

A Wife's Responsibility to Help Her Husband

by Barbara Hughes

Barbara Hughes emphasizes the biblical role of a wife as a helper to her husband, highlighting the importance of the gospel in understanding this responsibility.

Duration: 1:12:07

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1

Topics: "Family"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the true gospel and not just relying on a one-time prayer for salvation. He highlights the significance of the book of Genesis in understanding our identity as created in the image of God and how sin has marred that image. The speaker emphasizes that God had a plan from the beginning and Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of that plan. The sermon encourages believers to teach the gospel to others, including children, and to have a comprehensive understanding of the Bible.

Transcript

This message was given at the Building Strong Families Conference held in Dallas, Texas, March 20th through the 22nd of 2000. This conference was sponsored by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and Family Life Ministries. Following the message, there will be information on how to order additional materials on building a strong family.

I thank you very much to whoever it was that gave me the opportunity to be here and speak on this topic. It's really the passion, really, of my heart in many ways. And over the years, I've tried hard to encourage other pastors' wives, but women in general, not just pastors' wives, on this topic.

But in particular, pastors' wives, because my husband and I have done a lot of speaking to pastors and their families. I do have four adult children. My 33-year-old son is getting married April 30th.

And every time I see his bride-to-be, I want to kiss her feet. Because we've prayed for her for so long, and God has given him a wonderful gift. So we're very happy about that.

Our family, a little bit, we have two daughters first, and then two sons. And our son, Kerry, is a pastor in Spokane, Washington. Our daughter, Holly, who is our eldest, and her husband were missionaries in Austria until Holly's health failed over there.

And they are back and now have seven children. Three are adopted from Chicago, Center City. And we just got a new little boy in November that we're getting to know and love.

And so our family is interesting. So that's how we have so many grandchildren, and out of three, three children. So our fourth son, the one that's getting married, I'm hoping will produce a few himself.

The wife's responsibility to help her husband. Genesis 2.17, the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

Let's pray. Our Father and our God, we thank you so much that you are a God who speaks, that you have not left us as orphans. You have given us your word and the Holy Spirit.

And we thank you that we have the opportunity today to listen again to your word and to consider its implication in our lives as women. And we pray that we would appropriate it to our lives by the work of the Holy Spirit who helps us. We pray this in the name of Jesus and for his sake.

Amen. Let's get a drink. A genial hearth, a hospitable board, and a refined rusticity.

Let me say it again. A genial hearth, a hospitable board, and a refined rusticity. Anybody have any idea what I'm talking about? Those are words by William Wordsworth.

Let me just go through it again. He spoke these words in reference to a wife and home. A genial hearth.

What's a hearth? The center of the house, the heart of the home, the fireplace, where everything happens, the heart. As far as warmth. And it's genial, a friendly hearth.

That's what a wife would provide in William Wordsworth's time. A hospitable board. Well, hospitable, friendly, open arms.

And what's board? What's a board? Pardon me? It's the table. It's the table. You remember the old sign that used to be put up in homes, room and board, awkward? It was room and board, table, a meal.

So a hospitable board, a welcoming, hospitable table. Arms open wide, a prepared place. And refined rusticity.

Rusticity means simple, humble comfort. And refined rusticity. When we think of refined, it means literally looking out for the welfare of another.

A person who is refined, is well-mannered, is thinking about the welfare of those around him. And so a refined rusticity is humble comfort, comfort prepared with you in mind. What lovely thoughts, aren't they? It was spoken by William Wordsworth a long time ago in reference to a wife and home.

Wordsworth's words describe an ideal that most men dream of in respect to a wife and home. I take it back. You know, when I wrote those words, I thought, no, that's what men in the past would dream of in respect to a wife and home.

Today, everything is up for grabs. Now, let me just make a mention about these glasses. Would you believe I lost my glasses on the airplane coming here? These are from the store upstairs, so I'm going to have a little trouble with them.

Today, everything is up for grabs in regard to what a home and what a wife is. Most young men have not experienced a home where a woman, a woman who is their mother, who is married to their father, and remains married to their father, lives out life in this regard. So not only are Wordsworth's words archaic to the modern era, the whole concept is something that is totally out of the frame of reference of most young men and women today.

A genial heart, a hospitable board, and a refined rusticity. For the past 30 to 40 years, feminists have been successfully mentoring our sons and daughters, and they've succeeded. They've succeeded in that they have radically changed what most men and girls, what boys and girls who become men and women, think about their place in the world.

