



“Be A Mensch”

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## Introduction

The focus of this .pdf is different from the others that preceded it. In those, I tried to help husbands and wives who were dealing with lack of intimacy and affection in their marriages. To put it less indelicately, to those who are having to deal with sexless marriages.

As I pointed out in my articles, there are many excuses for why sex isn't happening, and even a few reasons, as well. All too often, Christians approach marital problems in a "christ-like" manner, meaning that instead of actually dealing with the problems head-on, they will slough off responsibility for working on the marriage and try to be, oh, so spiritual and seek God's intervention (because we all know that God is into using his super-duper Jedi Mind Tricks) to help us get what we ~~want~~ need want. All too often, these spouses want to be more Christian than Christ; they forget that while we are called to be good, we are not necessarily called to be nice. Remember, people, nice is not the same as good!

The purpose of my previous .pdfs was to provide information and possible action steps for actually getting down to cases and taking responsibility for working on the marriage. This .pdf, however, is for husbands only, and is a call for Christian husbands to examine themselves and act in a manner consistent with their profession of faith. If you have read the previous .pdfs or have read around my blog, you know that I hold no truck with the pusillanimous pablum that is today's treasured doctrine, that of *Servant Leadership*. I make no bones about my belief that this teaching has done a lot of damage to the institution of marriage. Coupling a strong feminism with a milktoast masculinity, *Servant Leadership* is a call for christian men to be housewimps to their families.

However, that doesn't mean that I discard the scriptural commands for husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the church, to honor his wife and cherish her as he does his own flesh, and to serve her as a spiritual leader. These are valid commands that today's church has cast aside in order to put butts in the pew and dollars in the plate (see my series on the feminized church, linked below.) In this .pdf, I have collected posts that I wrote to try to explain how christian husbands can be truly loving christian men in their families.

### **Title and Format**

First, the title, "*Be a Mensch*." I wrote the second chapter of this .pdf, "*Be a Man*," to exhort Christian husbands to be willing to ignore society's attempt to emasculate them, and to live in Christian integrity. However, about the time I was writing that, I began to examine the Jewish roots of our Christian faith, and started on a new path, learning just how much we christians have lost in two centuries.

As I began to learn more and more of just how much we owe to Jewish teaching, I remembered some of the Yiddish words I had learned over the years, and *mensch* was

one of them. According to the dictionary, mensch means *a person of honor and dignity*. And this simple word is the key to what I wrote about in these posts, and so adapted the title of the second chapter into the title of this .pdf.

As to formatting, in preparing this .pdf, I divided the articles into three categories: Integrity Needed, Integrity Lived, and Related Miscellanea.

I intend these articles to help you change your marriage for the better, but also to do more. I understand that the men and women who come to my blog site are not happy campers in their marriages, and it is my desire and prayer that what you find on my blog be of help to you as you work on your marriages. Christian husbands, I also pray that this .pdf will help you work on yourself, to be a Christian man and husband willing to stand in godly integrity, and to serve his wife, family and church biblically, and not by society's definition.

CSL

As always, my disclaimer:

*I am not a counselor, doctor, or pastor. For that matter, Wife says I don't play well with others. My advice and comments come from my concern for hurting Christian husbands and wives. Someone once said to me, "Church shouldn't hurt", and I believe the same thing goes for marriage. I'm going to call 'em as I see 'em, but please, don't take my word as gospel. Yes, read what I say, pray about what I say, but do your own "due diligence."*

## **First Section: Integrity Needed**

Chapter 1: “The Shot Across The Bow” Reloaded

Chapter 2: Be A Man

Chapter 3: Be the Voice

Chapter 4: “Feminine Side - \*Snort\*

## Chapter 1: “The Shot Across The Bow” Reloaded

[This post also appears in my [Addressing The Sexless Marriage .pdf](#)]

In April, 2015, I wrote a post which contained a letter from a christian husband to his wife that became known as *The Shot Across The Bow*. (This appears in the *Addressing the Sexless Marriage .pdf*) Written by a husband who was explaining how he addressed the sexual refusal situation that had developed in his marriage, I presented it as an example, a model, for husbands to use in confronting the gatekeeping/refusal issue in their marriages.

My good internet friend and fellow blogger, Chris Taylor, of *Forgiven Wife*, told me that she has always had a negative reaction to the piece, and in the course of our colloquy, she explained why it affected her so. In that post, she went into painful examination of her reasoning, and her reasoning was more than reasonable, and is the reason for this chapter. (Dontcha just love English?)

I need to re-address Job29Man’s Shot Across The Bow, (naturally, with my customary tact and equanimity), so here goes. If you are a husband in a sexless marriage and are thinking of using something akin to Job’s Shot, then be sure to....

### BE A MAN, AND NOT A TOOL!

Let me refresh everyone’s memory as to the core of *The Shot*, as to exactly it calls for and what it promises:

*I’m going to tell you my negotiating position. I am totally committed to this marriage. I will never, ever leave you. That’s not the man I am. I am not threatening you with anything because I have no intention of following through on any kind of ultimatum that involves me leaving you. Just not gonna happen. If you and I come to NO agreement today you will still have me as your committed husband until the day one of us dies.  
~ Job29Man, *Shot Across The Bow**

There are several promises in Job’s presentation that may or may not be used by another husband who chooses to use *The Shot* as a template. Job promises Sarah no ultimatums and that no matter what she does or does not do, he will never divorce or separate. Every man is different and needs to decide for himself what is his breakpoint, his dealbreaker. But one thing in this speech that is central to its presentation and is not negotiable is integrity.

*The Shot* is intended to be nothing more than the breaking up of the logjam that is hindering the entire marriage relationship. It is not a mechanism for “getting lucky with the little lady.” If, in reading my *Addressing the Sexless Marriage* series, you were thinking “This is something I can use to get in her pants,” then you are a total dick who doesn’t know squat about being a Lover to your wife! (See? Tact AND equanimity, right?)

## Are You A Man Or A Weasel?

One thing I learned years ago was the importance of being someone whom others could trust and know that integrity and honest dealing are your hallmarks. I realize that, today, we seem to put a lot of store in “wiggle room,” in being able to keep our options “open.” I’m old-fashioned enough to believe that this is bovine effluvia!

Whenever I hear someone try to parse out their previous statements, usually what comes to my mind is Bill Clinton saying, “Well, it depends on what the definition of ‘is’ is.” Guys, I’m sorry but that’s just crap, and if this is what you’re doing, you’re just serving up a big, old crap sandwich!

I see so many writers who are telling wives that they need to show their husbands respect, that they shouldn’t be saying things about their husbands to others, talking disrespectfully to them, etc. While I can say “Amen!” to those statements, I always want to add a little paragraph at the end of these articles that says

*“And men, be worthy of that respect!”*

I’m telling you straight up, one of the quickest ways to piss away your wife’s respect is to use weasel words, parsing out how what you promised wasn’t what you meant, etc. If somehow you have failed to live up to your promises, then admit it. Apologize for failing to live up to your word, tell her you are recommitting to live by your promise and ask her to help you keep to it. And then live it.

## Integrity

Integrity is a great concept. It should be one of the top qualities of every Christian man. Someone should be able to look at you and whether they agree with you or not, be compelled to say, “He walks in integrity.” Did I say “Christian man”? I need to apologize, because that’s not quite accurate. What I mean to say is that it should be one of the top qualities of every Christian, whether man OR woman.

My wife and I watched *Longmire* on Netflix. Set in Wyoming, it’s about a sheriff in a rural county near an Indian reservation. In one of the episodes, one of the characters, Henry Standing Bear, tells the sheriff about how Cheyenne warriors would fight. According to Henry, these warriors would take a length of rope and tie one end to a stake, and drive the stake into the ground. Then they would tie the other end of the rope

to their leg, so that they could not retreat. They were making the statement that this was where they would win or die. “This far and no further.”

Let me make this as clear as I possibly can, the *Shot Across The Bow* is not a magic bullet, a panacea for a sexless marriage. All too often, it can mark the onset of Armageddon, and what will likely ensue is anger and argument. However, if you decide that you are going to change your marriage, for good or ill, and like Popeye, have reached the point where you have to say, “That’s all I can stand ‘cause I can’t stand no more,” then the *Shot* is for you. *The End of Normal Life* is for you as well. Like the Cheyenne rope, they are statements of “This far and no further.”

That said, be a man of integrity and follow through on your word. Your promises must be supported by your actions.

## Final Word

Don’t wait for delivering the *Shot* or *End of Normal Life* to start being a man of integrity. Start living in integrity now. If you need to, ask your wife where you have failed her, if you have any unkept promises between you.

CSL

### **Links:**

*A Wife’s Heart, Colloquy #3*: <https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/07/22/a-wifes-heart-colloquy-3/>

*Addressing the Sexless Marriage, part 3* (contains *The End of Normal Life*):  
<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/04/22/addressing-the-sexless-marriage-part-3/>

## Chapter 2: Be A Man

*In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.*  
~ Rabbi Hillel, *Pirke Avot 2:5*

A college professor tells how every spring he can count on having a stream of students come to his office for the annual Identity-Crisis whinge.

