

CHAPTER 9

GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE FOR THE WOMAN

When God created the woman, He had in mind a greater and nobler purpose for her than what is commonly known. You'll be surprised to see in your Bible what God's attitude is toward the woman, and the beautiful role He intends for her to play!

Ask the average woman in God's Church what she thinks her role is in this physical life, and she'll probably say: "To get married, have children, obey my husband, and look after the home." In other words, she views her calling as that of a mother and wife whose primary responsibility is to do physical work and serve the needs of the family!

Now, obviously these basic duties are absolutely necessary and required — they are bedrock and foundational! But in too many cases, the modern-day woman in God's Church has drawn her circle of usefulness far too small. Much more is allowed! Much more is expected! Not that she should neglect or detract from these essential responsibilities in pursuit of outside interests — but that a great deal more is to be added to her life if she's to reach the fullest potential that God intends!

WOMAN IS DESIGNED DIFFERENTLY

It's no accident that a woman is designed as she is! There's a reason why God fashioned her differently from a man — why she is appealing and gloriously beautiful in his eyes. Why she was created with a unique capacity for insight, common sense and understanding that he needs and should deeply appreciate. Yes, God created the woman to fulfill a beautiful and significant purpose — and she'll never be happy nor successful until she discovers what it is. I'd like to discuss that wonderful purpose with you in this article, and show the ways you can achieve it now.

WHY WERE YOU BORN?

We understand the basic truth that God wants all human beings ultimately to become spirit-born sons or daughters in His universe ruling family. That's the ultimate reason why we were born. But, why were YOU born as WOMEN? There is a wonderful purpose involved!

To answer this question, let's go back to the beginning and analyze the reason WHY woman was originally created. Genesis 2:19-20 states: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all...but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him."

From this brief account, God gives the reason for the existence of the woman. Although Adam searched among the creatures God had made, there was none that could fill his needs and longings for companionship. He experienced a deep void in his life — he was lonely and incomplete. An element necessary to his success and well-being was missing. HE NEEDED SOMEONE LIKE HIMSELF. Even God noticed and said, "It is not good that thee be alone; I will make AN HELP MEET (suitable) for him ..." (Gen. 2:18).

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24).

CREATED TO HELP THE MAN

So our first clue in understanding the role of a woman is that SHE WAS CREATED SPECIFICALLY TO ASSIST THE MAN as his companion and helpmeet. She was designed to fill a tremendous need in his life — a need that no other creature could fulfill. She was made for him — and God intended that she be supremely happy in this position. The Apostle Paul confirmed the fact that woman was made for man in I Corinthians 11, verses 8-9: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, BUT THE WOMAN FOR THE MAN."

Thus, the woman was originally created for the man to fill a very great need in his life.

Later in this article we will expand how magnificent and lofty this calling really is and how that God expects immensely greater things from her than just "changing diapers, and washing dishes."

GOD'S PLAN TO BE JOINTLY SHARED

But let's now notice some other aspects of the woman's role in Genesis 1:28: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion...."

Note this carefully! These words were spoken to BOTH the man and the woman. They weren't given to the man alone — God's plan was a joint venture and the woman was to figure significantly into the purpose God had in mind.

Take the command to "multiply and replenish the earth." How could the man obey these instructions without the aid of the female sex? He could engender offspring, but he certainly could not produce children, nor bring them into the world. No! It was to the woman that God gave this part of the command. Not only was she responsible for bearing children, but also for nurturing them and giving them most of their early training and guidance. Frankly, the very existence of the human race continues BECAUSE of the all-important work and role of the woman! Her function becomes immensely more important when we consider that mankind — her offspring — is destined to become sons of God.

Thus, as the scriptures show, man alone could not do the job. He needed a helper, someone to work WITH HIM and assist him in achieving the goals God had given them both. As the Apostle Peter later described the relationship between husband and wife, man and woman are "HEIRS TOGETHER of the grace of life". (I Peter 3:7).

Being a woman is a position of HONOR and RESPECT! And, God wants her to realize the importance of her goals, her destiny — and work toward them in her life!

POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY

Because God is a God of order and organization, He has established a system of government between man and woman. And, in His wisdom God has decreed that man is to be over the woman in authority, as a general rule of life. The law of nature and common sense further substantiates this point. The man is taller in stature, has broad shoulders, has heavier bone structure and muscular build. The woman, by contrast, is smaller, more delicate and tender, and by biblical definition is called the "weaker vessel." By virtue of stature and physical appearance, then, the man is visibly stronger than the woman and over her in power and authority.

This does not mean that she is inferior to the man, that she is to be a "slave" or "doormat" for him to walk on, or to be subservient to a chauvinistic tyrant.

