

Wives, Be Subject

*“Wives, be subject to your husbands,
as is fitting in the Lord.”
Colossians 3:18.*

A woman called one day and asked, “How far does God expect a woman to go in regards to submitting to her husband?” Maybe you are asking the same question or maybe you really don't want to know because you feel it is old-fashioned, out-of-date or not applicable today.

In my stand for my marriage, I faced some serious submission decisions. Let me walk you through the same journey the Lord took me through as I searched the Scriptures for His answers. First, let's look at the two examples of submission that God specifically asks women to follow:

Jesus

Follow in His steps. “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**...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.” 1Pet. 2:21-23.

Submit in the same way. Right after 1Peter 2 tells us to “follow in His steps” chapter 3 immediately begins with, “In the same way.” He tells us that “In the same way” we wives are to submit to our husbands as He submitted to God, His Heavenly Father. Jesus was submitted to the authority of God the Father and we are to be submitted to the authority of our husbands.

Christ is the head of EVERY man. We know and understand that God the Father is over Jesus, yet how can we be sure that our husband (saved or not) is over us? “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of *every man*, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.” 1Cor. 11:3.

Disobedient to the Word. Now that we are sure that God is speaking to wives, what does He command? “In the same way you wives be submissive to your *own* husbands, so that 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.” 1Pet. 3:1-2.

If you use the KJV Bible this same verse says “that they may be won by the **conversation** of their wives.” I thought, “This is great; I can tell my husband about all of his mistakes!” Well, guess what? I went to my concordance and looked up the word “conversation” and I found out it meant “attitude,” *not talking!* What surprised me even more was a verse in 1Peter. It said that Sarah obeyed her husband Abraham, and I could become like her.

Sarah

Calling him lord. As you continue to read, it goes on to say, “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.*” 1Pet. 3:6.

We can become like Sarah: 1) obey our husbands like she did, **and** 2) do it without being “frightened by any fear.” What would we be afraid of? Well, what was Sarah asked to do by her husband Abraham that could have caused her to be fearful?

In Genesis 12:11-13 and also in Genesis 20:2, we see how Abram (later Abraham) asked Sarai (later Sarah) to lie! To sin! Abraham told her to say that she was his sister thus allowing her to be taken as another man’s wife! She did obey her husband. Now that’s submission!! Not many women have been called to submit like that!

If that were the only portion of Scripture concerning a wife’s submission to her husband, maybe we could dismiss it. However, this is not the only Scripture on a wife’s submission to her husband. We will find that the Scriptures have much more to say on the subject.

Subject in everything. This Scripture explains that your relationship with your husband is to be the same as Christ’s relationship with the church. “Wives, be subject to your own husband, as unto 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.**” Eph 5:22 - 24. Isn’t it sad that many churches don’t submit to Christ and His teachings, and in the same way, so many women don’t submit to their husbands? Is there any correlation?

Who hoped in God. Where is my hope when I submit to my husband as I strive to be a “holy woman”? “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.” 1Pet. 3:5. Our hope and trust must be in God. (See lesson 5, “Won Without a Word,” for “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge....” Hosea 4:6.)

How can we trust God if our authority has hurt us? Scripture says, “For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise of the same.” Rom. 13:3. How could Scripture say that when we know that many times the authority over us is not looking out nor caring for us? How did Sarah manage to submit to her husband? Sarah totally trusted God. She wasn’t trusting her husband. Abraham was the one who was responsible twice for her compromising position with Pharaoh! She simply and completely trusted God. “...**Blessed** is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose trust is the LORD.” Jer. 17:7. “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD.” Jer. 17:5.

Many women have thought, “I married the wrong man.” Sarah certainly must have thought that on occasion; I thought that as well. We can spend our days thinking “what if...” Instead, let us rest in this verse: “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and *those which exist are established by God.*” Romans 13:1. Our Father knew who we were going to marry before the foundation of the earth. He will use it for our good, if we can stop thinking about the “what ifs” and concentrate on God’s purpose for our suffering. “Although He was a Son, He

learned obedience from the things which **He suffered.**” Hebr. 5:8. (See lesson 10, “Various Trials,” for “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge...” Hosea 4:6.)

When I looked at the example of Christ and His submission, I could see His situation was very similar to mine. Jesus was dealing with unreasonable men who reviled Him, caused Him to suffer, and threatened Him. “Be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are *unreasonable*...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.” 1Pet. 2:18, 23. “If the temper of a ruler rises up against you, do not leave your place, [or show a resisting spirit]; for gentleness and calmness prevent or put a stop to great offenses.” Eccl. 10:4 AMP. God is clear in that no matter what treatment we are receiving, we are to be respectful and submissive.