“Professor, I don’t know who I am, I need to take time off to find myself. I need to peel back the layers that society has imposed on me and find out who I am at my core.” He says that he’d love, just one time, to be able to say, “What if you peel back all the layers and find that you’re an onion, with nothing at your core?”

### Are You Your Roles, Or Something More?

There is a kernel of truth in the whinging of these collegiate snowflakes (and yes, I know “snowflake” is considered to be a micro-aggression; I just don’t care.) There are roles for us to grow into as we mature, as we move through the different stages of our lives, but instead of whinging about these roles, those who truly mature grow into these roles and learn to embrace them.

I get that I am an imperfect commentator on today’s society, but I’m pretty sure that much of what we are seeing from these whinging snowflakes is the desire to be like Peter Pan and never have to grow up and assume the responsibilities of being an adult. Instead of seeking to acquire skills to make a living for themselves and for any family they might create, what we are seeing is a collective flight from reality.

Starting with my generation, a rebellion against the “expectations of society” rose up, and society’s so-called “norms” were flouted as old-fashioned Puritanism. Instead, a *follow-your-bliss* mindset began to be propagated and was embraced by increasing numbers down through the following decades. We have finally arrived at a point where we are seeing the creation of a generation fleeing responsibilities of making a life.

I think that one of the reasons that Christianity is so unpopular with contemporary society is because it makes demands on its adherents to grow and mature in their faith, which includes assuming the roles and responsibilities of caring for yourself and for others. And by caring, I mean actually working for their benefit and support.

There is no other way to interpret such statements as:

*For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” (2 Thess. 3:10)*



or

*But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim. 5:8)*

## The Role We Should Accept, And Gladly

Pure and simple, Christian men have roles and obligations that they have to grow into, as they mature and become men.

The quote at the beginning of this article is one that I've come across recently in my readings about the historical context of Christianity. It comes from the *Pirke Avot*, (*The Ethics of the Fathers*), a collection of rabbinic teachings that predate Jesus. Rabbi Hillel is considered the greatest rabbi ever (that's why you will find Hillel Houses on most college campuses) and is obliquely referenced in the Gospels. (You will have to read my *Scarlet Letter* series [see link below] to see his significance.)

I could attempt to tick off a list of the different roles that Christian men are called to fulfill: disciple, son/father, husband, church member, etc., but I would face the same difficulty of one preacher that I know of. He was asked by a man to give a list of sins that would keep a man out of Heaven. He refused to do so, saying, "I might accidentally leave yours off the list."

Instead, I'm just going to say that Christian men, be they meek or macho, must realize that there is a call on their lives to serve God and those whom God places in their lives. The apostle Paul studied under Rabbi Gamaliel, who was the grandson of the Rabbi Hillel I quoted, above. Given that rabbinic teaching was handed down from rabbi to disciple, and so on, it's probably a given that Paul learned by heart, "In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man."

The reason I believe this is because the teaching showed up in Paul's letter to the Corinthians...

*"When I became a man, I put away childish things."*

It would be impossible for me, or anyone else for that matter, to attempt to dictate to you what constitutes being a man, and I'm not going to try. But we do know that the Bible places on us the onus of growing in our faith and into roles of service and responsibility. If we can accept the moral strictures of Christianity, it shouldn't be so hard to understand that we have a place within the societal structures of Christianity, as well. After all, someday the older generation in the church is going to be you. It's for darn sure that Peter Pan will have to grow up then.

CSL

Rabbi Hillel reference: *Scarlet Letter* series:

<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2016/01/24/divorce-scarlet-letter-or-valid-option/>

## Chapter 3: Be The Voice

*There's a way to handle a woman, said the wise old man.  
Simply love her.  
~ From Camelot.*

Julie Sibert, of *Intimacy In Marriage* did an excellent post for wives on *Three Ways To Like Sex (When You Hate Your Body)*. It was an excellent post, and as I read it, this song from Camelot came drifting back to my mind. You know that I have a problem with the way that today's church has twisted Paul's instructions for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. (If you are not aware of my antipathy, download my *Bad Teachings* .pdf to get caught up.)

Yes, the church has absolutely transformed an exhortation to love into a cudgel to be used on husbands. But that doesn't mean that its misuse is an excuse to excise Eph. 5:25 from our bibles or a justification for shirking our obligations as husbands. Sibert's article sparked in my mind one way that we can fulfill this apostolic exhortation to love our wives.

When I read her post, I realized that she had an important message for husbands, as well. I'm not going to rehash her post; you can go read it for yourself at the link I provided below. But I do want you to think about her first point, and your role to be the person your wife trusts to tell her the truth about herself. To wives, she wrote, *Listen to the Right Voice*:

*I get it [she wrote]. At every turn, society blares out what "beautiful" is. Magazine covers. The Internet. Clothing that leaves little to the imagination. Reality shows (how is it that this Bachelor show has even survived this long?!). We are bombarded with what suffices for hot and what is relegated as not.*

And she's only right, you know, and not just about what our *Cosmopolitan* culture is saying on Beauty, either. Through so many different voices, through many different channels, our culture and society communicate so many lies to our wives, telling them that they aren't worthy of love, that they don't measure up to the current paragon of perfection being touted as today's Ideal. And as the years go by, wives find themselves drifting further and further away from any hope of ever measuring up to that impossible Ideal.

Sibert's first point, listening to the right voice? That should ring in your heart, because one of our tasks, as husbands, is to BE that right voice. Yes, I know that Sibert's post went on to say that instead of accepting the world's ideal of beauty, wives should instead be focusing on God's ideal, that the Right Voice is God. And I agree with her, completely.

## Guys, You Be The Right Voice, Too

I agree with Sibert completely; well, almost completely, except for one thing. As husband to Wife, Eph. 5:25 calls for me to love Wife like He does. And, believe it or not, it gives us guys a hint or two on how to do this. The next verse speaks of our obligation before God to care for our wives to the point of caring for her soul and spirit:

*that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (Eph. 5:26, ESV)*

With so many destructive voices, some very enticing, calling to our wives, we husbands need to be the voice that speaks love and worth into their hearts.

Does she hear messages that say she's not good enough to be loved? Let her know that you believe that she is. Jesus died for her, and you can live for her.

Does she hear voices that say that she's not beautiful enough? Let her know that she is beautiful in your eyes.

Does she hear voices that her past makes her unforgivable? Be the voice that speaks forgiveness to her heart.

I know that you have all heard the parable of the talents, and have heard it applied to your spouse. "God gave you his daughter," the parable goes; "what have you done for His child to help fit her for Heaven?"

Our task, as husbands, is to be the voice that counteracts all those others that seek to drown out God's voice and communicate love, delight, and hope for the duration of her "til death us do part."

*"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
And speak tenderly to her.  
And there I will give her her vineyards  
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope."  
~ Hosea 2:14-15a*

It has been my belief for many, many years that the Christian home is a sanctuary from the world. Behind the doors of our homes lie embassies of the kingdom of Heaven. As Christians, we are ambassadors of the King. Just as the devil is the father of lies, our Father is the father of truth. Lies are not spoken in His kingdom, and as husbands, it is our responsibility to speak Heaven's truth to our wives, to counteract the lies of the world.

CSL

**Resources:**

Julie Sibert article, *3 Ways To Like Sex (When You Hate Your Body)*:  
<http://intimacyinmarriage.com/2017/06/05/3-ways-to-like-sex-when-you-hate-your-body/>

## Chapter 4: “Feminine Side” – \*snort\*

This is going to be short, and I’m not even sure I’ve got a point in all of this, but here goes. What’s with all the attempts at gender-bending men? As I’ve said before, Prof. Henry Higgins got it right when he said, “By and large, we are a marvelous sex!”

Recently, I’ve been reading Emerson Eggerichs’ book, *Love & Respect*, and have really been enjoying it. In his introductory chapter to husbands on how to communicate love to their wives, there was one statement that Eggerichs made that made me put down my iPad and go, “Whoa!” In an aside, when telling husbands that they aren’t being called to become women, Eggerichs says,

*We make a huge mistake in the church, particularly among evangelicals. We tell men to “get in tune with their feminine side,” yet we don’t tell women to get in tune with their masculine side. (p. 122, Kindle ed.)*

My first observation? *Hellz yeah!* Okay folks, you tell me how many family/marriage conferences that you ever attended in which wives were told “Get in touch with your masculine side.” And yet, we think nothing of it when men are told that they need to get in touch with their feminine side.

When I read this to Wife, she responded with, “Well, they aren’t saying that men should be like women; they’re just saying that men should learn to be more sensitive.”

Okay, I can go with this. That kinda, sorta, makes sense. After all, I realize that as a card-carrying Coot, I can be somewhat prickly; I do tend to think that everyone is entitled to the benefit of my opinion and experience, whether they want it or not. After all, I’ve got ‘em, and it is incumbent upon me to set the world straight. And, yes, maybe I could be a mite gentler and, ahem, sensitive when offering enlightenment to the slower folk around me.

