



**God's Divine Design Under Attack – Part 3**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP – 07/26/2008**

During the 1992 presidential campaign, former vice president, Dan Quayle made national headlines by accusing the producers of the hit TV series, Murphy Brown, of promoting and even celebrating single motherhood. The title character in the show was having a baby out of wedlock by choice; she didn't want a husband, she just wanted a baby.

As to be expected, Mr. Quayle took a lot of criticism and public abuse for his comments. Any time a public figure promotes Christian morality you can expect that kind of persecution – as a matter of fact, the Bible guarantees it.

One positive thing that did come out of his comments was that it sparked a public debate on "family values" as it was called. For a brief period of time America had to think about how the family and morality had been on a downward spiral for many years in our country.

Since then we have been witnessing the death of the traditional family, where the husband is the main provider and the wife manages the household, and nurtures the children. Marital infidelity, sexual sin, homosexuality, abortion, women's liberation, and many other moral declines have all had their impact on the slow demise of this type of family.

Many modern day psychologists suggest that marriage as we know it should be radically changed if not done away with completely. "*Men and women no longer need such an institution*", they say. "*Let's face it*", they add, "*marriage as we know it has failed.*"

I would amend that statement by saying it isn't the institution of marriage that has failed, it is the husbands and wives who choose to ignore God's design for marriage.

If a company produced a product that failed 50% of the time that company would be forced to make drastic changes until that product no longer failed. They would keep trying until they got it right. But let's say they just couldn't get it right. No matter how often they tried to figure out a new way to build their product they couldn't make it work.

This was very puzzling to the owners because it worked flawlessly when the product was originally introduced. They were at a loss until someone suggested they go back and search the company archives to find the original plans and blueprints for building this product.

Well, you've hopefully made the connection in my illustration. Marriage doesn't work today because of how people try to build it. It only works when we go back and look at the original blueprints. A marriage between two sinful, selfish, depraved people will never work if left to their own wisdom and ideas. The only hope for those two people to make it is if they follow God's instructions.

The man-made experiments for marriage have failed miserably. I submit to you that even when we slightly adjust God's plan and God's design for marriage we are asking for trouble – and in this case we will indeed get what we ask for.

Allow me to give you a few facts and figures that support God's plan as it pertains to children from broken marriages:

- More than 80% of adolescents who are filling our psychiatric hospitals come from broken homes.
- 75% of teenage suicides occur in families where one of the parents is missing.
- In single parent homes with teenage children, it is estimated that violent crime and burglary is as high as fifty times more likely to be committed by these teens, than their two parent counterparts.
- The data we have that compares single parent households with two parent households does not show a single solitary positive characteristic. None of the circumstances are healthy or positive

And what is the primary cause of single parent households? – The sexual revolution. When sexual sin is no longer viewed as sin, the family will not survive.

All of these trends and statistics are from the last twenty to twenty-five years. What will the next few decades bring? Is it possible things can get worse?

Turn with me in your Bibles to **2 Timothy 3**.

### **2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13**

Let's pray.

We are living under a curse. In **Genesis 3:16b**, God says to Eve after she had sinned against Him, "**Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.**" The curse we find ourselves under is that wives will always have a tendency and desire to rule over their husbands, and husbands will always have a tendency and desire to suppress their wives.

A combination such as this is fraught with peril. How are we to have a strong, vibrant, and biblical marriage if our tendencies and desires are in utter opposition? Is there any hope for us today? Can a Christian husband and wife somehow overcome this curse?

I have been leaving you with this question for the last two weeks without an answer. I should be able to at least begin answering this question tonight – or more accurately, I will answer the question, but will only begin to lay out God's solution as to how.

So let me cut to the chase right now – yes, there is hope, and yes, you can overcome the curse. But before we begin to outline how, let's look at the passage we just read for a little more insight into our dilemma.

### **v. 1**

Notice the time table for when **difficult times will come; the last days**. The questions we must ask of this text is, are we in the last days now, and, are we experiencing the difficult times alluded to in this verse?

Before I move on, let me make sure we all understand what the Bible means when it speaks of the last days. Simply put, the last days refer to the final years prior to our Lord's Second Coming. I say final years because there will be seven years that will elapse immediately after the rapture of the church and the Second Coming does not take place until the end of those seven years – known as the Tribulation. So even if the Apostle Paul had our generation in mind when he wrote this, and even if the rapture is just around the corner, even if Jesus is on the threshold of heaven waiting for God the Father to tell Him to go and get His children, there is still seven years worth of last days to be fulfilled after that event.