But, she is to be in subjection to her head, and to be a helper to him as they both work toward mutual destinies! "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN IS THE MAN; and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3).

This is one reason why women are to have longer hair than men: as a sign of their loyalty and subjection to the man whom God has placed over them. (I Cor. 11:9-10) It is a symbol of willing obedience and reverence — based on a deep relationship of love — and acts as a sign that even the angels can respect! "If a woman have long hair, IT IS A GLORY TO HER; for her hair is given her for a covering" (v. 15).

The woman who has such an attitude of submissiveness, who is joyfully being a HELPER to her husband, is a GLORY to him! "The woman is the GLORY of the man" (v. 7).

The deeply converted woman who understands God's will, wants to be ruled over — but with love, gentleness and understanding. When a man fails to exercise his role as the head, he brings frustra-

tion and discouragement to his wife, oftentimes causing her to step into an authoritative and arrogant role that's unnatural to her mind and into a position that God never intended!

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SUBMISSIVE

In Ephesians 5:22-24 God emphasizes the ATTITUDE a true, mature Christian woman should have:

"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."

Being submissive means being actively concerned about her husband and responsive to his wishes, needs and suggestions. It has more to do with an attitude of service and respect than just reacting mechanically and coldly to his commands. There should be a sense of eagerness and spontaneity in the way she fits in with his plans and tries to make his decisions work.

Being submissive does not mean a woman can't make suggestions herself, offer advice and help her husband see his faults. Nor does it mean she must put up with continual physical or verbal abuse. It does mean that she should do everything within her power to fulfill her role as a wife the way God commands and in a spirit that will inspire her husband to his greatest heights. Proper feminine submissiveness shows itself in humility, warmth, and a deep inner calm. When practiced the way God intends, it's a quality that will elevate her to a new realm that all people will admire and want to emulate.

1 Peter 3:4 further explains the type of submissive attitude a Christian woman will have: let the primary adorning be that of "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 a great price."

Think of it! God plainly says that this submissive quality is of great price to Him. The woman who is deeply converted and obeys her Creator willingly from the heart shows it in her life. Her whole being radiates a glow, charm and charisma that others can readily see. They are attracted to the attributes of God's very nature working in her.

A meek woman, for example, doesn't retaliate when offended or hurt. She doesn't sulk or pout. She doesn't "bad mouth" her offenders or stir up discord. Instead, she strives for peace.

Experience has taught that ladies who have fulfilled this rich, rewarding life as a mother and wife — being submissive, responsive and positive minded toward their husbands, families and others, are the ones who become the type of person mentioned by Peter. Often it is the ones who are proud and vain, stubborn and resistant, selfish and unkind who become grouchy, frustrated and miserable in their behavior and outlook!

A CALLING OF SERVICE

Yes, God has called women to a role of submissiveness, honor and respect to man as their head. But, really, we are ALL — whether men or women — under authority in one way or another. And, ultimately each one of US is under authority to God The Father — even Jesus Christ. God has organized His creation in this fashion to prepare US for our grand destiny in eternity! Ephesians 5:21 says, "SUBMITTING yourselves ONE TO ANOTHER in the fear of God." Note that husbands and wives are to submit to other IN LOVE. When both truly love each other, they are less concerned about authority as they are with serving each other.

God shows that woman has a GRAND calling, just as glorious as given to any man — and that it involves the attitude of being a servant — a helper in fulfilling God's Plan — just as Jesus Christ Himself. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, made self no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a SERVANT" (Phil. 2:5).

God shows that the women of old whom He loved and honored had this kind of attitude: "Even Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: Whose daughters YOU are, as long as you do well" (1 Peter 3:6) Also, the very mother of Jesus expressed an attitude of willing service before God. When told of God's intent for her in her life, she responded, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me ACCORDING TO THY WORD" (Luke 1:38).

It is through a spirit of meekness and humility that women are called to a position of honor and service. And, those who humbly and willingly seek to do God's will and follow His plan of government can expect to receive a great reward in His family.

THE FANTASTIC GOALS OF WOMANHOOD

God wants each woman to realize her greatest potential even in this life now. Notice the richness, depth and purpose which God gives to the calling of true womanhood, as described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing present it to Himself a glorious church, such thing; but that it should be holy of water by the Word, that He might not having spot, or wrinkle, or, any and without blemish" (v. 25-27).

These words hold a tremendous lesson for US as to what God has in mind for women in His Church to achieve!

