requires that we know God and His Word. First of all we need to know that God has set up two systems in the universe: the system of grace and the system of government.

The System of Grace

All that concerns the church, salvation, brothers and sisters, and God's children is included in God's systems of grace. Everything which pertains to the Holy Spirit and to redemption belongs to the system of grace. Within the proceedings of grace, the relationship of man and woman is such that the Syro-Phoenician woman received grace from God as much as the centurion. So did Mary as much as Peter. So, too, might Martha and Mary have been raised from the dead as well as Lazarus.

The System of Government

But there is another system in the Bible which we will call the government of God. This system is entirely different from that of grace. God's government is an independent system under which God does whatever pleases Him.

When God created man, He created male and female. This belongs to God's government. He created male first and female next - also a matter of His government. He does what pleases Him. He has a sovereign and independent will. When He decided that the Lord Jesus should be the seed of the woman, this too was God's government. He does not take man into His counsel...

Grace and Government Joined and Completed

These two systems of grace and government continued side by side until the coming of the Lord Jesus. Quite evidently there are two sides to God's work: the system of God's grace and the system of God's providence proceed together in the world. The priests and the prophets stand on the side of grace, maintaining the system of grace; the kings and the leaders of Israel stand on the side of God's government, maintaining the system of His government.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, on the one hand He came to be the savior of the world, to deliver men from sin. This is according to the system of grace. On the other hand, God sent Him to the world that through the work of the cross He might establish His own authority and set up His kingdom so that the heavens might rule on the earth. This is the system of government. Its work will continue until the power of the devil is destroyed and the kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth are brought in. On that day, the two systems of grace and government will be joined into one. That is to say, that during the time of the new heavens and the new earth, these two systems will become one in the Lord Jesus. He does both sides of God's work. He works under the system of government as well as the system of grace.

The government of God does not commence with the creation of man, but, rather, at the creation of the angels. This is quite clear in the Bible. When Satan was yet a morning star, while he was still ruling, God's governmental system had already begun. Following the creation of man, basic institutions such as marriage, husband and wife, family, and the relationship between parents and children all came within the realm of God's government.

The basic lesson that all brothers and sisters need to learn is that we should never allow grace to interfere with God's government. I say most emphatically that never in our lives should we permit grace to intervene

in what God has decided in government. God wants men to respect His government not to overthrow it. If we are ignorant of God's government, we are lawless people in the sight of God. Since we have never seen the kingdom except as it is seen in the church, it is imperative for us to see the system of government. As a matter of fact, the system of grace is for the sake of completing the system of government. The system of government is not for the system of grace, but grace is for the completion of government.

Many hold to a fundamental error: they foolishly maintain that grace can set aside government. The truth is that what God does in grace never alters God's government. The forgiveness of grace that we receive from God does not change His governmental forgiveness. No matter how much we receive forgiveness in grace, still it does not affect governmental forgiveness.

God's government is an independent principle. From beginning to end, God brings in His governmental system. Grace only complements government. The system of grace was added because of man's insubordination and rebellion under the system of government. Grace is for the purpose of redeeming and restoring those who are insubordinate and rebellious, so that they may be subject to God's governmental system. Hence, grace actually gives an assist to God's system of government...

Submission to God's Government

So the system of grace and the system of government are two separate matters. The humbler a person is, the more he progresses in the governmental system. Never think that because you have entered into the system of God's grace you can therefore escape the system of God's government.

Grace can never nullify government; rather, grace enables people to obey government. May I say with all seriousness that grace gives us the strength to be subject to government. It does not make us rebellious or desirous of overthrowing government. These systems complement each other. Grace never abolishes government. Only a fool would say that since he received grace, he can afford to be loose and careless. What a foolish thing that would be.

The clearer a person understands grace, the better he will be as a servant or a master. The more a person knows grace, the better he is as a husband, a parent, a child, or a citizen, for he is more capable of submitting to authority. He who receives more of the grace of God knows more of how to maintain the government of God. I have yet to see one who truly knows God's grace destroy God's government.

Head Covering and Government

The matter of head covering belongs to God's government. For those who do not know God's government, it is impossible to exhort them to have their heads covered. They will not be able to understand how much is involved in this matter. But those who have seen God's government in God's revealed Word are able to appreciate the tremendous connection between head covering and God's government. "Now I praise you in all things that you remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:2-3).

The relationship here described is not that of the Father and the Son, but that of God and Christ. To use a modern expression, Christ is God's representative. The relationship between the Father and Son pertains to the Godhead, but Christ sent of God touches upon God's arrangement, God's government. "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). God is God, and Christ is one sent by God. This is their relationship in God's government. The Son, originally equal with God, was willing to be sent by God as the Christ. God remained on high as God, but Christ was sent down to do His work. This is the first order of events in the government of God.

In God's purpose, Christ is set up to be the head of every man; therefore, all people must obey Him. He is the firstborn of all creation and its firstfruit. He is the head of every man; every man should be in subjection to Him. This is a basic principle under God's government. Christ being the head of every man is related, not to the system of grace, but to the system of God's government. Likewise man being the head of woman also belongs to God's governmental system. God in His government establishes man as head just as He sets up Christ as head

and also Himself as head. Thus the system is completed.

God is Himself the head; He sets up Christ as head; and he further establishes man to be head. These are the three great principles in God's government.

For God to be Christ's head does not touch upon the matter of who is greater; rather it is simply an arrangement in the government of God. Likewise, under God's government Christ is the head of every man and man is the head of woman. Such are God's arrangements; such are His appointments.

Philippians 2 is clear enough: the Lord Jesus in His eternal essence is equal with God; but in God's government He becomes Christ, and as Christ, God became His head. Christ Himself acknowledges in the Gospel of John that: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father doing: for what things soever he does, these the Son does also in like manner" (John 6:38)... Today Christ takes His place in the government of God. According to God's counsel, He is Christ and as Christ He needs to listen to God the Father, for God the Father and God the Son are equal in glory and honor in the Godhead, but in God's government Christ does not stand in the place of God the Son; rather, He stands in the position of Christ, the One sent of God.

Some day the whole world will know that Christ is the head of all men, for this is God's governmental decision. Today this is known only in the church; the world has no knowledge of it. But the day will come when all the people of the world will recognize that Christ is the head. He will have the preeminence in all the creation. He is the firstborn of all creation and the firstfruit. Everyone must be in subjection to the authority of Christ. Likewise, God's appointment of man as head of woman is also known only in the church today. Do you get the point? Today the church alone knows that Christ is the head of man and that man is the head of woman.

We have already seen how grace can never overthrow God's government. I trust our lesson will become clearer as we learn that grace is to support God's government, not to destroy it. How can anyone be so foolish as to use grace to interfere with God's government? The government of God is inviolable; His hand always sustains it. No one, just because he has believed in the Lord, can overthrow the Father's

authority, or even undermine the authority of any government. We must not say that because we are Christians we do not need to pay taxes. No, nothing of the sort! The better Christian you are, the more you maintain the government of God.

We are here today to maintain God's testimony in the world. God has shown us that there are three different heads: God is head, Christ is head, and man is head. This is not a matter of being brothers and sisters; it is basically a governmental arrangement. Grace is concerned with brothers and sisters, but government is different. God has sovereignly willed that the head of Christ is God Himself, so Christ must obey; the head of man is Christ, so man must obey; and the head of woman is man, and so woman should have the sign of obedience on her head.

The Meaning of Head Covering

“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonors her head; for it is one and the same things as if she were shaven” (I Corinthians 11:4-5).

The meaning of head covering is: I submit myself to God's government; I accept God's appointed position; I dare not nullify His government by the grace I have received; I do not even dare think about it; on the contrary, I accept God's government. As Christ accepts God as His head, so should every man accept Christ as his head. Likewise, woman should representatively accept man as her head. In covering the head, the woman signifies that she is not head, that she is as if she has no head - for it is covered.

Let us remember that although in practice it is only the woman who has her head covered, yet, in reality, Christ has His head covered before God and every man has his head covered before Christ. Why, then, is it that God only requires woman to have the practice of having her head covered? This indeed is marvelous, for it involves a very deep principle.

I often feel that it is impossible to talk with some brothers and sisters about head covering because they have no knowledge of God's government. Before anyone can understand head covering, he or she must first know God's government. The whole question is settled once

one sees that Christ has His head covered before God. How much more ought I to have my head covered before Him! I must cover it so that it is no longer seen or exposed, for Christ is my head. As a matter of fact, everyone's head must be covered before God. Since Christ is my head, I cannot have my own head seen or exposed.

Here I would like to tell Christian women that God has appointed man to be woman's head. In these days when God's authority is unknown in the world, the Lord demands this order only in the church. It therefore affects the very fact of our being Christians. God requires us in the church to accept what He has appointed governmentally.

