

About the Author

Br. N. Arul, a chosen instrument of God was born on 24th December 1975 to Mr. Nagaraj Mudaliar and Mrs. Chitra Mudaliar. He was brought up in the strict Hindu tradition. He fervently performed rituals at the temple from a very young age. During his schooling years he would return from School and reverently perform the rituals in the temple. Life was thus continuing until one day his father was diagnosed with () cancer. The whole family was very deeply grieved by the news and they were constantly plagued by the fear of loosing the father. It is at this juncture that Br. Arul who was 16 years old at that time had a dream of the Lord Jesus Christ crucified on the cross. He realized hat Christ is the true God and started praying to the Lord Jesus.

On further examination there was no sign of cancer in his father's body. His father returned home completely healed, this miracle caused Br. Arul to trust more in the lord Jesus Christ.

After a couple of years his whole family accepted the Lord Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. Br. Arul finished his Marine Radio Course. He also completed his post graduation in (). He started two companies namely Chemical Udyog and Grace Shelters at a very young age.

In 2001 heeding to the voice of the Lord he left both his business and started to do the Lord's Ministry he started "Hope Prayer Ministry Trust". In 2002 he started to publish a monthly magazine in Tamil called () which is widely read by believers the world over. Br. Arul has been fervently preaching the word of God in many parts of the country. Many people irrespective of their religion, caste or creed attend his meetings and intercessory prayer. Many people testify of healing and miracles during the meetings. God has used Br. Arul as an instrument to bring the love and repentance of Jesus to many people.

FAMILY LIFE

God performs extra ordinary and wonderful things in the lives of individuals. One of the most important aspects behind a man's success is his family. God is greatly concerned about the family lives of individuals. However many a times when we fail to do what we are supposed to do, it gives rise to the formation of a low pressure depression within the family. It immediately begins to thunder and instead of the gentle rain we see the storm beginning to rage. The more the delay in the storm crossing the shore the stronger the wind gets. Thus a low pressure depression transforming into a raging storm lies in our hands. God has given the grace to discern between what is good and bad. This is where the Holy Scripture comes in as a pillar of support. The lack of understanding as to how a husband should treat his wife and a wife should treat her husband lead to breaches within a family life. It is when we fail to understand each other that the unexpected problems occur. I thank God for having given me the wisdom and the grace to write this book, which I am sure will bring peace and blessings of our Lord into your family life. It will give you a clear insight as to the things that you ought to do and those that you should avoid. I pray that Christ would open the eyes of your understanding as you go through this book and meditate upon the truth that has been explained in this book.

WOMAN

First we have to understand the meaning for the word **WIFE**. What does a **wife** mean? A friend thought that he is being very humorous when he explained that **WIFE** stands for

W- Worries
I – Invited
F – For
E- Ever

People who are of this opinion are very difficult to change. When I asked the same question to another friend he exclaimed, Oh God! And ran away. Yes my dear beloved the intentions with which we view people determine the way we would interact and respond to that person.

Who is a WIFE? Let us look at what the scripture has to say about this in Genesis 2:21 – 23 **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.**

This is the mystery behind the creation of a woman. In Genesis 2:18 the scripture tells us that the reason God created a woman is to be a companion to the man and to satisfy his loneliness.

The Bible also tells us in Proverbs 18:22, **Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.** Therefore a wife is not someone who is bad, instead she is someone whom God has created for our good. Let us look at the cautions that the Bible gives us.

It is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18) let us look at the definition for the expression **“not Good”**, not good means it is very bad. However we do read in 1Corinthians 7:34 that **there are lots of differences between a wife and a virgin (spinster)**.

The stage before a woman gets married is what is described as virgin (spinster). Virgin means “chaste”. There are many stages in a woman’s life. There are lots of differences in the characteristics of that of a virgin and that of a wife. 1Corinthians 7:39 we read, **The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth**; virgin-hood is a very peculiar stage in a woman’s life let us look at the nature of a virgin.

1 Corinthians 7:29 reads, **the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none**. What is the reason for such a pathetic state, it is because at times the wife is responsible for the mistakes committed by the husband. Marriage has the tendency to transform both the husband and the wife into one flesh. The main substance of a virgin is her chastity.

This is what Paul in **1 Corinthians 11:2** says a virgin needs to be chaste. That is why she is addressed as a virgin.

Let us see how a virgin loses her chastity before her marriage. Let us look at what Dinah the daughter of Jacob did in order to lose her chastity.

She roamed around

Genesis 34:1 tells us, **Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land**. Dinah who, although had many brothers went to visit the daughters of the land on her own. In Genesis 33:18 we read, **And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city**.

What do we understand from this? They were new in the city, even before they could familiarize themselves with the city we see Dinah venture out into the city as though she was familiar with the place.

My dear beloved! We are meditating on the characteristics of a virgin. How should a virgin conduct her affairs? She should inform those in her household as to her whereabouts when she ventures out of the house. She should take along someone when she ventures out. The above action of Dinah was turned out to be disastrous for her.

In Genesis 34:2 we read, **And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her**.

On account of this Dinah loses her chastity. We observe that Shechem did not come in search of her, however her journey led her to him. Such incidents before marriage would lead a spinster to lose her virgin-hood.

My dear beloved, thus we see that it is in response to the loneliness that a man experiences that God had created a companion. In Genesis 2:18 we read, **And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone.** Yet there are some women who carry on with their life's journey alone, even after their marriage. At times we see that the decisions taken on ones own, without realizing the grace of God and without consulting the husband may lead to ruination in the future.

At times unnecessary journeys would lead us to defile our spiritual chastity. Let us compare the foolishness of Dinah with that of the good conduct of another virgin. When a virgin fails to follow the qualities, habits and morality that she should while she is a spinster and then goes on to become a wife it would prove fatal. It could be equated to an armature driver taking off on a busy traffic road.

When parents fail to train and instruct their daughters while they are yet spinsters, these women face a lot of difficulties and emotional problems when they encounter new relationships after marriage. The way in which a girl lives during her spinster-hood will determine her family life in the future. Certain spiritual characteristics will lead us to possess certain spiritual blessings. There are certain things that a girl has to learn before she becomes a wife and there are certain things that she has to learn after she becomes a wife. It is only then will she be able to enjoy a good family life. When a student appears for his exams after a good preparation, it will lead him to possess a good position in his career. The special classes that a student attends, the books that he reads his perseverance and hard work will fetch him good marks. He does not rise to such a high position overnight; it takes a couple of years of preparation. Similarly in the lives of successful sports persons we see that behind the medals and trophies that they win, lies hard work, practice and listening to the sound advice of the coach and following his instructions while training are all very important.

Just as there are several preparations before success similarly, a wife during her spinster-hood needs to prepare and develop certain characteristics. She needs to prepare herself to be trained. If not there is no point in blaming anyone for the problems that will arise in the future. She will not be able to win Gods favour even through rigorous fasting.

The characteristics of a Virgin

Let us look at Rebekah from the bible. A girl is judged by the way she behaves in public. Her marriage will be based on that judgment. When we have certain strong characteristics working within us people will automatically begin to notice them. Just as both the perfume and garbage emits odors, while one is desirable the other is repulsive, similarly a girl's bad character will lead her to lose her testimony.

Walk

In Genesis 24:15 we read, **And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.** This verse talks about the way she walked, what does it mean when we say that she carried the water on her shoulder? It means that she offered to shoulder the burden of her family. She did not walk aimlessly she walked to satisfy the needs of her family. Her meekness and love made her to fetch water and thus fulfill the needs of the family. There is nothing wrong in the way she carried herself. Before her marriage a virgin has to offer whatever help possible to her family.

You may think that Rebekah did not work for any organization. In Genesis 24:11 we read, **And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.** Rebekah certainly could not have lived a lazy life. From dawn to dusk look at how Rebekah conducted her affairs. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reads, **To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven;**, she did not come to draw water like a self righteous person proclaiming that she is working for her family. She did not come during the afternoon. Here the spinsters have to note that Rebekah did not go alone to a lonely place, next she went to a place where there were other women. Some people think that they are working for the welfare of their family, and work without a sense of time. Secondly by choosing to go where the women were drawing water it shows that she took all measures to protect herself. Some people ignore such situations and circumstances and get engrossed in their work, ultimately they loose out on what they shouldn't loose. Some women think that they are doing good for their family but the way they conduct their affairs would create suspicion in the minds of others. For example spinsters, who go out to work interact too much with their male colleagues, return home from work late, get dropped by different colleagues each day and when asked, they would answer that the job requirements are such, moreover the family situation is such that they need to work hard. Finally even though they might be good they give other people the benefit of the doubt about their character.

