

1 Corinthians 11:2

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom's sermon on 1 Corinthians 11:2 addresses the importance of maintaining proper order and authority in worship practices among men and women.

Scripture: Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 31:10, 1 Corinthians 7:3, 1 Corinthians 13:4, Ephesians 5:33, Colossians 3:18-19, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Peter 3:7

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of mutual respect and understanding in marriage, emphasizing the need for husbands and wives to fulfill their respective roles with love and patience. He highlights the significance of obedience, gentleness, and self-control in maintaining a harmonious relationship, urging couples to bear with each other's weaknesses and faults. Chrysostom encourages husbands to lead with kindness and wives to support with grace, reminding them of the rewards of enduring challenges together and the value of a peaceful home. He stresses the need for both partners to focus on their own responsibilities rather than pointing out the faults of the other, promoting a spirit of forgiveness and compassion in marriage.

Transcript

Now I praise you that you remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you.

Having completed the discourse concerning the idol-sacrifices as became him, and having rendered it most perfect in all respects, he proceeds to another thing, which also itself was a complaint, but not so great a one. For that which I said before, this do I also now say, that he does not set down all the heavy accusations continuously, but after disposing them in due order, he inserts among them the lighter matters, mitigating what the readers would else feel offensive in his discourse on account of his continually reproofing.

Wherefore also he set the most serious of all last, that relating to the resurrection. But for the present he goes to another, a lighter thing, saying, Now I praise you that you remember me in all things. Thus when the offense is admitted, he both accuses vehemently and threatens: but when it is questioned, he first proves it and then rebukes. And what was admitted, he aggravates: but what was likely to be disputed, he shows to be admitted. Their fornication, for instance, was a thing admitted. Wherefore there was no need to show that there was an offense; but in that case he proved the magnitude of the transgression, and

conducted his discourse by way of comparison. Again, their going to law before aliens was an offense, but not so great a one. Wherefore he considered by the way, and proved it. The matter of the idol-sacrifices again was questioned. It was however, a most serious evil. Wherefore he both shows it to be an offense, and amplifies it by his discourse. But when he does this, he not only withdraws them from the several crimes, but invites them also to their contraries. Thus he said not only that one must not commit fornication, but likewise that one ought to exhibit great holiness. Wherefore he added, Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:20 And having said again that one ought not to be wise with the wisdom that is without, he is not content with this, but bids him also to become a fool. 1 Corinthians 3:18 And where he advises them not to go to law before them that are without, and to do no wrong; he goes further, and takes away even the very going to law, and counsels them not only to do no wrong, but even to suffer wrong. c. vi. 7, 8

And discoursing concerning the idol-sacrifices, he said not that one ought to abstain from things forbidden only, but also from things permitted when offense is given: and not only not to hurt the brethren, but not even Greeks, nor Jews. Thus, give no occasion of stumbling, says he, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God. 1 Corinthians 10:32

2. Having finished therefore all the discourses concerning all these things, he next proceeds also to another accusation. And what was this? Their women used both to pray and prophesy unveiled and with their head bare, (for then women also used to prophesy;) but the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy, and covered their heads when praying and prophesying, each of which was a Grecian custom. Since then he had already admonished them concerning these things when present, and some perhaps listened to him and others disobeyed; therefore in his letter also again, he fomented the place, like a physician, by his mode of addressing them, and so corrects the offense. For that he had heretofore admonished them in person is evident from what he begins with. Why else, having said nothing of this matter any where in the Epistle before, but passing on from other accusations, does he straightway say, Now I praise you that you remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you?

You see that some obeyed, whom he praises; and others disobeyed, whom he corrects by what comes afterwards, saying, Now if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom. 1 Corinthians 11:16 For if after some had done well but others disobeyed, he had included all in his accusation, he would both have made the one sort bolder, and have caused the others to become more remiss; whereas now by praising and approving the one, and rebuking the other, he both refreshes the one more effectually, and causes the other to shrink before him. For the accusation even by itself was such as might well wound them; but now that it takes place in contrast with others who have done well and are praised, it comes with a sharper sting. However, for the present he begins not with accusation, but with encomiums and great encomiums, saying, Now I praise you that you remember me in all things. For such is the character of Paul; though it be but for small matters he weaves a web of high praise; nor is it for flattery that he does so: far from it; how could he so act to whom neither money was desirable, nor glory, nor any other such thing? But for their salvation he orders all his proceedings. And this is why he amplifies the encomium, saying, Now I praise you that you remember me in all things.

