

Sermon: The Model of a Godly Woman

Text: Proverbs 31:10-31 ESV; I Peter 3:1-7 ESV

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Introduction: No matter what you may have heard, there only two possible genders for humanity: male and female. Boys and girls, if they live long enough, grow up to be men and women. Our focus, today, is on godly women. Godliness is a choice we all can make. I am not insensitive to infertility issues, nor the choice that is sometimes made to remain single. Paul talks about that in **I Corinthians**, and there can be great value in that as well.

But, because it is Mother's Day, today, I want to focus on women and also the importance of living a godly life for not only a husband and children, but literally everyone. The world is watching, and our witness can be indeed powerful.

Mark Twain once said: "Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture which they can not understand; but as for me, I have always noticed that the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I *do* understand."

In a rapidly changing society of shifting values, it is increasingly important that we follow biblical models for all our relationships. The role of a woman, and especially the wife in the family, is of critical importance. "If the time should ever come when women are not Christians and houses are not homes, then we shall have lost the chief cornerstones on which civilization rests" - Andrew Dickson White

I Peter 3:1-7 ESV Wives and Husbands

1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they see your respectful and pure conduct. **3** Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— **4** but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. **5** For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. **7** Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

A godly woman needs to be:

I. Submissive

A. Submission is not a weak quality.

Being submissive to your husband (or to Christ, if you are single) is not a bad quality. It is a completely voluntary action done out of love and respect. There are many examples of submission in the NT. In our text in **I Peter**, Sarah is found obeying Abraham thereby showing she was submissive.

Jesus was a submissive person. He was submissive to his parents. We hear in **Luke 2:51a ESV** “And he (Jesus) went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.” Earlier Jesus had taught learned men in the temple area with great authority. Jesus was also, in every way, submissive to God.

I Corinthians 15:27-28 ESV ²⁷ For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

The Church is to be subject or submissive to Christ, its Head, just like a wife is to be to her husband, and children to their parents. Certainly, submission is not a sign of weakness or a character flaw.

A Christian is to be submissive to his government. In **Ephesians 5**, masters are not asked to be submissive to their slaves, neither are parents to their children. Never are any of these areas of submission reciprocal with the exception of the husband and wife relationship where in **5:21** it reads regarding the husband-wife relationship that they are to be: ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Sometimes the word *hypotasso* (translated here: “be submissive”) has been misunderstood and some have tried to soften it to mean ‘be thoughtful and considerate; act in love’ (toward one another). This kind of sometimes wishful thinking breaks down logically when we hear that demons were subject to the disciples (**Luke 10:17**)

It should be remembered that submission to authority does not mean “inequality” or a lack of value or importance. Jesus was subject to his parents and God, but no one would say Jesus was of less value or importance. It means we know how to love.

“In submission we are at last free to value other people. Their dreams and plans become important to us. We have entered into a new, wonderful, glorious freedom -the freedom to give up our rights for the good of others. For the first time we can love people unconditionally.” - (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, p. 112)

“Silence frees us from the need to control others. One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others. A frantic stream of words flows from us in an attempt to straighten others out. We want so desperately for them to agree with us, to see things our way. We evaluate people, judge people, condemn people. We devour people with our words. Silence is one of the deepest Disciplines of the Spirit simply because it puts the stopper on that” (Richard Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity*, pp.57 -58)

The book of Proverbs has a number of things to say about the qualities a godly woman should have and not have. [Proverbs 31:10–31 ESV](#) is an acrostic poem, each verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet:

10 An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. 13 She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. 14 She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. 15 She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. 17 She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. 20 She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. 22 She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

And also ... **Proverbs 21:9, 19 ESV** ⁹ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife. ¹⁹ It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.

Proverbs 27:15 ESV ¹⁵ A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike;

A godly woman who is submissive would not be quarrelsome or argumentative. Do you know how to have the last word in an argument? - You apologize!

How many arguments have you won?
Most arguments aren't really won, only discontinued!

I Peter 3: 1 that we read earlier is many times quoted for the benefit of wives of unbelievers, but it is equally true for those who have believing husbands, too.

A godly woman needs to be submissive:
B. For the Lord's sake (as well as the husband's).

The purpose of this kind of submission is **FOR THE LORD**.

