

How to Exasperate Your Wife
& *Other Short Essays for Men*

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YOUR WIFE**

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DOUGLAS WILSON

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Moscow, Idaho



*This book is for Christian wives everywhere.
Thanks for being such good sports.*



FREE PANTS
for the caveman on the cover



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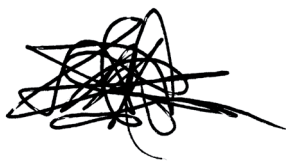
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**THE MEANING
OF HONOR**

CHAPTER 1

WISDOM IS A WOMAN

The apostle Peter tells husbands to live with their wives with knowledge. But many modern men face a barrier when they consider these words. They do not understand women because they do not understand wisdom, and they do not understand wisdom because they do not approach her as a woman.

Throughout the book of Proverbs—a book for teaching wisdom to young men—wisdom appears as a *woman*. The book begins with two women, personifications of wisdom and folly respectively, and it ends with a particular woman. As a woman, wisdom appears under various aspects, and men who would be wise must approach her with all these separate aspects in mind. While some of the feminine aspects of wisdom are not *directly* applicable to a man's understanding of his wife, several are.

First, she is an instructor, a teacher, and a schoolmarm ready to rap our knuckles (Prov. 1:20–25), hauling us out of the classroom by the ear. Wisdom is a woman who effectively teaches little-boy-simpletons. This means that a man who pursues wisdom should make it one of his life's pursuits to seek, among other things, to sit still in his desk and try to keep ink off his face. Wisdom is pursued with humility.

Wisdom is also a wealthy patroness, one who throws spectacular banquets to which we are wonderfully invited. “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table” (Prov. 9:1–2). A man who pursues wisdom should behave as a man behaves who is invited to dine at a palace or mansion. He should respond to the invitation, watch his manners, and eat what is served, all the while rejoicing in the wisdom that comes with bread and wine. Wisdom is pursued with gladness and joy; wisdom is gained with a knife and fork.

While all this is important, the remaining aspects of feminine wisdom are more directly relevant to the man who wants to pursue wisdom as a means of learning how to dwell together with his wife.

Wisdom is a sexually attractive woman (Prov. 7:4) and should be sought as any sensible suitor would court a beautiful and intelligent woman. The name *sister* in this context should be taken the same way it is taken in the Song of Songs (Song 5:1). The man who passionately

courts wisdom here is protected in the next verse from the “strange woman,” who flatters with her words. When wisdom is *courted*, seduction loses its allure. When the feminine personification of wisdom is courted, a man is protected from very tangible, non-personified hookers and tramps. When men come to see wisdom as altogether lovely, and they seek to win *her* hand, they are sexually protected.

A wise man marries this woman and is instructed to be faithful to her. She is a dear wife, never to be forsaken. “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake *her* not, and *she* shall preserve thee: love *her*, and *she* shall keep thee” (Prov. 4:5–6). This is the language of marriage. A man who ditches the actual wife of his youth is thereby revealing that he abandoned another woman (Wisdom) some time before. Before he leaves his wife for some young twinkie with enhanced mammaries, he has to have already left wisdom for folly.

Wisdom is our mother, and speaks to us as to her children. “Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not” (Prov. 8:32–33). In this image, wisdom is *our* mother, but viewing wisdom as a mother enables a man to see his wife *as a mother* as well, and this teaches him to respect her high calling.

This approach to wisdom—treating her as a woman—collides sharply with the approach of modernity, which

sees wisdom as a pile of rocks. These rocks are to be sorted out, counted, and organized into smaller piles according to size, color, and weight. The world is thought to be a place of brute facts, all needing to be fashioned into a more efficient ball-bearing factory. The ancient word says that wisdom is a woman to be approached with a rose, a sonnet, or both; we think it is a mountain to be razed with strip-mining equipment.

When it comes to obeying Peter's injunction to live with our wives with knowledge, men of all ages have unfortunately been dense. But modern men have this additional handicap: we have a false understanding of wisdom that distorts how we understand most of the world around us. It is little wonder that we don't understand our wives.