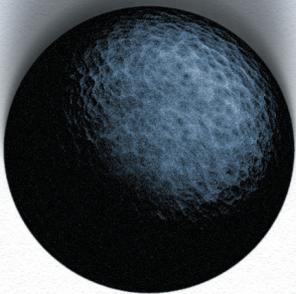


Women's Role IN GOD'S FAMILY

BEAUTY, ORDER,
PROTECTION,
FULLNESS, GIFTEDNESS
AND FRUITFULNESS
FOR JESUS



Women's Role

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As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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Understanding What the Apostle Said About Women in Gatherings

evening together mid 1980s

These thoughts that follow were written almost twenty years ago, as the first Handful of Saints in this city were first beginning to seek out Father's Heart for what a Christian and a Church truly must be, according to His Oath and Word. Many of us had witnessed, from inside of "leadership" positions and not, the massive contradictions, hypocrisies, marketing and sales jobs, out and out evil sins and divisions "brushed under the rug" in both religious institutions and "house churches," which are generally no different and no better. Know that "GOD don't make no junk" and that if HE is doing the Work then "the gates of Hell cannot prevail" as they do in those aforementioned environments. We were NOT interested in falling into the same traps and the same ways that have yielded such pathetic fruit over the years. HIS Church, by His Word, will crash down the walls of Hell itself, rather than "conform to the patterns of the world" and lose teens, and marriages, and perpetuate the Spiritual babyhood of so many men. As Isaiah prophesied over the cursed and disobedient Israel of his day, "women and children will rule over you" as I take away all of your Anointed and Gifted men, and you will say "You have a cloak and are wealthy and a good businessman—you be our leader." A sad commentary, and infinitely applicable in our present day. We did NOT want any more of that nonsense that wears Jesus' Name, but contradicts everything about Him. Singing louder or a better "worship band" or "sermon" or "building" or "program" or "more informal where more

people are allowed to talk” has NEVER solved the ROOT Issues of the Spiritual demise of most “groups” caused by leaven and lukewarmness and schisms and unBiblical hierarchies.

With the heart of not repeating the evil and leavened history of much of the last 19 centuries, we will address a topic that needed to be addressed twenty years ago, as we were seeking to find our footing in many areas of Life. One “topic”—“Woman’s Role in the Church”—has caused much consternation in many countries, we’ve noticed. Due in some places to a faulty “culture” that puts down women in general society (and is carried over improperly into God’s Culture), women are made to be “second class citizens” and a “caste system” robs them of their Rightful inheritance, and robs Jesus’ Body of their Gifts. In other places, generally in the West we’ve noticed, the egos of the “women’s lib” culture has improperly and unBiblically over-reacted to being “put down” and they have tried to rationalize and excuse away many Scriptures, playing games with Greek and Hebrew word studies to attempt to build an empire that is, in the end, not of God’s making. There is NO doubt that our Father has a Plan of distinct but equal roles of men and women, as surely as man was created from dust and woman from the man’s rib. And IF we continue to “fuss” against God’s Plan, erring in EITHER direction, we have no more hope of seeing God’s Ways lived out in His Bride in a visible daily “equal yoke for the Son” sort of way than we could just snoozing in the back “pew” of an institution. In fact, the “pew” would be far less painful than most self-proclaimed “more organic” situations will be if egos and pseudo-scholarship (masking prejudice and agenda) rip through a group of Believers, spouting off their “theories” of “women’s role” or “eschatology” or “evangelism” or blah blah. It’s MUCH safer in the “pew” than to go through that nonsense.

In twenty years here, with large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds (including many ex-seminarians and ex-pastors and those with “something to lose”)... we have never had a “split” or even an impasse on topics such as these. We need to say that, because satan has just about conditioned everyone to “expect the worst” and quote his utter darkness of “bloom where you’re planted” and “work from within” and “agree to disagree”—rather than for 100% of those who wear Jesus’ Name EXPECTING “unity of the Faith” and “the full knowledge of the Son of God” and “no longer infants, tossed to and fro.” It is not only proven to be

POSSIBLE, but it is God's MANDATE. Be There, or be square. Accept no counterfeits of His Grace and Wisdom. Counterfeits are so easily available and franchised today, born out of men's techniques and personalities and ambitions. You'll end up regretting being a part of something like that, and be tempted to lower your Vision of what GOD is after, "the Bride who has made herself ready" for the Return of her Groom.

Let Him Write it On Your Heart

Looking into what the women's responsibilities and limits are in an assembly of believers has been a heartbreaking thing to consider doing. It's heartbreaking because it's so easy for man to get buried in Latin and Greek word studies and then begin to approach God on the basis of intellect rather than on the reality of a relationship with Him. I might not have your birthday memorized, I might not know your weight, I might not know your DNA code, *but if I know you, then I have a relationship.* I don't have to put you under a microscope to have a relationship. However, if I put you under a microscope and yet have no relationship, then there is nothing worth having in that situation. There is something about the Kingdom of God that is "neither here nor there." It's within you. There is something about the Kingdom of God that is no longer written on stone tablets, but "*I will write it on your hearts,*" saith the Lord in Jeremiah 31.

"*I will breathe My Spirit on you,*" is Ezekiel's parallel to Jeremiah 31. "I will breathe My Spirit on you and you will have life. The dry bones will come together with a loud clang, and then the wind of God will breathe on you, and you will be a vast army for My name's sake." When we remove the focus from Life (with a capital L), to just the things *about* God, then there is a great risk involved.

The Scriptures say, "Watch your life and your doctrine closely." Paul goes on to say that the upshot of that is that it is necessary to watch both your life and your doctrine *in order to* save yourself and your hearers also. The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. There is no question that all Scripture is God-breathed, and beyond that, the Word was with God, the Word *was* God. To say that the Scriptures aren't important, and that these kinds of things are irrelevant, is really a dangerous position to be in *because this is a porthole into the heart of God.* If we study the porthole rather than the God who's on the other side of the porthole, we suffer tremendous loss. But if we can see that

the porthole to God is His Word, then we find that it's the conduit of Reality as we live the life that is "on earth as it is in heaven."

When we see what is in heaven, when we see what the Word of God says, when we see what was treasured in the heart of God before He invented time in the universe, *and when we go deeper and deeper into the truth of that Word*, we have access to His heart and His mind. However, there is a distinct possibility, as Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees, that we can diligently study the Scriptures thinking that by them we have some merit. We think we have some standing before God based on the Scriptures only. Jesus said it's not so. "You are children of satan, your father is the devil," was to those Jews who "believed Him," to the Jews who thought that they could have eternal life via the Scriptures and via the "church they went to." Jesus said it wasn't so.

The Spirit of Christ Within

As we try to understand, what then is the proper approach? I think Peter gives us a good indication of that when he spoke of the holy prophets, the men of God of old, that also diligently studied the Scriptures. But, it says they studied the Scriptures to find out what the "Spirit of Christ within them was pointing towards." Now, you can see the difference between John 5, 6 and 7 where Jesus deals with the Pharisees, and between 1 Peter 1 where Peter speaks of the prophets of God. You can see that both say, "diligently study the Scriptures," and yet one was totally false, while the other was very admirable and noble in God's sight. One had zero benefit—even though they were Bible scholars. The other had infinite blessings. If you can sense the difference between those two things, then we can go on. If you can't sense the difference, then this will just confuse you utterly. Even if you understand all the words that are said, your heart will be very heavy, and you won't find Life.

We diligently study the Scriptures to find out what the Spirit of Christ within is pointing towards. The Kingdom is neither here nor there; it's within you (Luke 17). That is the nature of the new covenant. "No longer on stone tablets, no longer leather binders, but I'll write it on your heart" (Jeremiah 31). "There is an anointing on you that is real and not counterfeit" (1 John 2:27). That is a definition of the New Covenant written in A.D. 96 or 95, long after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. A full twenty-five years later, we find that the New Covenant

consisted of the anointing that is within. Be sure to remember that as we go on, and maybe it will prove to be valuable.

“Silent Women in the Church?” The first thing I would like to say about that title is that anyone who values the Word of God and wants to know the true expression of the Kingdom of God “on earth as it is in heaven,” has to ask this question. I just don’t know any way around it because there are some very prominent Scriptures that deal with how men and women relate to one another in the midst of a people of God. And I don’t know how any honest person can try to decide what the Kingdom of God is all about and totally blow over this point. This question has not only been asked in a lot of places already, but is bound to be asked by every person that cares about what God thinks about His Church in the future. It has to be asked. It has to be resolved. That’s why I decided to go into it, even though, like I said, my heart was kind of heavy doing it because I know it can be abused. I know it can be turned into a creed and into something external rather than life.

Square Peg in a Round Hole

The reference that I’m making here is to the fact that a lot of times we try to figure out what the Scriptures say about a certain subject when we really don’t have a framework to even make a decision about what the Scriptures are saying. It’s kind of like living in a well all of your life and trying to describe a rainbow. Or being totally stone deaf from birth and trying to describe a symphony to somebody. *You just can’t do it.* You don’t have the frame of reference to be able to describe what is happening. A lot of questions that we have in the Scriptures about the nature of the New Testament Church are purely and simply because we have been living in a hole in the ground and we were not back there where they were. We are not living in the kind of Christianity that they lived in, so we have to use our minds to try to force the Scriptures through our little Play-doh mold to make it look like what we have around us. We say, “We are living in truth. Now, how do we describe from the Scriptures what we are doing?” We try to find a way to defend what we are already doing, rather than going back to the Scriptures and saying, “What in the world is Christianity?... Let’s start from there, and be those people, and live under the same premise that they lived under... Let’s live in the same relationship to one another and to God that they lived in, and then see what we have.”

A lot of Scriptures have been much more meaningful to me as I've pursued that course and decided not to worry about what men think. I decided not to worry about what I was always told growing up in the "church I used to go to" and just asked myself, "What, purely and simply, do the Scriptures say?" Who were those people? What kind of relationships did they have with one another? What kind of relationship did they have with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? If we go back and look at it all from that reference point, then a lot of things make a lot more sense.

1 Corinthians 5

We talked in another city recently about 1 Corinthians 5 and how that is such a clear indicator that, by and large, the religious world doesn't have any idea what the Church is, and, therefore, is totally incapable of understanding a lot of the Scriptures. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 5 it says to get out the old yeast from among you (speaking of one caught in immorality with his stepmother), and Paul goes on to say that he wanted all slanderers, all grumblers, all idolaters, all the greedy, and all the sexually immoral put out of the Church, and for nobody to eat with such a person. "Expel the wicked ones from among you." He wanted all of those people out, so that they could be a pure batch as they actually are.

Now, in the framework of the church system that exists today in America (pick your denomination or non-denomination, if you want to call it that), what you'll find is that 1 Corinthians 5 in the framework of most people's reference is absolutely impossible to keep. They're going to look at 1 Corinthians 5 and say, "Well, we can't throw out all the slanderers because we don't know if there would be anybody left! We wouldn't know one if we saw one anyway, and it sure would be awfully hard and cruel to do such a thing. So, we dare not obey the Scriptures." If we are not going to obey 1 Corinthians 5, then we might as well forget about Acts 2:38, John 3:16 and the rest of them, too. *You can't throw out the Word of God and still claim to be the Church of the Living God.*

In 1 Corinthians 5, it says that he wanted all idolaters, all slanderers, all grumblers, all the greedy, and all the immoral—*every last one of them*—out of the Church. Not those who don't claim to be brothers, but every last one of them who *do* claim to be brothers have to leave. We are to expel them. The purpose, of course, is that their souls would

ultimately be saved through the pain and the agony of being taken away from their life source—taken away from the people that they know would die for them in a minute. The agony of that would cause them to repent. That’s GOD’S method. Jesus Himself talked about it in Matthew 18 as well.

The point is this: If we claim to be the Church of Jesus Christ, but it is impossible to deal with 1 Corinthians 5 (we have to throw it out the window and not do it), if that’s true, then we’re not really the Church. We’re coming from the wrong framework. We’re trying to pound a square peg into a round hole. You’ve got a square peg in 1 Corinthians 5 and a round hole of the religious system today, and there is no way that they’re going to fit. They can’t fit. If it’s impossible for us to deal with 1 Corinthians 5, then we are not the Church that Paul was writing to, that the Holy Scriptures refer to. We’re doing something totally wrong if we can’t deal with the slander. If we wouldn’t know a greedy person because everybody says, “We can’t judge...” then we’re not Jesus’ Church. If there is not enough relationship to know who’s greedy, to know who has a bad attitude, to know who’s immoral in their mind or in their life... if we are not close enough to be able to keep that Scripture with one another, then we are not the Church of Jesus Christ. We might be Christians, but we are not Jesus’ Church. Again, I need to point that out because the reason a lot of these Scriptures about women are so difficult is because we are trying to pound a square peg into a round hole.

Another example has to do with “worship services.” There is nowhere in the Scriptures that shows that 9 A.M. “bible class” and 10 A.M. “worship service” had anything to do with Christianity. It’s not even remotely similar to anything we read about in the Bible. If we’re trying to figure out what women are allowed to do in “bible study” and what women are allowed to do in “worship service,” when they never had any such thing in the Scriptures, then why are we reading the Scriptures to find out what to do in a situation that they were never in? If you are trying to find out how to be a New Testament Christian, you can’t live in a hole in the ground. You can’t be blind and try to describe a rainbow, and you can’t find out what the women’s role is in the New Testament Church when you aren’t a New Testament Church. If you are trying to fit Scriptures into the traditions of men (“bible study” from nine to ten and “worship service” from ten to eleven), then you might as well give up because it isn’t going to work.

Hired Preachers vs. Leadership from God

No one claims (at least no one with any biblical intelligence claims) to hire and fire preachers, because everybody knows that concept is totally foreign to the New Testament. In fact, it is an *abomination* to interview, to try out, to hire and fire so-called preachers. *That is absolutely an abomination and totally unbiblical and has nothing to do with Biblical Christianity whatsoever.*

Here's the point: How are we going to be able to function in something like 1 Corinthians 14, "Everyone brings a word of instruction, a song..." when we have hired a clerical person, a "pastor," a "minister"? You pay him a salary, give him three weeks vacation, a library allowance, a car allowance and an insurance program, and maybe some stock options, and we call that Christianity. We are just in for a load of trouble when we try to live out 1 Corinthians 14, which, by the way, is one of the primary passages about women. If you are going to go on hiring and firing "preachers" and having an IBM mentality in religion (it's totally not in the Bible), you might as well forget about understanding the women's role because it's in the same chapter, and that chapter does NOT apply if we are not going to live in the New Testament Christianity that you read about in the book of Acts.

Are men of God entitled to receive gifts given to them out of love, gifts of material love even, from those whose lives they've changed? Absolutely! Galatians 6 says, "*He that receives instruction in the Word should share all good things with his teacher.*" But, it is a very organic thing. It has to do with love and liberty, and not salary and stock options. Not hiring and firing, but honoring the men in your midst that labor in the Lord... that show the heart of the Lord... that are propagating the Word of the Lord in the Kingdom of God. It's about honoring them and freeing them up to not wait on tables so that they might be fully devoted to prayer and service with the Word. It's an organic thing—not an external position, not a hireling. The Bible, in John 10, speaks very poorly of hirelings. I would NOT encourage anybody to do that.

But I need to say all of that because if we are trying to understand the woman's role in the New Testament Church, and if we are looking at it in terms of a system of two songs, a prayer, a "sermon," "invitation song," Lord's Supper, passing the basket, and the final "Amen" and then everybody goes home, then we might as well look some place other than the Scriptures for it. If that's what we're looking at, even

though that idea is totally foreign to the Scriptures, and if we are trying to figure out what women are supposed to do in that environment, then we should look elsewhere for the answer because the Scriptures don't address any environment other than Biblical New Testament Christianity.

The Scriptures don't tell the Gentiles what to do at AA meetings or Rotary Club meetings. It doesn't address meetings. *The Scriptures address the Kingdom of God.* We better throw away the manmade things. Otherwise, we are going to have a rough time trying to figure out how to apply Scriptures. They are going to seem to contradict each other. Like in 1 Corinthians 5 (if you don't hear anything else I have to say about that), if the church that you are a part of cannot effectively apply 1 Corinthians 5 right to the "T," then you need to totally change your congregation. From the ground up, it needs to be totally uprooted, torn down, destroyed and overthrown, in order that God might be able to plant something that looks like Acts 2 and forward. If you can't apply 1 Corinthians 5 in the honesty of your heart because you don't know how to deal with the slanderer (and you wouldn't know one if you saw one), then you have a problem on your hands. If you don't know what a greedy person is because, after all, everybody has material possessions, and how are we supposed to know... if you don't have any way of knowing what's going on, then it's NOT the Church that Jesus died for. And if it's not the Church that He was writing to in the Scriptures, you might as well forget trying to figure out what the women's role is.

Defining Some Terms

Here are some terms that you need to understand if we are going to look at what the Bible says.

"Silent" / "Silence"

a) "*hesuchia*": *tranquil, undisturbing*

1 Timothy 2:11 & 12—That word is in there twice and as we read those in just a couple of minutes, look for that word silent or silence (or some translations say quiet). The word is "*hesuchia*" and it means tranquil or undisturbing. It doesn't mean totally silent. It doesn't mean stone cold silence but means tranquil and undisturbing.

1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 3:4; Luke 23:56—In that phrase, it's rendered resting or rested, and it's the exact same word in the Greek: to rest.

1 Thessalonians 4:11; Acts 21:14—“We were silent, saying ‘The Lord’s will be done.’” Explain that one! “We were silent, saying, ‘The Lord’s will be done.’” That’s the word, that’s the exact same word, “*hesuchia*.” We say it while we’re silent. In other words, it doesn’t mean silent. It means we rested. In our hearts we were quiet and tranquil and we said okay. In other words, we give in. I think the NIV says something similar to that, “So we gave in.” It’s the same word in the Greek.

(b) “*sigao*”: hold one’s peace, keep hidden, unvoiced

1 Corinthians 14:34-35—Again the word is *sigao*, which means to hold one’s peace, to keep hidden, unvoiced

Romans 16:25—Spoke of the mysteries of God that were kept hidden. They were kept silent, if you will. They were hidden away.

Acts 12:17; Acts 15:12; Luke 9:36—It says they kept it to themselves. They held it back. They kept it hidden. That one might be interpreted to mean absolute silence. Again, it is not a certain thing, but it definitely leans much more that direction than the first word. To keep it hidden is a present infinitive as opposed to the aorist infinitive.

**I hesitate to drop these things on you, but you need to at least know that there are some things that you can go back to and you can look into and it’s not just the imaginations of men.

“Teach and have authority... (1Tim2:9-15)

PRESENT INFINITIVE

Definition: “Indicative of a condition or process”

Examples: “*pisteuein*”—a believer

a given occasion

“*doleuein*”—a slave

“*didaskein*”—a teacher

AORIST INFINITIVE

Definition: “Denotes that which is eventual or particular”

“*piteusai*”—to exercise faith on

“*doleusai*”—to render a service

“*didaxai*”—to teach

Pronunciation key: (ei= “a” as in gate; ai= “ai” -aisle; eu= “eu” -feud)

a) “Teach” is “present infinitive,” as opposed to “aorist infinitive.”

A definition of present infinitive is “indicative of a condition or process” (Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, Dana and

Mantey, p.199). The aorist infinitive denotes “that which is eventual or particular.”

The Greek word *pisteuein* is, “a believer” and that’s present infinitive. *Piteusai* is to “exercise faith on a given occasion.” It’s the same root word, but one is a believer because he is always a believer. The other indicates that he expressed faith on a particular instant in time; he expressed faith in a particular situation, on a given occasion.

The next word *doleuein* is one of the words for slave and that’s a constant state of being a slave. The same root word is *doleusai*, which means “to render a service.” So, he’s a slave but only on an occasion. A slave all the time versus presenting himself as a slave on a particular occasion. Now you see why that’s important.

The word *didaskein* is “a teacher.” *Didaxai* means “to teach.” A teacher, again, in the present infinitive, is one who always teaches. That’s who they are; that’s their status; that’s their position. Positionally they are a teacher, but in the aorist infinitive they just simply teach. It just so happens when you read 1 Timothy 2 in the English, it seems to say, “I forbid women to teach and to have authority over men.” But if you look at it carefully, you’ll realize that it is in the present infinitive, and in fact it means, “I do not allow women to have the status of teacher” (i.e., the continual state of authoritative teacher).

b) “Have authority” ... “authentēin”—to exercise dominion over, “self-assured, self-confident, firm conduct” (1st century B.C. usage)

To have authority is in that same phrase. “I forbid women to teach and to have authority over men.” It’s the only time in the New Testament that that word exists (“*authentēin*”), but we have some history behind that. Back in the first century B.C., the word was used as “self-assured, self-confident or firm conduct to exercise dominion over.”

The construction as well as the context indicated that the best expanded translation of this passage would be something similar to, “I do not permit a woman to have a self-assured role as a teacher over a man. She must maintain a posture of tranquility, submission and peace during the teaching and the discussion of the Word of God.” Look into these things and you will find that’s exactly what the present infinitive means. When Paul says, “I do not permit a woman

to teach and have authority,” he’s really saying, “I do not permit a woman to have a self-assured role as a teacher over a man. She must maintain a posture of tranquility, submission and peace during the teaching and discussion of the Word of God.” It’s really important to understand that if this subject is important to you at all. This passage must be important to you because it’s one of the most powerful passages on this whole subject.

Order and Headship

1 Timothy 2:9-15

1 Timothy 2:9—*“I want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety.”* That word propriety in the Greek is kind of a key, and it’s almost the theme of this whole passage here because what it really means is a voluntary limitation of one’s rights. If you understand that the heart that Paul is calling for in a woman is a voluntary submission— a voluntary limitation of her sphere of rights—then the rest of this will make sense also. *“Not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds appropriate for women who profess to worship God.”*

[Footnote: This brings up another point that I just want to touch on briefly, and that is something of the hypocrisy that I’ve seen, and we’ll touch on it again, in terms of legally applying certain passages and totally leaving out others that don’t seem to be appropriate. Here’s one of them: It says very clearly, and you can look it up in the Greek, “I don’t want any women to have braided hair.” But, I have never heard anybody tell me that they really feel like it’s sin to violate this very clear teaching. “Braided hair, you know, what’s wrong with that?” They’ll give you an explanation of why they think we can throw that passage out. It’s the same way with foot-washing. Jesus said, “Now that you’ve seen what I do, now you go and do that also and you’ll be blessed.” Well, we’ve conveniently thrown that out, at least the vast majority of the religious world says, “Oh well, I’ve got a good explanation why we don’t need to obey that.” There isn’t any more emphasis on one than the other. If you are going to take a mindset of legality, (which by the way the letter kills and the Spirit gives life) then I expect braided hair will be forbidden in your assembly and foot-washing will be mandated in your assembly. I could give you about ten more examples, too. My call really is to eliminate hypocrisy and double standards.

How many of you follow the direct teaching to not invite friends to dinner, but rather invite the lame, the crippled and the blind? Clear

teaching, word for word out of Jesus' mouth, no loopholes available. There is nothing cultural about it. It says to stop inviting your friends to your banquet, but invite people who can't pay you back. Why in the world would we legally try to twist and contort and try to press and squeeze people into our religious mold, when we absolutely, blatantly disobey the clear teaching of Jesus in Luke? Some things are a little hard to understand, but that one isn't. Why don't we do that before we decide we want to take the speck out of our brother's eye? Why don't we get the plank out of our own?

There was one thing that Jesus hated—and that was hypocrisy. I expect that someone out there might want to make a law, a creed, and legally apply the things we are talking about (or some other version of the things we are talking about), but I defy you to try to take a speck out of anyone's eye on this subject until you stop inviting your friends to the banquet and start inviting the lame, the crippled and the blind, like Jesus clearly said. It's the heart of the issue that we're looking for here, and if we want to take a legal approach to it, we're all in a whole lot of trouble. Every last one of us is in a hole of trouble if we are trying to build scaffolding to reach God based on legal principles.

And, I would feel very sorry for anyone who is so naïve and far from God to attack others for having braided hair—because there is a POINT being made by God, not a LAW of externals that has no bearing in our present age. Does that mean Truth is “relative”? Never! It simply means that Father wants us to “have the mind of CHRIST” rather than be so foolish and disConnected as to blindly apply externals when it is the HEART of the matter that He wants applied vigorously. Even today, many who do not know Him “strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.” I hope that effectively disarms anyone who would have an arrogant attitude as we look at all of these things. End of Footnote ☺]

“A woman,” in verse 11 of 1 Timothy 2, *“should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man. She must be silent.”* Why? “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. The woman will be kept safe through childbirth if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

Some people don't particularly like Paul's reasoning... “Woman was deceived.” Someone might say, “Well, so was man.” “And man did it with his eyes open. And why is that not as bad as the woman who was

tricked into it?” Some people don’t like the reasoning of Paul, but that’s not really up for a vote. The Holy Scriptures are the Holy Scriptures and some people twist and contort them to their own destruction, as Peter said. I would highly advise you not to argue with God on that point. Even if you don’t understand God’s reasoning, you’d better leave it alone. That *is* God’s mind on the matter, and even if your mind doesn’t line up with God’s mind on that, TOO BAD! You just know this is true and you don’t have to understand fully why. You just know for a fact that it’s true.

Here is one of the key passages, and it says that a woman must learn in quietness and full submission. *“I do not permit a woman to have authoritative teaching over a man. She must be tranquil. She must be quiet in her heart.”* Full submission. As we sit in any gathering, a woman must not demand her rights. She must not step over the top of men and demand her rights. Why? Cultural? No! It’s dependent on God Himself, His heart and the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. It has nothing to do with culture. Adam wasn’t deceived first, Eve was. Man was created first and then Eve. So that’s GOD’S reason for it, and if that’s God’s reason, that’s good enough for me. Women must not take a position of authoritative teaching in a position over men, whether it be in private or whether it be in public. The principle has to do with male and female all the way back in the Garden of Eden. To push her way over the top of man, as a female, is sin. I guarantee it on the authority of the Scriptures. To assault a man and publicly go over the top of him with authoritative teaching, rather than full submission and a quiet heart, is wrong. We’ll talk about how that works out practically in a few minutes, but that’s the heart of the issue. Don’t lose sight of the *heart* of the issue.

1 Corinthians 11:2-17

“I praise you for remembering me in everything and holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ (remember that phrase), and the head of the woman is man.” Who’s the head of the woman? Man. Who’s the head of man? Christ. And the head of Christ is? God! Remember that also. *“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head,”* which is Christ. *“And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head,”* which is man. If she prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, then she dishonors, embarrasses,

humiliates, breaks down the relationship between herself and the man, which is her head.

“Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head (the man)—it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but, the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentions about this, we have no other practice nor do the churches of God.”

If you read it in the King James or any other version, you’ll see that it says basically the same thing. The principles are intact in any translation you want to look at. What is the reason given for a woman praying or prophesying with her head covered? What is the reason given? It dishonors the head if her head is uncovered. Now is that cultural, based on this passage? It goes back to Adam and Eve again, doesn’t it? *“The very nature of things,”* quote—unquote. The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. Woman came out of the side of man and so the reasons given, again, are not cultural.

Notice what the whole impact of the thing is. The impact of the thing really isn’t head-coverings, but it points back to the hierarchy in the universe that God has established. He begins that whole passage by laying the groundwork. He said the whole universe is highly ordered. There are principalities and powers in heaven and also principalities and powers and rulers on earth as it is in heaven. Submit to those that have authority over you in the Lord. Submit to those who have governmental authority over you in the civil government, it says in Romans 13. Submit to those who have governmental authority over you in the family of God and in the family unit. The reason that He gives all this for the questions is that He is answering how we relate to

one another in the assembly of the saints. It is based on this premise that Christ is the head of the Church, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ, and never will any of these things be violated. They must not be violated. Anything that violates the hierarchy that God has created is sin.

It goes on to talk about the liberties that they were exercising, apparently in not having their head-coverings on. That, apparently, was the question that the Corinthians asked. They had a number of questions. I think this is the sixth one that they seemed to have asked in the letter that Chloe's household brought, and in the letter that he may have received otherwise, as we see in Chapter 7. But, the point is, that what he was establishing wasn't custom, per se. It wasn't the externals, per se, but the thing that he was establishing in their hearts was the hierarchy that must never be violated. Never violate headship. Why? Because in his argument further down, it reestablishes the point that he is making and that is, you cannot violate headship and headship is real because woman came from the side of man. Woman is the glory of man, and man was not created for the woman but the woman for the man. His argument there points to the hierarchy, the natural order of things that God has established.

God is the head of Christ, even before there was any time at all. Before there was anything in all of creation, there was an order in the Godhead. Christ submitting to the Father. Before the world was, somewhere inside of the Godhead, inside of this one God, was the Son saying, "Not My will, but Yours be done." There is something really incredible about all of that. Built not in the nature of the universe, but into the very nature of God Himself was: God is the head of God, God is the head of Christ, the Son, and the Holy Spirit says nothing that the Son doesn't give Him to say. *There is submission built right into God Himself.* And Paul's argument here is: Don't ever push your way out of that submission, because when you bust your way out of that, when the woman comes over the top of man and embarrasses the man in any way at all, *that is violating God.* We have violated God Himself whenever we bust out over the top of the natural order that God has created.

Paul reasons with them on the basis of creation again, not culture. The issue isn't headdress. It's much bigger than headdress. It's much bigger than a hat. The principle is: Don't ever, ever, ever do anything that violates the headship of man. Because just exactly the same way that Christ is the head of the man, so is the man the head of the woman."

If taking off your headdress humiliates his manhood, and makes you look like a prostitute to the eyes of the world when you're so free and you're so liberated that you can do anything you want, say anything you want, dress any way you want, talk back to him in public or any other thing... when you're so liberated you can do that, you have separated yourself from God. It's much bigger than head-covering. It has to do with anything that violates headship. Ponder that passage and let's go on to the next one.

1 Corinthians 14:33

Bear in mind that there are really no chapter breaks in this letter. It's a letter. There are no numbers. There are no chapters. There's not even any punctuation in most of the manuscripts. This is a handwritten letter. About fifteen or twenty minutes after he wrote what we just read about women, he is still writing the same letter and he makes a few other statements. In case you missed that, let me say it again. The women were praying and prophesying, very apparently in the presence of men, because if they weren't in the presence of men, there would be no chance of humiliating the men in the congregation. That was the whole point behind what he wrote about the men not being dishonored.

Now, if the men weren't there, how could they be dishonored by whether or not a woman has a doily on her head? The point is that women should never dishonor the man. If there are no men present, there's no chance of the men being dishonored. So praying and prophesying clearly seems to be happening out of the women's mouths in the presence of men. Preaching the Word of God in a sense, speaking forth the Words of God. (I'll throw out the word preaching because you'd be hard pressed to really translate any word in the New Testament "preaching." Forget that word because it has confused our thinking. We'll say, "speaking the words of God.")

Women are praying and speaking the words of God, in the presence of men apparently, in chapter 11. Otherwise, the whole chapter doesn't make any sense. In light of that, he goes on to say in verse 33: *"For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. [no paragraph break] As in all the congregations of the saints, [where God is the God of peace and not disorder] women should remain sigao—silent—in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their husbands at home;*

for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the Word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?"