They won! They did it! They achieved what they set out to do. They radically changed how men and women, how boys and girls who grew up to be men and women, think about heart and home and wife and husband. It's a done deal.

Let me just say in regard to this, my husband and I get around to pastors and wife conferences and to seminaries and speak, and if you think this is not true, you would think that at least in a pastor's home this would be clear. But I can't tell you how often I talk to women who are terrified of investing their life in their husband's life in ministry. That is just out of... Their arms are like this, no thank you.

That's his career. I'm going to have a life of my own. They're afraid.

They're so afraid that if they would invest their life, they've bought the deal. They've bought the lie. The effeminate have succeeded.

Because these women are terrified that if they would invest their lives as a pastor's wife, they're going to lose something. But you know what? They may have succeeded in changing how we think about these things, but they have failed women in regard to their happiness. I want to read to you some things from an article that I found two years ago in the American Enterprise.

It's a national magazine of politics, business, and culture. The article is written by Barbara DeFoe Whitehead. She's the one who wrote Dan Quayle was right in the Atlantic Monthly, remember, a few years back, well, several years now.

But this is not written from a Christian perspective. It's written from a secular perspective. Her observations about what the feminists have wrought with girls.

So let me just read. It's been taking a while because I want to read quite a bit to you. You can get this.

It is, I told you what it was from, the American Enterprise, the January-February issue of 1998. So don't worry. That's where you can get it.

Go to the library and make a copy of it. I'm going to read quite a bit. All is not well with the women of Generation X. Consider the evidence.

Close to 40% of college women are frequent binge drinkers. It's gone up, I'm sure, in the last two years. Our behavior related to date rapes and venereal disease.

Young women suffer higher levels of depression, suicidal thoughts, and attempts than young men from early adolescence on. Between 1980 and 1992, the rate of completed suicides more than tripled among

white girls and doubled among black girls. For white women, between 15 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death, and there is evidence that young women are less happy today than 20 years ago.

Using data from a survey of high school seniors, sociologist Norval D. Glenn has tracked the trends of reported happiness for young men and women. Since 1977, the happiness index has been trending downward for young women. The chart just goes like this.

Gen X women seem to experience the greatest discontent in two areas, men and their own bodies. The difficulty of finding and keeping a loving partner tops the list, outranking obstacles such as job discrimination, sexual harassment in the workplace, and domestic violence. In addition to being disappointed in their ultimate relationships with men, women are discontented with their own bodies.

And it goes on and on to talk about that. These conditions afflict some of the most privileged young women of the generation. This comes as a shock to older baby boom women.

After all, college-educated Gen X women, the first full beneficiaries of the achievements of the women's movement, have grown up with more freedom, opportunity, and choice than their mothers or grandmothers. More to the point, they have been the beneficiaries of what might be called the Girlhood Project, the systematic and self-conscious effort to change the culture and prepare girls for lives as liberated, self-determined individuals with successful careers, sexual freedoms, and nearly limitless personal choice. As a mother raising daughters in the 1970s and 80s, I remember the heady sense of responsibility that accompanied the Girlhood Project.

Sons were sons, but daughters were a social experiment. We gave them books like Marla Thomas's, *Free to Be You and Me*, and read them stories in mids like *The Princess Who Could Stand on Her Own Two Feet*. We dressed them in jeans and sneakers.

We fought for their right to play Little League Baseball. We pushed for more sex education in the schools. We urged them to please themselves rather than to please men.

Given our optimistic expectations, it is bitterly disappointing to reach the 90s only to discover that young women's happiness index is falling, not rising. What is happening to our bright and talented daughters? Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg's *The Body Project, An Intimate History of Girlhood*, meticulously documents the downward slide of girls' aspirations and ambitions over the past century, from improving one's character through good work to improving one's body through grueling workouts. I'm skipping around here.

A rough consensus exists on some key factors that make coming of age more difficult for girls today. A cultural emphasis on thinness, which makes the normal weight gains of puberty a source of anxiety and self-loathing. A media saturated with sexually explicit images and misogynistic messages.

The sexual revolution and the availability of the pill, which relieved men of any significant burden of responsibility for the negative consequences of unmarried sex. The high rate of family breakup and dysfunction, and the erosion of adult supervision. Puberty is now fraught with danger and anxiety.

Professional providers of contraceptive and abortion services have replaced mothers as the main source of authority on sexual matters. This is not written for a person in the church. Let's see, there's so much I could read to this, but I'm going to skip around a little.