The Word of God blasphemed! Why is it so important that we submit to our husbands? Because, when we don’t, our *actions* **blaspheme** God! “The aged women...teach the young women...to love their husbands...being obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.” Titus 2:5 KJV.

As is fitting to the Lord. How are we to act with our husbands? As is fitting to the Lord! “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as is fitting to the Lord.” Col. 3:18. Is the way you act toward your husband fitting to the Lord? In other words, would you act the same way to the Lord if He were standing in your husband’s place? A sobering thought, isn’t it?

The woman was deceived. The most important reason that we are to be under our husbands’ authority is for our protection. “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman **being quite deceived, fell into transgression.** But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint.” 1Tim 2:11-15.

Because of the time in which we live, many of us have difficulty accepting the concept of submission. But, dear sister in Christ, there is nothing that God would instruct us to do that is not for our good. Being subject will protect us from deception, which will cause our destruction.

Now that we have reviewed the Scriptures, let us answer some other questions you may have, using God’s Wisdom....

Testimony

It is with permission from my husband, Dan, that I share this testimony of submission with you. It is our hope that this will put to rest, once and for all, your fear in submitting to your husband. We hope that our testimony will show you that there is protection when you take an extreme stand in submitting to your husband, even when he is disobedient to the Word. Ladies, submission is applicable today.

My husband was at the time backslidden and in adultery. He hated and mocked my submission to the Lord and to him. One night, when we were on a trip with some of his business associates, he told me that we were going to a nightclub where there was nude dancing. Then he moved toward my face and said, “Well, are you going to submit?” He was determined that I go, so I agreed. When he left to purchase the

tickets, I went into the restroom and prayed “out loud” like I had never prayed before. **Immediately God came through!** We ran into one of his friends who asked where we were going. When my husband told him, this man went crazy, telling Dan how horrible it was and *not to take me*. I could have walked on air – my faith in God was soaring!

Undaunted, he pulled out tickets for another (a little less filthy) show. But my faith was so high, I *knew* God would deliver me! As we drove closer and closer to our destination, I kept looking and imagining how God was going to stop my husband. However, I was shocked when we went in, sat down, and he ordered drinks. *Just to let you in on the magnitude of this submission, my husband’s adulteress sat down at the table with us when we got there!* Tears filled my eyes as the show began, not because my husband had brought me, but because I felt God had abandoned me.

But, ladies, God is so faithful and we can trust Him. When the lights went out right after the first performance (which by the way I could NOT even see because of the tears), my husband turned to me and told me, “Run! Get out of here!” Again submitting, I ran! Soon my husband met me outside with tears in his eyes. He said, “I can’t believe I did this to you. I am so sorry. I will never ask you to submit like that again. I am ashamed of myself.”

And he never did. As a matter of fact, even before we were restored, he took on the job of my protector from the immorality of the world. God has a blessing for us whenever we can trust and prove our faith in Him alone! Usually God delivers us, but sometimes we must go through the “fiery trial” in order to receive our reward! God is faithful; we can trust Him even when our husbands put our submission to the test!

Questions Answered by Scripture

What is submission or being subject? It is obeying without even a word, *especially* when your husband is being disobedient to the Word of God (1Pet. 3:1). It is not reviling in return or threatening him. 1 Pet 3:9 says “not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a *blessing* instead....”

But is submission applicable today? “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.” Heb. 13:8. In Matt. 5:18 Jesus says “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.”

But shouldn’t I use “tough love”?

Love, we are told in 1Corinthians 13, is gentle and kind, not tough.

In 1Tim. 2:11 it says that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man.

In 1Pet. 2:23 Jesus uttered no threats when suffering, and He says we are to follow in His steps!

In 2Tim. 4:4 it says that in the last days we will turn to myths. Using “tough love” with our husbands is a myth since the word “tough” is not in the description of love in 1Cor. 13. It may be tough on us when we respond to our husbands lovingly even when they are unlovable!

In 2Tim. 4:3 it also says that we will accumulate teachers who go along with our own desires. It feels good to our flesh to give ultimatums and confront others. But the Spirit and the flesh are in opposition to one another, "...so that you may not do the things that you please." Gal. 5:16. (For more information on tough love read lesson 3 again, "Gentle and Quiet.")

How do I do what God asks?

