



A CUP OF FAITH

The official publication of the Women's Ministry of Faith PCA

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HOW WIVES DEMONSTRATE THE GOSPEL IN MARRIAGE

Written by Dawn Darby

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."

Ephesians 5:22-24

When Paul wrote his letter to Christian Ephesian husbands and wives, it was as counter cultural, or I would argue, even more counter cultural than it is in our day. The Roman world had never been enlightened by the gospel, as our Western world has been.

It had never heard of the self-sacrificing God of the Hebrews. In fact, self-sacrifice and humility were not character qualities that were admired. And to be told that husbands should serve their wives who were equal heirs with them would certainly have been a shocking requirement.

In fact, it was revolutionary. But not a revolution by those who have no power against the powerful. Rather it was a heavenly revolution—top down. The one with the power gives it up. Just like Jesus did.

In our feminist culture, though, we hear the word ‘submit’ and we get our backs up thinking that someone is forcing us to obey a tyrant. First of all, most women don’t marry tyrants. Second, wives are told to submit, not to obey. Children are told to obey.

Women are not children and they are not subservient. Women are equals with their husbands and when they are told to submit, this implies a “voluntary yielding to one who has authority in a leadership structure” (1).

They choose to submit out of reverence for Christ and love for their husbands. Third, let’s clarify what Paul is not saying. He is not saying that every woman is to submit to every man. Wives are to voluntarily submit only to their own husbands.

But why are husbands the leaders in the home? Aren't women leadership material as well? Why can't they both be leaders equally?

I could just give a simplistic answer and say, "Because God said so." But if we discover the reason God ordered human society this way, we can begin to see something really beautiful. God ordained the husband to be the head or leader in marriage for His own purposes. In every relationship someone has to take the lead—in a team, a business, a country.

In many settings that person could be a woman, but in marriage, it is the man. This is the divine order. So submission in marriage is "the kind of submission that the hand gives to the head when it stretches out its fingers to help someone in need. Neither the head nor hand can operate independently of the other; the hand does not direct the head; the hand's submission to the head involves service. So it is to be in a Christian marriage and home life" (2).

Paul clearly believes that marriage is not merely what it seems on the surface. Marriage is a model of something. It points to something else. Its fundamental purpose is not for procreation, pleasure, and/or companionship. We get to participate in something holy and sacred.

When Jesus tells parables, He is using earthly examples to make a heavenly point. Our marriages are parables as well—the parable of Christ's love for His people. "We are actors on the cosmic stage, playing out the profound mystery in front of a watching world" (3).





When Paul says that marriage is a mystery, he is indicating a connection between human marriage and the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). This is the gospel.

What does Christ do for His Bride, the Church? He lives a perfect life for her, dies for her, is resurrected for her. What does the Church do for her Groom, Christ?

She submits, obeys, honors, loves. In our marriages we have the opportunity to mirror the gospel by copying our role models in the heavenly marriage. The world around us is watching to see how we behave. Is what we say the same as how we live? Are we wives submitting to our husbands out of reverence for Christ? It is the gospel that motivates us to do what we don't want to do. That is, to submit when we want to do things our own way. And it is the Holy Spirit who helps us to do this.

Why is submission in marriage so hard then? We all want to share the gospel, don't we?

We all love our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then why is marriage so hard!?!

It is because Satan knows that marriage tells the gospel story and he is determined to wreck it.

Satan attacked marriage at the outset. Even though Satan's temptation of Eve (and Adam as well) seems to focus only on her trust in God, look at what happens in Genesis 3:12. Adam throws Eve under the bus without batting an eye. Not only was there a breach in man's relationship with God, there was a breach in the marital relationship as well.

Marriage tells a story. The story of Jesus and His marriage to the Church. Human marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church. Why men and women have the roles they do is a mystery to us. But it's the way God designed marriage. When the world sees a covenant relationship lived out, not perfectly, but sincerely, that is a show-and-tell exercise of the gospel that we can practice every day—to one another, to our children, to our neighbors, to the world.