Feminist calls instead for a new single sexual standard based on traditional boyhood. In their play and pursuits, little girls were to be made more like boys. Among liberal elites, a traditionally feminine daughter became a mild social embarrassment, while a feisty tomboy daughter was a source of pride.

The virtue of staying sexually pure has been replaced by the virtue of staying physically fit. If good girls work out, bad girls let themselves go. Oh, there's so much.

Let me just make one more comment here. Gilligan, Steinem, and the many other feminists who continue to promote a girls are silenced and short-changed victims philosophy are simply not up to the task of guiding contemporary girls. If I may borrow an image from Camille Paglia, putting your girl in the hands of contemporary feminist leaders is like sending your dog to vacation at the taxidermy.

What I want you to notice there is that with all that has been going on steadily in the charred and seared trumpet, young women's and girls' happiness quotient has been steadily going downward. Now I want to read you something else. This is written by a poor Methodist woman in 1780.

I do not know. I do not know when I have had happier times in my soul than when I have been sitting at work with nothing before me but a candle and a white cloth and hearing no sound but that of my own breath with God in my soul and heaven in my eyes. I rejoice in being exactly what I am, a creature capable of loving God and who as long as God lives must be happy.

I get up, I look for a while out the window and gaze at the moon and stars, the work of an almighty hand. I think of the grandeur of the universe and then sit down and think myself one of the happiest beings. I think she has something that we've lost and that the generation of women and young girls that we live in this culture have been deprived of.

Where do we begin to teach young women today that have been raised literally every single image from the magazine, to the newspaper, to the billboards, to the TV, everything is telling them exactly the opposite of what this statement and what this is about, a wife's responsibility to help her husband. How in the world do we do it? I mean they just, you know, in most places that you would make that statement you'd be laughed out of the, they just, they wouldn't have any, you know, good thing to replace it with but they would laugh you off the stage. They would laugh me off the stage.

Where do we begin? I'll tell you where we begin. We begin with the gospel. We begin with the gospel even in the church.

I think, you know, we evangelicals, we think because we have historically taken the gospel around the world that we know the gospel. You know, the history of evangelicalism is that women, or that they take the gospel to the world. I am absolutely convinced that evangelicals do not understand the gospel for the most part.

People in the evangelical churches do not understand the gospel. I know, I work with women. I hear women who have grown up in evangelical churches and think they have understood the gospel because they have at one point prayed a prayer and think they have their ticket to heaven and their lives are meant.

They don't understand the gospel. Now I'm going to give you quickly a minute. I want you to turn to somebody next to you and I want you to try in a minute to tell them the gospel.

Alright, do it. Maybe 15 seconds. More fully to that person that you would share it with as if there were no one.

Listen to what Paul says. His definition of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15. Starting with verse 1. Don't look it up.

I'll just read it to you. Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel. The gospel I preach to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved. If you hold firmly just the word I have preached to you, otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received I pass on to you as of first importance.

Here it is. That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. That he was buried.

That he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. One phrase is repeated twice. According to the scriptures.

How many times has the gospel been tried to have been shared over the last I don't know how long. Think of it though. Christ died for our sins and was buried and resurrected.

How in the world? How can we know? How can anybody understand how the death of a person named Jesus Christ 2000 years ago could it possibly have any bearing on my life and my sins if you tell me it does? If you don't have the Old Testament scriptures. And what's my sin anyway? They would think it was doing bad things. You see, if you try to teach the gospel apart from the Old Testament and give it to people give them the full counsel of God you're just giving a defective gospel.

I'm guilty of that. I know I have done it. But I think we're in big trouble in the church today and we're reaping a whirlwind of people who don't understand the implications for their whole life of the true gospel according to the scriptures.

And believe me there is absolutely no way no way to tell a woman that she is to be her husband's helper without the scriptures. All those difficult passages in the New Testament about women you haven't got a lady to stand on without the Old Testament. The Old Testament is what gives meaning to the words and the phrases of the gospel and to who we are.

I love this thought. I thought about it so much this last year. And the thing that I've come to realize is that the gospel defines me.

It defines me. There's no question about it. It defines who I am.

First of all, I find out that I become a child of God. It tells me, though, beyond that what I was created to be in the image of God. And how do I find that out? From Genesis 1 to 3. It tells me that I'm created in the image of God.

It tells me what went wrong. What went wrong and how that image was marred. And that from the beginning our Creator God had a plan.