The Sister's Responsibility

When a sister covers her head, she is standing before God on the basis of Christ's position before God and man's position before Christ. God wants the woman to cover her head in order to manifest His government on earth. This privilege falls only to woman. She does not cover her head merely for her own self; she does it representatively. For her own self, she does it because she is a woman; representatively, it is because she represents man before Christ and Christ before God. So when woman covers her head before God, it is just the same as if Christ covered His head before God. Likewise, when woman covers her head before man, it is just the same as if man covered his head before Christ. Man or woman should have no head because Christ is head. If one's head is not covered, there will be two heads. Between God and Christ one head must be covered; so too must it be between man and woman, and so between Christ and every man. If one head is not covered, the result will be that there are two heads. If God is head, then Christ is not; if Christ is head, then man is not; and if man is head, then woman is not.

God calls upon the sisters to show this arrangement. It is through the sisters that God's governmental system is to be displayed. It is the sisters who are responsible to have the sign of obedience on their heads. God specifically requires women to have their head covered when praying or prophesying. Why? Because they ought to know God's government when they come before Him. In going before God to pray for people, or in going before people to prophesy for God, whether in praying or prophesying, whether in that which goes to God or in that which comes from God, in whatever is related to God, head covering is

demanded. The purpose is to manifest the government of God.

Man ought not to cover his head. It is a shame to his head if a man covers his head before woman, for the man represents Christ...

“For this cause ought a woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels” (v. 10). The Bible does not specify what is to be used for the covering; it only states that the head, where the hair grows, should be covered. Why should the head be covered? Because of the angels.

I am often amazed at this marvelous teaching that sisters should have on their heads a sign of authority FOR THE SAKE OF THE ANGELS. We know the tragic history of how some of the angels sinned. Satan rebelled against God. Why? Because he desired to make himself equal with God. In other words, the angel Lucifer attempted to expose his own head before God and refused to submit to His authority. In Isaiah 14 Satan consistently reiterated “I will...” Right in this passage we see an archangel falling to become Satan. Revelation 12 further shows us that when Satan fell, one-third of the angelic host fell with him. Why did the angels fall? Because of their not being subject to the authority of God the head, but trying to expose their own heads.

Today woman has a sign of authority on her head because of the angels, that is, as a testimony to the angels. Only the sisters in the church can testify to this, for the women of the world know nothing of it. Today when the sisters have the sign of authority on their heads, they bear the testimony that, “I have covered my head so that I do not have my own head, for I do not seek to be head. My head is veiled and I have accepted man as head, and to accept man as head means that I have accepted Christ as head and God as head. But some of you angels have rebelled against God.” This is what is meant by “because of the angels.”

I have a sign of authority on my head. I am a woman with my head covered. This is a most excellent testimony to the angels, to the fallen and to the unfallen ones. No wonder Satan so persistently opposes the matter of head covering. It really puts him to shame. We are doing what he has failed to do. What God did not receive from the angels, He now has from the church. Because some of the angels do not submit themselves to the authority of God and of His Christ, the world is subject to great confusion. The fall of Satan has caused more trouble

than the fall of man. But, thank God, what He failed to get from the fallen angels, He has obtained from the church.

When many of the sisters in the church take the place given to woman and learn to cover their heads, they send out an unspoken word of testimony to the angels in the air, to the effect that God has obtained in the church what He desires. Because of this, woman must have on her head a sign of authority, a testimony to the angels.

I have written all this out for you because I truly desire that you would see the truth of the magnificent testimony of head covering. It is tragic that the church has been falsely taught that the grace of God nullifies the government of God. This is great error and it will keep many from progressing in the kingdom. Only the truly humble will be able to receive this message, for pride always desires to uncover its head and determine its own way.

Even as many women do not want to have any man directing their activities, so many men do not want Christ to dictate to them. Obedience only occurs when the will of Christ coincides with the will of man, or when the will of the wife or daughter coincides with the will of the husband or father. The world is full of two-headed monsters for many refuse to cover their head, desiring rather to expose it as Satan did.

Is it any wonder that this is such a difficult teaching, since it bears upon the original transgression of Satan. He has worked tirelessly to get all others to uncover their heads, even as he did. He would have the whole world uncovered before God. We see the tragic results of his efforts as children uncover their heads before their parents, wives before their husbands, men before Christ, servants before their masters, citizens before their governmental leaders. The world, and especially the church, has become the target of Satan's deceptions until it is full of rebellion.

The scriptures actually foretell that this would be the condition of Christianity before the return of Yahshua, for in Thessalonians we are told that He would in no wise return unless the apostasy occurred first, the great falling away from the truth. We are told that God would send the church strong delusion for they did not love the truth. Paul said that the last days would be difficult days for men would heap to themselves teachers to tickle their ears and they would not endure sound doctrine. Many proclaim that we live in the last days, but they are heedless that the scriptures declare that the state of Christianity before the return of Yahshua would be one of great apostasy, error and deception.

Should we not expect that the understanding of God's government would be hidden and greatly obscured in this day? Should we not expect that many would even tragically use the grace of God as an excuse to tear down and reject the government of God? What harm these ones do to themselves and all those around them. They will not make further progress in the kingdom.

Is it not telling that it takes humility to receive this teaching, yet that the casting off of this teaching is in harmony with the pride of man that seeks to yield to no other authority? All of these things should be witnesses to the truth and they should expose where the error lies.

Some, when they hear this teaching, think that it sounds strict and legalistic. They have confused government with legalism. When Yahshua walked in perfect submission to the Father, having no will or initiative of His own, it was not legalism He was under, but He was perfectly submitted to the government of God. This led to a perfect peace between He and the Father. There was no striving. Likewise when women cover their heads, literally and practically, peace is the result in households everywhere. When they uncover their heads striving is the result. This is certainly the witness of I Peter 3.

In I Peter 3 we also are given Sarah as an example of a godly and submissive wife, and immediately afterward the great obstacle to following in her example is listed. The obstacle is fear. Many women fear that if they submit to their husbands, and they do not correct them when they are wrong, if they do not constantly make known their own desires and needs before their husbands, they will somehow be neglected, abused, or suffer in some way. It takes faith in God to overcome these fears and to place one's trust in Yahweh. It takes faith to remain silent and to trust that Yahweh will correct a husband who is disobedient to the word. Sadly, too many women exercise fear rather than faith, and the results are seen in the church and in our society.

The same is certainly true of men who are afraid to trust Christ and to follow Him wherever He leads. Many refuse to let go of the reins of their lives. They fear that Christ might lead them down paths that are terrifying to them. They are afraid that somehow their own needs and desires will be overlooked or neglected. They respond out of fear and uncover their heads.

We all need grace to walk in these things, tremendous grace. This life is fraught with perils, and we need the comfort and assurance of a Savior who loves us enough to lay down His life for us.

I told you that my life changed irrevocably when I learned these truths and began to walk in them. Peace was the very first fruit that attended this understanding of government and submission. I had peace in my life that I lacked in prior days. I knew what was expected of me, and though I have been led through the valley of the shadow of death, I have clung to my Lord and Savior and followed Him where He led me. He has preserved me and brought me into much truth in the last nine years, truths that would have been withheld from me had I not accepted His government, rather than resisting it.

When we enter into the place of submission and humility, this finds great favor with God. He knows our frame and our weaknesses. It finds great favor with Him when He sees us following the path of submission despite all of the fears and objections that arise within us. The word He gave me concerning those who obeyed Him in following this course is: "The eyes of Yahweh roam to and fro throughout the earth, that He might strongly support those whose hearts are wholly His" (II Chronicles 16:9). When He finds such a one, He will move heaven and earth on their behalf. How beautiful is a submissive and trusting heart in His sight. His heart is captivated by the sight of such a one. With longing He desires to reach out and support those who have adorned themselves with a quiet and submissive spirit.

Now I praise you because you remember me in everything
and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

I Corinthians 11:2

Is a Woman's Hair Her Only Covering?

Although this book is written to women who have already decided that they want to walk in godliness and to willingly accept the divine order of Yahweh's government, I felt like something should be written about the objections that arise from many sources today. Godly women are regularly confronted with some objection or another to the path they have chosen. Some have supposed that they have come up with a "killer argument" that overturns all that we have spoken of thus far. This chapter, and the next, addresses the arguments that I have heard most often.

Not all who bring up these arguments are malicious or rebellious, some simply have not been taught the truth. These chapters are written to encourage the women who do practice headcovering and who seek to honor the government established by Yahweh. It is my hope that if any have been troubled by the arguments spoken of here that they might regain peace as the scriptures are examined in their proper context.

I have had some sisters ask me what constitutes covering the head. Some teach today that a woman's hair is all the covering that she needs and that the hair was the covering that the apostle Paul was referring to in his epistle to the Corinthians. We can clearly see the error of this viewpoint as we examine Paul's writings.

There are many evidences of the practice of Christian women of the early church wearing a covering over their head, including paintings found on the walls of the catacombs of Rome where the saints hid to escape persecution. However, in this chapter we will limit ourselves to scriptural evidence.

Those who raise the argument that a woman only needs her hair for a covering base this upon Paul's words in I Corinthians 11:15b which states, "for her hair is given her for a covering." This would seem to be implying that a woman's hair is all the covering that is being spoken of by the apostle, and if a woman has hair, particularly long hair, then she is properly covered and is giving a testimony to the angels.

