
REFORMING Marriage

Gospel Living for Couples



DOUGLAS WILSON

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INTRODUCTION

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Eph. 5:2)

How would you describe the spiritual aroma of your home? When visitors arrive, before virtually anything is said or done, what is one of the first things they notice about your family? In many cases, it is the *aroma*. Do they feel as though a bad attitude crawled under your refrigerator and died? Or do they think someone has been baking spiritual bread in the kitchen all afternoon?

Perhaps the one living in the home is not in the best position to answer this question. Aromas are the sorts of things one gets used to. The residents usually do not notice those things that immediately strike a visitor. So if there is an offensive aroma in the home, it can sometimes be a difficult problem to solve. No easy formula of resolution is available. Nevertheless, the Bible does teach on the subject. The text noted above says that when Christians walk in love they are imitating Christ, and the sacrifice of Christ is a pleasant aroma to God. Similarly, a Christ-like

home atmosphere produces this sort of aroma before God and consequently before man.

In other words, keeping God's law with a whole heart (which is really what love *is*) is not only seen in overt acts of obedience. The collateral effect of obedience is the aroma of love. This aroma is out of reach for those who have a hypocritical desire to be known by others as a keeper of God's law. Many can fake an attempt at keeping God's standards in some external way. What we *cannot* fake is the resulting, distinctive aroma of pleasure to God.

In the home, where should this wholehearted obedience begin? Where should the aroma originate? Jesus taught us, with regard to individuals, that cups must be cleaned from the inside out. If we apply this principle to the home, we should see that the "inside" of a family is, of course, the relationship between husband and wife, as they self-consciously imitate the relationship of Christ and the Church. John Bunyan once exhorted husbands to be "such a believing husband to your believing wife that she may say, 'God has not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preaches to me every day the way of Christ to His church.'" The health of all other relationships in the home depends upon the health of *this* relationship, and the key is found in how the husband is treating his wife. Or, put another way, when mamma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.

Later in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, Paul tells husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies. He then points out that each person nourishes and cherishes his own body. The word for *cherishes* in that passage literally means *to keep warm*. Consequently, one of the fundamental duties of husbandry is for the husband to keep his wife *warm*. When that is done, the rest of the home is warm. But how can he keep her warm? Notice that our text says that we are to *walk* in love. A wife is not kept warm in the securing love of a husband if he is erratic in how he loves her. If he is harsh with her or ignores her but occasionally shows her

CHAPTER I



A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY *of Marriage*

FOUNDATIONS

A short walk through the marriage and family section of the local Christian bookstore easily demonstrates that modern Christians have a tremendous interest in the subject of marriage and family. But this booming marriage business (books, conferences, seminars, marriage counseling) is really a sign of disease and not health. In a very real sense, our interest is morbid, almost pathological. We are like a terminal cancer patient, fervently researching alternative treatments, hoping against hope that something can be done. Desperate for happiness in our relationships and discontent with what God has given us, we are imploring the experts to show us the way out.

God is the Lord. He is central to the coherence of all things, including marriage. He has the preeminence over heaven and earth, and all His human creatures have the moral responsibility to acknowledge that preeminence in all they do, including how they marry. A man and a woman who have this orientation together, in a covenant bond, enjoy a Christian marriage. If they

deny or ignore this truth, they do so at their peril. A mature Christian is one who understands that it is the duty of all human creatures to glorify God in all things. It therefore stands to reason that a mature Christian man will be a mature husband. Likewise, a mature Christian woman will be a mature wife. *Maturity in the Lord is a prerequisite to maturity in marriage.*

In studying the subject of marriage, we must begin with the biblical instruction on the nature and character of God. When we have come to understand that He is indeed the Lord, we will naturally turn to Him to learn how His gracious law applies to the foundation and purpose of marriage.

THE COVENANT

The nature of the triune God is described to us in Scripture under the figure of a father-son bond. God is the *Father*, and Jesus Christ is His only *Son*. Before He laid the foundation of the earth, the Father had already selected a *bride* for His Son. That bride is the Christian Church, revealed at the end of history as the elect of God.

