***The Role of Women in the New Testament Church - PH79-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:1-3***

We're continuing our study of Philippians 4:1-3, where we have the historical record of two ladies in the Christian community at Philippi, who were well-known and very active, but who were in competition and in conflict with one another. So the apostle Paul has spoken to Euodia and to Syntyche to give them some advice on resolving their conflict. His advice to them is to come to a united mind, and to come to the same thinking.

What Paul, in reality, is telling these two women is to get back to Bible doctrine. They had been functioning on human viewpoint thinking which flows up from the old sin nature, so they've been at odds with one another. Their good Christian service has been hindered, and they are causing a disruption in the fellowship of a lot of believers.

So our mind is very important. It determines our feelings toward people, and the Word of God prepares our minds for divine viewpoint emotions. Whatever feelings you've had this week, that you don't like, have been expressed by you toward other people as a result of your emotions and your feelings. You cannot control that in any other way except through your thinking. When you have God's mind, then you have emotions that are satisfying. People who are negative to doctrine are going to be subject to the old sin nature.

**Euodia and Syntyche**

So Paul wanted Euodia and Syntyche to continue in the important work that they were doing. They were making the kind of contribution that women have always made historically in God's work, and which is so essential. He wanted them to continue making that contribution to the local church ministry, but they had to get straightened out between themselves.

So today, I wanted to, first of all, look a little bit in the Word of God for the reasons that Paul was so concerned about these women. It wasn't just two girls out of many that had a difference, so, OK, two women can't get along with one another. The reason for that was because they had been so important in the Lord's work, and because women in general in the New Testament church were so important, that when women fight in the church, the Lord's work is greatly hindered. Really, it's hindered a lot more when women are at odds in their local church than when men are at odds, because the emotions don't flare up, and get so much in the way when men are involved, and men don't tend to broaden the scope of the conflict, whereas women get their emotions flared up, and they have a way of including their friends. They run a party so they can tell their friends all about their problems, and how they don't like what somebody is doing, and they tend to broaden the scope of the conflict. So this was very important. Women are critical to the Lord's work. If women are not functioning, the Lord's work is injured.

**At Pentecost**

So in the age of Christianity, we find that women were gathered with the men in the upper room as part of the 120 who were in Jerusalem after the Lord's ascension, awaiting the day of Pentecost. As a matter of fact, they were participants in that 10-day waiting period. In Acts 1:12-14, we see that the women were there: "Then they returned on to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey." That is, a journey that they were permitted to travel on the Sabbath Day and not be considered work. The Lord had just ascended from the Mount of Olives to heaven.

Verse 13: "When they were come in, they went up into an upper room where abode Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James." In other words, these were the 11 apostles. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." So immediately Jesus has gone to heaven. He has told them to wait for the enduement of terrific spiritual power when God the Holy Spirit comes down to them, and He indwells the believers; fuses them together; and, forms the body of Christ, the church, and begins the new age of the church.

So it is not only the leadership of the church that is there. It is not only the male disciples of Jesus who are sitting and waiting in fellowship day-by-day, over that 10-day waiting period, with the leadership. But there are present also, the women who had served Jesus and who had followed Him, including the Lord's mother, and now the Lord's own half-brothers, who up to now had totally rejected Him, but now have themselves become believers.

So the women, right from the beginning, before the church age has even begun, while in anticipation of it, the women are there, obviously, in a very strategic role of anticipation in the part that they are going to play. They were present during the periods of prayer among the disciples. For example, when they decided to select a successor to the fallen Judas, in Acts 1:23, we read that they appointed Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They had selected them as potential successors. Then if you compare that to verse 14, again, you will see that those who made the selection included women who were present in the upper room at the time. So they are involved here in the congregation, acting in its behalf as an organization.

**Believers**

Soon after Pentecost did take place, literally multitudes of women were saved. In Acts 5:14, we read, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." So after the day of Pentecost, and as the initial preaching went out, who should respond to the gospel? Well, obviously, women did, in great numbers. As always, women were sensitive to spiritual things. From the very beginning, they had the insight to see that this was a great thing that had happened. They could see where God was moving in history, and they responded in large numbers. Many were saved.