This view has a couple of problems, however. If this covering is a sign to the angels, as verse 10 of this same passage states, then would it not be true that all women with long hair, whether pagan or saint, are giving a testimony to the angels? But how can a pagan give a testimony to the angels when they do not even understand the witness they are giving? And knowing nothing about the government of the kingdom of God it is highly improbable that these women are practicing submission to that governmental order. This sign that Paul speaks of would seem to be more deliberate than merely wearing long hair. It is something done with conscious thought, and as an intentional declaration that the angels understand.

Let me share something with you that the Spirit revealed to me recently that I believe will be helpful in bringing clarity to this issue. Paul's discourse on headship and headcovering conforms to a pattern that he uses in other places as he speaks of various topics. The pattern that Paul repeatedly demonstrates is to first declare the issue that he is discussing, and then to use examples from scripture and from nature to illustrate and add emphasis to his teachings.

Let us look at an example of this pattern from this same letter to the Corinthian church. In seeing the pattern in which Paul puts forth his instructions to the Corinthian church, we can come to precisely understand his intent regarding headcovering. In the following passage on the topic of ministerial compensation, note that Paul declares his topic at the very beginning and then he uses various examples to back up his declaration.

I Corinthians 9:3-14

My defense to those who examine me is this: do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel

of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

In verses 3 - 6 Paul declares his topic. He is speaking of the right of a minister to receive physical things from the church in return for spiritual labor so that the minister might be able to refrain from working. It is clear that this is his topic, and we see that he concludes this passage by restating his topic, "So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."

In the verses between his opening and close, Paul uses both scriptural arguments and natural ones to support what he has spoken. When he speaks of a soldier not serving at his own expense, or a farmer eating of the fruit he has planted, he is giving a natural illustration. When he speaks of not muzzling an oxen, and later when he speaks of Levites eating that which is brought to the temple, he is giving arguments found elsewhere in scripture. So we see that Paul follows this pattern: declare his topic; support it with scriptural and natural examples; declare his topic again.

Now let us compare this to the passage in I Corinthians 11 regarding headcovering.

I Corinthians 11:2-16

2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

4 Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, dishonors his head.

5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, dishonors her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved.

6 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.

7 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.

8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her

head, because of the angels.

11 However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?

14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

16 But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

Again we see that Paul begins by declaring his topic. In verses 2 - 6 he states that he is speaking of holding firmly to the traditions he has delivered to them, and the particular tradition he addresses is regarding headship and the practice for women to have their heads covered while praying or prophesying and men to have their heads uncovered. Again, just as in the prior passage, he concludes by summarizing his topic, "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God." Paul begins and ends by saying that he is speaking of the traditions or practices of the churches of God.

In between the introduction and conclusion of this topic we can see that Paul has followed the same pattern as the previous passage. He gives weight to his exhortation by giving examples from scripture and from nature. Paul states that man should not cover his head because he is the image and glory of God, but woman should cover her head because she is the glory of man. He further states that man does not originate from woman, but woman from man and that woman was created for man, not man for woman. These are scriptural arguments given to support the tradition he delivered to the Corinthians that women were to have their heads covered while men remained uncovered.

In verse 13 Paul switches to giving natural examples to support the practice he is proclaiming. He identifies the next examples with the phrase "does not even nature itself teach..." Compare this to the previous passage on ministerial support, "I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?" It is Paul's habit when leaving his main topic to give examples, to lead into the examples with an introductory phrase; "does not even nature itself teach", "does not the Law also say these things." It is plain that this is not Paul's main point, but merely arguments and examples given to add credence to his instructions.

What is the natural example he gives regarding the practice of headcovering?" He gives the example of women having long hair and it being a glory to them, but men having long hair being a shame to them. As we look at this passage, it is clear that hair is not Paul's topic. Hair is simply the natural example he employs that the Corinthian women might more readily understand and accept the tradition of the church that women should cover their head while praying or prophesying.

We are not to confuse Paul's natural illustrations with the actual subject of his discourse. In the passage from I Corinthians 9 on ministerial support, we would be mistaken if we said Paul was really talking about oxen, farmers, or soldiers. In I Corinthians 11 we would be mistaken if we were to say Paul was talking about hair. Hair is merely mentioned as an example to support his teaching that women should have a sign of authority on their heads to testify that they are content with Yahweh's governmental order.

Again, as we look at the pattern Paul uses, his main topic is proclaimed in the opening verses. In chapter 9 he discloses that he is talking about a minister's right to obtain a living from the gospel. In chapter 11 he clearly is speaking of headship, government, and the practice of covering the head. Note that in verses 2 - 6 of I Corinthians 11 the word hair is never mentioned, for hair is not the topic. In every occurrence the word Paul uses for head is *kephale* which is properly interpreted as *head*. In fact this word is used all the way down to verse 14 where we finally have a mention of hair which is the Greek word *komao*, which is defined as *tresses of hair*.

If Paul had meant to declare that the tradition of the churches of God was that women wear long hair, he would have declared this in his topic statement. However, this word is nowhere used until he gets to the portion of his discourse where he is using natural examples to support his topic that women should have a covering on their heads. So we see that hair is not Paul's subject at all, for it is nowhere present in the matter he lays out in his introduction. Wearing a covering on the head as a symbol of recognition and submission to Yahweh's governmental order is his topic.

Furthermore, it is not hair that Paul is declaring to be a sign to the angels, it is the wearing of a covering on the head, a covering deliberately placed there to make a statement of agreement with Yahweh's governmental order.

How easy it would have been for Paul to begin this discourse by saying "Every man who has long hair while praying or prophesying, dishonors his head. But every woman who has short hair while praying or prophesying, dishonors her head." But he did not say this. He does not even mention hair until he gets to the end of his discussion and he chooses to give a natural illustration to support the practice of the

church.

To discern Paul's topic we must limit ourselves to that which he states when he introduces his topic: "Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, dishonors his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, dishonors her head."

So we are able to answer the question, "Is a woman's hair the only covering she needs?" The answer is clearly "No." By comparing passage to passage we see that it was Paul's practice and manner to first declare his topic and then to later support it with natural examples. Hair is not the topic of Paul's writing in I Corinthians chapter 11 anymore than oxen were the topic in chapter 9. These are merely mentioned as a way of adding support to, and an understanding of, the instructions Paul is delivering. How evident this becomes when we compare passage to passage and discover Paul's patterns in his writing.

We have used scripture comparisons to arrive at Paul's meaning semantically, but we also need to get understanding. In the preceding chapter we read of headcovering being a sign to the angels, and an attesting witness that the godly woman is content with her role and calling in Yahweh's creation. Yet headcovering has a further significant purpose that is marvelous to understand.

In this passage from the book of I Corinthians, we have read the statement that man "is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man." Let us answer two questions and we will see another profound reason for women to have their heads covered. The questions are: "Should God's glory be covered?", and "Should man's glory be covered?"

The scriptures make it plain that it is Yahweh's will for His glory to fill the whole earth, the heavens, and all creation.

Numbers 14:21

As I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of Yahweh.

Psalms 57:5

Be exalted above the heavens, O God;

Let Your glory be above all the earth.

We also know from the scriptures that it is shameful for man to expose his own glory.

I Corinthians 1:27-29

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, God has chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.

As we consider this we can see that it would be dishonoring to God for a man to cover his head when he is praying or prophesying. Man is the glory of God and God's glory should not be covered. This is also why it is a shame for man to have long hair. A man with long hair is glorying in his own flesh by taking to himself the glory that should adorn woman, and he is at the same time covering the glory of God. I Corinthians 11:15 says that long hair is the glory of woman. When a man takes this long hair to himself he is flaunting his own glory, for woman is the glory of man and her long hair is her glory.

In scripture we are given an account of a man who gloried in his long hair, and this glorying led to a shameful death. This young man was Absalom, the son of King David.

II Samuel 14:25-26

Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him. When he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut it, for it was heavy on him so he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels by the king's weight.

Absalom was so proud of his hair that he only cut it once a year, and he made a spectacle of this event. He would gather people together for his annual shearing and he would weigh the amount of hair that he cut off. Absalom had a glorious head of hair, but he foolishly flaunted his glory. It was this hair that he so gloried in that was the instrument of his death.

II Samuel 18:9, 14-15

Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. For Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going... So [Joab] took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him.

This story gives stark testimony to the evil of men seeking to expose their own glory while covering the glory of God. Perhaps Paul was thinking of Absalom when he said, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him." A man should not have long hair, and he should not place a covering over his head when he prays or prophesies.

Similarly, since woman is the glory of man, it is shameful for a woman to be uncovered while praying or prophesying. As she stands before God she represents the glory of man, and the glory of man should not be flaunted, but covered. If a woman stands in the congregation with her head uncovered she is exposing the glory of her husband and her husband is brought to shame for failing to cover his glory in the presence of God. What a shame it is for a man to stand in God's presence with his glory exposed. This is the meaning of these verses:

Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, dishonors his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, dishonors her head... 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.