From the beginning He had a plan. So that when Jesus Christ came He was recognized as the fulfillment of God's plan through the ages. It defines me.

It tells me who I am. And it motivates me. Why does it motivate me? Well, let's look again at Genesis 1. I mean, we've already heard it several times here.

Wayne brewed it so clearly. And who would I be to try to explain it any better? I want to just point it out again to you. You must need to hear this again.

First of all, we are made in His image. Look at chapter 1, verse 26. Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.

Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. Well, who is us? You know, up until that time all through the creation account you don't hear God having a conversation with Himself. Let us make man in our image.

And you get a hint there. You get a hint of what has already been explained to us by Wayne Grudem and also in other seminars that God is eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And when He creates man in His image He creates him a plural being.

Why? Because it is not good for man to be alone. God exists in relationship and He created mankind that way. Plural.

Male and female. And Genesis 2.18 it is said it is not good for the man to be alone. It was after the first account of the creation of mankind but only Adam in the second chapter is created at this point and He says it is not good for the man to be alone.

All up to that point every day of creation it says, and it was good and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good but when Adam is created He says it is not good. And it is because we are created in His image we are created a plural being mankind like us Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The fact is man alone or woman alone is not adequate to represent the image of God for God exists in relationship.

Now I want to make a point here at this point in the account He is not talking about marriage and it says it is not good. He is talking about mankind that man alone or woman alone is not adequate to represent the image of God. It takes both male and female.

Now look at chapter 1 verse 27 God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him male and female He created them. Okay this is a little bit of Hebrew poetry it works not by the echoing or the rhyming of words but the echoing of ideas. So you've got God created man in His own image and that idea is echoed back in the image of God He created him.

Now to be true to form it would say again in the image of God He created them. But He says male and female it draws attention to the differences between them and it is really interesting as Wayne already pointed out that He doesn't say man and woman He created them. He uses the biological terms male and female to really draw attention to their differences and that is important.

What we learn from this is that our differences are part of God's plan by design in making mankind in His image and our girls need to understand this. They need to know about Genesis 1, 2 and 3 so that they have an identity. They're not only a child of God they're a woman made in the image of God.

It's important. It's so important. Now I want you to look at Genesis 2, 18.

The Lord God said it is not good for the man to be alone I will make a helper suitable for him. A helper suitable. Okay.

In Exodus 18, 4 and 1 Samuel 7, 12 and Deuteronomy 33, 7 God is referred to in one place Moses called God his helper and God is called Israel's helper. It's a name attributed to God. Helper.

But for me where this really came home I remember being a young woman and all this talk I was kind of wondering about my identity as a woman did I need, you know you kind of hear all this stuff and you wonder. And I remember reading in John 14 that Jesus' disciples are falling apart. Their world is falling apart.

He's going to leave them. Everybody's after him. They're after Jesus.

And he's going to the cross shortly. And he says Peace, my peace, I leave with you. And then he tells them and he says I'm not going to leave you as orphans.

I'm going to give you another helper. I'm going to tell you when I saw that a light went on and I saw for the first time that the Holy Spirit shared the same name that I do. It's called Comforter.

The word in Greek it's not the Hebrew word but it's the word the Greek word that means the same thing. The one who comes alongside and helps and encourages. It was a done deal for me.

I thought from that time on my name Helper I'm going to wear the badge of honor because it's divine. It's divine. It's a wonderful thing.

Helper. Okay. I want you to notice something.

In Genesis 128 it's really interesting here. It says He said to them. This just forget it He said to them.

Do you realize that that is the first time in all of creation He didn't say anything to the birds. He didn't say anything to the fish. He didn't say anything to the trees.

When He made Adam and Eve He blessed them and He said to them He made us capable of hearing His voice. Nothing else in all of creation was created with that capacity, but we were. But with that wonderful privilege, He was responsible.

Because when we hear His voice, we are responsible to obey what He says. His word and His will, we are responsible for. What's my point here, going back to that? My responsibility to be my husband's helper is not to society.

It's not to my husband. It's not to my children. It's not to the church or the pastor.

It's God. It has repercussions, whether or not I do this, for all of the above. Big repercussions.

But my responsibility is to God. He made me in His image, and He made me capable of hearing His word and His will, and He gave me the ability to speak back, to respond to Him. It's an awesome thing.

What is the task? What is it that we're to help our husbands with? We're created to be His helper. Help them do what? You know, when I first got this, I thought, I know what everybody's going to want me to do. They're going to want me to give them a list, have dinner ready at six, do this, do that.