Water is very very essential it is required for everything, water is essential for survival of the whole family, yet Rebekah did not go to fetch water at odd hours. She chooses the time when she would do so. She created a safety net that would not make her vulnerable. This is very essential. Many spinsters fail to do so and find themselves as unwed mothers 1Timothy 4:12, **Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**

THINGS THAT PARENTS SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF

Parents should train their daughters in household chores. Some parents consider their daughters as blossoms and pamper their daughters too much and do not involve them in household chores. If someone questions them about it they would reply “afterall she will not be with us for long”. Ultimately when they get married and go to their in-law's house these flowers would turn into thorns. Parents who prepare for their daughters marriage by way of purchasing jewels cash etc should also train them in doing household chores. In this way a spinster should prepare herself for family life

HOSPITALITY

Genesis 24:18 reads, **And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.** Eliezer was a servant in the house of Abraham. The above incident took place while he was in search of a bride for his master's son Isaac. These verses indicate the sympathetic nature of Rebekah. Her hard work was transformed into a charitable act. Not only did she quench the thirst of those in her household but she also came forward to quench the thirst of strangers. By offering the water that she had fetched, to a stranger Rebekah displayed her brotherly love as mentioned in Romans 12:10 **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.** If we take a closer look into this incident we note that she shared the fruit of her hard work with the stranger. This depicts her sacrificial nature. She could

have told him “here is the spring you fetch and drink”. But she did not do so instead she drew water and offered him to drink.

HONORING

Here we see one more characteristic of Rebekah displayed, 1 Peter 2:17 reads, **Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king**, and again in Romans 12:10 we read, **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another**. Rebekah’s characteristic was according to the above mentioned verses. When a person possesses certain qualities which is lacking in others the inclination and intention of his heart becomes evident in his speech. The bias and pride in his heart is revealed through his words. “from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”

Rebekah’s heart was filled with humility she spoke in a way that honoured and did not humiliate strangers. We observe her saying “drink my lord”, the honour rendered to the elders will lift us up, we see that her arm was stretched out sympathetically.

My beloved in the present day family life we see such problems arising in similar situations and circumstances. When as a wife a woman, is called upon to part/offer something to others and if she as a spinster does not possess the nature of giving her position as a wife will be shaken.

A girl during her spinsterhood should practice such characteristics of honouring the elders and being hospitable to strangers it will be easier for her to provide and attend to the needs of the elders in her husband’s household, especially her mother/father in-law, and other elders in the family.

Similarly when a spinster is used to relate respectfully to strangers she will not have any problem in doing so with her in-laws after her marriage.

Such preparation will help a spinster when she gets married and becomes a wife. Just as an individual prepares during his/her exams a spinster needs to prepare more for a happy married life. If she fails to do so she will end up being a thorn in the family and her family life will be a misery all the days of her life. She should serve the elders with honour.

REBEKAH’S SENSE OF DUTY

In Genesis 24:16 we read, **And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up**. The former part of this verse indicates the personality and the model life of Rebekah. The secret of her great beauty was the fact that she did not falter in her walk. She did not know a man and remained a virgin. The above verse very beautifully describes her characteristics.

REBEKAH’S SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

In Genesis 24:16 we read, **the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up**. The later part of the verse we observe that Rebekah’s sense of responsibility, she was focused in her work she did not ask the other women for help, and she was capable of

carrying out her duties independently. This will help us to handle every situation without being a burden to others.

Now – a- days we see a tendency among married women to expect others to undertake her responsibility. When these expectations are not fulfilled it disturbs the peace and happiness in the families and it paves the way for future strife and quarrels within the family.

So we see that such lack of preparation during ones spinsterhood becomes a snare when the girl becomes a wife. Such preparation in building the character is much more necessary and essential than purchasing fine clothes, jewels etc for the marriage.

REBEKAH'S SILENT SPEECH

We read that Rebekah finished her task and came out of the spring. What this implies is that she did not chat with the other women who were at the spring. What a surprise! Generally we observe that when women gather the sound of their chat will be heard much louder than any other noise. Normally we hear two types of noise when women gather, one is that of quarreling and the other is the joyful noise of chatting and laughter.

Rebekah knew how to avoid the petty fights that we normally observe at the hand-pumps in the street corners. The language that she used was that of silence. Normally the pumps at the street corners becomes the platform for women to share their opinion on public matters, rumors and gossip. Similarly it also becomes a source from where rumors generate. The latest fashions, family feuds, problems between the in-laws, the latest marriage proposal received by the spinsters in the community etc becomes the headlines of the day. We also get to witness the fight scenes from the previous night's soap operas. Women tearing at each others hair etc. the modern day street pumps can be compared to the spring mentioned in the bible.

This characteristic of Rebekah has to be appreciated.

Beloved what we need to observe from this is that even though Rebekah was in the midst of other women she learnt to maintain a certain distance from them. Let us look at the present pathetic condition of many women, either they get too close or remain altogether aloof. Since they lack the art of maintaining a distance they are unable to maintain a healthy relationship with their in laws. Similarly she has to be discreet in giving counsel to her husband. One can only speak the language of silence only if they know the art of maintaining the distance.

REBEKAH'S PATIENCE

In Genesis 24:19 we read, **And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.** The above verse describes the patience of Rebekah. Normally if someone knocks at our door for a drink of water many among us would get angry and would most likely point to the hand-pump at the street corner. But in this verse we see that Rebekah offers to draw water to quench the thirst of the camels as well. Camels are generally known to consume huge quantities of water which they would then store for the long journey in the desert. Offering to draw such quantities of water only depicts her patient endurance. What does this incident indicate? It

depicts Rebekah's skill in satisfying and attending to the needs of even those members in the household who are not easy to satisfy.

Very often we see some wives who only attend to the needs of their husband they neglect the other member in the family. Wives have to take into consideration the needs of the other members of the family as well. There are some people in the family who may not be satisfied no matter what others do for them. A prospective bride needs to prepare herself mentally to encounter such situations. If she doubts in her capacity to attend to the needs of those in her husband's household she will find herself in a tensed situation always. It is due to these reasons that even silly matters are blown out of proportion. A girl needs to prepare herself to encounter people with such attitudes in her husband's household.

Above all Rebekah talks in a way that encourages Eliezer. In all situations a girl needs to talk in a way that encourages and builds the confidence, this will motivate any man to perform well. If we look closely we can observe that Rebekah offers her service even before Eliezer asks her to do so.

When a wife begins to live and interact with others in her husband's house she should not wait for others to ask her to do a certain task. She should volunteer her service to the elders in the household. If a girl should display such a quality she should be a patient person by nature. Next she should also be an enduring person. Only when a girl possesses such qualities will she be able to talk encouragingly to the elders in the household. She should possess such qualities as a spinster if not when she encounters the camels (hard to satisfy people) in her in laws house she will flee at the slightest pretext to her mother's household.

REBEKAH'S HARD WORK

Genesis 24:20 reads, **And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.** This shows Rebekah's promptness in fulfilling the task she had undertaken. It is very easy to promise but fulfilling what was committed for is not an easy task. Drawing water for the camels indicate her hard work, it also indicates her briskness in doing her work. Consider the words 'she ran' normally only if a person is brisk will she run about and do work. 'She ran' back to the well to draw more water indicates her desire to quickly accomplish the task at hand. In the family situation it is such circumstances that cause strife between the wife and her in – laws.

Very often we see that a girl will be doing a certain task, but her thoughts would be on something else in which case the task will suffer. If a servant in the household does her work shabbily only her work will be criticized whereas if the daughter-in-law in the house commits a mistake her whole family will be drawn into the criticism. Why is this so? It is because the girl is not prompt in her work. It creates rift among family members and leads to the splitting up of joint families. In the present fast world it is necessary that a wife learns to manage her time and accomplish her tasks promptly within the specified time.

A SURPRISING CHARACTERISTIC

In Genesis 24:21 we read, **And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.** When the characteristics that we have meditated upon so far are seen in a girl her life will be fruitful and this will cause any man to be surprised. When will we surprise someone with our accomplishments? It is only

when we are able to do something in an outstanding manner. This ability to surprise others cannot be developed overnight we have already meditated upon the secrets of this ability. The secret lies not in taking up a task and completing it haphazardly but it involves the right moderation of skill, ability and promptness.

In order to live amicably and successfully with her in-laws a wife needs to judiciously mix and display such characteristics. This will draw the attention of her in-laws towards her. Although it is most likely that there would be difference of opinions and issues yet just as the waves wash away the shells off the shore these differences and issues will gradually be washed away.

REBEKAH'S HOSPITALITY

In Genesis 24²⁵:25 we read, **She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.** When Eliezer enquired about her family and whether there was room in her house for him and his companions not only did she answer his question but we also observe through the above verse her hospitality.