Just as Paul gave more than one scriptural reason supporting the ministers right to make a living from the gospel, we can now see that he has given more than one scriptural reason for women to have their heads covered. The godly woman should cover her head because of the angels, to demonstrate humble acceptance of her role in creation. She should also do so because of glory: God's glory should be exposed, but man's glory covered. This is the purpose and understanding of headcovering.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:15

Neither Male Nor Female

Probably the most often heard argument that is used to justify the overthrow of Yahweh's governmental order among men and women today is that which is based upon Paul's words to the Galatian believers. A fragment of one verse that is removed from its context is repeated over and over, "in Christ... there is neither male nor female."

This one snippet of a verse is used to justify women being independent of men and declaring that man is not the head of woman. This verse is used to support the role of women as pastors of churches even when Paul has declared elsewhere that he does not allow a woman to teach or usurp authority over a man. This verse is used to proclaim that a patriarchal family structure has no place in the church age. This one phrase, taken out of its context, is used as the "killer argument" to overturn the governmental order of Yahweh that is found everywhere throughout the scriptures.

Indeed, when one takes this fragment of a sentence by itself, as it is most often offered, it appears to give great trouble to the teachings of governmental order between men and women. However, we should always examine the context of the scripture quotations we use, to know whether we are properly understanding the meaning of the writer. Paul admonished Timothy to "study to show yourself approved, rightly dividing the word of God", addressing the problem of many who do not rightly divide the word.

Many grievous errors have occurred as saints have taken scriptures out of context and have used them in an improper manner. This brings up a point that I would like to address before I venture further on this topic. There is a danger of examining the scriptures to find something that we desire. We may have a certain prejudice on a topic leading us to seek to find scriptures that will support our prejudice.

In the book of Proverbs we are told that every man is justified in his own eyes (Proverbs 21:2). It is quite possible to find a scripture passage, a verse, or a snippet of a verse that will support anything we desire. I have even seen some use scriptures to support fornication, and even adultery. The child of God should always have as his

or her first goal to know the mind of Yahweh on a matter, and with no concern of personal consequence, to desire to conform oneself to that which the Spirit illumines to us.

Much of the church lacks this integrity, however. We live in the perilous last days that Paul spoke of where men will not endure sound doctrine and where the masses of Christendom are heaping to themselves teachers to tickle their ears and to tell them what they want to hear. We live in the day in which Paul foretold to Timothy that men would turn aside to myths and fables, and he further declared to the Thessalonian believers that Yahshua would not return unless the apostasy occurred first, the apostasy being a divorcement from truth.

In this same passage to the Thessalonian believers we find some sobering words. "Because they did not receive the love of the truth... for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false" (II Thessalonians 2:10-11). When people do not hold the truth as their first objective in studying the scriptures, when they approach the word of God with the intent of supporting some position that appeals to them, then the Father has declared that He will send them deception.

If we approach the scriptures with anything less than a sincere desire to know truth, the Father will allow us to find exactly what we want. If we desire falsehood, He will give us over to delusion. Only those who desire truth, despite all personal cost to themselves, will find it. In the matter I will address here, many have received delusion because they really didn't want truth. They wanted something less than truth. They simply desired to find a doctrine that they felt would not lead them outside of their comfort zone, or bring them to a place of personal crucifixion. Even in the Old Testament we find that there were always many more false prophets than true. It is no different in Christendom today.

Satan's chief weapon is deception and deception always works best when it has an element of appeal in it. By offering an enticing deception, Satan deceived the first woman in the Garden of Eden. The fruit that Satan invited Adam's wife to partake of was physically appealing, and Satan's lies made it even more attractive to her soul.

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate...

In the same way, there is much in the doctrine that says there is no governmental

difference between men and women in the kingdom, that makes it attractive both to the women and the men who would eat of this fruit.

The teaching that much of the church has adopted says that marriage should be a democracy, and the man and woman should be co-leaders together in all of life's decisions. This certainly is in keeping with the trend of Western society where patriarchal order is seen as archaic and backward, where men are condemned as chauvinists, and oppressive and controlling figures if they insist on being the head of their home. The weight of societal opinion is against any man or woman who would proclaim Yahweh's governmental order.

There are tremendous obstacles to overcome should any man desire to walk in the order established by Yahweh. A man may have to deal with the unwillingness of his own wife to submit to his headship. This resistance can be quite extreme, even to the point where a woman would rather leave her husband and divide a family than to submit to her husband's headship. Then there is the opinion of society to overcome. The man may be painted as an overbearing brute who is insensitive to his wife's feelings. He may be labeled as a controller, as bossy, or as being prideful.

The man will probably have to contend with the objections of others in the church whose households are ordered democratically, where the husband does nothing unless the wife agrees. Undoubtedly there will be those who would see a man walking in proper governmental order as being a threat to their own arrangement in their household. The man may also have to deal with church leadership that has not dared to proclaim man as the head of woman for fear of the firestorm that would result. The pastor or elder may be fearful of the conflict that may result if the issue is brought up, so he may try to dissuade any man from taking a stand on the matter.

These are not hypothetical situations, I have personally viewed them all first hand. Yet I have concluded that it is impossible for a man to have Christ as his head, and have his wife as an equal partner at the same time. What happens when the man knows that Christ is leading him to do a particular thing, yet his wife is in adamant disagreement? The man is then torn. Should he agree with Christ, or should he agree with his wife? In such a situation a man actually has two heads. Christ is one head and his wife is the other, and he can only act if the two are in agreement.

If agreement never comes then the man must choose between which head he will follow. If he chooses to appease his wife and to thereby preserve marital peace, he will have to disobey Christ. If he chooses to honor Christ as his head, then he will have to disregard the demands of his wife. A man who places himself in the

precarious position of trying never to choose a course unless his wife is in full agreement will be brought to a choice sooner or later of deciding whom he will obey.

There are many pastors and teachers of the word today who insist it is God's will for all decisions in marriage to be made by both husband and wife. I have even had some to tell me that God would never ask a man to do something without bringing his wife into agreement first. This would certainly be nice, but it has neither been my experience, nor is this revealed to be the testimony of the scriptures.

If David had consulted with his wife Michael first, he would have never danced before the Lord as he did when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem. When Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah above the witness of God to him, he ended up having Ishmael as a son. When Samson finally told his wife Delilah what she badgered him to know, it ended up costing him his sight, his strength, and eventually his life. Solomon's wives led him into idolatry.

Whether wives are godly or ungodly, there will eventually come a time when they have not heard the same thing Yahweh has revealed to the man. It seems Yahweh is intent on causing this to happen to test our obedience to His headship. When a man seeks to never choose a course which will offend his wife nor God, he will eventually be led to confusion. No man can have two heads and remain without conflict. The traditions of the church today have brought many homes to this state of confusion.

Yahshua condemned the Pharisees for making the commands of God of no effect through their traditions. Their traditions were interpretations of scripture that were of man, not of God. In the same way, those who are teaching this doctrine of democratic relationships between men and women are nullifying the commands of God and bringing confusion into the body of Christ.

Interestingly enough, the scripture that states "for God is not the author of confusion" is found in the very passage that most pointedly looks at the issue of male/female relationships.

I Corinthians 14:33-34

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. 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.

What a difficult scripture this is for those who do not discern the government of God.

Again, I am not writing at length on government here, it is explained very thoroughly in the chapter “Head Covering and Government”. It is easy to understand why many who do not discern government have decried Paul as a chauvinist and one who was bigoted against women. Many have categorized his teachings as an artifact of the patriarchal society he found himself in.

I previously stated that when Satan brings deception he attempts to make it appear attractive. What is the attraction in the negating of God’s order that Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman? For one, it frees the woman from her place of submission to man. This is an awesome attraction.

It is evident in our western culture that the natural order of men and women as established by God is viewed with contempt. For generations now women have been fighting to attain an equal footing with men, choosing not to remain in submission to them. The concept of a wife honoring and submitting to her husband is viewed as archaic and unsophisticated.

There is tremendous fear that must be overcome for a woman to subject herself to her husband, father, or other male authority figure in her life. This is why Peter said,

I Peter 3:6

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.

A woman fears that her husband may not consider her needs. She fears that her husband might make a foolish mistake that will have negative repercussions in her life. She fears that her husband might choose to walk down a path that will bring hardship to herself or her children. She fears that her husband might through disobedience bring judgment and calamity upon herself and the rest of his household.

By negating God’s order and changing the obvious and natural interpretations of scriptures, a woman is offered a way out; she is given an alternate path which she can walk that gives her much more control over her destiny. She no longer has to walk in submission to man, exercising faith, trusting God to protect her from the failures of her husband who has feet of clay. As Satan offered the fruit to Adam’s wife, and it had a pleasing appearance to her, so does this forbidden fruit have allure to women in the Church.

It is only through faith and obedience that the godly woman refuses to take the bait that Satan dangles before her. Her soul life must be crushed and her fears must be

faced and overcome. By entrusting herself to Yahweh, and looking to Him rather than to her circumstances, the holy woman overcomes the fears in her life. Yahweh is pleased to respond by strongly supporting such a woman.

