How can a wife support and help her husband?

Defining a woman’s role for the marriage relationship can be a very confusing thing. Why is this true? The first and most obvious reason is that many women are simply listening to the multitude of opinions in the media without going to the Scripture to see exactly what God has declared. Popular opinion is not where a wife should look to find direction for her life and marriage. The second reason the role of a wife is so confusing is that some women simply do not want to hear or do what God has commanded. These women think that their way is better than God’s plan. However, if you will seek God’s view on this subject and ask Him to help you become the woman that He has called you to be, the joy He has promised will be yours. Therefore, consider what God has to say about your role as a wife.

How does God want you to fulfill your responsibility?

1. Recognize your calling. If you are to become the support to your husband that God has designed then you must first understand His divine calling upon your life. Do you realize that you were created specifically to be your husband’s helper? Moses declared: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’ ” (Gen. 2:18). The word helper means one who aids another. Thus the woman was created because the man needed help from someone that could aid him in his responsibilities.

Now if you are thinking, This sounds so demeaning to me, that I’m just someone’s helper, then think about this for a moment. The idea of a wife being her husband’s helper does not demean her in any way. This same word helper is used in reference to the Lord Himself. David said concerning God: “The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless” (Ps. 10:14). Jesus also called the Holy Spirit our Helper who would be sent to aid us in our service to the Father (John 14:16). Therefore, since the Lord desired to aid us in every way possible, He created woman to be a helper and aid to man.

In addition, note that the helper God created was to be comparable to Adam. The word comparable means one who is a counterpart or the matching mate of the other. The idea is much like a pair of gloves or shoes which has a mate that is different but comparable to and a counterpart of the other. Just as a right hand glove can not be worn on the left hand or visa-versa, so men and women are different but still a compliment for and equal to each other. The right hand glove was not created for the left hand. Likewise, a woman is not the same as a man but is the counterpart to him which enables the two to function together. Both Adam and Eve were created with a specific divine purpose in mind.

Know your calling.

Are you your husband’s counterpart?

Knowing God has a stated plan for you as a wife, are you willing to agree and yield to His desire? Are you willing to be your husband’s helper and counterpart? The reason I ask this is because some wives I have spoken to do not want to be the helper; they want to be the head. If you are trying to be the head then you will not be a helper to your husband. Why? Your striving to be the head will only create conflict and tension between you and your husband. This is the first decision that you must make. Do you truly want to be a wife that will support and help her husband?

2. Becoming an excellent wife. The next step in becoming a helper to your husband will be that you become a woman of virtue and of excellent moral character. Solomon taught: “An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones” (Prov. 12:4). What does it mean to be an excellent wife? The word excellent is the same Hebrew word translated virtuous found in Solomon’s instruction to wives in Proverbs 31:10-31. The meaning of this word excellent essentially refers to the moral character and strength of an individual and is used of both men and women (Ex. 18:21; Ruth 3:11).

If you desire to be the greatest aid and help to your husband then you need godly character and moral strength that can only come from your personal relationship with the Lord. The prophet Habakkuk taught that God was the one who gave him this moral strength in the midst of his trials: “The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills” (Habakkuk 3:19). The word strength in this passage is the same Hebrew word translated virtuous.

Do you have such a close fellowship with the Lord so that you can go to Him and receive His strength and virtue in the midst of your struggles? Only by yielding to your calling as a helper and experiencing God’s power in your life will you truly be able to find joy in being the counterpart to your husband. I encourage you today with the words of Solomon: “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30). As you reverence the Lord in your life you will experience the strength to be the helpmate God has called you to be.

3. Submission is vital. The word submission for many women is completely abhorrent to them when used in refer-
ence to a wife’s role in marriage. Many women have told me they believe this teaching of submission is a tool used by many men to manipulate and control their wives. I tell these women that in some cases I would have to agree with them. However, if submission is understood biblically it can never be used in this manner. Why do I say this? Consider this fact. We all must submit in a multitude of ways throughout our lives where we don’t think submission is evil or manipulative. We all must submit to traffic laws or we get a ticket. We must submit to the laws of our nation or we go to jail. We must submit to our employers or we risk getting fired from our jobs. We all must be submissive and respectful with our friends so as not to offend them or we will not have them as friends for long. Finally, we are all called to submit to the Lord in all things. In other words, everyone submits to someone in some way. We do so to be obedient, to keep harmony, to show love, and to keep order in life.