What does it indicated to entertain strangers as one's own? It indicates the way in which we should entertain the relatives who visit our home. When we do so we should be careful not to set conditions and make them feel comfortable. If we request them to stay on for a few more days then they would feel welcome. Some people rear dogs in order to guard the house, in some household the people themselves behave as dogs. The specialty of dogs is that they will guard the house against strangers. Lets us compare the way a girl behaves when her relatives visit them as opposed to when her husband's household visits them. We notice that she will be unusually brisk and go about her chores promptly. At the same time if her husband's relatives come visiting the she develops illness and seems lethargic. In short it would make the visitors to leave the house immediately. Such attitudes would destroy the reputation of the wife amongst her in-laws and lead to rift in relationships. That is why when as a spinster the girl trains herself in entertaining guests she will not have a problem doing so when she becomes a wife. Such attitudes and behaviours would lead to disputes among the family members.

REBEKAH'S GOOD BEHAVIOUR

In Genesis 24:28 we read, **And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.** This verse describes the good behaviour of Rebekah even though she offered to draw water for Eliezer and his company, as though she knew them earlier, instead of walking along with Eliezer she ran ahead of him. In this verse we note that Rebekah was careful not to walk back to her house with a stranger. It depicts the testimonial life of Rebekah.

If she had walked along with Eliezer it would have raised suspicion in the minds of many people. As a spinster every girl should be cautious not to give an opportunity for others to talk ill or suspect her character. At times even a very innocent girl might give room for unnecessary speculations/gossips just by hanging out with other men. There is no problem

in talking to men or helping them when necessary however for a spinster to be seen walking around or hanging out with other men is unscriptural.

MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

The next most important characteristic of Rebekah is that she maintained a very good relationship with those in her household so as to have shared the incident with them. It is necessary that as a spinster a girl is open about her associations that she has outside the home. Even though she was involved in a very important task of fetching the water for the household she was humble and modest in her relationships within the home. It is important that a spinster shares everything that happens outside her home (workplace etc) with her family members. This characteristic will enable her to be open to her husband, otherwise she would remain a puzzle to her husband. This noble characteristic will lead her husband to put his trust and confidence in her. When a girl lacks this characteristic it would cause even a good undoubting husband to doubt. This would lead to misery in the family life. When a girl hides such associations even though it may be a very casual one it would give an opportunity for a third person to spread a rumor about her among her in-law and it may also lead to exaggerations of the relationship. This will eliminate all doubts and suspicion with the family. If we are not open about our associations it will lead to endangering the family life.

A spinster needs to have all these characteristics if she does not possess them, even though she be well educated, holding a good job or from a very affluent family she may fail to be a successful wife.

My beloved lets compare the life of Dinah with that of Rebekah, what a man sows that he reaps. Dinah was also approached by a very rich man but the outcome was disastrous. Whereas in the case of Rebekah we see that she is also approached by a representative of a very wealthy family (Genesis 24:22 **And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold**) it was the tradition of that time to present a prospective bride with such gifts. However without immediately setting out on a journey with Eliezer she first goes and informs her brother Laban and then Laban approaches Eliezer and proceeded with the matter. But in the life of Dinah she does not allow her family to intervene with the affairs instead went ahead on her own without the knowledge of her brothers and she allowed herself to be defiled by Shechem.

It is only when such major decisions are made with the approval and knowledge of the elders will it bring divine blessing in the life of a spinster. These are the characteristics of the spinster.

WIFE

Today although a spinster attains the position of a wife if she does not possess the characteristics required for a wife it leads to dispute within the family. Even the church's intervention will not be able to solve this problem. couples will blame and accuse each other for the problems in the family it is only when we enquire with both the parties involved will we be able to understand the true situation.

We see such problems arising in both affluent as well as economically backward families. Amidst all this we see that the wife plays a very vital role, her immature attitude will lead her to lose her credibility her lack of skills to handle such situations leads to severe complications. The wife might have been very successful as a student in college she might have been a gold medalist too in co-curricular activities and sports events. She would have won the applause of others by her beauty and the way she presents herself. However why do we see women who are very successful in their careers, earning lucrative salaries and holding positions of authority in their work place and those in public service sometimes fail miserably in their family life? It is because they lack knowledge concerning family life. Knowledge is different from experience sometimes people observe the lives of others and build their own life whereas there are others who observe other people and ruin their own lives.

We who have so far meditated on the characteristics of a spinster let us now look into the character of a wife. In 1Corinthians 7:34 we read, **There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.** A real wife should know to differentiate between spinsterhood and wifehood. It is only then will she be able to have a successful married life. She will not be able to solve all the problems through money, the dowry she brings or by her beauty. She would have to display certain characteristics which are different from those she required as a spinster. Only then will she be able to succeed in her family life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WIFE

SUBMISSION

In 1Peter 3:6 we read, **Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.** My dear beloved submission is one of the characteristics that is desired by the Lord. Women especially wives need to possess this characteristics. There are no options to submission. Submission should not be conditional **Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18** and **Titus 2:8** all these verses reflect this. Note the phrase “as to the Lord”, we read in 1Samuel 15:22, **obedience is better than sacrifice.** Likewise submission forms the foundation of a wife’s position. “In all things” the verse says because of the lack of submission a woman loses her status as a wife and causes herself to be deserted. If the scripture speaks about submission of Sarah then we also need to gain an understanding about submission. Let us look at the areas where submission is required from a wife.

SUBMITTING TO THE WORDS OF A HUSBAND

The scripture tells us “in all things” why should a wife submit to the husband’s words? We read in 1Corinthians 11: 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.** And again in 1Peter 3:7 we read, **Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker.** By saying so the scripture makes the husband responsible for all things concerning the wife. The scripture describes a wife as a weaker vessel so it becomes necessary for a wife to submit herself to her husband.

When a wife fails to submit she takes for granted the status which has been given to her by God.

THE AREAS WHERE A WIFE SHOULD SUBMIT

A woman should be submissive in several things. First of all she should submit to the words of the husband.

JOURNEY WITH THE HUSBAND

When a wife accompanies the husband on his journey it will work out for the families welfare. Sarah is a very good example in this regard we read in Genesis 12:11 **Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee,** in Genesis 12:5 we read, **And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came** and in Hebrews 11:8 **By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.** These verses tell us that Abraham did not know where he was going when he embarked on his journey. What we need to understand from this is that it was a time when Sarah was not in fellowship with God, God was revealing His word only to Abraham. Although Abraham himself did not know where he was going Sarah accompanied her husband in the journey. 1Corinthians 7:5 **Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.** The problems starts here, even after a wife comes to live in her husband's house a wife does not necessarily accompany her husband. Some couples do not attend the same church. This is because there are differences of opinions concerning worship. One speaks ill of the other's place of worship and claims that the church that they go to is the true spirit filled church. We often see that it is normally the women who win in these matters. They would build a wall of fire around themselves saying that the church does not have either fire nor heat, in such a way that no one can get near them. At this the elders in the household would start to grumble saying "why did she choose a husband from such a church where there is neither fire nor heat?" we see that non Christian couples would get over the frustrations of the week and would vent their emotions by spending the weekend by visiting some place etc. However those who call themselves children of God transform the Sunday into a battle day. There are Christian families where battles are unceasing. My dear beloved in order for a wife to journey with her husband they should be in one accord. Amos 3:3 tells us **can two walk together except they be agreed.** Unless a wife is mentally prepared and agreeable with her husband she cannot undertake the physical journey along with her husband. Such submission should not only be followed in matters concerning attendance to the church or worship. But also in all other matters. And this is what the scripture also stresses.

WHAT DOES TRUE SUBMISSION MEAN?

When a wife submits to her husband's desire and begins the journey with her husband it is most likely that she would encounter difficulties and problems it is however in these situations and circumstances a wife should ensure that the first love that she had for her husband should not grow cold.

Here we see Sarah adopting this principle in her life. Sarah was a very beautiful woman and Abraham feared that the Egyptians will kill him on account of Sarah, so he asks her to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister. In this we see Sarah's submission to Abraham. We see that Sarah was thus taken to Pharaoh's Palace. And the scripture tells us in Genesis 12: 17 and 20.....**“And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.”**

Beloved, if Sarah had not followed Abraham, she would not have encountered such problems. It is because she followed her husband to an unknown place that she was in danger of being molested. We also observe that the scripture does not mention Abraham making any attempt to rescue his wife Sarah. Abraham remained still (Abraham sought a spiritual response to his problem) and the Lord moved on behalf of him. It is normal that a wife would expect her husband to intervene and help her out, when she encounters difficulties and problems, but we see that despite the fact that Abraham did nothing to save Sarah out of a difficult situation, when she returned from Pharaoh's palace she did not conclude that it is not safe to accompany Abraham and so return to the safety of her father's household. Instead Gen 13: 1 says that Sarah continued her journey with Abraham.

