

SIDE TOUR 1: Spots and Blemishes

A Dirty WORD

The word "submission" has been maligned in our modern generation. When the word is used in reference to women with their husbands, red flags and negative reactions immediately surface. Unfortunately, the reaction to the concept of submission is based on wrong assumptions and erroneous conclusions. Submission is actually a good thing. Women may raise an eyebrow when a man says that submission is a good thing, but the Bible clearly values the word 'submission'.

Jesus submitted Himself to the Father. Did this make Jesus less than the Father? Did it make Him a doormat and someone to walk all over with disrespect? No. The Father loves the Son. Jesus willingly submitted to become a Man and die for us. He volunteered for the position. Submission was the means that God used to bridge the gap between God and mankind. Even while we were yet sinners, God demonstrated His love for us by submitting to the Cross

A correct view of submission involves men and women. Men are to be submissive as well as women. We are all to submit to one another in the fear of the Lord.

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21, KJV)

The Biblical word 'submission' is actually a military word meaning 'to arrange troops under a leader'. A private in the army ranks under a sergeant. The private is no less human than the sergeant. A lieutenant ranks under a general. Each has a different position and responsibility. The position may rank under the other but each has value as a person. The position does not make the person more important than the other. The position does not take away the personhood of others.

We voluntarily place ourselves at the service of one another in the Lord. The Bible tells a wife to submit to her husband. When this is taken out of context, the conclusion some make is that a man can therefore do anything he wants at the expense of his wife. The Bible clearly does not teach this type of behavior. In fact, the Bible tells a man that he should love his wife by nourishing and cherishing her.

Peter addresses the issue of submission in 1 Peter 3.

"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and

you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." (1 Peter 3:1-6, NASB95)

The 'in the same way' at the beginning of Chapter 3 is a reference to the passage that comes before it in 1 Peter 2:

" For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps," (1 Peter 2:21, NASB95)

The example that is used for submission is Jesus Christ. He willingly submitted to the Father to accomplish the Father's will. He willingly submitted to the Cross to save us from our sins. A woman is to submit in the same way. In other words, she is to willingly place herself in the position of submission to her husband.

Submission is to be with a gentle and quiet spirit because this is pleasing to God. The challenge for women in the Body of Christ is to understand the danger of having the opposite of submission which is a controlling spirit. A woman may try to control others and her husband by her countenance, moods, words and behavior. A controlling spirit may result in unconsciously demanding her way and not God's. A man needs the respect of his wife. A woman may use her words through nagging or withholding herself physically to get her own way. God's will becomes secondary to her will. In this regard she disrespects her husband and God.

Please don't misunderstand. Jesus clearly values women and so should their husbands. A wife is equal to her husband in regards to her salvation and eternity. In heaven there is neither male nor female. Every place the Gospel has gone in the world, the position and status of women has risen. Women were the first to know the most important event in history, Jesus' resurrection. Women are to be loved and cherished by their husbands.

The point is that the behavior of a woman in relationship to her husband should be one of a gentle and quiet spirit. The opposite of a gentle and quiet spirit is a rough, contentious and noisy spirit that demands its own way. It is even possible for a man who is disobedient to God to be won by the Godly behavior of his wife. He is won by her submission to God.

I asked my wife's opinion of the following hypothetical situation:

If a husband and wife traveled to a foreign country and they were placed in danger, would it be acceptable to the wife if the man lied to protect himself at her expense? He more than stretches the truth to save himself but it actually put his wife in danger.

My wife's response was, "Does she like him?" At first I thought, 'What does it matter if she likes her husband?' Then it dawned on me. The wife would be willing to submit to the situation if she knew she would be protecting the one she loved. I hadn't thought of that. Why would it be important to know whether she liked her husband or not? The reason is that she would be willing to sacrifice her freedom, her body and even her life for the one she loved.