They were becoming arrogant here about their gifts and about their assemblies and so on. Paul saw fit for at least a third or fourth time to rebuke them for their arrogance. But again, the point is in the context of order and disorder, with no chapter breaks and no paragraph breaks. He's speaking about women that seem to be creating chaos in the assembly. That can't be the case, as he is pointing out here.

Now I've read, it seems like, just hundreds of things that people have written from all kinds of different perspectives on all of this, and frankly, the more I read, the more I realize that people are trying to pound square pegs in a round hole. Because that is the contradiction in every single thing I read. Everybody I read seems to contradict themselves as they start to talk about this whole subject. Again, the framework must be wrong because as the very verse itself says, "God is not a God of disorder." So, God isn't contradicting Himself. But if men do, they obviously don't have the mind of Christ. They obviously don't understand the Scriptures, even if they know all the Greek words. I'm positive they don't understand the Scriptures if they begin to contradict themselves. We'll see more about that later.

Part of what has been thrown out is that the word that means "they're not allowed to speak" has to be joined intimately to the verse before that where women must remain silent... women must remain in a place where they are quiet and are hidden... women must remain hidden. Remember we looked at that word earlier. But it's joined intimately to "they are not allowed to speak." The word there has to do with not expressing thoughts, per se, not expressing concepts. But the Greek word has to do with sound versus no sound. It doesn't have to do with concept. It has to do with sound versus no sound. The women are not allowed to make sounds. It's in the context of tongues, in the context of chaos, more than three speaking, people not taking turns properly.

The whole subject has to do with chaos in the Church and it seems as if what's happening is that women are forcing themselves into the situation, and creating even more chaos. Essentially, God says in this passage that men are to order things in this way and women are supposed to stop creating chaos. They are to stay hidden. They're not to make noise, not to make utterance, not to make sounds, but to stay back out of the way and not to speak. To remain silent. Again, that

word, as we defined it earlier, does tend towards silence. It doesn't have to mean utter silence, but it does tend that direction much more so than 1 Timothy 2 does.

The thing that I would like to point out in verse 34 is that *“they are not allowed to speak, but must remain in submission as the law says.”* If you miss that phrase, I really believe that you don't have a chance of understanding this passage. *“As the law says”* is the only time in this whole passage, other than the fact that God is not a God of disorder, where he gives a reason why things should be this way. *“As the law says”* is the only reason he gives to why things ought to be as they are. So, if you don't understand what that means, then you are going to miss the whole concept that he is trying to get across here. The reference that he is making is in Genesis 3:16.

Commonness of Reasons Given for a Role of Submission

**As you read all these things, you'll notice there is a common grain all the way through, and if you don't pick up on that, you are going to have problems.

“As the Law Says”

“As the law says” (1Cor. 14:34; Gen. 3:16). Genesis 3:16 was the curse in the middle of God's discussion with these people who had fallen into sin—Adam and Eve. The reasoning that Paul had given over and over again was Adam and Eve and Genesis 3:16. *“As the law says,”* was when God talked to Eve about her fall and about her sin. He said, “You are going to suffer the pains of childbirth and your desire is going to be for the man, but he will rule over you.” As the law says, “The man will rule over the woman.” It goes all the way back to creation just like Paul said it did. The man will rule over the woman.

Side note: Though her desire—Eve's desire, the woman's desire—is for the man, God uses that same word in Genesis 4:7 when He says *“Sin is crouching at the door and it desires to have you.”* It's the very same word in the Hebrew in Genesis 4:7, *t^sshuwqah (tesh-oo-kah)*. Her desire, then, is to coyly master the man, but he will rule over her. That word “desire” doesn't have to do with affection. “Her desire will be for the man.” That doesn't mean she'll like him. What it means is that she'll have a hungry appetite to master him. The exact same word is used in the next chapter

and it's the only time that you'll see that, except for one other instance in the Song of Solomon. That's the only three times this word is ever used in the Hebrew Old Testament. It means to coyly master, to have an appetite of passion for, and to gobble up in a mastery kind of way.

“As the law says.” “Though the woman's desire is to coyly master the man, the man will rule over her.” That is why it is a curse, because the man will rule over a woman who desires to coyly, to manipulatively, master the man through subtleties, hints and batting the eyelashes. “Sin is crouching at the door, desires to have you, desires to master you.” This is a part of the curse that came upon mankind at the fall in Eden. And the curse of the desire to coyly master the man can only be broken with “ever increasing Glory” as the woman practices the “renewing of her mind” with the words of God as her bread from heaven. That curse, like all the curses in the garden (the sweat of the brow, etc...), are meant to be broken as we find our rest in Jesus the Anointed One—as we go deeper and deeper into the will of God and the New Covenant, into the “renewing of the mind” and into the fellowship that there was back in the Garden of Eden with God.

As we renew our mind with the thoughts of God, the curse is broken. We'll still have thorns in the ground. There will still be certain aspects of it that are true, but with ever increasing Glory, by the renewing of our mind, we're coming back into a fellowship that Adam and Eve had with the Father before the fall of man. The curse is broken with “ever increasing Glory” as the woman practices the “renewing of her mind” with the Words of God as her bread from heaven. As she submits her life to Christ, which is another way of saying the same thing, her response to man will automatically be more and more like the relationship in submission between Jesus and His Father.

“As the Law says” is a statement that the woman will not innately desire to respond as God would have it. She would prefer, apart from a mind renewed in the thoughts of God, to “take charge of this heap of ruins” (Isa. 3:6,12) and “fix” the situation for the incompetent men (Isa. 3:1-5; 5:4). Have you ever seen that? Have you ever seen women just welling up inside, wanting to “take charge of this heap of ruins” for the sake of these incompetent men that can't seem to get it all together? Anybody know what I am talking about? That's the curse. And without the “renewing of the mind,” we'll not break that curse. The men will never be worthy of submitting to, though woman will have to anyway, and the woman will never have it within her to submit, apart from

thrashing herself. It won't come out of the overflow of the heart. There will always be a war there. The Spirit and the flesh war with one another and that's part of the fall of man. That is part of "falling short of the Glory of God" as it says in Romans 3.

"As the law says" is a statement that the woman will not innately desire to defer to men, to let him rule. "As the law says, she is not to create an uproar." Instead, she is to bite her tongue and maintain a sweet, submissive heart at all times. Though this is most difficult (it is, after all a curse), it honors your God, which is far more important than having it your way. Your only job in this life is to honor God. Your job is not to make us have good meetings. Your job is not to make yourself have a good marriage. Your job is not to make the Church be something or do something. Your job is to honor God, to work heartily as unto the Lord in this workplace—to go forth and multiply and fill the earth in your personal relationship with people around you, to lay down your life as a ransom for many while they're yet sinners, whether in your marriage or any other place you happen to be. *That's your job!* Because in being a lamb slain, led to the slaughter, silent before your shearers (shearers aren't very nice people, but silent before your shearers) you submit yourself. You could have called ten thousand angels, but instead you emptied yourself and made yourself nothing and took on the form of a slave and a servant, and became obedient even though it cost you your life. *That's* the heart of Jesus.

Again, though it's most difficult, it honors your God for you to submit and have a sweet spirit, which is far more important than having it your way, even though in your mind, it could be better. And maybe really *truly* so, but it doesn't make any difference. *If you dishonor God to accomplish something for God, you haven't accomplished anything.* Is that reasonable? If you think you can make your marriage a better place to be by overruling your husband and forcing him into a corner, you've dishonored God in doing that. You've violated the relationship between the Father and the Son and the man and the woman and the children. You've violated all of that. Dishonor God and there will be *nothing* you can do out of that dishonoring God, to honor God.

You are better off to have a lousy marriage than to take authority over man—*because you are not going to have God's blessing anyway.* You are better off laying down your life as a ransom and letting God do it, lest any man boast. Then you can't take credit for doing anything, which is the way God wanted it anyhow. Ponder all of that. In 1 Corinthians 14,

the reason for this idea of silence (being quiet in the Church, not making racket, not pushing forward with rumbling noise)... the reason for not doing that, it says, is because of the law, *because of the law, because of the law.*

“Dishonors Her Head,” Adam and Eve, and the Angels

In 1 Corinthians 11, it’s “because of Adam and Eve” and because of the “angels,” which could mean several things (nobody knows for sure). Possibly there was a race of angels of the Sons of God that came down and had families with the daughters of man and created a super-race, if you read back in Genesis, and possibly because of their lack of submission in all of that area, that realm of disobedience, they were cast down and put out of God’s sight. Maybe that’s the reason for that. Another possibility with the angels is that they are in such deep obedience (the ones that are still in the Father’s presence)—total, absolute obedience and a rapid response to God’s Love—and all angels are ministering servants sent to those who will inherit salvation because we have angels surrounding us all the time, whether we see them or not. They are at our disposal to dispatch and to serve us. If we would know how to utilize that, it would be a tremendous asset to us. But, something about the angels makes it totally inappropriate to violate the hierarchy, the areas of submission that God is creating. It’s because of the angels; because of Adam and Eve, again, and because it dishonors the man, *which is the same issue.* That’s the 1 Corinthians 11 passage. Similarly, in 1 Timothy 2, it’s again because of Adam and Eve, because of the nature of creation and God’s heart on all of that.

To summarize all that: The premise not to be violated is Headship, order. Even in the Godhead itself there is order, and there is a natural order of things. Whatever you do, no matter how you think you are supposed to function in a group situation with the people of God, make sure you never ever violate headship in your home, in your personal relationships, as well as in the group of God’s people. Make sure you are not pushing over the top of that. Make sure that you submit to the man the same way that the man is to submit to Christ and the same way the Son submits to the Father. If you don’t believe that the man submits to Christ, and you don’t like that example, *then submit the same way that Christ does to the Father.* See if you can find fault with

that one! That's how you are supposed to submit to the man, according to the Word of God.

I encourage you, whatever else you do in all of this, to make sure that your heart is right on that subject, because if it is not, if you have a coy manipulation, a coy desire to push through and rule over and manipulate to have it your way, *then you're violating your relationship with God, no matter what the men are doing.* If they are totally wrong or totally right, it makes no difference. You are *not* to come over the top of that. Unless they're forcing you to do something that is disobedient to God, and then judge for yourselves whether it's better to obey God or men. If they're forcing you to disobey God, then you have no choice but to walk away from that and to do what you need to anyway. Should you explain it? Well, make up for it with a hundred times dose of love and self-sacrifice and service, but never allow any man or any woman on the face of this earth to cause you to disobey God. Don't do it! That's the exception!

Discrepancies in Two Traditional Views

Those Not Under Lordship of the "Word was God"

If the "Word of God" is the "Word was God"; if there's Deity itself dwelling in the "Word of God" (which there is), if that's true, then to ignore the "Word of God" is a serious error. To pretend it's not there, to pretend it doesn't matter, is big trouble. One of the positions that has been taken in the religious world today is, "We'll just do what we feel like." "Do what is right in their own sight" (Judges 21:25). They respond according to the pressure of society and "feelings," rather than the utterance of the Living God.

You may have all read the newspaper about an entire multi-million-numbered denomination that came out of the restoration movement, making a statement that they didn't want to claim publicly that Jesus Christ was the only way to the Father, because if they did, they would alienate some people. One of the people there who was not a spokesman, but just an attendee, said that he was just amazed that they could table Jesus that way and push Him on a back burner. That's what happens when the pressure of society begins to say, "Well, you know, in San Francisco homosexuality is okay, so if we are going to have a big membership in our 'church,' we'd better not press the issue too hard." If I happen to live in

San Francisco and I have a “church” and I want my salary and I want my “church” to grow, I had better lay off this homosexuality bit. I had better not say too much about it. In fact, it would be real nice if I spoke publicly about having homosexual clergymen and staff people so that they can all have their representation. But that’s the pressure of society—women’s lib and immorality, etc.—beginning to dictate what the church is supposed to be all about, because it’s not the righteousness of God that men take a stand for. It’s their own personal gratification, their own ego, their ambition and their fear of men. They are not wanting to be ostracized, not wanting to be alienated from other people. So the pressures of society (conforming to the patterns of the world is what Paul calls it), have forced a vast majority of the religious system into grossly violating a lot of very clear Scriptural principles. Instead of paying attention to the Word of God, a lot of people have done what they feel like is right in order to go with the flow of culture. And that’s a big problem.

There is unrecoverable loss when we don’t do everything “according to the pattern,” “on earth as it is in Heaven!” (Mat. 6:10; 1Cor. 4:6; Acts 3:21-23). The Bible says that Christ will be held back in heaven until all things are restored and it says that everyone that does not do exactly what Jesus says will be completely cut off from amongst His people. It couldn’t be any clearer than that. We suffer unrecoverable loss when we don’t do everything that Jesus says. There is no way around that. We’ll be completely cut off from amongst His people, and Jesus will be held back in Heaven until things are restored. Hebrews 5:9 and 8:5 speak of a salvation that comes through obedience, and if we don’t know what the Word of God says, it’ll be very hard to obey the Word of God.

“Jot and Tittle” Religion

No Double Standards

The second class of people live in legalistic, “jot and tittle” religion. Imaginary distinction (by definition) equals hypocrisy. That’s a very important thing to see. If we start to categorize things, and we start to say that it’s okay for women to answer questions and ask questions in “bible class,” but as soon as we flip a switch and go into “worship service,” it’s not okay anymore because women have to keep silent, then something is wrong. It’s the exact same building and the exact same pew (probably never even got up during the ten minute break) but we flip the switch and now instantly women have to be silent in the “church,” but ten minutes earlier they didn’t. That’s blatant hypocrisy

and Jesus was infuriated at that and it just can't be. There is no way we can have our cake and eat it, too. You just can't do that. We've got to understand these things in light of the true New Testament Church, otherwise we are going to end up with a lot of contradictions like that. If we are trying to pound a square peg into a round hole, we're going to keep having to find answers like that, that are very uncomfortable.

Then, later on when people are not sitting in a pew anymore, but out on the front porch of this "church building," or out in front of the vestibule and someone says, "Hey, Margaret, what did you think about that sermon?" And she replies, "Well, I kind of thought he missed it on such and such a point." You know what they have done? They violated the exact same principle, but they're fifteen steps away from where they had to be silent before. The only appropriate response is not to answer the question. If you hold to that in "bible study" and in "worship service," you can't violate it on the front porch either.

What about when you go off to the restaurant or to your house? For three hundred years there was no such thing as a "church building." So now we have to do the same thing in the house as we do in the "church building." Your husband asks you the question, "What did you think about the sermon today, honey?" You can't answer it without violating the Scripture. If you hold to it in "worship service," you have to hold to it in "bible class." If you hold to it in "bible class," you have to hold to it on the front porch and the restaurant. *Otherwise*, you are a hypocrite because you have a double standard. If you have two standards of the Word of God, one here and one there, then you are a hypocrite. So we have problems if you are taking that legalistically.

The following is by a man named Sattenfield. It is kind of a scholarly explanation in answer to a book that a man named Cassey wrote. Sattenfield apparently did not like Cassey's book very much. Cassey took one position, and this man takes another. Sattenfield writes, "Furthermore our view of worship is not supported by the Bible. Worship according to Jesus is not limited to a certain time and place; (Jn. 4:20-24; Acts 17:24). It is to be a continual act, not something that we can turn on and turn off when we please (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17 and Heb. 13:15). Simply because one is praying in a private devotional, it does not mean that he (or she) is not worshipping. In fact, every time that a Christian prays, regardless of the time or location, it is worship because it renders reverence and homage to God. Therefore, to conclude that 1 Timothy 2:8 does not apply to private situations is stretching the

text to fit one's preconceived notion. This Scripture is applicable to ALL circumstances and absolutely destroys this objection."

He sounds so sure of himself, doesn't he? What he is saying is that there is no chance whatsoever that a woman can ever, *ever* speak in a public assembly because after all, there is no such thing as a "worship service" in the Bible. Worship is neither here nor there, it's within you. "It's not in Jerusalem, it's not on this mountain, now it is in Spirit and in Truth." He said the Bible does not allow for the difference between "bible study" and "worship service" and "devotional." Well, now look what he says on the very next page. "Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:11, instructs the woman to learn in quietness. Asking and answering questions is undoubtedly included in this instruction because it is a part of learning. ... The only situation where a woman is prohibited from asking questions is in the assembly (which is not a direct parallel to our Bible class situation)... Paul said let the woman keep silence..." See what he did? He made a definite distinction between a "bible class" and a "worship service." Previously he said that there is no such thing as worship services, that the Scripture applies to every situation, a capital *ALL*, it applies to everything. And the very next page he said that it doesn't really apply to "bible classes," just to "worship services."

See what I mean about a square peg in a round hole? This man is a scholar and he's refuting another scholar, and neither one of them have any idea what they're talking about. They always automatically contradict themselves. Sooner or later if you talk to them long enough, they've pounded a square peg into a round hole and their folly will become evident to all. This guy happened to do it in two pages, but if I had read five or six pages, I would have found it eventually. It just happened to be right there on the next page.

There is no way that you can live in "churchianity" and follow God's teaching on 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14 or any other passage you want to try. You are just going to be taking external things and trying to ram them into your situation of overhead projectors, two songs and a prayer, and your little temple ritual and exercises. It isn't going to happen. You can't do it. You are always going to contradict yourself if you do that.

What about Singing? And Praying?

Colossians 3:16 literally, in the Greek, reads: "*In all wisdom, teaching and exhorting yourselves in psalms and hymns and songs spiritual, with*

grace singing in the hearts of you to the Lord.” It’s to the Lord even when you’re singing and teaching and admonishing one another—it’s to the Lord. It says that we are exhorting and teaching one another in psalms, hymns and songs spiritual. This is just pure logic and if you want to throw it out the window you can, but I don’t see how you can. If singing (on the authority of the Word of God) is teaching and exhorting and admonishing... if singing to one another psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is teaching, admonishing and exhorting one another, and it is forbidden for a woman to teach or to speak in a public assembly, then not only does she have no right to open her mouth (because silence and singing cannot co-exist), but also teaching and singing cannot co-exist because singing is teaching and admonishing. If you allow a woman to sing in the living room or in a temple, you are still going to end up with the same problem because she is automatically teaching when she sings, according to the Word of God, and she is not keeping silent, according to the Word of God.

The people who would want to departmentalize that and say that *this* is okay and *that* is okay, but *THAT* is not, are the very same ones that make a distinction between “bible study” and “worship service.” They say, “Well, it’s okay to sing because that is authorized.” Well, *where does it say* that women can sing? It doesn’t say “women.” It doesn’t say it in Ephesians 5. It doesn’t say it in Colossians 3. It doesn’t say that women can sing. In 1 Corinthians 14 it says, “*Brothers*, everyone bring a song, a word of instruction.” So again, if you take that legal mindset, then women are forbidden to teach, and women are forbidden to teach in the presence of men, and women are forbidden to speak out loud, and women are forbidden to pray. And remember that singing is to the Lord, so that makes it a prayer, too. Anytime a woman opens her mouth to sing, she is teaching, she is breaking the silence, and she is also praying publicly in the midst of men.

Again, you can’t have your cake and eat it too. It is hypocrisy to say, it’s okay in “bible study,” but not in “worship,” and it’s okay to sing, but it’s not okay to pray. It’s okay to sing, but it’s not okay to teach. It’s okay to sing, but it’s not okay to break the silence. *They’re all contradictions, and it can’t work.* When you take the legal mindset, you are pounding a square peg into a round hole.

What about Between family Members?

Can two intimate family members of different sexes pray out loud

together? Can I pray out loud with my wife? I know there are people that painted themselves into a corner, because they found themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. They will forbid their wives to pray out loud with them at night before bed or some other time. But the vast majority of people see how ludicrous it is when the two have become one flesh. If we are really one, why can't the other part of my oneness pray out loud? Again, it's not logical. This isn't a separate person, this is me. Why can't I?

How about my sister? Say I'm fifteen, my sister is sixteen, we are both brand new Christians. Can we pray together—male and female? How about my two sisters and me? How about my two sisters, my mother and me? How about my two sisters, my mother, my wife and me? If you are going to apply this, *then you have to go all the way to the core* where not one word can come out of a woman's mouth anytime, anywhere.

A teenage girl with her father, is that allowable? A wife and a husband, a brother and sister, a man and his wife and his sister? ***Sisters and Brothers in Christ are much closer than by natural blood line. Jesus said, "Who are my mothers and brothers and sisters? Whoever does the will of my Father..." (Mat. 12:48-50; Lk. 11:27-28).*** If you allow for a man to pray with his wife, if you allow a teenage girl to pray with her father, then according to the very words of Jesus, *how much more so a Brother and Sister in Christ? Either you have both or you have neither.* You can't draw a line between the two. ***My Family, my Brothers and Sisters, are intimately closer to me in Christ than in my physical relationships.*** If that's true according to the Word of God, then either I allow none of it, or I allow all of it. *Anything less than that is a contradiction.* It's chaotic, and there is no way out.

God is not a God of disorder. He doesn't care for us to be spinning around in circles trying to figure out whether a fourteen-year-old girl can pray with her father or not. He doesn't intend for us to be spinning around in circles legally trying to figure out jots and tittles. That's not a father's way. I don't do that with my son and daughter, and my Father in Heaven (who is not evil as I am, according to Jesus' Words), how much more will He give me all good gifts and give me a way of peace? Wisdom from Above is peaceable. Wisdom from below is chaotic. It creates discord and envy and factions (Jas. 3). If our discussion of this leads to discord and factions and chaos and every evil practice and division, then it's wisdom that's from below. It's unscriptural and of the devil, even if it is totally scriptural. The *Word of God* says it's of the

devil. By its fruit you shall know it. If it's from our Father, there's peace. If it's from below, it's of the devil and there's chaos and division.

What about Praying and Prophesying?

Again in 1 Corinthians 11 women were “praying and prophesying” in mixed company presumably, or the passage doesn't make any sense in regards to dishonoring men. That is in the same handwritten letter as 1 Corinthians 14, and Paul has *already* acknowledged that it is happening. Women are “praying and prophesying,” and the weight of the evidence clearly shows that men were present because they were being dishonored in the way it was happening.

When Not Speaking is a Violation

It is possible to violate “headship” by *not* speaking when asked. There is an example of an assembly in San Antonio, Texas, where the “preacher” was announcing a picnic the next weekend and the husband of the family that was sponsoring the picnic wasn't there at the time of the announcements. The “preacher” called down from the pulpit when he was making announcements and said, “Would you please tell me what time next weekend this is going to be so I can tell everyone else?” She wouldn't answer him. He said, “I'm standing here trying to tell what time to come to your house next week. Could you please tell me?” She didn't say anything. Finally, he said, “Never mind,” and went on to the next thing. He asked her afterwards, “Why did you do that?” She said, “I have to be submissive.” He said, “By not answering me, when I asked you to answer me, you were *not* submissive. You were disobedient in public. You *violated* submission. Based on your interpretation of something, you violated the very principle that the Word of God says.” Submission isn't a matter of the external things. It's a heart issue. When she refused to do what he asked her to do, she was out of submission. She violated headship. *She humiliated a man in public by refusing to speak.* She didn't submit. It's not the speaking itself that is the issue. It's the heart of the thing and where the headship is. That's the real issue.

Casper Weinberger, as the Secretary of Defense, has to be in submission to President Reagan. The President is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Weinberger must be in submission to Reagan at all times. If Reagan says, “Casper, come here. I have to ask you something about Lebanon,” and Casper says, “No.” Is that submission to not speak? How could you ever interpret that as submission to not speak? That is not submission. Submission is to say, “Casper, what do you think?” And

Casper says, “Here’s what I think.” Reagan says, “Okay, well, I’m not going to do that.” Casper says, “Okay, I fully support you in what you’re not doing.” Submission isn’t to keep silent in and of itself. Submission is to not create chaos. It’s the chaos, the disorder, that God is not the author of. It’s the violating of headship. It’s the violating of the way that God has stacked things up in the Unseen world. When a woman violates that and creates chaos and disorder, then she’s in sin. When she doesn’t create chaos and disorder, she doesn’t dishonor her head. When it all stacks up as it did with God the Father and God the Son, then it’s in harmony with the Word of God.

The jots and the tittles will get you into big trouble like the woman in San Antonio. The jots and the tittles caused her to sin in public. She violated the very essence of the Word of God, thinking she was keeping the letter of the law. The letter kills; the Spirit gives Life. Casper Weinberger’s responsibility is not to keep silent, but to answer questions when he is asked, to not answer questions when he is not asked, and to fully support whatever the Commander in Chief says, whether he agrees or not. The nature of submission is not an external form of silence. He would be incompetent if he kept silent. He would be rejected as a cabinet member. He would be worthless. A helpmate is only being a helpmate if she is helping. Backing away and being a deaf-mute, being silly putty on the ground, that’s not submission. That’s not what women are created for. They’re created to be a rib so that man can be full and free, and to be there for him. They’re created to be a Casper Weinberger, to be an expert, and then to submit. That’s the nature of the whole thing.

“Menservants and Maidservants Will Prophesy”

In Acts 2, the nature of the New Covenant that Joel prophesied about is that, “Both my menservants and my maidservants will speak My word.” Young men and women, menservants, maidservants, male and female—the nature of the New Covenant, the New Testament Church that Joel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied about will be, “both My men and My women will speak forth My Word.” If God didn’t mean that, then why did He say it? Why did He prophesy it and why did Peter quote it in Acts 2 when the Church was established? That’s the nature of the New Covenant. There is no third covenant. There are only two covenants. The second covenant totally swallowed up and fulfilled the old covenant. The old was obsolete. The New Covenant, the second covenant, has both menservants and maidservants speaking God’s Word.

In Acts 21:9, twenty-five years after Pentecost, Philip had four daughters who prophesied—spoke the Word of God. There was no apology for that. That wasn't even spoken of as unusual. That was just the nature of the New Covenant. It made sense. Even before the New Covenant was fully formed, in Luke 2:36-38, there was Anna, a prophetess, a woman of God, that spoke forth the word of God. She prophesied over the child and went forth telling everyone in the temple. Did she just tap the women on the shoulder? And then say to the men, "Excuse me. You are a man, so I can't tell you that the Messiah is here"?

Galatians 3 is an excuse for some, but if you understand the heart of God, it's not an excuse; it's reality. There's neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, in Christ Jesus. We're all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We have put on Christ. We've been clothed with Him. It's an excuse for some—it's a license to sin, a license to violate headship for some and it can't be. But, when you understand the truth of it, it's a marvelous truth.

Some More History

The following are a couple of things J.W. McGarvey wrote. McGarvey was back in the middle 1800's and some of you have heard of him. He was a real man of God. He wrote this along with a man named Pendleton, who was his mentor. These two men had a massive impact on the restoration movement and the religious world as a whole, especially of this country back in the middle 1800's. You'll really appreciate his heart as we get into this:

"Corinth was made up of Greeks, Romans and Jews, and all these three elements of her population were found in the church to which Paul wrote. The Jew and the Roman worshiped with covered, and the Greek with uncovered, head. Naturally a dispute would arise as to which custom was right. Moreover, as the women were beyond all doubt acquainted with the principle that there is neither male nor female in the spiritual realm (Gal. 3:28), they seem to have added to the confusion by taking sides in the controversy, so that some of them asserted the right to worship with uncovered heads after the fashion of the Greeks. Now, in the East in Paul's day, all women went into public assemblies with their heads veiled, and this peplum, or veil, was regarded as a badge of subordination, a sign that the woman was under the power of the man. Thus Chardin, the traveler, says that the women of Persia wear a veil in sign that they are 'under subjection,' a fact which Paul also asserts in this chapter. Now, the

symbolic significance of a woman's head-dress became the determining factor in this dispute. For a man to worship with a covered head was an act of effeminacy, a disgrace to his head, and for a woman to worship with uncovered head was likewise disgraceful, for it would at once be looked upon as a bold assertion of unwarranted independence, a sign that she had laid aside her modesty and removed from her sphere. From this passage it is plain that it was not intended that Christianity should needlessly vary from the national customs of the day. For Christians to introduce needless innovations would be to add to the misconceptions which already subjected them to persecution. One who follows Christ will find himself conspicuously different from the world, without practicing any tricks of singularity. ... Therefore, by covering his head while at worship, man symbolically forfeits his right to share in the glory of Christ, and thus dishonors himself. We are no longer slaves, but sons (Gal 4:7). 'We Christians,' says Tertullian, 'pray with outspread hands, as harmless;'" (That's interesting. That's the passage in 1 Timothy 2 right before that, "I want all men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer." It's not a Greek custom because it was written to the Ephesians, which wasn't a Jewish city and he said, "all men everywhere.") Tertullian says, "... 'We pray with outspread hands, as harmless; with uncovered heads, as unashamed; without a prompter, as from the heart']:" but the woman is the glory of the man. ... And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church."

"... This is usually regarded as a very difficult passage, but the difficulties are more seeming than real, if we regard it as a general rule. Paul gives two reasons why the women should keep silence: 1. The Old Testament law made her subject to her husband, and hence not a teacher, but a pupil. 2. The customs of the age made it a shameful thing for a woman to speak in public. Of these, of course, the first is the weightier, and yet we find exceptions to the rule in both dispensations. There were several prophetesses who exercised their gifts in public (Ex. 15:20; Judg. 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Isa. 8:3; Neh. 6:14; Luke 1:41, 42; 2:36-38; Acts 21:9)." (In fact, if you go back and look at some of the frescos and some of the drawings in the catacombs in Rome, you see women praying publicly and even women praying over men. You can put whatever value you want on that, but obviously they didn't have a big problem in the early Church with women doing that. What McGarvey is pointing out here is that there are exceptions, though that is the rule.)

“...Moreover, the fullness of prophetic endowment granted to the New Testament church was a matter of prophecy (Acts 2:17), and Paul himself gives directions as to the attire of women when exercising the prophetic office in the church (ch. 11:5). Paul’s rule, then, admits of exceptions. Some would do away with the rule entirely as obsolete on the ground that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28); but this is undoubtedly unwarranted, for while the gospel emancipated woman, it did not change her natural relation so as to make her the equal of man. The powers of woman have become so developed, and her privileges have been so extended in gospel lands, that it is no longer shameful for her to speak in public; but the failing of one reason is not the cessation of both. The Christian conscience has therefore interpreted Paul’s rule rightly when it applies it generally, and admits of exceptions. The gift of prophecy no longer exists in the church, but, by the law of analogy, those women who have a marked ability, either for exhortation or instruction, are permitted to speak in the churches. Moreover, the apostle is speaking of the regular, formal meeting of the church; and it is doubtful if his law was ever intended to apply to informal gatherings such as prayer-meetings, etc. There is some weight to the comment that to understand the apostle we should know the ignorance, garrulity and degradation of Oriental women. Again, women are indeed subject to their husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 2:18; Tit. 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1). The law is permanent, but the application of it may vary. If man universally gives the woman permission to speak, she is free from the law in this respect.”

So, there are some good thoughts in there, I think, that lends some credence to what we’ve been talking about.

Living With the UnBiblical Square Peg?

