

The Bride of Christ vs The Pride of Life

May 5, 2012

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Today is the end to the fourth week in our count to Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Firstfruits (of the Wheat harvest). This 49 day count of the Barley harvest is one of the most important timelines in the plan of Salvation to those who are called of the Father at this time. I, as well as others, have written about it often since our eyes were opened to the knowledge and awesome truths that God/Elohim have granted us after leaving the confines of a corporate church for the yoke of our husband Jesus the Christ.

This 7 Sabbath, 7 weeks, 49 day count, is filled up with many lessons which are directed to those called during the second covenant times. We have been called by the Father unto His beloved Son to see if we in fact will be chosen by the Son to be His eternal bride, the wife in the family of God. This is not an easy calling to walk in as many of the parables teach us. We will and undoubtedly have encountered many difficulties along the way. The parable of the sower is just one that comes to mind. Many obstacles to success are in the way. Christ details many of the pitfalls, struggles, and trials which beset us the church or called out ones during these 7 weeks of harvest through the writings of John. His messages to the 7 churches of Revelation chapters 2-3 are very sobering and yet inspiring as well. I have written in detail about this link in the article entitled, "The 7 Churches, 7 Days of Unleavened Bread, and 7 Weeks Journey to Pentecost."

I find it personally helpful to read through Rev 2-3 often. It is about us and our fellow brethren. It is a wakeup call to the faithful, that is, those who have been called and who are in the process of being chosen. Not chosen for salvation for that is a free gift but not as worldly Christianity understands it. Free from God with conditions on us. We will discuss this shortly. In Christ's messages or warnings, whichever you deem appropriate in calling them, we find some very unflattering things being said to say the least. We see many who were called practicing despicable behavior as defined by God. We should use these scriptures as a mirror to look into often and in doing so we will recognize a lot of what is being described going on in what we refer to as the Churches of God. These scriptures should be used as a vehicle for our personal repentance. Christ lists many vile activities and conduct that His bride should not be involved in as well as some that she should be pursuing. If we heed His advice He tells us we will receive the Crown of Life.

These messages are a lesson in constantly overcoming and persevering. Look at just a few of the things we are to be doing this to, "the Nicolaitans", "the woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess", "false apostles", etc. As difficult a situation each of these may present we are finding out they are really not

the most difficult tasks placed before us. The most difficult are the very personal overcoming's such as "keeping our first love" or rejecting and overcoming "the Pride of Life."

We are to be holding fast to our Husband to be able to do all this overcoming and persevering. We are to live by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. We must follow Him wherever He goes and no other. It is a humble walk but not a weak walk. We are to be girded with His strength just as He was with His Fathers. Christ is working with those called by the Father to see if we are compatible to Him. Those chosen by Him will be functioning in the responsibilities of the wife in the household of God the Father, being married to Jesus Christ the Lamb of God for eternity. That chosen bride is equated to a woman of great value. Satan understands this and is working feverishly to try and prevent it. He is doing so with every lying wonder of deception he can muster. He is redefining the perception of the role of a woman in society as well as in the family and in Christianity. If he were to be successful in his evil attempt there would not be a virtuous woman to be found based on Gods definition of such. However, we do have the Word of God and it clearly tells us Satan will fail, but will cause tremendous havoc in his unholy pursuit. The results of his evil undertakings can be seen all around us. Many "modern women" who profess to be "Christian" conduct themselves contrary to scripture. That is the direct result of the deceptive work of the prince of the power of the air injecting prideful attitudes into our minds. The world around us promotes and packages the image of a woman as being beautiful to look upon and completely self-reliant. No humble toads allowed! Of course that is not what our Creator is looking for. Her beauty is far more than skin deep and her reliance on Him is beyond measure. We are to be in the world but not of the world. A simple reminder we should recite to ourselves often.

I am often drawn to the parable of the wedding supper in Matthew 22: 1-14. He sums it up by stating, "Many are called but few chosen." That is of course referring to the function of the bride in the patriarchal Fathers household.

The physical pattern and description of what a virtuous wife and bride should be are written about throughout the scriptures so we will be without excuse as to our behavior as such. These are all a type of what God expects of us in our calling and choosing. However those qualifying attributes of an acceptable wife to God are rejected by many modern women because of the Pride of Life. Please understand that this is not picking on women time here. I am focusing on women because the functions to be fulfilled in this calling are that of a wife in the household. All of us men who are called at this time are also called to those functions and responsibilities. Judging from what some in the churches profess I think they actually envision themselves qualifying for the function of the husband. Sorry boys that role is filled by our Head, Jesus the Christ. Many men do not consider the attributes of the bride to be connected to their conduct and thus qualifying. If they keep that up they will fall far short and be disqualified. There are men in the churches who by their actions and attitudes actually discourage their wives from going on to attaining success. That is reckless endangerment and it will be dealt with by their wives spiritual Husband in the future.

Satan has been so good at redefining societal norms by his trickery, deceit, and lying wonders that he has completely repackaged the vision of a Christian woman. This new creation rejects the biblical role of a woman. She is now vested with undertaking functions assigned to a man in the body by Christ. The traditional role of a woman is rejected in modern societies today. The act of marrying, being a home maker, raising children, willingly yielding to one's own husband are considered to be unfulfilling, menial, and downright foolish by many. Of course many men in society have contributed to this greatly by their

conduct. Unfortunately many women today who are looking for a possible traditional husband are greatly discouraged. Many are forced to choose from an inferior cast or remain single. Those who do marry have a 1 in 2 chance of being a future statistic of divorce and a single mother while bozo goes off to find a newer version. Our society is in great danger of completely collapsing as to the family. Without a traditional father and mother role children are in danger of being devoured by those who are perverted to Satan's way.

I grew up in a single mother home. My brother and sister and I were raised by my mom and my grandmother. My progenitor (certainly not qualified as a father) left when I was three. Mom had to attempt to fill the role of provider and mother at the same time. She did not want this but did her best with grandma's help. She paid a heavy price for doing so in many ways. What she gave to us was a work ethic, which was instilled into us by her example. Unfortunately today many women who find themselves in similar circumstances make the decision to let another man into their lives with a loose commitment if any, and then all suffer for it. At times it does work out if a firm commitment is sought and given from all parties but that is becoming rarer by the day. My reason for bringing this up is to state that a woman's role is different from that of a man in the family. Can a man do a woman's job and a woman do a man's job in such? Yes, the exceptional ones can but only in a limited way. Because someone can do something even in a limited way does that mean they have a responsibility to do it? Absolutely not is the answer. Only under very extreme circumstances should that be considered for it does not fulfill the pattern of God in creation or command. There should be no pride or vanity in it. If we are to be pleasing to Christ we must want to fulfill our calling in the role and function we were called in. He sets the rules in the household. This does not mean that we are to forego growing in grace and knowledge for that too is a command and promise to us.