II Chronicles 16:9

"For the eyes of Yahweh move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

One can see what the attraction is to the woman to embrace the error that is being espoused today, but what is the attraction for the male? One of the chief motivations is a desire to appease his wife and other women in the body of Christ. I can attest that any man that desires to walk in the calling in his life as the head of his wife will encounter the most extreme opposition. To touch this issue is to touch the very heart of Satan. One of the greatest strongholds of Satan in families and in the church is centered around the issue of maintaining God's government.

Women have a tremendous position of influence in a man's life. They can either affect a man for great good as Timothy's mother and grandmother did, or they can affect a man for great evil as Jezebel did with her husband Ahab. A man greatly feels the influence of the women in his life, particularly that of his wife. The two are one flesh. This is why Yahweh forbid the Israelites to marry foreign wives. He knew the influence of a wife, and he foresaw that the Israelite men would be influenced to follow after foreign gods.

Solomon was a man who loved God (I Kings 3:3). Unfortunately, we have the parallel statement that Solomon also loved many foreign women (I Kings 11:1). In the end, his wives led him into idolatry and he built shrines and temples to their gods. Solomon spoke much about the effect that a nagging or contentious wife can have on her husband. She can make his life a misery. She can also turn his heart away from a pure devotion to Yahweh.

When a woman continually urges a man to perform some deed that is contrary to the will of Yahweh, many men will capitulate. For some, they may quickly stray from obedience. For others, they may be worn down over time as was the case with Samson.

Judges 16:16

And it came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

Many men know that to stand on the truth of scriptures and to acknowledge Christ

alone as their head would be the cause of tremendous strife in their marriages. Most women in Western culture are so indoctrinated in the rebellion and independence of the nations they live in that they perceive God's design of headship to be ludicrous, unreasonable and simply intolerable. They would no more willingly submit to it than cut off their own head (which, by the way, is what they are being asked to do).

Many men, being more desirous to keep peace in the home, avoid the issue altogether. They go along with the ways of the world and establish a very modern, democratic home. It is very modern, but wholly unbiblical. We can see that there is an attraction for both the man and the woman to deny the teaching of scriptures regarding Yahweh's established order. Yet, some believers are simply ignorant of the truth, never having had it taught correctly to them.

There are so many arguments that make it seem reasonable that we should no longer make a distinction between men and women in the church. Perhaps the most common is based on these few words of Paul that "there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28). As much as preachers talk against the error of taking a scripture out of context, it is amazing how many do so with this verse.

To see the error, one must look at the whole context of the verse. As this is such an important issue, and we wish to address the problem of taking a scripture out of its proper context, I will include the whole passage here.

Galatians 3:1-29

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Yahshua the Messiah was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying "All the nations shall be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous

man shall live by faith." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"-- in order that in Christ [Yahshua] the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Yahshua the Messiah might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ [Yahshua]. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Yahshua. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

This passage, indeed virtually the whole book of Galatians, is dealing with the issue of Judaizers coming into the body and teaching people that they must, in addition to having faith in Christ, keep the Law, as delivered by the Patriarchs and prophets, in order to be saved. The book of Galatians shows very little concern for issues of church order, or personal relationships in the body. Galatians is not a governmental book. To find instructions on government and order, a much better source is Paul's letters to the Corinthian believers because these issues were some of the main

subjects he addressed among them. The Corinthian epistles would be a much better source to discern doctrine about male/female relations among the body than Galatians, because such relationships are not the focus of Galatians.

Looking at this passage from Galatians we see that Paul has decided to approach the Galatians' error by revealing what the source of the promise given to Abraham was. Was it through the Law, or through faith? This is important because the Judaizers were saying that in order to be true Jews, (sons of Abraham), one had to keep the Law. Paul shows that this is erroneous. The true children, seed, and offspring of Abraham are those who walk in the faith of Abraham.

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

Paul is establishing who the true seed is, and who will inherit the promised inheritance that was given to Abraham and his seed. By identifying who the true seed is (Christ), Paul is able to show how foolish those are who assert that believers must come under the Law, because the promise given to Abraham was not based upon keeping the Law. Indeed, the law was given 430 years after Abraham.

This is essential to understanding this passage and interpreting the scripture that many are quoting. Who are the inheritors of the promise? Under normal Jewish law daughters did not inherit, only sons did, the exception being families that had no sons. Neither did slaves within the household inherit, nor foreigners. The inheritance was given to the male seed of the father.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Yahshua.
For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ [Yahshua]. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, **heirs according to promise.**

Paul is speaking of the rights of inheritance here. The very next verse after the one that says there is neither male nor female states "And if you belong to Christ, then you are... heirs according to promise." This whole passage is establishing who will inherit the promises given to Abraham. This is no teaching on governmental order. Paul is not overthrowing the teaching that "Christ is the head of man, and man is the

head of woman.”

Paul is joyfully asserting that all those who come to God on the basis of faith are the true children of Abraham. They are sons because they are in the Son. They share in the inheritance. Observance of the Law does not determine who inherits the promises of God and who do not. Indeed, the law never determined who was a true son of Abraham.

Paul is saying that among the body of Christ, all share in the inheritance and all are considered sons in relationship to the promise given. Some are not Jews who inherit the promise, and some Greeks who are excluded from the promise. Some are not slaves who are excluded, while others are free and are included. Some are not male who receive the promise, while others are female and are excluded from the promise. All are in Christ. All receive the promise. All are inheritors.

Paul is NOT teaching here on male/female relationships. He is teaching on inheritance. He is not talking of government, nor the exercise of gifts. He is in no way advocating the abolition of gender roles as established by God. This is not the context of his teaching. Paul did teach on these subjects, but not in this passage of scripture.

Over and over in this day people are pointing to this scripture and saying, “see, it says right here that in Christ there is neither male nor female.” They declare, “ We can cast off all this talk about man being the head of woman. Since there is neither male nor female we are all free to hear from God and have Him alone as our head.”

How very appealing this is to those who loathe submission. How very appealing it is to those who want to determine their own way. Yet these people do violence to the scriptures by taking these words out of context. They violate what is stated in other passages that are clearly speaking about governmental order.

One of the scriptures that is overthrown by taking this scripture out of context is, “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). If we were to interpret the meaning of this snippet of a verse from Galatians as people insist, then we would have to rewrite I Corinthians. It might be better rendered in this manner, “But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and Christ is the head of every woman, and God is the head of Christ.” But this is not what it says, is it?

Again, I will reiterate, if we come looking for something in scriptures to support a certain prejudice that we have, we will find it. However, if we look only for truth

without regard to how it personally affects us, we will indeed find truth, and Yahweh will give us the grace to walk in it. If we look simply for the truth of God's governmental order, we will find it everywhere.

Most of the arguments against maintaining the gender roles established by God and spoken through the mouth of His prophets, are based upon fairness, or rather, the apparent lack of it. It seems unfair for a woman, who undeniably has the ability to hear the voice of God, to submit herself to man. Often these men are less sensitive spiritually than their wives or daughters. However, even in this case the scripture is clear, the government of God still stands.

If a woman who is resistant to these matters will be honest in examining this issue, she will recognize that her reluctance to agree with the testimony of scripture has more to do with fear than any other reason. Fear causes women to reject the authority of their husbands. Fear also causes men to reject the authority of Christ. Questions that arise out of fear are asked, such as: "What if he doesn't consider my interests in his actions and decisions?" "What if he makes a decision that is costly to myself and the rest of the family?" "What if his guidance leads to hardship and anguish and I have to suffer due to this?" "What if I am not given any forum to exercise the gifts and talents God has placed in my life?" "What if my happiness is threatened in submitting to his headship?" And even, "What will others think of me for choosing to submit to authority when it is so out of vogue, and women who submit to their husbands are looked at as weak and spineless?"

The Father knows our frames, that we are but dust. He knows we have tremendous fears that come against us. He realizes the peril that many women feel in submitting themselves to their husbands. He is gracious to those who choose to do so despite the fears that arise within them. This truly finds great favor with Yahweh. Oh how He will minister grace and mercy to those who choose to entrust themselves to Him and to abide by His governmental order, overcoming every objection that arises within themselves.

I have great compassion for the fears of women. I know how difficult it is to submit to someone who very well may make decisions that will bring negative consequences. As I struggled with this issue at one time, I asked God what it would hurt for a man to just capitulate and to tell his wife that they would run their marriage like a democracy and all decisions would be made with the equal voice of both partners. I was asking God, "If a man chooses to lay aside the authority delegated to him, and out of compassion for his wife to never ask her to do anything that caused her distress or discomfort, what would be wrong with this?" God spoke back to me so quickly that I was startled. He said, "Honor would be missing."

A wife is told to honor her husband as man is to honor his head, Yahshua the Messiah. God has created a divine mystery where the marriage relationship mirrors the relationship of Christ with His Bride. The King James Version of the Bible renders the word honor as 'reverence'.