If I had to live with my unbiblical “square peg,” in other words, if I was forced to live in an environment that revolved around temple exercises on Sunday morning and Wednesday night, what would I do? Well, if you were to ask me that, I think I would probably be very hesitant to ever have a woman behind the pulpit. I would be hesitant because what I have done if I have put a woman behind the pulpit, is I’ve somehow ascertained for all the people in the assembly (as well as the visitors) that this woman would not violate their headship, that she wouldn’t dishonor the men in the congregation. I *assume* that for everybody if I put a woman up in the pulpit. But, you see, it’s a square peg *because there is no such thing as a pulpit in New Testament Christianity*. There

is no such thing as a “sermon” every Sunday morning at 9:25 AM and 10:25 AM for twenty-five minutes. That idea of “preaching a sermon” every Sunday morning—a “clergyman” standing up and delivering an exhortation that he studied for forty hours to prepare word for word, and practiced in front of his mirror, and got all of the quotable quotes out of all the books, and developed this thing to throw at people every Sunday morning—that *idea does not exist*. It’s not anywhere in the Bible, Old Testament or New.

So, that being the case, since that’s not Christianity at all anyway, we come up with a problem of what to do with the pulpit and a two-hour meeting on Sunday mornings and one hour on Wednesday nights. Personally, I am not going to get myself in that situation again where we are practicing unbiblical things of having temple exercises Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. I’m not going to do that anymore. I’m never going to have that problem again about whether or not to allow a woman to stand behind a pulpit. But, if you happen to be in a situation where you are doing that, wherever you may be, then that’s going to be a problem that you’re always going to have to be faced with. If I were in your shoes, I probably wouldn’t put a woman up there to “lead a prayer” or “preach a sermon” either. In fact, I’m sure I wouldn’t. Again, what you have done is created your own problem by having unbiblical practices.

Living In Deep Relationships—Intimacy

Another possibility is to go back to the basics. 1 Corinthians 14 speaks of “when you are all together.” That’s how that passage is introduced in 1 Corinthians 14. If you think with me for just a minute, and you go back to 1 Corinthians 1, we can look at something that I’ve never heard before, so maybe you haven’t either. Maybe I’m right, maybe I’m wrong. But think about it. In chapter 1, some were of Cephas, some were of Apollos, some were of Paul. Some from the household of Chloe came and told them that some were of Cephas and some were of Paul. Go back and look at the situation in Corinth.

If there were twenty thousand Christians there, it’s highly unlikely that they had all met in one place, daily in public and from house to house. In Acts 2, there were twenty thousand Christians, and in the early stages there were three thousand and five thousand men, and they multiplied and were added to daily. There was a whole mass of people. What did

they do? They met daily in public under Solomon's colonnade and they met from house to house. Did they get twenty thousand people or five thousand in one house? No way! Did they get everybody together at some time? Yes, they did. It said that all the believers were together (Acts 2). There were times when they were together on Solomon's porch. There were other times when they were from house to house. It happened daily. We don't know how often everybody was together in public, but we do know at the very least, they were daily together. That makes sense because of the Scripture that says, "Admonish one another daily so none are hardened by sin's deceitfulness." That's the very essence of New Testament Christianity. So, we know there was a "together daily" kind of thing going on, but the all together thing didn't seem to happen at the same time. It couldn't happen at the same time. It couldn't happen at the same time as from house to house.

"Some are of Cephas, some are of Apollos, some are of Paul." Since there is no "church building" for over three hundred years according to archeologists, what if this household that meets in Chloe's house in Corinth has a hero named Paul? "Hey, this is a real man of God. He saw Jesus and he was caught up in the third heaven. We like Paul, let's invite him to spend some time with us." In this other household, Aquila and Priscilla's household maybe, they are big fans of Apollos. This man has mighty words, and he is a great speaker. In this other household over here they really think the world of Peter because he walked with Jesus for three and half years. This man really knew Him. He knew the Life that was with the Father from the beginning. He knew Him firsthand. He was His friend. They were of Peter. And people were actually carnal enough, babies enough as Paul said, to think in those terms. What if that was an expression of the different households, the different gatherings of people in households that took on these special forms, these special ideals—pet ideas, pet men of God?

Well, in chapter 14 it says, "*When you're all together* here is how you function." There may have been a *distinction* between the daily in public and between the "house to house." Again, I've never read of anyone making that distinction, but surely someone has. If that's true, then there are some things to think about as you read on from here.

It's different when it's outside of the smaller Family settings—*not based on the size of the group, but on intimacy*. Think about this: If we are sharing life together, pouring out our lives for one another, confessing sin one to another, bearing one another's burdens in a smaller Family

setting like this... and then, from time to time, we get together with twenty or thirty other groups just like this to celebrate Christ together.... *That* might be the context for Paul to say, “Women, I want you to keep quiet. Women, I want you to take a background place. I don’t want you to usurp authority. *Brothers*, everyone brings a song, a word of instruction, a revelation.” Now you can begin to see how in a gathering like that a woman might actually violate the headship *because there is no intimacy there*.

For instance, if a Sister were to say something to me in this kind of environment, I wouldn’t take offense with it *because we have a relationship*. But, if I didn’t know them, and they stood up to a larger group of people and said, “Here’s what I think you ought to do,” then *that* grates my heart a little bit, because it’s not coming out of relationship. Hasn’t she just come over the top of me? Hasn’t she just pushed what she thinks over the top of me in authoritative teaching? Well, I “do not permit women to have an authoritative teaching role.” It’s not an authoritative teaching role if my wife tells me, or my daughter tells me, or *my Sisters in Christ that I’m busy laying down my life for and they for me*. I’ve not violated principle, then.

Without RELATIONSHIPS Nothing Works

Maybe, just maybe, the whole question goes back to the fact that in a normal religious environment, nobody has any relationship with anybody. Some of you reading this who used to be in that kind of environment didn’t even have a relationship with your own spouse until you got out of that “churchy” environment. It wasn’t until you got real in the midst of the people of God, daily in public and from house to house, opening up your heart and your life and all that you are to everybody, that you had a relationship with even your own spouse.

Again, the point is that all of the first Corinthian letter *is invalidated if we don’t have relationships*, because nothing is going to make any sense. There is no way to work it out. But if we have relationship, you have not violated my headship if I’ve given you the right to come to me. If I’ve given you the right to come and say, “Hey, this is out of line. I hear you saying this, but you’re doing this.” If I have given you the right to do that because we have been busy laying down our lives for each other, then you have not violated headship. I’ve given you the right to do that. In fact, if you didn’t do that, you would be *unsubmissive*

because I have asked you to *because I need your help*. But, if somebody from the outside does that, then we have a problem because then I don't know where they are coming from. I don't know what their motives are. I don't know whether they're arrogant or not. I don't know if this is authoritative teaching or humility. I don't know. They've never been willing to lay down their life for me. They've never shown me anything in their life. All I hear are words coming from somebody I don't know.

So, I would like for you to ponder the possibility that without relationships, it's impossible for 1 Corinthians 11 to take place. It's impossible for women to pray and to speak forth the word of God in the presence of men if there's no relationship. It does make sense that men, even if they are carnal and unspiritual, will have to do everything, because there is not enough relationship to avoid violating the principle. What this really is, more than anything, is a call to lay down your life for one another. And in so doing, if a person gives you the right to enter into their life, then it would be unsubmitive of you not to do that. It would not be authoritative teaching. It would not be usurping authority if they gave you the right to enter into their life. However, that will never happen if we don't have relationship.

So, Now What?

Let me finish by sharing something from the writing called Meetings in His Kingdom: *"Certainly the question of 'women's role' will come up, and justifiably so... Paranoia, arrogance, ignorance of the Scriptures, and the traditions of men are four foes in this battle to understand the women's role, each leading to a different way of missing God... In a formal 'service,' complete with pre-programmed liturgy of songs and prayers and actors, this is even a tougher question. But, in the context of life in Christ, it's not a difficult question to resolve. When the people of God are functioning in Life, as a Family, without pomp and circumstance and a program, the question can be approached from a simple Family standpoint."*

"Wherever you happen to be, I suggest that you yield to the leadership of that assembly on this point of a woman's role. And yield to it enthusiastically, whatever they decide. If you choose to be a part of the local body, under the local expression of the government of Jesus (Isaiah 9:7; Heb. 13:7, 17; Heb. 12:15), be an asset to the unity and corporate life of Jesus there, not a thorn."

In other words, whatever the leadership in the congregation that you are a part of has decided, for as long as you are a part of that congregation, you'd better come under their authority and not be a burden for them. You had better respond to that.

“Simply for information’s sake, the way we have learned to relate to each other in the church here is that the women, so as not to “dishonor her head,” “the man,” (1Cor.11:5, 3, 8–9; 1Tim.2:11–15) never barge in during a gathering.... A woman should ask, “May we pray?” rather than “Let us pray.” “May we sing ‘Majesty?’” rather than simply starting the song as many of the brothers do. With the right heart, even “May I share this scathing rebuke that God has put on my heart about...?” is not “usurping” if it is the Will of God and acceptable to the men to say what she’s seen. It’s all done in humility with graciousness and beauty and honor.”

Even a scathing rebuke is not out of line as long as they have permission to do it. If you say to me, “I have something to say to you that’s going to curl your hair, can I tell you?” And I say, “Yes.” Then, you’re in submission. You’re in perfect submission because I gave you the right to say it. It’s not what you say, it’s the heart behind it. If I say, “No, I don’t want to hear it,” you don’t go away grumbling. You say, “Okay, that’ll be fine. I may be wrong anyway.” You don’t go away grumbling. It’s the heart behind it.

DO Function!

“Your sons and your daughters will tell forth the divine counsels.... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days and they will tell forth the divine counsels” (Acts 2:15-21; 1Cor 11:5; Acts 21:8-9—25 years after Pentecost. Rev. 3:20-21). “God’s Will is that women, and men too, function out of humility, but do function. Don’t stop. Don’t bury your talent. Find the way and the place that seems good to the Holy Spirit and to you and the Family of God (Acts 15:28; Heb. 13:7, 17), and is obviously consistent with the Scriptures. But do function!”

If you bury your talent, you are a wicked and slothful servant, even if you are a female. Don’t hide behind the idea that women are supposed to be absolutely silent and make no contributions to the Kingdom of God. That can’t be right. If you bury your talent, you will become accountable for that. Likewise, make sure your heart is very submissive.

You honor the men and you honor their headship. Your heart is gracious and you are not grumbling and discontent, and you're not grabbing and snatching and undermining. But, your heart is submissive and full of kindness and graciousness and beauty, and, as Sarah did with Abraham, call the men Lord. And all the women said, "Amen!" It really isn't hard. But you will never know, unless you live life. If you live life in vulnerability, if you "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ," if you confess sins one to another, if you serve one another, if that's how you live your life, "this is how all men will know that you are My disciples by the agape that you have for one another." If that's how you live your life, then it's not a problem. If that's not how you live your life—daily in public and from house to house—if it's departmentalized into Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, then you don't have a chance. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, "*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*" If there isn't that liberty, there is one thing for sure, the Spirit of the Lord isn't there.

For some of you this may have been boring, to others unnecessary (in your thinking), but be sure and establish it in your heart. Because if you are really thrusting out, if you are really doing anything for God's sake, you will encounter opposition and it's important you understand what the Word of God has to say. If you don't understand what the Word of God has to say, then you would really be hard pressed to be helpful to other people. You may have already encountered that. With the best of intentions you may have found yourself unable to help others because you didn't really abide in the Word, and the Word and Christ doesn't really abide in you. You took it lightly, you didn't grab a hold of it and retain it and persevere in it and produce a crop with it. You heard it, but it ricocheted off. You didn't grab it and retain it and persevere in it, and therefore you didn't produce a crop in it. I encourage you to know what the Word of God says about these things; otherwise, you'll get yourself in trouble later on. Okay?

Where Do Women Fit In?

From Meetings in His Kingdom

Chapter Twenty-Two

CERTAINLY the question of a “woman’s role” will come up, and justifiably so. There is very good reason for the woman’s role to be discussed in regard to meetings. We know that Paul saw fit to write about it a number of times, and we too should recognize it as a very important Biblical issue; let’s not pretend it doesn’t matter.

Paranoia, arrogance, ignorance of the Scriptures, and the traditions of men are four foes in this battle to understand the women’s role, each leading to a different way of missing God.

Paranoia is that opponent of Truth and of a Celebration of God’s Spirit where men run from anything that looks like it might be trouble. “Better safe than sorry” is an ungodly motto of cowards and faithless men and women. In this mode we will stifle anything and everything that God may wish to do in our generation. Had the father of our Faith, Abraham, had this attitude towards God and the things of God, Abraham would never have taken Isaac to that mountain to be sacrificed. (“That’s murder—God judged Cain severely for such an act of wickedness.”) David would surely not have danced as he celebrated before the Ark. (“Moses never did that. It’s unauthorized.”) John would have been labeled an unbiblical fool for claiming that men should be baptized by him, since there was no Scripture in existence in his day to support such an idea. God’s viewpoint was quite different. Any who rejected John’s baptism “rejected God’s purpose for their lives” (according to God Himself), even though John baptized without any written “authorization” and no “signs and wonders” to prove himself. Am I saying “anything goes?” No way. I am saying, however, that our mortal interpretation of the Scriptures is so woefully shallow that we had better not create a rigid system of “the way things must be to please God” and allow our paranoia to cheat us out of God’s Blessings. And in this case, rob women of their responsibilities as Priestesses in the Kingdom.

Arrogance is enemy number two. Some in this camp do not actually care what the Bible says about this matter because, after all, any limitation of women's roles is probably just a cultural thing, anyway. "I have my rights, you know." "Paul was a chauvinist." Please do not exalt yourself above God and His Word in this way. "The Word was with God; the Word was God." Careless arrogance is a lethal position to take.

And **Ignorance** of the Scriptures leads to chaos. We make our own way and our own rules when we do not "make our home in His Word" and, instead, do whatever seems right in our own eyes. That's clearly not God's Will, either.

Traditions of Men, enemy number four, still, as Jesus said, make "null and void" the Word of God. It doesn't matter one lick what you're "comfortable" with, or the way pappy used to do it. Shocking? Seek God's Face, not your own comfort zone. No one who followed after Jesus, in the days He visited this planet in the flesh, bypassed being shocked at His "unorthodox" interpretations and practices. Jesus hasn't changed. Prepare to be shocked... and follow anyway.

These four foes must all be crushed in order to know God's Way for our lives and His church. In a formal "service," complete with a pre-programmed liturgy of songs, prayers and actors, "what role should women take" is an even tougher question. When you have a pre-set format, a printed program that's handed out at the door, and people assigned to certain roles, many situations are far more complicated than they need to be. "Who will play thus and such a role? Do I dare allow a woman to say a prayer?" Since the institutional structure was never God's intention in the first place, of course it is hard to know what God's Will for the role of women is in that format! When you have a liturgy and a religious machine instead of the Family of God, it creates unnecessary tensions. In the context of life in Christ, it's not a difficult question to resolve. When the people of God are functioning in Life, as a family, without pomp and circumstance and a program, the question can be approached from a simple family standpoint. When you have a program, a system and a machine, big-time decisions have to be made. When you're living life together as Family, God works through that to answer a lot of questions.

Wherever you happen to be, I suggest that you yield to the leadership of that assembly on this point of a woman's role. And yield to it

enthusiastically, whatever they decide. If you choose to be a part of that local body, under the local expression of the government of Jesus (Isa.9:7; Heb.13:7, 17; Heb.12:15), be an asset to the unity and corporate life of Jesus there, not a thorn.

Simply for information's sake, the way we have learned to relate to each other in the church here is that the women, so as not to "dishonor her head," "the man," (1Cor.11:5, 3, 8-9; 1Tim.2:11-15) never barges in during a gathering and takes control of a point being made or during times we are turning vertically towards God. She is never to have an outspoken, authoritative presence in a meeting, as if "over" (rather than "submissive to") the men present. There *is* to be a difference, Biblically, between men's and women's roles in the Church—no question about it. A woman should ask, "May we pray?" rather than "Let us pray." "May we sing 'Majesty'?" rather than simply starting the song as many of the brothers do. With the right heart, even "May I share this scathing rebuke that God has put on my heart about...?" is not "usurping" if it is the Will of God and acceptable to the men to say what she's seen. (In fact, it would be "unsubmissive" to *not* share what is on her heart if the men ask her to.) It's okay if it's done in humility, with graciousness, beauty and honor. If a woman is, out of frustration or pride, trying to fill the men's role, God cannot use her to do what *she* is called to do. When everyone is filling the part that God designed for him or her (such a rarity!) it is astonishing how things fit together. God is honored, and everyone is fulfilled.

We should note, as we ponder this challenge, that the very nature of the second (and last) Covenant includes a prominent place for women. At least part of their role is described by the Holy Spirit as: (Acts 2:15-21) "*Your sons and your daughters will tell forth the divine counsels... even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will tell forth the divine counsels.*"

1 Corinthians 11:5 speaks of women praying and prophesying. It is highly likely that men were present, or the entire reason for writing the warning (the danger of "dishonoring" the woman's head, the man) would have been of little relevance. Twenty-five years after Pentecost the evangelist Philip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-9).

These Scriptures, at least, do seem to venture beyond much of christendom's normal conception of "women in the church."

Another entire segment of christendom has very little respect for the Scriptures, and just collapses into “conforming to the patterns of the world.” Anything that the world allows or demands eventually becomes acceptable for these false churches. An expanding role for women in society and business seems to “re-write” the Scriptures in groups such as this.

I believe you’ll find, as you consider God’s Word on the subject, that gatherings like those on Solomon’s Porch (Jerusalem, mega-thousands present, Acts 2–5) and the “whole church” gatherings (Corinth, numbers unknown, 1Cor.14:23), the “daily in public” part of “daily in public and from house to house” will work out to be a little different than the “house to house” gatherings as far as the women’s part goes. While just as free (1Cor.14:26 is a “whole church” passage), the possibilities of “dishonoring the head” (1Cor.11) are much higher—and different cautions to the women are in order in this larger environment. Think about it; pray about it.

In spite of all of the pressures of the man-made rules or liberties, women must be women who tell forth the divine counsels of God. That’s the nature of the New Testament church, prophesied by Joel and repeated by Peter in Acts 2. The nature of the New Testament church includes both sons and daughters—both men and women, telling forth the divine counsels of God. God’s Will is that women, and men too, function out of humility, but *do function*. Don’t stop. Don’t bury your talent. Find the way and the place that seems good to the Holy Spirit and to you and the Family of God (Acts 15:28; Heb.13:7, 17), and is obviously consistent with the Scriptures.

On “Women’s Role”

Sunday Afternoon, February 20, 2000

Question: So, what is the “woman’s role” supposed to be in the church, anyway? There is so much controversy! Some say all of Paul’s teaching about women and their role was only “cultural” and not “the Word of God.” I know this cannot be true. How much of the Bible would we need to throw away, in order to please everyone on every topic? However, I also have a very difficult time understanding what the women’s role should be. If she is a co-heir, what about her preaching and leading bible studies and worship leading? Should it happen or not happen, according to God?

The biggest problem is that we are asking, “Should our poodle dog wear a beret, or a baseball cap, or a cowboy hat when she goes to the dance?” The answer is, “None of the above. Poodles don’t go to dances.” We spend our time trying to interpret Scriptures for totally unscriptural environments!! The legalistic answers are wrong. The culturalistic interpretations are wrong. The liberal answers are *all* wrong! Poodles don’t go to dances, and Paul was *not* writing to people that had to decide if women should be allowed to “preach sermons” (there were none) during the “service” (there were none) or speak up during a “bible study” (there were none) or “lead worship” (wrong idea) in Paul’s day!

There is *no* mistaking (1Cor. 11, 14; 1Tim. 2; 1Pet. 3; etc.) God has a different role in mind for women than men. However, the *real* role of a woman can only be interpreted in the context of *biblical, daily Christianity*. We cannot understand God’s thought unless we live *as a family* “from the least to the greatest,” “confessing sins one to another,” and “bearing one another’s burdens to fulfill the law of Christ.” Any attempt to interpret a male/female role in the unBiblical context of “attendance,” “programs,” “Sunday house-church services,” “bible studies,” “monthly prayer breakfasts,” “hirelings,” “cell groups,”

“Buildings Appropriated for Religious Functions,” and “worship teams”—will miss the mark *terribly*.

Let’s not try to “dot the i” when the “i” does not yet exist! In other words, let’s just build God’s way, without the gimmicks, or accommodating human flesh with the human schedules and programs. Let’s try it *without* the hierarchies and “automatic teachers, preachers or leaders.” This “automatic speaker” or “official leader” makes a man nothing more than a mini “vicar” or “substitute” (from the Latin word, “vicarious”). Do we really need a substitute for Christ? Whether a “protestant” vicar, or a roman catholic one, it is the same disastrous offense to God’s Son. “Nicolaitanism” translated, is to “conquer the People.” Jesus is ALIVE and needs no one to fill in for Him! “When Revelation comes to the second, let the first one sit down!” “Everyone has a word of instruction, a song, etc.”

Jesus said, “Call no man leader, teacher, father, vicar—for you are *all brothers!*” Are there Gifts? OF COURSE! But, Oh, how different. “Automatic” anything or anybody? Nope. Only Jesus. Period.

Let’s try building *daily* as a *Family*, rather than as an organization. Also, do you realize what is as unfruitful and as far outside of Father’s Heart as institutional christianity? Here it is: A “loose-knit nothing” is equally wrong. Just nice people that hang around together some, is *not* God’s intent for “a City set on a hill that cannot be hidden.” The “loose-knit nothing” is not His thought either! We were, according to Father, “baptized by the Spirit” into something immensely greater than that! (1Cor. 12). If we will each lay down our lives in tangible ways every day as a Priesthood, “joined and knit together by every supporting ligament,” *then* and *only then* will we be in a position to KNOW what the “women’s role” can be, in keeping with both the Spirit and the Words of the Scripture.

Here is another way of saying the same thing: What is the basis on which God intends for us to fully understand Scripture? Personal prayer and Greek word studies? Oh, I love those, but... NO, that’s NOT the end of the deal!

“God’s household, the Church of the living God, *is the pillar and foundation of truth,*” saith the Lord.

Much of what is seemingly contradictory in the Scriptures, and the majority of those things that cause controversy and division, are the

product of ignoring God's Counsel on this point: "The Church is the pillar and foundation of Truth!" In the *midst* of daily lives, joined to one another and hidden *together* in Christ Jesus, baptized into one Body by one Spirit, daily "having need of one another," "contending as one man for the Faith," in *that* environment God shows Himself and brings "unity of the Faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God!" In that environment, where the Testimony of His Son is evident in "how all men will know you are My disciples," He shows His Friends His Thoughts, as things come up. His House is not a laboratory, a library, a think tank, or an ivory tower. It is a Family of "a hundred homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, and children." We must be a daily Family, or we are not living in His Heart's desire, and are not the "Bethany" or the "Beth-El" where He desires to put His feet up and open His heart and current applicable thought to His Family in the most comfortable way.

"His Intent was that now, *through the Church*, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

Well, the "woman's role" in the Church? Hey, let's start with being the Church, and then we can, in the context of Family, discover *together* what the women's role should be in the heart and mind of our Father.

Question: We were talking this morning about teachers. We believe Scripture when it says women are not to teach men. I have been influenced by women teachers, and I want to be obedient in all things, so is that wrong of me to put myself under their teachings? Can you give us insight about women teaching in the church? Thanks...

Hi... so much of the difficulty in comprehending and "obeying" Scripture is the *unbiblical* world we attempt to "apply" Biblical teachings within. If I said to you, "I want you to take your pineapple tree and fertilize it with koala droppings," and you lived in Canada, of all places, you would *want* to "obey"—but you *could not*. You could *call* a pine tree by the name "pineapple tree" and you could *call* dog droppings "koala droppings" and go on. But then, if I were to say, "Now, I want you to take the pineapples, and eat every bite of them," you would find yourselves eating pinecones and getting very sick.

Why? Because we attempted to substitute truths and apply things, and rename things that are *not* what “the author meant by that word” and that *don’t work* in your world. That is the dilemma of so many things that most folks face.

“All things in common”—what does that MEAN?!! One cannot know and one cannot “do” it in an unBiblical world of attendance and disconnectedness and leaven in the batch, where hypocrisy and lukewarmness can remain hidden or accepted. It would be a program or a “community” or a gimmick... and a disaster! The same is true for “woman’s role” and “leadership” and “the Lord’s supper” and so many other topics.

SO, what to do about “women authors” and “women in pulpits” and the like? Who knows?! A “good author” *is no evidence* whatsoever that the man or woman even knows God, or lives a life *anything like Jesus*. I personally know and have spent considerable time with a number of the “big name” authors and leaders and music guys in christendom (in their homes, at the YMCA with them, in their meetings and at their breakfast tables), and find the majority to be as worldly, ambitious, and hypocritical as anyone you can name. Jesus is *not* their “Passion”—even when they write wonderful books about that very topic! They are so often proud, egocentric to an extreme, power hungry, and ambitious. And worse. They will *not* submit to the Word of God, or anyone around them. And yet their books and “sermons” are marvelous (and quite lucrative for them—“peddling the Word of God” and music they claim God inspired, “for profit”). It is *pathetic and tragic*.

SO, how do you, in this unBiblical world, deal with “women authors”—or “men” for that matter—when you have *no idea* what their *lives* are really like, because the ivory tower, leaven-filled, hierarchical, traditions-of-men world they live in is *so far from God*? I don’t know! Just do your best, and when you find something that sounds legitimate, do *not* be fooled into automatically thinking they must know God well, or *live* anything like what they write about. Contact them, perhaps. Send them things to read. Get feedback on what is going on where they are, for “you know them by their *fruit*”—not their word-crafting.

Question: “I have a question for you... It has to do with what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:26-35. Could you explain for me what he was saying there, ESPECIALLY in regard to the women? We really want to do things

God's way, so what does Paul mean about women being 'silent'? Should they never say a word in meetings? And what about every day life? I know we're supposed to be a 'family' but I've never been able to figure it out. It can feel so unreal and mechanical. Are there answers? What is it like for you all there?"

☺ Yes, there are answers, for sure. And they are pretty well tested for Biblical authenticity and fruit in the 15 years we've been living the way mentioned, as Family. I feel a bit overwhelmed to try to describe it, though. If someone asked you about a typical week for your family, I think you could see the magnitude of the task of answering the question—if you were meaning to do the answer justice instead of superficiality! That's kinda how I feel. I don't see how I can answer thoroughly with time constraints right now. But, I would say that the answer is *relational, rather than legal*, of course—meaning that if we *are* functioning as *family* every day, then the answers can be extracted from how you function with your own physical family.

Of course the parallels are not exact because of raw numbers in “the whole church” that Paul was writing to, and because of various levels of relationship, as well as unBelievers that were in the midst of the Family, on the occasion mentioned. All of these are factors, just as they would be in your home. If a third cousin were there, there would be some “Heisenberg” effect on the dynamics of your family and how you functioned and speak to one another. If an outsider were there—someone you did not know at all—it would affect your family dynamics considerably. The bathrobe is not an option for wandering around the house now. The discussion at dinner would not likely be of sensitive matters, and so on. I just use this to illustrate the point that there is no way I can answer your question in a *general* way, because every situation is different.

But, the *points* Paul is making must not be violated:

- 1) Men's roles are different than women's. Women must not dominate or control the assembly, but be submissive to their husbands and the men in general.
- 2) There must be no more than two or three prophetic “thrusts” in one sitting. There may be considerable teaching and discussion and songs and prophetic insights on topic number one. Later

in the time together, another totally different prophetic thrust may come along, and all that surrounds this. *But*, when a third entirely different thrust manifests itself, it must be questioned as to whether enough has been done already for the Time. “The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet.” If a fourth thrust were to come up, we *know* that it should be set aside for another time, no matter how good it may be. “Two, or at the most three.” God is not the God of disorder or chaos, and “over-feeding” is no longer good for the health.

- 3) Nor is a tongue worthwhile in the assembly if there is no interpreter—because that is a potential source of chaos, and God does not author confusion or noise or chaos.

In a general way (but as I said, don’t go too far with this, because every situation is totally different and “as many as are led of the Spirit are sons of God”)—if women desire to say something, they must (by the Principle of 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Corinthians 11—speaking of women prophesying) do it in submission—not as one with “authoritative teaching” (the Greek of 1 Timothy 2). “Would it be okay if I asked a question?” “Would it be okay if I offered a thought on that subject?” *That* is the spirit of anything that would be said.

And, contextually, in listening for the Spirit’s Voice on these matters, it has been interesting to see that when very large numbers are together, including perhaps large numbers from other cities on occasions, the women have generally not felt liberty in the Spirit to say a word. And the very same women *may* be able, under Headship, to offer a Thought in a more local environment (a living room, or with 250 folks locally that they are intimately close with on a daily level), and be powerfully used by God without anyone feeling any lack of humility or submission.

SO, again, seen through the “family” eyes that most can relate to at home, it is not hard to see that the dynamics of the specific occasion have *much* to do with whether your wife or children should say or do something. And in a different situation, what they may do, acceptably, could be much different. And, if a woman were exercising indiscretion or lack of humility and acting in a way that is inappropriate for the situation, *because* every single person is daily involved in each other’s lives, someone could easily nudge her and whisper “Not here. Not now. There will be a better time to express yourself on this matter. This is inappropriate.” And she would be *glad* and *grateful* (though perhaps

ever so slightly embarrassed at her temporary poor judgment). *It's a family, not a "meeting" to attend, so everything changes radically!*

Question: I have a concern about women in meetings or just speaking in general. What does it look like when women are quiet in meetings? 1 Corinthians 14:34 says, "The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says." Should women talk to men in a certain way all the time or does this only pertain to meetings? I am specifically asking about the women who speak to any man besides their husbands. I don't fully understand this. I know that there is no male or female in His Church, just Christ. How does this apply to our daily lives? I will pray that God gives us wisdom on this.

Thanks, Brother in Christ,

Hi there, Beyond question Paul's encouragement to the Corinthians (in two places) and to Timothy and to Titus—about who women are to be, as well as Peter's Thoughts—all point to the fact that **women are clearly to be different than men** in how they carry themselves. Many who deal with "Church" as something to "attend"—an institution and organization, rather than Family—will *never* get it right. They'll either allow women to dominate in "meetings" and in "real life"... or they'll make "separate rules" for "meetings" and then allow women to dominate in the rest of life... or they'll bury women into some subservient role in "both" worlds. There are NO good answers when the Church is not functioning as Family in the Body of Christ. "Round peg in a square hole." The "Scriptures" don't make any sense in a non-Biblical paradigm. "Get the leaven out of the batch." *It can't be done*, in a non-Biblical paradigm. It can only be excused or justified or legally applied or totally ignored. TRUTH only can be understood in a Biblical model of daily Life in the Church. "The Church: the pillar and foundation of Truth"—that is the meaning of this verse. Anyway, a great and important topic. And women *fully released* to be who God called them to be, and yet *fully* in the role that God intended for them under the headship of men (not just their husbands)—AH!

