

# BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

## The Battle of the Sexes

Genesis 3:16; 4:7

2015

### Introduction

In Genesis 1:27 we are told that God created mankind in his image and declared his creation of man and woman and marriage to be “good”! The relationship was to be governed by equality of personhood, equality of dignity, equality of mutual respect, harmony and unified destiny!

Unfortunately, Eve usurped her husband's headship and took over his place of God-ordained leadership. And, simultaneously, Adam abdicated his leadership role over his wife. Consequently, God sentenced men and women to have to deal with this struggle of leadership on a permanent basis.

And therein lies the conflict of marriage that is so universal to every marriage and every family!

**Quote:** Ronald Reagan

“There are no easy answers, but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right ... [Addition: ... and what is biblically right.]”

### I The Woman's Battle

A. The biblical description of the curse:

1. The curse: “Your **desire** will be for your husband”

a. What it doesn't mean: “**Sexual** drive”

The first is that in spite of the woman's increased pain in childbearing, she would continue to have sexual desire toward her husband.

b. What it does mean: *Teshuwqah* = “To have dominion over or to **usurp** authority”

Fifteen verses away from Genesis 3:16 is Genesis 4:7 where we find an exact duplication of this phrase.

Gen 4:6-7 “Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

“Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you....sin's desire is for you but you must master it.” The same phrases. The construction is absolutely identical. We learn in studying the Bible that when you have identical terms and identical construction in close proximity, they mean the

same thing, or they express the same concept.

What is it saying in chapter 4 verse 7? The Lord is speaking to Cain. He says, "Sin desires you." What does that mean? Sin wants to control you. Sin wants to dominate you. Sin wants to take over your life. "But you must master it, you must rule over it." It's the very same expression.

The idea is that the woman seeks to overthrow the rank, to twist the divine order, to master her husband, to seek control over him. And in turn, he will dominate her. As the woman tends toward rebellion, the man tends toward despotism. And you have the battle of the sexes right here.

2. The rationale for this sinful response:
  - a. A woman's innate drive to protect her **marriage**
  - b. A woman's innate drive to protect her **family**
  - c. A woman's innate drive to protect her **home**

3. The extreme responses to this curse:
  - a. Aggressive: **Domination** of the husband
  - b. Passive: **Subjugation** to the husband

#### B. The biblical evidence of the curse:

Prior to Eve's rebellion, submission to her husband was a joy and an expression of her submission to God. However, from this point on she would find it much more difficult to yield herself to the authority of her husband and would have a tendency to challenge and usurp her husband's leadership and authority. As a result, we find numerous commands for wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18).

1. Commands to **submit** to her husband
 

Eph 5:22-24 "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."
2. Commands to **respect** to her husband
 

Eph 5:33 "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."
3. Commands to not nag or quarrel
 

Judg 16:15-16 "Then she said to him, 'How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength.' With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death."

Prov 27:15-16 "A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;

restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”

#### 4. Commands to **obey** her husband

1 Peter 3:5-6 “For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”

### C. The biblical solution to the curse:

#### 1. Accept the Bible’s universal diagnosis:

- a. Stop defending your **motives**
- b. Stop justifying your behavior
- c. Stop rationalizing your **sin**

#### 2. Accept the Bible’s remedy:

- a. You must **master** it! - Gen 4:7

Rom 6:11-14 “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

## II The Man’s Battle

### A. The biblical description of the curse

#### 1. The curse: “But he (the husband) will rule over you”

- a. What it doesn’t mean: He will be the **metro-man**
- b. What it does mean: “He will be prone to **dominate**”

Through history men have used and abused women, treated them unkindly, unfaithfully, indifferently – demonstrating little interest in their personal needs, in their feelings, their emotions or their sufferings. In general, men have throughout human history used women for sexual fulfillment, for domestic duties and to tend to the children.

#### 2. The rationale for this sinful response:

- a. A man’s innate drive to **lead**
- b. A man’s innate drive to **achieve**
- c. A man’s innate drive to **conquer**

#### 3. The extreme responses to this curse:

- a. Aggressive: **Domination** of the wife  
Exercising his leadership in an abusive, authoritative and controlling manner.

b. Passive: **Subjugation** to the wife

Abdicating his leadership out of fear, laziness, exhaustion or submission to his wife -- producing chaos in the marriage and family life.

He views his sphere as that of making a living and gives to her the job of making a life. He refuses to make decisions, refuses to give direction or to show concern over the way the family is going, or to enter into the problems of child discipline and training. All this constitutes failure and the breakdown of the headship of man over woman and of God over man.

**Quote:** Judy Garland

“Millions of words have been written on how a man should love a woman. I would like to give you my reflections on the things a man should not do in loving a woman. First, don't yield your leadership, that's the main thing. Don't hand us the reins, we would consider that an abdication on your part. It would confuse us, it would alarm us, and it would make us pull back. Quicker than anything else it would fog the clear vision that made us love you in the first place. Oh, we will try to get you to give up your position as number one in the house-that's the terrible contradiction in us, we will seem to be fighting you in the last ditch for final authority on everything, for awhile, but in the obscure recesses of our hearts we want you to win. You have to win, for we aren't really made for leadership.”

B. The biblical evidence of the weakness

1. Commands to **love**/cherish his wife

Eph 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...”

2. Commands to be considerate toward his wife

1 Peter 3:7a “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives ...”

3. Commands to not be **harsh** with his wife

Col 3:19 “Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”

4. Commands to treat his wife with **respect**

1 Peter 3:7b “... and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

It doesn't say rule over her, or order her around or make sure she does everything you tell her. It doesn't say subject her, command her, exercise authority over her or dominate her. There's nothing here related to authority at all, it just says love. Yes, the husband has authority and headship in the marriage and family,

but it is to be exercised through love. What a man needs to convince his wife of is that he loves her so much that he is always concerned with her well-being. That makes his authority soft and warm, and then his authority is her protection, not a threat to her independence.

There's no tyranny here, there's only sacrifice. He takes the role of protector, guardian, overseer, but there's no tyranny, only sacrifice.

#### C. The biblical solution to the curse

##### 1. Accept the Bible's universal diagnosis:

- a. Stop defending your **motives**
- b. Stop justifying your behavior
- c. Stop rationalizing your **sin**

##### 2. Accept the Bible's remedy:

- a. You must **master** it! - Gen 4:7; Rom 6:8-23

**Quote:** Susan T. Foh

"As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight from his headship. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination."

### III The Pathway to Mastering Sin and Winning the Battle

A. You must be born again - Jn 3:5-7; 2 Cor 5:17; Lk 9:23

B. Submit/**enslave** yourself to God - Jam 4:7; Rom 6:11-14, 22

C. Put the sinful nature to death and be filled, led and **empowered** by the Spirit - Rom 8:1-15; Eph 4:22-24

D. Renew your mind daily through the Word - Rom 12:2

E. Be **transformed** into Christ's likeness - Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18

F. Access God's resources: Prayer, worship, fellowship, etc.

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