

## Women & More

### *Unguarded Moments*

16 February 2012

The story is told about an organization of wealthy city women who had decided that this month's outing would be to a *dairy* farm. Most members of the Monday Afternoon Club had lived in the city all their lives, and had never seen such a thing, so on the appointed day they boarded the rented bus and headed for the unpolluted countryside, leaving the city far behind.

When the ladies arrived at the farm and were greeted by the farmer, he invited them to ask him any questions. One woman, after looking around and being properly amazed, stepped into a large building and was totally stumped by something she thought quite remarkable. Locating the farmer, she asked, "Sir, why don't these cows have horns?"

Cocking his head for a moment the farmer began in a patient and respectful tone: "Well, ma'am, cattle can do a powerful lot of damage with horns. So, sometimes we keep them trimmed down with a hacksaw. Other times we just stop the growth of horns 'cold' in the young ones by putting a couple drops of acid where their little horns would grow in. Still, there are some breeds of cattle that never grow horns. But the reason *these* cows don't have horns, ma'am, is that *these* cows are horses!"

While the lady in our story seems to have missed the basic-knowledge boat, the farmer—*man*—is taking great pains to cover his condescension and sarcasm with grace! This tale harbors an important nugget for us to look at: Men and women are different! God made us different for a purpose. We look different, act different, think different and communicate different!

Talking about gender differences, Dr. John Gray in *Men Are From Mars, Women Are from Venus*, sets a comical stage. "Once upon a time Martians and Venusians met, fell in love, and had happy relationships together because they respected and accepted their differences. Then they came to Earth and amnesia set in. They forgot they were from different planets!"

The first woman on planet earth, Eve, began her life as a wife. Have we thought much about that? She was never a baby, a toddler, a teen or a college student—Eve woke up to life in Eden, from creative surgery, saying "I do". And why is that important for us to look at? Because 80% of our lives as women of God may be spent in our individual 'call' as wife!

Talking about Eve in *Women of the Bible*, Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda write: "She came into the world perfectly at peace with her God and with her

husband, the only other person on the planet. She lived in Paradise, possessing every pleasure imaginable. She never knew the meaning of embarrassment, misunderstanding, hurt, estrangement, envy, bitterness, grief, or guilt...**until she listened to her enemy and began to doubt God.**"

**I. So what is God's plan for women in marriage? Know that God does not mean for us to check-our-brain at the marriage door. Here are ten things that we should be careful to guard against in our marriage:**

1. **Infidelity**—includes fantasizing about other men. **Ephesians 5:3** "*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*"
2. **Dangerously irresponsible with money**—speaking of greed. (On March 1, we'll have a lesson titled: 'Wisdom' Watches Her Spending.)
3. **Careless in speech**—telling too much about our husband to family, friends or anyone who'll listen.
4. **Inappropriate and suggestive actions**—flirtatious. Our flirting days are over! **Proverbs 19:14** "*Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord*" (prudent means wise, judicious and cautious). *Prudence* is one of God's best gifts to our husbands.
5. **Gripping, grumbling, complaining, quarrelsome**—Proverbs calls it "Drip, drip, drip." Imagine the 'dripping' in Solomon's household, with 700 wives and 300 concubines! **Proverbs 19:13b** "...A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping."  
And **Philippians 2:14** "*Do everything without complaining or arguing.*"
6. **Disrespect for our husband**—disregarding and disesteeming his views, ideas, decisions, suggestions, and his commands to us.
7. **Trying to rule over him**—not submissive to God-given authority of our husband. Examples: "If my husband would start leading, I would start following," and "I've told him to start leading now!"
8. **Disinterest in physical relationship**—Gary Smalley says, "A man will tie his affections to those who respond to him and remove it from those who don't."
9. **Undermining our husbands** is emotional and spiritual abuse.
10. **Taking him for granted**—it's lonely out there. We must not place activities/people ahead of him. **Psalms 68:6** "*God sets the lonely in families.*"

**II. Two commands that God has for wives in Scripture:**

1. To **respect** her husband #6. above (**Ephesians 5:33**), and
2. To **submit** to him #7 above (**1 Peter 3:1, 2**). Webster defines:

- **Respect:** in relation to; having high or special regard or esteem; expression of respect or deference (respecting his views, opinions, ideas, suggestions and commands).
- **Submit:** to commit to the discretion or decision of another or of others; to yield or surrender (as in deference to).

### III. Some big questions many women ask today:

#### 1. Should we keep the marriage together because of the children? First:

**Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Next question on one flesh.)

#### And • **Why did God make a man and his wife to be one flesh?**

**Malachi 2:15, 16** “Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup> ‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment.’ Says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.”