All what things? For hitherto his discourse was only concerning their not wearing long hair and not covering their heads; but, as I said, he is very bountiful in his praises, rendering them more forward. Wherefore he says,

That ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you. It appears then that he used at that time to deliver many things also not in writing, which he shows too in many other places. But at that time he only delivered them, whereas now he adds an explanation of their reason: thus both rendering the one sort, the obedient, more steadfast, and pulling down the others' pride, who oppose themselves. Further, he does not say, you have obeyed, while others disobeyed, but without exciting suspicion, intimates it by his mode of teaching in what follows, where he says,

1 Corinthians 11:3

But I would have ye know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of every woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

This is his account of the reason of the thing, and he states it to make the weaker more attentive. He indeed that is faithful, as he ought to be, and steadfast, does not require any reason or cause of those things which are commanded him, but is content with the ordinance alone. But he that is weaker, when he also learns the cause, then both retains what is said with more care and obeys with much readiness.

Wherefore neither did he state the cause until he saw the commandment transgressed. What then is the cause? The head of every man is Christ. Is He then Head of the Gentile also? In no wise. For if we are the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof, 1 Corinthians 12:27 and in this way He is our head, He cannot be the head of them who are not in the Body and rank not among the members. So that when he says, of every man, one must understand it of the believer. Perceivest thou how every where he appeals to the hearer's shame by arguing from on high? Thus both when he was discoursing on love, and when on humility, and when on almsgiving, it was from thence that he drew his examples.

3. But the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Here the heretics rush upon us with a certain declaration of inferiority, which out of these words they contrive against the Son. But they stumble against themselves. For if the man be the head of the woman, and the head be of the same substance with the body, and the head of Christ is God, the Son is of the same substance with the Father. Nay, say they, it is not His being of another substance which we intend to show from hence, but that He is under subjection. What then are we to say to this? In the first place, when any thing lowly is said of him conjoined as He is with the Flesh, there is no disparagement of the Godhead in what is said, the Economy admitting the expression. However, tell me how you intend to prove this from the passage? Why, as the man governs the wife, says he, so also the Father, Christ. Therefore also as Christ governs the man, so likewise the Father, the Son. For the head of every man, we read, is Christ. And who could ever admit this? For if the superiority of the Son compared with us, be the measure of the Father's compared with the Son, consider to what meanness you will bring Him. So that we must not try all things by like measure in respect of ourselves and of God, though the language used concerning them be similar; but we must assign to God a certain appropriate excellency, and so great as belongs to God. For should they not grant this, many absurdities will follow. As thus; the head of Christ is God: and, Christ is the head of the man, and he of the woman. Therefore if we choose to take the term, head, in the like sense in all the clauses, the Son will be as far removed from the Father as we are from Him. Nay, and the woman will be as far removed from us as we are from the Word of God. And what the Son is to the Father, this both we are to the Son and the woman again to the man. And who will endure this?

But do you understand the term head differently in the case of the man and the woman, from what thou dost in the case of Christ? Therefore in the case of the Father and the Son, must we understand it

differently also. How understand it differently? says the objector. According to the occasion. For had Paul meant to speak of rule and subjection, as you say, he would not have brought forward the instance of a wife, but rather of a slave and a master. For what if the wife be under subjection to us? It is as a wife, as free, as equal in honor. And the Son also, though He did become obedient to the Father, it was as the Son of God, it was as God. For as the obedience of the Son to the Father is greater than we find in men towards the authors of their being, so also His liberty is greater. Since it will not of course be said that the circumstances of the Son's relation to the Father are greater and more intimate than among men, and of the Father's to the Son, less. For if we admire the Son that He was obedient so as to come even unto death, and the death of the cross, and reckon this the great wonder concerning Him; we ought to admire the Father also, that He begot such a son, not as a slave under command, but as free, yielding obedience and giving counsel. For the counsellor is no slave. But again, when you hear of a counsellor, do not understand it as though the Father were in need, but that the Son has the same honor with Him that begot Him. Do not therefore strain the example of the man and the woman to all particulars.