How can I possibly do all that the Lord asks me to do as a wife in today's world? By Grace! And how do you get grace? By humbling yourself. In James 4:6 it says, "God hates the proud, but gives grace to the humble." And in 2Cor. 12:9 it says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." And yes, contrary to the world's foolish opinions, women are weaker than men. "You husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a **weaker** vessel, since she is a woman..." 1Pet 3:7.

Let us thank God for the protection He has given to us when we obey Him and are in submission to our husbands! Instead of fighting to get out from under the protective authority of our husbands, let's praise the Lord for choosing us to be women.

Submission. To help us "let go" of our fear of submission, it may be helpful to look more closely at Sarah's example. I have been accused of teaching "**submission unto sin.**" Although that phrase almost sounds Scriptural, it is quite fictitious. But the meaning behind those words is certainly found in Sarah's life. I can tell you honestly that it has been a careful journey with much searching for the Truth. God says, "**seek and you shall find**" (Matt. 7:7) and "**But if any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God who gives it to men liberally.**" James 1:5.

Many Christians and religious leaders did not agree with my teachings on submission, but I found it actually helped to encourage me to seek and find the truth. The more I dug into the Word, and the more I followed what I learned with radical obedience, the more I was able to teach submission with boldness. Ladies, I found that the lack of submission is at the very root of the contentious woman's existence. It is not when and what you submit to; it is the "spirit of rebellion" that will exist if you do not trust God completely with the results of your submission.

The true blessings come from trusting in God, not in trusting in our husbands' leadership, for "**The mind of man plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.**" Prov. 16:9. You and I need to "**Trust the Lord**" and not trust "**in mankind, making flesh our strength.**" (Jer. 17:5) We need to be willing to search for the Truth in God's Word. I personally lived what I write and my testimonies bear witness to the Truth of the Scripture. I have also seen the many "**bad fruits**" that have come from those who *opposed* this Truth of *complete submission*. "You will know them by their fruits..." Matt. 7:16. Selective submission is not submission at all; it is rebellion! And rebellion is witchcraft! "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry." 1Sam. 15:23.

Any woman who protects herself by demonstrating a spirit of disobedience will *never* have God's complete protection nor will she see the true blessings God intends for her! And sadly, a rebellious wife will possibly *never* see her husband submit to **His** authority, Jesus Christ.

Did Sarah Submit unto Sin?

Was Sarah's obedience submission unto sin? No, Sarah did not sin. It was Abraham, who was Sarah's authority, who sinned. When he asked her to tell a half-lie (of course, a half-lie is still a lie and, therefore, a sin), Sarah obeyed and, as a result of her obedience to her husband, God protected her.

As I said, it is important for us as women to **understand the command** that is given to us as women. "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." 1Pet. 3:6.

We must search for the Truth in God's Word so that we, as women, are able to come to the knowledge of Truth, "...for among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of Truth." 2Tim 3:6-7.

We must not debate Scripture. We must be "ready to make a defense to *everyone* who asks you to give an account for the hope that is within you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1Pet. 3:15) Also, we must remember to "keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better that if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong." 1Pet. 3:17.

Disputes about words. If others teach or tell you something **contrary to Scripture**, remember "If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words." 1Tim. 6:3-6.

All of us must be careful to **obey God's Word** and, by our example, teach others what He commands. "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called **least** in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called **great** in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:19-20. This includes your daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters, and mother, as well as your Christian and non-Christian friends.

Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus refers to the **Pharisees** as blind men, hypocrites, children of the devil, trying to catch or trap Jesus in what He said. He also said the Pharisees hindered potential believers, perverted Scripture, were self-justified before men, were outwardly righteous and blind to spiritual things. The scribes were experts in legal matters. He refers to them as having external righteousness, teaching without authority, and questioning Jesus on His authority. Jesus exposed them, condemned them, and, also, called them hypocrites. (Above references from NAS Biblical Cyclopedic Index) Let our lives not be like the scribes and Pharisees. Let our hearts be open as we search for the Truth.

Their own desires. You can easily find someone who will tell you **what you want to hear**. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the Truth, and will turn aside to myths." 2Tim 4:3-4. Are we living in the time when women will not endure sound doctrine? Will you turn to myths?

If you want to know the Truth, walk with me as we once again search the Word as it refers to Sarah's obedience.

Sarah's Obedience

The answer to the question "How far should a woman submit to her husband?" is found in the life of the woman, the only woman, who God's Word says is our example of submission, Sarah. (1Pet. 3:6) Let us take a very close look at all the references to Sarah and her relationship with her husband Abraham.