Ephesians 5:32-33

**This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.
(KJV)**

The word reverence in this verse is a very intense word. Strongs' Hebrew and Greek Dictionary renders it this way. 5399 phobeo (fob-eh'-o);

from 5401; to frighten, i.e. to be alarmed; by analogy, to be in awe of, i.e. revere:

You may recognize the similarity of the Greek word 'phobeo' to our English word phobia. Both come from the same root which means "to fear." You may ask, "Why would a woman fear her husband?" The type of fear here is a reverential fear and it is similar to the admonition that saints are given to fear God. The husband actually stands in the place of God to his wife. Man is the head of woman as Christ is the head of man. Man has been delegated authority by God. He stands in God's authority.

Yahweh revealed to me that the lack of submission in Christian marriages today is a mirror of the lack of submission found in the church toward Christ. We will not resolve the issues discussed here by adopting democratic forms. It will not satisfy God for men to say, "I will always follow Christ when I agree with Him. If Christ will never ask me to do something I am unwilling to do, then we will have peace. Let Christ and man perform their relationship in a democratic way. Let Christ always consult with man before He makes a decision."

No, this would be unacceptable to the Father. Christ is our example. Even as we are told in the Gospel of John that Yahshua NEVER did anything of His own initiative, but He always did the will of the Father, even so should man have his head covered before Christ and he should always strive to never do anything of his own initiative, but to always do the will of Christ. And so should woman do with man.

This requires humility and submission. It requires putting the flesh to death, and for the lack of these things we sadly find these things rarely practiced. May Yahweh grant us His grace to walk in His divine governmental order.

Greater love has no one than this,
that one lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

No Greater Love

I recently listened as my daughter played a song by a young Christian lady that states, "Sometimes I think it would be easier to die for You than to live for You." There is profound truth in this, for dying for Christ necessitates that we die one time, but living for Him requires that we die daily. It is a great paradox in the Kingdom of God that all who would live must die, while all who seek to protect their life will lose it.

I would encourage you to pray and ask the Father for wisdom and understanding before reading this chapter, for its message is more difficult than any chapter written thus far. The flesh will despise what is written here, but it is my hope that many women will sense the seal of the Holy Spirit upon these words.

Every member of the Kingdom of God is called to die to self. They are called to lose their life that they may find it. They are called to have no will or agenda or initiative of their own. They are to find their purpose and reason for living in another.

We are told that "the head of man is Christ." This implies that man is to have no head of his own. Man is to live to do the will of Yahshua. Man is to have no initiative of his own. Man has been purchased with the blood of Christ and he now belongs totally to another.

I Corinthians 6:20

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

I Corinthians 7:23

You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Romans 14:7-8

For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

This is abundantly clear, is it not? Our life is not our own. We have been purchased at an exceedingly high cost. Yet, even though the meaning is clear and unmistakable we find that there are few who walk in conformity to the truth of these words.

Yahshua set before us the pure example of one who walked in this selfless way. He never did anything of His own initiative. He always did the will of the Father. He declared that He never even spoke a word of His own initiative. He walked in complete and total Sabbath rest. His will was surrendered to the will of the Father. At His most extreme test He declared, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done."

This is the example set before all men. To be a disciple of Christ one must lay down his life and daily take up their cross. They must die to all personal ambition. They must die to all the plans and goals they have imagined for their life. They must live with one purpose, to know the will of Christ and do it.

Although this is abundantly clear from scriptures, the church as a group does not walk in this manner. The church has many goals and ambitions that arise from the soul of man. The church is filled with the initiatives of man. Even the seemingly good things that the church does are largely the product of making an offering to God that arises from the soul of man. All such offerings are detestable to Yahweh and they will be burned with fire until nothing remains.

Yahshua revealed that many would come to Him on the day of judgment with their good works proudly in hand looking for His blessing. These good works are identified as prophesying in His name, casting out demons in His name, and even performing miracles in His name. Yet Yahshua's response will be, "Depart from Me, you lawless ones, for I never knew you." Yahshua reveals in this same passage of scripture (Matthew 7:21-23) that the only thing that will receive the Father's blessing is to do the will of the Father. We must receive command and then obey. We are not to make offerings that arise from our own souls as we determine what is good and evil.

Those who have not yet discerned the government of God cannot receive these words. Once one discerns government all begins to become clear. There is one legitimate will in the universe and that is Yahweh's will. All else is to be in subjection to His will. He is the fountain of all authority and the source of all rule. He delegates His authority to others as He determines, and we must then be perfect in subjection to those authorities as if we were obeying Yahweh Himself.

Yahweh has established Yahshua as the head of man, therefore men must obey Yahshua as they would obey Yahweh. Yahshua is man's head. Man is to have no head of his own. Man is to be in subjection to Christ in all things. Man is not to will things of his own initiative. He is not to determine his own course in life.

If a man would be a disciple of Christ then he cannot determine where he will work, or what his occupation will be. He must allow Christ, his head, to reveal His will and desire for these things. A man cannot decide whom he will marry, or where he will live. These decisions too must be surrendered to the will of Christ. If a man would be Christ's disciple, he cannot decide how he will spend his money, how he will raise his children, where he will go to church, or a myriad of other things, for if a man lives he must live for the Lord, and if he dies he must die for the Lord.

This is the whole meaning of Sabbath rest. In Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, the apostle Paul states that a rest yet remains for the children of God. He reveals that there is a great danger of the saints failing to enter into this rest, even as the children of Israel who left Egypt failed to enter in. He then reveals how one enters the Sabbath rest of God.

Hebrews 4:10

For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Man can have no works of his own. On the seventh day, Yahweh rested from His work of creation. He ceased initiating new works. Even so, man is to initiate nothing of his own. He is to find his highest purpose and calling in discerning the will of the Father and doing His good pleasure.

Does this make man God's doormat? Does this total subjection to the will of Yahweh belittle or humiliate man in some sense? Is a man who lives this way somehow lessened and diminished in his being and character? No! This is the purpose for which man was created. Man was made to express the character of God and to be an extension of His divine will. Yahshua was not diminished by laying aside His own initiative and refusing to be self-directed. He became perfect in obedience, and because of this the Father has now highly exalted Him and given Him a name above all other names.

It is evident that the church at large is very shortsighted today. They seek to enjoy life to the fullest and to gain all the things of this world they can. The church seeks to fulfill every human ambition and to chase every personal initiative now, during this physical life. Yet this is not the purpose of this life. The purpose of this life is to

conform us to the image of Christ who never sought His own will or way. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross.

There is a joy set before all those who would deny themselves now in this life and who would live to accomplish Yahweh's purpose for their life. If we are focused on gaining the things of this world and fulfilling our personal objectives and goals in this life, then we may very well find some satisfaction for a time, but in eternity we will find that we have traded that which is priceless for the fading treasures of a fallen world. There will be much weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

There was a man who lived a generation ago who was expected to excel in the things of this world. He was bright, attractive, and athletic. He was a standout in college and many expected him to pursue the world's course to fame and advancement. Yet something transpired in this man's heart where he saw the things of this world as mere dung in comparison to the glory to come. He turned his back on the pursuit of the things of the world and went to become a missionary to remote tribal people.

Neither the world, nor the majority of the church, understood his decision. They asked why he would go this path. Jim Elliot responded, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." This life on earth is fleeting and momentary. The path of the righteous is fraught with difficulty and pain and suffering, yet the apostle Paul described these things in this manner.

II Corinthians 4:17-18

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

When we consider the life of Paul it seems incredible that he described these things as a momentary, light affliction. How much more should we surrender our will, goals, dreams, and aspirations to Yahweh and receive instead the knowledge of His desire for us?

Christ is the head of man, so man is to have no head of his own. He is to live to accomplish the desire of Christ. Similarly, man is the head of woman, and the married woman has her husband as her head. She is to have no head of her own, but she is to live to do the will of her husband. She is to surrender her aspirations, goals, and desires and seek to fulfill the desire of her husband.

If there are but a few men who will truly walk surrendered to Christ, then we should not be surprised that there are but the smallest remnant of women who will live surrendered lives before their husbands. It seems unreasonable that a woman should lay down her aspirations, dreams, desires, hopes, and plans for her life that she might live to help her husband attain to the fulness of his calling. How rare it is for a woman to call her husband lord, and even rarer for a woman to obey her husband as she would the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22-24

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.

Even as a man must have a heavenly vision to surrender his own will for his life to Christ, so too must the godly woman have a heavenly vision in order for her to surrender her life to her husband. If the woman is seeking to find all her fulfillment in this life then she will never choose this course. Only those who look to a heavenly reward can with joy turn their back on this world and its alluring offerings of self-fulfillment and pleasure. Only by understanding that her reward is elsewhere can a woman choose to accept man as her head and to refuse to have a head of her own.

I have encountered so many examples of women who are not walking in these things, even as I have encountered many men who are not seeking the will of Christ for their lives. How often has a man declared to his wife that he senses Christ leading him in some direction and the wife opposes him because her will is not in agreement?