The real situation I was thinking of was Abraham and Sarah going to Egypt. Abraham told the King of Egypt that Sarah was his sister and not his wife. He was afraid the King would kill him in order to take his beautiful wife, Sarah. Abraham had lied to save his own skin. The King did take Sarah and God intervened on Sarah's behalf and protected her.

My thinking was that Sarah committed herself into God's hands as an act of tremendous faith in submitting to God. She was being very spiritual. I never thought that Sarah did it because she loved her husband and was willing to protect him at any cost. My wife, I believe, had the proper interpretation of the passage. Sarah loved her husband and was willing to submit to the situation in order to protect the one she loved. This was the same thing that Jesus did for us. He willingly submitted to the Cross out of love for us. Sarah did not kick and complain to get her way. She submitted out of love for her husband. She didn't want to see him die.

A Dirty LIFE

The Bible exhorts a man to love his wife. He is to live with her in an understanding way.

"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7, NASB95)

Husbands are to submit to their wives "in the same way" as the wife was exhorted to submit. What is the "same way"? The same way is the same way that Jesus submitted to the Father and loved us. He gave His life for us. A husband is to love his wife by living with her in an understanding way as a fellow heir of the grace of life. He is to submit to the will of God and not to the desires of his own flesh.

There is a malignant 'disease' in the Body of Christ that prevents a man from living with his wife in an understanding way. Not only are his prayers not being answered but he is walking outside the Presence of God. A "dirty" life is preventing men from enjoying a 'face to face' relationship with God.

The 'disease' in the Body of Christ is like the disease of leprosy. In the Old Testament a person with leprosy was excluded from normal society. A leper was called "unclean" and ostracized. A leper had to live as one who was unclean and could not be touched. The leper could not enter the courts of God or the Tabernacle.

The spiritual 'leprosy' I am referring to in the Body of Christ is pornography with and without masturbation. Pornography prohibits a man from living with his wife in an understanding way. His prayers are hindered. He has separated himself and cannot enter into the Presence of God or be in a 'face to face' relationship with God. Remorse and guilt haunt the man who is involved with pornography.

Pornography must be seen as God sees it. It is the visual raping of a woman. That woman is someone's daughter, sister, wife or mother. Involvement in pornography cannot be justified for any man and especially a follower of Christ.

I would like to relate a graphic illustration of the sin of pornography from the Old Testament. The story ends in tragedy. The "dirty" life lived in pornography will also end tragically.

There was a Levite priest in the Old Testament who was traveling with his concubine. She was actually his wife. She played the harlot on him and he went to find her and bring her home. After he got her he was traveling back to his home town. He needed to spend the night on the way and stopped at a city within his own nation. He went to the city square as is customary to find out who would take him and his concubine in for the night. An old man told him it wasn't safe to stay out in the open and took him to his home. Then something terrible happened.

"While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him." Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly. "Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man." But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man's house where her master was, until full daylight. When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. He said to her, "Get up and let us go," but there was no answer. Then he placed her on the donkey; and the man arose and went to his home. When he entered his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout the territory of Israel. All who saw it said, "Nothing like this has ever

happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!” (Judges 19:22-30, NASB95)

The Levite's concubine was repeatedly raped all night by multiple men. She died after she crawled back to the place she was suppose to be spending the night. The Levite opened the door and found her dead the next morning and took her body home. He cut her into 12 pieces and sent a piece of her body to each of the Tribes of Israel. The reaction to this event was total outrage.

How does this story relate to pornography? The Levite's concubine was repeated raped to satisfy the lust of the men of the city under the shadow of night. As a man sits in front of his computer or TV screen, he thinks that no one is watching. He can surf the net and find multiple women to stimulate his fantasies. His eyes are full of adultery (if married) and fornication (if single). He may or may not use these virtual women to stimulate himself through masturbation. He "ravishes" them mentally until he is satisfied. The difficulty is that pornography never, ever satisfies. Masturbation never satisfies. A man cannot get satisfaction in these activities. The result is an endless cycle of repetition, sin and guilt. Viewing pornography is virtually raping someone's mother, sister, daughter or wife.