The Bible refers to Sarah 59 times! In all those references there are only three times when Abraham asked her to do something. Remember, *she* is to be our example of obedience toward our husbands.

In Gen. 12:11 Abram tells Sarai how beautiful she is and that when they enter into Egypt, she is to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister so that he may live. This was a half-truth since she was his "half-sister." It is then noted that Abram was "treated well" for her (Sarai's) sake. Did she sin by lying or is she innocent because the authority over her told her to lie?

Then in Gen. 12:17, "...the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues." Then it says that "because of Sarai" Pharaoh asks **Abram** (not Sarai) why *he* has done this to him. Abram is ultimately held accountable. Pharaoh then sends Abram and his wife Sarai away with all that belonged to him. Then in Gen. 17:15-21 the Word tells us that Sarai will be the "mother of many nations" and "kings of peoples shall come from her." So again, Abram is held accountable for what he tells his wife to do and Sarai is blessed for her obedience.

Now, in Gen. 18:6-15, we see Abraham asking Sarah (God has now given them their new names) to go and make cakes for the visitors. We find that Sarah again obeys her husband and makes the cakes.

Believe it or not, in Gen. 20:2-18 "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah." This time Sarah isn't asked to lie; the Lord delivered her out of that. However, she is still taken as another man's wife! But then in verse 5 we see the king begging God for his life. In verse 6 you see God's protection for Sarah as He tells the king, "I did not *let* you touch her." God's Word tells us that "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" and that we shouldn't be "frightened by any fear" no matter what our husbands ask us to do. God protected Sarah and He will protect us as well!

To prove further that we are not responsible when we obey our husbands, we see in verse 9 that when the king blames someone, he blames Abraham. "Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, 'What have you done to us...you have done to me things that ought not to be done.'" In verse 12, Abraham explains his half-lie (which is still sin). Then, in verse 13, Abraham clears Sarah of any wrongdoing. He confesses to the king that it was his idea to deceive him. "This is the kindness which you will show me: everywhere we go, say of me, 'He is my brother.'" Now watch: again in verse 16, God blesses Sarah. The king tells Sarah that he has given her brother 1,000 pieces of silver to show that *she* was cleared of any wrongdoing. Sarah again was exalted in her innocence as in verse 18 it says, "For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech *because of Sarah*, Abraham's wife." When we obey as Sarah did, we will also be protected, cleared of anything we have been asked to do, and blessed!

The next verse, Gen. 21:1, says, “Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.” God “tested” Sarah's obedience to find out if she was worthy to be the mother of the Promise and of many nations. We can be certain that God will test our hearts also.

But Sarah's blessings from God are not over as we see in Gen. 21:12, “But God said to Abraham, ‘...whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her...!’ ” God tells Abraham to do whatever Sarah tells him to do to Hagar, since Sarah is distressed by Hagar's attitude. Even though Sarah got ahead of God by sending Hagar in with Abraham to hurry His promise to her, God made it right! We see the evidence in Gen. 21:14 as Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away.

To Obey

In Scripture there are eight different words for *obey*. Three are in Hebrew from the Old Testament, and 5 are in Greek from the New Testament. Only the word *Hupaku* (5219 in the Strong's Concordance), pronounced *hoop a ku o*, is used with women in relation to obeying their husbands. The definition of this word *obey* is: to hear, to be under as a subordinate is, to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority; to hearken, to be obedient, to obey. This word for obey is found in 1Pet. 3:6 when women are commanded to obey, as Sarah did with Abraham. It is also found in:

Rom. 6:17 when it says that we are to be servants and obey from the heart (see also Gen. 21:1).

1Pet. 1:22 as again it says that we are to obey from the heart.

And Heb. 11:7 when Abraham was to obey by leaving for Canaan (see Gen 12:5).

Some, who have disputed my strong stand on submitting to our husbands, have used other references in Scripture to prove that we don't have to obey as Sarah did. However, they are using a different word, such as the word *PEITHO* (3982) *pie tho* which means to convince by argument, to pacify, to persuade. But this word is not used in the relationship between a wife and her husband.

Also, there is the word *PEITHARCHEO* (3980), *pie thar ke o*, which means to persuade by a ruler (magistrate). This is in Acts 5:29, when Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We must obey God rather than men.” But again, this word for obey is not used in the husband and wife relationship.

A fourth word for *obey* is *SHAMA* (8085) which means to hear, consider, or discern. This word for *obey* is used in reference to Daniel when he makes an appeal to not eat the food from the king's table. Many have encouraged women to use this *obey* to appeal to their husbands; however, God's Word uses none of these words for *obey* in reference to the husband and wife relationship.