For with us indeed the woman is reasonably subjected to the man: since equality of honor causes contention. And not for this cause only, but by reason also of the deceit 1 Timothy 2:14 which happened in the beginning. Wherefore you see, she was not subjected as soon as she was made; nor, when He brought her to the man, did either she hear any such thing from God, nor did the man say any such word to her: he said indeed that she was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh: Genesis 2:23 but of rule or subjection he no where made mention unto her. But when she made an ill use of her privilege and she who had been made a helper was found to be an ensnarer and ruined all, then she is justly told for the future, your turning shall be to your husband. Genesis 3:16

To account for which; it was likely that this sin would have thrown our race into a state of warfare; (for her having been made out of him would not have contributed any thing to peace, when this had happened, nay, rather this very thing would have made the man even the harsher, that she made as she was out of him should not have spared even him who was a member of herself:) wherefore God, considering the malice of the Devil, raised up the bulwark of this word and what enmity was likely to arise from his evil device, He took away by means of this sentence and by the desire implanted in us: thus pulling down the partition-wall, i.e., the resentment caused by that sin of hers. But in God and in that undefiled Essence, one must not suppose any such thing.

Do not therefore apply the examples to all, since elsewhere also from this source many grievous errors will occur. For so in the beginning of this very Epistle, he said, 1 Corinthians 3:22-23 All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. What then? Are all in like manner ours, as we are Christ's, and Christ is God's? In no wise, but even to the very simple the difference is evident, although the same expression is used of God, and Christ, and us. And elsewhere also having called the husband head of the wife, he added, Ephesians 5:23 Even as Christ is Head and Saviour and Defender of the Church, so also ought the man to be of his own wife. Are we then to understand in like manner the saying in the text, both this, and all that after this is written to the Ephesians concerning this subject? Far from it. It is impossible. For although the same words are spoken of God and of men, they do not have the same force in respect to God and to men, but in one way those must be understood, and in another these. Not however on the other hand all things diversely: since contrariwise they will seem to have been introduced at random and in vain, we reaping no benefit from them. But as we must not receive all things alike, so neither must we absolutely reject all.

Now that what I say may become clearer, I will endeavor to make it manifest in an example. Christ is called the Head of the Church. If I am to take nothing from what is human in the idea, why, I would know, is the expression used at all? On the other hand, if I understand all in that way, extreme absurdity will result. For the head is of like passions with the body and liable to the same things. What then ought we to let go, and what to accept? We should let go these particulars which I have mentioned, but accept the notion of a perfect union, and the first principle; and not even these ideas absolutely, but here also we must form a notion, as we may by ourselves, of that which is too high for us and suitable to the Godhead: for both the union is surer and the beginning more honorable.

Again, you hear the word Son; do not thou in this case admit all particulars; yet neither ought thou to reject all: but admitting whatever is meet for God, e.g. that He is of the same essence, that He is of God; the things which are incongruous and belong to human weakness, leave thou upon the earth.

Again, God is called Light. Shall we then admit all circumstances which belong to natural light? In no wise. For this light yields to darkness, and is circumscribed by space, and is moved by another power, and is overshadowed; none of which it is lawful even to imagine of That Essence. We will not however reject all things on this account, but will reap something useful from the example. The illumination which comes to us from God, the deliverance from darkness, this will be what we gather from it.

4. Thus much in answer to the heretics: but we must also orderly go over the whole passage. For perhaps some one might here have doubt also, questioning with himself, what sort of a crime it was for the woman to be uncovered, or the man covered? What sort of crime it is, learn now from hence.

Symbols many and diverse have been given both to man and woman; to him of rule, to her of subjection: and among them this also, that she should be covered, while he has his head bare. If now these be symbols you see that both err when they disturb the proper order, and transgress the disposition of God, and their own proper limits, both the man falling into the woman's inferiority, and the woman rising up against the man by her outward habiliments.