But you know, I know the Holy Spirit will guide you in those things, as will other older, wiser women that will encourage you. But what I want you to understand, first of all, is what the task is that we are called to do. There's three things in this passage that we are given to do.

In Genesis 126, it says, Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

And it repeats that about caring for the earth. But three things I want you to see. First of all, what I've already pointed out is that our responsibility first is to hear and obey God's Word because He speaks to us.

When He speaks to us, He makes us responsible for what we hear. Then we have the task of raising godly offspring. Civilization is our responsibility.

And then to manage His creation. That's chapter 126, verse 28 and 30. But we have been given, we're in a way, God's vice regents.

He says, Rule! There's another way that we are created in His image. He's a ruler. He's given us His world, His created world, to manage, to rule.

So we are His vice regents, as it were. So we have this task at hand. All right, I want to talk a little bit about here, about what it means to hear and obey His voice.

Because this is where Eve first got off, isn't it? This is where she stopped helping her husband. Those are the three areas that we are to help our husbands. Hear and obey the voice of God and the will of God.

Raise godly offspring and manage His creation. Civilization and the world. All right.

What Eve was to do was to listen and obey the word of God, the word and the will of God. Now, she understood about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because of Adam. The command was given to Adam.

He instructed her about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, I have to really quickly go through this. This is important.

This is so important to understand. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a knowledge that belongs to God. If you go through, you know, you all have read the account, but you go through and read this account again and just observe what God did give us.

In chapter 1 through verse 28 and following, it says over again, I give, I give, I give you, but one thing I don't give. You can't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge, if you will, of good and evil, belongs to God.

There was only one thing that God didn't give human beings. He didn't let them be God. He was God.

He reserved that for himself. In another time, look these verses up. 1 Kings 3.9 and 2 Samuel 14.17. In these two, you will see that it was given to the king to discern right and wrong.

That was the king's prerogative. He determined what was right and wrong. The subjects obeyed what the king determined.

You see, when Adam and Eve initiated it, when Adam followed through, pursuing the knowledge of good and evil, they were seeking moral autonomy. I'm going to say it again. They were seeking moral autonomy.

Now, does that have a familiar ring? Isn't that what our entire world is about today? I determine what's right and wrong. You don't tell me. God doesn't tell me.

I determine what's right and wrong. Moral autonomy. They wanted to be the rule maker.

Believe me, Eve understood in a way that we don't understand what the knowledge of right and wrong was. She understood, number one, because God spoke to her. She understood the word and the will of God.

When it says in 1.26 and 1.28, let them rule, it reminds me that really what the gospel is all about is that he has given us an area to rule, but he's reversed the right to be God in our lives. And when we become believers in the gospel, according to the scriptures, what we are doing is placing ourselves back under God's rule. He determines what our life is about.

He calls the shots. His word is clear. Okay.

There's something else wonderful here. And it's been given to all of us, craft vessels, you know, clay pots. And we have this treasure to give out.

Do you know the most wonderful thing about the gospel, I think? One of them. Oh, there's so many. But I love this, that we're created in the image of God.

The first Adam marred that image by moving out from underneath God's control. God always lived perfectly under God's control. Do you know what he's called in Colossians 1.17? I think it's Colossians 1.17. Let me make sure.

1.15. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus perfectly obeyed God, always lived under his rule, and he shows us how to do it. If you want to know what it means to be fully human, fully female human, look to Jesus.

Not the feminine. Jesus Christ was the most fully human being that ever lived because he got it right. He always lived under the rule of God.

Always. It's a wonderful thing, women. Hebrews 5.7 says this.

Let me see if I can get it quickly. I can never find things when people are watching me. It always makes everybody else feel really good when the pastor's wife can't find the passage.

Not only did God give us the ability to hear his voice, he listened to us. Listen to what about Jesus, what is said. During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

You know, all this talk about submission being a bad word for women. Jesus did it. He did it over and over again.

1 Peter 2, look at that. It says that God heard his son when he cried out, when it was hard to follow his will as a human man, but he obeyed always the will of God, and God heard his voice because of his reverent submission. Submission to what? To the will of God for him.

Submission. All right. Look at 1 Peter 2. It's Jesus again, a woman.

He's showing us how to be, how to be a helper to our husbands. He says, it's in chapter 2, down about verse, oh golly, 20. But if you suffer for doing good, and many of you suffer in a difficult marriage.

If you suffer for doing good, and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving an example that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, no deceit was found in his mouth.