A husband is the security for a wife. When a wife encounters an insecure situation in her life and the husband does not take any tangible measures to rescue her, yet she continued her journey with him, without murmuring and grumbling it shows her patient endurance.

It did not stop there, in Genesis 20:1&2 we read **and Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.** God intervened and through a dream revealed to Abimelech that Sarah was the wife of Abraham and she was sent back to Abraham. Earlier we see that because Abraham introduced her as his sister she was taken to the courts of Pharaoh and again due to the same reason she was taken to Abimelech. These kings, took Sarah to their respective palaces because of her beauty. Consider the mental state of Sarah because of these two incidents. She was 65 years old when Pharaoh took her to his court, Sarah was experiencing menopause and was an old woman when Abimelech was attracted to her. (Genesis 20:11&12).

While accompanying a husband on his journey a wife might encounter such unfavourable situation, the characteristics of Sarah illustrates the way a wife should adopt. When a husband stresses that his wife should visit his parents and the wife encounters some uncomfortable situations, on returning home the husband would find himself in facing a cannon. Even angels will not be able to rescue him from such a situation. The scripture illustrates the qualities that a wife should display while facing such situations.

Neither did Sarah murmur at Abraham nor did she turn back to her household. Sarah did not ask Abraham “What is wrong with you, you keep traveling from one place to another and in every place I am encountered by kings who want to take me to their palace and misbehave with me, because I choose to journey with you I am being treated like a prostitute. I cannot go to the palace of any king anymore”. Instead she addresses him as “Lord” and submits to his will. What a virtuous woman! At no point in the journey did

Sarah tell Abraham “at least now listen to what I say” instead she submitted to all the he expected of her.

When a woman on the advice of her husband undertakes to do something and encounters a loss or finds herself in an unfavourable situation, it is most likely that her husband’s participation in her affairs ends there. However it is necessary that a wife submits herself in both favourable and unfavourable situations. This is true submission.

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE IN-LAW’S HOUSEHOLD

God lifts a spinster to the status of a wife so that her relationships will be multiplied. Retaining or ruining the relationships that are thus obtained depends on the means that a wife adopts in her interactions within the relationships. When a woman fails to be sensitive in maintaining these relationships it leads to frictions within the family. In the present times we see that in order to show affection towards her husband a wife disregards the other members in the family, however lets look at the family life of Sarah.

Genesis 12: 5 says...Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son.....what does this verse reveal? Sarah did not consider Abraham’s household as a unnecessary burden. The fact that she did not disapprove of Lot accompanying them is laudable. She did not consider the members of her husband’s household as strangers.

In today’s fast world when members of the husband’s household happens to prolong their stay the wife begins to feel uncomfortable, when Sarah allowed Lot to accompany them, she displayed her generosity and accommodating nature. In this we see that Sarah did not raise any objection to living in a joint family. It’s not an issue to be accommodative under favourable conditions, however when some physical constrain or monetary support is required by the husband’s household, in these situations then the wife begins gets impatient. When a wife concentrates on gaining only her husband’s love and disregards the needs of his family members this strain within the relationship and eventually not only will she loose the love of her husband but also leads to friction within the family.

Adjustable nature

Adjustable nature is depicted in the way a girl conducts her affairs within her husband’s household. It is not only necessary that a wife adjusts with her husband but is also equally essential that a girl learn to adjust with the other members in her husband’s house. In Genesis 12:16 we see, **“And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels”**. The above favours were bestowed upon Abraham because of Sarah. In Genesis 13:2,5&6 **And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle....** And on accord of this they parted ways. It is most likely that Lot took with him some of those things that were bestowed upon Abraham on behalf of Sarah, yet we observe that Sarah did not speak a word either on behalf of Abraham or against Lot. In other words she choose to ignore their strife bearing in mind that they being relatives might fight one day and might decide to get back together sometime later. Above all we see that when Abraham heard of Lot’s captivity due to political reasons,

in the land that he choose to live in and Abraham decides to go down and rescue Lot she did not raise any objection.

In such situations the wife tends to intervene. This disturbs the peace in the family. If a wife makes attempts to win the love and affection of her husband by hating and condemning the other members of his family, instead of love she reaps only hatred of her husband. It is always advisable for a wife to keep away whenever the husband gets into any type of strife with the members of his household. It is better for a wife to neither speak for nor against anyone. At sometimes the wife needs to control her emotions and adjust to the situation.

We have so far meditated upon those things that a wife should do now let us look at the don'ts that a wife should follow.

The Don'ts for a wife

When a woman becomes a wife she should be aware of the don'ts. At sometimes the lack of knowledge regarding such things would lead to problems within the family. Just as the misconduct of a Pastor disturbs the church similarly the misconduct of the wife affects the family. Some people may be unaware of the Don'ts and would be perfectly performing the Don'ts. Let's see what the scripture says about the Don'ts.

Communication

Communication is one of the most important skills. Its only through communication we can express ourselves to the whole world. We can hear the sound produced by speech all around us, we are free to speak to anyone and we may speak to people as we desire. However the way a wife communicates and to whom a wife engages in conversation is very important. For the scripture tells us that **from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**

A wife's should have the mind of Christ. She should be able to differentiate between those of her husband's household and the outsiders who are engaged in any type of work within the husband's household. It is in these areas that a wife normally commits mistakes, she fails to maintain a distance and develops a special bonding with them. It is most likely that in days to come these type of relationships will turn out to be the reason for reproach.

Lets look at how Sarah handles such relationships. Genesis 16:1&2 the scripture reads, **"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai"**. And thus was born Ishmael.

A wife should know how to maintain the distance between herself and those who work in the household. She should be discrete in sharing sensitive information with them especially in matters concerning the personal affairs between her and her husband should not be disclosed to the domestic aids in the house. At the same time she should also not give an opportunity for another woman to get close to her husband. We are aware of the consequences of such an act of Sarah. The scripture reads in Genesis 16:4 **And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.**

Sarah heaped coal on her own head. The means she adopted to overcome her reproach in itself became a matter of reproach to her in the midst of the same crowd. At times when the wife fails to maintain the distance between her and the domestic aid, the domestic aid gradually evolves into a member of the family. What is the consequence of such foolishness on the part of the wife? The wife, to her dismay becomes the domestic aid.

CAUTION'S TO A SPIRITUAL WOMAN

This is one of the greatest mistakes committed by those who are get involved in spiritual affairs. They would work in the fervency of gaining one soul and the effort they put in to gaining that one soul will put to test their husband's soul. There are many such self righteous women who have ruined their own homes. We see many women whose have been blinded by Satan concerning these matters. The soul wining mission of the women should be in accordance with the word of God. In 1Corinthians 7:16 we read, **For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?** The scripture says in Jonah 2:9 **Salvation is of the LORD.** And again in Isaiah 59:1 we read **Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.** Concerning spiritual matters, working in the flesh will be rendered in vain. Thus Christ has different ways of encountering individuals, for the bible tells us in Mat 16:26, **For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?** The bible tells us to beware of people.

Finally a woman should be careful even while communicating to her husband if she takes him for granted and speaks all that she feels, she will land up in trouble. Thus it would be good if you follow the above mentioned Don'ts.

Communicating with strangers

Let us look at what Eve the first woman did. God commanded them not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was God's true commandment. There was no need for Eve to share this command of God with the serpent, this caused them to loose their stand in the presence of God. What do we understand from the fact that Eve spoke to the serpent who is a stranger? It shows that Eve failed to recognize her call. Eve was called only to be a companion for Adam. It was only to elevate Adam's loneliness and not to preach to the serpent. Engaging in conversations with strangers during the absence of the husband will in time lead to great losses. Even involving in activities that might seem monetarily gainful (kitties, small savings schemes, chit fund etc) without the knowledge of the husband can be equated to the conversation that Eve had with the serpent. "My husband is an irresponsible man, he does not save anything, he gives away all he has to his relatives, he is a drunkard and squanders all the money. This is the only way I can save something for the future." This is a very common justification that many women have, however by doing so the wife will loose her credibility and truthfulness and she becomes a liar. Thus we see that engaging in conversation with strangers without the knowledge and in the absence of the husband, no matter however appropriate and gainful it may seem, is not advisable. It is better to hold such conversations in the presence of the husband.

Avoiding communication even with the husband

In 1Cor 14:35 we read, And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. This verse tells us that

women ought to spend time with her husband in the house. “Ask their husbands” tells us that they need to converse with their husband. Not conversing with the husband in certain situations and circumstances will bring honour to a wife. Having to ask the husband should not be viewed very lightly. A wife needs to understand that she lacks the knowledge regarding the issue that she is about to ask her husband. The attitude to ask and learn from her husband in an age when many women would think that they know everything shows her humility.

Some women may very enthusiastically seek to clarify their doubts from their husbands, however they may not wait for an answer from him, they might volunteer the answers. In short a wife should be sensitive in her speech. Its only then will the act of asking and learning be fulfilled.