What a Marvel to behold! Truly good stuff. Women who are subservient doormats *and* women who are domineering feminists—*Neither have any idea of how awesome it can be to do it God's way!!*

Excerpts from a question... I listened to the tapes entitled “Silent Women in the Church” and I have a question in my context. I’m sorry, but I need to voice my emerging understanding on this issue in a (probably) long winded way. Don’t worry about writing back soon if it is not convenient. I trust my questions will become more focused as I see a clearer picture of Father’s ultimate intention.

...To sum all of that up, this woman is not power hungry for power’s sake, I think. She is like a mom who is fed up with her kids who won’t shape up to her expectations, and says it is actually God who is fed up. What can I do other than to pray and fast? It has been 15 months now. Maybe it’s not fair to ask you, but you seem to have gone through some stuff that may enable you to sense if the Lord is in this, and to what degree. I love these folks like my own family, and my kids are getting hurt, as too much time elapses with no resolution.

Is it true that the Lord has arranged for the man (husband only?) to lead the family and church, and even if he is wrong (or falls into sin?), the woman (wife?) is to obey?

Thanks and love,

NO, NO! You didn’t understand me! Xoxoxox!!!!!!!!!!!! Not sure *where* you got that idea!!! Of *course* a woman must *never* buckle under and “obey” anything sinful! I’ve never been willing to accept that scenario as from God. “Judge for yourselves whether it is better to obey God, or man!” Any authority *must* reflect *Jesus’ Authority* (“All Authority in Heaven, and on Earth, belongs to Me”) in Spiritual matters, or they have usurped the place they were delegated to, and must *not* be obeyed.

The fact is, you will never be able to “envision” how to fit many Scriptures into such an *incredibly* unBiblical paradigm as what you have had to endure there. Many Scriptures *cannot* make sense or be put into practice in such a faulty, sinful environment. And it is sinful, if for no other reason (and there are, no doubt, other reasons) than that it is *unBiblical* in it’s very essence and manner of “serving God.”

A couple of e-mails follow on the subject of authority and man/woman roles with one another, which may clear it up a bit.

Hi, Some thoughts exchanged between the saints, years ago... captured in some rough notes at that time relating to "authority."

Understand "Authority"! Take a hypothetical situation to help interpret other "authority" situations. In the United States, a cabinet-level position known as "Secretary of Defense" or a military position known as "Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" have tremendous authority and decision-making status. However, they *report* to the Chief Executive Officer, the Commander-in-Chief—the President of the United States.

He has the ultimate authority. *They* would be totally irresponsible to *not* speak to the President very frankly about their viewpoints. They have the expertise that often he will not. Nevertheless, he makes the final decision and they *must* be supportive of that decision. If his decision is counter to their recommendation, and things fail (as they had predicted to him, earnestly)—they will *not* be traitors to his authority with an "I told you so" attitude, or allow anyone in the media or press to know that *they* were right, and the President was wrong. That lack of loyalty and insubordination is TOTALLY evil. They will simply work with him to rebuild and find new solutions for the new problems. But He will continue to get their full support and loyalty. *That* is the "Authority" that Jesus commended the Centurion for, and saw him to be of *Great Faith*.

Now, here's another scenario. Let's say that the President asked the Secretary of Defense to do something illegal. Now that is an entirely different story! There are laws that the President *must* submit to that are bigger than him. He has no "authority" to ask anyone to violate the law, simply because he has "authority." He only holds that "position of authority" based on the law, and will *never* have the right to "order" someone or make a decision that *violates* the "delegated authority" that he has been granted. He is *not* an "owner" of authority, but has only been entrusted with authority to get a job done, within the confines of the law and greater authority that is over him.

In a similar way, authority in the home, and in Spiritual situations, is real and appropriate. *God Himself* grants authority to one in various situations in Church and Family and workplace and elsewhere. Responding to that "delegated authority" is a *Faith* issue, like it was

for the Centurion who was so commended by the Master Himself. If we don't respond to authority, we *cannot please God*. We *cannot* have "God" as an authority and savior if we will not respond to authority that He has placed in our lives, whether we always "like" or "agree" with what they decide (as in the Presidential example above)—or not.

However, in an unBiblical environment, with false, man-appointed authority (clergy), or over-bearing, lawless authorities in home or workplace... *anyone* who asks us to *disobey God* has over-stepped their authority and... "*Judge for yourselves whether it is better to obey God, or man.*" *Authority is real*, and God is disobeyed when we make ourselves the ultimate authorities because we will not submit to those God has placed in our lives—in family, or Church, or workplace, or civil environments. *God* is at the root of Authority delegated to men, and to miss that or ignore that is the height of arrogance and unBelief. But, at the point where one (in any of those environments) asks us to *disobey God*, they have forfeited their right to have "authority" in that area.

Spousal, Employer, or Governmental “Authority”

Monday Morning, October 14, 2002

In answer to a question about a husband (a man with a history of sin, not Christlikeness—yet like every American CALLS himself a “christian”) who is demanding that the believing wife “obey” his “headship.” He is demanding to control her, her relationships, her time, and her beliefs—a controlling slave-master, not a husband or a Christian—and by so doing, he is breaking federal law and the US Constitution (which protect religious liberties for every US citizen, male or female), in addition to God’s Law.

Question: “How should I deal with the fact that I OF COURSE want to honor my husband, and yet my first (‘seek FIRST the Kingdom’) priority is to my Life with Jesus and His Family?Love, Mary”

Dear Mary... I’m so sorry. I very much appreciate your heart, and have literally shed tears this morning for this. I am so sorry. First, some general thoughts:

“Judge for yourselves whether it’s better to obey God, or man” (Acts 4:19).

When a mere human, whether 1) a boss at work, or 2) a police officer, or 3) a husband or wife or parent... when ANY mere human demands that we do things that violate our conscience, harm our relationship with Jesus or our possibilities with Him, or do something or anything that is sin (“missing the mark” is the Greek word for sin)—we have an

obligation to “obey God, rather than man.” There is NO way around this Truth, though some compromisers will try to manipulate you and the Teachings and Life of Jesus to their own ends, *of course*.

In that environment of a Saint doing what God wants them to do, without “man pleasing” (and losing God by pleasing man, Gal.1:10), “if the unbeliever is willing to stay, let him stay” (1Cor. 7:12-13). God has not called us to compromise Spiritual matters from mere men. But, if the attractiveness of who He is making us causes them to want to stay with us *anyway*—great. We DO NOT compromise, but perhaps the pagan or religious unbeliever (those who pretend to be Christians, but their lives and minds and actions and tongues reveal them to be otherwise—1John 1 to 1John 3) will realize what they are losing, and allow the Believer to be who they need to be and relate how and to whom they need to relate, rather than constantly trying in vain to command them to disobey or water-down God.

“ALL authority in heaven and on earth belongs to ME,” said Jesus (Matthew 28:18).

All OTHER “authority” is ONLY related to 1) things that have no bearing on my Spiritual Life, or 2) things that are *consistent* with the Authority of Jesus—not violating my conscience.

Kindness, patience, servant-heart towards even the worst manipulator and control-freak and abuser? Please! A thousand times YES! Always. And “the extra mile!” But, compromise on matters relating to Jesus Christ and our growth in Him and His Kingdom—for another mere human who is attempting to control us, threaten us, or bully us with guilt or fear or manipulation or bribery? Never.

When legitimate “spiritual” and governmental “authorities” commanded two Apostles (who knew Jesus’ ways well) to alter their “lifestyle” in Jesus—even “optional” elements, one might reason—they responded to the commands (from legitimate authorities) this way:

“Judge for yourselves whether it’s better to obey God, or man.”

In the Spirit of their Master, “Seek FIRST the Kingdom.”

When all of the commands and decisions being imposed are compatible with our life in Jesus—excellent! Pay the price, even when you wouldn’t “agree”—that’s what authority is all about! BUT, when others are demanding you violate your conscience? A true Christian would never

demand that you violate your conscience and try to control you in that manner anyway. They've already revealed themselves. And, if what they are living and modeling and inviting you into is *really* Jesus, their fruit and patience and love will show it over time.

But, if they are playing god and attempting to usurp Jesus in your life, then they have revealed the spirit that they are of. Any "authority"—whether a boss, a government, or a husband or wife—ALL must be *only* reflective of "neutral" decisions or decisions in keeping with our conscience-call to follow Jesus with all of our hearts, uncontrolled by mere fallible and ego-centric human flesh.

"ALL authority" belongs to Jesus alone. Any other authority must be representative of Him, or they are violating Him and you. As the men who knew Jesus and His intentions well on this matter said, "Judge for yourselves whether it's better to obey God, or man."

Simple enough, really.

Mary, you have to know, on various levels, it's not an uncommon story. But it is still very sad. Live your life for Jesus, and give in where you can, as it's not related to your Spiritual Life or any children involved. Be a servant and be kind. But you only live *ONCE*. Do it right, even if men's controlling power-freak stuff (using Scriptures, of course) turns into physically or verbally beating you, as it often does. At that point, if he will *not* allow you to live by your *own* conscience, and you are not going to live by his foul conscience, then God said, "Let him leave, you are not under bondage in such cases." Your courage and servant heart and willingness to suffer rather than compromise your conscience or one ounce of your Spiritual Life—will either win him over, according to Paul—or further reveal his true colors.

Out of seven billion people on earth, "FEW will be those who find the Eternal Life"—and we will not *all* be so fortunate as to have guessed correctly during our youth and pagan days in marriage situations. We can't control who our blood relatives or bosses at work or neighbors are, or whether they will be mini-gods, or slaves of Jesus. It's out of our control. "MANY" will destroy themselves, and according to Jesus the statistics are that we will be surrounded by heartache and charlatans crying "Lord, Lord!" in addition to those who never have claimed Him. While the tares abound on the planet and we still must be "in the world"—we are NOT required to be "of it."

“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. And I will be your God, and you My people” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

Love, serve, care, pray... but GOD never asked you to compromise anything of Him, just to love others while they persecute you for loving Him and not playing by the world's rules.

“Judge for yourselves whether it's better to obey God, or man” (Acts 4:19).

Some Practical Questions About Men's and Women's Roles

Africa 1996

We could take all the parts of a car—a steering wheel, a bumper, a motor, a door—and pile them in a room. They could all be very wonderful parts, but you could not drive very far in that car if all the parts were not put together. In fact, you couldn't go anywhere in that car. The gift of apostle puts all the good parts together. In the churches, we need the gifts that can help put the car together. This is what Paul says in Ephesians 3. He tells people about Jesus' great love and helps put the church together so that it will be the house of God. All the wonderful gifts and all the committed Christians need the gift of apostle to help them put the House together.

In Ephesians 4, Paul said that God gave gifts to the church—apostle, prophet, and the other gifts so that we can all grow together. Those gifts don't *make* us Christians, but they do *teach us how to grow together*. They teach us to no longer be infants, help us grow into the full measure of the stature of Christ, and help us to be compacted together. Paul says that this gift is very important to the church in helping good people to build together properly.

Many of Paul's letters talk about very practical things. He does talk a lot about Jesus, but mostly he talks about how the Believers should live with each other. He gives them practical teaching about money, their marriages, children and widows, and about how to build in the Church

with authority matters. He teaches them about their worship together, their meetings, and how to share with one another.

Teaching all the good parts (the way to become a car) was most of what Paul did with his gifts. In other words, he taught them how to build together so that they could go somewhere; we don't want to be a bunch of parts sitting in the middle of a room. We want to be a bus for Jesus to go somewhere. We want to build together and learn how to do our work together in love.

Paul said it was okay to have practical questions. In 1 Corinthians 1, we read about how some from the household of Chloe traveled hundreds of miles to ask Paul a question. They asked him questions about divisions they were having, questions about marriages, or about what to do when sin was in their midst. And because his gift was that of an apostle, he could see what to do. God's people needed Paul to be able to see and help. Paul was not a "superstar". He knew he had weakness in his heart, and had fallen into sin in the past. But because God loved Paul anyway, Paul wanted to say "thank you" by using his gift for God's people.

"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman must learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to have authoritative teaching over a man. She must be silent. For Adam was formed first, and then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived. It was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be kept safe through childbirth if they continue in faith, in love and holiness with propriety" (1 Timothy 2:9-15).

This is similar to 1 Corinthians 14, and Paul wrote both Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. So we want to understand what the Holy Spirit was thinking when He wrote these things. The Holy Spirit is a person and He has thoughts and feelings, just like with you and me. If you say something to me, you are probably thinking and feeling more than you are saying. So we want to understand what the Holy Spirit is feeling and thinking since the Holy Spirit is a Person, not just words.

The heart of the Holy Spirit is that He loves men and women just the same. In Galatians 3, He said that there is no male nor female; we are one in Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free. If we have faith in Christ, we now wear Christ. We have the clothing of

Jesus—not Jew, not Greek, not male, not female, not black, white nor yellow. Hallelujah?! But now we *all* are Jesus. What color is Jesus? *Who cares? He is wonderful!* And so, if we have faith in Jesus Christ, we all put on Jesus, and there is no more Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. This too the Holy Spirit has said in Galatians 3.

Precious Thoughts on Authority

There are many things that the Holy Spirit thinks concerning male and female. These things are precious and we must understand them together. As we consider all the teachings about man and woman, we see that the Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. Man is the head of woman. But, is not Christ the same as God the Father? Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” Yet the Father is over Christ, though they are one. Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God.” The Father and the Son are one.

Certainly Christ is head over the man. But if we have been clothed with Christ, we are one with Christ. So there is still authority between Christ and the man, yet they are one in another way. There is authority between the man and the woman. The man is over the woman in the same way that Christ is over the man. Yet the man and the woman are one in Christ. So, in one sense, the man and the woman are very equal. And yet there is authority between the man and the woman.

These things are very precious and you must try to understand. The man can serve the woman with a whole heart. A man can love the woman and cherish her deeply. A man, in a way, can make himself a slave to the woman as Christ has come to serve the Church. But even though Jesus washed our feet as a slave would, He still has authority. And likewise, as a man cherishes and loves a woman, even becoming a slave to her in some ways, he still has authority over her, and she must respond to that.

Because Christ is so kind to us and loves us, we shouldn't forget His authority, should we? There is an order in God. There is authority in God. And when the Holy Spirit speaks these things to us in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, He is not saying that men are dictators, ruling over the women with an iron fist. Women are not slaves that have to hide in the corner in the darkness. We must celebrate the wonderful gifts God has given our women, and even submit to the gifts that He has put into their hearts. But women must still recognize the authority that

God has placed in man. So all of these things are *matters of the heart*. All of Christianity is a matter of the heart, not a matter of rules and laws. Jesus did not give us a set of rules. He taught us how to have His heart. He teaches us to think like He thinks. Therefore our goal with 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 is to have the heart that He wants us to have about these matters. The Bible is not a rulebook, but a way to have a heart.

Now how does that look in a practical way? In a relationship between a man and a woman, the man will feed, care for, and cherish his wife. He will lay down his life for her in every way possible, even so far as to become a slave as Christ did for the Church. At the same time, the woman will listen very carefully for the voice of the man because that is her heart, just as is the Church's heart to hear Christ. The woman's heart is to hear the man's voice and respond to it. This is not a law, but this is the way Jesus wants us to live in our hearts. The more a man lives that way towards a woman, the more he can hear God. The more a woman lives that way towards a man, the more she can hear God. The Scriptures say, "*How can two walk together unless they be in agreement?*"

Authority Sets Us Free!

All of these matters are very, very important. When the whole church is together, if our hearts and our minds are right, then the man will be very respectful and loving towards all the women (who will not disappear like the furniture). The men will deeply love the gifts in the women and will not want them to bury their talents. The women will respect the men and, as they are in the gatherings of the saints, will understand the authority of the men and never come over the top of that authority. Paul said, "*I do not permit the women to teach with authority over the men.*" And yet they can *offer* their gifts.

A practical example: If one of the women has something burning in her heart to say, she must not bury her talent. She must not ignore the gift of God that is within her because the men need that gift. We need *all* of Jesus desperately. So if a woman has something burning in her heart that she wants to speak, she can respect the authority of the men by asking permission to say this thing. She should turn first, perhaps, to the authority over her personally. If there is a man in her life that has special authority over her, then she should, perhaps, turn first to him and ask him if it is okay. Perhaps then that man should ask the

assembly if it is okay if the woman speaks. If the man does not think it is a good idea for her to speak, or if the assembly does not think it is a good idea for her to speak at that moment, then she should be happy to be silent. She should not resent that or be angry. She should not say, “Well, then, I will never share anything.”

This is how the woman can be Jesus to everyone, with the man still having the authority. The man draws the gift out, but the woman does not push herself to the top. When you look at all the teachings of the word of God together, what you see is that God has a wonderful heart towards women. A woman is not like a chair or a table in the room. She is alive with Jesus and we need her very much. But she must also understand God’s order and not be proud or arrogant. She must be humble in order to offer her gift. This is the order of the angels, the order of God the Father and Christ the Son, and the order of man and woman. We are all one, but there is an order in God that helps everything to work smoothly. We are equal, and a wife’s gift may be even better than her husband’s, but God made him a man and so there is order. Maybe he doesn’t deserve to be in a place of authority. But God chooses things that we must honor, so we must all work together to draw out the gifts and also to love the order that God puts us in so that we can work together.

Where I live, we have some very, very gifted women. The Church there has been blessed by several women who are very, very strong in Jesus. They will all tell you the same thing about functioning within God’s Order—it does not press them down; it sets them free. There is great freedom in offering their gifts rather than just taking authority. It is a very precious thing to be in submission. The women will tell you that it frees their hearts and makes them sing inside to offer their gifts rather than to take. So, while we do not desire to push down any gifts at all, these gifts come as an *offering* from the women, and that is true in the home or in a gathering of the saints. This is a heart that is precious to Jesus—a heart He will bless.

Do you remember when Jesus spoke to the Centurion, the Roman guard? He said to that man that in him, He saw greater faith than was in all of Israel. The greatest faith Jesus had ever seen was in a man who said he knew how to be under authority and how to have authority. The Roman guard said that he would say to his servant “Go,” and he would go. He would say to another servant, “Come,” and he would come. He said he too knew how to respect authority and go and come under

authority. Jesus said this was a man of the greatest faith He had seen because he knew how to respond to authority. It was something that set him free, not something that pushed him down.

When Christ is head of the man, the man is set free. Jesus said if we are not His slave, we are a slave of sin. When we choose to not let Jesus be our Master, sin becomes our master. But when the Son sets us free, we are free indeed. Do you feel these things in your own heart? When you obey Jesus, are you free? When you don't obey Jesus are you dirty inside?

The same is true with a man and a woman. When we respond to God's order, we are not slaves; we are free. But when we don't, we become slaves to the wrong thing. A woman that is not under authority with faith will feel dirty inside. She will be confused and frustrated. God gives order and authority in the family and in the Church—*not* so someone can be better than another person or tell them what to do and order them around. He gives order and authority so that we can all be set free in love and God's order.

Talking to Daddy as Family

We speak of a way to live, not a way to have meetings. The answers to many practical questions are easier than they seem at first. The more we become a family in truth, the more things begin to make sense. Most people are caught between being a family and being a religious organization. Some groups of people are totally just a religious organization. Others are somewhere between being a religious organization and a family. But, as God brings His Church more and more toward being Family, then more and more things begin to make sense. When we view ourselves as a family, the answers to different questions begin to make sense. Because we love each other so much, we share every part of our lives with each other every day. Now it's no longer just about meetings. Rather, because our lives are so wrapped together everyday, men know how to treat women and women know how to treat men. If we know how to do it in our homes and in the streets, we will know how to do it in the meetings.

In all things, we must recognize God's order, but we must also not quench the Spirit. We must recognize order, but we must not bury our talents. So, if all the Saints are together and God puts a prayer in my heart, as a man I might ask if it would be okay for me to pray. If I'm a

woman I would probably ask a man if it would be okay for me to pray, and he might ask the whole assembly, “Would it be okay if this woman prays?” If that man and the assembly think it’s okay, then *she is under authority*. She is covered by authority if we ask her to do it. If she just decides to do it, then that could be out of order. But if we all want her to pray because she is our dear sister, then she is under authority and at that moment it’s okay. These things are true.

We should understand something about prayer. The word “prayer” sounds very religious to our ears. As we become more like family, then the way we work together makes more sense in the meetings. As we all become closer friends of God, then prayer makes more sense. In false religion, people “say their prayers”. In Jesus’ Christianity, we have a friendship with our dear Father. So, what then is a “prayer meeting”? I’m not sure I know what a “prayer meeting” is anymore. I know what it is to have God’s family together. I know what it is to have God’s family talking to their Father together from time to time. But I’m not sure I know what a “prayer meeting” is in Christianity. Can you see the difference? One is religion, and the other is relationship.

We don’t “say prayers,” *we talk to Father*—just like a young child would talk to his daddy. Does a young child have a prayer meeting with his daddy, or does he just enjoy talking to his daddy? Does he need a meeting to talk to him, or can he just talk to his daddy because he loves him? Well, what if all of God’s little children are in the same room and they want to talk to Daddy? That would not be a prayer meeting. That would be a family being a family with their Daddy. So now you can see perhaps how corporate prayer works. It doesn’t *work*, per se! What we can do, though, is if a brother loves Daddy and wants to tell Him that, when he gets done, I say, “My turn, my turn, I want to talk to Daddy!” That is how we pray together. That is how we talk to God together, as God stirs in our hearts. A special sister might ask a man, “Would it be okay if I talked to Daddy now?” And so she is still in order because the man has authority over her. But she still has the freedom to talk to Daddy if she has worked that out. This is how we can be with teaching, with prayer, with singing, and with everything because we are family together with our Daddy.

We want to continue to brush all of the traditions of men and religion out the door and just be simple children with each other. We don’t want to be religious, holy men with titles and rituals. We want to be loving children with each other and with our Daddy every day. Meetings take

care of themselves because we are family all the time. We talk to Daddy together all the time. We bring the teachings of Jesus to each other all the time. If we all happen to be in the same room, that's great. But that's not any different than outside the room 30 minutes later.

A Question About Women

Question: But the Bible says that when we pray, the men raise their hands, but the women do not. So the women can also raise their hands? Can that be right?

Good question. 1 Timothy 2:8-9 says, *“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes...”*

He says, *“I want men everywhere to lift holy hands in prayer... I also want women to dress modestly...”* Does that mean that men should not dress modestly? Men must dress modestly also, even though he speaks to women here. And he does not say, *“The women should not lift up hands in prayer.”* He does not say, *“Men must not dress modestly.”* Men must dress modestly. Women must dress modestly. If a man lifts a hand, he should lift a holy hand. The key word is *“holy.”* He should lift a hand that is dedicated to God and wants to serve God. Unless a woman violates authority, if she has a hand that wants to serve God, it might be okay for her to lift it. God did not say that men should *not* dress modestly, even though he *does* address the women to dress modestly. God did not say that women should not be able to lift hands in prayer; so maybe it's okay, if they are *holy* hands, just as it's okay for men to dress modestly.

Externals or the Heart?

Sunday Night, May 27, 2001

This is a response written to someone who wanted to move here, but NOT if: 1) The women wear pants or scoop necks (whatever those may be), work outside of the home, or speak in “meetings,” or 2) if the children go to schools (rather than “home schooled”), or 3) if anyone watches sports or any kind of television or “secular movies.”

He asked what I thought about those topics...

Hey, well, though I like your heart because it seems like you CARE, I do feel the need to drop some “food for thought” on you, but you can take it or leave it.

Regarding your other feelings about certain topics... There isn't a great deal of evidence that your “standards” are His, PER SE, regarding some of the other things you mention—sports or whatever. I don't want to be Amish when I grow up. As you can surely tell from the “Modesty” thing you read, we are FAR from having a “conforming to the patterns of the world” mindset and Life together. And YET, the externals you mention are overcooked, would be my impression. We'll leave that between you and Him and whomever you meet in the future, for whatever reason you are moving... but you would have a VERY hard time supporting many of those views from Scripture—except in a general way that you would need to extrapolate into your own interpretation.

I DO understand where you're coming from, and can relate. BUT... It's the HEART that He desires to avoid entanglement or seduction, not a set of rules about whether this or that is innately “good and evil.” Dat's the wrong Tree! But, I understand where you're coming from, of course. And, that's okay. A television “commercial” with cleavage or innuendo, or your average “sitcom”? That's EASY to discern. A no-brainer for anyone who desires Jesus and wants a harvest that is

HIM. But, a soccer game on television is automatically “evil”? Well, that’s making up a set of man-made rules. That too is a no-brainer.

So where is the “line”? TRULY, “without Holiness, no one will see the Lord,” and “the grace of God teaches us to say ‘NO!’ to ungodliness.” It’s just VERY important that we’re going for the HEART, not externals as we apply these things with one another. You would be VERY hard pressed to find a lot of “rules and regulations” in the teachings of Jesus. “Tell my brother to share the inheritance!” “Nope. I’ll just tell you both to AVOID GREED LIKE THE PLAGUE!” Can you see the difference??!!

Some may watch an “American football game” (to use your example) with no problem whatsoever, spiritually. FREQUENTLY when a game is on, the game (tied in the fourth quarter, for example) could get turned off because someone asks a question or brings up something they were reading out of Ephesians. While no one considers turning off the game an automatically “spiritual” thing to do (that would be childish and hyper-religious), it has and does happen virtually every time that things far more valuable than any foolish sporting event come up, and people come and go, or the “game” is turned off entirely. The “game” was only a “non-religious” excuse to be together anyway, a “WINDOW” into others’ lives. And so, the “game” itself is certainly not “automatically” carnal or sinful, as certainly pharisaical religionists sometimes want to make it. The New Testament not only does not “condemn” such things, God actually uses “illustrations” from such things for His People to learn from. Certainly “wasting time” can be a sin for some with such things, as, of course, any obsession or distraction deeply grieves the heart of God. But, this is “case by case” something that we work on Together, as taught in 1Cor.12, Heb.3:12-14, and Acts 2:42-47. It is the HEART that we work on together, not binding externals which God said have “no ability to restrain sensual indulgence” ANYWAY. Use the “windows” and even enjoy the “windows”! Just don’t ever allow them to become a “wall” rather than a “window” into Higher Places!

And a particular sport MAY be a problem for a PARTICULAR person. It depends on the heart of the PERSON. And, *only* as we BUILD in Relationships can we know the difference in a particular person. The body language, the frequency, what they sacrifice for it, their demeanor afterwards (loud, impatient, etc.)... all of these things are CLUES to the heart. “The eye is the lamp of the Body.” What’s in their EYES? THAT’S the part we deal with, with one another. But, to say that watching soccer on television is “evil”—or that public

schools or hospitals could NEVER be a “tool” God would use—that’s the wrong tree and leads to death.

We have well over a hundred children being educated at home, and NONE in public (or so-called “christian” schools)—so I am not speaking as one who is “defending” public schools, but just as one who is defending the Tree of Life. Our women are beautifully submissive and wonderfully fruitful—at the same time. There is NO contradiction between 1Cor. 14, 1Tim. 2, and 1Cor. 11 (where women pray and prophesy)—IF you understand God’s Thoughts are about DOMINEERING and “AUTHORITATIVE teaching” (the Greek of 1Tim. 2). We’ve never had a “free for all” in over fifteen years. Not even one! BUT, I am still concerned about your tree right now. I know 32 is young, as is 13 years, and your experience in Ekklesia is limited. SO, mostly I admire that you CARE about such things. So, sorry to have to say anything, but carry on with what you have to do. Once again, you asked!

And beyond that, I surely don’t know what to tell you! We’ll keep praying that Father will guide and protect and enrich you in all ways, and you’ll find the “Place” you’re searching for!

In His Love,

Head Coverings? Or Just COVERING?

Tuesday Afternoon, May 7, 2002

Question: I wanted to write you about head coverings. But first I wanted to say that we've really appreciated the materials that you sent to us. God is using what you are about to stir in us again—the desire for the intimacy that living “close” to one another can produce as Christ is allowed in a real, tangible way to come forth. The reason I say again is that at one time we were meeting daily for prayer meeting and working together, etc. We met like this for seven years, but in the end the pastor left. (We did have “clergy,” which we now know with your help by showing us in the Scriptures—was deadly.) The thought of getting close again seemed too much. I'm sure that our chaos and problems and issues are a situation probably played out many many times in other places.

What developed was what we have now. We have no elders as such, but the men of the group (six families) meet twice a month and discuss whatever needs to be voiced. We have open meetings as there is no pastor or emcee. At this point, any man or boy can speak. We used to “allow” women to share, but a new group has joined us in the last three years that is definitely against women doing this. We have some very different “theological” viewpoints. Most kids are home schooled (not that that is a merit badge, but does help to describe certain things about us). Until recently, we have had a brother here that believed he needed to force-feed Calvinism and infant baptism to us (very strongly believing that what you believed gave unity rather than who you were connected to). He has since left, but until recently there has been a real “controlling” thing come on our meetings. There is still one strong “reformed” brother in our midst, but his approach is much more “organic,” realizing that when the soil is not ready, it is not ready, so he doesn't force his views on others. So anyway, probably a fairly typical small group.

But what I'm writing about is this: We appreciate the tapes on women being silent in the church (and the other tapes as well). Our women, to the most extent, are submissive in the spirit of Christ. It's not a forced, legal-type thing. Several of our wives have been wearing head coverings for about ten years. We still have not been able to come to a resolve about it. We know it is not a requirement for salvation or law (although it can and has been subtly made a law that can kill the women), and actually I wish the verses were not there. Even if our women wore nothing on their heads (some don't), they would be submissive. It doesn't help that the camps of other believers who are walking in Life with the Lord are seemingly divided about this issue. We've read much and still not come to a conclusion.

So, what I want is to hear what you, as a church, have been able to work through with this issue if you feel like sharing that. Your thoughts on women being silent in the church seemed to me very balanced, with clarity on headship. So, share if you would. We appreciate it. Thanks again for everything.

Hi there. I've appreciated your perseverance in asking about this several times now. ☺ However, I think the reason the Master doesn't allow me yet to answer with any perspective that might free y'all up a bit—is that “diversity” that you mentioned in your midst. It sounds like *Lordship* is too big an issue to not be *the* issue in your midst. We have *never* had all of those problems you mentioned, in over sixteen years with multiplied times the number of people, and many ex-“pastors” and other “experts” as part of the Church here. But, what you describe can *only* happen when Lordship is at stake in some of the lives.

The self-will and attitudes being exhibited don't mark those lives or places where Jesus is Lord of all, “from the least to the greatest.” If we are wrestling continuously with “issues” and “problems” such as these, there is something fundamentally wrong with the “Foundation” of “Obedience of the Faith.” So, to address the “topic” of head coverings, or whatever, would only create more controversy and bring out more “opinion” in all likelihood. And you're right—it's not just your “group,” of course. Many “groups” of folks that are not on the Foundation as a whole (say, 98% or so of what's out there), could tell horror stories as bad as or worse than what you've described. I have to say that it fatigues me and hurts me to even *think* about ever living life in an

environment of chaos and opinion and schism and half-trust, as is the case in most places. It is anguish to even imagine going through that. So, what to do?

