

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN:

IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

CLASS 4: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE HOME?

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
 - January 5th: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
 - January 12th: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
 - January 19th: What are the priorities of parents?
 - **January 26th: What are some of the roles of women in the home?**
 - February 2nd: What are some of the roles of women in the church?
 - February 9th: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
 - February 16th: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
 - February 23rd: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?

INTRODUCTION

- This class will further build upon what was discussed in our class on feminism.
- **Since the world's idea of equality between men and women have come into the church, the church must be able to properly define and defend why we believe what we do.**
- *The world thinks that the worth of a woman is found in what she does, not in who she is before God.*
- As was stated before, the Bible upholds the truth that men and women are equal in God's economy, but they have different roles.
- **Different roles do not mean different worth to God.** As all people, both men and women, were created in God's image (Gen 1:27), God values them the same.

THE ROLES OF A WOMAN IN THE HOME

- “Humanity fell into sin when the woman stepped out of her God-ordained sphere and was deceived by Satan's temptation. Women can avoid the first woman's misstep and be preserved (i.e., be kept spiritually) from Satan's deception if, unlike Eve, they devote themselves to their God-ordained domestic sphere (caring for their husband and children and managing their household).”¹
- In our current time, **the idea of roles has been frowned upon and looked at as archaic.** Women are told they need to keep moving up and up not allowing men to stop them from reaching their full potential.
- This can be extremely harmful when it comes to the marriage relationship.
 - When the wife abandons her God-given responsibilities, there is going to be chaos in the home.
- There are some who see no gender distinction between a husband and a wife's roles.
 - This means that anything a husband can do, a wife can do too, without any consequence.
- “Although we're far from done, social movements have allowed women to achieve a greater level of equality. However, not all marriages have partners who are on equal footing, and in some cases, that's by choice. Couples generally fall into one of two camps: partners either lean towards the traditional perspective of male breadwinner/female homemaker or hold the more contemporary view that men and women are equal and have shared responsibilities.”²
 - This is what is known as a *false dichotomy*. This fallacy presents *only two choices* when there are more available. In other words, those in the traditional perspective camp can also hold to equality.

¹ Andreas J. and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 217.

² Rob Pascale and Lou Primavera Ph.D., “How Do Gender Roles Impact Marriage?”, *Psychology Today*, 07 Jan 2020, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/so-happy-together/202001/how-do-gender-roles-impact-marriage>

- The *modern or present* view is that within marriage, men and women are equal. If you are not for the contemporary view, then you do not believe that men and women are equal.
 - If you believe that marriages can have designated roles for husbands and wives which are based on their gender, then you are going against what society thinks to be true.
- This is why we must be so diligent in where we look for input regarding our marriages and spousal relationships. If you decide that a psychologist, or any other non-Christian source, is the place to go, you will be left only with the world's ideas and strategies.
- We believe that having roles in the marriage is not only traditional, but more importantly, it is Biblical.
- While there is freedom in much that we do as believers, God has ordained the marriage institution and put it in order the way that He desires.

A wife's relationship with her husband.

- God's will for every Christian wife is that her most important ministry be to her husband (Gen 2:18).³
- While seemingly old fashioned and certainly not aligning with what the feminist movement, this is what God has called women to be.
- Paul tells wives in **Ephesians 5:22** "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord."
 - Biblical submission is not about worth and importance. The world sees submission as something which is all about power. *The one who submits is weaker and less important.*
- "... 'be subject' refers to a relinquishing of one's rights. In no way does it imply a difference in essence or worth; it does refer, however, to a willing submission of oneself. Wives, submission is to be your voluntary response to God's will—a willingness to give up your rights to other believers in general and ordained authority in particular, in this case your own husband."⁴
- It is vital to see that Paul is not telling the wife to submit to her husband *in anything that he desires*. **The wife should have a voice in the relationship.** She is not to submit to her husband if he is asking her to sin or keeping her from following the commands of God.
- There are times when the wife will not agree with what the husband is saying, but as long as he is not sinning nor promoting sin, she should submit to him.
 - Biblically speaking, "In fact, submission to her husband is the *heart of God* for the Christian wife."⁵
 - This submission is not predicated on *his* goodness or *his* kindness.
 - ***This submission is based upon her serving the Lord.***

³ Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife A Biblical Perspective*, rev. ed. (Bemidji, MN: Focus Pub., 1997), 4.

