Lord, Teach Me to Submit

"Know how you can tell if somebody's really a Christian? Go home with him!"

Brother Bill's humor really hits home. As self-conscious laughter rippled around the room, I silently agreed. Yes. Talk to the husband and children.

So much I read, heard, and studied those days led straight to a road marked witness at home. It amounted to a continuous challenge. Our home appeared to be a normal, happy, Christian place. Bob and I had no exceptional amounts of friction—only occasional blowups, which by day's end always seemed to smooth out okay.

"...let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 5:26) is something Bob and I heed. We don't often harbor a grudge; both forgive easily. We had no serious problems, I supposed. It was more a desire to perfect our day-to-day walk with Christ.
Marabel Morgan increased that desire in me as she talked about her course entitled “The Total Woman.” Marabel not only is my darling friend and Christian sister, but also my prayer buddy. She based her course on the Bible, and I like the subtitle: “How to Make Your Husband Adore You.”

Marabel researches continually, and shares her discoveries with me. Her enthusiasm is so contagious, so upbeat, and optimistic, I just knew all that womanliness was bound to rub off on me. Much as I kidded her, however—and I kid Marabel unmercifully—at the same time, I knew God was dealing with me in those very same areas of my life. And Marabel, naturally, is one of His instruments.

So I prayed and studied the Bible a great deal, and God gave me one amazing insight after another—a series of personal revelations about my needs and failings as a woman, a wife, and a mother.

To add even further impetus to my desire to grow, Brother Bill began teaching the New Members Class lessons—Bible-based, of course—expounding what Christ expects of wives, husbands, parents, and children. Sometimes God just seems to bombard you from all sides!

All this began to change my heart. I became convinced women must study the Bible in order to learn how God wants us to live. That’s the only way we’ll ever find real fulfillment as females.

An enormous problem in America today—and it’s man’s fault as well as woman’s—is our sinfulness against God as each of us individually persists in carving out his own personal set of rules, his own so-called rights. This is no small matter. I’ve come to believe America ultimately will be endangered unless each of us endeavors to become a really strong, godly man or woman.

Many who profess and call themselves Christians absolutely flinch at God’s requirements for full manhood and womanhood. For example, consider Ephesians 5:22-24:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

How much plainer could it be stated? I thought I’d never describe myself as submissive. But submissive, I was to learn, doesn’t mean timid. It doesn’t mean a woman is meant to be overrun, downtrodden, and all that. To submit is a voluntary act of love and trust. It’s a deliberate yielding and deferring to your husband, in obedience to God’s plan for your life. Until we do that, we can’t please God.

Think of today’s unhappy women who struggle to usurp men’s authority. Their efforts can only be fruitless and result in self-defeat and misery because I can’t see where they’re supported by God’s Word.

Though most of us women don’t consider ourselves activists in that sort of struggle, we may actually end up in the same camp—if we nag, bicker, criticize, and undercut the man God gave us to love, rather than submitting our lives and hearts in perfect trust and support.

Marabel’s life dramatically illustrates what I mean. In fact, her resolution to stop nagging Charlie Morgan led to her researching and developing her own wife-to-husband approach. These eventually evolved into her Total Woman classes which became tremendously successful here in Miami Beach.
See if her story parallels yours in any way. It really hit home with me!

Charlie and I loved one another, but he never talked to me. We were “happily married.” Anybody would say so. But why was I so uptight? I’d always pictured myself as a serene, loving woman who never got cross with her husband or children. Meanwhile, Charlie often said, “Gee, you sure come unglued easily, don’t you?”

One day I realized I nagged Charlie. I constantly tried to remake him. I was always telling him small things I disliked about him—things he ought to improve. I saw he had begun to crawl into a shell. He had begun to think of me as a second mother. I could see I was the one cutting down the flame of our romance.

That day Marabel made a drastic decision:

I promised myself I’d never nag Charlie Morgan again. That night I told my husband I’d never nag him again but was going to accept him exactly as he was. I’m certain he didn’t believe me. I stuck to it, however. From that day to this, our lives, our marriage, and everything else has become fantastically better.

There’s much, much more to Marabel’s amazing story. In her very first lesson she makes an extremely significant point, and reiterates it often: “You must accept your husband as he is. The reason you can is that God loves you and accepts you just as you are!”

That’s exactly the principle God showed me. I realized I must stop criticizing Bob’s lack of spiritual development and work only on my own. I could see my carping literally undercut my husband’s confidence, desire, and ability to grow in Christ. Of course I mentally defended that nagging as something I had to do for Bob’s good, but that’s because I didn’t know the Bible very well.

I’d never try to get away with that now. The Bible doesn’t uphold a nagging wife anywhere—and Bob knows it. The devil can disrupt many a would-be Christian household via the woman’s tongue. Unfortunately, he’s done some damage this way at Villa Verde. Nagging, anger, criticism, sharp remarks, negative ideas—oh, that tongue is as a sharp-edged sword!

In Ephesians (such a rich book!) Paul speaks directly to that. In chapter 4, verses 31 and 32, he says:

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.