**Persecution**

These women believers, very naturally, because of their numbers and their enthusiastic response to the gospel, also became the objects of intense persecution. In Acts 8:3, we read, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, hailing men and women committed them to prison." Of these women that the apostle Paul (when he was an unbeliever) put in prison, many of them were also executed. So Paul, in later years, was always burdened by the fact that he had not only been the instrument for the murder of Christian men, but also for the murder of many Christian women. But the women were under persecution. Obviously, they were not making any secret of their stand for Jesus Christ. Had they been secret believers, nobody would have bothered them. But the reason they were the object of attack is because they were standing up and sounding off in behalf of Jesus Christ. They were testifying, and they were glorifying God for what He was doing in the new era of the church age.

**Homes**

Mary, the mother of John Mark, made her home available as a meeting place for part of the church in Jerusalem. We have that in Acts 12:12, in describing the place where Peter went after he was miraculously released from prison by the angels: "And when he had considered the thing (that is, Peter), he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying." Remember that the only place that Christians met in the early church was in homes. That's why we know that only so many people could get into one house, and yet there were hundreds of believers. We're told that on the day of Pentecost, for example, 5,000 people were saved. Now, where are you going to get a house where 5,000 people can gather for a church service? Obviously, all over the city of Jerusalem, there were these house churches meeting. God immediately, under the direction of the apostles, appointed an elder for each house church who was the pastor-teacher to instruct and to direct and to lead that group. One of these homes that was made available to the believers was owned by John Mark's mother.

So again, immediately, as in the Ministry of Jesus, the women were prominent in service and making possible His service through material provision. So again, immediately after the new age begins, here are women bringing their capacities into play in behalf of the ministry of the infant church.

Women were saved in Samaria. The Bible tells us that they fully participated in the practices of the local church, for they received water baptism. Acts 8:12-17: "But when they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Then it goes on to describe how they received all of the significance of that water baptism as it portrayed Holy Spirit baptism. At this particular stage, the apostles sometimes brought the Holy Spirit upon people by laying their hands upon them (though that changed as the normal order later). As we read through the rest of those verses, Acts 8:17 says, "The apostles laid their hands on them, and also brought the Spirit of God upon them in the same way." We may conclude that women were also full participants in the Christian experience.

**Lydia**

Now, the apostle Paul went to Europe to preach the gospel at the city of Philippi as the result of a vision where he saw a man of Macedonia asking him to come over, and saying, "Come over to teach us." That was God's way of communicating with Paul that he should now move out of Asia Minor and move the gospel into Europe. While it was a man in the vision, the first convert was a woman. As you know, her name was Lydia. She was apparently a businesswoman. Acts 16:14: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, 'If you judge me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.' And she constrained us." So the first convert was a woman.

**The Demon-Possessed Slave Woman**

The gospel was preached on one occasion to a demon-possessed slave woman in Philippi. That's what got Paul into so much trouble and got him thrown into prison. In Acts 16:16, we read, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain maid, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." This girl was indwelt by a demon, and demons, as you know, know a great deal about the future. Therefore, they are capable of telling fortunes. People can tell fortunes today, and they really can tell you about the future. There are people like that, that you can go to. You better not. It violates Scripture. But if you are foolish enough to violate a divine principle, and to go to a soothsayer, a fortune teller, they can tell you what's ahead for you, because they have demon spirit information. They are demon-involved and demon-associated, and they receive their information from the demons. So that's what this girl was doing.

Verse 19 says, "And when her master saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers." The girl's masters were infuriated because her fortunetelling ability left her once she became a Christian. So if you've got some Christian who stands up and tells you that he can tell you your fortune, you can doubt that he's a Christian, or he's a liar – one or the other. If he's a Christian, he's not going to be able to tell you the future. We have no prophets left today. The gift of prophecy has ceased in its predictive form. Therefore, nobody can tell you your future. Nobody can tell you what is ahead for you. If somebody pretends to do that, or can do it, it's because he's getting it from the demonic world.