Let's Review

We have walked through the Word together to find out the Truth on submitting to our husbands. So let's review what we found:

1. The one and only *woman* in Scripture who is given as an example of **obedience** for women to follow is Sarah.

2. God protected Sarah because she submitted “as unto the Lord” by obeying her husband and trusting *Him* for protection. (Eph. 5:22)
3. Only three references in Scripture say anything about Abraham asking Sarah to do something: to make cakes, to “half-lie,” saying that she was his sister, and to go a second time as a wife of a Pharaoh.
4. Abraham was the one held accountable for all Sarah did when she was obeying him.
5. After her obedience the second time, God “took note” and blessed Sarah with His promise of a son in her old age.
6. Here are 5 references showing that Abraham (and Sarah) were blessed and protected because of Sarah:
 - a. In Gen. 12:16, “he treated Abram well for her sake.”
 - b. In Gen. 20:7 it says, “therefore I [God] did **not let** you touch her.”
 - c. In Gen. 20:14-15, Abraham's wife was returned along with gifts of sheep, oxen, and male and female servants. He also was allowed to settle in the king's land wherever he pleased and was given a thousand pieces of silver to “clear Sarah”!
 - d. In Gen. 20:18, the wombs of the household of Abimelech were closed “because of Sarah.”
 - e. In Gen. 21:12, Hagar was driven away with Ishmael because God told Abraham to listen to Sarah and do whatever she told him to do concerning Hagar.
7. Abraham should have protected Sarah; nevertheless, God protected Sarah because she obeyed Him by submitting to her husband Abraham.

We therefore do not need to fear being submissive because we have God's protection. “You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.” Ps. 115:11.

All that now stands in the way of submission is a rebellious spirit. “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He has also rejected you....” 1Sam. 15:23. Once we begin to submit from the heart and remove the rebellion from our actions and attitude, trials will come “for our testing.” However, **God** is waiting to help us: “The righteous cry and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.” Psalm 34:17. (See lesson 10, “Various Trials,” for “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge....” Hosea 4:6.)

Eve and the Fall

We have studied the life of Sarah to see true submission in action. We saw in her life both blessings and protection. And we know that Sarah is exalted in the book of 1Peter because of her radical submission to her husband Abraham. But to bring us more understanding, it would be helpful to study the life of Eve, that we might glean more wisdom.

What principles of submission did Eve violate that led to “The Fall”?

Doubting God and questioning His Word. “And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’ ” Gen. 3:1. If she had only known that “Every Word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.” Prov. 30:5. Had Eve known and applied this verse, it would have saved us all a lot of pain!

Adding to His Word. “And the woman said to the serpent, 'from the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it **or touch it**, lest you die.’ ” She added that she was not even to “touch it.” When we add to God's Word, it violates Scripture and sets us up for sin. “Do not add to His Words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.” Prov. 30:6.

Listening to the voice of Satan. “And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' ” We must never forget that Satan is a liar. “Whenever he speaks a **lie**, *he speaks from his own nature*; for he is a **liar**, and the *father of lies*.” John 8:44.

Look upon evil. “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...” Gen. 3:6. What should she have done? “And let him turn away from evil and do good.” 1Pet. 3:11. Let's learn from her mistake and, instead, do as Job did... “I have made a covenant with my eyes...” Job 31:1. Jesus told us how important our eyes are to our future: “And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell.” Matt. 18:9.

Causing another to stumble. “And *she gave* to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.” Gen. 3:6-7. “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this —not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.” Rom. 14:13. “It is good not...to do anything by which your brother stumbles.” Rom. 14:21.

Enticed by his own lust. Was Eve to blame when Adam sinned? “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea...” Luke 17:1-2. However, “...each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.” James 1:14. There is a perfect balance here. If we are the cause of our husbands stumbling and sinning, we are responsible. On the other hand, our husbands are accountable to the Lord for their sinning. And while we are on the subject, remember that if your husband is heading for sin, get out of his way! (Ps. 1:1) Furthermore, we are told not to even say one thing to him about it! (1Pet. 3:1).

The Consequences

The first consequence was deception. “And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ ” Gen. 3:13. “For it was **not Adam** who was *deceived*, but the **woman** *being quite deceived*, fell into transgression.” 1Tim. 2:14.

