

## Marital Faithfulness

In this section, I seek to give you a Spiritual vision of marital faithfulness. When many hear this term they may be considering a breach of such to involve a relationship with another man, outward manifestations of adultery, and thus they confine the meaning of marital faithfulness to something like this: remaining with your husband without having any extramarital affairs with other men. But you and I know that this is by far too broad of a definition, and when I use the term I am referring to something far more intricate, something vulnerable to much deeper frailties of the human soul such that the smallest momentary breach in holiness before the LORD would compromise such. A woman can have not the smallest temptations for other men, and yet be largely unfaithful to her husband, even estranged from him, evidencing that she is estranged from the LORD if indeed her husband is a man of God. For adultery need not be with another man, but may be with any figment of carnality surrounding objects of worldly affections.

*The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. (Prov 31:11)*

The faithful wife's husband trusts her not only with regard to her avoidance of having affairs with other men, but he trusts her that she will not have affairs with the world, with lying vanities, with devilish wisdom, with carnal fear and temptations, such that there is a breach in her steadfast Spirit-led loyalty, reverence, and charity towards him. Marital faithfulness is essentially remaining united with your husband, staying with and for his soul always. Surely this is the purpose and will of God in the covenant of marriage: "*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder*" ((Matt 19:6)

*14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not He make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. (Mal 2:14-15)*

Marital faithfulness for the wife concerning her husband, a man of God, means that she is loving him in the love of Christ constantly, her soul is continually subjected unto him, she is not tempted against him in the minutest way, she is not lukewarm or cold in affections towards him, she is filled with intense holy reverence for him, she sees his Spiritual purpose and vision, she conforms all that she is to such in Christ, she exists for him, she does not mistrust him, misuse him, misguide him, or mistreat him. Surely you know sister, that this only possible when we are constantly filled with the Spirit, constantly abiding in Christ!

You may have contentions in your heart towards having such a perfect reverence and subjection in view of your perception of your husband's faults. Perhaps your husband has been in a backslidden state; perhaps the elders have called him out for being in sin. And so you question

whether it is even the will of God you to stay with your husband's soul when he is in such a position. Perhaps you deem that you must wait for him to be recovered, to escape the flames of his current course in order to be saved. I beg to differ sister!

Though the LORD would never call you to spiritually subject yourself to a man who is not right with Him, or to disobey the commands of Christ in any way, you are called to stay with the soul of your husband (and I am speaking here to beloved sisters married to converted men). Staying with the soul of the man of God, your husband, is not morally contingent upon his coming short of sinless perfection, regardless of the extent of his faults. If he has been made a new creation, you are to remain on the side of his new man, bearing his spirit made in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24). And thus, you must as the latter part of 1 Pet 2 explains, lay your life down in humble sacrifice for the cause of his new man, for surely he is God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them (Eph 2:10)! Oh love his soul, his precious soul, dear sister! Do think upon and remember when he has been filled with the Spirit of the sovereign LORD, when he did make mighty strides in the strength of your God, when the humility and love of Christ possessed him towards you. Remember his first love, his first works; remember whom the LORD has created him anew through his rebirth to be, and draw near to this soul. To his flesh? Nay, I say to his new man. And thereby subject yourself unto him (as to the LORD, but never in disobedience to Him) for you have seen the glories of his righteous soul, and your spirit has drawn near to it, and you must do all things that his new man may live, survive, and thrive before the living God! Oh love his soul sister! Oh love his dear soul! May death work in you that life may work in his new man (2 Cor 4:12)! In the passage below I wish to draw your attention to the flow of the passage from the start leading up to verse 1 of chapter three beginning with the word "*Likewise*". Verses 21-25 charge us to follow in the footsteps of Christ who suffered and describe the manner in which Christ responded to the suffering. Furthermore they describe the result, that is, the Spiritual fruit, of His sufferings in those who follow Him.

### **Christ's Response to Suffering**

- *Did no sin*
- *Guile was not found in his mouth*
- *When reviled, reviled not again*
- *When He suffered, threatened not but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously*
- *His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree*

### **The Result of Christ's Sufferings in His Followers**

- *Dead to sin*
- *Live unto righteousness*
- *Healed by His stripes*
- *Returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of soul*

Immediately following these verses the passage states, “*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection unto 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*” (1 Pet 3:1). Dear sisters, the LORD is in this passage, giving you specific commands as to how you are to stay faithful to the soul of a man who is not in obedience to the WORD! This is how: Do not sin! Do not let guile be found in your mouth! When you are reviled, revile not again! When you suffer, do not make threats to leave him, to slander him to deprive him, etc., but COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD WHO JUDGES RIGHTEOUSLY. Let death work in you that life may work in him. It is certainly possible and even in the universal intent of God to produce the fruit of the Godly chaste conversation of wives coupled with their holy fear: the winning of the souls of their husbands!

Thus, if your husbands, though they be men of God, are not in obedience to the WORD of God in particular areas, you are to bear their souls in the eternal realms, stay with him in spirit by being yourself filled with the Spirit of Christ who has left you an example to follow in His steps (see again 1 Pet 2:21-25) through diverse states of soul within your man ranging with His being oft filled with the Spirit to a state of disobedience to the WORD. Your subjection as to the LORD to him is for the sake of his new man and in the case where the husband remains unconverted, for the sake of his conversion, that he might become a new man.

Marital faithfulness is a soul state of humble surrender to the sufferings of Christ, of resignation of self-striving, selfish desires, vain glories and conceits, carnal “justice”, denial of the lusts of the flesh and eyes and the pride of life, it is a forfeiting of self defense, of retaliation...it is all for the sake of his new man, whether he be born heretofore or yet to be born, that his old man would die, that his new man might live to righteousness, that he might be healed, that he might be returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul.

*21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:23 Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously:24 Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.3 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;2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. (1 Pet 2:21-1 Pet 3:2)*

When marital faithfulness is breached by the fault of the wife, she falls prey to manifold temptations and following this road, temptations to lust for emotional and physical connections to other men. Such a breach need not appear to be apostasy run its full course; it may begin very subtly, but before the woman is aware she is fallen prey to all manner of temptations towards other men.

She may not have perceived that she had sowed to such an outcome, but when she is unawares, she is ensnared by the devil. Sin had lain at her door and its desire was for her (Gen 4:7). Oh the blessings of staying hidden in Christ that we may be set free from the ensnaring power of our adversary!

*Hide me oh Father in the cleft of Thy Rock  
That the devil may not by his beguilements my defeated estate mock  
Bind me to Thy altar of self denial where Christ may be exalted in my heart  
That Your blessed victory, hope, and peace, Your saving WORD may impart*

*6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11 To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet 5:6-11)*