So what are the characteristics of the last days, and how does this relate to the topic of marriage?

#### **v. 2-5**

Can I ask you a question? – Are any of these characteristics foreign to today's world, or are all of them prevalent in today's world?

Beloved, based on this text we are in the last days. Now whether that means we will experience the rapture in our lifetime or not is unknown, but we are in the last days as the Bible describes it.

So how does this relate to our topic of marriage? The answer is it has everything to do with it. Let's quickly look at each one and you tell me if it will have a positive or negative effect on the marriage.

- **Lovers of self** – I again ask the question I have asked you many times before: What is the opposite of love? – Selfishness. Can a marriage marked by selfishness, and thus lacking genuine love, survive in these difficult times?
- **Lovers of money** – what's the number one issue that husbands and wives argue about? Money problems and disagreements over money are consistently at the top of the list for why couples get divorced.
- **Boastful and arrogant** – Pride and arrogance will always cause discord in a marriage. Pride and arrogance will cause you to think more highly of yourself than you do of your spouse, and both will always lead you to demand that your way, is not only the best way, but the only way.
- **Revilers** – You obviously cannot have a harmonious marriage if one or both of you stir up strife.
- **Disobedient to parents** – we could approach this issue from many angles, but the bottom line is disobedience to any form of authority will lend itself to being disobedient to all authority; and as we have seen in the last two weeks, God designed authority, both in the spiritual realm and in the human realm. Rebelling against authority of any kind will spill over into the marriage relationship as well.
- **Ungrateful** – lack of contentment will hinder every area of your life. When you are discontent with anything it is a very short walk to becoming discontent in

- your marriage. You will begin to find all sorts of issues and faults in your mate when discontent and ungratefulness become your normal state of mind.
- **Unholy** – I hopefully do not even have to elaborate on this one as it relates to marriage. You simply cannot follow God’s Word apart from being holy.
  - **Unloving**- self-explanatory.
  - **Irreconcilable** – again, self-explanatory.
  - **Malicious gossips** – gossips cannot be trusted; need I say more as it pertains to marriage?
  - **Without self-control** – a lack of self-control is simply another form of selfishness.
  - **Brutal** – another self-explanatory characteristic.
  - **Haters of good** – not compatible with a good marriage.
  - **Treacherous** – have you ever seen a treacherous person with a good marriage?
  - **Reckless** – recklessness means you are not looking out for what is best for you, let alone what is best for your spouse.
  - **Conceited** – yet another form of selfishness.
  - **Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** – lovers of pleasure are again selfish, and if you do not love God you will not be obedient to His commands.
  - **Having a form of godliness** simply means you put on a false front; you are not genuine.

Let me say it again, we are in the last days. These characteristics are running rampant in our world today and all too often they are doing the same in our marriages. It’s only by the grace of God that the divorce rate is not 100% instead of 50%.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Ephesians 5**.

### **Ephesians 5:22-24**

Through the ages, wives have borne the brunt of this entire passage even though God says what He needs to say to them in three verses and He takes nine verses to speak to husbands. I’m sure many households have the King James rendering of **verse 22**, **“Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands”**, etched in stone and proudly displayed throughout the house.

### **v. 22**

Overzealous husbands have thundered the cry of, “Submit woman!” as if they have been appointed master of the universe. But can I point out something to you? Many translations do not follow the NASB in this regard, and it’s a shame, but the words, **“*be subject*”** are in italics in the NASB – meaning, the words do not exist in the original Greek manuscripts. They were added for clarity.

Now before you wives get too excited, the context of the passage clearly points to the way it has been translated, but it has been purposely softened (by the Holy Spirit) by not inserting it in **verse 22**. The context comes from **verse 21**, so the truest translation would actually read this way: **“...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ; wives, to your own husbands, as to the Lord”** (**Ephesians 5:21-22**).

Being subject to your husbands is still the proper context, but the true rendering is miles away from, “SUBMIT, or die!”

The term, "**be subject**", refers to a relinquishing of one's rights. It does not imply any differences in value or worth or superiority, but it does imply a willing submission of oneself. Wives, if you desire to be obedient to God's Word, submission to your husband is to be a voluntary and willing response to God's will for your life – a willingness to give up you're your rights to the ordained authority God has imposed upon husbands. And make no bones about it, that authority has been imposed upon the husbands by God's divine choice and not by any inherent superiority or just due.

Note what it does not say: "Wives, obey your husbands." In **Ephesians 6**, Paul uses the word obey in reference to how children are to respond to their parents, and in how slaves are to respond to their masters (**6:1, 5**). So if God, through the Apostle Paul, wanted this subjection or submission to mean blind obedience, He would have directed Paul to use the same word. Since He did not choose to use that terminology we need to make sure we fully understand the difference.