PS What if you are a single woman? How can this encourage you? Be encouraged! The Bible starts with an earthly marriage, but it ends with a heavenly one. All of us are the Bride of Christ and that marriage ceremony is for YOU! Your Groom gave Himself for you and someday you will be wearing the beautiful bridal clothes that He has reserved in heaven for you (Revelation 19:8). Human marriage tells a story and this is a story that you can tell, even if you are not living it out right now.

"When the world sees a covenant relationship lived out, not perfectly, but sincerely, that is a show-and-tell exercise of the gospel that we can practice every day—to one another, to our children, to our neighbors, to the world."





PPS For women who still struggle with the heavy duty that Paul's injunction places on us, here is what Sinclair Ferguson says in his book *Let's Study Ephesians*, "Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church! The model for and the measure of a husband's love is to be—Jesus Christ. If there were any suspicion that Paul was placing too heavy a burden on wives this dissolves it immediately."

PPPS Because of the Fall, women and men struggle in their obedience to our Heavenly Father in the area of marriage, as in all areas. If we are married, we live with sinners, and our spouses also live with sinners. The Lord's commands hold true even if one spouse is not a believer. However, what if there is abuse? What if one spouse is asking another to sin? Paul limits a wife's submission to her husband by the qualifier "as to the Lord".

If you, or anyone you know, are in a marriage where there is abuse or requests for you to sin, please do not walk this path alone. If you are not sure if you are suffering abuse, please do a google search for Dr. Ramona Probasco's Abuse Evaluation Form. (The first page of this form is provided below.) The body of Christ is here to help you walk in obedience to our Father as well as to rescue the weak and the needy (Psalm 82:4). Please reach out to a pastor, an elder, or a godly woman friend. You are not alone. Your loving Saviour, Jesus, suffered pain and humiliation and He knows your suffering. Reach out to His arms here on earth for help.



Abuse Evaluation Form

Directions: Circle the words or phrases that you have experienced in your relationship even if it happened only once.

Physical Abuse

The misuse of size, strength or presence to control or hurt someone.

- Pushing
- Shoving
- Backhanding
- Biting
- Strangling
- Punching
- Burning
- Hair pulling
- Kneeling
- Smothering
- Grabbing
- Kicking
- Twisting arms
- Tearing clothes
- Clenching fist as if to hit
- Stab or cut with knife
- Standing or sitting on
- Smacking repeatedly or a single slap leaving a mark
- Banging your head or pinning you against a wall or the floor
- Holding or carrying you against your will
- Trying to hit you with a car or pushing you out of a car
- Driving recklessly in order to scare
- Throwing objects
- Breaking furniture
- Sweeping objects off a table or dresser
- Breaking windshield or windows
- Intentionally breaking your personal items
- Punching or kicking a wall or door
- Blocking a doorway so you cannot leave
- Standing behind your car so you cannot drive away
- Taking your keys so you cannot drive away
- Detaching or disabling phone to prevent a call
- Locking you in or out of the house, in a closet or other confined space
- Abusing or killing a pet

1. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Vol 3, Page 332
2. Let's Study Ephesians, Sinclair Ferguson, Page 150
3. Alive in Him, Gloria Furman, Page 157

CHRISTMAS DAY AT FAITH

Written by Lesley Pollack

December 25, 2016

A View from the Balcony

Below are:

Girls (friends) wearing matching fabric fashions,
Mothers willing children to wait (I promise the presents are coming!),
The people of f(F)aith, (the people of God), the remnant.
Other congregations are close in the shallows, hearing the rerun, turning
thoughts to presents and parties,
but we, feet hardly touching, struggling, are far into the depths of doctrine:
the (incomprehensible) nature of the incarnation.
How, O Loving God? How, O Living Man?
True mystery! (Emphasis 'mystery')
True mystery! (Emphasis 'true')
Life preservers for floundering sinners!
Sidetracked: my fingernails (split) and skin (dry and cracked).
Back on track: His hands (calloused from hammer and nail) punctured with
hammer and nail.
Body. Blood.
Bread and wine in mouth (a remembrance) mingle with memories (future) of
ham and potatoes (a celebration).
Sunlight (having slowly marked time detailing the window pattern across the
wall) streams 'cross pastor's face.
Is this the time? The end? The beginning?
Will the skies rip open, angels singing 'Hark!' and we on to glory?