Satan knows his craft very well. He knows what God/Elohim are doing here on earth. He can even recite it from scripture but for all his power he can't truly understand it, for the whole precept is alien to him because of his prideful, self-centered, deviant, twisted mind. However he has a part to play in it for he is being used as a tool which is assisting in bringing about the perfecting of the bride of Christ the second Eve. As such we who are called at this time have a lot of holding fast and overcoming and persevering to do. It is a constant struggle as we draw closer to the time of the final Pentecost as depicted in scripture and the seven week count. As that time draws closer Satan will in all his vanity suddenly realize what the scriptures say about him, and the sky will fall and persecutions begin resulting in terrible grief to many. We in the body need to come to grips with the depth of our calling. Unfortunately many are just focusing on or reciting salvation. They beat to death that salvation is a free gift and that we can't earn it. How mature, how brilliant! How short sighted!!! Yes salvation is a free gift **only if it is given!** There is no guarantee it will be given to each and every one of us. There is a Lake of Fire referenced often as one of the outcomes. If we do not complete the basic tenants of what God demands of us as to keeping the household rules of the Father then we will not be a part of His family in any role let alone the bride. Salvation is OFFERED to all, but not to ALL at this time. Regardless of when it is offered it will come with conditions. If we are willing to yield to God and the rules They live by then it will be offered to us.

I would give gifts to my children when they were young and for that matter still do. Much of the time the gift came while spending time during the day with me driving around to different job sites. To enhance this we would stop at Wendy's for a frosty which was really special for we did not do much of that. If my children had have been disobedient as to the rules of the household they would not get the

opportunity and certainly would not get the frosty. It was up to me if I gave this free gift to them. It was mine to give more so than theirs to get. That is what is meant by a free gift of God. We have no right to it but rather opportunity to it through Jesus Christ. The “free to give” is entirely in God’s hands. That is a Biblical fact. There is a Lake of Fire because God has allowed for only one Satan in the Plan of Salvation and he too will be eliminated after he has fulfilled his role in it for he will never repent of his evil ways or yield to God. Likewise those who will not yield to and welcome the will of God in their lives will join Satan in his fate.

We are certainly called to salvation at this time but much, much, more brethren. Our actions in this life, in this calling, will be used to qualify us for the function of the bride of Christ for eternity. It is a very important function and is not for all and it is not free as salvation is. We need to earn it by what we do in this calling of the Father unto His Son. However it is not for everyone. Remember the scriptures about it. Many are called and few chosen. That is only fitting for such an important role in the household of God. Only one could qualify to be the Christ, the Lamb of God. We should be encouraged that the role being filled now allows for more than one. Our Savior qualified us for the free gift (which covers all mankind; past, present, and future) and that is why it can’t be earned but He is making sure we ourselves qualify for the function of the bride with His assistance just as He was assisted by the Father. This function is only being offered in this age. It will be closed in the near future as scripture tells us in Matthew 25:10, Rev 15:8 and elsewhere.

The scriptures are filled with examples and teachings of how we are to be functioning in our roles as men and women in the body of Christ. We are to have a deep understanding of both whether we are men or women, but are commanded to only function in the ones we are called in as to gender. That is very important to understand. Once again there is to be no vanity in it, no surfacing of the Pride of Life in any shape or form. Just because we have an understanding and even an ability to do the other role we are not to do so as per Gods command. I would like to make it easy for us and fall back on the old, “Gods ways are not our ways” cop out but I can’t for it does not apply here. It is easy for us to understand why we are confined to performing our gender roles in the church, the body of Christ, if we can let the vanity and deceit of Satan flee from our eyes. With that said the emphasis should be placed on all of us understanding the role of a woman. That is the function now being filled by the Plan of Salvation. The role of the Husband is filled. That is not an excuse for us men to abrogate a single one of our responsibilities. That can be difficult for some to comprehend. We are all qualifying to be the bride short and sweet. Unfortunately the world around us does not share Gods definition of the attributes and abilities of a bride for eternity. We are going to spell some of that out today from scripture. We men do not live the role of a wife but need to deeply understand it and respect it as the focus at this time and not be self-enamored with being in charge as so many losers are. We will be required to function in the bride’s role spiritually!

In our study today we are going to see what God requires of us as we are qualifying to be the bride of Christ. It is a humble function of service and love. Let’s strike to the heart of the matter quickly so there is no doubt as to how a woman is to function in the body to be pleasing to God.

Titus 2:1-5:

“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience (another tall order to fill); the older women likewise, that they be reverent (not reverend) in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine,

teachers of good things; that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their OWN husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed (an even taller order than for men).”

The apostle Paul has written about the roles of men and women in the church often in his epistles. His teachings are ridiculed by “modern type” women, and for that matter “wimpy” men as well due to being blinded in ignorance of the Plan of Salvation and the will of God. The Pride of Life cuts them off from knowledge and thus understanding which when put into practice displays wisdom for all to see.

Romans 11:33;

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.”

Many moderns today attack the writings of Paul while all the while calling themselves Christians. If that is not confusion I am lost on what is. The most prolific writer of the Second Covenant scriptures is rejected in part and thus in whole. That depth of confusion bodes for Satan’s ability to deceive, to divide and conquer. There is a very important reason why he attacks Paul in this manner outside of the obvious perverted lifestyles Satan is establishing as norms in the mind of mankind of which all are anti-family and thus anti-God. Paul taught at great length about the law and how it is holy and good and spiritual. If you can cause folks to doubt his teachings on some points you can cause doubt on the others. Again Satan knows his craft well, even though the other apostles taught the same things.

Let’s jump over to the apostle Peter to see what he has to say about Paul and how his teachings were being used to divide way back then as well.

2 Peter 3:14-18

“Therefore beloved, looking forward to these things, being diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and account the longsuffering of our Lord, unto salvation, as well as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him (by God) has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them these things (those things Peter was just addressing in his letter above) in which are some things hard to understand, (why?) which those untaught (of God) and unstable (taught by Satan) twist to their own destruction as also the rest of the scriptures.”

Here we have Peter understanding, teaching, and endorsing Paul’s writings in his epistles. Peter makes it abundantly clear that those who were untaught and unstable were the ones trying to discredit Paul and in fact all the scriptures as well with their twisting them unto their destructive path. There are many in this age, which undertake the same unholy path all the while proclaiming they are of God and true Christians. Many of them are deceived but some are not.

Peter continues here in verse 17 with a very specific warning. “You therefore beloved, since you know (these things) beforehand, beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked...”

Who are the wicked? Those who are untaught and unstable who twist Paul’s teachings to their own destruction and draw in many others, whether deceived or not.

Why Paul?

Satan focuses on Paul for two reasons which are; his instructions on the law and instructions on the bride of Christ. Paul slices and dices Satan’s immoral teachings on everything from homosexuality to false worship. Paul taught relentlessly about relationships between men and woman, husbands and wives, parents and children, and between mankind and God. He explicitly puts in writing the pattern and

importance of our calling at this time. He knew the pattern of Salvation; he knew that the Father was calling a bride unto His Son after the method of Abraham for his son Isaac after his own kind, his kindred. Paul knew God was building an eternal family and he also knew that Satan had tried from creation to pervert and prevent it from happening by screwing up relationships. Remember Eve allowed him to get between her and her husband Adam so that she turned aside from Adams teachings unto Satan's deceptions.

Let's hear Paul's summation of this and a reason why he was so vehement in it.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3;

"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Satan is doing everything he is allowed to do to pervert the roles between men and women, husbands and wives which have been ordained by God. Just look at the world around us. His success is astounding. Married couples are divorcing in wholesale numbers and leaving a wake of destruction behind them with their children and their economics. Homosexuals and lesbians are gaining control of all the western worlds' institutions. We have got to stand in the gap between the world and the Church. We must never let his deluded thinking corrupt us. Paul stood in the gap! He wrote about this deviant behavior and its outcome. He also wrote about how we are to function in the body of Christ as men and women. He defines our responsibilities in very easy to understand language to those who have the spirit of God and the mind of Christ. Paul knew what his purpose was and he fearlessly pursued it. He did all he could to further the expansion of the family of God even to forsaking having a physical family himself. He was completely dedicated to Christ and his commission of presenting a chaste virgin to Him. Paul was a bridge to the Gentiles to crossover to Gods knowledge as they left Satan behind. Yes, he stood in the gap and so should we!

