Let God Be True!

When Your Husband's a Fool

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"Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send."

I Samuel 25:25

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

I Peter 3:5-6

Introduction:

A. Having studied holiness earlier today, we should see that holy women are being considered here.
B. This subject is very simple … should a wife obey God or her husband in matters of sin? This is easy.
C. The two difficulties are intimidated women and insecure men, but the Bible can correct both of them.
D. All men are fools some times; and some men are fools all the time. What is a married woman to do?
E. It can be wonderful married to a Christian man, but it can be a great trial of faith married to a fool.
F. The confusion on this topic has been exacerbated by books like Elizabeth Rice's, "Me? Obey Him?"
G. We want the very godliest marriages and families, but we measure by only one standard – the Bible!
H. We want great women as our wives – those who fear and love God more than they do their husbands.

Wives Are to Obey Husbands

A. We believe, teach, and defend a husband's authority, for it is a clear matter of revelation from God for the benefit of man and profit of society (Gen 2:18; 3:16; I Cor 11:3; Titus 2:5).
B. A man gets a helping companion; a wife gets a protector (Ec 4:9-12; I Tim 2:12-14; Ru 3:1).
C. Christian wives submit "as unto the Lord" and "as it is fit in the Lord," because they do it based on faith in Him and His command, which make it a proper thing (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18).
D. We do not care that Diana Spencer might have eliminated "obey him" from her 1981 vows.
E. We do not care that so-called Christians make marriage a partnership, neutering the husband.

All Authority is Ruled by God

A. Parents rule children, masters rule servants, kings rule citizens, husbands rule wives, and pastors rule churches by God's revelation. Man did not invent or determine any authority.
B. The only absolute and unconditional authority is God Himself, who made all other authority relationships relative … conditional … subjective … and temporal.

C. There is no place for rationalization in this or other Bible subjects. We submit to revelation!
D. Godly children disobeyed their parents in order to obey God (I Sam 19:11-17; I Kgs 15:13).
E. Godly citizens disobey rulers in order to obey God (Exodus 1:15-21; Josh 2:1-7; Dan 1:5-8).
F. The apostles provide the clearest example of disobeying authority (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29).
G. No wife has faced greater fear than three Hebrew men, but consider their "careless" answer to the most powerful king in world history that had power over their lives (Dan 3:16)!
H. Husbands are no more always right than rulers, masters, parents, or pastors are always right.

Wives Are Not to be Amazed (I Peter 3:1-6)

A. After civil and employment authority, Peter took up the duties of wives (I Peter 2:13-25).
B. The nature of a wife submitting to a husband parallels the other two authorities (I Pet 3:1).
C. For unbelieving husbands, a wife's subjection, chastity, and fear might win him (I Pet 3:1-2).
D. A Christian wife is to emphasize and exalt her inward spirit above her outward looks (3:3-4).
E. Holy women in the Old Testament observed this very same role of marital subjection (3:5).
F. Sarah, the wife of the Friend of God and mother of Israel, did so by "lord" (3:6; Gen 18:12).
G. A woman can show herself a daughter of Sarah by doing well by the same subjection (3:6).
H. However, she is not to be afraid with any amazement – terrifying fear rendering her helpless.
    1. Amazement. The condition of being mentally paralyzed; loss of presence of mind.
    2. Amazed. Driven stupid; stunned or stupefied, as by a blow, out of one's wits. Bewildered, confounded, confused, perplexed. Struck with sudden terror; terror-stricken, terrified, alarmed. Lost in wonder or astonishment.
    3. Amazed. See Exodus 15:15; Judges 20:41; 32:15; Isaiah 13:8; Ezekiel 32:10; Matthew 19:25; Mark 6:51; 10:32; 16:8; Acts 2:12.
    4. The apostle used "afraid" here in the same sense as "fear" used earlier (3:6; 3:2; 2:18).
    5. A wife does well by obeying her husband, but cannot compromise through fear of him.
    6. Sarah obeyed Abraham well in a variety of circumstances (Gen 12:5,10-15; 18:6; etc.).
    7. However, she went against him in the matter of Ishmael and Hagar (Genesis 21:9-12).
    8. Peter was terrified and denied Jesus to a maid, who accused him of being a disciple.
    9. Remember the unbelieving husband in context, which could certainly complicate things.