For if exchange of garments be not lawful, so that neither she should be clad with a cloak, nor he with a mantle or a veil: (for the woman, says He, shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments:) much more is it unseemly for these Deuteronomy 22:5 things to be interchanged. For the former indeed were ordained by men, even although God afterwards ratified them: but this by nature, I mean the being covered or uncovered. But when I say Nature, I mean God. For He it is Who created Nature. When therefore you overturn these boundaries, see how great injuries ensue.

And tell me not this, that the error is but small. For first, it is great even of itself: being as it is disobedience. Next, though it were small, it became great because of the greatness of the things whereof it is a sign. However, that it is a great matter, is evident from its ministering so effectually to good order among mankind, the governor and the governed being regularly kept in their several places by it.

So that he who transgresses disturbs all things, and betrays the gifts of God, and casts to the ground the honor bestowed on him from above; not however the man only, but also the woman. For to her also it is the greatest of honors to preserve her own rank; as indeed of disgraces, the behavior of a rebel. Wherefore he laid it down concerning both, thus saying,

1 Corinthians 11:4-5

Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonors her head.

For there were, as I said, both men who prophesied and women who had this gift at that time, as the daughters of Philip, Acts 21:9 as others before them and after them: concerning whom also the prophet spoke of old: your sons shall prophesy, and your daughters shall see visions. Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17

Well then: the man he compels not to be always uncovered, but only when he prays. For every man, says he, praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But the woman he commands to be at all times covered. Wherefore also having said, Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head unveiled, dishonors her head, he stayed not at this point only, but also proceeded to say, for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. But if to be shaven is always dishonorable, it is plain too that being uncovered is always a reproach. And not even with this only was he content, but added again, saying, The woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels. He signifies that not at the time of prayer only but also continually, she ought to be covered. But with regard to the man, it is no longer about covering but about wearing long hair, that he so forms his discourse. To be covered he then only forbids, when a man is praying; but the wearing long hair he discourages at all times. Wherefore, as touching the woman, he said, But if she be not veiled, let her also be shorn; so likewise touching the man, If he have long hair, it is a dishonor unto him. He said not, if he be covered but, if he have long hair. Wherefore also he said at the beginning, Every man praying or prophesying, having any thing on his head, dishonors his head. He said not, covered, but having any thing on his head; signifying that even though he pray with the head bare, yet if he have long hair, he is like to one covered. For the hair, says he, is given for a covering.

1 Corinthians 11:6

But if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled.

Thus, in the beginning he simply requires that the head be not bare: but as he proceeds he intimates both the continuance of the rule, saying, for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven, and the keeping of it with all care and diligence. For he said not merely covered, but covered over, meaning that she be carefully wrapped up on every side. And by reducing it to an absurdity, he appeals to their shame, saying by way of severe reprimand, but if she be not covered, let her also be shorn. As if he had said, If you cast away the covering appointed by the law of God, cast away likewise that appointed by nature.

But if any say, Nay, how can this be a shame to the woman, if she mount up to the glory of the man? we might make this answer; She does not mount up, but rather falls from her own proper honor. Since not to abide within our own limits and the laws ordained of God, but to go beyond, is not an addition but a diminution. For as he that desires other men's goods and seizes what is not his own, has not gained any thing more, but is diminished, having lost even that which he had, (which kind of thing also happened in paradise) so likewise the woman acquires not the man's dignity, but loses even the woman's decency which she had. And not from hence only is her shame and reproach, but also on account of her covetousness.

Having taken then what was confessedly shameful, and having said, but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, he states in what follows his own conclusion, saying, let her be covered. And he said not, let her have long hair, but, let her be covered, ordaining both these to be one, and establishing them

both ways, from what was customary and from their contraries: in that he both affirms the covering and the hair to be one, and also that she again who is shaven is the same with her whose head is bare. For it is one and the same thing, says he, as if she were shaven. But if any say, And how is it one, if this woman have the covering of nature, but the other who is shaven have not even this? we answer, that as far as her will goes, she threw that off likewise by having the head bare. And if it be not bare of tresses, that is nature's doing, not her own. So that as she who is shaven has her head bare, so this woman in like manner. For this cause He left it to nature to provide her with a covering, that even of it she might learn this lesson and veil herself.