So, maybe there is something to this being more sensitive.

### And Then I Remembered This

Years ago (1980?), I was in an MLS program in UNC, Chapel Hill, with several other librarians. I was the only man in this special program, and so had a kind of privileged status when we were in residency during the summers, in Carolina. I remember one morning when several of us were sitting around with our different texts, discussing aspects of library science, when one woman walked into the room and announced that she had opted to wear jeans that day. Her reason for this sartorial decision?

“Oh, I’m feeling boyish today.”

My jaw dropped at that statement and I made the simplest of inquiries as to what she meant. Eloquently, I blurted out, “**HUH?**”

She proceeded to try to explain what she meant, and to either my obtuseness or that fact that it sounded like gibberish, her explanation made no sense to me. But I was dumbfounded by the fact that every woman in the room knew exactly what she meant!

“Boyish?” What does a woman mean when she says she’s feeling “boyish?” I said it then, and I’ll say it today, “That don’t make no sense!”

You never see a man come tripping up to a group of guys and say, “I’m feeling a little girlish today, so I decided to wear my pumps skeet-shooting today.” No, it doesn’t compute, sorry. That dude will get voted off the island, pronto!

## One Possible Explanation: Poor Word Choice

Instead of meaning “get in touch with your feminine side”, what these well-intentioned folk mean to say is, “Men, you need to learn to be more sensitive.” But doesn’t that open up another can of worms? After all, wouldn’t it be stereotyping to simply assume that men are, by and large, insensitive and women are the sensitive ones? And, as far as that goes, what if the slipper was placed on the princess’s foot instead? As in, “Well, why don’t you learn to toughen up, and stop being so sensitive?”

No, I guess I can’t see that duck flying. I guess we are going to have to accept the fact that, archetypically, women do seem to be more sensitive to others and to feelings, etc. I guess that won’t go.

## Well, How ‘Bout ‘Feelings’, Not ‘Feminine Side’?

There might be something to this. We guys aren’t known for being too big on sharing our feelings. We are given the role of being the one who is supposed to be the pillar, the one whom the family can rely on. John Wayne is often held up as the model of masculinity, and we are told to ‘man up.’

But it does seem to be a mantle that men, for the most part, are ready and willing to shoulder, and down through time immemorial, women have, on the whole, gotten on board the idea. After all, our definition of a real man is the guy who is there for the family.

But, then again, marriage is a melding of two people into one flesh. If I learned anything from the *Colloquy* series that Chris and I did a few years ago, it is that feelings are a valid part of any relationship, and if one of you needs feelings attended to, it is a valid need. But in my mind, I do see the dangers of becoming too focused on feelings. After all, we have the example of “Chicken Boy.” [see below]

## So Is It All Just A Wash?

Well, maybe not. Guys, there might be something to this ‘sensitivity’ stuff, this ‘feelings’ stuff. And I’m going to cogitate on it for a bit. I’m going to finish Eggerichs’ *Love & Respect*. Then I’ll let you have the benefit of my experience. After all, you’re entitled to it.

CSL

*Colloquy* Series link:

<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/07/14/a-wifes-heart-colloquy-1/>

Chicken Boy - given how YouTube takes down videos, it’s simpler to let you find it. Go to YouTube and search on the phrase “Bruce Willis chicken boy”, and that will take you to a clip from an episode of Friends.

Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect* at Amazon:

[http://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs-ebook/dp/Boo4MYFQ3Q/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1455636437&sr=1-1&keywords=love+and+respect](http://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs-ebook/dp/Boo4MYFQ3Q/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1455636437&sr=1-1&keywords=love+and+respect)



## Second Section: Integrity Lived

Chapter 5: The Church and Porn, part 1

Chapter 6: The Church and Porn, part 2

Chapter 7: The Church and Porn, part 3

Chapter 8: Aphorisms for Marriage, part 1

Chapter 9: Aphorisms for Marriage, part 2

## Chapter 5: The Church and Porn, part 1

This is going to be another departure from what I usually try to address on my blog, but I want to respond to something that Paul Byerly (*The Generous Husband*) asked of the members of the Christian Marriage Bloggers Association. Without giving the link, I will say that Paul B. wrote of his concern about the damage that pornography is doing to marriages in our country, and asked if the Church's message and approach in responding to porn should be changed.

### Attack The Real Problem

Time for a flashback:

Back in the 70's, I attended one of those summer Jesus Music Festivals, held at a Virginia campground. As best I can recall, there were some good, even great, bands at this festival, but the one thing that stuck with me most from that event was the preaching of the late evangelist Tom Skinner, one of the featured speakers. A former gang leader, he became an evangelist and for a time was team chaplain for the Washington Redskins and was a fixture on the 'Skins sidelines during home games.

At this festival, Skinner spoke on the need to live in the Spirit of God, using Gal. 5: 16-24 as his text. As all Christian husbands know, this portion of Scripture contrasts the works of the flesh with the gifts of the Spirit, and it has been, is now, and forever shall be the text for hundreds of thousands of sermons, books, articles, etc. But it wasn't the contrast between the works and gifts that I remember, so much as his treatment of the beginning verse of the segment, v. 16:

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

Skinner liked to use vivid imagery to illustrate his points, and he brought out the difference between us trying to deal with our sins vs. walking by the Spirit. He spoke of a Christian trying to deal with a besetting sin, let's say impure thoughts, for example. This Christian works for a year or two on learning to bounce his eyes so he won't be tempted to think impure thoughts. He realizes that he has a problem when he goes to the beach and sees those skimpy swimsuits, so he stops going to the beach. He works like a logger with an ax trying to chop down this sin in his life every day.

He gets to the point that he feels that he's chopped down the tree of impure thoughts, this work of the flesh, only to realize that another tree has sprung up; he discovers that he has problems with anger! And so he begins to work on his anger issues, starting a campaign of several years duration learning to chop down this work of the flesh, his Irish temper. But then...! You guessed it, another issue pops up, and then another, and another.

The upshot is that this brother is walking in constant spiritual defeat because his spiritual life is one of constant struggle, always fighting his own nature, his flesh.

But let's look at that verse again:

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

Does it say anything about fighting against the works of the flesh? No, it doesn't; instead it gives us one directive: "walk by the Spirit." That's all. It says that if you do this one thing, i.e. walk by the Spirit, you won't fulfill the works of the flesh.

## SQUIRREL!

Steven Covey is the man who is credited with writing one of my favorite quotes which addresses one of the character flaws that plague mankind. Some might say it's a feature of the design, but I think it's a bug. Be that as it may, the simplicity of Covey's statement belies its depth:

*Keep The Main Thing The Main Thing*  
~ Steven Covey

I love this quote. We can get too easily distracted and drawn off into chasing squirrels (just like Dug, in the movie *Up*.) And the Church excels in this. I've been a Christian since 1969, and I've seen us Christians get our knickers in knots over so many issues, whether it be politics, homosexuality, communism, etc. Yes, there is reason to be concerned about matters around us, but it's like we lose our grace when we start to deal with them.

And it's not just since 1969. The American church has been involved in many 'crusades' down through the years. In the 1800's, of course, the two biggies were Slavery (pro & con) and the fight against Demon Rum. (For an interesting read, learn how we Methodists were the reason Welch's Grape Juice was created. [Link below.](#))

And, yes, these fights against social ills were (and are!) worthwhile endeavors; I'm not saying that being involved in Abolitionist or Prohibitionist causes were wrong. But I am saying that when we make our causes our *raison d'etre*, we take our eye off of the main thing.

## Walk By The Spirit . . .

If we choose to fight against social ills using our human strength, we will most likely lose. After all,

*Slavery* – America has never been so deeply divided, racially, as today.

*Prohibition* – Enacted, repealed and ridiculed. A historical joke.

*Drug War* – Hello, Colorado! [This post was written when only Colorado had legalized drugs.]

*Same Sex Marriage* – My denomination will probably split in the next few years. [As of the creation of this .pdf, only the Covid-19 virus lockdown prevented the UMC split this year. Next year, it's on!]

*Porn* – Japan is lost, America is going...

Or we can do what we are called to do. We aren't called to be social activists, but to be Christians who take the message of Christ's redemption and healing to the people who need to hear it.

“CSL, do you really think a return to ‘That Old Time Religion’ will make any difference?”

Why, yes. Yes, I do. You see, it's happened before. In fact, the next chapter is a history lesson about how Christian movements truly affected society change (including a revival that only a war could stop) in the next chapter.

CSL

Methodists and Welch's Grape Juice article: <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/methodist-history-controversy-communion-and-welchs-grape-juice>

## Chapter 6: The Church and Porn, part 2

Members of the Christian Marriage Bloggers Association were challenged to discuss the damaging effects of porn on marriage, and how the Church is responding to it. Of course, this started me thinking about the issue of porn and the Church's response, and I've come to the conclusion that much of our response, while not necessarily ill-advised, is merely ineffective. At the end of the last chapter, I presented the idea that when we choose to come against a sin, we do two things: we approach the fight in our own strength and not in God's spirit, and we change our identity from Christian to Crusader.