Then one of the seven angels . . . came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (Rev. 21:9–10)

Paul teaches us that we ought self-consciously to think of our marriages as dim pictures of the central marriage, that of Christ to His Church. It is a great mystery, he says, but when a man leaves his father and mother and takes a wife, he makes a proclamation concerning Christ and the Church. Depending on the marriage, that declaration is made poorly or well, but it is always made.

We can, therefore, see how the foundation of marriage is *covenantal*. God's relationship to us through Christ is covenantal—it is the New Covenant—and our marriages are a picture of that truth. The foundation of godly married life is the same foundation for all godly living—in everything we are to seek the glory of God. Our triune God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, and He has chosen *marriage* as one of the best instruments through which fallen men may glorify Him.

In attacking the covenantal nature of marriage, the error of feminism has actually been very valuable. Throughout the history of the Church, destructive heresies have been used by a sovereign God to force the Church to define that which was unclear. It was the heretic Marcion who provoked the Church into identifying the canon of Scripture, it was the heretic Arius who forced the Church to testify clearly to the full deity of the Lord Jesus, and so on. In our day, feminism is providing that same service through its challenge of the marriage covenant.

Without the defiance of error, we can very easily just drift along, doing what seems “natural” or “traditional.” Countless thousands do quite a number of things because it “just seems right.” When and if that practice is ever challenged, however, the traditionalist is nonplussed. “Well, I’m not sure *why* I do that, really.” Consider our practice of a woman taking her husband’s last name. Why do we do that? Why does Susan Miller become Susan Carter? Does the Bible require it?

Surprisingly for some, the Bible does teach that God calls a husband and wife by the same name—the name of the husband. This fully supports both our particular custom of a bride taking a new name, as well as the covenantal truth that custom represents.

“This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them *mankind* in the day they were created” (Gen. 5:1-2). In Hebrew,

the italicized word translated *mankind* is *Adam*. In other words, God created Adam and his wife male and female, He blessed them, and called *them* Adam. She was, from the beginning, a covenantal partaker in the name of her husband. God does not call her Adam on her own, He calls her Adam *with him*.

Adam first noticed the lack of a suitable helper after naming the animals.

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. (Gen. 2:20–21)

When Adam was naming the animals, he was not just attaching labels randomly. In the ancient world, names were extremely significant and represented the nature and character of that which was named. This significance is very clear in the Genesis accounts of the naming of Adam's wife. In naming the animals, Adam saw none who could be appropriately named as a helper suitable for him.

After the creation of his wife, Adam receives her, and *names* her.

And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman [*Ishshah*, not Eve], because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:23–24)

As verse 24 shows, Adam and Ishshah were a paradigmatic couple. *They were not just any two individuals*. When the Lord Jesus taught on the subject of divorce, He appealed to the creation ordinance of marriage found in the early chapters of Genesis. He taught us that *God* puts a man and woman together in marriage, and what God has joined together man has no authority

to separate. The temptation is to argue that in Genesis God only joined together Adam and Eve—two individuals as individuals. But this argument resists the teaching of Christ, who insisted that Adam and Eve were a paradigmatic couple—a pattern for all the rest of us (Mt. 19:4-6). When God joined *them* together, He was joining together *every* man and woman who has ever come together sexually in a covenant bond.

Other facts are obvious as well from this creation ordinance of marriage. Because God created Adam and Eve, homosexuality is excluded. Because Adam could find no helper for himself among the animals, bestiality is excluded. And because God created just *one* woman for Adam, the pattern of monogamy is clearly set and displayed to us. The polygamy found in the Old Testament among the saints of God does not alter this. Polygamy was instituted by *man*, and not by God. The first record of a polygamous union was Lamech (Gen. 4:19), with no hint of divine approval. But most important, polygamy does not fit with the creation ordinance of marriage or with the picture given in the New Testament of Christ and the Church.

So in this passage of Genesis, we are taught that Adam's reception of the woman, and his naming of her, were to be a pattern for all marriages to come. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother." Now at this point Adam had not yet named his wife *Eve*. Adam gave his wife two individual names. The first was Ishshah, or Woman, because she was taken out of man. The second was Chavvah—life-bearer, or as we say it in English, *Eve*. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve [*Chavvah*], because she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20).