Submission, or being subject to, will often look exactly like obedience, but to be perfectly in harmony with what God is expecting from the wives, it must be a voluntary and willing obedience. Children and slaves have no such option; they must simply obey whether they are in agreement or not. God is more concerned about the wives having the proper attitude and proper frame of mind in their response to their husband's God-given authority. Compelled submission through gritted teeth would be just as bad as no submission.

Throughout Scripture God desires willing obedience and willing sacrifice; and it is no different in this instance.

Let me ask you this question: Why does God have commands for us to follow in the first place? What's the purpose of having these commands in the first place? – Only God knows what is best for us. You may think you know what is best for you, but you really haven't got a clue.

Have you seen the series of books on the market called, "Microsoft Office for Dummies" or "Car Repair for Dummies"? They have simple step-by-step instructions for people who don't have a clue about the subject matter but need to learn it so their lives will be easier.

Beloved, I mean no disrespect to God's Word in saying this, but the Bible could accurately be called, "Life for Dummies." Guess who the dummies are? Every command contained in God's Word for you and I to follow, are there to make our lives on this earth easier. And when you and I voluntarily and willingly choose to obey His commands our lives will be exponentially easier. For when we choose to do things our own way it is like continually bumping up against a wall when the door is on the other side. After a while your head is going to hurt. God's way is the open door.

Next we need to notice that **verse 22** adds to be subject to your *own* husbands. This does not mean you are exempt from being in subjection to all other men, but reflects a depth of intimacy and a sense of ownership a wife has for her husband.

Hold you place in **Ephesians** and turn with me in your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 7**.

### **1 Corinthians 7:1-5**

Paul beautifully expresses the intimacy and mutual submission between a husband and wife. We in essence own each other in the bonds of marriage. Specifically, Paul is speaking about the sexual relationship in a marriage, and the Bible is clear that there is absolutely no concession for any sexual relationships outside of marriage. Mutual submission in this passage says that neither should deprive the other because you belong to your spouse not yourself.

Well, that's a sermon for another day, but I wanted you to understand this issue of ownership within a marriage. Turn back to **Ephesians 5**.

The last phrase we must pay attention to in **verse 22** is, "**as to the Lord.**" Wives, when you voluntarily and willingly submit to, or are subject to, your husbands, you are actually submitting to the Lord. And our purpose in submitting to the Lord is to give Him all the glory and all the honor.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** says, "...**whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**" So when you voluntarily and willingly submit to your husband's God-given authority you bring glory to God. You bring glory to God in your submission to Him and you bring glory to God by your testimony to others.

### **v. 23**

God graciously now answers the question why. Why should I be subject to my own husband as to the Lord? – Because the husband is the head by God's design and purpose.

Remember how we discovered the meaning of the word **suitable** in **Genesis 2:18** meant to compliment or to complete? That same relationship is beautifully illustrated here. A head without a cooperative body is far from complete. An un-submissive wife renders her husband as a spiritual and functional quadriplegic. And a wife trying to live apart from the head renders herself as a spiritual and functional spastic; twitching and convulsing every which way and accomplishing very little, if anything. When mind and body work in unison, there is literally nothing that cannot be accomplished.

A wife who willingly is subject to her own husband as to the Lord, honors God, honors her husband, honors her family, honors her church, and even honors herself. And as I mentioned earlier, she also becomes a beautiful testimony of the Lord to a watching world.

Christ is the example for the husbands even in this verse that speaks directly to the wives – He is the perfect provider, the perfect protector, and the perfect leader of the church. These same characteristics are to be emulated by the husbands so that the wives will find it to be a joy to voluntarily and willingly be in subjection to God's designed authority.

The wife should flourish under her husband's provision and protection and leadership, just as the church should flourish under Christ's.

**v. 24**

The key phrase in this verse is the last two words, "**in everything.**" The only exception to this command is if your husband is leading you to violate Scripture.

The key for wives to be able to break the curse and live their lives in subjection to their husbands is found in **verse 18**: "...**be filled with the Spirit.**" This same command of submission and subjection is found in **Colossians 3:18**, and the key in that passage is to be filled with God's Word (**Colossians 3:16**).

It's a beautiful thing. It's God's way. Any other way is doomed to heartache, strife, and ultimately, failure.

Husbands, you have absolutely no excuse for not being back here next Saturday night – we have a lot to talk about on your end of God's divine design.

Let's pray.