My thought is that we need to "make the main thing the main thing" by downplaying what we are "agin" and emphasizing the evangelism of our society. I am not saying to accept the societal sin *du jure*; instead, yes, condemn the sin that society espouses, but preach Christ. In essence, as some might deride it, return to that *old time religion*. My problem with this pseudo-sophisticated scoffing is simple: it's worked in the past, so why do you think that mankind is too sophisticated for God's good news?

### It Worked In Rome

Think about it—120 frightened followers of an executed Messiah hiding in an upper room in a conquered backwater country. In less than three centuries, this conquering Empire would itself be conquered by the message and faith of these 120. They didn't have political clout or military might, and certainly didn't have courage. Less than 30 years later, followers of their faith would be in the palace of the Emperor (Phil. 4:22).

Led by the Spirit of God, seeing themselves as citizens of a better kingdom, they took the message of the Gospel to every province of the Empire, and shared God's word with every class and caste. What began as a faith of defeated, conquered Jews spread into the marketplaces and homes of Roman slaves and citizens and transformed the culture of Rome. Julian the Apostate, the last non-Christian emperor, complained of them

*For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us.*

### It Worked In England

Historians tell us that the social conditions in France and England during the 18th century were very similar, but had very different outcomes. The end of the 18th century saw France descend into a bloody revolution that brutalized a nation and only ended when Napoleon Bonaparte seized Paris and declared himself emperor. On the other hand, Great Britain completely avoided this descent into madness, and instead morphed into the Victorian Era that we so love to mock for its *Christian* prudery.

Many historians give much of the credit to John and Charles Wesley and the Methodists. While they did not change the social and political structures of Great Britain, their work changed the British people. James Townsend, in *Radicals in Times of Revolution*, wrote:

*The spirit of the French revolutions of 1789 and 1830 is captured in Delacroix's painting Liberty Guiding the People (a bare-breasted French woman with Phrygian cap and musket, leading the onslaught). England was spared such revolutionary political upheaval; many church historians have argued that it was because of the spiritual revolution, linked to the Wesleys, that swept the country. **Drunkards, wife beaters, and rabble-rousers found their lives revolutionized by the Wesleys' message.***  
(My emphasis)

The editors of the Christian History Institute said of his influence,

*His exhortations to live perfectly in love today seem harsh, but consider the effects on his congregations. **Swearing stopped in factories, men and women began to concern themselves with neat and plain dress, extravagances like expensive tea and vices like gin were dropped by his followers, neighbors gave one another mutual help through the societies.***

It's of interest to recall, when they speak of the effects of Wesley's sermons on "his congregations," that Wesley didn't have any congregations, that all churches were shut to him and his followers. Wesley's sermons were delivered in the public streets and fields, wherever he could gather an audience. He didn't "speak truth to power," he didn't confront institutionalized evil and injustice. He preached the Gospel, and transformed a people. Which, in turn, transformed a nation.

## It Worked in the U. S. in the First Great Awakening

Believe it or not, while America was founded on the principle of religious freedom, religion wasn't all that free in America. For example, we all know from our American history classes that Roger Williams was drummed out of Puritan Boston, and so founded Connecticut on the principle of "religious freedom." But what we aren't told is that Williams was just as theologically intolerant of those different from him, persecuting followers of George Fox when he was in power, in Connecticut.

By the 1700's, church membership was the privilege of a few; in New England, of the "proven saint" and in Virginia and the South, of the landed gentry. In essence, religion was the property of the propertied class, with church membership conveying rights of citizenship in the colonies.

Beginning with the Dutch Reformed churches of rural New Jersey in the 1720's, and spreading to New England in the 1730's, ministers began to preach to men and women who were excluded from the established church and from the seats of power. Ministers such as Theodorus Frelinghuysen and Jonathan Edwards preached about the need to come to God outside of man-made institutions.

The First Great Awakening sparked a spiritual renewal among colonists by preaching that redemption was available to all, no matter what class they were in. As a result of this preaching, thousands of colonists became Christians and turned from their sinful practices to serving God. Thus, the impact of the Great Awakening was a transformation of American society and life for decades to come.

Besides Edwards, the iconic figure of the First Great Awakening was George Whitefield, a contemporary of the Wesleys, who first came to America in 1739. In a fascinating read, Benjamin Franklin wrote about Whitefield and his impact on both Americans and Franklin:

*It was wonderful to see the Change soon made in the Manners [behavior] of our Inhabitants; **from being thoughtless or indifferent about Religion, it seem'd as if all the World were growing Religious**; so that one could not walk thro' the Town in an Evening without Hearing Psalms sung in different Families of every Street.*

~ ~ ~

*I happened soon after to attend one of his Sermons, in the Course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a Collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my Pocket a Handful of Copper Money, three or four silver Dollars, and five Pistoles [Spanish coins] in Gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the Coppers. Another Stroke of his Oratory made me ashamed of that, and determin'd me to give the Silver; and he finish'd so admirably, that I emptied my Pocket wholly into the Collector's Dish, Gold and all.*

## It Worked in the U. S., In the Second Great Awakening

The history of OT Israel was the cycle of Rest, Relapse, Repent and Revival. This cycle occurred under the judges, the kings and the post-exilic prophets. The history of Christianity shows that this same cycle follows true in any movement of God. The spiritual high of Luther's Reformation in Germany was followed by a cold deadness in German clergy 100 years later that only changed with Philip Spener and the Pietist movement. Another hundred years saw the need for Zinzendorf and the Moravians (who led Wesley to seek after God, by the way.)

In America, the First Great Awakening changed American society, and even contributed, intellectually, to the American Revolution. But the all too human tendency to complacency and relapse led to the need for another Awakening a generation or two

later. Many of the churches had, again, become temples of dead formality, a stodgy Calvinism that discouraged personal seeking after God.

As well, the new nation had people moving westward, through the Cumberland Gap and into the Ohio Valley. In this spiritual void, the Second Great Awakening sprang up, stirring up spiritual renewal. The First Great Awakening was directed mostly toward those who were members of the church; the Second Great Awakening, with its brush arbor revivals in the new territories were directed to those not in the church, and resulted in a spiritual fervor being once again kindled in the hearts of the common people.

## It Worked in the U. S., In the Third Great Awakening

What's that you say? You've never heard of the Third Great Awakening? This third awakening is more commonly known as the Prayer Meeting Revival, but even then, it isn't all that well-known. Despite being ignored by history, some think that it was the greatest of the three awakenings, and was so powerful and strong that the only thing that could bring about its end was the Civil War.

In the fall of 1857, Jeremiah Lamphier, a NYC businessman asked for permission to conduct a weekly prayer meeting, from noon to 1:00 p.m., in the North Dutch Church on Fulton St. He began to hand out notices announcing this meeting, and at his first meeting, had one attendee—himself. At 12:30, another man did come in and joined him in prayer. This was Sept. 23rd.

By Oct. 14th, less than a month later, the meeting was being held daily, and had 100 men attending. Within six months, the meetings were affecting 10,000 New Yorkers, and it was reported that business stopped in NYC daily, at noon, for one hour. When Horace Greeley wrote an editorial in the New York Times, it became nationally known and began to spread to other cities across the country.

The results of this unmarked revival?

*Churches benefitted greatly from the Revival. At its peak, there was an estimated 50,000 converts per week. During a two year period, 10,000 were joining churches weekly, and Sunday schools flourished.*

***The Awakening of 1857-1858 brought over one million new converts into the American Church, and revived the over four million members present before the Revival. The new life within the churches was shown most dramatically by the resurgence of evangelism.***

~ ~ ~

I understand that this has been a rather long chapter, and that I did not directly address the topic at hand, the Church's response to porn. In the next chapter, I will explain my



reasons for presenting information concerning just some of the moves of God and how they affected the society around the Church, and what I think should be the proper response of the Church to the evil of pornography in today's world.

CSL

**Resources:**

James Townsend, *Radicals in Times of Revolution*:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/radicals-in-times-of-revolution.html>

Christian History Institute, Issue 2:

<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/john-wesley-leader-of-the-methodist-movement>

National Humanities Center, Ben Franklin on George Whitfield:

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/ideas/text2/franklinwhitefield.pdf>

Article on The Prayer Meeting Revival:

<http://www.smithworks.org/revival/1857.html>

## Chapter 7: The Church and Porn, part 3

Paul Byerly, of *Generous Husband*, started a discussion among CMBA bloggers about pornography and the efficacy of the Church's response. In the two previous chapters, I cleared the ground by suggesting that the church make the main thing the main thing, and not wander off on crusades, and provided a look at some examples of how Christians have affected society in the past by doing just that: making the main thing the main thing, and not getting caught up in crusades.

In this chapter, I want to try to tie those ideas together in a suggestion/rant (take your pick.)

### First Off, Let's Talk Reality

There's pretty much nothing that the Church can do about porn, pure and simple.