Now, of course, in Philippians 4:3, we have these two ladies, Euodia and Syntyche, who have been immortalized on the pages of Scripture because of their conflict, showing again that women were so important in the work of the New Testament church that Paul would actually make personal specific reference to them and their conflict.

**Upper Class Women**

In Thessalonica and Berea, the gospel moved into the upper class women. There were the women of the streets – the prostitutes on the streets. There were the very high class, cultured, educated prostitutes that the leading citizens were participating with. Then there were the regular cultured women who were married to men of the upper stratas of society. These women were generally in a very secluded type of life, but they had more freedom in the Roman world than in the Greek world. There were many of these upper class women in Thessalonica and Berea who were saved. The gospel entered their ranks.

Acts 17:4: "And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women (upper class women), not a few." We have the same thing in verse 12: "Therefore, many of them believed, also of honorable women who were Greeks, and of men, not a few." So the gospel was moving also from the general masses of people, and the women who had believed there, to people who were in positions of authority – people who were in positions of social importance, and those women were also responding.

**Damaris**

Acts 17:34 mentions one woman in particular in that experience where Paul was preaching on Mars' Hill to the philosophers: "Nevertheless, certain men joined him," after the philosophers dismissed Paul and said, "We'll listen to you at another time." The Scriptures observed: "Nevertheless, certain men joined him, and believed, among whom were Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." Now, Damaris, we suspect, was one of the cultured prostitutes, because no lady of good standing and no lady of good breeding would have been on Mars' Hill with those philosophers. That's one place a woman would not have been. But this woman was. These women, who were cultured prostitutes, moved freely among men of the upper class.

The reason these men found them attractive is because the average women, even if she was well-born, was left uneducated. Therefore, she was on the dumb side. She could not enter into the things that her educated husband could enter into. She was restricted in the areas of life that he moved in, and she was socially restricted. So these women were actually educated women. They were women, very frequently, obviously of great means, for they were taken care of by their patrons. They were women that provided the men with the interchange of intellectual activity, as well as other things, that they could not find in their wives. So Damaris was probably in that category. Here she is in that situation in life and in that kind of a profession. And she, too, has been reached by the gospel.

**Priscilla**

We also have a lady named Priscilla that I'm sure you have heard of in the New Testament. She is named six times. Her husband's name is Aquila. Now, she was very definitely a cultured and educated lady. In Acts 18:26, we read, "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue (that is, an evangelist named Apollos), whom, when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

Evangelists today are pumpkin-poor students of the Bible. Most evangelists are okay as long as you listen to the gospel. When you listen to an evangelist preaching the gospel, keep your ears open. Once he starts getting away from the gospel, be suspicious of him. Don't trust him with a 10-foot pole, because most evangelists are very poor in their understanding of doctrine. They are very confusing, and they fall into the habit of manipulating and playing upon peoples' emotions. They do that as a natural occupational hazard of evangelists. Most evangelists are not teaching evangelists. We, when we witness, are to be teaching witnesses. We teach the gospel. It's a teaching game. There's no other way to present the gospel. That's what an evangelist should do. Instead, they like to manipulate peoples' emotions to get them to make a decision on that basis. And that's bad.

It seems apparent that Aquila and Priscilla attend this meeting. They're listening to Apollos preach, and they recognize that this man is of God; that he does know his stuff about the gospel; and, that he makes a very effective presentation. Immediately, they say, "He has the gift of evangelist. That's obvious." But then he gets off the gospel, they say, "Oh oh, did you hear that? Oh, that hurt." Pretty soon they're cringing about what they're listening to Apollos saying. Now he's effective; he's smooth; he's got good words; he's a good-looking fella; he stands up there, just like the cultists; he's very attractive; and, he's very appealing. So people are believing everything he says. So after the meeting, Priscilla and Aquila take him aside and say, "Apollos, you've got the gift of evangelist. You are right on. But there are some things that I think we can inform you on, that we can clarify, that we think you're off on in your doctrine."