Unfortunately, most people prefer the cost of the chaos and half-trust to the cost of a Cross and a Foundation. (At least they get to be kings of their own opinions and tiny plot of ground—though Jesus is only figure-head and kewpie doll in such a case.) Until the *REAL* issue is resolved, the “details” really don’t even matter. More will spring up or reappear, forever and a day. “Is hell real?” “Should we be allowed to break bread other than in our homes, because, ‘Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in?’” And, “What about foot washing, which Jesus seems to command?”... and a few hundred others we’ve heard in various cities and countries. So, it’s hard to see how to answer about certain “subjects” considering the environment that you describe!

I’m not saying it’s your fault at all. But it’s a bottomless pit and echo chamber when the Quality is as you describe, regardless of how “normal” it is to human existence. It’s not God’s habitat to be so full of chaos, self-will, opinions, and “stirrings” as you describe. “Of one accord,” “being many are ONE,” just AS the Father and the Son “are one.” “Unity of the Spirit” *and* “Unity of the Faith,” and therefore “no longer infants tossed to and fro by every wind of teaching.” Humble hearts—all absolutely under His Lordship, and Apostolic Gifting in Foundational relationship there... and the problem is solved. Either of those two missing, and you will absolutely never have the Peace that you desire and might have had—so you’ll have to get used to it as it is, and just take one “fire” at a time.

It’s just like trying to build a house on sand and wondering why everything looks good for awhile, and then eventually some of the doors don’t close right, and cracks are appearing, and the floor is separating in the corners.... We can keep filling in with plastic wood and spackling—but the real problem is not going away, even if hidden for a time. The Foundation has to be Right, and the Plumb Line true.

Although you *certainly* didn’t describe “a bunch of terrible people” (and *trust* me, I’m *not* taking it that way at all!), you did inadvertently describe something we’ve seen and heard all over God’s green earth. You described a “normal” situation where both Lordship and Apostolic Gift are missing (and these two are inseparable when we’re desiring a Lampstand—a local CHURCH rather than individual lives scattered

here and there). I don't blame you or think less of you or anyone there, but I'm just trying to say that *those* are the real issues to be watching and praying and acting about—not head coverings at this point.

NOT the answer you were counting on, or the one I planned on giving when I began writing. But, if I just play the game like “everyone else” and give you a formula and yet another opinion and some clever “how to’s” to speed you along the cheery path, I wouldn't be honoring Jesus, or really helping you. There are *plenty* of gimmicks out there, and self-appointed “I've planted 48,219 ‘churches’ in 918 countries, and this is how you do it” kinda guys. But, those things end up just like what everyone already “left”—except with a few extra bells and whistles, and, in some ways, some much *larger* dangers than what they left behind at the “institution.” So, I have to tell you the truth, even if it's not what you wanted. . . . But actually, I think I've heard your “voice” in past dialogue and conversations we've had enough to believe that you really DO want the truth, whatever it may be. Thus my willingness to write a little more, at a little deeper level than the “how to” and “here's what to believe” religious words.

Question about Head Covering

Friday Evening, July 13, 2001

What is your understanding on the head covering in 1Corinthians 11? I was always taught that it was just cultural, etc., and never really gave it much thought, but I have recently been restudying it and have come to the conclusion that it is something that should be practiced. Although, I think the overall principle is that of order and relationship—God-Christ-Man-Woman—I just keep coming back to the question of the physical covering that the woman is to wear being right. Also, the passage, “... because of the angels,” makes me think it is to be an outward symbol to the unseen realm of angels, probably both good and bad, as they observe our obedience in keeping our relational order.

I have really been blessed with some of the things that the Lord has revealed to me through you and your understanding of His word, and you have shown me some things that I never thought of before. Although I would like to think that I am free from most of it, I keep finding myself a victim of the old “church of Christ” hermeneutic of proof texting without really letting the Lord speak to me through His word. My wife and I are just trying to please Him in every way and I wanted to ask your opinion and help in understanding this passage. Please keep us in your prayers as our life is rapidly becoming His only...

Hi, I truly appreciate your heart on matters like this! Honesty and humility and flexibility are truly marks of a Disciple of Rabboni, and your willingness to look at this and whatever else may ever come up is wonderful. Actually, we have come to a conclusion (though that word is misleading, because NOTHING is concluded on ANY subject—that would be the wrong Tree!!!) that the ISSUE in God’s Mind is Authority, illustrated in their world and time by a head covering. “Because of the Angels” deals with authority issues relating to the angels, not head coverings related to the angels. Now, “the very nature of things” WOULD continue, it would seem to us, to press us towards long hair, their glory, for the women, and short hair, relative to the women, for

men. That has nothing, apparently, to do with “culture.” If we had ever found that women were less than submissive or were drawing attention to themselves with outsiders, or anything of the kind, because of lack of a hat or headwear, we would clearly need to adjust to His Thought about Authority by dealing with anything that stands in its way.

IF there were some connection in practice or heart between the Issue Paul discusses by the Spirit (Authority) and the head covering (other than hair) as there seems to have been in Paul’s world, we would desire to remedy this quickly. However, since wearing or not wearing certain items (fill in the blank with anything), or a certain tone of voice or mannerisms or habits—anything that would create the appearance of lack of respect or a submissive heart by the women—is seemingly the issue here, that’s what we’re looking for. It goes WAY SUPER FAR past “head coverings”!!! 😊

Hope that is a bit helpful, brother of mine!

Love,

Your Own Oil

Saturday Afternoon, December 9, 1995

A discussion with two saints making marriage covenant with each other and those who were sharing the time with them.

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any extra oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out, ‘Here’s the bridegroom. Come out to meet him.’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied. ‘There may not be enough for both us and for you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The ones who were ready went in with them to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir, sir,’ they said. ‘Open the door for us.’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth. I don’t know you.’ Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” (Matthew 25:1-13, NIV)

As you know, JESUS is the bridegroom in this story. There is a song about this story and one line in that song talks about being ready for the Father to say, “Today your wedding day has come.” I don’t know if the song mentioned the virgins or I just thought of it, but it struck me really hard that the primary reason for having a relationship with someone, the primary reason this Church exists ... *is to make sure there is not a single person in our sphere of influence who doesn’t have oil, their own oil when the bridegroom comes.* That’s why we are here. We are not here for the sake of entertainment. And, that’s why sometimes things are hard, or challenging, or difficult. That’s why hard things are said to us sometimes, and that’s why we have to say hard things to others. Those things happen. And why? Well, notice the context of that teaching in Matthew 25. There’s the parable of the sheep and the goats and the parable of the talents. These are very serious things that

Jesus is saying again and again. He is saying, “Please, I beg you. Be ready. Be ready.” Being a nice person isn’t good enough. There were ten *virgins*—not five virgins and five immoral people. There were ten virgins. Were they all human? Sure, they all fell asleep. They were all just normal people. But the difference was that five of them were *ready*. Five were prepared. They had stocked their own oil, and they were ready. They had something for themselves that was stored up against that Day, while others were sloppy or lazy about it.

Our primary job with each other, with everyone we know (whether there are 300, 3,000 or 300,000 in the Church that Jesus has put us in), is to “see to it brothers that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart” (Hebrews 3:12). See to it, brothers, that every last one of you has oil. Make sure your lamp is burning brightly, you have your own oil, and you can face Jesus with some true Life inside of you—not just a *good* life. In the story Jesus told, a good life didn’t make it. That wasn’t enough in that case. Make sure there is something real, something tangible, the oil of God flowing in us and through us and out of us—not just survivors. The “survivors” didn’t survive. They didn’t make it. As sincere as they were, they didn’t make it. Our primary job with each other is to make sure that everyone has oil—to make sure that no one is too lazy to gather and store the oil, and to make sure that no one burns their oil on selfishness and pride, or fear of failure before God or man. Make sure that you are not burning up all of your oil on stupid, foolish, silly, worldly personality things and not wanting God’s Will for your life. When you are living like that, it makes you fight, fight, fight against God’s Will... or, you don’t want to devote yourself to other people because they might hurt you or something.

We know where each other’s struggles lie. Part of being family is that we know where the struggles are. We know where the challenges are. But we can’t be afraid to face each other courageously and say, “You have to have oil. You have to! I’m going to fight for you to have oil so there are no surprises on judgment day.”

What’s the purpose of a marriage? It’s to help someone in very close proximity to have a whole truck full of oil. That’s the purpose. Marriage is not for our entertainment. It does not exist so that we can be happy, so that we can be satisfied, so that all our needs can be met. Whatever things come our way along those lines, that’s wonderful. It’s a gift of God. He loves to give good gifts to His children. But *that’s* not the purpose of marriage. The reason marriage exists, the reason God Sovereignly put

you in that relationship (whether that relationship is marriage, some other form of deep relationship, or even a sort of cursory/superficial relationship), is that He has called us to make sure everyone has oil... and to fight for each other in that way. I commission you in Jesus' name not to let having a good time with each other be your primary objective. Rather, make sure each of you, individually, has oil. Make sure you are passionate to see that the other has that oil, and for what children God may grace you with to have that oil too.

Also, help each other help others around you have that oil, and commission each other to go out and multiply and fill the earth with oil so that satan drowns in God's Holy Spirit oil. That's God's call. That's why we are here, and that's the future that you are vowing to one another in marriage. That's the future we have vowed to each other in all of the relationships God has given us. It's not for our entertainment. It's not so we can be happy, or so we can enjoy this or that. If that happiness comes, it comes. But the main issue is—will we help each other not be taken by surprise when the Bridegroom comes back? Will we help each other to have lots and lots and lots of oil? Because, as Jesus made clear, you can't borrow from someone else on that day! You can't borrow someone else's oil. It has to be yours. It has to come because you have developed that oil. You birthed that life in Jesus and it's real, and you've not burnt up your oil on some other selfish pursuit.

When you are busy having an attitude about something, can't you feel the oil burning up? Can't you, in your heart, feel it burning, burning away when you have a judgment of someone? When you are being selfish or you are being deceitful can't you feel that oil burning up inside of yourself? I can. When I have those attitudes, when I have reactions, I feel God's Holy Oil burning up, and it causes my heart to panic... in the right way. I'm *not* going to burn up my oil on anything. I want to be ready when He comes. I've made my share of mistakes, but I want to be ready when He comes.

I want to make this point. When the Father says, "Son, your wedding day has come," there will be five virgins—not five Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus—but five people who are there waiting for Jesus, who will be surprised because they don't have oil of their own. It's our job to *see to it brothers* and *see to it sisters*, within the beautiful relationships that He has given us and is giving you now and in the future... that each one has an abundance of oil, and that we help each other to help others do that too.

Marriage Perspectives and Objectives



1980s

Some thoughts exchanged between the saints, years ago... captured in some rough notes at that time...

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).

“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

“Stop viewing one another after the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

“See to it, brothers, that no bitter root sprouts up between you. But encourage, deal in one another’s lives alongside daily” (Hebrews 12:15; Hebrews 3:13-15).

Because we are neither married nor given in marriage in heaven (Mat. 22:30), then the marriage institution (as it is called) is *not* above the Word of God. In other words, if a spouse sees something in his/her spouse’s life that is unlike Jesus, Jesus *didn’t* say,

“Take it to him and him alone and then bring two or three witnesses—unless it happens to be your wife, or your husband or your children or your parents.” He didn’t make that distinction. He said you take it to *anyone* who claims to be a Believer!

Who are my mothers and brothers and sisters? Who is my family anyway? Those who do the will of God. That’s the **ONLY** way a person who has been born a second time is allowed to see it. We must come to

understand more of the eternal nature of the things of God than most understand. We've got to cross these barriers. "Take it to him and him alone, plus your best friends"—that IS Gossip! Or, "Take it to him and him alone, plus your wife"—that's Gossip!

A marriage is not a legal place to sin. "Do what you want, inside of your own four walls." That is *not* the way the Scriptures read. Also, if your brother or sister who is caught in a sin happens to be your spouse, it's not, "Take it to them and them alone... but don't bring two or three witnesses, because they are your spouse, or best friend, or...." Wrong. Those things have to take place. Remember, we're neither married nor given in marriage in heaven—there's something much bigger at stake here!

The reason you are married is because God has given you a special opportunity to work the Life of Jesus into a captive audience. You mutually benefit from that relationship. You are together in that relationship so you can help each other become more like Jesus in the quickest possible way—in the most trying of all circumstances. ☺ (Did I say that?)

It is a Great Opportunity, to lay down your life for each other in a way that is almost inescapable! It is easy to escape responsibility in just about every other relationship, but marriage is a relationship where your responsibilities are inescapable, if you are honest at all. *If you are a pagan you can step out of that relationship*, but if you really love Jesus and love your spouse, that's the perfect place to grow in the deepest possible way.

Marriage is not a place to *hide* from the Word of God. It is the best possible place to *apply* the Word of God!

If you are a husband with a wife that is walking in unbelief, or a wife with a husband that's walking in unbelief, that certainly presents some serious difficulties and painful situations. And, the problem in the home and relationship may not be unbelief (as classically defined, at least). It may be bitterness, unforgiveness, rebellion, a hard heart, laziness, pride, self-centeredness, shortness of temper or other things that are just plain old *not like Jesus*. These are issues, because those problems are indications that they are very likely not in fellowship with Him—and you care too much to let things stay that way.

Take the opportunity, in your marriage, to build one another up and to use that depth of relationship to help spur one another on to love and

good works. If they will *not* move towards Jesus, that is always going to be their choice. You are still very responsible to show them the way, and encourage them and pray them into Greatness in Christ. But in the end there are seven billion people on the planet at the moment, and you can't make anyone, even if they live in your four walls, have "a good and honest heart" that wants to love Jesus and obey Him in every area of their lives. Not everyone "loves the Truth and so is saved." Some, according to Jesus, do not "love the Light." You can only do the best you can, and continue to serve God in every other area of your short lifetime as well. *You* must do what *you* have to do to serve Him well in every arena of life.

Again, as this relates to pseudo-Believers and unbelievers? God says, if he (or she) is content to live with you while you are serving Jesus whole-heartedly, without compromise, being the best servant you can be in the home at the same time you are "about your Father's Business," then that is great. If they will not tolerate you living for Jesus on GOD'S terms—laying your life down for them and others, "admonishing one another daily," "bearing one another's burdens," "confessing sins one to another," "joined and knit together by every supporting ligament" within the daily Life of the Body of Christ Jesus... that is a very different matter. *They cannot control your service of God.* Not possible. "Judge for yourselves whether it is better to obey God or man." "You are not a slave in such cases" to unBelievers' whims.

Of course, you *must not* provoke unnecessarily, or manipulate to get something you want and use your "service of God" to do so. But on the other hand, when a spouse or parent or child will *not* cease "crucifying Jesus afresh" right before your eyes, the ultimate decision is no longer yours, if you are "not your own, you are bought for a price." If they are willing to stay, as you live a Life for Jesus, deeply involved in His Kingdom, "contending as One man for the Faith" (while also being Godly and sacrificial in the home), let them. "Who knows? You may actually participate in saving their souls!" But you'll never do that by compromising and giving in to their emotional and physical blackmail. They will only learn (from any lukewarm compromises and slavery to mere men on your part) how little Jesus really means to you, and how pointless it would be for them to give their lives to such a powerless God. Don't do that to them, thinking you are doing them and God a favor by lowering the standard of your life to accommodate someone else's sin. Bad, bad choice. Don't do it.

Now, back to relationships amongst Believers. Take the opportunity to use whatever resources you have available, to help them Grow in Christ—even if it involves bringing other people into the picture. If “to him and him alone” is ineffective (because they “won’t hear you” or because there is no change) then JESUS said there was a next step to take! Bring “two or three others” and even involve the entire church if necessary to snatch them from ways that crucify Jesus and harm their ability to have a true relationship with the Father. It is not in THEIR best interests, as well as being forbidden by God, to just turn away and ignore sin in your home or relationships. *Again, marriage is not a place to hide from God’s Word. It’s a place to explore a close-proximity relationship to help each other be more like Jesus.*

In other words, don’t put up with (ignore, overlook, refuse to deal with) anything in your marriage or home or workplace or neighborhood (when Believers are involved) that is inappropriate and unlike what Jesus taught and commanded. Just because they’re your spouse or your children or your parents or, on the other hand, because you supposedly don’t know them very well *doesn’t give you that right*. “Cop-outs” are not the way to please Jesus and to “wrestle to present everyone complete, perfect, full and free in Christ.”

And marriage is *not* to be pursued for self-interests. It must not be pursued on the basis of what you want for yourself, rather than what would best serve God. “MY house”—“MY family”—“MY time”—“MY day off”—“MY yard”—“MY job”—“MY dinner table”.... These are very weak and destructive expressions of one that is not connected to the Head and the Body of Christ. People who live that way will not See the Kingdom in the Lives around them, beyond the middle-class, cultural counterfeits. Don’t settle for that! God has designed you for better!

And never, ever, **EVER** marry someone based on wishful thinking—hoping that someday “they’ll be a man of God or woman of God.” Only marry based on what is proven and bears fruit, not on what you *hope* it will be someday if they “grow into it.” You must forever live with what you decide in these matters. Don’t be naïve or self-deceived, or let your hormones rule you and ruin your life! The human body is just a decaying earth-suit that ends up shriveled and stretched and ripped in a short amount of time anyway. Be wise! Be governed by the Spirit, seeing “*no man after the flesh*,” as Paul said. Nothing is judged or decided by “the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear” if we are walking with God.

Look at Jesus as the Standard—an irrevocable Standard, regardless of the kind of relationship you have. Whether it's mother, daughter, husband, wife or whatever, that kind of relationship must not nullify the teaching of Jesus. That's the place to apply the teaching of Jesus to the greatest possible extent. *Love and mercy and patience—but NOT disobedience to what God taught.*

A marriage is not meant to be a hiding place. It is meant to be a place to bring each other to the highest possible place in the shortest amount of time.

So, *DON'T SHRINK BACK* from that responsibility.

"We're neither married nor given in marriage in heaven," Jesus taught.

"Those that are married should live as those not consumed or controlled primarily by this relationship, as time is short and the days are evil," said the Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus, through the apostle Paul.

The purpose of marriage is to build the character and qualities of Christ in the shortest amount of time, in the closest possible proximity.

See it that way, instead of trying to get all of the things you "want," okay??!! Love, devotion, kindness, patience, selfless partnership, and more... all are part of the Picture of Jesus and His Relationship!

Now, PLEASE...!!! Don't use this as a license to do the nagging you've always wanted to do, either. It's not like that. Again, patience, kindness, forbearance, generosity and love. But with clarity—there *is* a Standard. Help each other to walk it out, in love, without compromise. Marriage is *not* for your entertainment and your "rights" primarily. That self-life standard is sold to you by the world, and pagan ideology, but it is *not* God's Intent. From the Beginning it was not so. Find your "enjoyment," your "joy and crown," in "bringing many sons (and spouses and neighbors and co-workers) to *Glory*"—not just surviving and serving your own interests. *That's* where Life *really* is found!!! Go and find the meaning of this!

Working it Out, TOGETHER... in the Midst of Immaturity

Brazil

Let's say that someone does come to you to try to help you see something in your life. Perhaps that person is immature. Perhaps the issue gets clouded. When someone is immature, there can be mixture sometimes. So, what do we do?

There are two or three things I want to say about it. First of all, Jesus honors the fact that we are doing this together. So, even if there is immaturity, He said, "If two or three come together to discuss a problem, there I will be." He didn't say everyone had to be perfectly mature or have perfect knowledge. He said He would come if we do it HIS WAY. If we do it HIS WAY, He said He would be in our midst. In Matthew 18, He said, "If you come together to solve a problem I will come too," and He doesn't talk about how mature the people are, or that they should have a title of elder or pastor or any such thing. I do understand perfectly the dilemma... it does create problems when there is immaturity or mixture. But it is important that we honor something bigger than ourselves. It takes faith to see something bigger than ourselves.

There have been people who I've brought to Jesus and helped to find Jesus who were very immature. I've had those people come to me and talk to me about things in my life. Sometimes they are totally right. Sometimes they are totally wrong. Sometimes there is mixture (some good mixed with some bad)—that can be frequently true. But it's very important, even if I brought them to Jesus, that I honor something bigger than myself and that I humbly listen to them. Jesus said that if

someone comes to me and has a grievance, if we can't work it out—then we bring in two or three others. That's what the Bible says. And if we still can't work it out, we tell it to the whole Church. The beautiful part about that is, even if there is immaturity, good things can still happen from it. If they come to me and say something that I don't think is true—according to the words of Jesus, I ask them to bring two or three others to talk to me, too—because something really good will happen if we do that. Jesus promised that He will come if we do that. And then... either I will see what I was blind to before, or they will see their immaturity if they discover that they were wrong.

BUT either way, I must never make them feel bad for coming to me. I must not discourage them from being a priest. I must be grateful that they had the courage to try. And perhaps I will learn from their effort. Or perhaps they will learn from their immaturity. But either way, if everyone is humble, then God will receive glory. If I want someone to not be immature anymore, I must not discourage them from doing the work of God. That's how they become mature—they try to do God's work, even if they make mistakes. So, sometimes it is hard when there is mixture. But God even works that together for the good, and it's okay.

If someone comes to me and says, "I really think you should do this instead of that"—I might think they are totally wrong, but I must not make them feel bad for trying. What I should do instead is bring others in to help talk about it, too. There are examples in the Bible of this. When Paul was far away from Corinth, they had problems (disagreements) in Corinth. Some were taking each other to court, others didn't believe in the resurrection. There were crazy things going on there and they were not getting the problems solved. So they asked for help from the outside.

On another occasion, Paul was with some Judaizers (some people who believed in circumcision) and they couldn't solve the problem. Paul thought that circumcision wasn't essential. Other people thought that they must become Jews first and then Christians. They couldn't solve the problem. Both thought that they were right. So what did they do? In Acts 15 it says they all went to Jerusalem and talked about it with other people. They could have gotten angry and separated from each other. But instead they brought in more help. So when we have this mixture or immaturity, we bring in more help—even if we have to bring it in from the outside: from another part of the city, from another part of

the country, from another country. We just bring in more and more help, rather than separating from each other. This is the biblical pattern for overcoming mixture and for finding and hearing God.

At the end of Acts 15, after they brought in much more help to help clear this up, James said, “It seems good to us and to the Holy Spirit and here is the solution...” So there was a battle with different opinions. There was immaturity. Jesus said if we have problems, bring in more help. So we have been doing this where we live for nearly fifteen years now, and it’s getting better and better without all these problems. We even have many people that used to be “pastors” or leaders who thought they knew everything. But as we all learn to be humble, we can work together to build the House. And even all the smart guys become humble, like little children, and help each other—because we know we need help, and we want other people to look into our lives.

This Truth applies even as it relates to a husband and wife. There may be disagreements about this thing or that, but if the matters have to do with spiritual things, if it’s about Truth—then this all applies. Here is an example: If your husband does not like broccoli and doesn’t want you to fix broccoli and you really, really like broccoli... that’s okay. Don’t fix it. But if you go to someone else’s home and they have broccoli there, and he comes home with you and he is complaining about it and upset and angry about it... THAT is a spiritual issue. A personal preference is okay, but when sin comes in, that is not okay.

Helping Each Other Over Time

As it relates to all relationships, even husbands and wives, there are very real, difficult things that happen. The beautiful thing about the Body of Christ in a lot of these things that we have been talking about is that as you begin to open up your lives with sisters and brothers, those sisters and brothers will help. The brothers, over time, will talk together with the husband and say to him, “You need to be more considerate, more observant.” The brothers will help show him ways to do that. The sisters will say to the wife, “You need to be more patient, you need to be more kind and loving.” That’s what a helpmeet or rib is for, is to help, not to be upset. So the sisters will help, and the brothers will help, and altogether in twelve or eighteen months, everyone will be totally different.

Quality of Life Brings Confidence

There is something else that can help very much in embracing all of this and can make it easier for you to hear things from people that you might not know very well. It's not because you know someone very, very well that you are able to hear them. Rather, you can "hear" someone because you know the *quality of life* that they are a part of. Likewise, if they know the quality of life that you are a part of, it will give them the same freedom to receive what you say, even though they don't know you well. That's a very powerful truth—if the Church is really the Church! If I were to live here and there were 500 of us, maybe I wouldn't know you personally very well, but you would still be able to warmly receive the things I say without being offended (and vice versa), *if the quality of life—the Foundation—is proper throughout the whole Church*. The time when it becomes a problem is when the church is not really a Church, and people in the "church" just live any way they want to live. People are scattered. This is VERY unBiblical, but 98% of all places called "church" in every country live this way. God said if things are scattered in this way that "Your meetings do more harm than good!" In such a scattered, unBiblical environment (even if the singing and "preaching" seem "Biblical") much of God's will cannot be accomplished in lives.

For example, imagine an environment where you don't really know anyone too well and someone comes up to you and says, "You need to change, you need to change." You would likely say (or think, or gossip), "I don't know you. I don't know if your life is any good. I don't know if you love me, I don't know if you love anyone. What you are saying may be true, but I don't really appreciate it very much." That's what happens when the church is all scattered and it's not really a Church, as the Bible defines a Church. Of course there will likely be many Christians there, but that does not make it a Church, according to Jesus.

Now think of an environment where there are 500 people who are totally devoted to Jesus—and you know they are—and all 500 people are laying down their lives for each other every day. A daily *quality of Life* is there, and "from the least to the greatest, they ALL know Him." "See to it brothers that NONE of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart." "Admonish, encourage, warn, be called along-side one another DAILY, so that NONE are hardened and deceived by sin." "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ." "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed!" If THIS is the quality of Life, THEN even if you don't know them very well and

they say something... it's okay. You still want to hear it. So the quality of life, the Foundation, makes all the difference in how easy it is to hear. It's not just whether or not they know me very well. It's that I trust that they know Jesus very well.

When the Church is really the Church, if something is not working out, you can bring in other people that you trust. There IS a way to work it out. It doesn't just end up in the air some place. If the person coming to you is immature, or you don't know them very well, and you don't quite understand what they are saying; well, you know that they are committed to other people that you *do* trust and know... so, you are able to bring those other people in. You can always bring in other mature people to help clarify. If you know they are committed to people, they are committed to God, and their life is accountable to others—then it is easy to bring in other trustworthy people so you can get it all resolved. However, if everyone is just doing whatever they want and no one is really laying down their life for anyone... then it is just a bunch of words floating around and you don't really know what to make of it all. You wouldn't even know who to bring in to talk about it! Who would you bring in? They don't know anyone. You don't know anyone. It's all just a big guessing game. Then it's all suspicion and hypothetical stuff and you end up just being a rag-doll tossed around all over the place. But, if you know someone who is committed to daily life and you are too... and you hear something that's immature (or you think it is), it is so easy to bring in other people that you know are solid people to help clear it all up. Then everyone goes home “new and improved.”

In an average religious assembly—hundreds of thousands of religious assemblies all over the world—most people can be part of that for twenty years and never really change very much. That's a very sad situation. The reason it is that way is because they are building wrong. Someone is giving a speech or sermon to them on Sunday morning. Maybe they have a bible class over here or over there, and another religious meeting with miniature clergy in a home on Friday nights, once a month, except during summer family vacation and sports season. But they don't have intertwined “joined and knit together” lives as a Priesthood of Believers. So most people don't change, even after twenty years! That is very sad. But if we use God's blueprint—the teachings of Jesus—then we can all change to be like Him. If we are humble and we work together as priests, the greatest miracle of all can happen—we can change.

Fragrant Women:

To Him and Him Alone, Then With Two or Three With Jesus

October 2000

Because we are neither married nor given in marriage in heaven (Mat.22:30), then the marriage institution (as it is called) is NOT above the word of God. In other words, if a spouse sees something in his/her spouse's life that is unlike Jesus, Jesus didn't say, "Take it to him and him alone and then bring two or three witnesses—unless it happens to be your wife, or your husband or your children or your parents." What about the scripture that says a wife should win him over "without words"? ☺ love,

Hi... The teaching of Peter doesn't contradict the teaching of Jesus—which can't be added to with "unless you're married to the one in sin." I've seen WAY too much fruit of 15 years of lives changed by not allowing the home to be a hiding place for hypocrisy and sin to contradict the teaching of Jesus that way! Peter was addressing not nit-picking details, as women are prone to do—not that Jesus should be contradicted. IF he won't hear a co-heir, fellow disciple, and calls himself a Christian, she MUST bring 2 or 3, or she has disobeyed the clear, exact Teaching of Jesus Himself. I personally wouldn't want to be responsible for telling someone to disobey an extremely clear Command from Jesus Himself! AND, as I've said, I've seen men change dramatically from disciples acting like disciples and bringing Light where there had been none for 10 years of silence from a spouse that was battered by fear. Obeying God, not man, will always hold sway, and God said "to him and him alone... and if he won't hear you... 2 or 3." Again, it would be very gutsy to advise someone to disobey such a clear Command as that, I would say. I'm sure Peter was not taking that on. I wish I could say, "Sure, okay!" but... the tragedies of ignoring Jesus' Command in the home are legion.

In a REAL Church, there are 15 other people that are easily involved relationally and it is not some big ordeal to involve others—since they are deeply involved in the details of their everyday life anyway! In an institution, or a home situation where Life is not really there as it should be, then everyone outside of the home is essentially an “outsider”—so it is a BIG deal to involve others. But not so when there are ALREADY “a hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters” involved in their life every day. It flows easily, painlessly, and without fanfare or legalisms. In an institutional setting (whether a “housechurch” or a “facility”), it is a nasty thing to “bring two or three” and avoiding such an ordeal unless murder or something large has taken place is a high priority for most. Understandable. BUT, if we built His way *in the first place*, it would be as easy as fixing dinner or cleaning a room. Not a biggee!!

Hope you understand what I’m trying to portray... It’s very pain-free and life-giving, in the Right context!

Love,

Thanks, yes I think I understand and your points are well taken. Nevertheless, I can see how wives could abuse such a mechanism, and I think that is why there are so many follow-up scriptures about submission and quietness. May God forbid that hidden sin should continue to be unchecked among those who name Christ as their own!!!!!! God is not mocked—a man reaps what he sows! Love,

Hi, You can see that the institutional way of building has undermined the Intention of God in His Church by rule by committee! Foolish building practices by men in denominational settings such as that STILL don’t mean we must disobey Jesus’ clear Command! Jesus didn’t seem to think it was problematic to obey Him in this simple command, and didn’t say anything about BIG sins versus small! It is NOT “indicting” in a BIBLICAL environment, but only so in an institution! All that happened to you happened in a VERY unbiblical environment, and not a true church. Therefore, all the pain and contradictions and destructive garbage that could not have happened in a real church, built on a Foundation of Life and Truth! If your wife was less than submissive, all of THAT would have come up when she brought the

two or three into the discord so that JESUS could show up in power and life! (That is the context in Matthew 18, of course.)