In 1Cor 7:34 we read, **There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.** One of the intentions for getting married is that a person who for so long had to live only for herself, from now on has to abide by the desires of others, especially please the husband. Those who want others to love them should in the first place should learn to love others especially the husband.

HOW TO PLEASE THE HUSBAND?

In Genesis 27:9 we read Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

Cooking

Rebecca was seen speaking the above verse to Jacob, when she overheard Isaac in his bed speaking to Esau and asking him to bring savoury meat so that he may eat and bless him. Dear beloved pay attention to the phrase “such as he loveth”. A wife should be sensitive to the likes of her husband. Isaac asked Esau to bring “savoury meat” where as Rebecca’s told Jacob that she would cook the savoury meat “such as he loveth”. She was well aware of the likes of her husband. She instructs Jacob to bring two kids of the goats.

This incident clearly illustrates the importance of a wife ability and skill in cooking. A wife should not shrug off from cooking by giving excuses. This will be possible only when she enquires as to the likes and dislikes of her husband. if a wife fails to exercise control over the kitchen (domestic affairs of the household), it would lead to her losing her status in the bed room. It is impossible for a wife to make an impression on her husband by her presence in the bed room alone. The wife should also leave her impressions in the other rooms in the household. The way she decorates and maintains the interiors of the living room, way she judiciously handles the supplies and stores in the kitchen, the sanitation and hygiene of the bathrooms and toilets, the way she serves food to the members in the household and her own table manners, all this will draw the attention of the husband and wins his confidence. Why is this so? If you notice, the presence of all the other members of the household would be in all the above mentioned rooms. Their movements within the house cannot be

restricted. The wife should rectify the flaws and shortcomings of the other members of the household, and her wise handling of these issues should build the house.

A WISE WOMAN BUILDETH HER HOUSE

The mistakes that a woman commits in these areas will disrupt her life and will earn the bitterness of her husband. Even though these are small things, due to the influence of the in-laws it is most likely that these issues would be blown out of proportion. When the affairs in one room is disturbed, how can there be peace in another room? When problems and arguments arise in the kitchen how would it be possible for a wife to entertain her husband in the bed room? Or how will she be able to interact with her husband's pleasing words? When one part of our body is hurting how will the other parts of the body enjoy wellness? Similarly when difference of opinion arises in one room of the household will its influence not be felt in the bedroom also? These are day-to-day happenings within every household. In all this it is important for a wife to please her husband.

You must be well versed in the culinary art, however the wife should be sensitive to the expectations of her husband. It is important not to compare the cuisine of one's parental home with those of the husband's. There might be a lot of difference in the cuisines, however it is least important to get entangled in the way the food is cooked in the husband's house instead one should be sensitive to the taste of the husband. This should be the main aim of the wife. The working women should in no way site any excuse and shrug from this very important responsibility and handover this territory to someone else. We see that the scripture also shows that cooking is one of the aspects which please the husband. **“The way to a man's heart is through his stomach”.**

A LIFE SET APART

If we believe, accept and be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit and then just continue in our normal worldly way of living, we will not grow in the Spirit. We have been set apart from the people of this world and their works. The church is the bride prepared for the coming of the bridegroom which is Christ. When Christ returns it is the way we live our life which has been set apart from this world which will draw the attention of Christ. As the scripture in Mathew 19:29 says...**And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.** A wife should submit to the husband as she submits to the Lord. A wife should be seen living this **Life** which has been **Set Apart**. Just as the church should be prepared to give up everything similarly in the context of a family a wife should be willing to give up all things for her husband. Ephesians 5:22,24; Titus 2:8; Colossians 3:18 says that, **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.** Let's take note of the phrase “as unto the Lord”, just as discipleship requires that a person should be prepared to give up all other relationships, similarly in order to earn the love and affection of the husband a wife should be willing to give up all relationships especially the relationships of the parental household.

Let us now consider the married life of Jacob. While he lived in his in-laws house along with his two wives and children for twenty years, there rose a heated argument between Jacob and his father-in-law Laban over his remuneration. Genesis 31:36 reads **And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban...**the word of God tells us that Jacob returns to his father's house.

Genesis 31:17,18 reads **Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels. And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.** Beloved Rachael and Leah were Jacob's wives, they accepted to leave their father and brothers and embark on the journey with Jacob. In this we see the oneness that the husband and wife possessed. What we also need to note in this verse is that Jacob decided to go to Isaac his father's house in land of Canaan.

They did not praise the comforts and wealth of their father's household. They did not respond "Jacob what did you have when you married us? All that you had was what our father had provided. Not only did our father feed you, but also bore the expense of our child bearing. Now where are you taking us to? Is it to your father's house? For so many years we never knew the meaning of the relationships such as mother in-law and father in-law. You are free to go if you want to, we will not give up the comforts of our father's household and follow you. How dare you speak about our father?" Instead they replied in Genesis 31:14 **And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?** They considered the humiliation of their husband as their own. Further in Genesis 31:16 we read **For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's. Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.** Rachael and Leah did not expect Jacob to set them in an independent household free from their in-laws. They agreed to go leave their own household and go and live in their in – laws house, they also left at a time when their father Laban had gone to shear his sheep. They did not tell Jacob "how do you expect us to leave our father who for so many years had provided us with food, got us married and took care of the deliveries of our children. Let our father return we will inform him and get his permission before we leave. Submitting to the husband and leaving once father's house indicates the set apart life. Women need to ensure that in these things they do not take up sides with their father instead support their husband.

In the present times this is the areas where problems arise. Now we see that the situation has been reversed. We see that, like Rachael and Leah many husbands heed to the voice of their wives and leave their parental homes. They very often land up setting up their abode nearer to the wife's parental home. All this happens in the slightest pretext, because we see that women even though married they are still attached to their parental household. They prefer to set up a nuclear house nearer to their parental home. However all these in course of time would develop in to obstacles in gaining the affection of the husband.

Couples who live in nuclear household often hesitate to visit their in-laws. Especially those of the husband's household. Very often at this juncture the wife will sought to give lame excuses and petty reasons in order to avoid visiting her husband's house. All this will result in displeasing the husband. It is highly impossible for a woman to win the love and affection of her husband without the cooperation of her husband's household. The distance that a wife maintains from the husband's household will always reflect the distance the husband maintains with his wife on many matters. These are the practical difficulties in a wife winning the good will of her husband.

The wife who spends four out of seven days in a week in her parental house will automatically ruin the prospects of a good family life. This will not only lead to a strain

between the relationship of a husband and wife but will also lead to the husband harbouring great bitterness towards the wife's household.

USURPING AUTHORITY

1Timothy 2:12- 14 reads, **but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.** The scripture has not authorized a woman to have dominion over the husband. However the welfare of a family depends on the way this dominion is expressed.

In the book of Proverbs 18:21 we read **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.** It is evident that the words that originate in a man's mouth will prosper friendships. But we see that the relationship between a husband and wife is much more than that of friendship. People have ruined such relationships by merely speaking the inappropriate words.

Areas where a wife should not exert authority

1. Expectations of the flesh

we read in Genesis 30:1.2 **And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel....** Dear beloved the above let us consider the above quoted verse in terms of the expectations of the flesh. In the above verse we can observe that Rachel earned the anger of her husband by her speech. 1Corinthians 7:4 reads **The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.** However, with the power bestowed upon a woman within the capacity of being a wife a woman should not overtly exert her authority and thus provoke her husband to anger. Instead a wife through her meekness and love get her needs and necessities met.

In the Songs of Solomon 8:6 we read..**for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.** Generally the words spoken in love would be void of harsh words and conspiracy. Let's look at what the Bible speaks about love. Genesis 34:3 reads **And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.**

Speaking kindly will create love. This is very essential in a family life. The expectations of the flesh should be fulfilled by communicating in love and kind words and not by demanding for it like one would place demands before a management in the work place. This overt expressions of a wife would belittle a woman's modesty. A woman who needs to be a confidant to her husband will ruin the confidence a husband has in her. These actions would lead even a good husband into a suspicious husband and thus destroy the peace of the family.

2. Spiritual Expectations

1Timothy 2:12 reads **But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.** Here the word "teach" denotes that a husband will not tolerate a wife's interference in spiritual matters and so will the Lord. This is not only observed in the New Testament but also be seen in the Old Testament. A wife should be

cautious in spiritual matters because the bitterness, difference of opinion, arguments and strife that exists in the domestic aspects of the family will only cause strain in the relationship between a husband and a wife, whereas the interference of the wife in spiritual matters will kindle the wrath of God and will lead to curse.