Then he states also a cause, as one discoursing with those who are free: a thing which in many places I have remarked. What then is the cause?

1 Corinthians 11:7

For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.

This is again another cause. Not only, so he speaks, because he has Christ to be His Head ought he not to cover the head, but because also he rules over the woman. For the ruler when he comes before the king ought to have the symbol of his rule. As therefore no ruler without military girdle and cloak, would venture to appear before him that has the diadem: so neither do thou without the symbols of your rule, (one of which is the not being covered,) pray before God, lest you insult both yourself and Him that has honored you.

And the same thing likewise one may say regarding the woman. For to her also is it a reproach, the not having the symbols of her subjection. But the woman is the glory of the man. Therefore the rule of the man is natural.

5. Then, having affirmed his point, he states again other reasons and causes also, leading you to the first creation, and saying thus:

1 Corinthians 11:8

For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man.

But if to be of any one, is a glory to him of whom one is, much more the being an image of him.

1 Corinthians 11:9

For neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

This is again a second superiority, nay, rather also a third, and a fourth, the first being, that Christ is the head of us, and we of the woman; a second, that we are the glory of God, but the woman of us; a third, that we are not of the woman, but she of us; a fourth, that we are not for her, but she for us.

1 Corinthians 11:10

For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head.

For this cause: what cause, tell me? For all these which have been mentioned, says he; or rather not for these only, but also because of the angels. For although thou despise your husband, says he, yet

reverence the angels.

It follows that being covered is a mark of subjection and authority. For it induces her to look down and be ashamed and preserve entire her proper virtue. For the virtue and honor of the governed is to abide in his obedience.

Again: the man is not compelled to do this; for he is the image of his Lord: but the woman is; and that reasonably. Consider then the excess of the transgression when being honored with so high a prerogative, you put yourself to shame, seizing the woman's dress. And you do the same as if having received a diadem, you should cast the diadem from your head, and instead of it take a slave's garment.

1 Corinthians 11:11

Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord.

Thus, because he had given great superiority to the man, having said that the woman is of him and for him and under him; that he might neither lift up the men more than was due nor depress the women, see how he brings in the correction, saying, Howbeit neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord. Examine not, I pray, says he, the first things only, and that creation. Since if you enquire into what comes after, each one of the two is the cause of the other; or rather not even thus each of the other, but God of all. Wherefore he says, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:12

For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman.

He said not, of the woman, but he repeats the expression, from 1 Corinthians 11:7 of the man. For still this particular prerogative remains entire with the man. Yet are not these excellencies the property of the man, but of God. Wherefore also he adds, but all things of God. If therefore all things belong to God, and he commands these things, do thou obey and gainsay not.

1 Corinthians 11:13

Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God veiled? Again he places them as judges of the things said, which also he did respecting the idol-sacrifices. For as there he says, judge ye what I say: c. 1 Corinthians 10:15 so here, judge in yourselves: and he hints something more awful here. For he says that the affront here passes on unto God: although thus indeed he does not express himself, but in something of a milder and more enigmatical form of speech: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled?

1 Corinthians 11:14

Does not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor unto him?

1 Corinthians 11:15

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering.

His constant practice of stating commonly received reasons he adopts also in this place, betaking himself to the common custom, and greatly abashing those who waited to be taught these things from him, which even from men's ordinary practice they might have learned. For such things are not unknown even to Barbarians: and see how he every where deals in piercing expressions: every man praying having his head covered dishonors his head; and again, but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled: and here again, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him; but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering.

And if it be given her for a covering, say you, wherefore need she add another covering? That not nature only, but also her own will may have part in her acknowledgment of subjection. For that you ought to be covered nature herself by anticipation enacted a law. Add now, I pray, your own part also, that you may not seem to subvert the very laws of nature; a proof of most insolent rashness, to buffet not only with us, but with nature also. This is why God accusing the Jews said, Ezekiel 16:21-22 You have slain your sons and your daughters: this is beyond all your abominations.