BUT, when everything is disjointed attendance of meetings, amongst people, some who are not even Christians, no one would even know it because of the worldly, disconnected lives in which so many live in that “meeting-centered” religious environment. There are (of course) great folks there, as well as charlatans no one would ever have a clue were such. But even the BEST folks will not grow nearly as fast as they would in a Biblical environment, *“admonishing one another daily so that NONE are hardened and deceived by sin.”* *“A LITTLE leaven leavens the WHOLE batch,”* saith the Lord. SO, your whole mess would have been RADICALLY different from the get-go if she HAD brought two or three from amongst the “HUNDRED mothers, brothers, sisters,” and thus JESUS had been there as the two or three came for the Purpose of clarity in the matter. (Again, THAT is the context of “there I AM in the midst” in Mat. 18.) SHE would have been radically changed for it, and YOU wouldn’t have had all those years of grief! You may feel better now, but SHE didn’t have the Opportunity for change that she would have had in a Biblical environment, obeying Matthew 18.

The disobedience of Jesus’ absolute Command in Matthew 18 is FREQUENTLY the result, as I said in my last note, of an UNBiblical environment where OBEDIENCE does “more harm than good,” so folks have rationalized their way out of Obeying a clear Command and have made excuses and tried to find loopholes. The FAULT is in the unbiblical building practices that CREATE CONTRADICTIONS, not so much in the lambs that are caught in the “pickle” and opt for “alternatives.” SO, in your institutional setting, it would have been great if she had NOT taken you to a worldly committee. HOWEVER, if you had been in a REAL church where EVERY LIFE is daily intertwined, instead of, “I have no need of you” until next “meeting...” you would have been amazed at how much better the next ten years would have gone if she HAD brought “two or three,” but in a BIBLICAL Church! Food for thought...

P.S. Wives should never ABUSE any Command of Jesus!! They must not disobey it, OR abuse it! And they WON’T be able to abuse it if everyone around them, totally intertwined into their life and the life of Jesus as a way of life... is functioning on a Biblical Foundation. But, OF COURSE they should not ABUSE any Command of God!

What does the scripture in 1 Peter mean?

Believe me, I DO understand the question, and have seen the abuses within the institutional religious world. So, since Peter's thoughts CAN'T be used to disobey Jesus in Matthew 18 and other places, then it obviously means what I mentioned earlier. A woman not being like a dripping rain on a tin roof (the inclination of a woman, Genesis 3), but rather being a wonderful, fragrant, inner beauty of a woman that melts the generally-hard-hearted and insensitive man with her delightful qualities. As a way of life. Every day. HOWEVER, even bringing in two "Jonathans that are closer than a man is with a woman" to discuss something that isn't changing or is getting too muddled and complicated, those that are already DEEPLY involved in his life, would not violate this spirit of kindness and avoidance of badgering or browbeating or domineering. It very well might, as I said, be a HUGE violation in an institutional setting, but in the Family of God, defined by a SECOND Birth, it is peaceful and EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE MAN, would DESIRE more Light and Wisdom be brought in. He wouldn't WANT his wife to withhold things from him that might allow him to Grow. And she would not have an "agenda" that she is hand-picking people to support. That could ONLY happen in an institution. She would be, in GOD'S HABITAT of true Life, ONLY wanting to learn herself if she is wrong. And because of the daily intertwined lives, "from the least to the greatest," even the nuances of how the thoughts are presented, and the facial expressions, the contradictions of the stories, etc., are a "bread crumb trail" for those walking in true Fellowship with the Head and the Body... to discern and resolve.

Wives, Boys, and Toys

Monday Morning, February 4, 2002

Question: Have you been in situations where the women show a lot of enthusiasm for the Kingdom, but their husbands are either lazy, workaholics, or _____?? SOME of the folks that God brought into our lives (for a time???) show passion for God's ways... My wife spent the afternoon with four women who again drove quite a distance to be here. It appears with SOME of these wives that their husbands lack zeal. One gal said, "My husband likes to have fun—either skiing, camping, or hiking. I enjoy spending time with God's people. My idea of having fun is having God's people over so that they can tear our house apart!"

I think if you were to check these guys' (husbands) vital signs, you'd find a spiritual pulse. What experience have you all had?? Thanks,

Hi there. Historically, and across the miles, we've noticed something profound. ☺ All "zeal" that women have is NOT always in Wisdom or Grace. Sometimes, it's a fleshly, controlling zeal that does not comprehend what is just below. But, I'm sure that's not a problem there. ☺ Just thought I'd mention it, for sometime far distant in the future, and in some far away place. ☺

As for the Boyz...

PRIMARILY, the sheep are separated from the goats... by the VOICE of the Shepherd. Sheep and goats can be all mixed up within the same crowd of dumb animals around the well—until the Shepherd's Voice is heard. The goats will yawn at that voice, but the sheep find their way to the Voice.

The goats make excuses, or "try real hard" for awhile, and then drift back to their entertainment or selfish pursuits, dead to the Voice, except to please men (which cannot be sustained). Or they are defensive and argumentative, blame shift, or counter accuse in order to change the subject away from themselves. Those would be goats. Baaaa-d boys.

The sheep, on the other hand, will be easy to recognize in but a little bit of time. They will be the ones who CARE when they Hear—and their walk is SUSTAINED, and with “ever-increasing Glory.” In OUR Covenant, “A man does not need to beg his neighbor constantly: ‘Please, oh please, know the Lord, know the Lord!’” Sheep care and Listen. Goats cannot sustain much of anything in His direction. They only want to USE Him, and to defend their own flesh simultaneously.

Another way of saying it is this: You won’t know if there are vital signs there or not, until there is Vision and a clear knowledge that “the Kingdom is at hand.” Without VISION the people cast off restraint. If the play-babies don’t know WHY they should care (the Vision, the Words of Life), they will LOOK like goats perhaps. But IF they know WHY all of this matters, and the Vision of Jesus and His “ever-increasing Government” is before them, they will not fuss and fume and fight you. They will not continue to be forever play-babies (though they may play—see below ☺). They will not “cast off restraint” if they KNOW what life is about. In other words, they’ll REPENT... when it is clear the Kingdom is at Hand. Otherwise, most will just act like children in the marketplace. “If the trumpet sounds an uncertain sound, who will get ready for the battle?”

The ONLY way to find out if there IS anything Real there, is by getting into their lives to find out if they CARE about the Things of God—and if they’ll SACRIFICE the pleasures, for the sake of anything that is GOD.

The skiing kind of stuff isn’t a problem—AS LONG AS:

1) Kingdom things are under discussion and the focus at all the times they SHOULD be (e.g., when shallowness on someone’s part becomes evident, or someone’s eyes are wandering, or carnal, fleshly humor emerges, or loquaciousness, or selfishness, or independence or some other sins emerge through the course of the day). IF “seeking FIRST the Kingdom” takes place AT ALL TIMES, “as we rise up, sit down, and walk along the way,” and we’re not having our “fun time” and then later we’ll have our “church time”—IF the times on the slopes are MEANT to be “windows into the souls of our companions” and provide Opportunities (as opposed to entertainment as a separate category of our lives, and the “religious stuff” and “character stuff” and “witnessing stuff” are for later), then the skiing COULD be okay.

2) IF all involved are willing to BUILD it Right (NOT “who likes to ski the most,” or “who wants to come,” or “who has the money to come,” but, WHO SHOULD BE THERE, CONSIDERING THE GIFTS AND MATURITY LEVELS OF THOSE INTERESTED IN GOING, and who should stay home for Kingdom reasons), then it could be okay.

3) IF all involved are willing to be in the Light about any obsessions or lusts about such worldly things that may become apparent if they “don’t get their way,” or if they are compulsive to “ALWAYS” do it at some time of year, or day of the week, or habitual time or way, or whatever, and,

4) IF everyone could GLADLY just skip it this week, or forever, for Jesus’ sake... then it COULD be okay. It’s NOT about “to ski or not to ski,” or anything so external as that, of course.

Help a little? I’d better stop now. I answer too many letters (write too much), I’m told. ☺

Love,

Difference Between Male and Female 😊

A Fictitious “Funny” of Local Origin...

One evening when Elaine and Roger are driving home from being with some Saints, a thought occurs to Elaine, and, without really thinking, she says it aloud: “Do you realize that, as of tonight, we’ve been married for exactly five months?”

And then there is silence in the car.

To Elaine, it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he’s been feeling frustrated by our relationship; maybe he thinks I’m trying to push him into buying me a gift that he doesn’t want to give me, or isn’t sure of what to get.

And Roger is thinking: Man. Five months.

And Elaine is thinking: But, hey, I’m not so sure I want to start functioning that way, either. I mean, where are we going? Are we going to be able to sustain this pace? Every five months? The math doesn’t work... but in some ways it would be nice. Special. Maybe just dinner out, or doing the dishes. But if he really loved me he would do those things anyway. So, maybe gifts IS a good idea. But where will it lead? And what about the children, when we have children? What will they think? What will they expect? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person?

And Roger is thinking: So, that means it was... let’s see... February when we got married, which was right after I had the car at the dealer’s, which means... let me check the odometer... Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here.

And Elaine is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more commitment; maybe he has sensed, even before I sensed it, that I was feeling some reservations about the gifts. I didn't mention anything about gifts, but that should be obvious to him. Anyone would know that's what I was thinking. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected.

And Roger is thinking: And I'm going to have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those guys say, it's still not shifting right. And they better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time. What cold weather? It's 87 degrees and this thing is shifting like a garbage truck, and I paid those thieves \$600.

And Elaine is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure.

And Roger is thinking: They'll probably say it's only a 90-day warranty... can you believe those guys?

And Elaine is thinking: Maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for him to be a knight to come riding up on his white horse. Why do I feel this way, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me. He may not be a knight the way I want him to be, but he's a good person. A person who is in pain because of my self-centered, schoolgirl romantic fantasy.

And Roger is thinking: Warranty? Yeah, right. This is America. There's always a catch. Always small print or some lawyer's clause so that all the cost and all the obligation and time and trouble fall back on the little guy. Man oh man oh man.

"Roger," Elaine says aloud.

"What?" says Roger, startled.

"Please don't torture yourself like this," she says, her eyes beginning to brim with tears. "Maybe I should never have... Oh, I feel so... (She breaks down, sobbing.)

"What?" says Roger.

“I’m such a fool,” Elaine sobs. “I mean, I know there’s no knight. I really know that. It’s silly. There’s no knight, and there’s no horse.”

“There’s no horse?” says Roger.

“You think I’m a fool, don’t you?” Elaine says.

“No!” says Roger, glad to finally know the correct answer.

“It’s just that... it’s that I... I need some time,” Elaine says.

There is a 15-second pause while Roger, thinking as fast as he can, tries to come up with a safe response. Finally he comes up with one that he thinks might work. “Yes,” he says.

Elaine, deeply moved, touches his hand. “Oh, Roger, do you really feel that way?” she says.

“What way?” says Roger.

“That way about time,” says Elaine.

“Oh,” says Roger. “Yes.”

Elaine turns to face him and gazes deeply into his eyes, causing him to become very nervous about what she might say next, especially if it involves a horse. At last she speaks.

“Thank you, Roger,” she says.

“Thank you,” says Roger.

Then they go home, and she quickly goes to bed while he decides to write emails until she falls asleep. She never does. The conflicted, tortured soul weeps until dawn.

After responding to some Emails, Roger opens a bag of Doritos, turns on the TV, and immediately becomes deeply involved in a rerun of a tennis match between two Czechoslovakians he never heard of. A tiny voice in the far recesses of his mind tells him that something major was going on back there in the car, but he is pretty sure there is no way he would ever understand what, and so he figures it’s better if he doesn’t think about it.

The next day Elaine will call a dear, trusted friend, or perhaps two of them, and they will talk about this situation for six straight hours. In painstaking detail, they will analyze everything she said and everything he said, going over it time and time again, exploring every word,

expression, and gesture for nuances of meaning, considering every possible ramification. They will continue to discuss this subject, off and on, for weeks, maybe months, never reaching any definite conclusions, but never getting bored with it, either.

Meanwhile, Roger, while playing racquetball one day with Elaine's brother, will pause just before serving, frown, and say, "Bill, did Elaine ever own a horse?"

And that's the difference between men and women.

Thoughts about Relationships

A Potential Snare, Especially for Females

Saturday Morning, February 26, 1994

The desire to have Understanding of how Jesus desires that we think and feel and act... on the topic of “best friends” is always important. Because of the magnitude of emotions relating to our basic instinctual desires for love and affection, and our disdain and fear of “loneliness” or rejection, this topic will always remain dangerously important... for us, for our children, in any legitimate expression of Christ Jesus in His Church. So, this (originally “internal” to the local assembly here) is forwarded on for those of you that desire God’s Highest and Best.

“Best Friends”—Close Relationships in His Kingdom

There have been times in many people’s lives (people in the world as well as within the Elect) when they have striven for, or found, a “best friend.” I mean that in the natural and obvious sense: this special friend is the main person in their life... the one that they look to in time of crisis, the one they are confiding in, the one that they are likely to be with at any given time, the one that they find the most pleasure in as a companion. Is this a bad thing or a good thing?

Parts of this are fantastic! Done correctly, it can be a spectacular gift from God! *Aspects* of that kind of relationship are precious and we can be grateful to God for “kindred spirits” and more. (In the major part of the church world where there is often much compromise and too little reality, special relationships are a miracle from God, many times. A close friend in that far-too-typical sort of environment is often a lifesaver and sanity check that is worth more than diamonds and rubies!) However, there are some very important things to watch for, if

there is someone in your life that you would consider a “*best friend*,” or someone that is far more likely to be involved with you in your everyday life than any other single person.

Are You Ready?

If you are THE person anyone confides in, or THE person they feel “most comfortable with,” or anything of the sort, then some things do need to change right away. (Others around you are likely to be more unbiased in their assessment of this than you would be of yourself—as Paul said, “If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”) Will you unselfishly move to higher ground spiritually? More often than not there are roots of self-love and insecurity that can cause us to cling to our “right” to having a “bestest buddy in the whole world.” A sister mentioned to me recently that, it seems to her, women (or even little girls) are prone to wanting and running after (or falling into) “best friend” relationships far more often than most males. WHY you have evolved into this type of relationship is an interesting question to ask yourself. Let’s examine some of the pitfalls, spiritually, of an unhealthy—the wrong kind of—“best friend” relationship.

For starters, most of us have been on the outside of one of these things at some time or another as well. Only a few privileged ones, clothed in all of the social graces and with personalities or talents that make them permanent insiders, have missed the experience of being an outsider. It’s painful. To willingly, as a disciple of Jesus, inflict pain or erect any unnecessary barriers between yourself and others, or your good friend and others—this saddens God’s Spirit. Our God “sets the lonely in families.” How sad to do the opposite by making anyone feel like a second-class citizen... on the “outside looking in.” Our close relationships, even within our own households, are to serve God’s People and give them a welcome home. “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him—as you have helped His People and continue to help them.”

No matter how convinced we may be otherwise, if you are THE person in another’s life (in the sense that you are the one they’ll talk to about this or that, seldom others, YOU are the one privy to their hopes and dreams and desires and dislikes or complaints)—you are causing them to stumble, and, in addition, you are excluding and harming others. God will not allow you to build this way forever. When the people

in Genesis 11 thought they were of such oneness that they could do anything, God came and confused them and left them unable to communicate. And the building stopped entirely, with great pain. The time will come when God will, if He loves you, bring chaos, confusion, and pain into your relationship that has usurped Him and His People. And you'll lose the precious thing that could have been. It's far better to do it His Way!

Another sad aspect of the "best friend" scenario, "the" focal point and confidant, is that you are far, far less able to hear God's Voice when it might be time to move on to other relationships or, perhaps, to be sent out with other saints to another city. If you are too "comfortable" because you have built a fortress for yourself in flesh and blood (or allowed them to do so with you), you will not be able to hear God. The relationship **MUST** stay on the altar at all times, if God is going to be with you.

Practically speaking, there is great poverty in the wrong kind of "best friend" relationship. Just as it tends to, unknowingly of course, isolate us from others, it also robs us of access to all of God's Gifts. If my habit, due to an improperly built "best friend" relationship, is to "always" tell so-and-so first, or my knee jerk reaction is to run to so-and-so with news first, or to cry on so-and-so's shoulder, or to ask so-and-so how to go about doing something in the Kingdom... this "tradition of man" nullifies our ability to hear God! (Mat.7) Instead of asking God who we should go to for "equipping for works of service," we have a "tradition" of handling it in a particular way. This usurps God as God! It also cuts us off (and others) from drawing on the gifts that He has placed in His church, with resulting poor fruit. Can you see it? May it never be. Please do **NOT** get yourself so comfortably into a relationship that you cannot hear God, or don't even think to ask Him what He desires in the decisions we make. How should I spend my time? If you have an "automatic" place to go or person to be with, you are lacking in your relationship with God and giving away your future. As well as robbing them of their future in Christ. The traditions of men still nullify the voice of God.

I know how easy it is at times to find comfort and security in the wrong places. Find it in Jesus! Ok?

Love,

P.S. Great relationships are GREAT! Just be sure, please, that you are pointing each other forward and upward and outward, not towards each other as an end in itself. And launch each other into other relationships, rather than clinging! YOU don't have all the gifts of the Body, nor do they. Don't rob each other by being narrow for selfish or naïve reasons? THRUST one another outward, if you really love each other in Christ, rather than selfishly. OK? A recap of the problem of predictable relationships? They are exclusive, and others are unknowingly left out of the magic circle. God sets the lonely in families. Also, it becomes nearly impossible to hear God when it's time to move on, if we have found *identity* in a relationship. In addition, we can't hear God day to day, drawing on His choice of gifts, going to those of HIS leading to share our lives, when the "traditions of men" have become ingrained and expectations are built into the pattern on both sides. And, lastly, but very importantly, the wrong kind of relationship harms our relationship with God as we find too much security somewhere other than in Him.

May God grant understanding and wisdom, and grace, to all that *live* to love and serve Him. Finally, let me repeat, so that no one reacts wrongly, Great relationships are GREAT! Great relationships are GREAT!

Kingdom Beauty

March 2001

Hello, though we originally wrote this for the sisters, it is obviously important for all of us to have a deepening awareness of what Jesus values. We ALL need each other to see and feel what Jesus sees and feels, as TOGETHER we walk and Live the Jesus' Life! So we offer this to all of you, humbly and in Love, m and d

Dear Lovely Sisters...

It has recently come up and seems like a Good time to talk about our appearance—how we view it, how God views it and what it takes to make our thoughts One with His.

First and foremost, anything that comes from sin must be eradicated. It is totally unacceptable as a disciple of Jesus to “pretty yourself” with make-up, jewelry, perms, hairstyles, hair-coloring or certain clothing for the WRONG reasons. Why do we have this “need” to look a certain way, anyway? Are we vain? Are we insecure without it? Does it make us feel better about ourselves? Do you have a desire for people to look at you, notice you and admire you? Or maybe you have some need to be accepted, and that’s how you go about it. Or you’re afraid of looking old, being gray, or getting wrinkles or bags. Or maybe you’re afraid of what others will say and you don’t want to face the comments and jokes that might come up (which is a whole other side of it, worthy of a few words. How dare any of us draw attention to external junk in a way that tears down or puts doubts or fear in people’s heads?? Ribbing ladies about gray hair, or wrinkles.... Women don’t need that, men don’t need that. Be sensitive and covering-minded. Nobody needs off-handed, non-Jesus centered, inappropriate comments—good OR bad, about anything—PLEASE)

Or maybe you’re holding onto your own self-life—you don’t want to lose control and your “rights” about when, how and what you do to

yourself. Maybe you are just plain ol' comfortable with habits and patterns that were formed by worldly opinions that you grew up with. Whatever the reasons are that you do what you do, there is no place for sin, in this area of your life. If you've never allowed your motivations for wearing make-up, plucking your eyebrows, getting perms, wearing jewelry, or coloring your hair (and any other thing we're not thinking of at the moment) to be sifted through the thoughts of the Spirit, it's time. You've got to ask yourself and Jesus about why you are doing what you are doing.

Secondly, anything born of flesh is flesh. If you're attracted to someone due to the flesh (or you attract others through the means of your own flesh) and you have respect for them or value them or listen to them based on WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE IN THE FLESH, then that's exactly what you'll get in your own life. If you build with them and think about people FOR REASONS OF THE FLESH, then that's what you'll get is flesh. Whatever door you walk through is the kind of house you'll get. On the flip side, the Spirit gives birth to spirit. If you're attracted for Father, Son and Holy Spirit-centered reasons, you'll get more of Jesus as a result. Walk through His door for His reasons and you'll get His Life. Walk through the flesh door for fleshly reasons, and you'll have more of the flesh in your life.

Of course, there are possibilities for "doing" certain things that are motivated by the Spirit for Right reasons. For example, if you "stand out" in a crowd because you have a tumor the size of a baseball growing off the side of your head, you may need to have it removed. It just may be a real distraction to others to the extent that it makes them unable to hear what you are saying. They walk away remembering the unusual knob sticking off your head. Or maybe you're white as a sheet—practically albino, so you wear color on your skin to help others relate with you without being so distracted. Maybe a terrible case of acne needs help, so as not to draw attention. Or an unusual skin problem needs extra cosmetics of some sort. There may be specific legitimate needs—but don't use reasons like that as an excuse for self-indulgence. You can always use the tool of others to help you discern.

The flipside of that is if you "stand out" for the WRONG reasons—if you stand out as noticeably pretty, because of your make-up or clothing or jewelry—if people would easily pick you out of a crowd because of the way you have altered your appearance—then you are building with flesh in your life. Not to mention risking drawing attention from

pagan men. There's a scene in the "Postman" which illustrates the danger of that point. At one point in the movie, the disgusting "bad guys", the thugs come into town to bully the people and rob them. In the process, the townspeople are wandering around. One is a young, married woman who was STUPID enough to wander across the village square WHILE THE THUGS WERE STANDING ACROSS THE WAY!! As a result, OF COURSE, the bad guy notices her youth and beauty and "wants her" and ends up murdering her husband. So WHO was responsible for that?? It was HER. She was obviously very unwise about the perverted nature of pagan men and their insanity of sin. Sure, it was just a movie, but it demonstrates the point, clearly. Don't think stuff can't happen to you or people you love—it is satan's world at the moment. Just please watch out, dear sisters, in how and where and why you do certain things—especially out in public. How you "appear" has everything to do with that as well. And be sure and look out for any young ladies you know and care for. They NEED your Eyes to be sharp FOR them. Their naiveté may just get somebody seriously hurt or killed, like in that movie. The point can't be emphasized enough. We ought to be very careful to protect the beauty we have—like Rebekah who "took her veil and covered herself" (Genesis 24:65). Our beauty is for our man and for the Body of Christ—ONLY! (See the last part of the "Modesty" booklet, for more on that.)

Roots

Here are some of the historical roots of cosmetics, specifically...

The use of cosmetics is worldwide and dates from the remotest antiquity. Although it is generally believed that cosmetics as they are now known originated in the Far East, the study of simple cultures indicates that forms of cosmetic beautification have been practiced in every part of the world. The war paint of the Native American, the tattooing and scarification practiced by many peoples (the Maori of New Zealand and numerous African cultures), and the use of woad (a blue dye used by ancient Britons to paint their bodies) are all forms of cosmetic adornment.

The earliest historical record of cosmetics comes from the 1st Dynasty of Egypt (circa 3100-2907 BC). Tombs of this era have yielded unguent jars, and from remains of later periods it is evident that the unguents were scented. Such preparations, as well as perfumed oils, were

extensively used by both men and women to keep the skin supple and unwrinkled in the dry heat of Egypt. The women of Egypt also developed the art of decorating the eyes by applying dark green color to the under lid and by blackening the lashes and the upper lid with kohl, a preparation made from antimony or soot. It is likely that the Jews adopted the use of cosmetics from the Egyptians, since references to the painting of faces appear in the Old Testament.

By the middle of the 1st century AD, cosmetics were widely used by the Romans, who employed kohl for darkening eyelashes and eyelids, chalk for whitening the complexion, rouge and depilatories, and pumice for cleaning the teeth. The Crusaders found cosmetics widely used in the Middle East and spread their use throughout Europe. The almost universal use of cosmetics in modern times has grown with the scientific study of the ingredients employed. This research was begun by the French in the 19th century and led to the development of more and better cosmetics at low cost.

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So what about the “beautifying” of ourselves with cosmetics? It is an invention of the world, that finds its roots in Egypt, of all places, is it not?? And don't forget that your ideas today about make-up were most likely birthed in the world—movies, TV, advertising, billboards, magazines, Clairol and the Avon lady. It was never taught you from the scriptures to do the makeup thing. It was taught you by the world... your high school peers, the magazines, the movies, the models.... Most women have some way or another that they have an unhealthy affection or priority about something in their appearance, whether of body, or face or hair or ears or knees or whatever (it's just built in to the female's sinful nature, so watch out). Satan and the world knows that and has simply capitalized on it—quite successfully. But we are none of his, so we don't need to buy into the garbage of the world. If you wear make-up, know clearly why you are doing it. If your reasons have no basis in the Scriptures or in the Spirit, (driven by GOD reasons, rather than the world, or our own desires to look a certain way) then quit doing it. Which brings up the point that you will just plain ol' look different if you drop or change any physical habits/routines/rituals. And when you “look” different, it will sometimes cause carnal people

to make stupid comments. When you set yourself up to look or be a certain way, it takes some work to get out of it sometimes—including dealing with what others think and do as a result. Don't sweat it—it's a short season and people forget about it long before you will.

What is so great about your "beauty" anyway? Here's a pretty clear "reality check" from another e-mail...

"I'm beautiful! Look at me!"

Oh, okay! Yes. Amazing protrusion of cartilage off the front of your skull. You're RIGHT! No question that your fatty deposits are in slightly different places and shapes than those of some other ugly bags of mostly water. And there might not be but 1 or 2 million others that have better eye balls, superior skull and skeletal shapes, and higher quality lips than you. Although you still can't lift a tree, you have an extra 10 pounds of muscle tissue that your neighbor DOESN'T HAVE! And your wardrobe? You drape some VERY special cloth over yourself, all cut and colored JUST RIGHT. Your stringy dead protein cells that push out of the top of your head are the absolute best. No denying it. You are RIGHT up there. And, since you're so smart and talented too, and you are so good at running on the hamster wheel and pushing salt water out of the little holes in your flesh suit, you'll probably be able to make your skin fit a few more months than most. Yippee. Everyone will surely notice. And care a lot.

All authority, all beauty, all meaning, all Life that is TRULY Life are wrapped up in the sparkling eyes, the delightful voice, and the warmly penetrating wisdom of JESUS, the Son of GOD—the Deliverer from sin and darkness! Fall on your knees and WORSHIP HIM! Don't be afraid. You can do it now, no matter WHAT mere humans might think!!

What Does GOD say?

Here are a few things from the scriptures to think about...

"When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, 'Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' Aaron answered them, 'Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your

sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.' So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out to Egypt." (Exodus 32:1-4) And where else did all the gold jewelry come from, but from Egypt? The new gods they were worshipping, were fashioned from Egypt's gold. Very interesting.

"All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord." (Exodus 35:22) They gave over their gold of the earth, to God, as a precious gift and sacrifice.

"They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols and vile images. Therefore I will turn these into an unclean thing for them. I will hand it all over as plunder to foreigners and as loot to the wicked of the earth, and they will defile it." (Ezekiel 7:20-21) It can become a detestable idol if we're not careful.

And then there's Jezebel... (Her doings are found in 1 and 2 Kings) Do you know what kind of woman she was?? Are you familiar with her sin, manipulation, control of the men in her life and hatred for God's men?? It's got to be one of the most despicable pictures to God to have women who "rule over" the men. Women who don't know who they were created to be. Women who rebel against God and His order. Women who crave attention and DEMAND attention from men. Who manipulate and contrive and plot and punish and torture men. Who "hold things" against the men and then "pay them back" what they think the men deserve. Do you know what kind of a woman Jezebel is? Have you not felt it in your own bones to resent and accuse and manipulate the men in your life? Be honest, now.... It's downright disgusting. and Heartbreaking and totally destructive to God's purposes. Jezebel was a criminal pagan, no doubt, and out to KILL God's prophets—God's Holy Men. A woman out to undo and tear down the Voice and Power and Presence of God on the earth at that time. We are NO LESS GUILTY —and even moreso—if we tear down and destroy and attempt to undermine and wreck God's work through His men by means of our own petty selfishness, and attention-craving self-life, jealousies, comparisons and strivings for attention (whether negative or positive attention—we don't care, as long as they are giving ME attention). It's downright despicable and will lead to your own undoing and harm

to everyone around you. That might sound like a tangent, but really, it's all related to this vanity deal. If we crave attention and manipulate to "have our way" in our emotions and inner stuff, then perhaps it's the SAME THING when we put on the outward adornment—we're craving some kind of attention.

Back to Jezebel... what can we possibly learn from that whole scenario? Well, for starters, a serious, serious crushing of any of the sins just mentioned above. But the original reason we brought her up was because the end of her life was this... Jehu (son of Jehoshaphat) was anointed by Elisha to be the King of Israel. When Jehu was anointed, Elisha said to him, "You are to destroy the family of Ahab, your master. In this way, I will avenge the murder of my prophets and all the Lord's servants who were killed by Jezebel. The entire family of Ahab must be wiped out.... Dogs will eat Ahab's wife, Jezebel, at the plot of land in Jezreel, and no one will bury her..." (2 Kings 9). So Jehu went after the kings of Judah and Israel and killed them both on the way to Jezreel, where Jezebel was. And this is what happened....

"When Jezebel, the queen mother, heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel, she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window." (2 Kings 9:30) Who knows what she sought to accomplish by doing that, whether pure vanity or manipulation of some sort, but she obviously was attempting to "appear" a certain way. To beautify her outsides was all she could do for her wicked insides. Then... "When Jehu entered the gate of the palace, she shouted at him, 'Have you come in peace, you murderer?'" (Look who's talking!!!) Then Jehu shouted, "Throw her down!" "So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot." Gruesome death for a gruesome woman.

From Jeremiah, about God's people—again, some kind of attempt to pretty up the outside through the use of jewelry and makeup...

"What are you doing, O devastated one? Why dress yourself in scarlet and put on jewels of gold? Why shade your eyes with paint? You adorn yourself in vain. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life." (Jeremiah 4:30)

Another is in Ezekiel 23—a very graphic picture of the lewdness and promiscuity of Jerusalem and Samaria. God brought judgment upon them through Ezekiel, and this is the end of God's words about it (to get the full impact, read all of chapter 23)... "They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed

yourself for them, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry. You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and oil that belonged to me..." (Eze 23:40-41) "So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you. You will suffer the penalty for your lewdness and bear the consequences of your sin of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord." (Eze 23:48-49)

When we searched it out, those are the kinds of women, as recorded in the history of God's people, that sought to dress themselves up with makeup and jewelry. We just didn't find that kind of thing happening with the Sarah's, the Ruth's, the Abigail's... It wasn't because it wasn't available in that day and age... it was available to them if they wanted it! But it was so clearly a product and custom of Egypt, that only prostitutes and adulteresses ventured into that world. In light of all that, maybe Peter's words will ring a little clearer...

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear." (1 Peter 3:3-6)

And Paul said...