In both passages where she is named, it is clearly stated that her two names reveal a significant truth about her. The first reveals her dependence upon man—she was taken out of man. The second reveals man's dependence upon her—every man since is her son. Millennia later, the apostle Paul teaches us that we are

continually to remember these two truths in our marriages. Each wife is an *Ishshah*, and each wife is a *Chavvah*. Each is Woman, and each is Eve.

“Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God” (1 Cor. 11:11–12). Notice that the progression of Paul’s thought follows the same pattern seen in Genesis. Woman “came from man (*Ishshah*), even so man also comes through woman (*Chavvah*); but all things are from God” (*Adam*).

God is the one who called our first parents by the collective name Adam. Now Adam is also a generic term for *man* or *man-kind*. This shows clearly the biblical practice of including women under such a description. Our English use of the generic *man* and *mankind* follows this biblical example exactly. Far from being insulting to women, as feminists want to maintain, it reflects a biblical pattern of thought. The feminist reaction to this, and their rejection of taking a new last name (in order to keep their *father’s* name!), is not just a small bit of modern silliness. It is a fundamental rebellion against God. So when our Susan Miller becomes Mrs. Robert Carter it is not just “something we do.” It is covenant security.

With this basic framework for understanding the marriage covenant, we may turn to consider the basic purposes of marriage. The Bible sets forth three basic *earthly* reasons for marriage. They are, in turn, the need for helpful companionship, the need for godly offspring, and the avoidance of sexual immorality.

HELPFUL COMPANIONSHIP

The Bible teaches that God placed Adam in the garden and gave him a task to perform. But the man was incapable of accomplishing that task alone. Adam needed help, and the woman was created to meet his need.

Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:19-24)

We should be able to see the connection between Adam's work of naming the beasts and the next phrase—"but for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him." The modern mentality tends to think of "naming things" as a simple scientific matter of attaching labels. But here Adam is naming the beasts with a name suitable to the nature of each. As mentioned above, in the process of naming, he realizes he has found no suitable helper—no one among the animals with a nature comparable to his. He could not name any of the animals as a suitable helper.

In the verse immediately prior to this passage God had said that it was *not good* that man should be *alone*. Throughout the process of creation, whenever God completed a work, He then pronounced it good. Obviously, such a pronouncement from the Creator indicates completion. But the Lord's statement that it was not good that man be alone is a clear indication that the creation of man was still incomplete. "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him'" (Gen. 2:18). Adam was incomplete because he lacked a companion, one who would be a helper comparable to him.



HEADSHIP

and Authority

INESCAPABLE HEADSHIP

A brief grammar lesson may help explain the nature of biblical authority in the home. When it comes to reading the Scripture, Christians frequently confuse *indicatives* and *imperatives*. An indicative is a statement of fact; there is no *ought* in it—the chair is brown; the ship is tilting; the snow is lumpy. Such statements simply aim to tell us the way things are. An *imperative*, on the other hand, is a command; it tells us what we must do. Close the door! Turn on the computer! Pull over! Consequently, if one were to say, “The book is on the table,” this is a simple statement of fact. It is an indicative. But if one said, “Put the book on the table,” this is a command—an imperative.

The reason for rehearsing this distinction is that many Christians find themselves misunderstanding what the Bible is saying because *they attempt to turn indicatives into imperatives*. When it comes to the gospel, the carnal heart loves to make this same mistake. What is the gospel but the Great Indicative? Faithful preachers proclaim what God has already done in the cross to

save sinners, while sinful men try to turn the gospel message into something they may do to earn salvation.

The same “grammatical” confusion happens when husbands seek to understand the Bible’s teaching on headship and authority in marriage. The Bible says the “husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church” (Eph. 5:23). Paul most emphatically does *not* say that husbands *ought* to be the heads of their wives. He says that they *are*. In this verse, the apostle is not telling us how marriages ought to function (that comes in the verses following). Rather he is telling us what the marriage relationship between husband and wife *is*. Marriage is *defined* in part as the headship of a husband over a wife. In other words, without this headship, there is no marriage.

This does not mean that God gives no imperatives to the husband. In the verses following we find a very basic imperative indeed—husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. But nowhere is the husband commanded to be a head to his wife. This is because he already is the head of his wife, *by the very nature of marriage*. If he does not love her, he is a poor head, but a head nonetheless.

