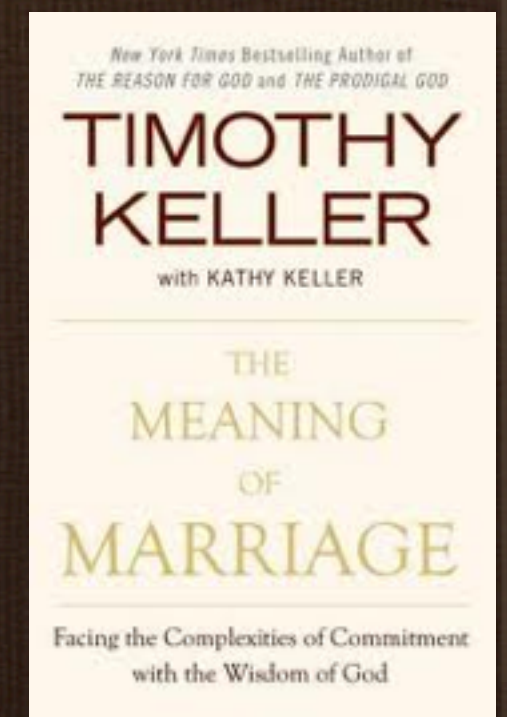
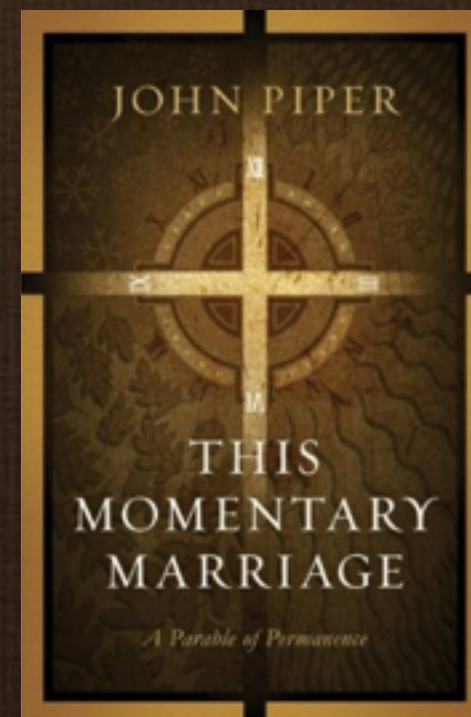


Marriage (5)

Wife's Role

Slides by: Timothy Chan, based on
John Piper's "This Momentary Marriage"
& Tim Keller's "The Meaning of Marriage"



The S-word

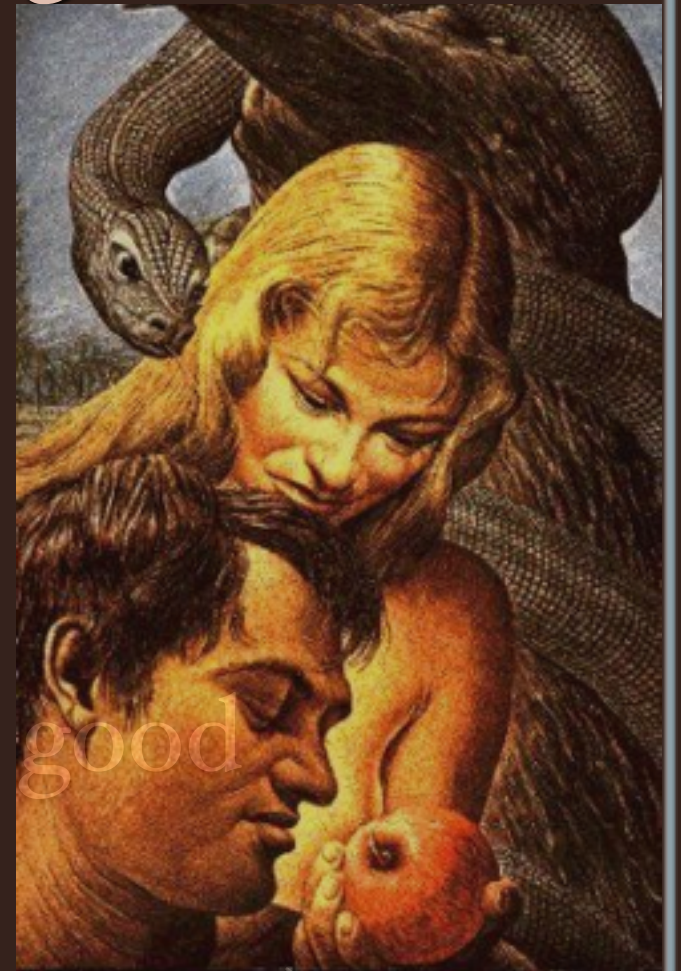
- ❖ When people nowadays read that the Bible says that the wife's role is "submission," they associate it with:
 - ❖ Patriarchal system
 - ❖ Antiquated beliefs
 - ❖ Gender inequality
 - ❖ Male domination & female subjugation
 - ❖ Abuse of women
 - ❖ Domestic violence
- ❖ (Q) Do you have any fears and negative associations with the word "submission" as applied to the wife's role in the Bible?

The S-word

- ❖ The complementary roles of the husband and the wife are meant to be God's good design of marriage.
- ❖ (Q) In your experience or opinion, how is the wife meant to live out her role of "submission"?