⁴ John MacArthur, *Different by Design*, MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 54.

⁵ Peace, 140.

- **When she does this, she puts her heart and care in the hands of her Lord.**
- The wife, rather than waiting for her husband to be the kind of man she can submit to, is called show her reverence to God by her submission to her husband.
- If her husband is not saved, this submission becomes even more important. Peter says in **1 Peter 3:1-2** “In the same way, you wives, be submissive *to your own husbands* so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.”
 - As the wife shows love and respect for her husband, *even though he may not deserve it*, the Lord uses that behavior to win over her husband.
 - This does not mean that her husband’s salvation is in her hands. But it does mean that the Lord will convict his heart about this disobedience through the wife’s obedience.
- “The general principle issuing from Peter’s counsel is that leading unbelievers to Christ is a greater cause than insisting on justice in human relationships.”⁶
- Instead of insisting on making sure you are comfortable or even loved in the marriage, because those things are temporary, the primary focus of a believing wife should be the salvation of her unbelieving husband.
 - If the wife is not content with what God has given her, she is going to be constantly going against what her husband has to say to her.
 - If she finds her contentment in Christ, and not in her husband or her circumstances, she is going to really blossom and flourish in her relationship with the Lord.
 - As she does this, she is then going to be able to obey her unbelieving husband, even when she knows that it does not favor her at all.
- **A brief word about physical abuse in a marriage relationship.**
- *A wife is never called just to tough it out.*⁷ As I have stated, the wife is to submit, if we take God’s Word as a whole, she is also to be prudent.
 - **Proverbs 27:12** and **22:3** says that “the prudent sees the evil and hides himself.”
 - The prudent person is a sensible person who sees danger and seeks help.
- The church is a place where God has given the responsibility to care for women in these areas and we should never nullify that responsibility.
- We are commanded to vindicate those who are weak and those who are in need. We are also commanded not to show partiality towards those who are committing wicked acts (**Psa 82:2-4**).

⁶ Andreas J Köstenberger with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (2nd ed.; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 53.

⁷ I understand that men can also be abused by their wives.

- The scope of this teaching is not about divorce and physical abuse. If this is happening in the marriage, the wife should seek out the elders of her church for protection and counsel.
- There is nothing which the Lord is not able to give the power to overcome, including an abusive husband. Even in these cases, the believing wife should desire her husband to be saved and sanctified.

A wife's responsibilities within the home.

- When we get to the next teaching, we are going to discuss one of the areas that the older women are to train the younger in, which is being a worker at home (Tit 2:5).
 - Since this concept falls under the wife's responsibilities in the home, we are going to talk about what that looks like now.
 - In the next class, we are going to discuss what that looks like to be training younger women within the church setting.
- The home is the wife's domain and "a godly wife is organized and works hard to operate her home with the least possible chaos."⁸
- This does not mean there won't be chaos! This means that the wife should be known to keep an organized home that is not always a disaster.
- What does it specifically mean for a wife to be a worker at home?
- "Notice that Paul didn't make any effort to elaborate on what he meant by 'workers at home.'"⁹
- This was not a concept that Paul thought he had to further explain because the culture at the time knew exactly what he was talking about.
- Peace further explains it as "someone who guards the dwelling or is a keeper of the household."¹⁰
- The wife has a high honor and calling. She is to make sure the house, not the physical house but its members, are taken care of in a godly way.
 - She oversees the kids in the house. She makes sure they are provided for with food and others items needed for the daily activities.
 - If the kids are going off to school, she makes sure they are up and ready to go in the morning and that they go to be early enough to get enough sleep for the next day.
 - She makes sure her husband is well cared for too. That he has food to eat and an organized home to come back to at the end of his day.
 - The house should be neat and tidy.