Meditating on this is a very valuable thing for husbands to do. Because the husband is the head of the wife, he finds himself in a position of *inescapable leadership*. He cannot successfully refuse to lead. If he attempts to abdicate in some way, he may, through his rebellion, lead poorly. But no matter what he does or where he goes, he does so as the head of his wife. This is how God designed marriage. He has created us as male and female in such a way as to ensure that men will always be dominant in marriage. If the husband is godly, then that dominance will not be harsh; it will be characterized by the same self-sacrificial love demonstrated by our Lord—*Dominus*—at the cross. If a husband tries to run away from his headship, that abdication will dominate the home. If he catches a plane to the other side of the country and stays there, he will dominate in and by his absence. How many

children have grown up in a home *dominated* by the empty chair at the table? If the marriage is one in which the wife “wears the pants,” the wimpiness of the husband is the most obvious thing about the marriage, creating a miserable marriage and home. *His abdication dominates.*

In this passage of Ephesians, Paul tells us that husbands, in their role as head, provide a picture of Christ and the Church. Every marriage, everywhere in the world, is a picture of Christ and the Church. Because of sin and rebellion, many of these pictures are slanderous lies concerning Christ. *But a husband can never stop talking about Christ and Church.* If he is obedient to God, he is preaching the truth; if he does not love his wife, he is speaking apostasy and lies—but he is always talking. If he deserts his wife, he is saying that this is the way Christ deserts His bride—a lie. If he is harsh with his wife and strikes her, he is saying that Christ is harsh with the Church—another lie. If he sleeps with another woman, he is an adulterer, and a blasphemer as well. How could Christ love someone other than His own Bride? It is astonishing how, for a few moments of pleasure, faithless men can bring themselves to slander the faithfulness of Christ in such a way.

These are difficult words. And even with the qualifications, it is probable that a number of readers have reacted negatively to the earlier use of the word *dominance*. The fact that this is so is simply another testimony to how much the Christian Church is influenced by the propaganda of feminism—whether the man-hating secular variety or the sanitized “evangelical” kind. Nevertheless, the dominance of the husband is a fact; the only choice we have in this regard concerns whether that dominance will be a loving and constructive *dominion* or hateful and destructive *tyranny*. Arguing with the fact of the husband’s headship in the home is like jumping off a cliff in order to quarrel with the law of gravity. Marshall the arguments on the way down however one likes, he will eventually find himself refuted in a messy way.

However Christians compromise with feminism, such a compromise cannot undo the *indicative* that God has woven into creation. How could it? God has built the headship of the husband into the very structure of marriage. But what this compromise can do, it does very well—it brings in rebellion and sin. Such rebellion keeps husbands from obeying the *imperative*, which is to love their wives. What is the result? We see husbands denying their status as heads of their wives and refusing to love them as instructed.

LOVE AND RESPECT

The second greatest commandment requires that we love our neighbors as ourselves. “And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mk. 12:31). And, of course, if we ask “who is our neighbor?” the answer Jesus gives is that the person placed in front of us is our neighbor. As the parable makes clear, this includes the stranger by the side of the road, but it also includes those with whom we live. A husband and wife are certainly required by Scripture to love one another.

But when the Bible gives a specific command to husbands *as husbands*, and does the same for wives *as wives*, the emphasis in the respective commands is notably different. For example, wives are nowhere specifically commanded to love their husbands. In one passage (Tit. 2:4), the older women are urged to teach the younger women to be “husband-lovers.” But the word is a compound word (*philandros*), and the form of the word for love refers to a warm affection. In that verse, the same kind of compound word is used with regard to children. I would paraphrase the passage as saying that the older women should teach the younger women to be “into kids” and “into their husband.” Outside this one passage, the attitude that is required of wives

is one of *respect*. “[A]nd let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Eph. 5:33).

Men, on the other hand, are commanded to love (*agapao*) their wives to the uttermost. Two examples are given for the men, and both require tremendous self-sacrifice. First, men are to love their wives the same way they love their own bodies. “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself” (Eph. 5:28). No one ever hated himself, Paul teaches, and this provides us with a good standard in our treatment of others. A husband should be as solicitous for the welfare of his wife as he is for himself. This is nothing less than the Golden Rule applied to marriage. Second, men are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Eph. 5:25).