It should come as no surprise that Satan's deceptive powers are being used to discourage men and women from following Paul's simple and humble instructions. Satan rejected the authority of God after he was created. We can and have read that often in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Just think he was the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, until iniquity was found in him. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty and he corrupted his wisdom for the sake of his splendor. He became the author of the Pride of Life. It wasn't good enough for him to be the anointed cherub who covered the throne of God, he wanted to be God, he wanted to take over Gods role, he thought he could do the job and do it better. His twisted delusions of grandeur allowed him to think he was entitled to be God and perform all the functions of God. His role as a covering cherub was below him, it was demeaning to his great abilities, belittling in fact in his perverted mind.

Satan has worked tirelessly to place this same mindset into mankind for millennia. At this point in the timeline of salvation he is taking extra measures to infect women. His emphasis is being directed at the family full measure now for he already owns the governments of this world. There is no humility in his mindset, no service other than self-service, no love other than self-love. This mindset is one of, "I am better than you and thus deserve more than you." Just think of the capability he possesses for deception. He was able to convince many of the angels to rebel with him prior to our creation. His activities among the angels of God did not take place over night. It took a long time to deceive them. We read in Ezekiel 28:16, "By the abundance of your trading (politicking) you became filled with violence

within and you sinned...” As he was able to convince more and more angels to his way of thinking he was filled with more and more wrathful thoughts of dominion until he was bursting with them and in his deluded thinking actually thought he could displace the Creators. He is relentless and his methods have remained the same. That is the outcome of all politicking. It is evil in nature, intent, and outcome, and should not be any part of our thinking or functioning in life.

It was Paul’s commission to resist and expose Satan’s mindset and prepare a chaste, humble, respectful bride to Christ. It was a daunting task and still is. It should be our main focus in the body of Christ today. Many of the churches of God pay lip service to it. Many, but not all, are playing “who’s in charge” and “follow me.” Our relationship with Christ, with one another, with our spouses, and our children is not a competition. (However we can look at our personal overcoming as such as Paul often equated it to running a race). To be of His body we need to be one with Him. The world does not comprehend our calling and walk in Christ so why look to it. Satan owns it. We are not to function after it. Society is not humble, forgiving, caring, or any such thing. It is self-centered. We are to function in a manner opposite to it. At times it displays a false humility with an eye on what’s in it for me.

Let’s review how Christ set the right example and in doing so slapped Satan and his way down. Christ’s example of willingly yielding to another was in my opinion the greatest event in the history of eternity if such a thing can be said. It is very important to understand or at the very least recognize this mind which was in Christ. We are to follow Him wherever He goes. The words of Paul to the Philippians and thus to us now sum up and describe in absolute awesome beauty the mind we are to have in Christ our Savior, our Husband, our Creator. We are to display this mindset in the family of God the body of Christ.

Philippians 2:1-8;

“Therefore if there is any consolation, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind. Nothing being done through selfish ambition or conceit (Satan’s method and mindset) but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself (Satan hates and despises that way of thinking). Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Now Paul is going to tell and teach us how our Creator did this, our loving Savior and Betrothed. Please drink this in in its magnitude and then recognize He did it for you.

Verses 5-8;

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, (What mind? The one we just read about) who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, (that means He was God), but emptied Himself of His privileges (Godly existence), taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of man. And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (to the Father) and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.”

The Father and the Son expect the very same from each of us in the physical forms and roles we are called in, be we men or women. We are to have this mindset of Christ in all our relationships with the called of God, with our spouses, and certainly with our Husband Jesus the Christ and be obedient to God regardless of who is whispering in our ears. Brethren, this is what it is all about at this time. That is why Paul’s epistles were inspired to be used in number throughout the Second Covenant scriptures. He teaches us by example that we are to be submitting (willingly yielding) to one another in the fear of God. We are not to be trying to dominate one another but instead serving one another to the point of laying down our life. There is no satanic mindset in any of that for it is completely alien to him.

We read often in the scriptures that a wife is to willingly yield to her OWN husband. In doing so a wife sets the example of the mindset of Christ to all, including her husband, so he can better understand his own relationship with Christ. That is humble power in its finest form. That is what Christ displayed in His relationship with the Father. Christ deferred all authority in matters to Him. Even the angels who rebelled saw this and trembled at His awesome power and faith and confidence in the Father. We need to be of the same mind as Christ was. Just think He divested Himself of all His eternal glory and yielded to the Father so that he could give His life for us! If we are of His body we need to be doing the same thing. We are to be one with Him and thus the Father through Him. We need to trust Him in what he says to us just as He trusted the Father. In doing so we are giving up very little, He gave up everything! There is no vanity in it. We are to conduct ourselves in the body as we are placed by Him. This has nothing to do with the decrees of men. He regarded our interests above His own. That's God we are talking about. If He could do it in that great a magnitude we should be able to do it in the little we have. Romans 12:10, 16;

“Be kindly devoted to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

With this basis of Knowledge and understanding before us let's look to some of Paul's instructions which are ridiculed and rejected by the world and all who are untaught and unstable. They are not hard to understand for those who have the spirit of God residing in them and who have tasted the fullness of it. James teaches us in 3:13-17;

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct his works in the meekness (not weakness) of wisdom. But if you have (the teachings of Satan) bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist confusion and every evil thing is there. But the wisdom that is from above is pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

Do we actually yield to our Father, Jesus, our spouses, or our brothers in Christ? It is all to be one in the same. However we do not yield to any form of evil. Do we say we love God yet hate our brother called of the Father? Scripture tells us it is impossible to do so for if we hate our brother we hate God. Be aware however that not everyone who calls themselves a brother or of God is in fact our brother or of God so we should not be naïve to such things. As you can imagine and know this is all contrary to the world. We must all be one, we in Christ and Christ in the Father. We are to let nothing come between us. We are to be of the same mindset in our relationship. It is not by coincidence that when Paul was instructing the Corinthians that he was betrothing them to Christ that he brought up the example of Eve. She broke the trust she had with her husband Adam and allowed Satan to slither in between them. Divide and conquer! He appealed to her vanity, to her lusts of the flesh, but only after he failed with his first attempt at a direct assault. Many who profess to be devout Christians do not want to hear these things especially when they are penned by Paul. They actually believe Paul has it in for women and that he personally attempted to put them down. Of course there are others who attempt to use his writings to dominate women, and men for that matter, resulting in lots of confusion in untaught and unstable minds.

We should know that we are the second Eve just as Christ is the second Adam. Of course this is speaking spiritually not as flesh and blood. As such Satan is doing everything he can to slither in between us, to distort our Husbands instructions and teachings to us just as he did with the first Adam and Eve. He actually tried to lure Christ away from the Father when he tempted Him in the wilderness. Remember the old vain line about how he would give Him rulership over all the governments of the world if He would worship him. That one flopped so now he is coming after Eve once again. Unfortunately too many who are called fall to his deceptions in one form or another. He is a master of camouflage and subtlety. Unless we absolutely look only to our Husband we can and probably will fall prey to Satan's deives. It is our responsibility to never allow anything or anyone to come between us and our own husband. That is why we can often read things like, "Wives, willing yield to your **own** husbands, as to the Lord." This is a living example of a wife's understanding of how we are all required to function in marriage with our spiritual Husband. Listen up guys; if we don't understand this and cause our wives to stumble in it we will be accountable for our actions before Christ. It is imperative that we all learn the attributes of a wife who is desirable and sought out by the Eternal. I have personally learned a lot about this from observing my wife in our relationship with each other and her relationship with our children and how she functions with others. She is personally involved in an intimate relationship with Christ. She relies on her spiritual Husband for her answers to her questions. She has her own time with Him each day before she has to put up with me.