The reason Priscilla and Aquila could do this was because there was a time when they even worked with Paul. Paul was a tent maker by trade. So were these two people. There was a time when they fell in together, and they worked their trade together. Therefore, they had much time of discussion with the apostle Paul, and they got a lot of doctrine straight from the apostle that other people did not have. Remember that we're still operating in the New Testament in an era where the written canon of Scripture had not been completed.

So here in Priscilla, we obviously have a woman who is educated and who knows doctrine and who is capable, therefore, of explaining this to this evangelist who didn't have everything straight that he should have straight. She was not out of line as a woman to be teaching this man privately. She would have been way out of line had she gotten up in a church service and started explaining the Word of God to him. Now, she could have done that. It would have been a great temptation, and she could have easily done it, because part of the church met in her home. We read in 1 Corinthians 16:19, "And the churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house." So here, again, is a certain group of believers who met as a local congregation with a pastor-teacher leader. Perhaps even Apollos himself was the pastor-teacher. But they're meeting in the home of Priscilla. She's the hostess. She's the lady who sponsors the meeting place for this particular church. So it would have been very easy for her to stand up in her own house and start teaching Apollos. But she did not do this. The Scriptures indicate that they did this privately. They took him aside, and they explained these things to him.

**Married Women**

So here we have married women who performed a very great ministry in the New Testament church. I don't want you to think that all these things we've been hearing about the women's service to the Lord, and about their service after, in the New Testament church, was only by unmarried ladies. Obviously, we have married women who perhaps formed the backbone of this whole ministry of women. But of course, they performed this as many people as per the circumstances in their life, to what extent they were wage earners with their husbands, the age of their children, and so on. But they did constitute a basic work staff, as they do in the local church today.

The local church today, which goes forward and prospers and is most efficient, is always the local church that has a large contingent of married women whose circumstances in life are such as to make their time available for investment in the Lord's work. It is a great fulfillment to them, and it is a great movement forward of the local church ministry.

In the last chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul names 26 specific people to whom he expresses greetings of one kind or another, and appreciation. Eight of them are women. Out of this 26, eight are women. And anybody who is in this list is singled out for prominence and importance. And out of that list, eight women, again, are revealing how important they, as a gender, were in the New Testament work.

In Romans 16:3, for example, he calls Priscilla a helper. In Romans 16:6, he names Mary, who probably ministered to the personal needs of Paul and his party. He recognizes her for the lodging and meals that she provided. In Romans 16:13, he refers to the mother of Rufus as being his mother also. He says, "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." So here was an older lady who was to Paul as a mother, and who had ministered and provided the kindnesses again, in a way of domestic kindness, and of financial help, that a mother would to a son.

**Male Leadership**

But, lest I give you the wrong impression, while women were prominent in the New Testament church, and while they carried the ball in a very great way, they were also in a position of subordination by divine decree. Spiritual authority and leadership in the New Testament church were clearly placed in the hands of men. The role of women in the ministry was dignified. It was varied; it was prominent; and, it was essential, but it was below; beneath; and, in subjection to that of male leadership. However women were placed by God in the church (whatever the role that He gave them to play), it was always in the subordinate role as being in keeping with the order of the genders. Spiritual equality, in the New Testament then, did not mean that they had equality of duties that they performed. The basis of their spiritual equality was their oneness in the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that it makes no difference whether you are male or female. You're in the body of Christ equally.

**Water Baptism**

The introductory ceremony into Judaism, you remember, was circumcision, but it was a right that was reserved only for men. There was no comparable right to dignify the entrance of women into the Commonwealth of Israel. But when you get to Christianity, one of the great changes, and the elevating of the dignity of women indicated thereby, is that water baptism, which becomes the comparable introductory rite into the Christian community on the local church level, is equally available to women as well as to men.

So unity in Christ does not mean uniformity of practice for men and women. There is no such thing in the Bible as spiritual unisex – never. Women are always in a position of subordination to male authority, and spiritual equality refers only to the fact that a woman can build in her soul an identical spiritual maturity structure that a man can. There is no one can build a better spiritual maturity structure in his soul than a woman can. No husband can build a better spiritual maturity structure than his wife can. They have equal opportunity to do that, but they have differences of responsibility.