CHRISTMAS DAY AT FAITH

Continued

"How, O Loving
God? How, O
Living Man?
True mystery!
(Emphasis
'mystery')
True mystery!
(Emphasis 'true')
Life preservers
for floundering
sinners!"

Yes! There are the trumpets! No! We wait yet. (It's only young men pushing their praise through bended metal.)

"O Come let us Adore Him!"

The choir behind me, the trumpets beside me, my singing is fit for heaven (the people in front of me disagree).

On to the Narthex, bustling and joyful (despite no snacks, no coffee), our happy chatter the lyrics to the musicians' swelling sounds (of Christmas).

Where is the giant tree amassed with presents? A favorite book (from Rob's list), the best wool (for knitting), a challenging game, and other fun (toys! toys! toys!): a perfect gift for all!

No, while those things are wrapped and ribboned at home, here, (where two or three are gathered) the perfect gift (needed, wanted, free, and costly) is always present.

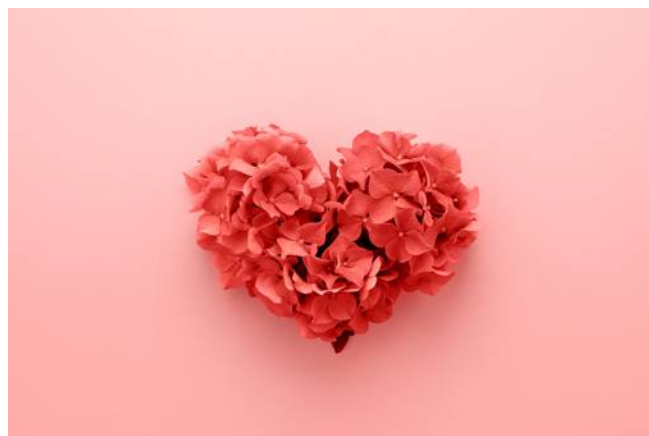


FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES

This month, we're featuring several articles by a few Friendship Circle leaders who will give you a taste of what their groups are doing. If you'd like to be a part of a Friendship Circle, contact Dawn Darby.

Written by Janie Irwin

Our Friendship Circle met in January and we decided that each member would get a chance to plan an event. In February, we enjoyed a “Sip, Dip, Paint” party (a first time for many of us). March was canceled because of the Stay-At-Home order. In April, we Zoomed to discuss a book about Liliias Trotter, “A Passion for the Impossible.” In May, we walked around the Rose Garden and Pond at Pt. Defiance. Next month we might walk around Dune Peninsula Park at Pt. Defiance.



Written by Ruth Ann Cassis

We have been meeting once a month via Zoom, hosted by Cheryl Anderson as she graciously figured that out as I am technically challenged! It meets on the first Thursday evening of the month at 7:00 pm. We also have a group text feed which we use a lot to share things, happy or sad, prayer requests or needs! We call ourselves “the yoke sisters” as at one of our earlier meetings we were praying together and one commented we were yoked together in faith as we persevere to ask God for growth for ourselves and salvation for our children.

Written by Margot Johnson

Sadly, not much is going on with our Circle right now! Our Circle of five spans several generations, and it's made for engaging conversation on a wide variety of good subjects. The first year, we enjoyed getting together to share a fabulous brunch at one another's home about once a month. Last fall, we decided to try something new and gather together for a morning treat at some fun coffee shop. Although some months were hit-or-miss, whatever time we spent together was really an honor and a privilege. Although we can't meet together now, we are emailing, or picking up the phone to stay in touch, to pass along a word of encouragement, or to share a prayer request.

Written by Cynthia Savage

Well, we have a mixed review, since we haven't been able to all be together yet. We met once together before the quarantine and since then we've been Zooming. Some of our older ladies in the circle are not able to Zoom, so I've called and checked in with them. It's not the same thing as a Friendship Circle though. Other than that, those of us on the Zoom calls are enjoying our chats together. We look forward to being able to meet in person soon.