Now the Scripture plainly gives us our duties. Wives are to respect their husbands, and husbands are to love their wives. But there is more. When we consider these requirements and look at how men and women relate to one another, we can see the harmony between what God requires, and what we need both to give and to receive.

The commands are given to our respective weaknesses in the performance of our duties. Men need to do their duty with regard to their wives—they need to make it a point *to love*. Women need to do their duty in the same way—they need to make it a point *to respect*. But men are generally poor at this kind of loving. C. S. Lewis once commented that women tend to think of love as taking trouble for others (which is much closer to the biblical definition), while men tend to think of love as not *giving* trouble to others. Men consequently need work on this area, and they are instructed by Scripture to undertake that work. In a similar way, women are fully capable of loving a man and sacrificing for him, while believing the entire time that he is a true and unvarnished

jerk. Women are good at this kind of love, but the central requirement given to wives is that they must *respect* their husbands. As Christian women gather together (for prayer? Bible study?), they frequently speak about their husbands in the most *disrespectful* way. Then they hurry home to cook, clean, and care for his kids. Why? Because they love their husbands. Now it is not wrong for the wives to love their husbands this way, but it is certainly wrong to substitute love for the respect God requires.

We can also see the commands which are given have regard for our respective weaknesses in another way. Men have a need to *be respected*, and women have a need to *be loved*. When Scripture says, for example, that the elders of a church must feed the sheep, it is a legitimate inference to say that sheep need food. In the same way, when the Scripture emphasizes that wives must respect their husbands, it is a legitimate inference to say that husbands need respect. The same is true for wives. If the Bible requires husbands to love their wives, we may safely say that wives need to be loved.

But we are often like the man who gave his wife a shotgun for Christmas because he wanted to borrow it. When a wife is trying to work on a troubled marriage, she gives to him what *she* would like, and not what God commanded and not what he needs. She loves him, and she tells him so. But does she *respect* him and tell him so?

We have difficulty because we do not follow the scriptural instructions. When a man is communicating his love for his wife (both verbally and nonverbally), he should be seeking to communicate to her the security provided by his covenantal commitment. He will provide for her, he will nourish and cherish her, he will sacrifice for her, and so forth. Her need is to be *secure* in his love for her. Her need is to receive love from him.

When a wife is respecting and honoring her husband, the transaction is quite different. Instead of concentrating on the

security of the relationship, respect is directed to his *abilities* and *achievements*—how hard he works, how faithfully he comes home, how patient he is with the kids, and so forth.

The specifics may cause problems with some because he thinks he might *not* come home, and she thinks he doesn't work nearly hard enough. But love is to be rendered to wives and respect to husbands because God has required it, not because any husband or wife has earned it. Paul does not say, "Husbands, love your wives if *she* . . ." He does not say, "Wives, respect your husbands if *he* . . ." God tells husbands what to do independently of what the wives are doing, and He tells the wives what to do independently of what the husbands are doing. Our obedience is not to rest on the obedience of our spouse. And it is always good for us to remember that God requires our spouses to render to us far more than any of us deserve.

SHE WAS MADE FOR HIM

As discussed in the previous chapter, marriage is a creation ordinance; it has been with us since the creation of mankind. When only *half* of humankind had been created, God looked on His work and said, "It is not good that a man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). When God was creating the world, He stated emphatically at each point that what He had created was good. Everything He did was good until He created man without a woman. At that point God said that something was *not* good—it was not good for man to be alone.

The Lord had created Adam and given him a task (Gen. 2:15). In addition to taking care of the Garden of Eden, Adam was also to multiply and replenish the earth. There was an obvious need for a helper as he could not multiply the species all by himself. The task assigned to him was that of exercising dominion over the earth; in order to accomplish this task many descendants

were needed. But in addition to the obvious help of making Adam fruitful, Eve was also to accompany him in his vocation and assist him in it.