I am able to write about these things but fall short in the doing more often than I should. A wise man once told me, "The more you know about yourself the more you know about others." We are all a work in progress. The reason I can write about it is because I just repeat the words and patterns of God which is a very important aspect of a man's role in the body. It is actually a form of retraining as a result of the first Adam's willingness to sin when he knew better. Repetition is a very good reminder and teacher. I have read recently that there are congregations which call themselves a church of God who actually allow women to preach during services. In doing so they are proclaiming they have greater understanding and wisdom than the apostles. Such activities are not founded in Biblical knowledge. They strain nats and swallow camels. The Word of God forbids such conduct and activities. We receive very specific instruction on that subject from the apostle Paul in first Corinthians chapter 14. This is a chapter which is attacked by many of the moderns who are filled with the Pride of Life and not godly wisdom for they do not have basic knowledge of the patterns being taught here by Paul. Without knowledge there is no understanding and without understanding there is no wisdom. Most of the moderns jump right down to verse 34 in their disdain for the apostles teachings. Let's read it all in context. That context being addressed here is; what is appropriate conduct in services and what is not. It's not lets beat up the girls time.

1 Corinthians 14:26;

"How is it then, Brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification (building up)."

This is a rebuke from Paul to the boys! This sure sounds like a typical gathering of the "boys" who are all trying to be the dominant "rooster." That is a common pattern with a room full of guys with each one thinking his psalm, teaching, tongue, revelation, interpretation, and so on is more important, more relevant, than anyone else's when they have a touch of the disease of dominion over another and self-importance. That is a true guy thing which can be overcome with the spirit of God working in us. Paul

goes on in the rest of the chapter and sums up what is important in a church service and what the focus should be on. If we miss this we miss the whole lesson. Have you ever wondered why Paul writes what he did in verse 36? To many it appears out of place. That is because they don't understand the lesson being taught here. "Or did the word of God come originally from you? (That's a shot at the boys who are trying to push their agenda full of self-importance and not what Christ has to say) Or was it you only that it reached? (Nobody else knows anything but you about it)"

Then Paul corrects everyone. Verse 37;

"If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord"

That is way too dogmatic for moderns to handle so throw the whole thing out and move on with something less demanding.

Paul's correction and positive instruction starts with speaking in tongues. He simply tells us all if there is no interpreter, "keep silent!" Okay, so Paul here has just told the boys not to speak if no one else can interpret what you say. Imagine that. The importance is placed on the interpretation by another and not on the one talking in a tongue, which is another language. Team work! If it will not edify the body don't do it, keep silent!

Now we get to the heart of a lot of misunderstanding in many today and quite frankly many may not have even heard what I am about to address which is a shame to us all as a church.

Verse 29;

"Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge."

So is everyone who speaks a prophet? That interpretation of the Greek is music to the ears of many a wantabe. At least the first part is for they do not believe they should be questioned as to what they say. Prophets here is #4396 and Strong's says of it, "from a compilation of #4253 (Pro; in front of, prior to) and 5346 (Phemi; to show or make known ones thoughts ie: speak or say); a foreteller, by analogy an inspired speaker, by extension a poet."

Vines says of it "one who speaks forth or openly, a proclaimer of a divine message..." Vines goes on with a lot more as we have covered in the past. One very important aspect mentioned is; it is one in whom the spirit of God dwells.

So here we have 2 or 3 prophets or inspired speakers or better put "speaking from the inspired Word of God" and not from their own revelation, interpretation, etc. while the others are to be judging or discerning what is said based on the written word of God which is supposed to be being spoken. Yes everyone else is to be just like the Bereans. This isn't a time for show and tell or some new understanding to be revealed. It is a time for sound doctrine as we have received from our Husband the Christ. Please remember the inspired word of God here uses the Greek Prophetes and not Prophetis which is feminine. Once again we men are commanded to speak the words of our Head, our Savior, Husband, and not our own. This is serious business here. It is a time of edification for the whole body with the whole body involved in one of two ways. Everyone has their part as they are placed in the body. In this case it is determined by gender as Paul is and will continue to instruct. There is no put down to women. This is a rebuke to behavior which was not Christ like in men. This is not a time to be impressing each other with great oratory skills or flashy clothing, or the telling of jokes. Adam failed in his role as teacher/husband to Eve. He taught her what our Creator had instructed him but when Eve had been deceived by another he never corrected the error. He left the instructions of God for his own. We are

not to do that. There are other formats for bouncing ideas off of others and such things, but services are not the place or time. There are other men, women, and children listening. They want to hear the patterns of the inspired words of God or at least they should. Speakers are to speak from the scriptures as the base of what they are talking about. That is Gods wisdom and not the world's wisdom. True prophets repeat the words of God and not their own. Let's follow the example that our Savior/Husband set for us. Even though He had been the spokesman for all the scriptures He still deferred to the Father in all things. That is the valor of the second Adam.

Do we understand why Paul asked the two questions earlier? "Or did the word of God come originally from you?" And don't forget "Or was it you only that it reached?"

There is no room for me, myself, and I in any of this. It is about the entire body working together under the Head, the Husband, to edify itself. This is just one of the commands as to how to do that. This one is centered on a Sabbath service. Men need to get this right. We need to speak the words that God gave us so very long ago and stick with them regardless of what confronts us. Adam knew Eve had done wrong. God's instructions were simple and true. We either believe them or we don't. We are all being tested here, men and women. Paul first told those speaking in tongues without an interpreter to not speak. As we will read he also tells us that if one is speaking and another has something to say which will edify, the first one needs to stop speaking and yield to him. He then goes on and tells women they can't speak as in getting up in front of the congregation and delivering the word of God. Is this cause for three offenses from Paul? Hardly! If that is our focus we are on the wrong wavelength.

The entire body is to judge what is said. We are all able to do so or should be able, but to do so in decency and in order. It is obvious the "speaking" here is talking about the responsibility to proclaim the Word of God from the inspired scriptures publically or to all during the service. The whole focus is to encourage the body not discourage it as Adam had done to Eve in the garden when he went with his own way when presented with a challenge by her. She believed Satan over her husband. A really bad decision! Eve was required to make a correct decision based on what her husband had taught her. Wives are to judge in services as to the content of those who are speaking. If something they hear is in question they should not go to that person and inquire but discuss it with their own husband in the privacy of their home. That is the example my wife and I follow. It is scriptural and helps anyone who does so to focus on the humility and safety to be found in the commands of our spiritual Betrothed and a very big lesson in oneness.

Verse 31;

"For you can all prophesy (#4395 not #4396) one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged." Many speakers in the churches of God follow the dismal example of the first Adam. It is all about them and how they can be creative and impress others. Sermon time is not a counseling session, it is not a belittling session, it is not a how do I look session.

In verse 30 Paul instructs us on how to keep it a humble function and not have the focus on self. "But if something is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent." This is the beauty of an interactive Bible study of converted brethren. The Pride of Life would never allow this to happen but the Bride of Christ would for she understands her role under the Head. Remember Ephesians 5:21; "Willingly yielding to one another in the fear of God."

