

Study 0081

Scripture text: Ephesians 5:22-33; Genesis 2:15, 18

In the last study, we noted that after a man is born again, his pre-occupation should be to live for God, by coming to the knowledge of God's assignment for him, and setting out to accomplish it (**John 4:31-34**). Just as God did with Adam, when a man becomes born again, he is planted by God in a local assembly where he will be spiritually nourished, brought to maturity in Christ, and, serve God acceptably. He also has to pursue a God-assigned vocation, or, be engaged in a God-appointed job, which is where he will bring the greatest glory to God and be most pleasing to Him. Finally, God will give him a wife who will be his helper. Unless a man apprehends or lays hold on the purpose for which he was apprehended or brought to salvation by Christ, he will be unfruitful and frustrated in his earthly endeavours; he will be unable to fulfil God's intention in marriage, and will ultimately lose his life in eternity. It is therefore imperative that a man and husband, needs to be trained in righteousness, learn what it means to be a true leader, and understand God's way of love in general, and more specifically, as it relates to his wife.

Marriage is kingdom-based, and as such, everything an unmarried believer or a believing husband does, must reflect this. Hence, for the unmarried believer, when praying for a wife, he should be asking God to reveal to him, the woman God has prepared for him as his helper in accomplishing God's assignment for him. It is not expected that he will bring someone before God, and ask God to approve. A married believer on the other hand, needs to understand that his wife is not just a companion, a complement, or his completion, but his helper as well; hence, he needs to share God's assignment for him with her, and help her to understand that she has a major part to play in it. Although the man as husband is the head of his wife; it is not in a dictatorial or tyrannical sense. Rather, he is expected to be a loving leader, fashioned in the pattern of Christ, such that he would sacrificially give himself for his wife; provide for her and bring her to maturity; protect her and be affectionate towards her; receive God's plan for his household, and communicate same to them; and, lead by example.

And as the husband is the head, the wife is the assistant (**1 Corinthians 11:9**), for she was given to her husband to be an aid, a support, and, to share his burdens (**Proverbs 31:10-12 (LB, NLT); Genesis 3:12**). The role of the wife as a helper is to be seen in the context of the husband's God-given assignment, either directly (where a wife is involved in the husband's business or ministry as a partner) or indirectly (where a wife plays a supportive role, e.g., the home-front, to enable her husband be effective in his God-given assignment), or, both. A wife can be likened in her role, to the way the Holy Spirit is a believer's Helper (**John 14:15-16**)—a wife is succour and comfort to her husband (**Genesis 24:67**), and is her husband's glory (**John 16:14; 1 Corinthians 11:7**).

It is important to note though, that the wife is not to be a tool for the sexual gratification of her husband; a baby-making factory; a housemaid; a punching bag; or an object of abuse. She is also not the head of the household; a unilateral decision-maker; or a women's libber (**1 Timothy 2:11-14**). Even when she is a 'bread winner', as in when she is the only one working (because her husband is out of work), she still is not the head of the household—that is the husband's purview! Rather, a wife is a helper, who can only play her role effectively when she first knows her husband's God-given assignment! She also would need to know how she can assist him, so that he can fulfil his God-given assignment. Thus, one of the things that a single sister should be able to hear from God about her husband-to-be, is what he will be doing for God in the furtherance of His kingdom, and, how she would support him

to fulfil that God-given assignment! For a married woman, (a) if she was married as an unbeliever, and is now born again, her primary role as helper to her husband, who is as yet, not born again, will be to intercede for him to God, as well as live as God wants her to, so that her husband can become saved (**1 Peter 3:1-2 LB**); (b) if her husband is born again, but deviating from God's will for his life (and by that token, God's intention for their marriage), her primary role is to prayerfully seek God's face for her husband's return to God's way (**2 Chronicles 7:14**), and where possible and necessary, give wise counsel to him on what he should be doing (**Acts 5:1-11**); and, (c) if her husband is already doing God's assignment, the wife plays the role of a burden-sharer, as well as takes care of the home-front as much as is possible; although her husband's role of maintaining discipline in the home cannot, and should not, be substituted! Had Eve busied herself supporting her husband, Adam, rather than engaging herself in conversation with Satan (**Genesis 3:1-7**), we would probably be living in a different world!

The wife cannot achieve God's intention for marriage by transforming herself into a boss or an authority over her husband, seeking to compel him to do God's assignment; rather, she is to use the resource of prayer/intercession (**Matthew 26:39-44**)! Indeed, a wife is expected to submit to her husband in everything, as unto the Lord (**Ephesians 5:22, 24; 1 Peter 3:1, 6**). Submission can be defined as a willing and voluntary subordination of oneself to another—it cannot be faked, and, it cannot be forced (**Philippians 2:3-8**)! If a wife is living the self-life, or in the flesh, she cannot submit to her husband no matter what he does or does not do (**Romans 8:5-8; 1 Peter 3:1-6**). If, however, she has the nature of Christ (i.e., she is living the crucified/resurrected life), submission to her husband as unto the Lord, in everything, should not be a problem. True, under the New Covenant, the wife is a joint-heir with her husband, of the grace of life (**1 Peter 3:7**), however, she must not focus on that equality as though it is more important than her role or mission in marriage—to assist, aid, help, support, and, succour, her husband! A wife should, therefore, not think of herself more highly than she ought to, but should take on the nature of a servant or slave (**Romans 12:3, 10b, 11**), and see that she reverences her husband (**Ephesians 5:33 AMP**). She should be obedient to the word of God, even when it seems unfair, for so Christ submitted to His earthly parents (**Luke 2:43-52**) and His Heavenly Father (**Philippians 2:8-11; Hebrews 5:8-9**).

It is important to note that a wife is a “*help meet*” to her husband. What this means is that a wife is adapted to, has been made to fit, or, is comparable to, her husband. This implies that the areas of deficiency in the husband (and there are many) are the areas which she will plug in, to make everything complete. It is therefore, very often the case that God would bring to a man who is introverted, a woman who is an extrovert to be his wife. Many people who say that they have nothing in common with their spouse-to-be are really on point, where it is God who has brought them together. No matter how strong a man may think himself to be, he definitely has weak spots, and God has prepared a woman to be his wife, who can, and will, cover those weak spots in his life (**Genesis 2:21-23**). This is one more reason a man should nourish and cherish his wife, so that she can continue to cover up his weak spots.

EXERCISE

Please answer **T** (true) or **F** (false) to the statements below.

1. A wife's proper place in the home is in the kitchen.
2. A wife's primary role is to raise the children.
3. A wife is to be seen, not heard.
4. A wife is the woman a man settles down with after a time of playing the field with other women.

5. A wife is a well brought up woman from a well-to-do home.
6. A pastor's wife should not be involved in the ministry of her husband.
7. A husband's role is to bring in money; the wife's role is to take care of the home.
8. A man and his wife should have the same traits for their marriage to be successful.