But the Lord already knew that Adam was going to need this help. The problem did not dawn on God halfway through the creation of man, with the woman then created as an afterthought. The reason the woman was created later was for the purpose of establishing, for all time, the line of authority in the home. After all, God *could* have created them both at the same time. Paul applies this lesson very plainly. “For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for woman, but woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:8–9).

In other words, the creation order tells us that Adam was not created for Eve, but rather that Eve was created for Adam. Moreover, the way Paul applies this truth shows that the relationship of Adam and Eve was not just unique to them as one couple. As mentioned earlier, they provide a paradigm for all marriages; this pattern is normative for the human race. The point is the intention of God in creation—the case does not rest on *chronological* priority individually considered. There are many wives who are older than their husbands (they got here first), but this does not undo the pattern set by the creation of Adam first, and the creation of Eve second.

Paul is making his application from the creation order. The application is made to Corinthian men and women, thousands of years after Adam and Eve lived. And although we are living thousands of years after the Corinthians, the fact remains that the order in which Adam and Eve were created was intended for us to use as a pattern for all subsequent generations of husbands and wives.

This creation order means that all husbands are called to a particular task (in fact, the word *vocation* comes from the Latin verb, *voco*, which means *I call*). Their wives are called to the role

of aiding and supporting them in their calling. This means, further, that the man is established by God as the authority in the home. Under God, he is defined by the work to which he is called, while she is defined by the man to whom she is called. As they turn to the task, since the work is his responsibility, she is his responsibility as well.

This obviously collides with the idea that men and women both have an equal right to pursue their separate careers as they climb up the professional ladder. Unfortunately, this assumption is common among evangelicals today. It is thoroughly unbiblical, and this problem was created, not by feminism, but rather by abdicating husbands. One of the central difficulties we face in our culture today is the general “wimping out” of the Christian men. Men have abdicated their God-given strength, leadership, and authority. They do not want to take the masculine role; they do not want to take the initiative because they have taken the easy way out. The fulfillment of the cultural mandate involves hard work, and men need to be hard in order to do the work. This does not mean they are to be hard *on* their wives; it means they are to be hard *for* their wives.

Men and women do not have the same perspective on work; therefore they do not have the same perspective of authority. This is deeply imbedded in the created order, feminist doctrine notwithstanding. Feminist dogma, engineered by ungodly men, has managed to maneuver multitudes of women into the workforce outside the home. But this has not changed how men and women relate to one another at all. It cannot. Even though the workplace has far more women in it now, the authority of men is still firmly intact. With the rhetoric of equality, women have been duped into working outside the home; they have taken a second job and then have been unable to get their husbands to share the load of their first one. She still does the laundry, the cooking, and everything else. And of course the selfish male is the main beneficiary

of all this liberation of women; he gets two paychecks for the price of one. He will still take out the garbage, however.

We must confess that God's pattern for the godly authority of a husband over his wife makes sense. The only alternative is ungodly oppression of women by men.

In no way does this mean that women are not competent in many of the tasks they do. A crescent wrench can be used to pound in nails, but that is not what a crescent wrench is *for*. There are some tasks detached from the home in which women do outstanding work. But just because someone is *able* to do a job does not mean that he or she is called by God to the task. A wife can do many tasks in the home and find fulfillment in doing them. Her husband, confronted with the same job, is able to do it, but it is like eating gravel for him. He finds no fulfillment; he is not called to the task in the same way she is.

So in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul states a truth which should induce fear and awe in all husbands: *the woman was created to be a helper for the man*. But nothing is more offensive than hearing ignorant men trifle with these truths—making jokes about submission and so forth. Such trifling is completely unbiblical in tone. When a man realizes that he has been created for and called to a particular task, that can be overwhelming in itself (Eph. 2:10). But if he then realizes that he needs *help* in performing that task, and he is not consequently moved with a holy terror, then he is a complete blockhead.

Husbands must, therefore, concentrate on being strong for the sake of their wives. Ungodly men are strong for selfish reasons, and not for the sake of others. A godly husband uses his strength to *give to her*; he does not use his strength to take from her. A properly-ordered relationship is one in which the man knows he was created by God to accomplish a particular task, and he knows that his wife was created by God to help him with that task. He was created for the glory of God, and although it may be frightening to say, she was created *for him* (1 Cor. 11:7–8).