The curse. To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; *yet* your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” Gen. 3:12-16. The definition of the word *yet* is important. It means: nevertheless, however or but. Your “curse” is not your husband ruling over you. Let me paraphrase it. What it is saying is, “Since you sinned I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; *nevertheless, however, but, I will protect you by putting your husband over you so that you won’t be deceived again.*” God could see that the woman would need special protection against deception. We women have a tendency to make decisions based on how we feel because we seem to be the heart of the “one flesh.”

Your protection. Therefore, we have protection as we stay under the authority of our husbands. “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. For it was **not Adam** who was *deceived*, but the **woman** *being quite deceived*, fell into transgression.” 1Tim. 2:11-14.

One in Christ Jesus. Now when we are told to submit to a man, this man is not just *any* man, nor is it *every* man. We are to submit to our own husbands. We also are to be subject to the men (and women) who are over all men and women, such as bosses or the police, etc. Many Christians have stumbled over this area of women teaching men. When a woman is called to teach, her husband should not be her pupil. Jesus came so that we could live under grace; let’s not become legalistic. “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 Jesus.” Gal. 3:28.

Just a note: the term “help meet” is from the KJV Bible. “Helper suitable” is from the NAS and NIV Bible. “Helper comparable” is from the NKJV and “helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him” is from the Amplified version. (Gen. 2:18)

Our second protection. Our husbands are our main protection; however, the Bible tells women that we have additional protection: “But women shall be **preserved** through the *bearing of children* if they **continue** in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.” 1Tim. 2:11-15. The word *preserve* is from the NAS Bible. In the KJV the word is “saved,” translated from the word *sozo*, which means: to save, protect or heal or to keep safe. Again, as we saw how we need to obey our husbands without any fear (1Pet 3:6), we also are to continue to bear children by faith. Faith, as we know, is the opposite of fear. (See lesson 12, “Fruit of the Womb.”)

Another interesting result of Eve eating the fruit is that God said to her that her “desire” would be for her husband. This word *desire* is translated from the word *tshuwqah* (8669), which is defined as: a stretching out after; a longing; a desire. But it is derived from the word *shuwq* (7783), which is “to run after.” We know that there are more women who stand for their failing marriages and for unfaithful spouses than men. Isn’t it interesting that at one time there was a song that was very popular (before feminism changed the way we think) called “Stand By Your Man”?

Adam blamed his wife. If you wondered why your husband blames you, it has been that way since the beginning of man! “The *woman* whom thou gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” Gen. 3:12. Our husbands are admonished to “...love your wives, and do not be *embittered* against them.” Col. 3:19. And also, “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no *root of bitterness* springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.” Heb. 12:15. But because of the tendency of

husbands to blame their wives, God has given us protection by giving us a principle to follow: “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...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.” 1Pet 3:1-2, 4.

His mistake. Then to Adam He said, “*Because you have listened to the voice of your wife*, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying ‘You shall not eat from it...’” Gen. 3:17. Why was it his disobedience and her deception? The last time the commandment not to eat the fruit is mentioned is four verses *before* Eve was even created! However, she did not submit to her husband’s authority when she ate the forbidden fruit. Nevertheless, she did not directly disobey God’s commandment, because it was given to *Adam* before Eve was created. That’s why the sin is passed down from Adam and not from Eve. Eve did not knowingly sin; she was deceived! Adam knew what he was doing when he took it from her and ate it. His downfall was in listening to his wife. We also see that it was passed down to Abraham when Sarah asked him to take Hagar in order to fulfill God’s promise of a son. “*And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.*” Gen. 16:2. Ask yourself if you have been the “voice” of temptation with your husband to do evil. I know I was guilty of this very thing. This is an excellent way of pulling down your own house, ladies!

His curse. “Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat other plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Gen. 3:17-19. Are you “toiling in the soil,” taking on his punishment of working as your own? The curse of *toiling* was meant for your husband. (See lesson 13, “The Ways of Her Household” to be relieved from the “sweat” you were never intended to bear.)

Now let us look at some other wives in the Bible to gain insight from their role as a wife. We will look at both the good and the bad examples.

Abigail

What do we know about Abigail? “And his wife’s name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance...” 1Sam. 25:3.

She lacked discretion. We will see as we study Scripture that Abigail lacked discretion. “As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.” Prov. 11:22. “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” Prov. 31:30.