- It's sex. Yes, a rotten, stinkin' perversion of sex, but it's not like it's something that we can regulate. It appeals to a natural human urge, even more so than alcohol or drugs, which we have tried to outlaw.
- It is ubiquitous. According to a TEDTalk that I watched some time ago, the average boy sees his first pornographic image before he's 12. The internet has placed porn within the reach of every man, woman and child on the planet.
- Unfortunately, in our culture, porn has become accepted. I realize that this is merely anecdotal, but I can't count the number of references to porn I've seen in entertainment. For example, it has become a staple of our humor. I recall one entire storyline of *Friends* (one of the most popular shows in its time) being about Chandler and Joey getting free porn. If you're a screenplay writer, a porn watcher is a stock character, along with the wine-drinking wife, or the stoner kid in high school.

Oh, we can stand and preach and make a lot of noise about the evils of that ol' debil Porn, but we will be as effective as Canute stemming the tide.

### So That's It, Just Give Up?

Well, yes and no. When I say "No, don't give up", I mean that the Church must uphold, through vigorous teaching and preaching, God's ideals on human sexuality in all the venues it operates in. This means that in the pulpit, in the Bible studies, in the prayer meetings, in the church groups (even youth groups, \*gasp\*), the Church has to say, unequivocally,

- Sex was designed by God for husband and wife in marriage, period. And mean it! (Oh, and when I say *husband and wife*, I mean man and woman, just in case there are any Methodists reading this.)

- The marriage bed is to be kept holy by fidelity between husband and wife (and that means **NO PORN!** It's not a marital aid.)
- The marriage bed is seen as holy and good by God and there is not one single blush of shame connected with it.

The Church needs to present the teachings of the Bible clearly and without equivocations, qualifiers, apologies, or trigger warnings. The Bible is our defining document, our guiding light explaining what we believe and why. If we say that we are Christians but live a life contradictory to the teachings of the Bible, we are liars, pure and simple.

The Church needs to be willing to say to its members that this is how we should live, and make no bones about it.

## And The Yes?

What do I mean by saying, “Yes, we need to give up?” I am saying that we need to give up our ways of trying to change society. I was part of the Religious Right and Silent Majority in the 80’s and 90’s. To borrow from Dr. Phil, that didn’t work out for us; look around. Oh, we elected politicians who said that they supported our causes, but nothing much came of them.

We let our fear drive our actions, and not our faith. In a recent essay, Erick Erickson described the dynamic that drove the evangelical vote this past election but is an accurate description of what drove us in the 80’s:

*People who do not feel safe believe the left is blaming them instead of protecting them. Consequently, voters are moving to those who they think will protect them and they are willing to hold their nose about those politicians’ flaws..... The left acts as if businesses should be shuttered if their owners operate as Christians. They not only don’t behave as if they can protect citizens, but they also turn the mob against citizens.*

As the people of God, we need to remember that Jesus Christ is our savior, not the latest **shibboleth-spouting politicians**.\*\*\* We need to realize that our faith should drive our lives, not our fears. We need to recognize that “Christian Political Action” begins with an oxymoron: “Christian” and “Political.”

Basically, “Christian political action” refers to political crusades undertaken by churches and Christians to attack social ills. Yes, it is possible that political victories may be achieved, to impose the will of the church on the unchurched, but this is always temporary, as the unsaved will always outnumber and outvote the saved.

## So What Can We Do, Then?

We can do what the church is supposed to do: present the Truth and stand firm in that Truth. And this is not just corporate church advice. Guys, you, individually should be doing the same thing in your lives. Know the Truth, present the Truth and stand firm in that Truth. When the Church and its members have preached Christ and lived out the truth of the Gospel, then they have affected society and changed the culture around them.

In the last chapter, I presented how the Wesleys, with their “societies” and “classes”, helped their followers to live out Biblical teachings on living for God, and provided ‘guidelines’ for practical holiness that changed the behavior of England. In the case of the Prayer Meeting Revival, the addition of one million new Christians and the revitalizing of the four million established Christians resulted in social betterment impulses.

## Now, Let’s Talk About What DOES Work

*“If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discernment, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in Christianity, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”*

~ Rev. Charles Finney

This is a harsh indictment, but it comes from one of the most successful ministers in church history. Wherever Finney preached, sin left.

And that’s the missing word, isn’t it? *Sin*. Oh, there’s also another missing word, now that I think of it: *holiness*. These two words, which fairly *shout* old-timey church meetings, are pretty much downplayed and soft-pedaled today. The operative word for the Church today is “Be relevant.” Today’s call is “Make the Church relevant! Make the gospel relevant!”

At the risk of coming across as some old deacon left over from a Billy Sunday campaign, I’m going to ask, flat-out: “Given the spiritual temperature of today’s church, what is there to differentiate the Church from the World?” There is an old saw that asks “If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict?” My question for the Church today is, “Is there any reason to believe that the Church really wants to be His bride or merely “just good friends?”

Am I being unfair? I don’t think I am, and after reading a blog post by one John Wesley Reid, I’m feeling more secure in my assessments. My eldest son linked to Reid’s post from his FB page, and so I decided to check out his *5 Trends Christian Millennials*

*MUST STOP Doing.* Reid says that he is addressing millennials, but his post actually addresses the problems of today's churches, and not just one generation. I recommend reading the whole post, but if you are pressed for time, take these three paragraphs and meditate on them:

***We're quick to sing popular worship songs like "O To Be Like You" and "Jesus, Be the Center Of My Life" but how practical do we allow this to be? We need to be Daniels, Esthers, and Joshuas. People of faith who love without ceasing and represent without compromise. Also, I understand that nobody is perfect but it's one thing to sin and try to justify it while it's another to sin and repent; confessing and turning away from sin. Stop flirting with what you can get away with, and instead pursue the holiness that we have through Jesus Christ.***

We are called to follow God; failure to even try to do so means that we turn our backs on Him.

## But CSL, Will It Work?

I don't know. I do know it "worked" in Rome, in the time of the Wesleys, and in the three Great Awakenings in the U. S., but nothing is guaranteed. And does God tell us that His way will "work", or just that it is His way?

### *Storytime!*

One day, a man went to God to complain: "God, I tried doing what you said to do, to act like Jesus, but it didn't work!"

God: "Oh, what did you do?"

Man: "I was in a restaurant, and while I was eating, I noticed that another guy took my coat off the coat rack and started to put it on. I told him that he had my coat, and he said that it was his. So I said that if it was his, he could tell me what was in the pocket. He put his hand in the pocket, pulled my gloves and said, 'My gloves.'

I remembered what Jesus said, that if a man takes your coat, give him your jacket too, and so I took off my jacket and said, 'Take this, too.' He did!

God, I lost both my coat and jacket because I was following what Jesus said. It doesn't work!"

God: Did I ever promise that it would work? "What is that to you? Follow me."

When push comes to shove, we are called to do nothing but follow Him and His ways. When our crusades take us away from that command, we should expect the ineffectual mess that is today's church to be the natural result.

CSL

\*\*\* Back in the 80's Steve Taylor did a song that I think was/is so accurate in describing our church ethos, today, *Whatever happened to sin?* Here are two stanzas about Christian Politics:

*A politician next door  
Swore he'd set the Washington Arena on fire  
Thinks he'll gladiate 'em  
But they're gonna make him a liar  
Well, he's a good ole boy who was born and raised  
In the buckle o' the Bible Belt  
But remember when you step into your voting booth  
He'll never lie, he'll just embellish the truth*

**Links:**

TEDTalk on porn, *The Great Porn Experiment*:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSF82AwSDiU>

Futility of Canute reference:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King\\_Canute\\_and\\_the\\_waves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Canute_and_the_waves)

Erick Erickson, *This is How You Re-Crete the Fascists, Nazis, and Other Demagogues*:  
<http://thejacksonpress.org/?p=59636>

Steve Taylor, *Whatever Happened to Sin?*:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOih14BSgJI>

John Wesley Reid, *5 Trends Christian Millenials Must Stop Doing*:  
<http://johnreidblogs.com/2015/09/08/5-trends-christian-millennials-must-stop-doing/>

## Chapter 8: Aphorisms For Marriage, part 1

I was working on a project that had me revisiting many of my older posts and the comments that readers had made, and in doing so, I came across something that I said in response to a reader who mentioned making apologies for past hurts.

Over the years, I have read marriage blogs and listened to sermons and podcasts on relationships in which the writers/speakers admonish people to accept the fact that they have something for which they need to apologize. I, myself, have written about making sincere apologies; after all, I strongly hold that “If you’re upset, I apologize” isn’t an apology, but a back-handed insult, so I accept the need for truly repenting of something that you’ve done wrong.

However, while I accept that apologies are good and necessary, I find myself more concerned with repentance and restoration.