Paul continues his instruction on this pattern in verse 32, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." No chief speaker in some hierarchy or pecking order. People read all this but seldom

comprehend it based on their actions. It is a tall order for most guys to willingly yield to another in this day and age. It is a society full of vanity and selfishness and self-importance. It is a wonderful thing to sit and listen to a man who understands his responsibility to speak about the words of God. It is so calming to be with others when this is actually happening.

This is a lesson Paul is delivering to the men in a congregation of the body. We are assigned this responsibility to see if we can follow in the footsteps of our Husband in setting the right example. This correction Paul has given here is for us men to take to heart. This is not qualifying us for a function as the man in the household of God for that function is spiritually filled by Christ. It is a test for men and us alone due to the folly of Adam. Why would a woman want to fall under that judgment when she has enough of her own functions to deal with and complete?

We are instructed in verse 33, "For God is not of confusion (disorder) but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

There is a right way and a wrong way and it is all according to what God says and no other. If we repeat the words of God then it is godly, but if we do not it is confusion. The author of confusion is Satan the devil, the covering cherub who was cast out of the presence of the Father. Look how important it is to speak continually about the patterns in the Word of God.

Romans 16:25-26;

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience in faith."

1 Corinthians 2:6-7;

"However we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory."

We need to focus on these things in our speaking; they are life to us and what builds up the body when we come together.

1 Corinthians 4:6;

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollo's for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other."

The minute we stray from the scriptures and the patterns they hold; here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, we open the door for vanity, strife, and division to enter in. That is not the way of God but the way of tearing down. Inspired speaking is completely centered on the Word of God and nothing else. As the scriptures tell us we are to with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:6). We of the male gender called of God need to stay more focused on Gods words and not our own and thus complete in some small part what Adam failed to do in the garden.

So now we come to Paul's instruction specific to the women in a church service. Keep in mind they were included in the judging or discerning segment of the instruction above. Now Paul addresses the "speaking" function we have just covered.

Verse 34," Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but to be submissive, as the law also says." (There's that dirty word "law" again)

This scripture is loaded with instruction but not one iota of it is a put down. Paul references it to the law not his opinion. Christianity has an answer for him. They do away with the law! It appears that is what some in the churches of God would like to see happen. How disgusting is that? Remember if we break or dump one part we dump it all.

Don't forget in all of this we are all qualifying to be the bride, to carry out the functions of a woman as in a wife in the family of God spiritually. Paul is very cognizant of that. He is simply instructing us all that it is not a woman's responsibility to give a sermon, bible study, or any such thing in a public gathering of the body. (This is not talking about singing, Sabbath school studies, female gender specific events, etc.) It is our Husband who does the speaking, we in turn are to be hearing His words and the male gender has been given that task to perform it. He in no way states a woman who has the spirit of God in incapable of speaking the words of God in harmony with the patterns throughout the Bible. In fact I know women who are extremely well versed in doing so, but they would never dream of getting up in front of a congregation to do it for they agree with the scriptures. They understand the role they have been given and don't want to muddy it up in confusion by taking on a man's role. A man (after Adam) has defined functions and a woman (after Eve) has defined functions. We need to get them right physically to display the spiritual understanding we have in Christ. This is not a contest between men and women. It is about humbly obeying God. Men and women have many other very specific functions as saints in the body of Christ. What if guys felt they should have the responsibility of bearing children? What a deluded mess that would cause. It goes against nature but that doesn't stop many today in society from thinking they can do so through a surrogate and pretend they are the wife in a homosexual relationship. Men and women are assigned roles specific to gender. If you don't like that you will not be allowed to enter into the family of God the Father.

There are some responsibilities we share together as husband and wife. Some men reject them as do some women. We need to stay focused on the simplicity in Christ and not on the Pride of Life.

Look how Paul continues with this instruction here.

Verse 35;

"And if they want to learn something, let them ask their OWN husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak (as in verse 29; Let two or three prophets speak) in the churches." (We discussed this earlier as to how a husband and wife who are one in the spirit and the flesh function on this point of instruction by Paul.)

Remember this goes back to Eve and her willingness to listen to another and then go back and convince her husband Adam of a different way. Women should not take this personal. It is not a put down or anything of a sort. It is about setting the humble spiritual example of what the second Eve should be doing according to our Husbands desire and not listening to others ending in questions of doubt in our relationship. It is an outward example of how we the second Eve are to be functioning in our qualifying to be the bride. The world does not see it that way for the Lying Wonder is hard at work. If a woman can't find the humility to obey this basic of commands how will she deal with the real hard commanded functions she has before her? They are many!

Please keep in focus it is not about ability, but humility and submission to the will of God. Through a woman's example in doing this many can be won over for it is not a common thing. When I see a woman

display this pattern I am personally humbled and yet proud for her and thank God for this sister in the faith and the example for me that she has reinforced by her actions.

Peter tells us that we in the house of God are under judgment right now in 1 Peter 4:17. Judgment there is #2917 Krima. Strong's says of it, "from #2919, a decision (the function or the effect, for or against crime)."

Vine's says of it, "denotes the result of the action signified by the verb Krino, to judge, a sentence pronounced, a verdict, a condemnation, the decision resulting from an investigation... the process of judgment leading to a decision..."

Yes, we are being judged right now in our calling as to our function in the household of God. It is based on how we obey the laws of God as applied to us and the functions we are in. It isn't dependent on what someone else is doing, just us alone. This is not talking about salvation here for that will be offered to all who have ever lived eventually. It is about much more. It is not to be taken lightly. Each and every one of us has been called for this purpose of learning the function of the bride in the household of God. It is a vitally import function as nature teaches us. It is an awesome opportunity and not some meaningless put down. We are going to cover that which is required of us as the bride but only in part and to some very clear specifics and then tell me it is not filled to the brim with responsibility and accountability and no time for foolishness.

Let's hear a little instruction from Peter on this subject of a wife in the body of Christ as exemplified by physical roles. 1 Peter 3:1-7;

"Likewise wives submit (willingly yield) to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they without a word (no need for speaking) may be won by the conduct of their wives, (actions speak louder than words) when they observe your chaste conduct with fear (respect)."

Now that is power, it is incredible that a woman can win others over without speaking a word. I have personally witnessed that. Many of you probably have as well over the years. The chaste (pure) conduct of a wife can win over non-believers.

Why?

Because it was very uncommon then and more so now!

Verse 3;

"Do not let your beauty be that outward arranging of the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on apparel; but the hidden person of the heart; with an imperishable gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

No preaching, teaching, or sermonizing, needed to catch the eye of God. No flashy apparel or any such thing.

Verses 5-6;

"For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands (not listening to the whispers of another) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughter you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror." Many moderns can't finish Peter's teachings here once they get to the "calling him lord" bit. Peter is not advocating that we do that, at least not as to how the world understands lord. Sarah was not in terror of Abraham. She loved and respected him and certainly understood her role in the household.

Peter sums up this instruction here in verse 7;

“Likewise husbands, dwell with understanding (just like your wife), giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel (treat her gently just as Christ does us) and as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Each of us, male and female, husbands and wives, have specific responsibilities to fulfill. If we are true to them in the Lord, we will be co-heirs together in the promises of eternal life and much more.

In Romans chapter 8 Paul tells us we are children of God, and in verse 17 says; And if children, then heirs, heirs of God (the Father) and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with, that we may be glorified together.”