I Peter 2:13-14 ESV ¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

In our text it states that submission is also for the benefit of the unbelieving husband that he may be won to Christ "without a word." This obviously is a hyperbole. Peter does not mean for women never to speak to their husbands. What he does want us to avoid is over-talking, continual preaching - Some might call it nagging.

Submission to the husband though never supersedes the wife's responsibility to Christ. And submission to a husband cannot be justified so as to go along with behavior that is sinful or wrong. Jesus Christ must always take priority over **EVERY RELATIONSHIP**.

Matthew 12:48-50 ESV ⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

(also see **Matthew 8:21-22**)

A godly woman needs to be:

II. Setting a Standard (I Peter 3:2-4)

A. Of purity – verse 2

Blessed are the pure in heart, Jesus said, for they will see God. Anyone can change. Even prostitutes are put up as models of faith in the book of Hebrews. Rahab, the prostitute is put up alongside men of faith like Abraham. She stands as a model of purity. (**Proverbs** also discusses purity and faithfulness by the husband and wife in **Proverbs 6:20-29**. Verse 32 shows us how not being pure is destructive.) **Proverbs 6:32 ESV** ³² He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

Biblical writer, Luke was ahead of his time in the value he placed on women. And this prose from - Eaton Stannard Barrett: *Woman*, Pt. I summarizes this point a bit.

Not she with trait'rous kiss her Savior stung.
Not she denied Him with unholy tongue;
She, while apostles shrank, could dangers brave,
Last at the cross and earliest at the grave.

Everybody needs a good model. In Scripture, Abraham is lifted up as a great model for men, yet Sarah is a great model for women - even today:

B. Of beauty (that is imperishable or unfading) - verses 3-4

There is a tremendous difference between inner and outer beauty. There is much talk about how women of the first century tried to make themselves beautiful. Extravagance and excess is not a 21st century phenomena. Seneca spoke of women with two or three fortunes in their ears.

Outward appearance is not the gauge of inner beauty. Jesus speaks of “whited sepulchres” that were full of dead man’s bones. People can be like that, too.

Some religious sects are opposed to makeup and jewelry based on the **I Peter 3** passage - but to be faithful to the text they also of necessity would need to be against clothing, and I do not know of anyone willing to press this passage that far. Talking about makeup on women, Dr. Henderson, somewhat insensitively, once said, “If the barn needs painted, paint it!” (You could say those things back in the 60’s)

There is plenty of artificial beauty to go around. Advertising tells us what we should hold as beautiful - but that changes every generation. Keats said, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all."

A godly woman needs to be setting a standard

C. Of hope

Sarah waited for God's promise - a son. Against all hope she believed...

A godly wife may need to wait patiently in hope that her example of beauty, purity, and reverence will have an accumulative effect on her unbelieving husband.

A godly woman needs to be:

III. Timeless

Paul wrote something nearly 2000 years ago that is still true: **Galatians 5:22-23 ESV** ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

A. Some things never go out of style.

like wingtips, and Paisley ties, OK, maybe not the ties...

Proverbs 12:4a ESV ^{4a} An excellent wife is the crown of her husband,

Proverbs 11:16a ESV ^{16a} A gracious woman gets honor,

Proverbs 11:22 ESV ²² Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.

A godly woman will always:

B. Think about tomorrow.

Hebrews 6:4-6 ESV ⁴ For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Faithfulness in every aspect of a marriage (relationship) is a continual project. It is awfully difficult for a Christian woman to walk away from her husband - just like a Christian who might walk away from Christ - It becomes terribly difficult to find your way back.

What we do today affects what we will have and be tomorrow. Don't trade away tomorrow for today. Don't be short-sighted or myopic in how you see your life. There is gold, and there is iron pyrite. Do not be foolish with your life's decisions.

Conclusion: Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "God save us all from wives who are angels in the street, saints in the church, and devils at home." The reason for the decline of the family, as God meant it to be, is the lack or absence of good models and absolute values. One of the things that will preserve our world is a godly family." The Church must be the answer for people who do not know "How" or "Why."

Women are equal with men in the area of salvation, but some of their functions within the family are different. In a culture that screams for equality in everything, WE NEED TO LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD FOR ALL OUR LIVES.

I Peter 3:7 ESV ⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.