### Repentance Isn’t A High Jump, It’s a Start.

Years ago, I read an anecdote about one of the Bob Joneses (I’m almost certain that it was the first one, but I can’t swear to it.) In the story, someone commended a certain individual’s conversion who had given a moving testimony on the night he was saved. I can’t remember why, but Jones, while not skeptical of the efficacy of the man’s conversion, uttered a line that I think we need to take to heart in all matters of repentance, salvific or otherwise:

*“I don’t care how high a man jumps when he gets saved. I’m more concerned with how straight he walks after he comes down!”*

In a picturesque way, Jones is giving us a truth that we often ignore at our peril. In following up on a reader’s comment about the need for an apology, I cited Jones’ line. I don’t know if it’s because we, as Christians, are so focused on our confessions and creeds, or because we just hear what we want to hear, but for some reason, it seems that we accept words for deeds. I know that we are told that we aren’t to judge, but wasn’t it Jesus who said, “You shall know them by their fruit.?” I don’t think he was telling us that an apology settled the matter.

### Aphorism #1

The late, great Gamble Rogers, a true *nonpareil* musician and storyteller, was known for his many pithy aphorisms about human nature. According to Rogers, aphorisms differ from proverbs or adages by their rather wry look at life. An adage on caution might be “Look both ways before you cross the street.” An aphorism about a related topic might

be, “Right of way is considered a function of mass times velocity.” Here are a few of Rogers’ aphorisms that have stayed with me:

*“Experience is what you get when you didn’t get what you really wanted.”*

*“In the final analysis, the size of one’s funeral is always determined by the weather.”*

*“Never blame a man for being human unless he makes a habit of it.”*

My favorite Gamble Rogers aphorism, which I have quoted often, says,

**“When your works speak for themselves, shut up.”**

I can hear someone asking, “CSL, what does this have to do with apologies or repentance?” Well, a lot, I think, so pay attention...

After making a deserved apology, most will think to themselves, “Well, that’s over with, time to get on with what we were doing before.” Sorry, but wrong.

Speaking as a typical man, I know that we guys will often tell ourselves, “Well, I apologized, things should go back to normal.” Sorry, guys, but if what you have done, what you have had to apologize about, is something that has caused real hurt, you’ve got more to do.

*“Why? I said I’m sorry. It’s over and done with! If she’s such a good Christian, she should just forgive and forget!”*

Nope.

“When your works speak for themselves, shut up.” Your works have already done some talking for you, and she heard it loud and clear. If you want her to believe and accept your apology, then you are going to have to do new works for her ears to feast on. Now, this shouldn’t come as a surprise to you guys. After all, in proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, John the Baptist shouted, *“Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance!”*

Like Bob Jones in the story above, your wife may be happy that you apologized, but she is also going to be watching how straight you walk after you come down from your high jump. The thing that we have to remember is that while apologies are good, repentance is better.

I think the problem is that we don’t know what repentance is. At the time that I wrote this for my blog, Wife and I were discussing this topic, and Wife made an insightful observation. She said that the problem is that we confuse confession with repentance. She noted “Confession says ‘I did it,’ but repentance says ‘I don’t want to do that again.’” She’s only right, isn’t she? Repentance simply means a changed “hereafter”. I know we tend to think of repentance as snot and slobber at an altar rail, but the definition of repentance means just one thing: turning around. A 180° turnabout.



Once, when a young minister was tying himself up in theological knots trying to explain the concept of repentance to his congregation, an older deacon couldn't stand his fumbling any longer. He stood up in the aisle and started walking toward the back of the church, and said loudly, "I'm going to Hell. I'm going to Hell. I'm going to Hell." He then turned around and started walking toward the pulpit, saying, "I'm coming to Jesus. I'm coming to Jesus. I'm coming to Jesus." When he reached the front of the church, he turned to the congregation and said, "That's repentance," and sat down.

And like my wife, HE was only right. The proof of the apology AND the repentance is the change in behavior and attitude that demonstrates a desire to not sin/offend again. If you confess but don't repent, the only thing you have communicated is "Yes, I did it, and I'm sorry I got caught."

## A Confession Too Far?

*"Holy Hannah, CSL, it's not like I sinned against the Lord! Hurt feelings, yeah, but sin? Don't you think you're laying it on a little thick?"*

Actually I don't. If someone's action(s) is enough to damage a relationship, then examination of that action needs to take place, and something needs to be jettisoned. We can apologize, but the crux of the matter is this: are we truly sorry that there is a wounding to the relationship, and are we disturbed that it was our actions that caused the wounding?

*"But repentance?"*

Yes, repentance.

Recently, I learned that it's quite possible that we, as a Church, have not fully understood the dictum, "The just shall live by faith." We tend to think that right belief determines our eternal outcome. But in my readings into how Israel understood words in Hebrew, and the connotations of the language of Biblical Hebrew, we seem to have missed the full import of the Hebrew word for faith, *emunah*. Instead of "the just shall live by faith," it's quite likely that Hab. 2:4 (the source for Paul's quotations) should read *"The just shall live by his **faithfulness**."*

It all comes down to this: it doesn't matter how high you jump when you say you're sorry. What matters is how **faithful** your walk is when you come down.

Don't talk; after you apologize, just shut up and let your works tell of your repentance.

CSL

## Chapter 9: Aphorisms For Marriage, part 2

In the last chapter, jumping off of a Gamble Rogers aphorism, I spoke about letting your works do your talking, about living out your repentance. After all, one of my pet topics that I will occasionally get exercised about on my blog is the need for integrity, for being a man of your word. (Hence this .pdf.)

In this chapter, I want to do a slight modification of Rogers' aphorism, "When your works speak for themselves, shut up!", and take it in a different direction. As I wrote above, what we do speaks louder than our words, so we need to make sure that the way we live our lives with our spouses lines up with how we talk.

But just as I did when I developed the *Golden Rule Corollary*© and the *I'm Okay, You're Okay Social Contract*<sup>TM \*\*</sup> [see explanation below], I found myself doing some idle thinking on Rogers' line and came up with a second version of Rogers' aphorism that I think applies to marriage. I think I'll call it the *Shut Up and Listen Corollary*.<sup>TM</sup>

### Aphorism #2

*When someone else's works speak for themselves, shut up and listen.*

I can't claim that this is solely my revelation; in fact, I recently found out that the poet Maya Angelou said something similar: "When someone tells you who they are, believe them the first time." In marriage, however, the "first time" train left the station a long time ago.

What made me think of this addendum to Rogers' first aphorism? I read materials around the internet that deal with marriage matters, and one place I visit is a secular marriage board, and I've noticed a recent addition to the collective wisdom on that forum. What I noticed was that spouses dealing with imposed celibacy often get caught up in an emotional pea-soup fog, and have trouble distinguishing reality from their own wishful thinking. As a result of this emotional fog, they have difficulties in distinguishing personal wishes from reality.

And as happens on every online message board/forum, these wobbly spouses get advice from others. I've noticed that the advice that has been popping of late is that when someone demonstrates for you who or what they are *actually* like by what they *actually* do, then it's time to *actually* believe them.

### When You Hear Good Advice, Take It!

All too often, what comes to us under the guise of advice is merely trite truisms and shabby shibboleths, and we rightly let them pass us by. However, occasionally we will let

a truly good piece of advice slip by, as well, and I'm thinking we open ourselves up to a world of unnecessary hurt by doing so.

*"When someone else's works speak for themselves, shut up and listen."*

In the years I've been reading about marriage and relationships, I've come across innumerable accounts and warnings about "red flags": relationship red flags, dating red flags, marriage red flags, even overlooked red flags that people now regret missing. With all this red flag-waving going on around us, we need to be able to receive that bracing advice that tells us to get our heads out of, erm..., out of the sand and pay attention to the reality of our situation, and not wishes and dreams.

The only possible quibble that I can imagine someone having with this is "That's not a christian attitude." I'm going to have to disagree with that, because we are told that we are to be wise and discerning as Christians. (I never have understood the idea that the mark of a good Christian is his gullibility.)

In fact, aren't we told that to be a good husband or wife, we need to be a student of our spouses? What are his/her likes and dislikes? How does s/he feel loved? What are his/her emotional needs? What are his/her strengths?

Well, why doesn't that apply to our spouses when what his/her actions tell us about who they are?

## Bottom Line

As I pointed out in my last post, words are cheap. You need to do more than to tout your integrity if you wish to be seen as a person of integrity. You can't talk your way into a good character.

But as I am wont to say, there are two sinners in every marriage, and integrity and good character are two-way streets. Yes, guys, as I said last time, if you have been a jerk in the past, 'fess up and repent, stop being a jerk and start living in integrity. But live in your marriage with your eyes open. Don't accept your wishful thinking for reality. Make sure that your actions speak for yourself, but also shut up and listen to your spouse's actions as well. While it is true that there are two sinners in every marriage, God wants both of those sinners to repent and live in integrity, together.

CSL

\*\* *The Golden Rule Corollary*© says that since we all know the Golden Rule by heart, how someone treats you demonstrates how they want to be treated.