That’s all of us, men and women. We are all involved in a very detailed and long qualifying process. It is not an easy task to comprehend the complexities of it in this age we live in with so many ungodly examples of improper conduct being flaunted at us from every direction. Only with the mind of Christ in us can we succeed.

Let’s now deal with the very specific commanded path for a woman called of God to conduct herself in the body.

1Timothy 2:8-15;

“Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (that’s a tall order); in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel (certainly not talking about burlap) with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing (the status symbol look of his day) but, which is proper for women professing godliness (the mindset of Christ) with good works.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission (Just think if Eve had have followed that example with Adam.)

And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first then Eve, and Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

The second Adam did not sin, and certainly is not going to throw His bride under the bus. The second Eve will look only to her husband and she will not allow another to come between them. Let’s read on for now we have the great belittling coming as perceived by the moderns.

“Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”

I fail to see anything demeaning in that. I have experienced the example of my wife doing just that for over 30 years of marriage. In my opinion it is the most important role in our household. The family could do without me more than they could do without Linda in many respects. That is not a statement in false humility or boasting on my part. If we all functioned under the criteria of the resume of a bride of great value as detailed in Proverbs 31 we would have a much healthier church. When I think of a wife I think of a woman who wants to bear children, who is committed to nourishing them and teaching them in what is right. She is the focus of the family in so many respects. She is involved in every aspect of the household on a daily basis. Somehow this has become a demeaning thing.

God commanded Adam and Eve to become fruitful and multiply. Do any of us for one moment think that command will not apply to the second Adam and Eve? Let’s just take a moment and jump to the end of the story of the bride of Christ after the marriage to the Lamb of God. Actually we can call it the

beginning of sorts, for it is descriptive of the bride carrying out one of her basic responsibilities in the family of God.

Revelation 22: 17.

“And the spirit and the Bride say come! And the one hearing, let him affirm come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires let him take the water of life freely.”

Does this hit home brethren! The Bride will be dispensing the “Water of Life” to all who will be the children in the household of God. Yes she will fulfill the responsibilities as the mother for she will be the second Eve. She will be running a lot of the household functions under the Father and her husband Jesus the Christ. We are talking about the children of that union here. There is a very exact and specific set of functions we must all be doing in our calling to qualify for this. Once again, this is not just about salvation but much more.

The apostle Paul covers the responsibilities of a wife in the household as well as in the church. She plays a major supporting role in both. I frankly believe that many have never bothered to look at it from this perspective. Her responsibilities are almost endless in scope. The example set in the scriptures of what the Father and the Son are looking for in the bride is very clear and concise. There is no guessing involved. Her role is absolutely a supporting role just as her Husbands is at this time. He yielded Himself to the Being we now know as the Father. He divested Himself of all His eternal existence and privileges to take second position to the Father even though He was equal in all with Him. That is the mindset they are looking for and not one which says I am better than you. Satan failed miserably in his role when it came to yielding to another. His gifts allowed his image of himself to swell to great heights. The bride of Christ will not allow this to happen. She will work within the laws of the household and deem others more worthy of many things more than herself even though she in many cases has more ability than they. She is humble and has no part in the Pride of Life disease.

Let’s read what Paul, the supposed trasher of woman has to say to Timothy. Keep in mind this is the same man who said the following, “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you now.” He is acknowledging the preeminence they have had in Timothy’s life as to the way of God. No mention of Papa bear here is there. These two women worked hard to turn out a good product in Timothy. That was undoubtedly not an easy task. I know what it is to be raised by a grandmother and mom. I and my brother and sister experienced that very thing. Neither mom nor grandma were in the faith but their work ethic was embedded into us and much more.

1Timothy 5:14;

“Therefore I desire that the younger (widows) marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully”

Here Paul defines the two major responsibilities of a wife. He has mentioned child bearing earlier. Remember he said she is saved through it. To the moderns that is a real opportunity to label him as a sexist. Ignorance can be used to offset some blame in those doing so but a line must be drawn with it as to their being deceived. There should be absolutely no confusion when it comes to the second responsibility he mentions here, “manage the house.” The deceived Paul bashers would once again jump on the bandwagon and use this to claim Paul was a typical “old boy” who regarded women as a beast of burden. To them managing the house equates to carrying two kids around while cooking and cleaning for his highness. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Manage here is #3616 oikodespoteo. Strongs says of it, “from #3617 to be the head of ie rule the family; guide a house.”

Vines says of it, “from oikos, a house and despotes, a master, signifies to rule the household so the RV in 1 Timothy 5:14 (KJV guide a house).”

Under guide it says “In 1 Tim 5:14, the RV rightly translates the verb oikodespoteo by , rule the household (KJV guide the house) the meaning being that the management and direction of household affairs.”

Yes brethren this is not a misprint in the scriptures. It is a living fact which will be carried on for eternity in the household of God the Father. The Bible will teach us shortly the depth and breadth of this awesome opportunity we who are called at this time have before us. What Paul has just shocked the moderns with is something to behold. We are all in training for it, whether male or female. Our biggest test regardless of gender is if the Pride of Life will suck us down to the level of Satan’s pitiful self-importance or not. Scriptures will tell us this is a full time function with no time for idle chatter or wastefulness. It is about absolute devotion to husband and family in every activity she undertakes. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives very detailed instructions to the church on the qualifications of Overseers and deacons (all males here, with wives mentioned in a supporting role). All of Paul’s instructions to Timothy and thus to us are inspired by God. As such they are a mystery to this world which is under Satan’s influence and completely wired into the prince of the power of the air. For the most part they can’t comprehend how one of the Elohim could become a servant any more than Peter could understand why Christ was washing his feet on the Passover before He was murdered. Paul tells Timothy in verses 14-16 why he was giving him the very specific instructions he was presenting.

1Timothy 3:14-16;

“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery (hidden truth) of godliness: God (Yes that is Theos #2316) was manifested in the flesh (Just as Philippians 2:6-8 clearly explained earlier) justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”

Christ became the living example of humility. He emptied Himself of His glory and took the form of a man unto death. He was totally reliant on the Father to restore that glory to Him. He put our interests above His! He put everything on the line for us to teach us the right example, to display the right mindset. He became the Son of the Father. He deferred all authority to the Father. He willingly yielded to Him and He expects, demands in fact, nothing less of us in our relationship with Him. Carrying out our commanded responsibilities in this short physical life and in the duration of our calling will determine whether we will qualify to be His bride, His wife, for eternity and thus carry out the incredible responsibilities of child bearing and managing the household of God.

Satan can’t even begin to understand the degree of humility it will take to accomplish this. Please don’t be beguiled to think humility equals weakness. The world has a warped sense of what humility is.

Humility is total strength and control of oneself. It is the suppression of the pulls of the flesh and thus the ability to serve others regardless of their “status.” We who are called by the Father and have His spirit can comprehend these things. We don’t always complete them in everything we do for we are a work in progress. Christ is washing us clean daily if we are yielding to Him in all things. That is a very

difficult road to walk by ourselves, in fact impossible. If we are yoked with Him He will carry the brunt of the burden.