He did not, when he was, when they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he kept on entrusting himself to the one who judges justly.

And then it goes on and says, he himself wore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin, and live for righteousness. That's what being fully human in the image of God is. Living under his rule.

Dying to sin. Living for righteousness. For by his wounds we have been healed.

You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseers of your souls. Why? In the same way. The same way as Jesus.

I can only briefly talk about that. Bring it and stir it up in your mind. It's so beautiful.

It is so wonderful. Jesus Christ is Lord. And we are able to live under his rule by, through the gospel, the power of the gospel.

That's what, if you had the gospel in three words, it would be, Jesus is Lord. I can't go into that. I want to quickly go into some personal illustrations.

I've tried to give you the theology. We are to be our husband's helpers. Because that's, first of all, before we were ever even created, our purpose was defined.

He hadn't even created us, and he said, I'm going to make him a helper. A helper is good. It's divine.

It's what the Holy Spirit is called. It's God is called. That and other parts of the scripture.

And then we are to submit in that relationship to his leadership. We help him by doing this. If we help him, be a man, by submitting to that, and we learn how to do it by looking at Jesus.

Now, I want to tell you a couple of examples. One about me. One about my mother.

To give you a little picture of this, you know, I've given you the theology of it. Now I'm going to try to put some feet to it. And I'll try to hurry, so we have some time to... Several years ago, actually, we wrote a book about this, and I can't give you all the details.

This little book is for sale on the other end. It's called Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome. You don't have to buy it.

If you know somebody who has a copy, borrow it and read it, because I can't give you all the details. But when we started out in ministry, my husband was a youth pastor and a college pastor for 10 years in California. Then that church sent us out to start a new work.

And oh, man, we went out with all the praises and the encouragement. Oh, this won't be long before your church is bigger than the daughter church. You know, we had all these predictions.

They sent us to church growth seminars. We heard everything. We were doing it right.

We had it down, boy. We were going to do it right. And, you know, youthful arrogance in a sense.

This was 25 years ago. And after having been in ministry for 10 years previous to that, I've been in ministry 35 years. Well, when we went out, we started, we had... Everything was going great.

We got a beautiful piece of property. We built a beautiful building. And everything just kind of leveled off.

And the details in this book. And I can't tell you everything now. But I mean it was bad.

It was bad. And things were looking bad. Seeing that people were going back to the former church.

And, you know, it's hard work when you start a ministry. And it's small. It doesn't have great youth programs.

You can't have everything in a small church. And we got terribly discouraged. But the bad thing that happened is that my husband, who is he? He looked at what was happening around.

And all the guys with the big churches were big personalities. With deep voices. And just personalities.

You know, my husband, he's revered. He's a wonderful man. You know, he's not somebody that's just going to win people by sheer magnitude.

You know, of drawing them through that. So he began to look. And I'm not saying that men with great personalities aren't godly.

That's ridiculous. You know what I'm getting at. My husband's thinking.

He's looking around. Oh, God didn't do me that. He thinks of all the things God hadn't done.

If you evaluated the big churches, you could see that he didn't have that man's gift and that man's gift. And he'd been depressed. And I'd been really concerned.

I could tell he was terribly discouraged. That night, after the kids were in bed, we sat down. And it all just began to tumble out.

And what ended up, I mean, he just poured out all these really awful thoughts and finally he said, God has called me to do something he hasn't given me the gift to do. Therefore, God. And what was I to do? I had been studying Genesis with the women at church.

Can you think of Noah? He preached. The shoe had been on the other. God, help.

I didn't know that was going to happen. I didn't have the words. God gave me the words in that moment.

And I just want to say, that night, after he went to bed, I remember sitting in my kitchen. My Bible that I always used was in the bedroom with him. And I couldn't get it.

And I needed a word from the Lord. And I found a Bible that had been given to me. The Thompson Chain Records Bible.

Up with my books. I took it down. I was reading through it.

I went to open it. I had never used it. But I opened it up in a brand new page.

It opened up and there was a verse marked in red. I have no idea when that verse was. Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down for I am holding him with my hand.

It was God met me in my need. Now I want to tell you quickly about my mother. I could tell you more.

All the details about that are in that book. And it has helped pastors in small places. We wrote it with them in mind.

And missionaries have said, since we've been here, do his word. And when you do what you're created to do. Let me tell you about my mother.

You know, I learned. I'm not in the mold. I didn't really.

Well, let me just tell you quickly. I've got a keynote to see if I can. My mother.