If Jesus Christ had selected a physical woman for a wife when He was on earth, what kind of woman would He have chosen? No doubt He would have been very circumspect and careful. Probably He would have chosen a woman like Mary or Elizabeth, or some other great woman of the Bible. He would not have selected a wife who was immature, careless in her conduct or example, or who was flighty, feisty, spoiled and selfish. He would have chosen a very fine, upstanding, intelligent woman in every respect.

Yet, notice what Christ's attitude is toward His future wife, the Church — the figurative woman He plans to marry: "...that He might present it to Himself (this figurative woman) a **GLORIOUS** church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (**Eph. 5:27**).

Christ's desire for her, as illustrated by this scripture, is that she become a **BETTER PERSON** even above what He originally found in her! He is going to elevate her, edify her, lift her to a higher realm of culture and beauty — encourage her total development!

Christ's wish for His future wife (and all women) is that in her relationship of **LOVE** to Him she develop her highest talents and abilities, but always in submission and respect to His headship.

Obviously, this is not the role of a "slave" or "doormat."

So, we can see that God's design for a woman is not that she be confined solely to the house, or just caring for the children and day-to-day routine things. **THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN JUST THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS!** Of course, such responsibilities are vital and are to be given **FIRST PRIORITY** — but she **CAN** and **SHOULD** go beyond these areas in attaining higher levels of maturity, growth and usefulness. She should be continually developing her mind so that she can give wise counsel to her husband and be an interesting conversationalist — adding color, life, zest and wisdom to the total family environment!

Remember the original charge given at creation, Genesis 1:28? The command to "multiply and replenish the earth" (which involves marriage, establishing the home, caring for the children) was given to **BOTH** sexes! And, the charge to "subdue" the earth and "have dominion" (which involves rulership, growth, expansion, etc.) was **ALSO** given to **BOTH** the man and the woman!

It's obvious that God wants both husbands and wives to grow together and to encourage each other's complete and total development in all His ways.

LESSONS FROM PROVERBS 31

When you look at Proverbs 31 you see the kind of woman Christ wants His bride to become. He breaks down and lists the **MANY** things a woman can do even outside the routine chores of housework.

Let's look at this passage in Proverbs 31 and learn from it. It has been preserved in the Bible for 3,000 years and is **INSPIRED OF GOD** to help the woman of today grasp and understand the type of life she should be living.

Beginning in verse 10 God calls attention to the **TREMENDOUS** value of the "**VIRTUOUS**" woman. He shows how she buoys up, strengthens and encourages her husband (verse 11).

This passage also shows how the Christian woman **WORKS** toward building her family — and, **HOW SHE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF INITIATIVE AND CONFIDENCE** in certain types of business matters.

Verse 14: "She brings food from afar." In many areas wholesome foods are not readily available and these must be sought out and ordered from many different sources.

Verse 16: "She considers a field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard (garden)." Obviously, this kind of woman has developed experience and proficiency in the business world. She has good sense and judgment, and can perceive a good bargain. She raises foodstuff for her family, and lays some in store for winter. She is a **THINKING** person, frugal, but not selfish.

Verses 17-22 show that a Godly woman will also be hard-working and **INDUSTRIOUS**. She provides appropriate clothing for her family, either by sewing it herself or carefully shopping for good buys. She puts money aside for family emergencies. But these verses also show that she should reserve time for personal development. She should continue her education by reading and keeping her mind stimulated with new ideas and concepts. She might even try her hand at poetry, music, art or other creative outlets. Even the husband will benefit from all these endeavors, because they will spark ideas in her mind which will **HELP HIM** in his job or outside activities!

Verses 25-26: "STRENGTH and HONOR are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with WISDOM; and in her tongue is the LAW OF KINDNESS." These verses give weight to the magnificent purpose for which she was created! And, they indicate that she should continue to grow and develop her character and personality in the process!

The Apostle Paul also refers to the fundamental duties in Titus 2:3-4 where he discusses how that older women can impart wisdom to younger ones: *"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness...teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed."*

Yes, a women should be able to cook meals, wash dishes, keep the house looking neat, clean and attractive and look after the children — but she should also go beyond these primary things in rounding out and completing her life. In fact, God wants her to.

True Christian womanhood is a position of **GREAT HONOR**! A woman has been designed by God to fill out a part of man's life that he doesn't have — both physically, emotionally and mentally! She is a complement to him. Together man and woman make a complete whole — "one flesh" as the Bible says! Man needs and hungers for the **COMPLETENESS** which only the woman can provide!

THERE IS YET ANOTHER ROLE

Let's now consider another question which puts the capstone on the entire subject: Why should a woman want to improve her life, to upgrade her personality and character? Is it to compete with men, to prove to others she can succeed, to gain personal esteem and recognition — or to make the best use of this physical life?