A woman's role in the body of Christ is many positive things but to me it is above all a thing of incredible beauty. I think you will agree with me when we go through God's resume for the bride detail by detail. Unfortunately when I look around today and see women and men bewildered and offended by what Paul has to say about a woman's role in the body I hurt for us all. Every one of us has been and will be continually tested on our faithfulness to our calling. In fact it will become relentless in the near future in my mind. Cooking and cleaning with a couple of kids in tow is not our future and should not be looked upon as the daily function of any woman in the body of Christ. If you think that is all there is to the function of a wife then you have sold yourself short of the glory which awaits us all. We must do our part regardless of our gender. We must assist each other in our functions of being a husband and a wife in the body of Christ. It is not a contest between genders or spouses. If we do not function as one in a marriage it will be near impossible to finish the quest we are on as to qualifying to be the bride. Proverbs 31:10-31 is a finely detailed resume of what Christ is seeking in His bride for eternity to come. It is a tall order when focusing only on the physical. Be mindful we can't finish what we don't start and if we do not recognize what we are being called to at this time it will not happen during this calling. If we do recognize what God is doing at this time in our lives then we have the assurance of our Saviors assistance in completing it. We start, we remain faithful, He finishes!

Verse 10;

"Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies."

The Hebrew word translated virtuous here in the NKJ is Hayil #2428. It is a fascinating application of the word here in the context of a wife. Do not lose sight of the fact it is presented in a question with an underpinning of doubt. The author of this NKJ translation I am reading has a footnote in the center column which states, "Literally a woman of valor, in the sense of all forms of excellence."

That's a mouthful!

The Vines says of Hayil, "strength; power; wealth; property; capable; valiant; army; troops; influential; upper-class people (courtiers)."

Vine's goes on with a lengthy explanation of it in its various applications. In brief it gives 5 distinct uses of the word.

First it signifies a faculty or power as in the ability to effect or produce something. This tells us we need to have a creative spirit which is accompanied by a desire to work.

Secondly it means wealth, property, with the nuance of the word focusing on one's ability based on wealth and goods. That simply means, can the individual function with wealth and goods in a godly way or will it be coveted and abused in its use. There is a lot at risk in the household of the Father on that point for we are to inherit all things and be a co-heir with our Husband in such.

Thirdly it is used in the sense of able, the ability to do a job well. Can we be trusted to follow directions from our Husband and no other. If we look to someone else to tell us what our Husband is saying we are following the path of the first Eve.

Fourth, it at times means army in the sense of a combination of a lot of individuals. Under such an idea the word can represent the members of an army distributed to perform certain functions. Does that not set the bells a ringing? The bride of Christ is the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:16 jumps to mind as do many other scriptures, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint

supplies, according to the effective working, by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love," Also Rev 19:14, "And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean followed Him on white horses." And Rev 17:14, "These will make war with the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings and those with Him, called, chosen, and faithful." And Zechariah 14:5, "...thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with Him". And Jude 14-15; "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also saying the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

The application of this nuance to the bride of Christ is a just and proper application. The wife of Christ will be composed of many individuals who function in unison for the betterment of the family and interests of God. She is the army of Christ. (Rev 19;14)

Fifth it states hayil represents the upper class. The bride will be ruling with Christ, they will be kings and priests. Many scriptures can be inserted here in this usage of the word in relationship to the bride of Christ.

The word hayil is an encompassing word being descriptive of many attributes to be desired by a husband in a wife. We also read here that her worth is far above rubies. This in some respects, humanly speaking, may come across as an understatement when we are finished reviewing her resume. It will become very clear that by and of ourselves we could never achieve this goal. Our Husband enhances the basic natural abilities we have to be able to build up His body as He places us in it. Keep in mind we are talking about the collective body of Christ here. Do not be overwhelmed if when reading all the attributes the wife possesses that you become discouraged. It is a collective thing. But as individuals we must do our very best to develop each of them into our labor in the Lord and the family of God. We need to strive for excellence.

Now we read about the first qualifying statement of which many are to follow.

"The heart of her Husband safely trusts her; so He will have no lack of gain."

Two really important things right from the start. Let me ask you ladies reading this, does your husband trust you with everything? If not, you need to examine why. Is it because of you or him? This is not a question to generate strife. If you have a good work ethic and a character to match it and he does not trust you with everything then he has a problem. On the other hand if you have a habit of being wasteful with time and possessions then you have a problem. To have a trust filled relationship with Christ we all need to be focused on doing our part. If we can't perform that in the physical realm we will not be doing so in the spiritual. Now if you are saddled with a deficient husband you can work to win him over with your diligent example of a woman of valor. If he is really deficient of which there are many in the world you are still obligated to set the right example. Do not let such a situation taint your relationship with Christ and do not let any doubt creep in.

When I was in Kenya several years back I was told prior to my visit that it would be very helpful to focus my speaking on the validity of the law and holy days under the second covenant scriptures. That focus of speaking was short lived. I still addressed it but from a much different perspective than what was expected. We were able to meet with many congregations and gatherings of people over our two and a half weeks of traveling all over the western part of the country. It did not take very long for Rick and I to realize there were a lot of real wastes of the male gender in the gatherings. I am referring to the types,

who think their wives are a beast of burden, and that they are to be waited on hand and foot. We did also meet some very converted men as well. Personally my focus switched to speaking primarily to the women who came to hear what we had to say. Some of these women would walk 20 miles or more to attend. Keep in mind they still had to meet their daily responsibilities and workloads such as getting up long before sunrise to prepare the days food, walking miles in many cases to get the days' supply of water from the a river, fixing fences, shelters, mending clothes, tending to livestock, and oh yes taking care of the children, etc. My heart surrendered to them in the example they set even when saddled with a waste for a husband. They carried out their duties and responsibilities continuously. They were and are living examples of what we are going to read here in Proverbs 31. From day two of speaking on, we focused on the bride of Christ and her calling at this time. Many sisters in the faith were encouraged. They had never been presented with the extent of their calling prior to our visit. We in turn learned a lot about them, ourselves, and the importance of our calling at this time.

So here in verse 11 we are told the heart of her husband safely trusts her. Trust is the basis of a sound marriage. It is the same for an eternal marriage as well if not more so. We can be assured that if the heart of Jesus Christ does not safely trust us we will not function as the bride in the Fathers household for eternity.

The second part of the statement in verse 11 is, "so he will have no lack of gain."

The moderns would jump on this and vehemently bellow out their disgust at her being exploited for his gain. Is that what the scriptures are teaching?

The Interlinear translates it as follows, "The heart of her husband trusts in her, so that he has no lack of gain."

If we are truly one with our husband physically or spiritually then his gain is our gain. We are one body as the scriptures put it so often. My wife uses the family resources for the gain of the entire family. Very seldom will she ever use them just for herself and for that matter neither do I. That is something we have practiced from the beginning of our marriage. I know others who function similarly. The family is our focus and thus I as the husband gain from every endeavor; be it in dollars and cents, or honor, or recognition due to the efforts of my wife. Linda has access and control over everything WE own. She does not need "my permission" to utilize any of it for I trust her because of what she has done consistently over the years. That is exactly what our Husband Jesus is talking about. I have known men in the church organizations who will not let their wives handle any financial affairs in the household. They have to ask to have money for groceries, etc. We are not talking about women who have acted in any way that would demand such treatment. Yet these "men of the faith" push their wives into a box and decide when to let them out. What a disgrace to the body, where is the trust!

We are going to be co-heirs with Christ as Romans 8:16-17 so clearly tells us. "The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (the Father) and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint (co) heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with, that we may also be glorified together."

Actually co-heirs there means "participants in common." We are about to read what that means here in the balance of Proverbs 31. We will be entrusted with all that is our Husbands. We will work with Him in everything! This wife of valor here has access to all the family resources and uses them to build up the family and to affect any who come into her sphere of influence. That's a little more than cooking and cleaning. Keep in mind what Paul said was a responsibility of the wife, oikodespoteo or "rule the

household” meaning, “management and direction of household affairs.” Oh yes we will have a lot to manage and direct in the future if we qualify in doing so now in this test run of things.