The I'm Okay, You're Okay Social Contract: *Marriage Splinters*, <https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2018/04/12/of-marriages-and-splinters-pt-1/>

## Related Misc.: Section Three

Chapter 10: Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 1

Chapter 11: Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 2

Chapter 12: Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 3

Chapter 13: The Church and Your Marriage. What Could Go Wrong?

Chapter 14: Addressing the “Man-O-Sphere”

Chapter 15: Addressing the Man-O-Sphere: The Last Word

## Chapter 10: Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 1

We have a problem in the church. It appears that nearly one-half of the church is made up of carnal, fleshly-minded people whose only thoughts are about satisfying their appetites, and have no desire nor ability to truly seek after God. They hide behind a facade of Christianity but, in fact, are incapable of self-control and are unable to submit to the direction of the Holy Spirit and pursue spiritual goals.

I can only be speaking, of course, about husbands, for it is well-known that wives are more spiritual, more holy and more godly than any ordinary man could possibly be. I know, I know; in the past, I've said that there are two sinners in every marriage, but today, I repent of such drollery. I have seen the error of my ways.

Ok, I'm back...

... from that alternative universe; you know, the one with The Sensitive Librarian? Now that I've shaken off the effects of quantum travel, let me state that I believe that the first paragraph, above, while written with a hefty slug of curmudgeonly snarkasm, is not too far off the mark in describing what is accepted as gospel truth in today's church. I am tumbling to the idea that the Church, through implicit means, is communicating the belief that women, by dint of mere gender alone, are more holy, moral and godly than men.

If it were just me who was hearing this message in church teaching, you would be correct in writing me off as a member of the tinfoil hat brigade. However, just last month [at the time of the writing of this chapter], a link to a two-year-old *Generous Husband* blog post came across my Twitter feed; upon opening it, I was greeted by Paul Byerly defending himself from the charge of believing this very idea. In a post asking *Are Women Better than Men?*, Paul B. makes a statement about the idea:

*What baffled me was why these guys would claim anyone thought these things. Recently I think I've figured it out. There actually are women who think they are superior. Maybe they think the X chromosome limits development. Maybe they think testicles interfere with being moral. I'm not sure why they think as they do, but clearly, some women think their gender as a whole is better than men as a whole.*

My reply to Paul B. might be an un-saint-like "Ya think?" Well, I guess I probably wouldn't do that. After all, he is the MacDaddy of all us marriage bloggers. And a nice guy (how's that for sucking up?)

Some time after reading Paul's post, I picked up Emerson Eggerichs' book *Love & Respect*, because for several years I had seen it recommended in many places, and by

many different people. When I finally got around to reading it, I was impressed by Eggerichs' material and his solutions to marital problems. One of the chapters had me shouting "Amen! Preach it, brother!" because I had never heard any Christian teacher, speaker or minister address this issue, the problem of assumed female superiority. Here is what had me shouting:

*You may well believe, as many women do, that you are a better person than he is and that he needs to change.*

*What I see happening in some marriages is that the wife believes—or appears to believe—that she does not sin. In many other marriages the only sin that a wife will readily admit to is her negative reaction to her husband's failure to be loving or for losing patience with the children. Beyond these areas, women do not see themselves as sinning, even though they readily admit bad habits and wrong attitudes. They write these off to chemical imbalance, hormonal problems, or dysfunction due to family of origin.*

## Women Don't See Themselves As Sinning?

Is it possible that this idea truly has cachet in our churches today? After all, isn't the basic tenet of Christianity that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?" Note that it says that "all have sinned," not "those with penises have sinned." Eggerichs has to be mistaken; this just doesn't seem to be a tenable claim. But this does seem to hold up.

One comment that I came across said that "any time you have a supposition of superiority, you have a root problem of pride." I can see that pride might just be the source of the matter. There is no doubt that we are awash in a sea of misandry today, what with all the toxic masculinity writings and speeches we find around us. And as I've mentioned in a post on my blog, I'm pretty sure that if you are online (the only way you can read CSL or get my .pdfs) then you have come across those treacly Sisterhood or Queen memes in your inbox. There does seem to be a supposition of feminine superiority in our culture and in our media today.

The problem for Christian homes and marriages is that the Church, like it has in so many other areas, sought relevancy by buying into the same message of the culture which holds that masculinity is a pathology in search of a systemic solution. I realize that the statement is inflammatory and that the only support for it is anecdotal. Whether it be the large number of classes and workshops on college campuses [link below] dealing with the problem of masculinity, or new problems being created (*manspreading*, *mansplaining*, etc.) to illustrate the problematic nature of the gender, or any other number of stories that are wending their way through the media, these are not empiric.

However, I believe that there is one empirical study that demonstrates that the church is, indeed, buying into the toxic masculinity concept and creating a church culture that devalues men.

A business guru once said, “Your system is perfectly designed to give you the results you’re getting.”

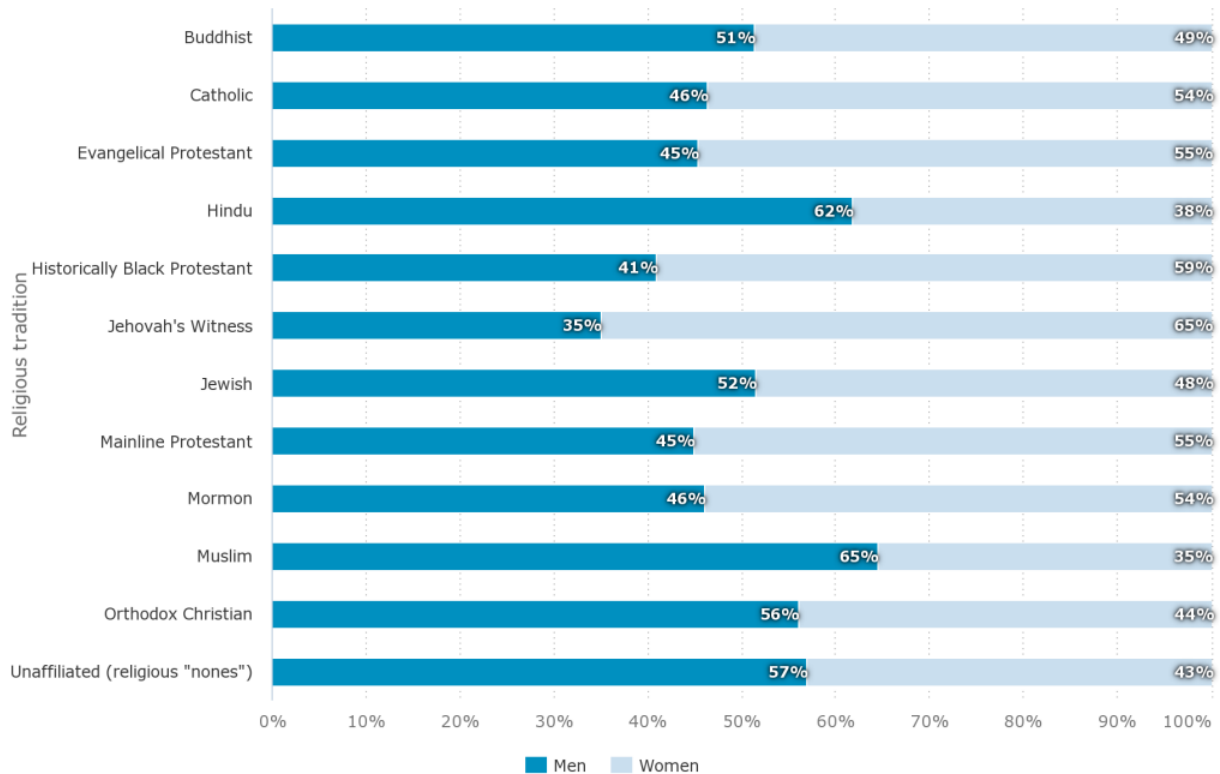
In my reading, I came across a paragraph that piqued my interest:

*Cotton Mather puzzled over the absence of men from New England churches, and medieval preachers claimed women practiced their religion far more than men did. But men do not show this same aversion to all churches and religions. The Orthodox seem to have a balance, and Islam and Judaism have a predominantly male membership. Something is creating a barrier between Western Christianity and men, ...*  
~ The Church Impotent

When I read that paragraph, I was spurred to see if that was true and found out that the Pew Research Center had done a Religious Landscape study, and the findings support the statements in the paragraph. Here is the chart from that study:

### Gender composition by religious group

% of adults who are...



Note that of all the Christian groups, only the Orthodox have more male adherents than women. Note also that Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam all have more male adherents than women adherents. So it would appear that the claim is true: there does appear something that is creating a barrier between Western Christianity and men.

Maybe it's how we see men? (Ya think?!)

In the next chapter, I discuss the impact of the Pew Research study.