"I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do." (1Tim 2:9-10) NLT

Do we believe what Peter and Paul both said, and is it reflected in the choices you make about how and why you "adorn ourselves" with this or that little jewel or makeup, braids or perm? Why oh why, do we do what we do?? Have you ever asked yourself?? Have you ever asked others who know Jesus more deeply than you do? And who would be objective for you?? WHY?? Why do I want this perm? You just need a "change of pace" to tickle your senses? You're trying to "spruce yourself

up”? You see others doing it, so why not you? If you “like a look” on someone, or because “someone else is doing it” does not give us a license to do the same. “TRENDS” are of the world because “trends” are based on what people think and like and value and do—NOT on what GOD is currently saying FOR YOU!! We’re led by GOD’S SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN, not by what’s popular or “pretty” or what “others” are doing, or what is “cool” or what others my age are doing. Of course, it’s not that you’d never wear an Adidas shirt or certain kind of shoes, but take note of why you buy and do what you do. What is your motivation? A tip-off in this area is if you’re very acquainted with other people’s wardrobes, and you remember what they were wearing yesterday, and they always have things you “admire” and you covet them—there’s a very real problem there. That’s a tip-off that your thoughts aren’t in the right place, and your motives and decisions may be off as well.

Why the hair coloring?? Are you afraid of a gray head? Do you color your hair because that’s the “normal” accepted practice that everyone else does, so you jump on that bandwagon too? Just know WHY you are doing what you are doing. It MAY be in the plan, but not if it’s driven by the “accepted thing to do” in a general way, and of course not because of your own vanity or pride or fear. It could be because it seems good to others and they’ve suggested it as something you might consider doing, maybe. Maybe we need to ask ourselves, just how terrrrriiiiiibllle would it be to go gray??? Maybe it’s okay to color your hair if you’re graying at age 20 and it would bring attention to you to have all gray hair at age 25. Okay, that’s a consideration, maybe. But what about when you’re 40??? When is it “acceptable” to be going gray?? WHO determines for us what is “acceptable”? The world? Our vanity? Everyone else’s expectations and convictions and preferences? Our dislike of growing old? Our husbands who don’t like gray? Who? Can we let it go, easily, if asked to?? How important is it to us??

Another good test in sifting our motives is this: “Can I leave home without it? Without having_____” (fill in the blank with make-up, hairstyle, jewelry, hair coloring, etc) If not having it, causes me to panic, there’s a problem in my heart—there’s some kind of idolatry going on. Something has become my god, other than God.

“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.” Proverbs 11:22

REMEMBER...

“My servant grew up in the Lord’s presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.” (Isaiah 53:2) External appearance even for the Son of man, was not something God wanted, to draw the attraction of men or women.

“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” (Proverbs 31:30)

It’s not the outward that pleases Jesus, but the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit before God and man. These are what makes a woman truly beautiful. Do you believe that?? Do you walk in it? Do you believe that you are made beautiful from the inside out? Do you believe that your face can shine like Stephen’s as you behold the Son of Man standing at the right Hand of the Father? Do you believe that you can shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the Word of Life? Do you believe that you reflect the Lord’s Glory by His Spirit? Do you believe that the eye is the lamp of the body and when your insides dance and rejoice, so do your eyes?? If you’re dark inside, no amount of makeup will make you truly vibrant. If your body is full of Light, ohhhhhh, how full of Light your eyes will be! They’ll be no denying that kind of beauty—for those who have Eyes to see!! Do you believe it?? Or have they just been poetic thoughts?

We’ll not experience the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, if we’re clogged with unbelief, pride, striving, bitterness, jealousy, competition, fears and insecurities about what others think. Why would we need to take matters into our own hands and make ourselves beautiful? Do we take other matters “into our own hands”? Do we work to make ourselves “happy”? Do we try and “make ourselves wise”? Or do we strive to make ourselves holy or friendly or loving or patient or caring or self-controlled? The point is, if we know better than to function from our own knowledge, opinions and strength in other areas, why do we or would we want to make ourselves attractive? Sure, there’s a place for being well kept, groomed and pleasant in appearance—but KNOW the lines that can be crossed in your own heart!

Do we not remember where our True, Pure and lasting beauty comes from?? From the Beautiful ONE!!! Jesus has become our attractiveness! He lives within to make us beautiful!!! Hallelujah!! Set free from this world and expectations, pressures, value systems, peer pressure, worries, fears, judgments and opinions. God is so Good. How He tests us and tries our hearts that we let EVERY last thing go at His feet. NOTHING controlling or ruling or swaying us. NOTHING that has a hold, nothing that's too important... that "matters" too much to us. This is just another chance in our lives to lay something at His Feet with freedom, peace and Life. Jesus has a face that shines like the sun! Don't you worry... you just yield yourself to Him, fall more deeply in love with Him and you'll become more radiant, more brilliant and more beautiful. How can His Beauty possibly be contained when Jesus, the Only Beautiful One, Lives within? He is our all—even our beauty!! "Those who look to HIM are radiant..." (Psalm 34:5)

Others DO Notice What You Do

What kind of heritage are we passing on to the young ladies and girls among us? What kinds of priorities do they see in us? Do they see us valuing things and people after the flesh and appearances? They notice... do you KNOW THAT?? They ALL notice what we do, how we dress, how we pretty ourselves—ALL the choices we make. WE are a LIVING JESUS in their midst. Whatever and whoever we are, is what they get of God and His priorities. It really matters, the example we set... we need to be JEALOUS for their souls and for their futures, that we'd not be sloppy, lazy or selfish in how we point and direct and love by example and by holding up God's truths. Every girl will want to look in the mirror to one degree or another, noticing her youth and loveliness (that GOD has given) and appearance. So what we say to them and even more, what we DO really matters. ALL the more reason why our convictions must be crystal clear about the matter.

The young ladies and other women will measure their own decisions by what you do, really, in everything. Mistakenly or not, knowingly or unknowingly, they validate their own choices by your behavior. So make sure your choices are birthed from His heart and desire for YOUR very personal life. And also, if we see others "doing" certain things, be careful to not jump on the bandwagon, because "so and so" has a perm, so it must be okay for me too. Please don't make the decisions in a HORIZONTAL, SHALLOW way: "They do it, so I can too." Rather,

Live FREE, between you and Jesus, finding His will for you, dialoguing about these things, and meshed and joined to other's lives in some of these practical decisions!

NOT a Law... THAT'S For Sure 😊

Believe us, this is not a plea to “conform” to something new, or “quit doing stuff”. This is a plea to get a right perspective. To make a SPIRITUAL decision, we need a SPIRITUAL understanding and foundation beneath our feet. So that's all this is. An attempt to lay out some spiritually based thinking and Perspective on our “beauty”. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. No beauty or majesty to attract us to him... nothing in His outward appearance that we should be drawn to Him. His Life in our Life becomes a sweet smelling aroma to all who know us. We are a sweet smelling fragrance, beautiful to all around us who have spiritual eyes to see, when we are walking with a confidence and Trust of Him as our covering, our crown, our Joy, our lasting Promise and Hope for the future. Jesus came and has bestowed on us a “Crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” (Is 61:3)

We love you, sisters. We want the best. We don't want laws... you don't want laws. That would mean nothing. External conformity means zero—absolutely nothing. It's dead. It's empty. In fact it's a hindrance to becoming a more Real person with Jesus. We need to find Him and His heart's desire for us. He's weaning us, ever so patiently and gently from the thinking and patterns and ways of this world we live in. Being transformed by the renewing of our minds. Shedding the old man, the world, the need for props and externals to make us feel good about ourselves. We just don't need them, do we... when we have Jesus. This is how a woman beautifies herself... Not by outward adornment of gold jewelry and braided hair, but by the good deeds... Sure, we can be well-groomed and feminine and maybe have special touches from time to time that are for other's sake, but let's be wise and discerning about the choices we make in this area. It will only mean more of Jesus and His Glory on the planet, as we reject the world and our flesh and Trust Him to Lead the Way...

Would you talk to Him about it all?? And make this and ones like it, your prayer? Please?

Father, This is so important.... We are Yours.... Your jewels that You've cared for and placed together in such a special and protected way. What a lovely thing! We know it's important for us as Your women, to have a healthy perspective and "treasuring" of Your ways. You, Jesus, have been softening us with your Love, massaging out our brashness and rough edges and exposing our presumption, opinions, walls, fears and barriers. We want Your most Holy thoughts and Dreams and desires for us, Your ladies... please help us feel what you feel about it all... that we'd See with the eyes of our hearts what it is that You desire to make pure and whole within us. Open our eyes to what You value...

We want to make ourselves beautiful for YOU, Jesus. However that works itself out from day to day, we KNOW that it means the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. We know it means being covered by the men in our lives. We know it means clothing ourselves with Your righteousness, Jesus and good works which YOU prepared in advance for us to do. Not clothing ourselves with our own good works, which are filthy rags! And not attempting to "beautify" ourselves through external means. We don't want to think or live like the world does. We want YOU, Jesus, to be our Beauty, our Strength, our Confidence, our Security, our Foundation, our Hope, and our Trust. We want you to be ALL for us. However that might work itself out in "gifts" that we give others with a pretty bow in our hair or jewelry or a handsome dress... we want it ALL to be bathed in Your life and springing from our love affair with You and our consciousness and purposefulness of heart about the lives around us. We don't want to do things thoughtlessly, or out of habit and tradition. And CERTAINLY NEVER out of vanity, pride, fear or insecurity. We want to honor You with our actions. And knowing too that all that we do makes a very real impression on others.

We don't want to follow after the ways of man that have been practiced through the ages by every kind of pagan imaginable, for every reason and purpose imaginable. We don't want to "beautify ourselves" in an unholy way with outward adornment when You have crowned us with the Beauty of Your Spirit and Your Presence within. Why do we or why would we NEED to beautify ourselves further? Have you not sufficiently covered us, lifted us up, made us whole and free? Have you not stripped us of the stain of sin and are you not continually stripping us of the ugliness of pride and independence and manipulation and detestable female bitternesses, resentments, jealousies and envyings? Are you not making us beautiful, as your women? Show us the way,

how to live pleasing lives to you.... We love you, Jesus, and we want what you want... no matter the cost... till our dying day, for You Jesus, and You Alone.

Much Love and Peace. . .

Dear Sisters,

We have been very thankful for your responses to the recent e-mails that have been sent out helping us to dig a little deeper into God's heart and our motives. They have revealed, as we already knew, that in all your ways you want to know His will and please Him. We appreciate your eagerness to find your life and affirmation fully in Him and not to compromise in any way. That is very solid ground to start on and build on. Thank you.

Since the e-mails have gone out there have been some questions and conversations that we think have been helpful in continuing to find God's heart. We've tried to capture some nuggets from those conversations to pass on.....

In the heart of God, along with order and many other wonderful things, is an appreciation for beauty. How would we know what has beauty or is ugly if there isn't something within us that recognizes and admires it? Why would one piece of music bring pleasure, peace and enjoyment to us while another grates us? Why do some works of art come to be appreciated as masterpieces while others seem to be only chaos? It is because some have captured the beauty of God's order, contrasts, design, symmetry, etc....

Somehow in the work of art or symphony they have been able to capture some of God's mathematical order, or balance symmetrically, or contrast in colors and highlights. It is not some random thing that God has done. As men have seen deeper into things it has become more and more apparent, even to the pagans, that there is definite order and patterns in what has been created.

We even hear there is an order and pattern in commodities that runs the whole financial market! ☺ These are all things that are part of God's heart and make things orderly and pleasing. And, it has been placed within each of us to recognize and appreciate those things when we see them.

It is okay to recognize and appreciate beauty. The thing we are to guard our hearts is things after the flesh or finding some kind of value in the beauty on a carnal level. Example: I can look at a rose and appreciate the beauty, fragrance, and intricacy of its design. Its aroma can bring pleasure to my sense of smell and its spectacular color capture my eyes. All that is fine as long as I don't end up worshipping the rose vs. the Creator of the rose.

How does all this relate to things we have been working through? Beauty is NOT the enemy. Vanity and worldly patterns of thinking are the enemy. A splash of color to contrast or highlight something I am wearing is not a problem. God created colors, hues, contrasts, etc... The danger comes when I am getting some kind of pleasure to my flesh or feeding vanity in some way. A hair ribbon, simple pair of earrings, or touch of some make-up is not the enemy. Again, the danger comes with our motives and finding any kind of identity in those things. As always it does go back to why you are doing what you are doing. If birthed in flesh it will produce fleshly babies. UCK! If birthed in the walking in the life, freedom, and spirit of Jesus it will birth good fruit in the spirit.

That being so you can understand why the exact same scenario can produce much different fruit. Put the exact same clothing, earrings, and bow on two women. Depending on their hearts and motives they can emanate two completely different things. One brings a smile to your spirit and soul as you look on her freshness. The other brings an uncomfortable feeling to your spirit. It wasn't the externals that were the enemy, but what the spirit within was emanating. Make sense? We can appreciate and find pleasure in the beauty that God has given individuals (it is there). He has placed it within us to appreciate and enjoy it. However we must be aware of the dangers that come with that and avoid those pitfalls. Knowing that beauty is there we do want to be extra careful in enemy territory to protect ourselves and each other from that beauty drawing attention from pagans.

A side note in all this.... As mentioned before there is a definite symmetry and balance in God's nature. That being so, it is very obvious when things are not symmetrical and they stick out in that way. Wearing only "one" earring as opposed to wearing a "pair" of earrings draws definite attention to itself. It is off balance. It is out of God's order. Very loud colors of clothing, print, or color contrasts draw

attention. Why? They are out of balance with the surroundings. Get where we're going?? We need to be wise and careful, but not paranoid and fearful. ☺

If there's ANYTHING that would smack of the world, we'd go after that with a vengeance in our lives! Jesus came to "destroy the devil's work"—that's power-filled!! Curses on sin!! AWAY with you, satan! UGHHHHH!!! ANYTHING that has the world's infiltrations into our lives, whether in our attitudes and ideas about appearance, the way we raise and teach our children, the way we treat our husbands, or the way we handle and view our money and possessions... REGARDLESS of the area of life, we go after the throat of the crimes of worldliness. We want NOTHING to do with it.... So we pray and we TRUST and we ask God to make things clear and to rip off the blinders from our eyes and EXPOSE the enemy. Even if we don't have things all cleared up in our minds, we can ALWAYS be asking with FAITH that He is Good and He WANTS to let us in on what He's thinking. That helps a lot, to know that we can Rest in trusting in Him... SOOOO... all of that to say, with the right kind of energy and jealousy for the things Jesus loves, we'll be able to *SEE* more clearly what's of Him and what's not. And THEN, that process clears the fogginess in our Vision and allows us to SEE HIM more clearly! Just a reminder that all of this and things like it is UNTO the discovering of God in a deeper and much more spirit-satisfying way in our inner man. It's part of searching for the Kingdom, that's like a Great Treasure, hidden away... God is veiled to unholy eyes and unconsecrated hearts. But for those who search, "the Kingdom is like a treasure in a field..." "A pearl, of great price"... there's great and precious "secrets of the Kingdom"... The more we work to "unveil" our spiritual eyes and consecrate ALL, we'll discover His Kingdom, that lies within each of us.

"Seek first the Kingdom... and all else will be added."

Just some encouragement that as God is shaking all that can be shaken, there's the Very Great Reward, for those who hold fast... of Jesus...

Messiah, Friend, Brother and King!

Love,

Protected And Within The Walls

Young Ladies in the Kingdom

January 2001

The precious young ladies of God's people, whether born again or not, are made for Jesus, *not* for the eyes and lusts of the world and its pagans. As young princesses growing older amongst God's people, they need protection—from the world, from its cares and affairs, and from its deadly influences, not to mention the danger, crime, immorality and lust of a wicked and depraved generation. Our young princesses are vulnerable and need covering and nurturing in a special way. Her heartthrob needs to be that of a handmaiden, pursuing Jesus whole-heartedly. She can wash Jesus' feet through the serving of the saints, through obedience to her parents, through loving authority and by being a bright spot to the people in her life, sowing good seeds generously, every day, towards Him and towards His people!! Learning to fall in love with all that He loves and hating all that He hates—falling in love with HIM, as her heart's desire.

To be a woman of noble character is her aim—within the walls of God's People, serving His house with diligence, kindness, industriousness and love. This description in Proverbs 31 is a picture of the life of a woman in the midst of Israel, a type of the church of Jesus, where all the people are bought by His blood. It is not in the context of the world that she pursues this picture that is described. A few snapshots from the proverb....

“Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is worth more than precious rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She will not hinder him but help him all her life....She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She watches for profitable trade;

her lights burn late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy....She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs with no fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule when she gives instructions....Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised."

And in Titus...

"These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to take care of their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the Word of God. (Titus 2:4-5)

Practical Problem Areas

Here are "problem areas" which will hinder a person from becoming that woman of noble character. You may want to look them over with your young lady.

1) Appearance—A lopsided, unhealthy value placed on one's clothing, hairstyle, facial features, body parts. If you are overly concerned and preoccupied with "how you look", you have a misplaced priority and possibly a misplaced affection. Are you...noticing how your clothes "feel" on you all the time? Lingering in the mirror examining your face? Comparing your body to someone else's body? Pride in yourself or jealousy of others? Always thinking about what you're going to wear? All of these things are telltale signs that you have a misplaced priority about your earth-suit that robs you of being beautiful where it counts—on the INSIDE! "It is not outward appearance that makes you beautiful, but the inner self." Do you believe that—for REAL? If so, work hard to make yourself beautiful on the inside with good choices, a yielded heart and by rejecting the temptations to primp and gaze in the mirror and be overly concerned with clothing, makeup and hairstyles.

2) Clothing—If it is important to you that you have the latest trends and styles, you've got an idea that comes from worldly thinking. If anything, we want to steer away from the trends of the world! Not that we should stand out as being weird—we don't want that either. But to mimic what "they" do with clothing, shoes, eyeglasses and other apparel

is dangerous territory to tread on. Here, the important question is: why do you wear and buy what you do?? Because you “like it” may not be a good idea if it smacks of the world. Just because it is so plentiful on the racks doesn’t make it a good idea. Sometimes it requires very conscientious work and effort to find clothing for a young woman in the kingdom which covers and is appropriate. Not trendy yet not monastic. It is quite a balancing act sometimes, but don’t worry, we can figure it out together! The important thing is to approach the whole area with a very loose hold, learning to prefer what is becoming and proper for a disciple and laying down preferences for certain “cuts,” necklines, flimsy or clingy materials, tight clothing and the like (all of which you will want to get rid of as you see the importance of covering and guarding the “lines” and “shape” God has given you.) Your body doesn’t belong to you, but for another, in the future. And it doesn’t belong to the world for pagan men to gawk over! Keep it safe, okay?? Take special care.

3) Magazines, books, catalogs, movies, t.v.—What you allow to pass into your head through the media, and printed material is VERY important. It WILL eat you away on the inside to take in bad seed in these forms. Worldly novels, stories that emphasize “good looks”, romance, self-centered relationships, and other worldly values will only serve to make it a priority in your own life. If you look at teen magazines or tabloids, they are out-of-bounds for a disciple—utter trash. Not some legal thing to “not read magazines”—but just because there is NO value in them for anyone who wants to be more like Jesus. Many magazines emphasize and value everything you don’t want to become! Looks, makeup, weight and figure, dating, primping, social pursuits... all these things are the opposite of God’s desire for your life. It is the world’s way of “training” you. God wants your priorities to be HIS and so, the seeds to sow will best come from His Word in all its many forms, others’ godly influence, and turning away from worldly sources.

4) The opposite gender—Take special care, as a young person to not position yourself in tempting, tough situations. Going towards boys or standing in places and in ways where you’ll be noticed is not usually a good idea. Flirting and being “chatty” are bad news! The “dating game” of the world is OF THE WORLD! Don’t fall prey to its lure. “Dating” is, as one brother in California is prone to say, preparation for divorce, not preparation for marriage. It is WRONG

building to participate in the “dating game” approach to “courting.” “Dating” cultivates a wrong sense of priorities and desires and habits, and introduces great dangers that never need be there for a young person, OR an older person.

There is a better way—a JESUS way—to meet and begin to know and find God’s Heart if He would have you have a marriage partner. “Make no provision for your flesh” by setting yourself up in bad situations, or closing your eyes when others are doing so! Better to “stick with the girls” (or, for the guys, stick with the guys) in a lot of cases, or with those who have a watch over your life. There is NO real reason for ever segregating by “age” or isolating in “opposite sex” private situations, anyway. NOT if we are trying to get to know JESUS and those that are His, and to hear His Voice, anyway. If we have other motives and mammal instincts we are pursuing, we’ll do it the way the world does it, without even questioning it. And we’ll let others “bully” us with, “Everyone ELSE is doing it! Don’t be such a shrew. You’re being overly protective. You’ll smother them. You have to let them expand themselves. You have to let them make their own decisions. Blah, blah, blackmail, accuse, insult, pressure to conform to the patterns of this world.” There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death, and 60% divorce rate in the “churches”. THERE IS A WAY THAT IS GOD’S for discovering if Father intends you to have a marital partner, and, if so, who that may be. And it is NOT “dating”.

Build Right In ALL Relationships!

Keep in mind too that the *only* good foundation for *any* relationship is to build because of what Jesus is currently doing—and NO other reason. If you choose and build because of external reasons or desires of your flesh, you will find yourself very empty, very frustrated and very alone. The only kind of relationship that brings Peace and Life and good fruit to you and those around you is to pursue people based on *who they are in Jesus*. It’s got to be a relationship that has Jesus and Truth as its total basis. The whole reason you are in it is because of Him and His House, and nothing else. Be attracted by what attracts Jesus. Be attracted by those who are serious about pleasing Jesus and who want to be changed into His likeness and who respond to the Word of God with obedience and respect.

Choosing your friends because of their age or social class or where they live or the kind of job they have or because they look pretty, or have a funny personality is building “after the flesh”. To “like” people because you have common interests or because they give you flattery and enjoy you so much, is self-centered reasoning and improper building for a disciple of Jesus. ***Let the measurement of the value of a relationship be how it is helping you grow in Jesus and how your relationship helps others grow in Him as well.*** A genuinely God-centered relationship with someone will ALWAYS benefit other people. It will NEVER, ever, ever be exclusive, revolving around two people only, sucking one another towards themselves. Ask Him to purify your motives and desires in the relationships He’s placed you in. Allow Him to fill you and reject finding fulfillment anywhere outside of His will for your life.

Remember that you will become like those you hang around. “Bad company corrupts good character.” Be careful who your closest friends are because you’ll become like them. Don’t spend your affection, desires, time and energy on those who value the world’s ways, affections and priorities. Steer clear of choosing and forming relationships based on worldly junk! Don’t be rude or unkind to those who are without Jesus or who are immature in their lives, but don’t desire affection from or buddy up to those people either. Pursue godly examples, and *be* a godly example.

To sum it up, followers of Jesus are bent on one thing and that is to love Him, to serve Him, and to adore Him only; to become increasingly buried and submersed in His Life and His thoughts and His priorities. Deeper and deeper into the Life of Jesus, to the Glory of the Father, through the leading of His Spirit. Now that’s a ROMANCE that is very worth pursuing!! It sounds good, doesn’t it? 😊

If Father has Plans for you—to remain single, as He did His Son Jesus, and His servant Paul and many others, that is WONDERFUL also! Don’t be bullied! Don’t be afraid! Many pursue these things out of selfishness, or loneliness, or hormones, or pressures from peers or parents, or foolish thinking, or pride (not wanting to be labeled) or laziness (wanting someone to serve them and meet their needs), or desiring affection, or an undisciplined mind, or discouragement, or being unclear of their Mission in Life. WEAK! YUCK! Don’t be like this, like the animal kingdom, but “Be TRANSFIGURED by the renewing of your mind!”

And IF He desires marriage for you, in time? Don't be afraid of that either! It *is* in the Father's heart, you know, if HE has authored it as a Gift to you! The picture of a beautiful young woman preparing herself for her one and only, is a reflection of God's desire for His betrothed! Looking with hope and perseverance to being prepared in heart and mind and character is God's heart for *His people, His Bride*. The purity of love, a marriage, procreation, and the beauty of the "cord of three strands"—as well as the *close quarters training ground in godliness and self-sacrifice*, is in fact, buried deep in the Father's Heart. It's not a bad thing, it's just that it is meant to be given by Him, not chased after by His children. He is the one who birthed the idea of a man's deep love for others, and expressing that as a shadow of the Life and Love of Jesus. But it is HIS to Give and not ours to take or grab after, or to build as we choose. "Let the Bride and the Bridegroom come OUT of their chambers" and "seek FIRST the Kingdom"!! And your Heavenly Father, who knows...! ***Come, Lord Jesus, for Your Bride!***

Concerning Vanity

Question: Do you see any dangers in telling the little children how “cute” they are?

Yeah, it doesn't take them very long to learn how cute they are either. They have all these faces smiling and coochy-cooing them. I still cannot quite break my daughter of looking in the mirror while she is crying. As soon as she starts to cry, she heads for a mirror. Some of those things go back to how adorable everyone thought she was. For her sake, as well as ours, it's good to be aware of those things. Not bone-crushing austerity, but the wisdom to know what it is we are doing.

Once I mentioned some of this to some folks in another city who had their six-year-old daughter all done up. They had her ears pierced, her hair done up perfectly, and she even had eye makeup on! I called the parents aside and said, “You are destroying this girl! Yeah, it's adorable. I admit it. She is gorgeous. She is the prettiest six year old I've ever seen. But the last thing she needs is a whole parade of people going up and telling her that. She is going to get her perspective and priorities so off base that by the time she is fifteen you are going to wonder why she has phone calls all night long and ends up pregnant... And you will scratch your head and wonder how it happened. You are going to realize then, when it's far too late, that you are primming her up for your own pride's sake! You did it for your own benefit, and now it has destroyed your daughter because YOUR priorities were wrong!”

Question: Would it be best not to mention the cuteness of the children at all?

We do need to be aware of it and cautious, but it is in God's heart to love his children. I love telling little ones when they look nice that they look nice. I think that's in the heart of God. We all need to be able to respond to that with grace, with no fear. The definition of humility is not thinking too much of yourself, and not thinking too little of yourself. It's just *not thinking of yourself*.

That's the same way with every other thing in the kingdom of God. You could have pride in the fact that you were the president of a big company. You could have pride about your job as a janitor. Or you could have fear in one or fear in the other. It doesn't make any difference. The issue isn't what you do for a living. It's not thinking too much of it *or* thinking too little of it. It's just not thinking of it. We

need to have an attitude that is indifferent towards all these things. To be indifferent towards a nice dress is a far better attitude than thinking too much of it, or thinking too little of it. God invented color. He invented beauty. He invented all of those things. It was His idea—the beauty of holiness. God did His creation in a pretty magnificent way. Even our physical bodies are praised by God as being tremendous workmanship. To just cover all that up in austerity as a monk or something is to defy God and the gifts that He has given. To deny His gifts is as nearly foolhardy as to worship His gifts. The goal is to not think too much of it or too little of it—just to be indifferent. Whatever you receive, give praise to God for it—give Glory to God for it. Pass it on. Don't be like Herod and be eaten by worms because you refuse to pass it on.

I don't know how to define that in really clear terms, but don't turn it around the other way and make some kind of cultic thing out of it where you are dressed in sackcloth and ashes. Respect beauty, admire beauty. If you go back and read Ezekiel 28, the creation that God did in lucifer is pretty awesome. God did that on purpose. But, lucifer forgot that he was reflecting *God's glory* and thought that *he* was emanating glory. Lucifer got it mixed up. God wanted it to be beautiful, but he wanted lucifer to see that he was reflecting God's glory, rather than emanating glory as a source in himself.

Along with that is that we must see beyond the physical. So often we don't see the beautiful child that is inside that beautiful dress. We don't see the attitudes of the heart that go along with that. So often we are so indifferent. We grew up seeing the physical. That's all we see.

A Peek into a Letter

from an “older” woman to a “younger” woman (Titus 2:4)

Listen carefully, and try to understand... and if you don't understand you can ask questions! Okay??

Jesus once told Peter to watch and pray (be alert, stay close to Him and keep asking Jesus to help you understand the things He says) because, in Jesus' words, “satan wants to sift you like wheat.” That means that satan, the liar, who hides in darkness and dishonesty, tries to trap people into the darkness by getting their attention with something they desire. For sweet young ladies, one of these areas has to do with a desire to be attractive.

Let some of Jesus' Light shine on you.... Do you realize that every time you feel good because you like the way you look, you are lifting yourself ABOVE Jesus in your own heart? Even the times you feel bad just because you don't like the way you look, you are still lifting yourself above Jesus! Do you know why that is? It is because Jesus is the only Person who is really, truly Beautiful! That means, that the people who hide their lives in Him become more and more beautiful every time they learn from Him and obey Him, and change the things in their lives that are unlike Him. Satan wants you to think that looking good makes you beautiful, but all it really does is make you look nice on the outside.

If you needed to clean the toilet and all you did was close the lid and polish the outside of the tank and the seat, what do you think it would smell like inside after 12 years of this? Pretty gross, eh?? Would the inside be clean and fresh and healthy just because the lid is shiny and polished? Of course not! Would you want to use a toilet like that? So what's the parallel?? Jesus wants you to have a pure, stable, steady life that doesn't ever depend on how your hair looks that day (because some days hair just does weird things! And it doesn't matter to Him, if you aren't lazy or selfish about it.) Satan doesn't like it that he can't ruin our days by making us angry about wild hair or panicked about a pimple or insecure about old clothes. Satan doesn't like it that God's people don't have to respond to his stupid ideas about what is important and valuable. God's people are secure and safe in Jesus' grasp. They find their *identity* all day, every day, in the fact that Jesus, *the ONLY Beautiful Person forever and ever and ever*, Loves them, is committed

to them, talks with them, forgives them, covers them with His Blood and His Holy Name. He Promises never to leave them, no matter how their hair or clothes or skin or eyes look, as long as they are full of Him and not full of evil, worldly darkness or sin.

Jesus doesn't want you to get trapped by satan into finding your identity in how you look. This will only draw your heart away from Jesus and make you miserable because you will never be beautiful enough to feel good this way. It will consume (that means it will eat up, devour, destroy) your heart and steal your life from you in the end, whenever that end comes. You will never be happy and you will never be free and you can never know Jesus and His Love for you if you live this way. SO DON'T live this way, feeling good or bad about how you look. Instead, sow seeds with Jesus and with people who love and know Him. Fill your heart with Him and the things He loves, and then you can begin to live by feeling good because of who Jesus is and what He is like and what He has done for you and all the people who Believe Him! Read about who He is and what He loves and then go do something about it, ok? You'll regret it for a thousand billion years if you don't, and you'll be thankful forever and ever if you do! Love,

Goals of a Young Woman

1. My goal is the biblical goal of Titus 2: to be a woman of character, principle, love, diligence, and to be busy at home.
2. I also want to expand my mind and skills—not so I can “make money” or explore a worldly environment, but so that I can grow in heart and mind and ability to relate to God, God's Creation, God's People, and those that God is extending His Hand to in this present age. I want to be able to teach others, be conversant, be Full. Learning, whether self-initiated, correspondence course, or something else that is handled from a strong Position, spiritually... is a good thing. Teaching children in order to be faithful in multiplying what God has allowed me to learn, as well as to have “windows” into the young people's hearts in order to reach out to them spiritually, as well as to spur me on to greater learning... is a good thing.
3. Whether married or unmarried, learning to manage a home, learning to cook and clean, learning to raise vegetables should that become necessary one day, learning to balance a checkbook... all of these are good things.