The Beginning: Reversal of God's Design

- ❖ **Gen 1-2:** The order for God's good design:
 - ❖ God created everything
 - ❖ Humans created in image of God
 - ❖ Woman created as a helper for man
 - ❖ Men and women rule over creation
- ❖ **Gen 3:** Sin reversed the order of God's design:
 - ❖ The snake (creation) deceived Eve (woman)
 - ❖ Eve (woman) gave the fruit to Adam (man)
 - ❖ Adam and Eve (humans) disobeyed God



The Beginning: Reversal of God's Design

- ❖ God told the woman in: (Gen 3:16b) “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”
- ❖ Parallel in: (Gen 4:7b) “... sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”
- ❖ The Hebrew word translated “desire” is *teshuqah*, which means “to compel; to seek control over.”
- ❖ God's design in Gen 2 was replaced in 3:16 by the woman's constant desire to control her husband, and the man's loving leadership replaced by domination.
- ❖ It doesn't represent the institution of male headship and wifely submission, but the distortion of it.

Understanding Submission

- ❖ “Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.” (John Piper)
- ❖ So what things does a wife do practically that constitutes “submission”?
- ❖ Since every family situation is different, it is hard to give concrete, applicable examples that constitute “submission.”
- ❖ It’s easier to understand “submission” by talking about what it is not.
- ❖ And it’s more helpful to talk about the proper attitudes and qualities that lead to “submission.”

Wife's Submission in Eph 5:21-22

- ❖ (Eph 5:21-22) ... submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord.
- ❖ A wife's "submission to her husband is an expression of her obedience to the rule of Christ." (Claire Smith)



Obedience to Christ

Submission
to husband

Wife's Submission in Eph 5:21-22

- ❖ If the wife's "submission" is part and parcel of her obedience to Christ, then it is:
 - ❖ Not coerced, but voluntary and willing
 - ❖ Not brainless, but intelligent and thoughtful
 - ❖ Not robotic, but with wisdom and discernment
 - ❖ (Eph 5:15) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.
- ❖ "This means that if a wife chooses continually to disregard or disobey this command [of submission], then her willingness to submit to Christ in everything is called into question." (Claire Smith)

Wife's Submission in Eph 5:21-22

- ❖ “An inability to trust a husband in marriage is not necessarily a marital problem. It is a spiritual one. It comes from years and years of not trusting God to provide and take care of you. When you live in the knowledge that God is in control, it takes a lot of pressure off of trusting others. A trust in God makes all other forms of trust possible.” (Sharon Hodde Miller of sheworships.com)

Wife's Submission in Eph 5:24

- ❖ (Eph 5:24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.
- ❖ (Q) What does it mean to submit to the husband “in everything”?
- ❖ It means that her submission is not limited by “no-go” zones with her husband, for example,
 - ✗ “Submit to your husband when they love you”
 - ✗ “Submit to your husband when they deserve it”
 - ✗ “When they do their part, then you do yours”

Wife's Submission in Eph 5:24

- ❖ There does need to be a qualification. “Because a wife’s submission is “as to the Lord”, then if a husband’s demands are in conflict with obedience to Christ, Christ wins every time. If a husband wants his wife to join him in sinning, she is not to follow him into sin.” (Claire Smith)

Wife's Submission in 1 Peter 3:1-2

- ❖ (1 Peter 3:1-2) Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Wife's Submission in 1 Peter 3:1-2

- ❖ Submission does not mean agreeing with the husband on everything.
- ❖ In 3:1, the husband is depicted as a non-believer
- ❖ Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband.
- ❖ You can use your “respectful and pure conduct” to win him “without a word” (so: putting him down publicly or private nagging are ineffective)

Headship & Submission in 1 Cor 11:3

- ❖ (1 Cor 11:3) But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.
- ❖ This links the male/female relationship with the headship/submission between God and Christ.

Christ's Submission in Phil 2:6-8

- ❖ We need to learn from Christ's submission.
- ❖ (Phil 2:6-8) Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- ❖ Christ willingly took on the role of the most submissive member of society – a slave.

Christ's Submission in Phil 2:6-8

- ❖ “Jesus’s willing acceptance of this role was wholly voluntary, a gift to his Father. I discovered here that my submission in marriage was a gift I offered, not a duty coerced from me.” (Kathy Keller)
- ❖ (Q) Do you see your submission as a gift or a duty?
- ❖ “The Son takes a subordinate role, and in that movement he shows not his weakness but his greatness.” (Kathy Keller)

The Dance

- ❖ The biblical pattern of the husband's leadership and the wife's submission is like a beautiful salsa dance.
- ❖ The key to salsa is a man who knows how to lead well and a woman who knows how to follow well.



The Dance

- ❖ When a husband and a wife obeys God's good design and acts out their roles faithfully, they should be like dancing a beautiful salsa dance.
- ❖ Tim Keller says that when you have “two Spirit-filled people entering into marriage,” they would each seek “to outdo the other person in service ... those two people are going to fight over pleasing the other person.” (Tim Keller)

Summary of Study #5

- ❖ **Genesis 3**: as a result of the Fall, men and women desire to rule over one another.
- ❖ Wife's submission is a part of her life of obedience toward Christ's will. Behind most marital issues lie spiritual problems.
- ❖ We must learn from Christ's example of submission, which is voluntary, willing, thoughtful, and full of wisdom. It is not coerced, but is offered as a gift.
- ❖ Husbands and wives playing their God-given roles is like beautifully coordinated dance moves.

Additional References for Study #5

- ❖ “God’s Good Design” by Claire Smith
- ❖ “Submission and the Single Life” at sheworships.com
- ❖ “My Wife, Salsa, and Submission” by Thabiti Anyabwile
- ❖ “Salsa and Submission” by Kristie