Abigail Disobeyed Nabal (I Sam 25:10-19)

A. Abigail was a beautiful and wise woman, but married to a fool (25:2-3). Beware fathers!
B. Nabal's wishes regarding David were well known, but Abigail disregarded them (25:19).
C. God blessed her disrespect and rebellion by giving her in marriage to David (25:25,37,39).
D. This is the classic illustration of a wife disregarding her husband in order to obey God.
E. What would wise Abigail have done, if she had dumbed herself down to "Me? Obey Him?"

Are There Any other Examples?

A. Zipporah rebuked her husband and circumcised her son to save Moses' life (Ex 4:24-26).
B. The great woman of Shunem asked her husband for a room for the prophet (II Kings 4:8-10).
C. Manoah's wife, the mother of Samson, corrected him for foolish thinking (Judges 13:22-23).
D. Eunice taught Timothy about God in spite of her pagan husband (II Tim 1:5; Acts 16:1-2).
E. Rebekah tricked Isaac into giving the right son the blessing of the Lord (Gen 27:1-17,46).

When Should a Wife Disobey?

A. If a husband orders his wife to sign a tax return that has a lie in it, she should refuse to do so.
B. If a husband orders his wife to steal something for him, she should refuse to do so.
C. If a husband orders his wife to watch a porn flick with him, she should refuse to do so.
D. A wife must obey God over her husband in those things He has plainly revealed in the Bible.
E. God commands spiritual things e.g. baptism and church attendance, which a husband cannot overthrow, for God's commands are far above his (Acts 10:48; Heb 10:23-25; 12:28-29).
F. A wife does not have the right to matters of liberty any more than a child, for Moses taught that husbands could disallow vows of wives, and fathers those of daughters (Num 30:1-16).
    1. The religious matters in this chapter are not commands, but freewill vows or offerings.
    2. First, consider that this passage teaches the independence of a female before the Lord.
    3. Second, a husband had to have disallowed the vow when he heard it, not any later.
    4. Matters of liberty are to be followed by those under authority in each of the five spheres.
    5. But God's commandments are not matters of liberty, nor are they answered by Num 30.

How Should a Wife Disobey?

A. If possible, she should approach the matter very carefully, cautiously, and soberly in prayer.
B. She should then approach her husband in the most discreet and respectful way possible to express her concern that a matter of sin is at stake against the word of God.
C. If possible, she should hear his answers and examine them by the word of God and prayer.
D. Consider the practical wisdom of writing a letter rather than having a verbal confrontation.
E. Every other wifely duty should be increased and perfected to show all good fidelity and faith.
F. Before defiance, if possible, a wife should proceed with questions, exhortation, and warning.
G. A wife should never explode, threaten, separate, or any other such thing over these matters.
H. A wife should make perfectly clear that all other aspects of the marriage will be upheld.

What If It Breaks Up a Marriage?

A. As in all matters of faith, it is only God's revelation that counts, not human sentimentality.
B. God has called the believing spouse in a mixed marriage to peace, which is their duty.
C. The Christian woman here does everything to save her marriage, even to an unbeliever.

D. If her husband is still so obnoxious in spite of her perfect life, he deserves Nabal's fate.
E. If the unbeliever rejects the perfect conduct of a wife for her religion, then so be it, but the entire onus of breaking the marriage is on the head of the perverse husband (I Cor 7:12-16).
F. The martyrs gave up marriage and a whole lot more – their own lives! – for Jesus Christ.
G. Jesus Christ prophesied that families would be broken (Matthew 10:34-37; Luke 14:25-33).

What Is a Real Man?

A. A real man fears God and accepts admonition even from his wife rather than sin against God.
B. A real man gives his wife the liberty to meekly and reverently question, admonish, or warn.

Conclusion:

A. Let every father protect his daughters from ever marrying a fool and being trapped like dear Abigail.
B. Let every wife maintain her faith, fear, and love of God as the most important relationship in life.
C. Let every husband cultivate this relationship with God in his wife and allow her liberty for godliness.

For Further Study:

A. Commentary on I Samuel 25 and Abigail's letter.
B. Sermon Outline: Ordinance of Authority.
C. Sermon Outline: A Marriage Covenant.
D. Sermon Outline: God Hates Compromise.
E. Sermon Outline: The Fear of the Lord.