MOMMA'S QUILT

Written by Brenda Hayden

I made the quilt for Momma the year before she died.

It was her last Christmas present from me. By that time the Alzheimer's disease was too advanced for her to live alone, and she was living with my sister in Texas. When I went for a visit, the quilt was hung neatly on a quilt rack in her room.

It broke my heart that she was not able to understand that I'd made it for her, or even what it was. She could no longer read the hand-made label that said "Momma's Cozy Rosy" or appreciate the soft flannel roses that formed the pattern.

By the next November, the deterioration of my beautiful mother was nearly complete.

Her stare was vacant, and she could not respond to my voice. A hospital bed had been installed in her room, and the quilt softly folded across the foot of it. Momma slept under it for those last few weeks.

MOMMA'S QUILT

Continued

She died in that bed, surrounded by loved ones, and covered gently with my quilt.

It comforted me to know that it had kept her warm, that fabric I had sewn and quilted had wrapped her in the love I was too far away to provide. After the funeral I washed the quilt and brought it home with me. I tucked it neatly into the armoire with the other quilts I had made, under lavender-scented tissue.

And there it stayed until a year later, when I packed for a writer's retreat at Port Townsend. I knew the accommodations would be spartan, and it was a cold rainy weekend.

On an impulse, I threw the quilt into a basket for the trip. Ignoring the wings of a thought fluttering against the back of my mind, I carried the basket to the car.

As I spread the quilt over the bed in my small room at the retreat, the thought slipped back. It was one of those childish step-on-a-crack-break-your-mother's-back kind of thoughts.

"It comforted me to know that it had kept her warm, that fabric I had sewn and quilted had wrapped her in the love I was too far away to provide."

MOMMA'S QUILT

Continued

Was I sealing some unwitting bargain with fate?

Both my mother and aunt had died of Alzheimer's. Would sleeping under the quilt add weight to some cosmic scale and increase my chances of getting the disease?

I pushed the thoughts back across the boundaries of my soul, and grabbed hold of my faith instead, faith that God is in control of this. It is a burden too big for me to carry alone.

I slept well that night, lulled by the sound of the wind and waves outside my window, and comforted by sweet dreams of my mother. I felt her love surrounding me, and I awakened with a sense of peace about her death.



LOVING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Written by Dawn Darby

Have you heard of the Maldives? Would you be able to find it on a globe? Try it because a few of your brothers and sisters in Christ live there and need your prayers. The Maldives are a collection of some 1200 islands, with 500,000 people inhabiting only 200 of them. The Maldives is one of the most restricted nations in the world, with fewer than 10 known believers. All Maldivians are required to be Muslim. Any Maldivian who follows Christ must remain secret or face arrest or expulsion from the country. Christians worship by gathering in homes and placing pillows against door thresholds and windows so no one can hear them. Tourism is a major source of income and tourists are confined to resorts in an attempt to protect the small population from outside influence.





LOVING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Continued

Pray for the continuation of Bible translation into Dhivehi.

Pray that Christians will be able to access God's Word through Bible apps or the Internet.

Pray for government reform to become more democratic.

Pray that Christian tourists would have the courage to share the gospel with people they meet.

Pray for safety, courage, and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the Maldives; pray that they have access to the Word of God.

"Pray for safety, courage, and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the Maldives; pray that they have access to the Word of God."

HAVE YOU HEARD OF PODCASTS?

Written by Dawn Darby

Do you like to learn and be encouraged? Do you enjoy listening to the radio, but you can't always listen to the program you like because you're busy at that time? Then podcasts are for you! Here are a few by topic:

Close to Home:

Faith Presbyterian Church

Current Issues:

BreakPoint

Eric Metaxas

News:

The Briefing

The World and Everything in It

The Christian World:

Joni & Friends

VOM Radio

Bible Teaching:

Renewing Your Mind

Just Thinking

Living on the Edge

Women:

Revive Our Hearts

enCourage Podcast

Family Issues:

Family Talk

Focus on the Family

Family Life