This was reflected, of course, in the public conduct of the women in the New Testament church. Their presence and their participation was so extensive, as a matter of fact, that it required certain regulations which the apostles provided. So we're told that women are not to serve as pastors of churches. They're not to serve as evangelists. They're not to serve in any of these positions of spiritual leadership. 1 Timothy 2:12 spells it out. This is the verse that gives more misery to the charismatics and to the Pentecostal movement than any verse in the Bible. They seldom tell their children to memorize this as one of the memory verses in Sunday school: "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." You might want to check, the next time you find a charismatic kid, you can check him out on his memory verses, and you'll find he doesn't know this one very well.

Women led in prayer or exercised the gift of prophecy – and they did both in the New Testament church. While this was a rather unusual thing for a woman to exercise the gift of prophecy and unusual for her to lead in prayer, when she did, she was to do so under a veil, because the veil was a mark of subjection. In 1 Corinthians 11:5-7, you may read about this. It was very important that when she led in prayer, or when she exercised her gift of prophecy, that she did so, even then, recognizing her subjection to male authority.

Now, one of the reasons for this was that Paul says that every time a group of Christians gather together in a church service, there are angels. The elect angels are in the room, as the elect angels are in this room right now. It is an offense to them to see a woman acting in a way that does not recognize God's order of spiritual authority: of husbands over wives; and, men over women. So the veil played that important role.

**Women Didn't Preach Publicly**

So the New Testament church just did not permit women to preach publicly. They could pray in mixed company in a proper subjection with the veil. They could not teach men publicly, though they could teach men privately. Women taught women's groups; they taught children's groups; they led in prayer gatherings; and, they taught men privately. Women served with skill and dedication in many areas of New Testament church work with complete divine approval.

**A Woman's Dress**

One thing, also, that they were to respond to, under God's divine order as part of their subjection, was in their dress. They were to dress with good taste and with modesty. In 1 Timothy 2:9-10, we read, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with godly fear and sobriety, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but, which become women professing godliness, with good works." A woman's basic beauty, this verse says, is to be found in the divine good production of her Christian service, and her beauty is going to be there, first of all.

If she thinks her beauty is going to be in the number of shoes she has in her clothes closet, and the number of dresses she has on her rack, she's very much mistaken. But that perhaps is not as bad as the woman who thinks that her beauty is going to be in the immodesty of her dress – how much of her person she can show. There are always women who cannot understand that the world has seen it all. They always feel that they are called of God to show that to the world which the world has never seen, which would better have been left covered up, and the world would have appreciated it a whole lot more.

So that's the necessity here of Paul saying, "If you're going to be a woman who is in subjection to God, and that's showing your subjection to your husband, you will dress with modesty. Do not dress in such a way that people equate you to a tramp, or to a low grade women without morals. 1 Peter 3:3-4 adds to this. It says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." This is what makes you beautiful – not wearing clothing that is skimpy and exposing. So just don't do it. It degrades you. It is unbecoming of Christian women.

By the way, there is nothing wrong with wearing stylish clothing. Every now and then, somebody in the fundamentalist camp has to act like an idiot. He says, "You see, women should not wear braided hair. Women should not wear jewelry – gold, it says here." Pretty soon girls are slipping their rings and their jewelry off, and taking their rings off. They don't want to show up with anything. Of course, they add makeup to this. But I notice they always skip the last part of verse 3, which says, "Or of putting on of apparel." They don't say, "God doesn't want you to wear clothes, ladies." That's the idiocy of some exegetes in the fundamentalist camp, I'm sorry to say. But forget that. God says, "I want you to be stylish as a woman. As a Christian woman, I want you to see how attractive you can be. And I want you to use makeup to make yourself attractive, but don't look like a clown." Unless we're having a Berean Youth Club circus, don't come to church looking like a clown.

And you dress in a way that is befitting your influence. Why should you dress in a way so that right away some kid that you may influence for the Lord loses respect for you; won't listen to you; and, has a reservation built up toward you? There may be some Christian woman, or some friend, some adult, or some other man that you might influence because of the way you look, and it immediately throws a red flag of suspicion about what you have to say concerning the Lord, because you don't look any different in your life from the world. You should be just as stylish and attractive as any woman of the world, but you should not look as degraded as the styles of the women of the world so frequently are.