Or, is there a **GREATER, TRANSCENDENT** reason?

In I Corinthians 7:16 the Apostle Paul made a profound statement concerning what the woman's influence can accomplish when rightly channeled: *"For what knowest thou, o wife, whether thou shalt SAVE thy husband?"*

Again the Apostle states: *"For the unbelieving husband is SANCTIFIED else were your children unclean; but now are they HOLY" (I Cor. 7:14).*

Moreover, I Peter 3:1-2 states: *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."*

The powerful implication of these scriptures is that the conduct, example, love and true concern expressed by a Christian woman can have an **IMPACT** on how another person **RESPONDS** to the truth of God — just as is true in the case of a man.

This is a concept of far-reaching importance.

A Christian woman should not cultivate all the traits and qualities heretofore described — just for herself. She must realize that through her God-fearing example, and the development of righteous, feminine character, she can influence the **SALVATION** of others — members of her own family, her husband, as well as others with whom she has contact in society.

Think of what she can accomplish with her life if she fulfills her role the way God has ordered — to allow the living God to live in her and radiate His qualities out to others.

This is why — in its spiritual application to the modern Christian woman — the Bible can say: *"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou EXCELLEST them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but A WOMAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED! Give her of the fruit of her hands; and LET HER OWN WORKS PRAISE her in the gates" (Prov. 31:29-31).*

And again, because of her example of love, kindness, thoughtfulness and self-sacrifice, *"Her CHILDREN arise up and call her BLESSED; her HUSBAND also, and he PRAISETH her!" (Prov. 31:28).*

WHAT A COMPLIMENT! HOW DYNAMIC THE POWER OF EXAMPLE!

Think of it! Just as the woman has the capacity to bring physical children into the world, she also (as the man) has the potential through her righteous example conduct and outflowing of God's Spirit to help bring SPIRITUAL sons into His Kingdom.

Please notice that nothing is said about preaching the gospel or trying to convert others to the truth through verbal persuasion. The emphasis is on the outpouring of inner qualities of character and personality — a mature and godly submissiveness that attracts the right kind. of attention inspiring others to want to follow.

This, then, among other things mentioned is one of her highest goals! What a truly great and awesome role to play!

A WORD TO THE SINGLE AND UNMARRIED

Not every woman will become a wife and mother! Some may choose to remain single for whatever reasons. Yet, the spirit and essence of every principle given in this paper still applies.

Once the concept of true womanhood is understood, it should be applied in all human relationships, whether on the job, at school, in the community or in any kind of social setting.

The woman's role is indeed glorious in God's eyes and she should always strive to upgrade and preserve the qualities that make her unique and beautiful!

SUMMARY

When God looked at Adam's situation, He knew that the man needed a "help meet" to give him love, warmth and encouragement. He needed someone to share his life with — one he could GIVE LOVE TO. So woman was made — to fill that void and help make man complete.

A lesson can be drawn from the dream that God gave to Joseph in Genesis 37. His father was portrayed as the sun and his mother as the moon, showing that a woman reflects the glory, warmth and honor of her husband, radiating his leadership and love.

Having a husband who is warm, radiant, loving and encouraging — whose example shines brightly as the "sun" — is tremendously inspiring to the woman! Proper masculine leadership can actually give her greater confidence and happiness!

The woman was designed to be a reflection of the man, but at the same time TO EXPAND HER USEFULNESS as Christ says He wants His bride to do. She should be ever improving and growing in all areas — and always alert to ways she can uplift and serve her fellowman!

Many women have a narrow view of their God-ordained role. They tend to think of womanhood only as cooking, mending, washing, bearing babies, etc. But there is more to it. Christ wants HIS bride to be GLORIOUS, without spot or blemish. This is how EVERY woman should be!

The role of true Christian womanhood encompasses a far greater dimension. IT INVOLVES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOTAL SELF — of inner charm and beauty, sweetness of temperament and the glory of God.

If these qualities are present, she is going to have a tremendous influence on those around her! Being a true total woman doesn't mean narrowing down goals. Rather, it means EXPANDING goals! Think bigger! Try to become as Christ says He wants His Church to become — a woman who is fully mature, emotionally balanced and who has developed holy, righteous character!

As the women of God's Church, you have before you the breathtaking opportunity of becoming a member of His divine family! But at the same time, you also can have a part in helping others to make it, too!

Enlarge your horizons and think big. Think sacrifice and service! Become GLORIOUS BEFORE HIM — in humility and submission — just as Christ wishes for His Church!

"For ye are bought with a price; therefore GLORIFY GOD in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20).

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