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WALKING AS WIVES

“I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart.”

Psalm 101:2

Before We Begin...

Marriage and the home are God’s idea. In the coming weeks we will be studying the husband-wife relationship. God’s Word is filled with instruction for married women.

Regarding those who have not yet met Christ as their Savior:

Some of you may not yet know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. This Bible study will be beneficial because anytime that God’s principles are applied to our lives there will always be a positive result. However, we will never experience God’s best in our marriages until we meet Him personally in our own individual lives.

If you have not yet made the wonderful discovery of knowing Christ, please take time to carefully read the preceding page; “Becoming a Follower of Christ.” Attempts to live the Christian life without having His power in your life will end in frustration. If you want to experience the abundant life that the Lord has created you to enjoy, before you begin this Bible study, begin to follow Jesus.

Regarding those who are not married:

Some taking this study may not be married. There are multitudes of single women whose lives are a “fragrant aroma” to God. As we walk with the Lord, He will fulfill His purposes in our lives whether we are married or single; being in God’s will is what matters, not our marital status. Will the following studies dealing with “Walking as Wives” relate to singles? Absolutely!

Those women who are currently single are a vital part of God’s plan. Perhaps you will marry in the future; these next chapters will help to equip you to recognize a godly man, and they will prepare you for being a godly wife.

Perhaps you may remain single; that, too, is part of God’s perfect plan for your life [I Corinthians 7:7, 8]. Paul tells us that single women have even more opportunity for service to offer in the church than their married counterparts [I Corinthians 7:25-38]. The Lord wants to use you single women in the lives of all other believers! Single women are in a unique position to be a great source of encouragement and strength to all of the women within the church. The following chapters will enable you to minister more effectively in the church, as you understand God’s specific plans for your married sisters in the Lord.

As we study “Walking as Wives,” open sharing and interaction among women from all walks of life will be essential and valuable. Regardless of our unique, personal circumstances, every woman is a precious creation; a treasure to God Himself [Psalm 83:3]. All of God’s Word is for all of us. We need each other; so let’s get started!

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:22

Prayer Points:

The “S” word. Submission. The very mention of the word evokes strong reactions. Lengthy computerized printouts enumerating a hostile plethora of arguments entitled, “Why I will never be submissive,” come rolling out of the minds of contemporary women.

As women who desire to walk in God’s ways, we must seriously grapple with the issue of wives “submitting to,” or “being subject to,” their husbands. The first question that must be asked is whether or not God REALLY instructs women to be subject to their husbands.

The answer to that question is an undeniable “yes.” The principle of submission is found throughout the entire Bible, along with abundant examples of women who were and were not submissive to their husbands.

While Scripture exhorts all believers to “be subject to one another” (Ephesians 5:21), there is a special emphasis placed on God’s desire for women to subject themselves to their own husbands. In every New Testament discussion of marriage the direct instruction for wives to submit to their husbands is repeated.

What are the arguments that women use to support their refusal to seriously consider obeying God’s command to be subject to their own husbands?

- “I think marriage should be 50/50.”
- “I’m equal with my husband, not beneath him.”
- “I refuse to become a doormat. Forget it.”
- “I’m intelligent and perfectly capable of standing on my own two feet.”
- “It was only meant for illiterate women of Bible times.”
- “I’m not about to let any man, even my husband, tell me how to run my life.”
- “I tried it before and felt that it wasn’t very joyful. God wants me to be happy, so I’ve decided not to be submissive.”
- “The only person I have to be submissive to is God.”
- “If I didn’t run this family it would fall apart.”

Put a checkmark beside any of the above arguments which you yourself have thought, or which you have encountered from others.

Much of the hostility and resistance related to being submissive reflects confusion about what submission actually means.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "submission" as:

- 1) *the act of submitting, yielding; or surrendering*
- 2) *the quality or condition of being submissive; resignation obedience; meekness*
- 3) *the act of submitting something to another for decision, consideration, etc.*
- 4) *In Law an agreement whereby parties to a dispute submit the matter to arbitration and agree to be bound by the decision*

When God speaks of a wife being "subject to," or "submissive" to, her husband, the Greek word, "hupotasso," is used. "Hupotasso" is comprised of two words;

- 1) "hupo," meaning "to place under" and
- 2) "tasso," meaning "to place, set, appoint, arrange, order."

It literally means "to place under in an orderly fashion." "Hupotasso" is primarily a military term meaning "to rank under." It is a voluntary action; not one of enforced servitude. In other words, a wife is to make the choice to place herself, or rank herself, underneath her husband.

Submission has been defined as "yielding humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power or authority." It is both an attitude and an action.

In this chapter we will examine the wife's attitude of submission, and in the next chapter we will look at how the proper attitude manifests itself in actions. Many questions may be raised that are not dealt with in this chapter. We will look more closely at the "what ifs" and "buts" in Chapter 7 as we go into more detail. Please don't get discouraged; hang in there!

Let's begin by examining our attitude regarding submission.



**Prayer
Points:**



Prayer Points:

***Optional:** Using your concordance and Bible dictionary, look up all of the various relationships described by the term “hupotasso” in Scripture. Does this give you any insight into the way that you are to be subject to your husband?

A woman’s “natural” reaction to the concept of submission is one of resistance (1 Corinthians 2:14), but God has not called Christian women to live a “natural” life. The Lord wants us to live in a “supernatural” way as we are filled with His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).

Why do believing wives find it difficult to maintain an attitude of submission toward their husbands?

Many women question whether or not the Bible really instructs women to “be subject” to their husbands. Has God ordained a structure of authority in marriage? Read the following verses to determine the husband’s role and the wife’s position in marriage.

1. Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5

Note that God only instructs wives to be subject to their own husbands, not to all men in general.

2. Romans 13:1, 2

What does this passage tell you about authority?

What does this passage tell you about resisting authority?

How might this apply to your relationship with your husband?

Some women feel that to be submissive to their husbands would be a sign of inequality. After all, Scripture tells us that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:27, 28).

Doesn't that mean that we are all equal in the Lord? Absolutely yes! We are spiritually equal with our husbands. Yet, we hold different positions in the marriage relationship.

3. I Peter 3:7

How does this passage indicate that there is a difference between husbands and wives?

How does this passage indicate that there is equality between husbands and wives?

To be subject to your husband does not mean that you are not equal to your husband. Submission is a voluntary action that in no way signifies inferiority.

Some suggest that being subject to their husbands is degrading, and is not an honorable position to be held. What does God teach us about this?

4. I Corinthians 15:28

Who is being submissive to Whom in this verse?

Would you refer to this as being “degrading?”

Others may argue that a wife should not be submissive to her husband if he is not as spiritually minded as she is. Should a wife who has more godly wisdom than her husband take over the headship of her marriage? What do the following verses indicate regarding spiritually mature wives who are married to not-so-spiritual husbands?



**Prayer
Points:**

SUMMARY:

Define "having an attitude of submission" in your own terms. You could use a synonym, a motto, a poem or a prayer, or even make a drawing to show your understanding of this quality.

DISCUSSION:

In your opinion, what do you see as being the main reason that contemporary women resist the idea of being subject to their husbands?

APPLICATION:

A Christian friend's husband is not saved. Your friend feels that she does not need to be subject to her husband since she knows God's will more than he does. What counsel do you give her?



**Prayer
Points:**