Furthermore, you are not to wear male clothing. This was true in Deuteronomy 22:5 in the Old Testament. You may compare 1 Corinthians 11:5-16. You have the same basic principle established that unisex is out with God. Men are to be men, and women are to be women. That, again, in the fundamentalist camp, sometimes has been carried over to saying, "Well, women can't wear slacks." When I was a boy, this is what I was taught. That's men's clothing. So I grew up, and went into the United States Marine Corps, and they ended up sending me to China. And I found that all the women wore pants, and the men wore kimonos. It just ruined my theology and zapped me good. Everything had been changed. So this is not the point.

There are slacks that are obviously female-designed. If one of our men walks in wearing female slacks, you're going to know it. It's quite obvious that he stepped up to the wrong rack. So the Word of God condemns that, and it equally condemns a woman to wear clothes that have been tailored for a man. That's all it means. She may be perfectly covered. So it's not a matter of modesty of some of her body being exposed, but it is because of the lack of subjection that this reflects. This will destroy you as a woman. That lack of subjection will destroy your femininity. It will make you an ugly person.

**Subjection**

So let's talk about the principle of subjection. Paul is telling Euodia and Syntyche to solve the problem with the help of a man named Suzygus. Our translations usually translate that word as "yokefellow," but it's probably a proper name. Therefore, Suzygus, which does mean yokefellow, would be a kind of a name for a person who can get people together. In any case, Paul appoints a man to act as mediator on this principle of male leadership in spiritual matters.

**Learn in Silence**

Let me read it to you again. 1 Timothy 2:11-13: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection." Did you get that? The keywords are: "women learn;" "silence;" and, "subjection." "But I permit not a women to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Authority over the man includes to teach in mixed company. Silence – for Adam was formed, then Eve. That's the point. There is an order in God's creation. When Euodia and Syntyche return to the status of temporary fellowship with God the Father, they will respond in subjection to the male spiritual leadership of Suzygus and the authority that he is exercising in bringing them together. The divine viewpoint principle for married women is that they are to learn.

**Subjection to Their Husbands**

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 tells us not only that they are to learn in silence, but they are to learn from somebody very specific as married women: "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak (as preachers), but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. If they are to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." A prime evidence of a woman's subjection to her husband is that she is looking to her husband for information. She is seeking to be taught as well as willing to be taught. A lot of women say, "Oh, I'm in subjection to my husband. Yes, I'm in subjection to spiritual authority." But they give the lie to that because they are not seeking to be taught. The woman who is really in subjection is actually seeking to be taught. Therefore, she goes to her husband and says, "Hey, tell me." She goes to her husband, and she asks.

A lot of married women only speak in declarative sentences. Do you know what declarative sentences are? They are statements of a fact, or statements of a point of view. And there are some women who fall into the habit of thinking they're asking their husbands questions with declarative sentences. If they had gone to Berean Academy, they would have learned the difference between an interrogative sentence and a declarative sentence. A woman who is in subjection to her husband flows a series of interrogative questions. But the woman who is not in subjection, constantly from her lips flows a series of declarative statements, even on subjects she's not qualified to speak on, like what her husband thinks.

Women very easily deceive themselves on this business, that they are in subjection, and they're not really so. Unless a woman is asking to be taught, she is not in subjection. That has to be ingrained deeply in her. You should teach this to your daughter. The non-subject wife actually takes the attitude that she can pass judgments on her husband's decisions. She never considers the fact that he has probably done a lot of thinking about a certain decision; that he has talked to other people; and, that he has read articles. If he's a reader, she should suspect that he's maybe read something, and that his own experience has been channeled into the computer of his thinking. Out of all this, he puts it all together, and he makes a decision.