My father went to California on the top of a railroad car. Left farm in Nebraska when he was 26 years old. Untaught.

I mean, you know, he was like a hobo. That's how he got to California when he was 26. He met and married my mother that year.

And he was a good man. Raised on a farm. Hard working.

He went to California to find his fortune. But he was an unskilled laborer. He met my mother.

My mother had to quit school when she was in the ninth grade because her mother was ill. She was the oldest of the children. Eight children.

And she nursed her mother. When she was, she became a maid to a wealthy doctor in his family in Pasadena, California. And she cooked for them and cleaned their house.

I remember when I used to go to Balboa Island in California on vacation with my family. That's where I used to go with the Schwartz family. She was the maid.

Well, my mother didn't know that. My mother met and married my dad. On their honeymoon, they had a lovely garden wedding in Pasadena.

And on their way to Santa Barbara, they were in the back seat of a car that had a rumble seat in those days, you know. And their maid of honor and best man were driving them to Santa Barbara for their honeymoon. They were in the back seat.

Had their suitcase in their lap. And they all got tired. They pulled along the side of the road.

And on the way, they fell, I mean, when they stopped, they fell asleep, of course, to rest. And when they awakened, the suitcase was gone. The few new things my mother had gotten was that they ended up spending 14 years in Santa Barbara.

I was born there. My dad worked as a gardener at the Bird Sanctuary. He did lots of things.

But finally, they couldn't get enough work. And my dad, they moved to Long Beach, California. My dad, shortly after their marriage, my mother realized he drank too much.

He always managed to be at work and work hard, but he drank. He was just, you know, that kind of guy. He drank his beer.

He was a beer drinker. Well, it became more and more a part of his life. When we moved to Long Beach, shortly after arrival there, my dad had a terrible accident.

He was working in a lumberyard, and he broke his ankle. It was a terrible break. He had five screws put inside, operated, and he was laid up for six months.

Do you know, I was in kindergarten then, and my little sister was six. My memory of that time is coming home from school, my dad sitting under the persimmon tree with his leg up in a rocker holding my sister. My mother had to drive an ice cream truck from seven in the morning, and my grandpa was the one who heard my mother.

Well, as I grew older, my father had another accident when I was in the ninth grade. No, I was 12 years old. I was in the seventh grade.

Well, all those years, he was drinking and working as whatever he could, usually in a lumber yard. When my mother... Well, alcohol became a big part of our life. But then, when I was 12 years old, my father went to church, and for one week, it was pure joy at our house.

My father was saved. And my mother, my mother had always known the Lord. I can't speak for you all the details, but she was living her life as best she knew how in covenant.

Well, my father was a Christian for one week. I remember the night. All my friends at church, the little baptist church we went to, were rejoicing with my dad.

He was playing volleyball. Everybody was happy. My dad was a new Christian.

Very much so. He almost lost his hand in a cut-off. He participated surgery after surgery.

For one year, my dad, late in bed, recovering from numerous surgeries and reading the Bible and memorizing. During that time, my mother got a job at the city college. Do you know what her job was? For men, she was 65.

She's 82 today. She was the maid at the city college locker room in the women's gym in Mayhem. You know, you probably didn't even know that somebody cleaned those showers and toilets for all those years.

At the end of that year, my father was so depressed because he got to go to work finally, and the only job he was able to acquire from that day on was a dishwasher. My dad was so demoralized that he ended up on Skid Row in Los Angeles for a year. You know, I've never understood the whole finally returned

home because of the dancing emphysema.

During the day, she went and cleaned the gymnasium with a little sleep. She nursed my father. My father understood who goes around getting real feisty and drunk often.

Believe me, it was awful. She never allowed me. She gave me a wonderful gift.

Doing it again. It's a bum. You know, he's just made my life miserable.

She gave me the gift of living her life according... I've come to understand that, you know, my mother's a happy woman. She's 82 years old, adult children, and I can't tell you how many grandchildren she has. She has great self-respect.

She has peace of mind. She lives in a little tiny trailer home, not a fancy one, in Beaumont, California, clothing closet. My point, we have to show our daughters how.

It begins with the gospel. According to the scriptures, the whole gospel, because the gospel defines us. It motivates us because it defines us when we live under God's rule.

And it rewards us with the gift of health, wealth, education, luxury. My mother didn't have any of those. I want to give you that.

That living under God's rule. He calls the shots. He defines us.