Abigail’s testimony. It begins in 1Samuel 25 when we learn of the situation. A band of men had faithfully protected the large herds of her husband’s sheep and goats; not one animal was missing. When the men heard that her husband was shearing his sheep, David sent a group of ten to suggest that he give them a reward for the work they had done, which was the custom. But Nabal (Abigail’s husband) scoffed at them and their leader and claimed he was not obligated to repay them in any way. This angered David, and he planned to kill Nabal and all the men of his household. When Abigail heard of David’s plan, she took five sheep and large quantities of food and hurried out to meet David. Many preachers have used Abigail as an example for us to follow; however, she violated Scripture.

What principles did Abigail violate? Abigail's violation of several principles in Scripture ultimately caused her husband's death. It also caused her to be taken as "just one" of David's many wives.

The husband is the head of the wife. One of the first statements we see is, "But she did not tell her husband Nabal." 1Sam. 25:19. Abigail did not give her husband his proper position in the marriage and took matters into her own hands. She violated the principle, "For the husband is the head of the wife... *he himself* being the **savior** of the body." Eph. 5:23. She should have allowed her husband to be the "savior" in this situation, "For... *insubordination* is as iniquity and idolatry." 1Sam. 15:23. Insubordination is defined as: not submitting to authority, rebellion, open opposition to authority, and stubborn defiance of control.

Submit to those who are *unreasonable*. She justified her interference by looking at her husband's actions: "...but the man [Nabal] was harsh and evil in his dealings..." 1Sam. 25:3. We cannot excuse our rebellion because of the actions of our authorities; the Word is clear. "...be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are *unreasonable*." 1Pet. 2:18. "One who **guards** his mouth *preserves his life*; one who **opens it** *comes to ruin*." Prov. 13:3.

She brought condemnation upon herself. "For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves." Rom. 13:1-2. When she was concerned that there was harm, she should have reported her concerns gently and respectfully to her husband. This is leaving it in God's hands. "The lips of the wise spread knowledge." Prov. 15:7. "The righteous is a **guide** to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray." Prov. 12:26. If Nabal had still persisted in his stubbornness, she instead should have cried out to God, not David, for mercy.

She meddled with strife not belonging to her. By taking matters into her own hands, she was *limiting the possibilities of God* to deal with her husband and the situation. "Like one who takes a dog by the ears is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him." Prov. 26:17.

She violated the 1Peter 3 principle. I know that Abigail was born before 1Peter was written; however, her violation proves that we should not look to Abigail as the heroine others claim her to be. Abigail did not honor her husband, she did not win him "without a word," and she did not call him lord (as Sarah did with Abraham). If Abigail had honored her husband, God would have protected her as He did with Sarah. "...therefore he [Pharaoh] treated Abram well for her [Sarai's] sake..." Gen. 12:16. And also, "Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised." Gen. 20:18-21:1.

She was *rottenness* in his bones. Abigail did not merely interfere with her husband's authority but she *shamed* him as well. "Please do not let my lord [David] pay attention to this *worthless man*, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him..." 1Sam. 25:25. "An **excellent wife** is a *crown* of her husband, but **she who shames** him is as *rottenness* in his bones." Prov. 12:4. She called David her "lord" and called her husband "worthless." Folly is defined as behavior arising from stupidity.

She was *prideful*. She made it known that she would have handled the situation differently than her husband. Abigail was motivated by pride: "...but **I** did not see the young men of my lord who you sent." 1Sam. 25:25. Yet, it was not her position to do so. Her position should have been to do "him good and not evil all the days of her life." Prov. 31:12. And "The **heart of her husband** *trusts in her*, and he will have no lack of gain." Prov. 31:11.

Shame killed her husband. Abigail's violation of principles in Scripture ultimately caused her husband's death. "...his wife told him [Nabal] these things, and **his heart died** within him so that he became as a stone. And about ten days later, it happened that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died." 1Sam. 25:36-38. "Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down..." Prov. 12:25. "But the tongue of the wise brings healing." Prov. 12:18.

Her husband died of a broken heart. The consequence of Abigail's actions is that her husband died after hearing of his wife's betrayal. She believed *she* was better at dealing with this dangerous situation.

The consequences. She "seemed" to have been successful in her schemes, but in the end she reaped what she had sown. "The Lord will tear down the house of the proud." Prov. 15:25.

Abigail lost her protection. She had lost the protection that God had placed around her, so, "David has sent us to you, to take you as his wife." 1Sam 25:40. This was anything but a blessing. She lived as an exile with David and his *first wife* in Philistia (1Sam. 27:3). She (and David's first wife) were taken captive by the Amalekites for a short time (1Sam. 30:5). She was later only one of David's *six wives*, and even later in Jerusalem she was *just one of many wives* (2Sam. 5:13).

