

# Understanding God's Design for Men and Women in Marriage

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. An old man goes to the Wizard to ask him if he can remove a curse he has been living with for the last 40 years. The Wizard says, 'Maybe, but you will have to tell me the exact words that were used to put the curse on you.' The old man says without hesitation, 'I now pronounce you man and wife.'
  - 1. How did we get to the point that we view the first great blessing given to humankind as a trap in which we must suffer?
  - 2. Yogi Berra once said: "If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."
  - 3. Where are you going in your marriage? Are you fulfilling God's purpose for your marriage? Do you even know what that purpose is?
  - 4. We have failed to understand and implement God's plan for our role in our marriages
- B. Begin with learning what God has planned for marriage from the beginning

## I. SIMILARITIES IN GOD'S DESIGN FOR MAN AND WOMAN IN MARRIAGE

- A. Gen. 1:26-27 – Men and women share equally in bearing the image of God
- B. Gen. 1:28, 31 – Men and women were blessed equally by God
- C. Gen. 1:28 – Men and women were given dominion over the earth
- D. Gen. 1:29-30 – Men and women were to share equally in earth's blessings
- E. Gen. 2:18 – Men and women share the basic need for companionship
  - 1. God's original design of a wife: "I will make him a help (Exer) meet (Ezer - an aid to fulfillment)." A wife shares equally when her husband achieves God's potential for his life. A husband shares equally with his wife when she reaches God's potential for her life.
  - 2. But equal does not mean identical or interchangeable. As Adam and Eve are created, they complement each other; they do not replace each other. Adam is a man; Eve is a woman. From the beginning, there are vast differences between the two, differences which are much more than biological and anatomical. Adam is called by God to be a masculine man; Eve is called by God to be a feminine woman. They are equal as persons of value before God and to one another, but different.
- F. 1Peter 3:7 – "and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." The salvation of men and women depends on how they comport themselves in their marriage.
- G. Eph. 5:22-33 – Commands given to men and women regarding marriage are bound upon both with equal force
- H. Rom. 7:2-3 – Both are locked in the marriage bond with equal force

## II. DIFFERENCES IN GOD'S DESIGN FOR MAN AND WOMAN IN MARRIAGE

- A. Adam's role as leader – Gen. 2:18-24
  - 1. Eve was created to be a companion to complete Adam
  - 2. Eve was created from Adam
  - 3. Eve was named by Adam - See also 1Tim. 2:13

4. We conclude that Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before they sinned, and was not the result of sin. Sin introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women:
  5. In the home, the husband's loving, humble leadership tends to be replaced by either domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission is often replaced by usurpation or servility.
  6. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to object to Divine limitations on their roles or to neglect the Lord's work.
- B. Eve's role as follower
1. The woman sinned first, deceived by the Serpent; characteristic of a follower – Gen. 3:6
  2. The man sinned deliberately; characteristic of a leader – Gen. 3:6
  3. As a result of the sin, Adam's role becomes harder – Gen. 3:17-18
  4. As a result of the sin, Eve's role becomes more difficult - Gen. 3:16
- C. However, each of their roles give them a means of fulfillment and spirituality
1. For the man to work hard and lead - Ecc. 2:24, 3:22; 1Tim. 5:8
  2. For the woman to bear children and follow – Titus 2:4-5; 1Tim. 2:14-15
  3. She will validate her place in the family and her position as a woman in this world by fulfilling her role

### **III. THE DIFFERENCES IN GOD'S DESIGN FOR THEIR NEEDS IN MARRIAGE**

- A. Eph. 5:22-33 – He wants respect, and she wants love, even if they do not understand their needs
1. It is part of God's design; He knows what we need and what will best fulfill those needs
  2. Husbands and wives don't understand each other because they are trying to give the other what they want for themselves; they are not wrong, just misguided
- B. 1Peter 3:7 – "Heirs together of the grace of life" What happens when the needs are not met?
1. Blaming, assigning responsibility, establishing expectations, making demands, delivering ultimatums; counterproductive, hurtful and harmful
  2. As the leader in the relationship, if anyone bears more responsibility than the other, it is the husband. In the majority of cases, his leadership sets the tone for the relationship
  3. So lead in the marriage by giving her what she needs and by being the kind of husband you should be
  4. She will in all likelihood and by design respond favorably to this kind of treatment
  5. If not, that is between her and God, and she will be lost; if she refuses to be a good wife, it's on her head, not yours
  6. "But I am not happy!" Oh well. Sometimes the choices we make in life, including the choice of a mate, lead to unhappiness in this world
  7. You remain steadfast in obedience to God and doing what is right by your mate and go to heaven

8. It's not about you and what you want; it's about what is right
- C. 1Peter 3:1-6 – Wives toward your husband
1. Rom. 2:7 – “Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality”
  2. “Suppose he stays a bully?” He's lost, but you stay faithful, do what is right and go to heaven
  3. Commands for husbands and wives are between the recipient and God. He did not assign us the task of being the enforcer... teachers only
- D. Protesting won't change this
1. “I can't love her as the Bible says, because she is too hard to live with! God will understand in my unique set of circumstances because He knows what I have suffered with her.”
  2. Just like saying: “I can't go to worship because I don't feel well, and God knows how much I suffer in my unique set of circumstances.” Does it keep you from work, seeing friends, fishing? No. Then who are you fooling besides yourself? You are lost.
    - a. James 2:10 – “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”
  3. Do you love your children, friends, parents, etc.? Then stop copping out and find a way to love her as she is, or keep going as you are and go to hell like a man.
  4. “But my husband is too hard to respect; God knows how much I suffer with him. He will understand if I treat him distantly and disdainfully.”
  5. Do you respect your children, friends, family? Then start showing him affection and respect or else stop playing a being a Christian

Conclusion:

- Song 8:6-7 - “Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death... 7 Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it.”
- How do young newlywed couples go from there to here?
- Esther 1:17-18ff - “So that they will despise their husbands in their eyes... Thus there will be excessive contempt and wrath.”
- Mal. 2:14 - “The LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.”