We see the following incident taking place in 2Samuel 6:15, 16. **So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.** We could interpret the word 'Dancing' in the literal sense but in the actual sense he was worshiping the Lord. This form of worship seemed insulting in the sight of Michal, David's wife. Not only did she entertain such thoughts in her heart but she spoke vehemently about it. We read this in 2 Samuel 6:20-23 **Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.**

It is in these areas related to spirituality that a woman needs to tread very cautiously. It is possible to earn not only the bitterness of the husband but also the wrath of the Lord if these are not dealt with wisely. What a piteous outcome! Even in the present times, when marriages are fixed, people pay more attention to the caste, creed, education, physical appearance, salary etc rather than the worship culture of the groom. After the marriage there will arise a lot of difference of opinions regarding the places of worship and it is most likely that without one's knowledge one would blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and this is a unpardonable sin before the God. Just as David's wife was barren till the day of her death, similarly some chastisement in both physical and other aspects may be seen all through life.

In Mathew 12:32 we read **And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man (Jesus Christ), it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.** Isaiah 63:10 reads **But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.** It is normal to go to the place of worship in search of peace. But today many couples lose their peace on account of the place of worship. This is why the scripture demands that a woman hold her peace in these sensitive matters.

Beloved! We have seen those things that a wife should not do, we meditated upon the way a wife should show love. Even if a woman fails in do what she ought to do yet, she should be careful not to do those things what she ought not to do. The words that Michal used resounded with mockery.

3. Mockery

Ephesians 5:4 reads Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks and in Ephesians 4:3 we read Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. If not, in the family life mockery will hinder the blessing of the Lord. We see that in Psalms 1:1 and 11:51 describes mockery as the characteristic of a wicked man. What is the consequences of mockery? We read in Isaiah 28: 22 **Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.** In case you find yourself in a situation of physical ailments, bareness, marital problems and at the same time you delight yourself in mocking others you only ensure that your problems get more worse. In Proverbs 19:29 **we read Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.** Some might think that they are being very funny when they talk like this, but in fact they are getting themselves ensnared.

Who are these scorners? In Proverbs 21:24 we read, **Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.** These characteristics might both knowingly or unknowingly exist in the hearts of couples. Mocking at in-laws and even mocking about each others physical appearance etc, will not only hurt the feelings but will leave a scar in the heart of either couple. Monetary aspects cannot compensate and heal the hurt and scars that are caused by mockery. Proverbs 24:9 reads, **The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.** Thus be not an abomination to each other. In some foreign countries this can be an illegal offence.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A WIFE

Responsibility should be seen in all aspects of work. We address our engagements in the worldly aspects as responsibilities. When some one performs well in their responsibilities they bring credit to their post. Post and responsibilities go hand-in-hand. When one performs ones responsibilities well, posts will automatically be bestowed upon them. We see that those who chase after only posts are never always successful in their career. Similarly within the office of a family a wife needs to be knowledgeable about her responsibilities in order to retain her position as a wife. A marriage does not overnight transform a woman into a wife, marriage is only the beginning. In everyday life we encounter women who have failed to retain their position of a wife. There are many women who do not realize their own shortcomings but instead go around blaming the husband. The lack of knowledge concerning their shortcomings in fulfilling their responsibilities can be seen as a major cause for such happenings. In 1Corinthians 7:3 we read.....**likewise also the wife (should render her duties) unto the husband.**

beloved we read in 1Corinthians 7:4 **...likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.** If a person who is bestowed with power fails to fulfill her responsibilities then she cannot complaint to a higher authority. She would have to face the consequences for her own actions. We have already meditated on the characteristics of a wife but hear we are going to meditate upon her responsibilities. Please do not compare it to the work life. Good nature and characteristics alone will not give fullness to the status of a wife. The responsibilities of a wife plays a major role in giving life to wifehood.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A WIFE IN THE FAMILY LIFE

I would like to draw your attention towards the caption **“Responsibilities rendered to the husband”**. A wife should fulfill her responsibilities bearing in mind the characteristics of a husband. A woman should clearly understand that even a stranger can take the place of a parent, sister, brother or any other relationship, however no one can replace the position of a husband.

1. Marital Relationship

Beloved! While meditating about the responsibilities of a wife a woman should also be aware about the marital relationship, this is one of the most important responsibilities of a wife. The way a wife behaves within this relationship might lead the increase or the decrease in the both the love and hatred that a husband has towards a wife.

What is marital relationship?

We read in Ecclesiastics 4:9 **Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.** And in Ecclesiastics 4:11 **Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?** Again in Genesis 2:24 we read, **and they shall be one flesh.** The relationship between a husband and wife is what we call marital relationship. The scripture approves such a relationship between a husband and wife. When such a relationship (intimacy) is maintained outside the office of marriage the scripture describes them as ‘rape’ or ‘molestation’. In 1Corinthians 7:2 we read, **Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.**

The phrase “wife unto the husband” denotes that a married couple should not be separated. Separation is main adversary for a marital relationship. In 1Corinthians 7:10 we read, **And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.** The phrase “let not the wife depart” clearly indicates that the married couple should be united. Again we read in 1Corinthians 7:5 **Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.** The mystery of creation lies in the fact that a husband and wife should always be united.

Genesis 3:24, Ephesians 5:31,32 stress the same thing, **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.** In Proverbs 5:19 we read, **Let her (wife) be as the loving hind and pleasant doe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.** A wife should thus be pleasing in the sight of her husband as described in the Bible verses mentions above. When a wife fails to perform her marital responsibilities towards her husband, she the wife who has been bestowed with powers will lose her status as wife.

In Proverbs 5:19 we read, **“her love”** depicts the eminent position of a wife. it should be cherished as something that is not available anywhere else. When do we see a rise in demand? It is normally when there is a scarcity in the supply. There should not be seen a scarcity for such a love, which will lead a husband do search for it outside the office of marriage. After marriage a wife stands as a guarantor for the fidelity of a husband. There are many men who after their marriage have been able to get out of their unholy way of living, however the chastisement on the part of the wife have lead many men to go astray. This is why we have already meditated on 1Corinthians 7:2 which reads, **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own**

husband. This fornication is just like a disease, we get vaccinated in order to prevent diseases such as malaria and typhoid, similarly, in order to prevent your beloved from the disease called ‘fornication’ it is very essential to vaccinate him with love within the marital relationship. Whether these things please a husband or not it would help a woman to retain her status as wife. The phrase “let not a wife depart” also means that the couples should not cease to sleep together in the same bed. Very often we see that gradually a wife would begin to make her bed with her daughters and cease to spend time quality time with her husband. The excuse that many women give for this act is that they have grown old and it may seem appropriate to do so when they have grown up children in the house. They would also conclude that since they are both 50+ years old they need not display such affections for each other. However this may not be true in the case of the husband who may still desire to spend intimate time with his wife. It is due to these reasons that very often we see older men behave in despicable manner than a youth. Even though the body might have grown old he may still be feeling young at heart.

In the present day we very often overhear people in public places, especially in the public transports, commenting “the youth are much better than the older men...” The reason that these older men are reproached upon is because of the wives who make their beds with their adolescent daughters. In these end times it is easier to lead a youth into a holy life, whereas the elders who consider themselves as youths can only be led into a holy life by their wife alone.

2. Responding according to the time

One of the responsibilities of the wife is to respond according to the time. It is good for a wife to spend the night with her husband, at the same time the Bible also tells us how a wife should behave during the day. We read about the qualities of a noble wife in Proverbs 31:15 **She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.** A wife should rise before dawn, moreover she is also instructed not to eat the ‘bread of idleness’ in Proverbs 31:27 we read, **She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.**

Why does one feel lazy? It is because we are afraid of the chillness of the early morning. However we read in Proverbs 19:15 we read, **Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep...** the prosperity of a household is in this, if a woman is filled with idleness what would be the state of the house? Again in Proverbs 6:9 – 11 we read, **How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.** This slothfulness would induce sleep and this in turn will earn the reproach of the elders and also disturb the peace of the family. Secondly, when a wife regularly avoids cooking and orders food for the household from the restaurant, it depicts slothfulness on her part. In Proverbs 12:27 we read, **The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting...** in the earlier chapters of the book we have seen how wife could earn the affection of her husband when she prepares and serves him the food as he desires. However the scripture calls a wife who shrugs from cooking for the family as a lazy person. Although these may seem a very silly matter however it is very important for a wife to score well in these areas.

In Proverbs 31:21 we see the phrase **“she is not afraid of the snow”** the scripture calls those who are afraid of the snow as lazy person. We also read in Proverbs 20:4 **The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold.** Again in Proverbs 21:25 we read, **The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.** It is in these areas that a man encounters strife with his parents and other siblings on account of his wife. This lazy nature is very dangerous, it would lead to a wife having to lose her husband. We call a woman with her husband as a wife, a woman who lost her husband is known as a widow. Lets look at the characteristics of a widow as described in 1Timothy 5:13 **And withal they (the widows) learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.** If a wife confesses that she is like one who does not have a husband, we ought to understand that these characteristics are present in some aspects of her behavior.