What if a wife truly lacks confidence in her husband? Perhaps he’s critical of her, hard to please, unfair. Should she submit to that kind of man? The Bible says she should. The inference is plain: Live out your Christian life before Him so that you influence your partner for the good. God says that’s a woman’s responsibility.

Husbands can disappoint wives for many reasons and in many ways. Some women, especially those who lost their fathers in childhood due to death or divorce, really want a daddy more than a husband. Their search for lost childhood robs the husband. (After all, how can he meet the needs a
father should have supplied—needs and dissatisfactions a woman probably isn’t conscious of having and can’t even express in words?)

Perhaps I’ve expected Bob to be Daddy. I don’t know. My parents divorced when I was thirteen, and as so many girls do, I did miss my father.

Submission, in the Biblical meaning of the word, becomes the only answer to that sort of problem. “Looking up to” the man as head of the house constantly asserts and reaffirms him. As I can support him with faith and trust, he can protect and complete me.

Husbands don’t come readymade, all packaged and prepared. Neither do wives. But as soon as one of them—either one—begins to follow the marital precepts outlined in the Bible, the other will desire to comply. That is, compliance follows where the first partner acts in love, as God would wish, rather than strict, joyless legalism.

Duty is stern; love is winsome. The loving wife always has more fun in marriage because God planned it that way. He really does provide us with joy and abundant life if we’ll just follow His blueprints.

When we as wives decide to submit to the man we love, that means we’re truly willing to change our natures. First, we need insight as to the places in life and marriage where we don’t meet God’s criteria. By reading the Bible we discover where these places are. Then we must learn, through reading the Word, how to overcome—which only can be done by the grace of God, diligent prayer, and faithfulness.

You’ll find your prototype in the Bible, I discovered; not only the kind of person you are, but a description of your feelings, your condition, and how to deal with it. It’s all there. If you’re faithful about reading and praying about it, the Word will reveal what you need in your life.

In Sunday school we studied the four natures Christians display. I think mine is sanguine, like Peter’s. In Matthew 26:33, he shows a quick display of emotion and is so outspoken and impetuous. I really identify with Peter!

There’s the phlegmatic nature, the ho-hum sort of person who often follows the line of least resistance. This is described in 1 Timothy 4:14–16.

The Apostle Paul, as depicted in 2 Timothy 4:7 exemplifies the choleric nature; a strong, determined, bulldog sort of person.

The melancholy nature, as in 1 John 3:16–18, represents loyalty and love. This is a fragile spirit which easily can be offended. I identify with that, too. I can see something of myself in all these natures—especially Peter’s.

Study the Bible enough, and I’m convinced you can become your own analyst. Jesus Christ is the perfect psychiatrist. By applying the Word of God to my life, knowing I’m born again, being lifted from sins through the blood of Christ, I see I can be delivered from the power of Satan, through Jesus. Miracles are possible. And sometimes, in any marriage, it takes a miracle.

People in the world can see this change. They comment that you’re different, that your personality is emerging. They recognize your changed life, but don’t know it’s the Christ in you.

God has had to show me that after my finding the joy of Christian life, and after He started me digging in the Word, He would continue to point out areas which need changing. Challenge follows challenge. There’s a Scripture text, Philippians 1:6, which speaks to that.

The woman who seriously intends to follow Jesus really desires to submit to her Lord. She knows that’s the only way. She desires this because she loves Him.
Bless This House

Only as I practice yielding to Jesus can I learn to submit, as the Bible instructs me, to the loving leadership of my husband. Only the power of Christ can enable a woman like me to become submissive in the Lord.

Christ becomes the means, then, toward perfecting and sanctifying a woman's cherished relationship to her man. In this way He fuses the two of them and creates a Christian marriage.

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CLASS AND RACIAL DIVISIONS IN THE FEMALE POPULATION
SOME PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL DILEMMA FOR THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

One of the professed goals of the women's movement is to liberate both men and women from the bonds of traditional attitudes which prevent females from actualizing the human potentialities. Consequently, an area of considerable interest among feminists is the extent to which the moveeme has changed traditional attitudes toward the place of women in society. An associated area of central importance is the attempt to identify those sectors of the population who rigidly cling to these traditional ideas. Although they do not typically allow one to reach conclusions about changes over time, analysis of public opinion data is a useful way to estimate the impact of the women's movement on traditional attitudes toward females. Opinion surveys can also be used to identify those sectors in the population which exhibit the greatest resistance to the idea of more egalitarian relationships between the sexes.

This study reports the results of an analysis of recent opinion data dealing with traditional attitudes toward the place of women in society. No specific hypothesis was tested; no attempt was made to construct or evaluate specific theory which purports to explain the causes of the women's movement. Instead, the data are discussed in terms of class and racial divisions in the female population, as well as the relevance of these divisions for the women's movement.

The data are described, presented, and discussed briefly. Lastly, some speculation is offered concerning the implications the data suggest for the goals of the women's movement.

THE DATA

The data used to assess the impact of the feminist movement on traditional attitudes toward the place of women in society are drawn from the 1972 election study conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The sample itself was drawn from a representative cross-section of households in the continental United States; persons 18 years or older were interviewed. The sample size was 2705, 1537 of whom were females and 1168 were males.