Verse 12;

“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.”

Brethren, that goes way beyond intimate. She loves and respects her husband beyond anything else in life. She is always looking out for him and his family’s wellbeing. I hope those of us who have been called by the Father have been blessed to have a relationship with a spouse who is deeply converted and not conquered. I have learned so much of what is expected of me as one betrothed to Christ from my wife that it would take a lot of paper to put my thoughts into print. That does not mean we have a perfect relationship by any means. We will only have that on a spiritual level with Christ, with Him doing most of the efforts to cover our shortfalls. What I am saying is my wife Linda clarifies in the flesh many of the things I am to be learning in the spirit.

Verses 13-15;

“She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. (Does not have to be told or prodded to do menial or any other tasks) She is like the merchant ships; she brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household and a portion for her maidservants.”

This is not only the epitome of a devoted wife but also of a devoted woman in service to all within the household regardless of status. This is a humble mindset just like that of Christ. She is not threatened by “peer pressure” or any such thing as to her activities. She could care less about what the Joneses think.

Verse 16;

“She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard.”

How many of you women have the freedom to do such things in your household? How many have the experience to be able to do such things? If given the opportunity could you do it? Would you be intimidated by the prospect? You have been called to inherit the kingdom with Christ! We all need to learn how to use our family resources to produce more. That’s every resource and at all levels of value. Ten dollars goes a lot farther at a garage sale or Goodwill store than at a department store doesn’t it. Many women in the faith function in that mode and carry’s it to much higher levels but there are some who would not be caught dead at a garage sale or Goodwill store. Vanity is a destroying force. If we can’t be trusted in a little how will we be trusted in a lot? We need to be industrious and thrifty in our present responsibilities to be able to move onto our future ones.

Verse 17-19;

“She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night (Matt 25:1-10).” This is a woman of many talents who knows her capabilities and is not afraid to use them to benefit others. She does not waste time trying to redefine her responsibilities as a wife and mother. She is very secure in her position in life and it is a sweet aroma to God.

“She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, yes she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.”

This woman does not do anything haphazardly. She has purpose in all she puts her hand to with the focus on the wellbeing of others.

Verses 23-25;

“Her husband is known in the gates, (she brings honor to him) when he sits among the elders of the land.

She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants. (What she has and makes is of great value to others)

Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.” (She is not seeking applause in what she does)

So will we brethren if we learn to be of the same mindset as Christ. We will then be able to carry out our duties in the household of God now, which we are being judged on, as to how we are performing. If we keep our hand to the plow we will be able to rejoice in the times to come.

Verse 26;

“She opens her mouth with wisdom (wisdom is the outward expression for all to see of our gained knowledge and understanding) and her tongue is the law of kindness” (not complaining about an “inferior” perception of being just a wife who is restricted from responsibilities assigned to her husband. She does not want to be the man of the house but does want to function to her fullest in her given responsibilities).

Verses 27-29:

“She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her;

MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE WELL, BUT YOU EXCELL THEM ALL.” This is no putdown to any but rather recognition to the few who will actually qualify to be the bride of Christ. Her husband and her children know her great value to the family welfare and wellbeing. She goes beyond the norm to serve her family and all who enter into her sphere of influence. There is no Pride of Life in her!

Verses 30-31;

“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

Revelation 19:7-8;

“Let us be glad and REJOICE and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, **and His wife has made herself ready**. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

The instructions found in Galatians 6:2-5 jump out in summing up so much of what we have read and reviewed today.

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.”

I ponder at times how many women will make up the number of the bride. Will it be more than men? I do believe a woman has the advantage in many ways. Time will tell. Regardless of that, we will all have to completely understand the responsibilities of a wife and be able and willing to carry them out faithfully under the direction of our Husband and our Father.

Brethren, the Pride of Life affects or better said infects us all from time to time. It can creep in when we are emotional about something or just plain ignorant of something. The scriptures are very, very clear about the roles and functions of men and women in the body of Christ. We don’t go outside of the scriptures to have them defined. We are to listen to the words and instructions from our Husband Jesus

the Christ, the Lamb of God, our Savior. We are not to let another come between us. Satan the devil, the prince of the power of the air, is broadcasting his vain and deceitful thoughts 24/7.

The functions of a woman are front and center to the wellbeing of the body of Christ. We all need to be functioning in them spiritually under our Husband whether as men or women called of God the Father. Those of us who are men really need to come to grips with that. The role we are functioning in physically as the husband is already filled spiritually in the household of God. That is a wakeup call guys! Many men today abrogate their responsibilities leaving a void which needs to be filled. We are the providers by divine command and example. That is upside down in today's world of divorces and fatherless children running around. But that is a subject for another day for today we are talking about the role of a woman in the body of Christ for we are not called to qualify for the function of the man, the husband, in the household of the Father.

When scripture talks about childbearing it goes far beyond the birth. It encompasses the life of the child and its wellbeing. That means its nourishing, training, education, safety, and so on.

Let's discuss the teaching aspect. In Hebrew society it was common practice for a male child to remain under the direction of his mother until he was around 12-13 years old. At that time he was expected to come under the father's direction in many things. He would start to learn the trade of his father; be it a shepherd, carpenter, fisherman, etc. That helps to explain in part why Mary and Joseph left Jerusalem without their son Jesus when attending a feast there. A transfer was taking place. That is why when they found Him (in the Temple asking and answering questions) after days of searching He told them that He was about His Father's business. The point I am making here is that the mother has the direct influence for the most part over the children for all of their early years. That is a huge responsibility. It is actually enormous and why I believe a woman of many years' experience should instruct our children in forums such as Sabbath classes, etc. I love my children and was active in their upbringing. But, I was not as involved as Linda. She was with them throughout the day. My time with them for the most part was after work, weekends, and vacations. I was out earning a living for the family. Linda was running the affairs and day to day management of the household, as well as directly teaching the kids all the fundamentals. She was more influential in developing their norms of behavior than I. The reasons are obvious. So who was more influential when they were young? Mom! No vanity in saying that! That in no way was a threat to me but on the contrary because of Linda's diligent teaching our children have brought me gain in many ways.

A mother has the greatest influence in the lives of young children. That is a very special and vastly important responsibility. The bride of Christ will undertake that same function in the Family of God. As men and women, husbands and wives, we need to follow the instructions our spiritually betrothed is giving us in the Word of God. We are not to foolishly think we are smarter than Him. He and the Father have a reason and purpose for everything they do and say. Their thoughts are far above our thoughts. Brethren we have choices to make throughout our calling. We can either believe God or not. To be lukewarm is not a good option as we can read in Revelation chapter 3. We are to function in the roles as we are placed in the body. It is difficult enough to complete our own without desiring to take on another's. That is relevant to gender and function.

No, women are not allowed to speak as the Bible defines it in services, which was easily explained earlier in context as to meaning. That is a role defined as a man's. There is no slight or put down in any of it. It is what God desires and commands. It is not up to us to challenge Him on it. That is what the

author of the Pride of Life has done and will continue to do during this calling in the Plan of Salvation challenging God through those of us who fall to his deceit. Please never forget we are all going to have to be able to function in the responsibilities of the bride in the household of the Father. Let's be who we were intended to be and trust in the Lord!

Ephesians 1:15-18;

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Our peace we give to you.

Brian