If a wife possess the above mentioned characteristics it may lead her to deserted state. It would be similar to what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 **But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none.** A widow is one who’s husband is no more, however these characteristics have the power to bring down a woman from the status of a wife to that of a widow. In short a such characteristics would transform a normal man into a useless and inactive person. Let us meditate upon the consequences of these characteristics.

Roaming from house to house

The scripture condemns the habit of roaming from house to house. In Titus 2:5 we read, the phrase **“keepers at home”**. Paul writes in the letters to Titus his son in the spirit that it women who are in the Lord should remain in the house. In 1Timothy 5:13 we see that roaming from house to house is one of the characteristics of a widow. At the same time lets look at those people whose legs will not rest in the house.

1. The demon possessed will not stay in the house: (legion)

In Mark 5:1-7 we read that a person who is possessed by demons will not stay in the house. We see the same person described in Luke 8:27, **when he (Jesus) went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.**

2. Those who have psychological problems will not stay at home

We see in Daniel 4:30 and 33 **The king (Nebuchadnezzar) spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.** This incident tells us that the king’s feet did not rest in the palace. Again we read in the parable of the prodigal son as described in Luke 15: 11 – 17 that the younger son left the father’s household. He lived a wicked life in a distant country. When he had noting to fill his stomach with except that which was used to feed the pigs, the Bible tells us that **“when he came to his senses”** he rose and returned to his father’s house. Similarly in Daniel 4:34 we see that when the king Nebuchadnezzar uttered the words **“mine understanding returned unto me”** he was restored to his former glory and returned to his palace. The feet of those who are

affected psychologically will not rest in the house. One loses his sense because similar to the king Nebuchadnezzar and the younger son in the parable of the prodigal son, one takes pride in one's own worldly achievements. Similarly we see that when a wife basks in the glory of her parental household and in the success in her career she loses her sense and her feet will not tend to rest in the house.

3. Her (Harlot) feet abide not in her house (Proverbs 7:11)

The scripture says that one of the characteristics of a harlot is that her feet will not rest in the house. The scripture draws many distinctions between a wife and a harlot. The scripture prescribes the characteristics that will help a woman to live as a wife. The ritual of marriage alone does not transform a woman into a successful wife. When a woman being a wife adopts certain characteristics of a harlot her family life becomes very miserable. There are certain characteristics that clearly distinguish a wife from a harlot. Both are women however why do we need to draw a comparison between a wife and a harlot while meditating upon the characteristics of a wife? It is because when a woman fails to fulfill her responsibilities she unknowingly slips into the characteristics of a harlot. These are the responsibilities of a wife in the family life. Let's meditate upon the difference between a harlot and a wife.

4. THE WIFE AND THE HARLOT

Until now we meditated on how a girl should live as a wife. Now let us see the characteristics which appear in the life of a girl who lives as a Harlot. At times the characteristics of a Harlot will manifest in a wife. Owing to this the peace, joy and the harmony of the family will be endangered. Both the wife and a harlot are both women, a woman is gauged by the society depending on the way she responds to the situation and circumstances. This is what determines whether a woman turns out to be a wife or a harlot.

A harlot is not born, when she succumb to such situations and circumstances wholeheartedly it's only then that she becomes a harlot. At times there is no point in blaming the situation or the society. It is because she succumbs to the situation that she is able to continue in it. At times women are cheated and are sold into prostitution. No one willingly gets into such profession. However if a woman desires she can always change her profession. Some continue in prostitution without being sold into it.

Who is a Harlot? The verses below describe "wholehearted involvement"

1. In Ezekiel 16:32 we read, **But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!**

2. Let's see through verses below how the bible describes about those who involve in worldly love affairs. In Romans 7:3 we read, **So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.** Again in James 4:4 we read, **Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**

3. We can also see through the verse below that there are some women who are pushed into such professions by men. In Matthew 5:32 we read, **But I say unto you, That whosoever**

shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

My dear beloved such situations may lead a woman to become a harlot. Whether married or not a woman can turn into a harlot or she can turn away from it if she choose to. Now let us meditate upon the characteristics of a harlot.

LET US LOOK AT HOW THE BIBLE DRAWS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN A WIFE AND A HARLOT

1. Garments

We have often heard the phrase **“clothes maketh a man”**. Clothes can be used to either cover or reveal our shame. We can understand a woman by her way of dressing. Let us see what the scripture tells us about the way a virtuous woman or a wife’s way of dressing.

In the book of Proverbs 31:22 we read, **She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.** She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. What does this indicate? A woman should be cautious about her way of dressing. In Jeremiah 2:32 we read, **Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?** Whatever a wife fails to do, she should not fail in paying attention to her way of dressing. The person who dresses up has one pair of eyes, however there are several pairs of eyes that would gaze them. **“She maketh herself coverings of tapestry”** indicates that a woman should be modest and chaste in the way she dresses. In this fast world, we often encounter women who are unaware that their way of dressing is immodest and vulgar. Their way of dressing motivates others to gaze upon her with improper intentions.

What is it that a wife should cover?

In the Songs of Solomon we read.....

O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. (SoS 7:1)

Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. (SoS 7:2)

Thy two breasts are like two young does that are twins. (SoS 7:3)

Dear beloved the above mentioned verses are those that were written by a bridegroom for his bride. We read the way the bridegroom is describing the body parts of the bride. What we need to take note of in this is that a girl should no dress in a way that would provoke others to comment overtly. This sort of disclosure of bodily parts should be reserved for intimate moments spent with her husband. These should be preserved from the eyes of the world. However in this fast world, because wives are not instructed in these matters they become a feast to the eyes of the outside world and the husbands are left in deprivation. Although this seems to be a very silly matter, when left untended this may turn into a major pitfall. It is because these sensitive issues are not given due importance we see situations as mentioned in 1Corinthians 7:29 which reads... **that they that have wives be as though they had none.**

Now let us see the way of dressing of a harlot

A harlot's Garment

In Proverbs 7:10 we read, **a woman with the attire of an harlot...** the scripture tells us that the harlot has special dress and accessories. In ancient and modern times there are dress codes which are prescribed for different stages of a woman's life. However these dress codes are not followed now-a-days. That is why it is difficult to differentiate between the mother and the daughter. There are different dresses for a girl child, when a girl becomes an adolescent, as a youth, after she gets married and for older women. However we see that in modern times there are many older women who show a lot of interest in dressing up to look young. In biblical times there were specific clothes prescribed for a woman if a woman wore those clothes she was considered as a widow. However in modern times widows feel secure in dressing up as a normal wife. let us look at the example of Tamar in the Old Testament. Genesis 38:15 reads, **When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face,** because she dressed as a harlot, Tamar's father – in – law had sexual relationship with her. What we need to take note of is that the way of dressing of a woman has the capacity to draw the attention of strangers to her. Through this incident we see that, because a woman behaves in the very same way a wife behaves with her husband (without any inhibitions) would not only attract strangers and passers by but would also lead to them addressing the woman as a harlot.

In Proverbs 5:20 we read, **And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?**

Thus she will dress in a provocative manner which will draw unnecessary attention. When a wife fails to drape herself then she would be treated like a harlot. One and the same woman however the way she dresses changes her office.

Relationship of a husband with a wife

We read in Proverbs 5:18 – 19 **Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant doe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.** the scripture welcomes the relationship between husband and his wife. In all circumstances these couples should be united and be one flesh, Genesis 2:24 tells us, **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.** This is the mystery behind creation. The word “knew” is used in the scripture to describe the relationship that a man has with his wife, this relationship that a man has with his wife is recognised by the scripture. The relationship that a man has with his wife is different from the pleasure that a harlot provides to men. A wife should not shrug from her husband because he has grown old. Let us see the solution provided in the scripture, Isaac bore two sons at the age of 60, Isaac's children grow up to be strong men, one becomes a hunter and the other takes care of the affairs of the household. About this time there broke out in the land a severe famine. However in Genesis 26:8 we read, **Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.** A wife is called to maintain such a relationship with her husband without any expectations, it should be unconditional and should be aimed at pleasing the husband. Rebecca fulfilled this duty. She did not shrug from maintaining a relationship with her husband because of his old age, the famine or the two grown up sons. This motivated Isaac

to sow in the land and reap an abundant harvest (Genesis 26:12). By maintaining a normal relationship with her husband she helped him to forget his old age and helped him to work as a youth and thus increase his prosperity.

A wife will always please the husband and motivate him to prosper on the contrary a harlot will demand the prosperity of a man in exchange for pleasure. If a wife offers pleasure to her husband on condition then she too takes the place of a harlot. When the husband fails to accept the counsel of a wife or the wife encounters strife with the husband's household during the day, during the time that a husband and wife are together the wife should not place any conditions that are favourable to her in exchange for the marital relationship. If she does show it will provide an opportunity to the husband to commit fornication.