4. Instead of asking, as a woman (men may be somewhat different in this area), “How would this or that provide a good ‘living?’” or, “Is this skill ‘marketable?’” I will ask, “What am I genuinely interested in? What could I possibly be good at?” Then, perhaps, I will pursue learning more of that area in various ways mentioned earlier. I will work hard in that area and see if it provides some “leads” in what I may want to pursue in order to expand my heart and mind, that I might be a more suitable vessel for serving God and serving others through “the parables of Life” that this learning experience (viewed correctly) might provide.

Special Note: The “young woman” in Prov.31 was functioning TOTALLY WITHIN ISRAEL—GOD’S CHOSEN/HER FAMILY! She did NOT live that way amongst the Egyptians and Philistines!!!!!!!!!!!! That is WRONG, and DANGEROUS. Many lives have been forever trashed due to the temptations, and independent and worldly lusts and situations, cultivated in a man’s heathen world that SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN IN IN THE FIRST PLACE! The Proverbs 31 woman is like Dorcas and Tabitha... **IN THE BODY OF CHRIST, IN SPIRITUAL ISRAEL—NOT functioning that way with EGYPTIANS or BABYLONIANS!**

“Single” Sisters in the Workplace

Monday Night, April 3, 1995

She looks for wool and flax and likes to work with her hands.

She is like a trader’s ship, bringing food from far away.

She gets up while it is still dark and prepares food for her family and feeds her servant girls.

She inspects a field and buys it. With money she earned, she plants a vineyard.

She does her work with energy, and her arms are strong.

She knows that what she makes is good. Her lamp burns late into the night.

She makes thread with her hands and weaves her own cloth.

She welcomes the poor and helps the needy.

She does not worry about her family when it snows, because they all have fine clothes to keep them warm.

She makes coverings for herself; her clothes are made of linen and other expensive material.

Her husband is known at the city meetings, where he makes decisions as one of the leaders of the land.

She makes linen clothes and sells them and provides belts to the merchants.

She is strong and is respected by the people. She looks forward to the future with joy.

She speaks wise words and teaches others to be kind.

She watches over her family and never wastes her time.

*Her children speak well of her. Her husband also praises her, saying,
“There are many fine women, but you are better than all of them.”*

Charm can fool you, and beauty can trick you, but a woman who respects the LORD should be praised.

Give her the reward she has earned; she should be praised in public for what she has done (Proverbs. 31:13-31).

(Instructions regarding currently unmarried women that are young)
“I want them to... marry, have children, and manage their homes. Then no enemy will have any reason to criticize them” (1Timothy 5:14).

“In the same way, teach older women to be holy in their behavior, not speaking against others or enslaved to wine, but teaching what is good. Then they can teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be wise and pure, to be good workers at home, to be kind, and to yield to their husbands. Then no one will be able to criticize the teaching God gave us” (Titus 2:3-5).

“She must be known for her good works—works such as raising her children, welcoming strangers, washing the feet of God’s people, helping those in trouble, and giving her life to do all kinds of good deeds” (1Timothy 5:10).

Hello ☺ Regarding the single sisters, whether widowed or still single for Jesus’ sake unless he provides a husband of His choice: *“What is their obligation in regard to bearing their own burdens in a Believer’s home that has brought them in? Should they pay rent? Should they be in the workplace in order to make wages to support themselves?”* These are good questions and ones that have been raised for various reasons over time.

In a recent conversation with a couple of single sisters currently working professional jobs in the marketplace, the whole topic was best likened to the “square peg in a round hole” syndrome.

“What are the qualifications of Elders in a standard 20th century ‘church?’” one may ask. There ARE NO qualifications for Elders in a standard Sunday-go-to-meeting, clergy/laity version of “church.” Why? Because there is no church truly present in most all cases. There

are likely to be some Christians there, but the definition of Church in God's Mind has virtually no resemblance to the things happening today. Little daily relationship with one another, filled to the brim with undealt-with "leaven," a high percentage of the influential members are likely not even saved by Jesus' definition. These and many other factors make it impossible to apply the "qualifications" in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 to the present situation. It would be like speaking Polish in Mexico. It simply cannot apply because the vast majority of the words don't make any sense in the radically different environment than the original source. A "square peg in a round hole" problem. "You can't get there from here."

Should a christian woman wear a one-piece bathing suit at the beach with selectively placed ruffles rather than a two-piece bathing suit? *Perhaps she has no business being at a place where everyone is wearing their underwear in public in the first place.* Perhaps we are asking the wrong question; we are trying to paint and detail a car that has no engine.

To consider the role single sisters may play in a household of Believers? Or a single sister living with other single sisters, or alone? Important questions. Maybe we should back up a little more and consider the CONTEXT of life as God meant it to be in His Kingdom, where He "sets the lonely in Families." (The tendency is often to try to fix small details in our lives, without considering that we may be unknowingly saturated with the "patterns of the world" and the "traditions of men.") I know that looking for God's Highest is what we all want to do. Many have taken great strides for Jesus' honor, in the direction of dying to self-life and love of the world. So, in this subject as well it would be healthy for us to go back to the Roots of His Heavenly Kingdom and Plan and see what we can find. As we cooperate more and more, invest more and more in His Economy, we will find more and more of the Blessings of "On Earth as it is in Heaven!"

I don't really want to say too much about what God may have in mind here about the sisters' role as I am not entirely certain of all aspects, either. But I do know a couple of things. First of all, the young women, *whether single or married or widowed are to be quite occupied with prayer and doing good.* THIS is what the Scriptures describe as their Calling. They are Called by Jesus, their Messiah, to be busy and loving, kind and industrious in the home,

creative and joyful. Whether single or married or widowed, there should be an order in God's House where they have men in their lives that watch over them and protect them, provide for them and provide leadership. "Feed and care for" and ultimately "give an account for."

I wonder if we have not, as I have suggested earlier been sold "a bill of goods" in assuming that a woman should be out in the marketplace earning "a living." Perhaps, to take a look at how to get the round peg in the round hole, we should reconsider how much responsibility we men should take for seeing to it that the young ladies do not NEED to be in a pagan men's world attempting to earn a wage. Perhaps we should be seeing to it that, as far as lies within us we allow the women to work hard amongst us in ways that do not require them to be in the middle of a "perverted generation."

Certainly, there is a context for a woman to be "a seller of purple" and "with money she has earned, plant a vineyard" WITHIN a life that is not forcibly independent in the "wicked and corrupt generation" in which we live! In other words, an industrious woman working within FAMILY LIFE is of great worth. A woman that is forced to provide for her own means via some career path, whether white or blue collar, service industry or otherwise, is a "statement" of a kind that I have grown to dislike greatly.

While a young woman IS to be a hard worker, and a lover of prayer and God's Work, it seems to me that the Work that God has for her, as I have seen God's Heart, is *within the context of Family Life and involvements*, as opposed to working as an employee in the marketplace, outside of the Saints' lives for large blocks of time. Working with Saints in a company, riding with them, lunching with them, within the love and care of God's Family, or working a job that does not require an interface with pagan men (a home computer-related means of income is one possibility of many)—these things can work if God authors them specifically. However, for the most part, I am more and more convinced as the years roll by that we men have not loved and cared for our sisters with God's sensitivity all that much. We have, in many areas (and maybe this one also) simply accepted the empty traditions handed down by our forefathers. We have, it seems to me ASSUMED that the greed and fear-driven patterns of the world regarding young women in the marketplace are

fine with God. We simply need to “put the ruffles in the right place” (try to modify the situation to attain the lesser of multiple evils) and everything will be okay. An honest mistake for the most part, but I’ve seen a large need to change my way of thinking from my past insensitivity.

There are so many different levels of this insensitivity that have smothered us. In Sao Paulo, Brazil we met some saints that needed to ride the public bus (they thought) in order to meet together with other saints in the evening. A young sister would often ride the bus alone through the most murderous districts of this decadent city at one o’clock in the morning. Two other brothers rode as far as they needed to ride in order to get to their home, and then left her to fend for herself for the last half of the lengthy ride. They HONESTLY had never given a thought to the fact that they might have ridden the entire journey with her, and then backtracked to their home after she was safely home. Their response (to discussing this need to love and cover the women that God has brought into our lives) brought a mixture (as far as my understanding of what was happening in Portuguese would allow) of emotions—horror that they had not been caring for her, AND the uncomfortable thought that they would be inconvenienced with loss of sleep and other factors in order to get her home. AMAZING how the battle generally always ends up being with the sinful nature, not simply our knowledge!

And so it is with our present topic at hand: caring for the single sisters amongst us. Some of this battle will be with our flesh, not our knowledge. Since the single women are not yet 60 years old in most cases, the blessing of meeting their needs is upon individual families in the church. We CAN help the sisters to order their lives in such a way as to be hard workers amongst us, and “bear their own burdens,” and yet keep them out of the pagan’s marketplace. This opportunity is met in a wonderful way by individual families, and caring, sensitive friends in the church (rather than a church-wide provision in a programmatic sort of way). I don’t honestly consider a sister as one that should be charged rent, or one that should pay for meals (except in a rare case that irresponsibility or presumption or laziness require difficult and unusual measures). We should not force situations where she feels obligated to go into the world system to support herself. Of course, out of the love of her heart and for Jesus, she should be a wonderful giver in every way in the home, and even financially bless

her family and others whenever and however possible. While there will always be anomalies to keep us humble and in prayer, I remain convinced in my spirit that this is the best and highest Way.

I hope this is helpful to the specific questions that you have, and I would be glad to discuss what I can about particular situations that aren't easily deciphered in this complicated, fallen world that we live in. 😊

In Christ Jesus, Mike

Women In Men's “Workplace”

Sunday Afternoon, October 26, 2003

Hi. ☺ Thanks for all the e-mails, and the relationship and help for all these years. You all have been so loving and so very encouraging!

*I was wondering—how are girls supposed to deal with guys in the workplace? In every job situation my mother, sister and I have been in, no matter how much we do not want what is thrown at us from the males, we can tell we are really affected by it. I've noticed that being rude ☹ in order to keep them away from you doesn't turn out so good. ☺ And you can't speak with the girls without saying **something** to the guys or they think (naturally)that you have something against them. Being very quiet in spirit does help but, there are always those negative situations that come up unexpectedly that it seems like you can't do anything about. There is a lot about all this that I just don't understand. I mean, you have to work in order to eat—in THIS case, how are you to be in the world but not of it?*

Thanks,

Hi... Frankly, the “Proverbs 31 Woman” (who does all of the great stuff in the “marketplace”)... if you read the context, this wonderful woman of God is functioning **ONLY IN THE CHURCH** (Israel). She is **NOT** doing business with the pagan men of the Philistines and Babylonians and Egyptians, as co-workers or clients. The context of this Passage is **ISRAEL**, and it is written to and describes Functioning **IN ISRAEL**, amongst God's People. There is no context or permission here for “women with pagan men in the workplace” with Babylonians and Hittites. In other words, you very well may be in a situation you were **NEVER DESIGNED TO BE IN**. And, that means there are no

good Biblical answers for an UNBiblical situation. We have dozens and dozens and dozens of women in the Church here, and NONE of them work with pagan men. Zero. Some have given up nursing careers, and many other professional backgrounds and educations once they found Christ and His Ways, just to be away from situations that are not God's Highest. They are extremely content, and even excited, about the Work Father has given them in advancing His Kingdom, without regret. You'll find that God's true Plan is BETTER—not as lame as dealing with pagan men, pagan philosophies and their ridiculous politics, their lusts and arrogance and rudeness... all only for mammon or ego. I hope you can discover someday what a woman in God's true Family and Army can be, fulfilled to the max, without the ball and chain and compromised situations that a man's work world subjects the precious Treasure of your Femininity to.

If there is a way you can do things that do not require “interface” with males or be stuck in close quarters with them, there is a bit more potential, obviously, to generate income without compromise—if one “had” to be in the workplace. (I know that you are not in a place where there are true Churches—where you and your mom and sister would be taken care of and covered and loved upon—so it is not a simple situation for you, right now.) Some situations are much worse than others, though even “better” may not be God's Highest. Of course, anything is “possible” (even “Take, kill and eat!”—Acts 10). And yet, in a workplace filled with men, many times it will take out and out blind compromise of Spiritual Truths to be a part of it for a woman. I know it's “the way of the world” and barely anyone gives it a thought. But, there's a reason that women in a man's workplace is so easily embraced as “normal” in our world system. Everything kind of goes back to what a person's priorities are, doesn't it? Consider the anger some might have towards your question and this discussion. And then ask yourself what their MOTIVES might be for being angry or frustrated. Could it be... materialism, personal ambition, greed, fear, large mortgages, multiple automobiles, an endless flow of techno-gadgets, worldly thinking about college or retirement, or “vacation lust”? You know something in this list is very close to the mark, in most every case. These things can be very seductive and at the root of major life and Life-destroying decisions about “women in the workplace.” I know that is “limiting” to think in terms other than this “conforming to the patterns of the world” (women in men's worlds, as one example), but Perfection is something to aim for! The statistics are overwhelming of destroyed

marriages and broken families due to “women in the workplace” and the flirtatiousness and dynamics you lament in your letter. THIS is not what Father meant when He spoke to us of “in the world, but not of it.” That I guarantee. You can know it, easily, by its fruit.

Now, since you are already in this difficult situation and apparently are being harassed somehow, it may be appropriate to protect yourselves, using a Spiritual tool of a different kind. What I speak of is based on the Truth of Romans 13 that GOD has put the governments and laws in place for HIS People. I bet to say “If you talk like that around me anymore, you may find the police at your door for sexual harassment, and then, after the law suit, I’ll own your home instead of you. Clean up the talk, or I will have to take action. There have been thousands of people in this country fired, and then sued or arrested, for talking like that to a female who doesn’t want to hear it.” It’s the law, so (Rom.13) using God’s appointed servants, the law and those who apply that law, is a distinct possibility. You should consider making this clear to those males around you who give you trouble. Assyrians and Egyptians do not honor Yahweh and His Son—but they will honor the “sword” of the pagan’s own laws that God has put in place to protect us.

I will certainly be praying for you and the Wisdom and Strength and Provision you and your family need. You are loved.

I’d be glad to talk more, anytime, as always, if you want ☺

Love,

Female/Male Stuff

Thursday Morning, April 12, 2001

Question: Hi, I didn't know if there was any way you would be able to help me, as a sister, see the bigger picture as far as caution about pagan men in the world system. I can understand to some extent—as far as the externals. But I know I don't see the world like I need to. I sometimes feel like I am eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that men are evil. But our enemy isn't man; it's satan, right? And satan lives in the hearts of women too, so why is it different with men? Help me understand? I do understand the idea of men's minds and how they can work. Anyway, if you could help me to see a little better into all of this, I would appreciate it. Thanks,

Hey there ☺. If you understand men's minds and how they work (not how they "CAN," but how they "DO" work)—then it's not mysterious or confusing at all, really. We would always want the treasured, precious females and children to avoid being treated as unHoly by those described by God as "satan filling their hearts," and "offspring of the devil." If you didn't know that pagan men's minds are filthy and twisted (some people don't), then you would need to know that in order to understand the necessity for acting wisely and conservatively. Jessica knows how dangerous and deceptive the world system is, NOW. And it's not that men are "EVIL!!" per se, and women aren't. But you have to realize, if you are discerning spiritually at all, that men DO notice women who are alone and vulnerable. Two or three disciples together, paying no attention to the pagan men, or with brothers around—those scenarios change *everything* in the dynamic of evil at work. You must know this: Delivery people notice every situation. Carpet cleaners, and door-to-door vacuum and meat salesmen... notice. Meter readers notice. Last month a meter reader was indicted on multiple counts of rape. As he became aware of people's situations, he imagined, and then planned, and then acted. An 80 year-old grandmother was a victim recently of something similar.

Writers and salesmen flirt for a living. It helps their sales to entice women by hormones and flattery and fun, and women with men. It IS the world we live in, and, just as in the days of Noah, it will be Judged as such. Some who fashion themselves “big and strong and wise” will think all is fine and they’re above it all... and the Ark is stupid. “As in the days of Noah.”

It is a weird and perverted world out there. Jesus said HIS world was ALREADY “wicked and adulterous,” “crooked and perverted”—and is it BETTER now than then? I can’t imagine you believe it’s better now. I sure don’t. Probably, you have never OVERHEARD the conversations between men (and sometimes women, though this is more often the sin of fallen males) in the restaurant kitchen, or the Finish Line Shoe Store back room, or the hospital staff break room about, “Did you see that babe? Did you see how friendly she was to me? I’ll bet I could...” Those conversations happen in every locker room, break room, car dealership sales floor amongst salesmen, and every school hallway in the WORLD.

Would it be worth it to inconvenience ourselves a tiny bit to AVOID being the object of their perverted eyes and mouths and wishes and actions and conversations? What if we decided to BUILD in such a way as to avoid the majority of situations where our women and children were raped—with eyes or conversation or worse? We CAN build in such a way as to crush MOST of the problem! Do you realize that ALL IT TAKES for a bank officer to stop flirting with a sister who is trying to open a checking account—is for a brother to be sitting next to her, and be halfway awake and engaged while she is opening the account? Isn’t it worth a LITTLE trouble to “come out from among them and be separate!” says the Lord? I think so. And actually, the vast majority of the sorts of conservative actions we may take are RECOMMENDED again and again by the police department, even to pagan women.

(Now, there ARE ways to build wisely that are also very simple. For example, when you walk into a restaurant, scan the room for a waitress and then ask to be seated in “her!” section. THAT’S wise. You’re not being weird to anyone, or causing a problem after the fact when a guy is assigned to you. You’re just seamlessly, wisely setting yourself up, with no extra trouble, for a likely uneventful lunch. THAT’S good. And, if you’re in a library line and they switch people on you to a guy, if he doesn’t appear to be grotesque or flirty or preppy to the discerning among you, well, you’re in line with another sister anyway, so maybe

stay in that line and don't make a deal of it. Just don't invite trouble by engaging him in cutesy dialogue or a warmth that is reserved for those that are in Jesus! Be wise.)

And surely it's obvious, as you say, that satan lives in women, too. It is the MANIFESTATION of the kinds of evil they each (men vs. women, normally) are inclined to, that one should be wise to avoid. Women's sins are more often those of emotion and control, and the resultant sins. They should be avoided just as vigorously! All such situations dealt a blow, "making no provision" for such situations. Just as you should open a public restroom door from the inside with a paper towel rather than your hand, there ARE things that the naked eye cannot see that you do not WANT touching you. If you don't "believe" in germs on doorknobs, you'll eventually become ill from someone you don't know and have never even seen. And that is NOT to say that you are "paranoid" of germs, just because you use wisdom to avoid as many as possible. Paranoia is wrong. Lack of awareness is foolish—and is fatal for some. As disciples, we MUST be among those "hating even the CLOTHING stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 23). I think you must understand Mary's emails as "art" and not "science"—as was her intention. But to miss her point will result in our friends' and children's eventual downfall in cases that might EASILY have been avoided! And what price can you place on the crushed hearts of those who are harmed by our negligence and naïveté. There ARE germs on the doorknob. We must NOT be so foolish as to think we have to be able to SEE them—to "believe" in them. Just because everything LOOKS fine on the outside, and happy-go-lucky pagans seem to do just fine in this "big bad world"—don't be naïve. Only those who have never cried themselves to sleep over the destruction of a soul ravaged by the enemy can remain naïve.

I do understand that "how to function" (restaurants, libraries, whatever) can be a little confusing at times in this world where Philistines, Assyrians, Egyptians, Sodomites... and God's People all share space. Can you imagine that situation—Egyptians, Sodomites, and Philistines all walking the sidewalks of Jerusalem in Jesus' day, speaking and acting as they pleased? No way. God's People were a NATION that stuck together, and were not intermixed in daily life and on their streets with the Assyrians and Sodomites. But it IS our situation, on our sidewalks and in our workplaces and markets. And to figure out how to live it out wisely is an art, not a science; a heart, not a formula. If the HEART

for Life in Him: “Come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord, “and I will be your God, and you will be my People!” is missing, there is a huge problem. If excuses and exceptions and self-life are the true driving forces, there will be no chance of hearing or pleasing God in these matters. If there is, instead, a resentment of one’s self-life being “cramped”—that’s a problem. But, that wouldn’t be the case amongst the lovers of Jesus we know, if I know them at all. Glad you asked.

“Chivalry” is Not Dead

Sunday Morning, October 12, 2003

So, WHY is it that the men ought to care for, protect and consider the women? Why should they go out of their way to make sure a sister gets across the city without having to go alone on an interstate with children?

Part of it, yes, is the safety factor—to keep them from getting stuck on an interstate with a flat tire, by themselves. Or to keep them from being murdered outside a gymnasium where crimes have happened before even! (Yes, that really did happen.) There’s this other story of some saints down in Brazil who let a sister travel through downtown in a city in Brazil at 1 a.m. in the morning making 2 or 3 train switches, BY HERSELF, for a 90 min. ride back to her house after being together with the saints. Did anyone notice or even question that? NO! No one questioned that. Letting a young woman travel through a city that’s 4 times worse than the worst part of LA at 1:30 in the morning. No one blinked an eye. It’s usually out of laziness, or because it just isn’t convenient. Never let “inconvenience” make your decision. Doing God’s will is GOING to be inconvenient. But so what? If you’re gonna do it Right, it’s gonna cost you. The other reason people “miss it” on even noticing the need to care for a woman, is because they are “comfortable” with it. You’re around something enough and you just get used to it being “normal.” You don’t think twice about it. The “traditions of men” nullify the Word of God. You can’t hear what God is currently saying about the matter because you’re anesthetized by the blind “tradition” of “it’s always happened this way.”

So safety is sure an issue, but the chances of getting mugged at Kroger, truthfully, are pretty slim. First of all, I SERIOUSLY doubt that the women would go to a grocery store in a bad neighborhood. They would surely look for a grocery store in a better area. And even then, they would likely desire to go together, rather than separately. Even the pagan police have said over and over again that this is by far the wisest thing to do—that many incidents of car-jacking take place in public parking

lots in broad daylight. And THAT is in a nice area, at a grocery store. It should be obvious, too, that a grocery store is for people that come to do something, do it, and leave. How many fights have you seen at a grocery store?

Even when we've had volleyball with 200 people going, we have had cars stolen and others broken into. That is just the world we're in. SO, what if your wife has a flat tire on the road? Wouldn't you be THRILLED if a brother was driving right behind her to change it, instead of the first stranger that comes along? That's GOT to be obvious. And a sister in the car with her—wouldn't that be FAR superior to her being alone? And, the LOSS spiritually ("Where TWO OR THREE are—there I AM") of not having people with you to pray or when you're sharing Jesus, or to talk, or to help you see your areas of grievance to God in your life that you are blind to?

If God was right in 1 Corinthians 11 as we suppose He usually is ☺, then man is the head of woman, AS Christ is the head of man. Would YOU want to go through life without JESUS there with you in the challenging times? Then IF we believe 1 Corinthians 11, why would we ever want to put women into an environment loaded with variables, and ask them to "be big and handle it"? SURE, they will statistically survive it, in all likelihood, but the fruit of doing things men's way is always bad. Women become more masculine as they are put into roles that they should not be in, and identity crisis and conflicts in the home and dangerous things happen a thousand times more often than they would have if we were building properly. Russian Roulette. Not everyone dies—but someone will eventually. And their blood is on your hands if you have built foolishly. I have some blood on my hands from years ago, and my stupidity, and I can name a woman or two that are DEAD because my thinking was influenced by the patterns of the world, and not by God during those times on that subject. That's only a small part of the reason that the men ought to cover and protect the sisters and children traveling around on their own and watching out for them in public places.

The MAIN reason a brother ought to care for a woman has to do with this: Do you ever see a man open a car door for a woman? Do you scoff at that? No. No one scoffs. They say, "Awww, isn't that nice." They like it. There's something about it that people like—Chivalry isn't dead afterall! Why do you put your coat down over a mud puddle for a woman to step across? Is it because she's going to drown? Because she's

not strong enough to do it herself? Why do even the pagans know that you lay your coat down over the mud, rather than to let a true lady get her shoes dirty? There is an issue in the Spiritual realm that is not in essence about “safety” at all!! That IS an issue, but there is something MUCH deeper. Now SOME would never ever care to open a car door for a woman, and not that it should happen every time for things to be in order anyway. But some would NEVER do it, or THINK about doing it for a woman. I would have to suggest, or rather declare, that such a person does not have a sense of God in their hearts, in a whole realm that is immensely personal and important to God. If we would open a door for a woman, or help her with her chair or her coat—then the principle should be easily obvious that something a thousand times larger (like sending them down into a bad neighborhood) would matter far more than a car door.

It is a principle buried deep within the heart of God that we CARE FOR OUR WOMEN! They may not NEED the car door opened for them, but it is RIGHT in the Spirit to treat them like queens and princesses! It is a test of OUR characters to treat them lavishly and with sensitivity, and it is important for THEM also to not be forced to be masculine and lose the preciousness that God intended for them in His Pattern. There’s something about honoring her that is in God’s heart. He honors His Woman, His Bride. He’d die for her. He DID die for her! That’s the ultimate in chivalrous acts, wouldn’t you say? In the stuff of life is the place to reflect the deep love of the Son for His woman. We were MADE for that. We reflect that love and kindness and consideration of Jesus that He has for his Bride. We care for her as he cares for his woman. We were made to reflect the love of Jesus to those around us.

And OUR part, as men, is to open the door, cover the mud puddle, tie her shoe, carry the groceries in. Is it always convenient or logical to ruin a perfectly fine jacket in the mud? Or convenient to run across the street to help a woman with her groceries? No, it won’t usually need to make much sense. But it’s just RIGHT and it’s highly prized by the Father to have Eyes for those things and live that way. So make it your aim to think outside the box we all so easily get mesmerized into all our lives and see it as an opportunity to share in Jesus’ heart.

A man who knows God, will do that because **THAT IS WHY WE WERE MADE!** That’s exactly why men were made was to protect, cover, care for and love the woman. She’s the weaker vessel. Not that

she's weak in the "weakling" sense—she could easily walk around the puddle or open her own door. It's because they are made as the weaker vessel and it's what WE were made for is to care for them, by laying the coat down over the mud, and for opening the door.

And you just don't know what that does for HER! You have no idea the effect that kind of care and actions has on a woman. If she's sensitive to the Spirit and desires to play HER part as the weaker vessel, it is a total JOY to be treated that way. It warms her heart because it's exactly the kind of care and honoring that SHE WAS MADE FOR. God MADE HER to be the recipient of that from the men. It helps her to be who she is meant to be on the inside. It speaks VOLUMES and changes her, without saying a word when a brother picks up the tab at a restaurant, opens a door, carries her 3-year-old for her. Volumes. Once (not just once really, because this and countless things like it happen ALL the time for those who Understand it) a sister went back for more Coke in a fast-food restaurant. She didn't see the man who was also approaching from just around the corner. But one of the brothers who was out with the bunch that day, HE saw it coming. So he went and stood with her, very naturally and appropriately. Without a word. He KNEW his part and that was just the perfect thing to do. He was WATCHING and caring—not just zoning out, getting absorbed in his own good time. Or maybe next time he offered to get her refill for her, long before that scenario came up. 😊 Either way, it's very small gestures, but they will happen all the time with men who watch and care and KNOW WHY they've been made.

Are You a Male or a Female?

One last “funny”...written by someone from somewhere, who we don’t know 😊

To find out if you are a male or female, take this scientific quiz:

1. Your department is on a tight deadline for developing a big sales proposal, but you’ve hit a snag on a key point. You want to go one way; a co-worker named Bob strongly disagrees. To break the dead lock you:

a: Present your position, listen to the other side; then fashion a workable compromise.

b: Punch Bob....

2. Your favorite team is about to win the championship, but at the last second the victory is stolen away by a terrible referee’s call. You:

a. Remind yourself that it’s just a game, and that there are far, more important things in your life:

b. Punch Bob again.

HOW TO SCORE: If you answered “b” to both questions, then you are a male.

I base this statement on a recent article in The New York Times about the way animals, including humans, respond to stress. According to the article, a group of psychology researchers have made the breakthrough discovery that—prepare to be astounded—males and females are different.

The researchers discovered this by studying both humans and rats, which are very similar to humans except that they are not stupid enough to purchase lottery tickets. The studies show that when males are under stress, they respond by either fighting or running away

(the so-called “fight or flight” syndrome); whereas females respond by nurturing others and making friends (the so-called “tend and befriend” syndrome).

This finding is big news in the psychology community, which apparently is located on a distant planet. Here on Earth, we have been aware for some time that males and females respond differently to stress. We know that if two males bump into each other, they will respond like this:

First male: Hey, watch it!

Second male: No, YOU watch it!

First male: Oh, yeah?

(They deliberately bump into each other again.)

Two females, in the identical situation, will respond like this:

First female: I’m sorry!

Second female: No, it’s my fault!

First female: Say, those are cute shoes!

(They go shopping.)

If the psychology community needs further proof of the difference between the sexes, I invite it to attend the costume party held by neighbors of ours from time to time, for fun. This party is attended by several hundred small children, who are experiencing stress because their bloodstreams contain roughly the same sugar content as Cuba. Here’s how the various genders respond:

The females, 97 percent of whom are dressed as either a ballerina or a princess, sit in little social groups and exchange candy.

The males, 97 percent of whom are dressed as either the Hulk or a Power Ranger, run around making martial-arts noises and bouncing violently off each other like crazed subatomic particles.

Here are some other gender based syndromes that the psychology community might want to look into:

The “laundry refolding” syndrome: This has been widely noted by both me and a friend of mine named Jeff. What happens is, the male will attempt to fold a piece of laundry, and when he is done the female, with a look of disapproval, will immediately pick it up and refold it so that it is much neater and smaller. “My wife can make an entire bed sheet virtually disappear,” reports Jeff.

The “inflatable-pool-toy” syndrome: From the dawn of human civilization, the task of inflating the inflatable pool toy has always fallen to the male. It is often the female who comes home with an inflatable pool toy the size of the Hindenburg, causing the youngsters to become very excited. But it is inevitably the male who spends two hours blowing the toy up, after which he keels over with skin the color of a Smurf, while the children, who have been helping out by whining impatiently, leap joyfully onto the toy, puncturing it immediately.

I think psychology researchers should find out if these syndromes exist in other species. They could put some rats into a cage with tiny pool toys and miniature pieces of laundry, then watch to see what happens. My guess is that there would be fighting. Among the male researchers, I mean. It’s a shame, this male tendency toward aggression, which has caused so many horrible problems, such as war and ice hockey. It frankly makes me ashamed of my gender. I’m going to punch Bob.