I know of men who felt called to be missionaries and their wives adamantly refused to go along. The wife wanted to stay close to home, close to family and friends. The wife may have had some plans of her own regarding career and education, and her husband's will conflicted with these things. She may have simply wanted to have a 'normal' life where she could raise children in the comfort of surroundings that were familiar to her. The wife ultimately was unwilling to bend. She was unwilling to subject her will to that of her husband.

I could give example after example of such things, for this is the norm in the church today, but let us press on to other matters. There will often come times when a wife or daughter is required to submit and to give up their own will and desire for that of a husband or father. As large and difficult of an obstacle as this is, there is much more that is entailed in losing one's own life and laying it down for another. There is much more to a wife being subject to her husband as to the Lord.

I listened to a minister speak on the issue of submission many years ago. He gave an example from a very practical experience in his own life. This minister had some land and he proceeded to build a fence on it. He had a young man whom he hired to assist him with the fence. Throughout the day the minister noted some profound things as he worked with this young man.

The minister began to build the fence and he would ask the young man for a board, or some nails and the young man would bring them over. Building a fence is a very repetitious chore and one would expect that this young man would catch on quickly and he would anticipate what his employer needed next, but he never acted as if he did. After a short while it should have been obvious that the minister was going to need a board next, or some more nails, or some other thing, but the young man never anticipated his wishes. He always had to be asked to bring another board. He always had to be asked to do everything.

Needless to say, the minister's experience with this young man was not satisfying to him. The job went much slower than it could have had the young man made himself more useful.

In relating this story, the minister was actually speaking of the calling of those under authority to make those over them successful. Whether the authority is on the job, in the home, or in some other sphere of life, those under authority should have the goal of making those in authority as successful as possible.

If this had been the young man's goal he would have tried to anticipate what he could do to make the fence building proceed with the greatest efficiency. He could have anticipated his employer's needs and he could have been ready to hand him a board without needing to be asked. He could anticipate when nails were running low and fetch some more without being instructed to do so. He could have in many ways brought a greater success to the one who hired him.

Why did the young man not do so? It was most likely because the young man was self-focused. He was not working to make his employer successful, he was working to earn some money for himself. He was oblivious to anything but his own desires and goals. He simply wanted to get through the day and collect his money.

In the same way, many wives are self-absorbed. They are consumed with thoughts of what they desire to get out of life and what they can do to get there. At times their husbands will ask them to do something that will throw a wrench in their own plans, and then the stage is set for them to decide whether they will live for their own desires, or whether they will be subject to their husbands as to the Lord.

It is the rare wife who will subject her will to her husband's, freely and without murmuring or complaining. There is a remnant who are seeking to be obedient, but if a wife merely obeys when asked to do so, she has done no better than the young man who helped this minister build his fence. She has not really applied herself to making her husband successful.

The wife who seeks to make her husband successful will make it her goal and aspiration in life to know where he is going and to seek to help him get there in the best fashion. She will apply herself to learning what his desires are for her and she will seek to fulfill those desires without the necessity of constant prompting.

Again, I feel it necessary to make a distinction between the godly and ungodly desires of a man. A wife or daughter should not make it her goal to help her husband or father attain ungodly desires in the best manner possible. It is not the wife's or daughter's calling to correct a wrong authority, but they need not speed them on their way to an ungodly goal, either.

A wife or daughter should have some discernment about the will of Yahweh, and in most cases they will find that their husband or father does have many godly desires that they can assist them in fulfilling. If a woman has a husband or father whose heart is intent on following Christ as a disciple, then there should be many opportunities to help them succeed.

Let me give you a couple of examples on how a wife can help her husband to be successful in accomplishing his desires. Since my wife and I first got married I have desired that she dress in a modest and feminine manner. I have always thought that women are very modest and attractive in long dresses, and I made my desire known to my wife. My wife had many other influences in the church, however, and for many years she did not walk in the principles spoken of here. She did things according to her desire and will. She had a tendency to make strong friendships with other women, and I would find her conforming in image to these women rather than to her husband's desires.

My wife went through various phases. She had one friend who liked stirrup pants and a variety of tops, often with the padded shoulders, to coordinate with them. My wife went shopping with her and her whole wardrobe changed to this fashion. Later she had another friend that liked a different fashion that was known for its wild patterns and bright colors, as well as pants and shorts. Again my wife's dress changed.

In all of this my desires were not fulfilled, and the effect was felt in our home. I have also desired that our daughter should dress modestly and in feminine apparel. However, my daughter found that she had her own preferences, I will call it the tomboy look, and she dressed in this way. My wife was not able to lead our daughter into conforming to my desire for her dress because my wife was not conforming herself. I was therefore hindered in bringing my family to be arrayed with modesty, and with what I viewed to be appropriate and godly dress.

Last year (our sixteenth year of marriage), the Father brought forth many foundational changes in our marriage, and my wife began to dress in a manner that I had long desired. She began to practice headcovering and she began wearing long dresses. I have never considered my wife to be so attractive as she is now. Her physical appearance is very pleasing to me.

It was no coincidence that our daughter began to wear a headcovering shortly after my wife, and not long after this she also began wearing dresses. My daughter is the very picture of a godly young woman, and this is very pleasing to me. She came to the conviction to wear dresses and a headcovering on her own, but the way was prepared by her mother's example of obedience in this area.

A woman has an incredible power in her home and among others in influencing them toward godliness. Her husband needs her support and active participation in bringing forth those things he feels are in keeping with godliness.

Another area that I will give as an example of how a wife can help make her husband more successful in life is the area of preparing food for one's family. I have long been a junk food eater. My flesh likes all the wrong kinds of food and I have suffered from the effects of being overweight most of my life.

The effects of being overweight can make one feel tired and lacking in energy. This tiredness can make one more susceptible to melancholy and depressive thoughts. As a minister who often has dealt with great opposition, discouragement can be a constant battle. Being overweight and feeling tired can also make one less productive in work, and less likely to want to spend time in physical activity with the family.

In my own family there is also a history of heart problems which are largely due to an improper diet. I have known that eating the wrong kind of foods has been a problem for some time, and I have expressed my concern to my wife, communicating a desire for us to eat healthier foods.

I do some of the cooking around the house, and I have only myself to blame for being

overweight. I could spend the time researching what would constitute a healthy diet and learning how to prepare foods that would promote good health, but I have many other duties that the Father has given to me. If I were to spend much time in this area, studying healthy eating, then I would have to put aside something else that is also very important. This is an ideal situation in which my wife could help me out tremendously.

Changing our eating habits has been a challenge for my wife for she has been raised on a traditional Southern diet that is high in fat and which accentuates meat dishes, with less emphasis placed on fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes and whole grains. To begin to cook healthy would require learning many new things and overcoming old habits.

My wife is now beginning to look into this matter of healthier cooking, and I am very thankful for it. I desire to be healthier and to feel healthier. Now that I am seeing in her a desire to prepare healthy foods for our family to eat, my mind is freed of its burden in this area. I know that as my wife applies herself to this area that our whole family will benefit, and I will personally begin to experience very real improvements in regard to physical stamina, emotional well being, and bodily health.

A husband may express a desire similar to the one's I have mentioned here, but their wife may not take any real steps on their own to satisfy their husband's wishes or desires. They may be more like the young man who had to be told everything. But a godly woman who wants her husband to be successful will apply herself, and she will do all she can to anticipate and fulfill his desires.

There are a myriad of things a wife can do to help her husband to be more successful in life. To do so, however, she must put away her own self-focus and she must become attentive to his life, seeking to help him achieve the calling on his life. Again, she will only do this as she looks to a heavenly reward and as she dies to the desires of her own soul with its longing to find fulfillment while in these earthly bodies.

I am sure that some are thinking here that the woman who lives to help her husband fulfill his calling will be hindered or robbed of pursuing the call on her own life. Those who make this objection are not understanding that this is the call on a woman's life. Even as a man is to live to fulfill the desire of his Head, woman was created to be a helper for man.

Another thing that is not understood is that the calling of every man and woman is to be conformed to the image of Christ. This conformity is not so much about outward activity as it is about an inward transformation. Yahshua was meek, and

humble, and selfless. Success in life comes by being conformed to this same image.

Success is not being a great musician so that you can lead others in praise of Yahweh. It is not about writing books that others will read and notice. It is not about being the most learned, or eloquent, or well known, or having the most achievements to boast about. Success is conformity to Christ, and we have these words regarding Yahshua.

Philippians 2:5-8

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Yahshua, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We will likewise be successful when we are able to let go of everything in our lives, when we claim no personal ownership or will of our own. When we can empty ourselves and humble ourselves as a servant to others, then we will meet with success. This is the will of the Father for us.

If a wife cannot take her husband to be her lord, then how can she take Christ to be her Lord? If she cannot humble herself before the husband that she sees, then how will she humble herself before Christ whom she does not see? There is no difference before God in submitting oneself to Yahweh's direct authority, or to the authority that He has granted to Christ and to man.