We know from Scripture how miserable Leah was with her marriage because she knew how much her husband Jacob loved Rachel. (Gen. 29) Could any of us imagine being just one of six wives? We know about David and Bathsheba. And let us not forget that he had other wives at the time. I know that when my husband was with just one other woman, it just about killed me! My question to those who say that Abigail was blessed to be David's wife is this: "Would you want your husband sleeping with five other women, especially if he was ruddy and handsome?" (1Sam. 17:42 says David was ruddy, with a handsome appearance.)

Her shame was passed on to her son. Abigail's only son is not even mentioned later in Scripture, even though he should have become the crowned prince after the murder of Amnon. She obviously had regrets about her life when she changed her son's name from Chileab which means "restraint of the father" to Daniel which means "God is my [Abigail's] Judge." (1Chron. 3:1). (Names are very significant in the Bible. See Leah and Rachel's names for their children in Gen. 29 and 30.)

Her lack of prudence. If Abigail had only kept silent God could have moved on her behalf. "Even a fool, when he **keeps silent**, is *considered wise*. When he **closes his lips** he is *counted as prudent*." Prov. 17:28. "...a *prudent* wife is from the LORD." Prov. 19:14. You may wonder what God could do for her, or maybe what He can do for you if you are married to a fool. "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." Prov. 21:1. God is faithful to turn the heart of David and even *your* husband. But instead Abigail got in the flesh and her heart turned: "Thus says the LORD, Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD." Jer. 17:5. What about you, will you take matters into your own hands when you see danger approaching you and your family? Or, will you trust God by allowing your husband to save the family?

Sarai

Sarai's voice. "So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her. And *Abram listened to the voice of*

Sarai. ” Gen. 16:2 “He who **guards his mouth** and **his tongue** guards his soul *from trouble.*” Prov. 21:23. Sarai’s mistake began a war that continues on in the Middle East between the Jews and the Islamic people, even today!

Moving ahead of God. “Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.” Gen. 16:3-4. Whenever we get ahead of God, and an “Ishmael” is conceived, we despise what we have created in our haste.

Evil for evil and insult for insult. “And Sarai said to Abram, ‘May the wrong done to me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight, May the Lord judge between you and me.’ But Abram said to Sarai, ‘Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.’ So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.” Gen. 16:5-6. Now here we see Sarai moving into a brand new violation. 1Pet. 3:9 reads: “Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.” When she went to her husband whining about the mess she was in, he encouraged her to again get into the flesh. Remember, “With **many words** *transgression is unavoidable.*” Prov. 10:19. Again, when you’ve got a problem, don’t run to anyone – run to God!

Sarah did make mistakes; yet, Sarah, we are told, is our example of a submissive wife: “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...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.” 1Pet. 3:3,5. God is so good. Sarah messed up big time, but God turned the situation around as she began to please the Lord. I, too, messed up big time. I had no idea what a wife was to do, say, or be. But when I began to follow the Lord and His Word, He turned everything around and He exalted me! He’ll do it for you, too. The more you follow His guidelines with a pure heart, the more blessings He will pour out on you!

Job’s Wife

Job’s “help meet”? “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!’ But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?’ ” Job 2:9-10. Poor Job, he lost everything and he was covered with boils. But to have his “help meet” tempting him to sin with his mouth, that’s too much! It reminds me of when I had my first son in the hospital. I was determined to go “natural” with no drugs. Yet every few minutes there was the nurse asking me if I wanted something for the pain. I felt like I was crawling in the desert while someone kept asking me if I’d like a cool glass of water. I felt like I wanted to slug her. I didn’t, however. *This, by the way, was the “old Erin” my husband left! Praise the Lord! He has changed me!*

Job knew that what his wife was saying was foolish. “The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the **perverted tongue** will be *cut out.*” Prov. 10:31. It was too bad for Job that God took all but his wife from him. God obviously does have a sense of humor! “He who gives **attention to the word** shall *find good.*” Prov. 16:20. Job paid attention to what he said and he was blessed. “For by **your words** you shall be *justified*, and by **your words** you shall be *condemned.*” Matt. 12:37. Isn’t it interesting that Job’s wife is never introduced by a name? We do, however, know her by her foolish comment. This is not the way I would want to be remembered; how about you? Instead...

Let us obey as Sarah did without being frightened by any fear

Personal commitment: To submit to my husband as unto the Lord. “Based on what I have learned from God's Word, I commit to obey my husband so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed.”

Date: _____ Signed: _____