The idea of a wife being her husband’s helper does not demean her in any way.

The Bible also declares concerning marriage: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:22-24). Why is submission of a wife to her husband so important to the marriage relationship? Understanding this truth is just as important as learning submission in the other areas we have already considered.

Submission creates a chain of command, harmony, and order to any organization, including the family. God has even ordained submission between the three persons of the Godhead. Paul made this clear when he taught: “I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3). There is one head in our government. There is one head in most businesses. Therefore, it stands to reason that there should be one head in the family. Becoming submissive to your own husband eliminates the power struggle between the two of you and brings great harmony to the relationship.

I know that some of you are thinking, But, my husband is a terrible leader and I don’t want to submit to him. If you think this, then it does make it difficult to submit, but you are still called to do it. I would encourage you to print out my last publication, “How does a husband lead his wife and family” and ask your husband to consider his responsibilities. You can find this publication for printing at www.covenantkeepers.org.

4. Take a servant’s position. Becoming a helper to anyone requires that you serve them in some capacity. Even Jesus became a servant to all mankind in order to free us from our servitude to sin. He laid down His life so we could be free. Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). Likewise Jesus told His disciples: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.” (Matt. 10:24). “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:26). In the same manner, a wife must become a servant to her husband if she ever desires to help him to fulfill his responsibilities as the head of the household. Yes, the husband is also called to be a servant in his home, but he must take the servant leader position. If both husband and wife will commit themselves to serving in their specific arenas this will create the best marriage possible. Two people will be serving each other and as a team serving the Lord and their family. This is what Scripture clearly intends for a couple.

Therefore, how and where can you be a better helper to your husband? What has he asked you to do for him? Where does he need help? Do you put these things at the top of your priority list or at the bottom? Answering these questions will determine how well you are a support and help to your spouse.

5. Become his companion. To truly help anyone you must become their friend and companion. Without true friendship and companionship a person will not trust you to help them especially with their deepest needs. Do you see your marriage as a covenant that you have made to be his companion? The Prophet Malachi warned men to treat their spouse in a righteous and loving manner, “Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant” (Mal. 2:14). Do you realize that God is witness to the way husbands and wives treat one another? God has called you to come together as a team to love and build up each other and to encourage and train your children. You cannot fulfill either of these duties if you are your husband’s adversary. Only as you become his loving companion and friend can your relationship function as God intended.

Only as you reverence the Lord in your life will you experience the strength to be the helpmate God has called you to be.

How can you become his companion? The word companion means one with whom you are knit together. Therefore, you must find ways that you can be knit together with your husband spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, verbally, recreationally, parentally, and sexually. As this knitting together occurs your marriage becomes stronger and stronger. For a more detailed explanation concerning how to find this companionship please read my article entitled “What is the purpose and the ultimate goal of your marriage” found at our website www.covenantkeepers.org.

6. Be a responsible homemaker. One of the greatest conflicts that is constantly brought up in marriage counseling is the resentment that men have toward their wives over their failure to take care of the home. This is one of the primary responsibilities of a wife according to Scripture. Paul encouraged the older women to: “Admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Titus 2:4-5). The word homemakers in this passage means to work at caring and managing the home. Just as a husband is to work to provide for his family so a wife is to work at caring for her home. This can be especially challenging when a wife works outside the home. She must still take care of her responsibilities within the
home realizing that her family is her first priority and her job second. In such circumstances it will be necessary for a husband to help his wife with household chores to lessen her burden. This balancing act of dividing responsibilities and helping one another as servants will be vital to a happy home.

I believe that a reading of Proverbs 31:10-31 will give you a clearer understanding of how this balancing act is accomplished. This section of Scripture is so valuable because it addresses the many aspects of a wife’s responsibility. It is important to note that this virtuous wife had interests and activities outside the home, but kept them in the proper order. She was very industrious in her ability to work with her hands, but she first provided food for her household (Prov. 31:15). Solomon declared that she then, “considers a field and buys it,” “plants a vineyard,” “extends her hand to the poor,” “she makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants” (Prov. 31:16; 20; 24). These references reveal that both keeping your home and working outside the home can be done if your priorities are correct.

Submission creates a chain of command, harmony, and order to any organization, including the family.