Marital relationship is one in which the wife engages in without any expectations in short she pleases her husband by not rebelling.

Relationship with a harlot

Proverbs 7: 11 and 21 reads, **She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.** Proverbs 5:3 reads, **For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.** The harlot will negotiate the price for her services at the very beginning itself. She is one who offers pleasure only in exchange for money.

In Mark 6:18, 22 and 26 we read, **For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.** Through this incident we see the head of a Prophet was given as a price to the harlot. Proverbs 6:26 reads, **For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.**

One of the characteristics of the harlot is that she hunts down life. She will not hesitate to commit infanticide. We read this in 1King 3: 16 – 27, **Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before**

the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

A harlot will not hesitate to kill. At times women opt for abortions and refuse to nurse their children because they think that their beauty will diminish. These will lead to health problems in the children. Wives need to be cautious in these areas.

From the above incident it is evident that not only wealth but even human life can be destroyed due to the association with the harlot. Now let us see how a harlot lends her body for profitable gains. In Genesis 38:16-18 we read, **And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.** Thus we see that not only will one lose wealth and life but we also observe that a harlot does not have any care or concern about the physical body or the status of the person. Due to this a man who associates with a harlot will be treated like an animal. The verse below illustrates this, Proverb 7:22 – 23, **He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.**

A woman should behave with authority in these areas, we see this in 1 Corinthians 7:4, **The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.** Again in Mathew 19:19 we read, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Based on these scriptures we see that love and affection care and concern will flow between the husband and wife. They will be able to compensate and compliment each other. Whereas the association with a harlot will destroy the body, wealth and the life. 1 Corinthians 6:16 we read, **What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh,** and again in Genesis 2:24 we read, **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

The above two verses show that a husband or a man's actions bears the same results, however the relationship in which these actions are performed makes a lot of difference. The same woman may be considered as a wife or a harlot, by the way she behaves.

Beloved if a harlot possesses the characteristics of a wife she will not continue as a harlot for long. At the same time if a wife possesses even a small streak of the characteristics of a harlot it will not be long before she turns into one. In bed there are lots of distinctions between the behaviour of a harlot and that of a wife. The most important distinction is found in Proverbs 31:26, **She (virtuous woman) openeth her mouth with wisdom; and**

in her tongue is the law of kindness and Proverbs 23:27, **For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.**

Even if a virgin brings truck loads of dowry from her father's household and lacks in the qualities required for a wife all that she brings will be of no use. It will not earn the love of her husband, there are many who make their lives miserable by boasting about the wealth that they bring from their parental homes. The dowry that a girl brings is like a travel ticket, there is no point in paying attention to the ticket and missing out on the journey. One should take care of oneself and the luggage during the journey. There is no point displaying the ticket for public viewing. There are all the chances of losing or destroying the ticket by pulling it out often. Possessing a travel ticket is one type of experience where as making the actual journey is another. We should not mix the two. Similarly entering the household with a lot of dowry is one experience but living life in the husband's house is another. Without realizing these there are many women who place a lot of importance and boast about their education and their jobs and lose out the blessing that has been given them by God which is the status of a wife.

For the attention of the working women!

Gone are the days when women were only confined to the kitchen. In the present times girls are given equal opportunity in education and jobs. The scripture welcomes and blesses the handwork of a woman. This is one of the characteristics of a virtuous woman. Ecclesiastes 10:19 reads, **but money answereth all things.** Thus there is nothing wrong in the woman working to bring in income.

Proverbs 31:16 reads, **She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.** The bible tells that apart from cooking and providing comfort a wife's arm should also be engaged in profitable employment. Even if she possesses all the characteristics of a good wife, yet she fails to bring income to the family she falls short of being a virtuous woman. Just as in the spiritual life it is important to have faith and holiness in order to fellowship with the lord. Similarly finances is important in a family life. Proverbs 31:12 read, **She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.**

What does "to do him good" indicate

Proverbs 31:13 reads, **She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. When a wife works cheerfully the household will prosper.** Firstly the wife should be accustomed to working. Working will remove idleness. Proverbs 21:25 reads, **The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.** Only if she is accustomed to doing work will she be able to maintain the servants in the household. She should know how to live with the servants. Proverbs 31:15 reads, **She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.** A woman should provide for her maids. A maid should always remain under the control of a wife. under no circumstance should a wife provide an opportunity for the servant to place her demands before the master of the house.

The practical difficulties of maintaining a servant in the present days in that very often we see that the servants never work for long in any household, it becomes extremely difficult to maintain servants because in many households we see that the wives fail to understand that

the servants are only meant for domestic work and not to be used as confidants. There are many servants who understand the weakness of the wives and use it for their gains. Some self righteous women would bestow favours apart from the prescribed salary, thinking that they are wining souls for the lord. They take the servants to their fellowships. The servant would consider this as a weakness of the mistress and begin to neglect her work.

The only relationship between a mistress and the servant is in providing the wages. A servant should not be considered as one of the poor. There is distinction between the poor and the servant. Let us see these difference between the servant and the members of the household in Proverb 27:27 we read, **And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.**

The verse indicates that one cooks to provide food for the family where as the task of a servant is to cook, this in turn becomes the means for her income and thus she provides food for her family. (1Timothy 5:18, Mathew10:10 and Luke 10:7) all these verses indicate that a **labourer is worthy of his reward.**

Thus we see that a person comes for work in order to earn his income. If we overdo things in this regard it will lead to evil. Will a servant refuse to listen to the Gospel when it is being preached to her by her mistress? She would pretend to do so in order to please the mistress and this will lead to a thorn in the flesh in the future. There are servants of God who have been assigned for such tasks. What is being explained in these is that the calling of a mistress is to see that the maid performs her tasks well and this is how the scripture describes a the way in which a virtuous woman conducts her affairs. It is enough to pay the wages to the servant there are other groups who deserve to receive charities. This is indicated in the verses below Proverbs 31:20 **She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy** and Psalms 41:1 **Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.** Thus these are the people to whom charity should be done, and this would please the lord. A woman should learn all these before she becomes a wife. Proverbs 31:29 **Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellent them all.**

This is where wives fail to win the praise of the husband. When charities are misplace it becomes a stumbling block in the family. When a wife succeeds in maintaining a good relationship with the in laws then she will win the praise of her husband the way she interacts with the neighbours, family friends and colleagues in the work place will win his confidence. Proverbs 31:10 – 11 reads, **Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.** If earning the income is one issue then spending the income is another. She does not forget her household just because she cheerfully involves in her work. Proverbs 31:21 **She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.**

She should be concerned about her husband's household at the same time she should also pay the wages due to the servant at the same time she should also give to the poor and the needy. Apart from this she should also be concerned about her husband's status in society.

Thus a girl becomes a wife not only when she gets married but should live all the days of her married life in this realization. It is only then will she be able to live as a successful wife.

CONCLUSION

Now we have reached the concluding chapter of the book “Guide to being a successful wife”. With regards to the book this might be the concluding chapter however this is not the end to a woman’s endeavours in being a successful wife, this is because on a daily basis the wife encounters several issues and different people. This book to a certain extent would help in calming the storm that may arise in a family life. This book has not covered the issues on bringing up children because we have concentrated only on a wife. In this book we have only meditated on how to be a wife to the husband. A woman who cannot live as a good wife cannot be a successful mother, although a woman may be in a position to provide everything to a child she will not be in a position to provide the fatherly touch to a child.

We notice that when we lose one relationship we may unknowingly lose another relationship when a woman loses a husband (other than due to death) she also loses the father of her child. All the efforts that a woman makes may equip her for success however this is not applicable to a family life. For example we can prepare for exams and practice by writing down what we have learnt. Similarly we can practice before attempting something. However we cannot apply the same rule in marriage in order to gain an experience we cannot marry some one. This requires self examination we should make the time for family life. These efforts are for our good. In all other fields the expected results can be achieved by our efforts however in family life no matter what efforts we make or the time we spend we cannot be sure of the result. It is when we get weary of doing these things that the family life becomes miserable. We should tirelessly work without any expectation (praise or applause) when a girl succeeds in doing this then she attains the purpose of her birth. If a girl fails in these it will be equal to her losing a major part of her days. There are many books that teach on wisdom however her wisdom and godliness lies in the way she conducts herself. This woman can live as a successful life it is in her own hands a knife can be used for both good and evil. Similarly a woman can reap good or evil by the virtue of her deeds. Above all when there is the grace of God it sustains the peace will remain in the family if the family are built then the church will be established if the church is established then the kingdom of God will be established.

May God grant you the grace to live as a successful wife.