Just as the concubine was repeatedly raped, men virtually rape the women they are lusting after. The enemy can use the slightest provocation or thought to make the first lust temptation "domino" fall. Once the initial "thought" domino gets hit by temptation, the dominoes continue to fall until lust runs its course. A man will use all forms of rationalization to justify his behavior. As excuses mount up he begins to believe them himself. He rationalizes internally and blames others (and even his wife) externally. The result is a life that ends up spiritually shipwrecked.

No man is immune. Whether a person is introduced when he is young or starts when he is old, the pornography habit is a "spot and blemish" in the man's life. Just as the worthless men took the Levite's concubine and raped her to death, so a man involved with pornography will continue to "rape" women virtually until the death of his spiritual life and other relationships. A man will never be free until he is willing to submit himself to God and get his heart changed and cleansed. The pure in heart will see God. How can a man get his heart pure and clean by being involved with sexual sin? The only way is through heart surgery performed by the Great Physician.

Pornography turns men into wimps spiritually. When God is looking for warriors, men are becoming wimps. All their spiritual strength is being siphoned off to meet their own lusts. God is disgusted with this spiritual idolatry. We are to set no worthless thing before our eyes. Proverbs tells us that when a man commits adultery with another woman, he is reduced to a loaf of bread. Men's eyes and hearts are full of adultery with destructive results.

"then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and **especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires** and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. **They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin,** enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;" (2 Peter 2:9-14, NASB95)

The only escape for a man is to diligently seek God. A man must become disgusted with being a wimp and pursue the path of a warrior. Walking with the High Priest into The Tabernacle and coming "face to face" with God will change the heart. As the heart is changed, a man is able to stand in the day of temptation. Standing firm in the faith will reinforce the heart change.

Just as leprosy caused a man to become unclean in the Old Testament, pornography is a spiritual "leprosy" that makes a man unclean. In the Old Testament Naaman was a warrior but was afflicted with leprosy. He was an enemy of the nation of Israel. A young Jewish girl was taken captive to serve in Naaman's household. This young slave girl was subjected to living in the home of a leper. In her home country lepers were segregated from the "clean". She had to live in a home that was owned by the "unclean". One day she told Naaman about a man of God who could heal him back in her own country. Naaman became desperate enough to go and see this man who could supposedly heal him.

Naaman left his country and traveled to Israel to find the man of God who could heal him. Naaman found Elisha and was given some instructions on how to get clean. Elisha told Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman out of pride refused to dip in this river thinking the rivers in his own country were cleaner than the Jordan. Naaman was finally convinced by his fellow soldiers to submit himself to the word of Elisha. Naaman dipped once, twice, three times and no change. Each time he dipped he had to humble himself more and more in the sight of God and man. Finally, on the seventh dip, he was healed

A man involved with the 'leprosy' of pornography must become as desperate to be healed as Naaman. He must be disgusted enough to begin diligently seeking God more than seeking to please himself. He must go to the Man of God (Jesus Christ) and do what He says. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. As a man humbles himself before God, he will be healed. It may not be the first "dip" or second or third, but diligent persistence in seeking God will result in healing.

" Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man was also **a valiant warrior**, but he was a leper. Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive **a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."** Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel." Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me." It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now." But he said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing." And he urged him to **"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean."** But Naaman was furious and went away and said, **"Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.'** **"Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?"** So he turned and went away in a rage. Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, **"My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"** So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean (2 Kings 5:1-17, NASB95)

Naaman washed and he was made clean. A man can be cleansed from the sin of pornography and lust. Oh, mighty warriors of God! Leave the "dirty" life and be washed in the precious blood of Jesus! He can do the impossible if you are willing to die to self and live unto God. Jesus turns wimps into warriors. Jesus, our High Priest,

can change a heart if a person is willing to "dip" in His blood and obediently follow Him. Arise, valiant warriors. Put off this sin and take up your swords and follow the King!