He tells us how to live. Father God, our dearest Father, how we thank you that you have given us the best plan. That even when things look hard and awful and difficult, that you're at work when we obey what you've called us to.

We don't have to wonder if you're good. You are good. Your plan is good.

And you will accomplish your purposes in our lives through things that the world would say, oh, bad, bad. We know, love, that your plan is different. And we thank you for it.

Help us live our lives and show our daughters how to live. Stand up so they can hear. Good point.

That's really true. That's why I didn't tell you how to help. The Holy Spirit will show you how to help.

Any other questions? She said, after 35 years being a pastor's wife, has it been one of your greatest joys? Has being a pastor... Oh, what has been one of my greatest joys? Well, I determined long ago when I wrote in this book about it that my goal as a pastor's wife, and I determined it during that awful time when we were trying to figure out the whole thing, when we did determine how we were going to evaluate our success. I decided that my goal was to one day hear God say to Kent, well done, good and faithful, to follow God, whether you're a pastor's wife or not. And this generation as always is hard, but I want to hear God say to Kent, I really believe that I am my husband's helper.

And if I can hear God say, well done, Kent Hughes, I'd be so happy because I know I've done what I was called to do. That's my greatest joy is helping him press on when it's hard. When it's hard to live a Godly life in this age.

Somebody else have a question? Well, we're working on that in our church right now. One of the things is I think that they need to learn about what the first three chapters of Genesis teach. They need to

understand that and they need to see it as good.

They need to understand singleness as a gift for the gospel. You see, you know, single females are elevated in the Bible. I mean, they're just there to help in that task too.

They're there to help with Godly offspring. They're there to help with the whole thing. The marriage institution is unique.

But whether you're married or not, I want my daughters and my granddaughters now to know that whatever God has planned for them, singleness or marriage, that their gifts are to be used for the sake of the gospel and when they are. To understand where they fit as a human being, as a female, in the image of God. And how do we do that? I think we have to work at it.

You know, most of the Sunday School material out there is not that great. I mean, what your kids are learning. Have you looked at what they're learning? And so, write your own.

Teach your children, and not just your children, the family of God is the church. And as wonderful as the teaching on the family, the support of the family is, the family of God includes everybody. And we're to incorporate all those single people, and we have a bundle of them, in all various stages.

We need to incorporate those children. We need to teach them what the Bible says. And when we teach them, don't worry about it not being published.

Write it yourself. And teach them what it says. We've got enough material on the website for CBMW to teach it.

Write it up. Robert Lewis Church has a tape series for teenagers. One of the things we did at church is we started getting all the women in the church to write their testimony, not their salvation testimony, a testimony about how God has used them, where they've struggled in some faith, where their faith has taken a step forward as a woman of faith.

And so that our daughters, we present it to sixth grade girls now. It's for everybody to get to know people on the level that we're connected, our faith, in the family, in Christ, uniting as a sister. But we give it to the sixth grade girls so they can hear what women are experiencing in their walk with God.

So that's one way. Then they can start relating to women, older women, single women, whatever their station in life, on the basis of their relationship with God. The name of the book, oh, that we wrote, well we wrote two books, Common Sense Parenting and Believe Me, we came up with this from one with a dysfunctional father and one whose father died when he was four.

And we, when we came together at Young Marriage, we were just like sponges. We wanted to know everything we could about how to raise a godly family. And we ask everybody.

So every good idea we ever heard, we put it. And then Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome is in there on one of the tables. And it's trying to help you see, to evaluate your success from a biblical perspective.

And so that's what that's about. And we count that time in our life. I have a chapter in there about how the wife can be a help to her husband.

Okay, well, of course our family is a family is our number one priority. But, you know, it's very interesting. We've had lots of pastors in my life talk to us and come and tell us that they had so been warned in seminary about not abandoning their family that they, they were not doing what they, they did the other thing.

You know, their family took over everything. It was like the gods, you know. And, you know, you need to let your children know that you're a father Your ministry is your family.

But they're, they're a part of it. But everything you do, it's not just something that happens on Sunday. It's incorporated into your life.

You know, it's in common sense parenting. We give all kinds of ideas for that. So I have to wind it down now.

It's over. The time is gone. A lot of those kind of ideas are in those books.

A lot of helpful ideas on that family. You're dismissed. This concludes the message.

If you have any questions given at the conference, please call Audio Mission International 748730 or a catalog on Building Strong Families. Call the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood 738210 or Family Life Ministries at 800-FL-TODAY. That's 800-358-6329.

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