Now, a woman who is in subjection will go to that husband who has made a decision to do something. He's going to invest in gold. So she goes to him and says, "I'd be curious to know how you decided to invest in gold," if she is in subjection, because she recognizes that he's been reading market reports; he's been consulting with experts; he's been putting his experience in; and, he has been exercising his judgment. He has all kinds of factors that she has not had available to her. Therefore, he has come finally to a point where he's made a decision. And until she goes through all the steps and the processes and has all that information, she can't pass any judgment. She's a fool to try to do so.

But if she is not a woman who is in subjection to her husband, she will come to him to say, "Well, what kind of idiot is this? You're going to invest in gold? What if it goes down? You're the craziest person I've ever heard of. I'm sorry I ever met you." And she carries on and on. Then, after she runs out of steam on that, she goes off on a tangent. "I remember what my mother said to me. I remember that time we were in the restaurant and you wouldn't pay the bill. I knew you were cheap then." And pretty soon, the poor husband says, "Let me see. What did we start talking about at first?" He's lost all track of it, because a woman who is not subject never stops going off on tangents, or you may bring her short by pointing out to her that maybe she doesn't know what she's talking about. She just changes subjects. She says, "I don't care what I talked about when I make my declarative sentences." Then she goes off in another direction. It is funny, but it has given birth to what we'll talk about in greater detail next time – the feminist movement.

Out of that kind of declarative speaking woman, reflecting her lack of subjection to her husband and the male leadership, has evolved miseries like you wouldn't believe. In the early 1960s, I think it was Redbook magazine that printed one of those surveys. I forget the title, but it was something to the effect of what makes women unhappy; what women feel; and, the frustrations of women. They got the shock of their lives. Something like 27,000 responses came pouring in. Women were pouring out the soul of their misery and their unhappiness.

There's a reason for that. And that reason goes back to the basic thing that the apostle Paul was trying to remove the misery for Euodia and Syntyche, and that is getting back to the mind of Christ; getting back to their role as females; and, performing their strategic function in the local church, but under the basic principle of subjection to spiritual authority, and under the realization of how they were structured as women, and how they had to get information by learning from their husbands or from males who were in authority in certain fields of information, especially spiritual information from the pastor-teacher. So the woman who is in subjection will recognize this; will function accordingly; and, will find happiness because she'll be clicking as a woman. The woman who does not is destined for misery of various kinds.

So the result of a negative attitude toward the man's authority shows up in all kinds of human conflicts, not the least of which is in the marital area. What happens there is that a husband with a non-subject wife (that is, one who does not ask him for information – she is not seeking to be taught) is the women that does not know that she should accept her husband's decisions, even if he should prove to be wrong.

If you're going to marry somebody, it might be a good idea for you to get some friend to go up to the woman and say, "What if your prospective husband here wants to do something that you think is sheer madness? What would you do? It could affect your life, so what are you going to do?" That's a good test question. Then have your friend report back secretly to what she says. If she said, "I just wouldn't have it," drop her. Hopefully, she will say, "Well, I'll tell him what I think, and why I think it's not a good thing to do, but he has to be chief and make the decision, and he may have to learn the hard way. But he'll have to make the decision." That's a subjective woman – a woman in subjection. That's a woman who's right on with God. Her husband may do some dumb things, and may cause some problems and some little misery, but not nearly the kind of misery that she's going to have if she decides to play the role of authority in that home. That's the difference, because she will lose gradually (if she tries that) the loss of respect of her husband for her as wife, and gradually even the loss of love itself.

So it's the inherent nature of men and women, the way God has created them, to have leadership within their relationship. That leadership has to come from the husband if the wife and he are to enjoy happiness. That leadership means that he is teacher and she is learner. That's not a bad thing to incorporate even in a wedding ceremony – that a husband promises before God that he's going to be his wife's teacher. I always try to include that in ceremonies that I perform. The people who take the vows don't often listen that close to realize what they are promising, and that the wife promises to be a learner. Without that relationship, your happiness is doomed.

Women played a great role in the New Testament church, but always in that position of subordination where God could bless them. That's true in the church; it's true out in the world; it's true in your life personally; it's true in marriage; and, it's true everywhere. If you learn that, God's hand is on you. If you reject it, His hand (make no mistake about it) is against you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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