And again, Paul rebuking the unclean among the Romans thus aggravates the accusation, saying, that their usage was not only against the law of God, but even against nature. For they changed the natural use into that which is against nature. Romans 1:26 For this cause then here also he employs this argument signifying this very thing, both that he is not enacting any strange law and that among Gentiles their inventions would all be reckoned as a kind of novelty against nature. So also Christ, implying the same, said, Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also so them; showing that He is not introducing any thing new.

1 Corinthians 11:16

But if any man seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.

It is then contentiousness to oppose these things, and not any exercise of reason. Notwithstanding, even thus it is a measured sort of rebuke which he adopts, to fill them the more with self-reproach; which in truth rendered his saying the more severe. For we, says he, have no such custom, so as to contend and to strive and to oppose ourselves. And he stopped not even here, but also added, neither the Churches of God; signifying that they resist and oppose themselves to the whole world by not yielding. However, even if the Corinthians were then contentious, yet now the whole world has both received and kept this law. So great is the power of the Crucified.

6. But I fear lest having assumed the dress, yet in their deeds some of our women should be found immodest and in other ways uncovered. For therefore also writing to Timothy Paul was not content with these things, but added others, saying, that they adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold. 1 Timothy 2:9 For if one ought not to have the head bare, but everywhere to carry about the token of authority, much more is it becoming to exhibit the same in our deeds.

Thus at any rate the former women also used both to call their husbands lords, 1 Peter 3:6 and to yield the precedence to them. Because they for their part, you say, used to love their own wives. I know that as well as you: I am not ignorant of it. But when we are exhorting you concerning your own duties, let not theirs take all your attention. For so, when we exhort children to be obedient to parents, saying, that it is written, honor your father and your mother, they reply to us, mention also what follows, 'and you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,' Ephesians 6:1-4 And servants when we tell them that it is written that they

should obey their masters, and not serve with eye-service, they also again demand of us what follows, bidding us also give the same advice to masters.

For Paul bade them also, they saw, to forbear threatening. But let us not do thus nor enquire into the things enjoined on others, when we are charged with regard to our own: for neither will your obtaining a partner in the charges free you from the blame: but look to one thing only, how you may rid yourself of those charges which lie against yourself. Since Adam also laid the blame on the woman, and she again on the serpent, but this did in no wise deliver them. Do not thou, therefore, for your part, say this to me now, but be careful with all consideration to render what you owe to your husband: since also when I am discoursing with your husband, advising him to love and cherish you, I allow him not to bring forward the law that is appointed for the woman, but I require of him that which is written for himself.

And do thou therefore busy yourself with those things only which belong to you, and show yourself tractable to your consort. And accordingly if it be really for God's sake that you obey your husband, tell me not of the things which ought to be done by him, but for what things you have been made responsible by the lawgiver, those perform with exactness. For this is especially to obey God, not to transgress the law even when suffering things contrary to it. And by the same rule, he that being beloved loves, is not reckoned to do any great thing.

But he that waits upon a person who hates him, this above all is the man to receive a crown. In the same manner then do thou also reckon that if your husband give you disgust, and thou endure it, you shall receive a glorious crown: but if he be gentle and mild, what will there be for God to reward in you? And these things I say, not bidding the husbands be harsh; but persuading the wives to bear even with harshness in their husbands. Since when each is careful to fulfil his own duty, his neighbor's part also will quickly follow: as when the wife is prepared to bear even with rough behavior in the husband, and the husband refrains from abusing her in her angry mood; then all is a calm and a harbor free from waves.

7. So also was it with those of old time. Each was employed in fulfilling his own duty, not in exacting that of his neighbor. Thus, if you mark it, Abraham took his brother's son: his wife found no fault with him. He commanded her to travel a long journey; she spoke not even against this but followed. Again, after those many miseries and labors and toils having become lord of all, he yielded the precedency to Lot. And so far from Sarah being offended at this, she did not even open her mouth, nor uttered any such thing as many of the women of these days utter, when they see their own husbands coming off inferior in such allotments, and especially in dealing with inferiors; reproaching them, and calling them fools and senseless and unmanly and traitors and stupid. But no such thing did she say or think, but was pleased with all things that were done by him.