It is also important to understand why Solomon trusted his virtuous wife as stated in Proverbs 31:11. He concluded his description of his wife by praising her spiritual relationship and her reverence for God. Clearly Solomon believed that his wife’s spiritual virtue affected her lifestyle and every aspect of her home. She was not only a woman who feared God but was able to correctly balance her responsibilities of the home with all her activities outside the home. Does your husband trust you in this way? Are your priorities in order? Your home can only become orderly, peaceful, and pleasing to both you and your husband when your priorities are according to God’s will. For a more in-depth look at the subject of priorities please read “Adjusting your priorities” found at www.covenantkeepers.org

7. Respect your husband. When Paul the apostle summarized his commands to husbands and wives he declared: “Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Eph. 5:33). Respect for your husband is vital if you truly desire to be your husband’s helper.

How do you show this respect? Respecting your husband is first something that must be rendered simply because of his position in the family. He is your head and therefore should be acknowledged as such. You should show respect for your husband’s position just as you show respect for the position of anyone in authority. For instance, you have no personal knowledge of a policeman that stops you on the highway, but you show respect to this individual. Why? You show respect for the position of authority the policeman holds. Likewise you should do the same for your husband because he is the head of your family. Your respect will also cause you to defer to him in decision making, cause you to speak respectfully to him in public, and enable you to be encouraging to him in private as you verbally support his leadership. To fail in these areas is to be disrespectful.

Now you may be thinking, But, I have a non-Christian or a spiritually carnal man as my husband. I can’t respect and defer to him. Notice what Peter teaches in such cases: “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear” (1 Peter 3:1-2). The word fear in this context means to show respect and reverence to your husband. This reverence is shown by your speech and conduct as you submit to his leadership. Are you attempting to win your husband by your respectful conduct? If you want to be a helpmate that will encourage your husband’s spiritual development then show respect for him. Berating, scolding, and shouting at him will do nothing to encourage his leadership in the home. Rather, listen to his ideas first and then explain yours. If you truly want to give good counsel to your husband use reason and encouragement as you share your ideas. Speak gently and respectfully without demanding or commanding him. Remember, it is not submissive to disagree or voice your opinion, just do it in a respectful way.

8. Meet his sexual needs. Many times in marriage counseling I have found that wives attempt to control and manipulate their husbands by withholding sexual relations. I have seen some wives use sex in such a way as to control their husbands in order that they can become the head of their homes. This reasoning and behavior is unchristian and unbiblical. Why? If you use sex in this manner you have taken what God intended to be an expression of love and affection and made it a weapon of control. Behavior like this will only cause your husband to lose respect for you and will drive him away.

God has called you to come together as a team to love and build up each other and to encourage and train your children.

Notice what Paul taught concerning your responsibility in the bedroom: “Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:3-5). God’s Word is clear. Sex is to be a means of expressing the affection that is in your heart and the love that is due your husband. Do you realize that you do not have the right to refuse your husband access to your body? You gave him the right to your body the day you got married. Husbands and wives can only refuse one another when the other spouse consents or agrees to the refusal. This is the meaning of the word consent in this passage, which means agreement. Therefore, you must find an agreement over this very intimate issue. In addition, Paul warns that if you deny your husband sexually you are actually exposing him to greater temptation by Satan.

Now some of you are thinking I can’t meet his sexual needs because his drive
You may also struggle in your mind with meeting his needs because you do not think that he meets your needs emotionally or sexually. How can you resolve this issue? If you refuse to meet his sexual needs what will happen? Your relationship will only worsen because of the tension and his sense of rejection. Instead, you should meet his sexual needs and then lovingly discuss how he can meet your needs as well. The biblical principle here is simply the Golden Rule: “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matt. 7:12). When Jesus said whatever that means no matter what the issue might be. You must do for your husband the very thing you want him to do for you. Therefore, how do you want your spouse to treat you emotionally or sexually? Are you treating him this way? If not, do not expect much to change in your relationship. In fact, why not use the Golden Rule in all the areas I have discussed with you in this publication? If you do then you will become the best support and helpmate you could possibly be to him.

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For more information concerning the ministry of Pastor Steve Carr or for additional marriage resources for couples and counselors, please contact us at our marriage web site www.covenantkeepers.org or by email at ccag@calvaryag.org or at 805-481-2320.