⁸ Peace, 71.

⁹ MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 71.

¹⁰ Peace, 72.

- For this to be taking place, for the wife to be a worker at home, to keep the home and to protect the home, it means that she must be in the home.
 - To be sure, this is not going to happen all the time nor with perfection. There are seasons of life which come upon families which can make some of the responsibilities difficult.
 - When there are multiple young kids in the picture, a wife's energy and fortitude can simply diminish and other things take priority.
- Once again, there are seasons in all our lives.
- While the biblical principles are the same throughout the marriage, how they are applied are going to look different depending on the season of life the married couple is going through.

WHAT CAN IMPEDE A WIFE'S WORK AT HOME?

- There are some things which can come in the way of a wife working at home.
- These are not necessarily bad things, but they can have a negative impact.
- A wife must understand that her role in the home is absolutely essential for the home to be productive.

Outside employment

- One of the common questions in the church is about the wife having a job outside the home.
- **Our culture today pushes women into the workforce and out of the home.**
- There is a constant narrative which is telling women that if they are not actively producing in society through the workforce then they are not worth as much as men are.
- The Bible, while not prohibiting a woman from working outside of the home, gives her responsibilities which need to be done within the home first.
- As we just saw in **Titus 2:5**, she is to take care of the home.
- If the wife is able to work outside of the home *and* fulfill her biblical role towards her husband and her home, this working outside the home can be considered.
- If either the home or the family suffers, then working outside of the home may not be the best direction forward for the family.
- When a wife works outside the home, there are some pitfalls to consider, even if the responsibilities within the family can be taken care of by her.
- Her energy may be diminished throughout the day. This means that she may not be able to care for her family in the best way possible. While not neglecting her responsibilities, she is not at the top of her game to rightly take care of the family's needs.

- She may find herself in a position of authority at work, but then submission at home. This can be a dangerous place for women.
 - It can be hard, if not impossible, to switch off the “boss” mode when she comes home.
 - If the wife is used to people coming to her to make decisions all day and her giving orders to her subordinates, it can be hard to then come home and submit to her husband’s needs.
- This is something to be really careful of and to monitor if the wife seems to fall into this category. It is not to say that she cannot be in charge when she is at work. But it is to say that it is not a relationship which should carry over into the home.

Modern Conveniences in the home.

- “Today we have many conveniences in the home that ancient people didn’t have. We don’t have to grind our own grain, make our own fabric, or go to a river to wash our clothes. That means keepers at home have more discretionary time now than before, so they need to be careful to use that time discreetly.”¹¹
- With the rise of delivered groceries, self-powered vacuums, on-demand food, and a host of other “time saving” services, the wife’s home may not need as much attention as it did when the Bible was written.
- There could be a tendency for the modern wife to fill her day with unproductive activities which neither lead her more into godliness nor bless her family.
- While there may be nothing sinful about the appliances or services, she must be watchful over her heart.
- If her desire is to free up time to watch more TV or to be able to sleep longer or any other unfruitful venture, there may come a time for an evaluation of the use of her time.
- Modern appliances and other ways to save time are not evil in themselves.
- **It is about the heart of the homemaker.** If her desire is to free up time so that she can be more productive in other areas, but all areas are well taken care of, then it may be a good idea to do so.

CONCLUSION

- **The wife’s role in the home is essential for the home to be organized and keep going.**
- This is done as she joyfully submits to her husband and stives to take care of the home well.
- Her husband is not a bystander in all of this but there to understand and love his wife well.
- She must be sure not to be caught up in the world’s ways, but stive for excellence in her service.

¹¹ MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 71–72.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What are some ways that modern technology has made the role of being a wife easier?
- What are some pitfalls that you have had to manage as your role of being a wife?
- How can your husband strive to know you better so that you are able to manage the household better?