**2. What if the husband is not a believer? 1 Corinthians 7:13, 14, 16:** “And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Other wise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. <sup>16</sup> How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband?” (Sanctify is to set apart; make holy.)

**3. What if the husband won’t take the spiritual leadership/headship in the home?** He doesn’t have to ‘take’ it, he is it! God said the husband is the head of the home. God says he is, so he is! God will not only hold him accountable for being the head, but God will hold us accountable for respecting and submitting to his headship! **1 Peter 3:1-2** says “Wives, in the same way (as Jesus submitted Himself to His accusers) be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.”

**4. What if the husband doesn’t deserve respect because he’s cheated or is an alcoholic, or drug addict, abusive, etc.? First of all, who is doing the judging?** God is the judge of all men—and how do we want God to judge us? **Ephesians 5:28-33** “...husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—<sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

God has the best plan for our lives, and he has specific plans for the married. **Jeremiah 29:11** “*For I know the plans I have for you, ‘declares the Lord,’ plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” Earlier in **Jeremiah 21:8b**, the prophet had spoken about two paths that God sets before us: “... *This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death.” **Proverbs 16:25** says, “*There is a way that seems right to a man (or woman), but in the end it leads to death.*”*

#### **IV. We must believe God and trust His Word!—Example of five wives:**

- After Eve took that forbidden fruit and ate it, and gave some to her husband, she began to doubt that God’s plan and purpose for her life was best. The devil presented her with a second plan—a self-serving option—be like God and know good from evil. **Genesis 3:6** “*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*” Why didn’t Eve ask Adam to give his thoughts on the option being presented to her by the serpent? After all, Adam was right there “with her” Scripture says, and he was the spiritual head. But she didn’t, and instead chose the way of death—the first woman’s *unguarded moment!*

When we choose to doubt God’s Word and his plan, then we’re listening to the devil’s words—always lies—and we’ll end up going our own way with our own plan. And that will be the wrong way! **Proverbs 19:3** says “*A man’s (or woman’s) own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.*”

- Later in Genesis 19 we read about Lot—Abraham’s nephew—and his wife. We never know her name. They were living in Sodom, and as the two angels of the Lord took hold of Lot, his wife and two daughters to get them out before the judgment of God fell on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, they said in verse 17: “...*Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!*” Nine verses later we read: “*But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt,*” —her own way!

- **1 Samuel 25:2-42** describes a cruel, abusive man, and his wife Abigail. “*A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy....*” **3** *His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surlly and mean in his dealings.”*

David had sent ten of his men to ask Nabal to show kindness to he and his men, as they had shown kindness to Nabal’s earlier. “*Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.*” Nabal answered David’s men roughly and arrogantly. Verse 14: “*One of the servants told Nabal’s wife Abigail: ‘David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled*

*insults at them.”* <sup>17</sup>“Now think it over and see what you can do, because **disaster is hanging over our master, and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.**”

Scripture says that “*Abigail lost no time*”—she gathered hundreds of provisions for David and his men, sent her servants on ahead, but “*she did not tell her husband Nabal.*” She humbled herself to David in one of the longest speeches made by a woman in Scripture. She says in verse 25 “*May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.*” Verse 28 “*Please forgive your servant’s offense....*”

David accepted Abigail’s gifts and promised not to kill Nabal’s household. She returned home to find her husband drinking, and when she told him what she’d done, verse 37 says that “*his heart failed him and he became like a stone.*” And verse 38 says, “*About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.*” And when God killed Nabal, David asked Abigail to be his wife.

- Acts 5:1-11 records the sad, sinful account of a husband and wife who conspired together to deceive the apostles and lie to the Holy Spirit. “*Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.*” About three hours after Ananias had come and lied to Peter and those gathered about what amount they’d sold the property for, his wife Sapphira also came in and lied. This would have been a good time for her **not** to do what her husband said—since it was sinful and ungodly! In verse 9 Peter exposes her sin: “*...How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.’* <sup>10</sup> *At that moment she fell down at his feet and died.*”

- Finally, in Acts 18 the Apostle Paul introduces us to a godly husband and wife ministry team—Priscilla and Aquila. In Ephesus they minister together to a new believer and aspiring preacher, Apollos. Verse 26: “*He (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.*”

**God made a husband and wife to compliment each other, yes, but to compliment—glorify—the Lord God together!** What a beautiful thing it is when two walk together with God as their ‘glue.’ Scripture says in **Proverbs 18:22** “*He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.*” But the temptations to be *less* as a wife are numerous, and the world screams them at us. The devil is out to defrock God’s plan and defraud his children, and nowhere is he more devilish than in the home. We want to guard our covenant marriage—it is *holy* to the Lord!