And another thing, and that a greater: after that Lot had the choice put in his power, and had thrown the inferior part upon his uncle, a great danger fell upon him.

Whereof the patriarch hearing, armed all his people, and set himself against the whole army of the Persians with his own domestics only, and not even then did she detain him, nor say, as was likely, O man, where are you going, thrusting yourself down precipices, and exposing yourself to so great hazards; for one who wronged you and seized on all that was yours, shedding your blood? Yea, and even if you make light of yourself, yet have pity on me which have left house and country and friends and kindred, and have followed you in so long a pilgrimage; and involve me not in widowhood, and in the miseries of widowhood. None of these things she said: she thought not of them but bore all in silence.

After this, her womb continuing barren, she herself suffers not the grief of women nor laments: but he complains, though not to his wife, but to God. And see how each preserves his own appropriate part: for he neither despised Sarah as childless, nor reproached her with any such thing: and she again was anxious to devise some consolation to him for her childlessness by means of the handmaid. For these things had not yet been forbidden then as now. For now neither is it lawful for women to indulge their husbands in such things, nor for the men, with or without the wife's knowledge, to form such connexions, even though the grief of their childlessness should infinitely harass them: since they also shall hear the sentence, their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched. For now it is not permitted, but then it had not been forbidden. Wherefore both his wife commanded this, and he obeyed, yet not even thus for pleasure's sake. But behold, it will be said, how he cast Hagar out again at her bidding. Well, this is what I want to point out, that both he obeyed her in all things, and she him. But do not thou give heed to these things only, but examine, thou who urgest this plea, into what had gone before also, Hagar's insulting her, her boasting herself against her mistress; than which what can be more vexatious to a free and honorable woman?

8. Let not then the wife tarry for the virtue of the husband and then show her own, for this is nothing great; nor, on the other hand, the husband, for the obedience of the wife and then exercise self-command; for neither would this any more be his own well-doing; but let each, as I said, furnish his own share first. For if to the Gentiles smiting us on the right, we must turn the other cheek; much more ought one to bear with harsh behavior in a husband.

And I say not this for a wife to be beaten; far from it: for this is the extremest affront, not to her that is beaten, but to him who beats. But even if by some misfortune thou have such a yokefellow allotted you, take it not ill, O woman, considering the reward which is laid up for such things and their praise too in this present life. And to you husbands also this I say: make it a rule that there can be no such offense as to bring you under the necessity of striking a wife. And why say I a wife? Since not even upon his handmaiden could a free man endure to inflict blows and lay violent hands. But if the shame be great for a man to beat a maidservant, much more to stretch forth the right hand against her that is free. And this one might see even from heathen legislatures who no longer compel her that has been so treated to live with him that beat her, as being unworthy of her fellowship. For surely it comes of extreme lawlessness when your partner of life, she who in the most intimate relations and in the highest degree, is united with you; when she, like a base slave, is dishonored by you. Wherefore also such a man, if indeed one must call him a man and not rather a wild beast, I should say, was like a parricide and a murderer of his mother. For if for a wife's sake we were commanded to leave even father and mother, not wronging them but fulfilling a divine law; and a law so grateful to our parents themselves that even they, the very persons whom we are leaving, are thankful, and bring it about with great eagerness; what but extreme frenzy can it be to insult her for whose sake God bade us leave even our parents?

But we may well ask, Is it only madness? There is the shame too: I would fain know who can endure it. And what description can set it before us; when shrieks and wailings are borne along the alleys, and there is a running to the house of him that is so disgracing himself, both of the neighbors and the passers by, as though some wild beast were ravaging within? Better were it that the earth should gape asunder for one so frantic, than that he should be seen at all in the forum after it.

But the woman is insolent, says he. Consider nevertheless that she is a woman, the weaker vessel, whereas you are a man. For therefore were thou ordained to be ruler; and were assigned to her in place of a head, that you might bear with the weakness of her that is set under you. Make then your rule glorious.