There is a very consistent pattern exhibited in Yahweh's government. Yahweh is the head of Christ, and Christ lives to do the will of the Yahweh. Christ is the head of man and man lives to do the will of Christ. Man is the head of woman and woman lives to do the will of man. Even as Christ lays down His life, so man lays down his, and woman lays down hers. Even as Christ did not choose His will when it conflicted with the Father's, so man is not to choose his will over Christ's, nor is woman to choose her will over man's.

As a man, it is necessary that I constantly seek to know the will of Christ that I might fulfill His desire. Likewise, wives are to seek to know the will of their husbands so that they might fulfill their desire.

If woman is seeking to fulfill the desire of her husband, and her husband is seeking to fulfill the desire of Christ, and Christ is seeking to fulfill the desire of the Father, then all is in harmony and the will of the Father is being accomplished throughout

the entire Kingdom of God.

This seeking should be an active seeking on all levels. Man need not wait until Christ hits him over the head with some command. Man should apply himself to search out the mind of Christ. Man must learn to discern the still, small voice of Christ. Even so, woman should actively seek to know the will of her husband. If you are married, do not wait for your husband to verbalize his desires. Seek them out. He may not always tell you what is really on his heart. Learn to read between the lines and to pick up on the subtle hints that he gives. Be mindful of the things he has spoken to you. Become attentive to him with a desire to make him successful.

If you have been as the young man who had to be told everything, then it will take effort to train yourself to do otherwise. Foremost, you must die to being focused on your own will, desires, and goals. Have you been thinking upon what you desire out of life? Have you been focused upon your own fulfillment? If you continue on this course then you will fail to make your husband successful.

The Kingdom of God is built upon the principle of servanthood. It may seem that I am proclaiming something that would give men the license to be domineering tyrants. This is not so. The man is called to lay down his life to do the will of Christ. Christ will lead the man to be a servant to others.

There are always instances where a man is not walking as he should in submission to Christ, and a woman feels she is in a perilous place and that her needs will not be considered if she lays down her life for her husband. Such a woman must consider that her own example of godliness and humility may affect her husband for good, but if she chooses the road of rebellion then she will certainly fail to influence him to walk in obedience and humility. Rebellion does not produce obedience. It merely leads to strife and conflict. It is only when a woman bears up when suffering unjustly that her behavior finds favor with God. It is only when she is walking submitted to her husband that the Father will act quickly to bring correction to the authority in disobedience.

I will conclude this chapter with these words. A woman who lays down her own goals and desires may have them given back to her at some time. There is a pattern revealed in scripture where the Father gives someone a vision, but the vision dies completely only to be reborn and fulfilled by the power of the Spirit. In this way the Father removes the flesh from our actions and pursuits.

You may have some great talent, or you may feel some great call on your life. So did Moses and Joseph when they were young, but their hopes and dreams died, and all

possibility of their dreams being resurrected through any effort of their own was removed. Only when they died to seeking to accomplish their dreams in their own strength could the Father fulfill His purposes in them.

Death precedes life. Humility comes before honor. Yahweh will ask you to lay that which is dearest to you on the altar. Your Isaac must be sacrificed. Only when you let go of what has a hold on your heart will you be truly free.

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:4

The Reward of the Godly Woman

Having read this book thus far, it should be evident that the Father has established His government in such a way that everyone who submits to His government must go through a process of crucifixion and death. Yahshua set the example when He submitted to His head and He went to the cross. Man is to follow as he takes Christ as head and dies to his own soul life. Woman completes the pattern by taking man as her head and dying to her soul's desires and will.

All would be bleak, however, if we merely stopped at the point of crucifixion. Yahshua did not stay on the cross forever. Despite all the crucifixes that adorn church walls and are hung on chains around people's necks, Yahshua is no longer on the cross. As a seed is planted in the ground and dies, so too did He die and he was buried. But praise Yahweh, He has risen again to new life and has sat down at the right hand of the Father.

The government of God is ordered in such a way that those who will submit to it will find the hard outer shell of their life experiencing extreme pressures. The flesh does not want to die. The soul life of man does not want to submit to Yahweh's rule and authority.

As we choose the path of obedience we find that our soul life is crushed, but then a marvelous thing happens. Even as the shell of a seed must be broken open for new life to spring forth, so too in our lives, when we submit to the breaking of God, we will find new life being released from us. This new life is not of man, it is of Christ. As we submit to the process of crucifixion, and as we lay down our life, we gain the release of the life of Christ within.

Many speak of having eternal life as if it is some gift that merely extends their mortal life. Eternal life is much more than this. Eternal life is a person. Yahshua said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6). When we are born again we receive the life of Christ within our beings. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7). But even as Gideon and his three hundred men had to break the

clay jars that covered their torches for the light to shine forth, so too must the earthen vessels of our lives be broken to let the light of Christ shine forth. If there is no breaking, there is no light.

Many saints go around boasting that they have eternal life, yet the life is never released. Many are those who have received Christ as their life and light, but they keep Him bottled up. If the grain of wheat does not die, it will not produce life. If the vessels of our lives are not broken, no life will come forth. Yes, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, but sadly it is rarely seen or released.

The majority of the saints are engaged in protecting their soul life. Rather than allowing the life of Christ to be released through them, they keep it penned up, and they offer to God sacrifices and works from their own soul. Many desperately seek to retain their soul life, their will and their desires, being self-directed. As long as they can retain their soul life they are willing to offer sacrifices to God, but Yahweh does not want sacrifices. He desires obedience.

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, death entered into all of mankind.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...

It does no good for man to offer actions and activities to God that originate with man. To do so is to offer that which is dead unto God. God wants a living sacrifice. He wants us to lay down our lives and allow the life within us, the life of His Son, to be unveiled and released. Many are the scriptures that reveal that Yahshua is the treasure that the saints possess. He is our life. He is our light. He is our truth. He is everything to us.

John 6:35

Yahshua said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

John 6:47-48

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life."

John 8:12

Then Yahshua again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light

of life."

John 11:25-26

Yahshua said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

John 14:6

Yahshua said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Revelation 21:6

Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."

God the Father has not given to us things, He has given us His Son. He has not given us truth, He has given us His Son who is truth. He has not given us eternal life, He has given us His Son who is eternal life. When we are born again by the Spirit we receive the life of Christ into our beings. Truly it is said that old things pass away. All things become new.

However much the church confesses that they have Christ, their words are hollow and empty if they do not allow the life of Christ to be released. Most do not do so because it requires a crucifixion first. Instead the church has adopted theologies that proclaim that man is to attempt to imitate Christ. They are to look at the scriptures and ask the question in every circumstance, "What would Jesus do?"

This is all wrong! Man cannot duplicate the actions of Christ. What folly and frustration this is. It leads to burned out saints who grow weary of trying to do that which is impossible for them to do. The church has lost the understanding that it is Christ who must be released to do His works through us. The apostle Paul put it this way:

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

This is the process in its most basic form. We submit to the government of Yahweh which will always lead to a crucifixion of our flesh. We lay down our soul life, so that

it is “no longer I who live.” The life of Christ is then released within us and He accomplishes His works through us. Our life becomes a life of faith. We believe we are one with Christ. We believe His life is in us. We believe that He will accomplish His will through us as we submit to Him. We believe that we are already seated with Him in heavenly places. We believe that we are righteous in Him, and not by our own actions.

When the Jews asked Yahshua what they must do to do the works of God, He answered:

John 6:29

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

When the seed falls into the ground and dies, it does not arise as it once was. It now expresses a new life that has been present inside the seed. The seed does not have to strain to bring forth this new life, it simply has to submit to the process of death and the life will come forth of its own. We cannot bring forth fruit by striving. The whole life of Christ is entered into by belief.

No one can walk this path for you. Each person must enter in themselves. I cannot bring you to the place of total comprehension of all the dynamics of this life. But I can show you the doorway. Death is the door through which we enter into life. This book has been focused upon showing women that the way before them is the way of suffering and death, but this path leads to life. For any woman to embrace the government of God she must die to her own soul life, to her will, her desires, her own rule, her goals, her aspirations, and her dreams.

The woman who refuses to embrace this path of crucifixion will never find the door to life. She may feel that she is protecting her life by avoiding this path, but in the end she will lose it and she will never find within her being the release of true life. She will forever be walking according to the carnal nature that is passing away, forfeiting the experience of knowing what it is to have Christ live in her.

This at last is the glory and reward of the godly woman. By dying to her own life and having the hard outer shell of her earthen vessel broken open, she experiences the life of Christ being revealed through her. The treasure within is revealed for all to see. She is a transformed woman and all who come into her presence must note the difference. She has exchanged her life for the life of her Savior.

May it be said of many women that “they loved not their life to the death” (Revelation

12:11). May it equally be said that “In them was life, and this life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Yes, this was spoken of the Savior, but it should be equally true of each of us, for we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

Selah (Pause and consider)

Amen

Other Books by this Author

	<p>The Remnant Bride</p> <p>Who exactly is the Bride of Christ? If you thought the Bride was all Christians, this book will surprise and startle you.</p>
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	<p>God's Plan of the Ages</p> <p>This book will establish a foundation for understanding God's work among man, the angels, and all of creation.</p>
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