

What's a Wife to Do?

In the arena of relationships—citizenship, work, marriage, family—society, saints, and Scripture often collide. When a collision occurs, we have several options. We can:

- Reject the Bible – Don't even attempt to read or understand what it says.
- Avoid the parts we find disturbing – Don't talk or preach about them.
- Reinterpret the disagreements as “cultural, not timeless” – Since times have changed, those instructions are irrelevant.
- Negate the problem by “attacking the author” – Accuse the apostle Paul or the apostle Peter of being a male chauvinist of the worst kind; and conclude that only Jesus' word can be trusted. (Since Jesus doesn't address sexuality or marriage roles & responsibilities, it must not be important.)
- Determine it isn't relevant – While this part of the Bible may be true, it cannot be lived in this day and age.
- Accept the truth of Scripture and pattern our lives after it.

The pattern for roles and responsibilities in the church, marriage, and family is rooted in the Trinity. The Trinity modeled the concept and pattern of a functional subordination.

	Equality	Function	Order
Trinity	The Father, Son, and the Spirit are equal as persons John 6:27; 10:30 Acts 5:3-4	The Father, Son, and the Spirit have separate functions John 16:7-15 Colossians 1:15-18 Ephesians 1:3-14 1 John 2:1-2	The Father has leadership and the Son and the Spirit submit John 17:1-5 1 Corinthians 11:3 Philippians 2:5-11 John 14:26
Church	All members are to be considered without distinction in the Body Galatians 3:28	All members have been given spiritual gifts to serve the Body Romans 12:6-8 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Ephesians 4:7-11 1 Peter 4:10-11	Christ has the authority and leadership is delegated to pastors & elders Hebrews 13:7 1 Peter 5:1-4 1 Timothy 5:17
Marriage	Husbands and wives are viewed as co-heirs of the grace of God 1 Peter 3:7 Galatians 3:28	Husbands and wives have unique functions in the family Genesis 1-3	The husband is given the role as the leader to which the wife is commanded to submit and respect Ephesians 5:22-33 Colossians 3:18-19 1 Peter 3:1-7 Proverbs 31
Family	All members stand in the place of equal responsibility before God Ezekiel 18:1-32 (20, 30)	Different members have different roles & responsibilities Colossians 3:18-21 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11	Parents have the authority in the home and the children are to obey Ephesians 6:1-3 Colossians 3:20 Proverbs

Within marriage, husband and wives have distinct roles and responsibilities.

	Wives	Husbands
Role	Helper Genesis 2:18	Leader Ephesians 5:23
Responsibility	Submit & Respect Colossians 3:18 Ephesians 5:22-24, 33 1 Peter 3:1-6	Love & Honor Colossians 3:19 Ephesians 5:25-29, 33 1 Peter 3:7
Results	Effective Witness 1 Peter 3:1-2	Effective Prayer Life 1 Peter 3:7
	Demonstrate reality of the gospel to a watching world Ephesians 5:32; 1 Peter 2:11-12	

The Role of the Wife: Helper (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-23)

“By God’s design, the wife is the helper of the husband and actively assists, encourages, and supports him.”

- The helper of the husband is the wife because of God’s design.
- The helper prioritizes her energies to help her husband.

The Responsibility of the Wife: Submit & Respect

“As helper, the wife voluntarily submits to her husband by respectfully bringing all areas of her life under his headship.”

- God commands wives to submit to their husbands.
- Submit to your husband “as to the Lord” because it is “fitting in the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18).
- Submit to your husband “in everything” (Ephesians 5:23-24).
- Submit to your husband with attitudes and actions of genuine respect (Ephesians 5:33).
- Submit to your husband with a “gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:1-4).

Principles to Practice

1. Rejoice regularly that God called you to be the helper of your husband—and as you help, to “work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Colossians 3:23).
2. Communicate your submission and respect so your husband feels respected.
3. Forgive your husband for any past hurts blocking your submission.
4. Depend upon the Holy Spirit to empower you to submit.
5. Enlist spiritually mature married women to encourage you regularly for support and accountability.
6. Pursue your own spiritual growth and don’t harbor resentment regarding whether or not your husband is the spiritual leader that he should be.
7. Trust God to change your husband (1 Peter 3:1-2).