And glorious it will be when the subject of it meets with no dishonor from you. And as the monarch will appear so much the more dignified, as he manifests more dignity in the officer under him; but if he dishonor and depreciate the greatness of that rank, he is indirectly cutting off no small portion of his own glory likewise: so also thou dishonor her who governs next to yourself, will in no common degree mar the honor of your governance.

Considering therefore all these things, command yourself: and withal think also of that evening on which the father having called you, delivered you his daughter as a kind of deposit, and having separated her from all, from her mother, from himself, from the family, entrusted her entire guardianship to your right hand. Consider that (under God) through her you have children and hast become a father, and be thou also on that account gentle towards her.

Do you see not the husbandmen, how the earth which has once received the seed, they tend with all various methods of culture, though it have ten thousand disadvantages; e.g., though it be an unkindly soil or bear ill weeds, or though it be vexed with excessive rain through the nature of its situation? This also do thou. For thus shall you be first to enjoy both the fruit and the calm. Since your wife is to you both a harbor, and a potent healing charm to rejoice your heart. Well then: if you shall free your harbor from winds and waves, you shall enjoy much tranquility on your return from the market-place: but if you fill it with clamor and tumult, thou dost but prepare for yourself a more grievous shipwreck. In order then to prevent this, let what I advise be done: When any thing uncomfortable happens in the household, if she be in the wrong console her and do not aggravate the discomfort. For even if you should lose all, nothing is more grievous than to have a wife without good-will sharing your abode. And whatever offense you can mention, you will tell me of nothing so very painful as being at strife with her. So that if it were only for such reasons as these, let her love be more precious than all things. For if one another's burdens are to be borne, much more our own wife's.

Though she be poor do not upbraid her: though she be foolish, do not trample on her, but train her rather: because she is a member of you, and you have become one flesh. But she is trifling and drunken and passionate. You ought then to grieve over these things, not to be angry; and to beseech God, and exhort her and give her advice, and do every thing to remove the evil. But if you strike her thou dost aggravate the disease: for fierceness is removed by moderation, not by rival fierceness. With these things bear in mind also the reward from God: that when it is permitted you to cut her off, and you do not so for the fear of God, but bearest with so great defects, fearing the law appointed in such matters which forbids to put away a wife whatsoever disease she may have: you shall receive an unspeakable reward. Yea, and before the reward you shall be a very great gainer, both rendering her more obedient and becoming yourself more gentle thereby. It is said, for instance, that one of the heathen philosophers, who had a bad wife, a trifler and a brawler, when asked, Why, having such an one, he endured her; made reply, That he might have in his house a school and training-place of philosophy. For I shall be to all the rest meeker, says he, being here disciplined every day. Did you utter a great shout? Why, I at this moment am greatly mourning, when heathens prove better lovers of wisdom than we; we who are commanded to imitate angels, nay rather who are commanded to follow God Himself in respect of gentleness.

But to proceed: it is said that for this reason the philosopher having a bad wife, cast her not out; and some say that this very thing was the reason of his marrying her. But I, because many men have dispositions not exactly reasonable, advise that at first they do all they can, and be careful that they take a suitable partner and one full of all virtue. Should it happen, however, that they miss their end, and she whom they have brought into the house prove no good or tolerable bride, then I would have them at any rate try to be like

this philosopher, and train her in every way, and consider nothing more important than this. Since neither will a merchant, until he have made a compact with his partner capable of procuring peace, launch the vessel into the deep, nor apply himself to the rest of the transaction. And let us then use every effort that she who is partner with us in the business of life and in this our vessel, may be kept in all peace within. For thus shall our other affairs too be all in calm, and with tranquility shall we run our course through the ocean of the present life. Compared with this, let house, and slaves, and money, and lands, and the business itself of the state, be less in our account. And let it be more valuable than all in our eyes that she who with us sits at the oars should not be in mutiny and disunion with us. For so shall our other matters proceed with a favoring tide, and in spiritual things also we shall find ourselves much the freer from hindrance, drawing this yoke with one accord; and having done all things well, we shall obtain the blessings laid up in store; unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

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