CSL

Paul Byerly, *Are Women Better Than Men?*:

<http://www.the-generous-husband.com/2014/12/03/are-women-better-than-men/>

Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect*:

[https://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs/dp/1591451876/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484517090&sr=8-1&keywords=love+and+respect](https://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs/dp/1591451876/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484517090&sr=8-1&keywords=love+and+respect)

Campus Reform, *Schools offer 'safe spaces' to combat 'toxic masculinity'*:

<https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=8645>

Pew Research Group report:

<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/gender-composition>



## Chapter 11: Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 2

In the previous chapter, I presented the idea that, contrary to the teachings of the Bible, today's church had somehow gotten hold of the idea that women are superior to men and without sin. I admit that it is a novel idea to articulate, but since it seems that this is held as truth by more than a few Christians (however tacitly), this seems like a good time to bring the teaching out into the light of day and examine it.

I cited several writers who have suggested that they have come across the concept in their interactions but didn't give any particulars or examples, other than to comment that they have observed evidence that it is held by some Christians. While it might be difficult to find a teacher or preacher who openly avows support for such a belief, I did cite a study by the Pew Research group that might demonstrate the results of such a teaching being promulgated. I included the Pew Research chart that showed that in all branches of Christianity (save the Orthodox branch) women outnumber men as adherents. The chart further showed that every other major religion has more male adherents than women, leaving Christianity as...

### “A Female Army With Male Generals”

This idea has been the topic of an on-going discussion in the CSL household. Wife will point to the fact that most churches and denominations are led by men, and that most church leaders are men. But as one writer points out, while this may be true, the undeniable fact is that women make up the ranks of the Church today. The Pew survey results were for the American church only; there are reports of greater gender disparity in Christian churches overseas, with a ratio of up to 9:1.

While I am not disagreeing with Wife's statement, others make the point, backed by studies, that Western Christianity has become a religion that appeals to women. Here are some of the findings of sociologists that I have seen cited:

*“In modern Western cultures, religion has been a predominantly female sphere. In nearly every sect and denomination of Christianity, though men monopolized the positions of authority, women had the superior numbers.”*

~ Gail Malmgreen, *“Domestic Discords: Women and the Family in East Cheshire Methodism, 1750-1830,”* in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Patriarchy and Politics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)

*“Christianity is especially associated with female spirituality.”*

~ Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society*, 1993

*“The nineteenth century minister moved in a world of women. He preached mainly to women; he administered what sacraments he performed largely for women; ...”*  
~ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977)

This last quote, from Douglas, sparked a question in my mind that I think it might lead us to why such a teaching could feasibly find root in the Church. My question?

*Is it conceivable that those preaching to a specific audience will begin tailoring the message of the Gospel to the prejudices of said audience?*

Think about Douglas’s observation, that the nineteenth-century minister dealt with an audience of women. Isn’t it feasible to think that, in order to put butts in the pew and dollars in the offering plate, such preaching might be skewed in order to ensure numbers and following? Might not the message of the Lord be skewed, as well? After all, Paul did warn us...

*For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (2 Tim. 4:3)*

## Is It Possible To Corrupt Biblical Teaching?

Hello! Have you been reading my blog? *Hellz yeah* it’s possible!! Think about it; a religion that can adopt Plato’s Soulmate, do a thorough cock-up of *Love Your Wife Like Christ Loved The Church*, hold to an unbiblical *Unconditional Love* teaching, and deify the institution of marriage is more than capable of altering a teaching for sacred and/or venal reasons. (Posts/articles that I have written about these bad teachings and others are compiled in the *Bad Teachings .pdf.*)

But to say that the Church teaches that women are innately more holy or spiritual than men? That the Church, whether intentionally or unintentionally, lends credence to a belief that men are inherently inferior to women? That can’t be supported, can it? While data may show that there does appear to be a barrier between Western Christianity and men, it couldn’t possibly be due to any teaching on the inferiority of men, could it?

## Where There’s Smoke, There’s Ire

Well, maybe yes, maybe no. (A quick aside—how willing are you to go to a place where you’re not wanted or valued?) But to answer the question, I would have to say that I don’t find empirical support for the idea. Anecdotally, however, that’s another matter, as there are any number of stories out there.

For instance, the bombastic pastor and speaker Mark Gungor tells of the time he was invited to go on the radio broadcast of “a nationally-known family ministry” (he

wouldn't tell the name, but I have my suspicions.) If you have ever listened to Gungor, you know that he is an equal opportunity offender, pulling no punches. He tells how the show's producer came to him shortly before the program was to be recorded, and told him that while he could be funny and make jokes, he wasn't to make fun of women. They were the program's core audience and they were the one group that was not to be offended.

In my meanderings, I have come across different ministries for marriage and family that do put women on a special spiritual pedestal. One author with a counseling ministry says that if there is a problem in the home, it is the husband's fault; wives follow godly leadership, so if there's a problem, guys, you're it.

As well, Wife and I are "alumnae" of a ministry that presented, among its materials, the teaching that wives have special spiritual insight and that husbands would do well to heed their wives' advice. As I write this and think back on different materials I've read, a thought from Emerson Eggerichs' *Love & Respect* comes back to me. He wrote:

*"The other belief that I no longer hold is in the exclusive and unique power of womanly intuition. For twenty years I preached, "Men, listen to the intuition of your wives. God will speak to them in a way that He doesn't speak to you because you have blind spots. **God will teach you through your wives.**"*  
(~my emphasis)

Eggerichs says that his motivation was to get husbands to love and honor their wives, but that he realized that he had gone too far, that he was saying that wives were the ones to teach their husbands. How many other ministers, preachers and teachers, with the same good intentions as Eggerichs, have done the same, with the result the Church teaches that women are spiritually superior to men?

As forest rangers say, when you see a lot of smoke in the forest, something is burning somewhere.

## Natural Result Arises, Naturally

I've pointed out in previous posts (and included in the Bad Teachings .pdf) that the Church has, through its Servant-Leader teaching, reduced the role of the Christian husband in the home. Paul Coughlin, in his book, *No More Christian Nice Guy*, makes a statement that gets to the heart of why there is a barrier between men and the Church:

*"When authentic domestic tranquility, then, is not achieved, **men are left with no real advocate within the church;**.... Throw in the strangely popular notion that somehow women are intrinsically more moral and spiritual, and you've got a real mess on your hands."*  
(my emphasis)

Discovering his role reduced in the home, he finds no sanctuary in his church. Result?  
“You’ve got a real mess on your hands.”

- Christianity “identified with female spirituality”?
- The church “has been a predominantly female sphere”?
- “God will teach you through your wives”?
- “Men are left with no real advocate in the church”?

Marriage is hard enough without the Church taking sides.

CSL

Pew Research Group study:

<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/gender-composition/>

Emerson Eggerichs, *Love & Respect*:

[https://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs/dp/1591451876/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485368511&sr=8-1&keywords=love+and+respect](https://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs/dp/1591451876/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485368511&sr=8-1&keywords=love+and+respect)

Paul Coughlin, *No More Christian Nice Guy*:

[https://www.amazon.com/More-Christian-Nice-Guy-Nice-Instead/dp/076420369X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?](https://www.amazon.com/More-Christian-Nice-Guy-Nice-Instead/dp/076420369X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485368642&sr=8-1&keywords=no+more+christian+nice+guy)

[ie=UTF8&qid=1485368642&sr=8-1&keywords=no+more+christian+nice+guy](https://www.amazon.com/More-Christian-Nice-Guy-Nice-Instead/dp/076420369X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1485368642&sr=8-1&keywords=no+more+christian+nice+guy)

## Chapter 12; Bad Teaching: Women Rule, Men Drool, part 3

In ch. 10, I presented the possibility (probability?) of a wide-spread acceptance in the Christian church of the idea that women are more godly, holy and spiritual than men, and included quotes from others who said that they have bumped up against the idea. I posited that this assumption might be a reason for the disconnect between men and the Church, and presented findings from a Pew Research study showing that, of all the world's religions, Christianity is the only one with a greater female membership.

Ch. 11 explored material that showed that the presumption of a female-superiority teaching is actually quite possible and that there is a very good likelihood that this teaching is at the root of much of the dysfunction that troubles today's church.

### Beatings Will Continue Until Morale Improves

In my writings on *Love Your Wife Like Christ Loved The Church* [see [Bad Teachings .pdf](#)], I showed how what should be sound biblical teaching has been reworked into a cudgel that is used to beat men into submission to their marriages. On a greater scale, the Church seems to be agreeing with society that masculinity is the gender equivalent of Mos Eisley, a "hive of scum and villainy." Of course, this would go a long way toward explaining why Christianity is the only major religion that doesn't appeal to men.

And yet, ironically, one of the most common complaints that wives make to pastors, speakers, writers and broadcasters about their husbands? "My husband isn't being the spiritual leader in our home that he needs to be." Please, someone, show me the logic in telling the poor sod that he's a spiritual inferior and then turn around and demand that he be his wife's Billy Graham? Talk about setting someone up for failure. [see link below to blog post]

There is a C. S. Lewis quote from his book *The Abolition of Man* that describes this situation perfectly. While not addressing any inferiority doctrine, he writes about how society is creating the kind of man it doesn't want:

*We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.*

He's only right. The Church effectively castrates the Christian man and castigates him for not being as spiritual as his wife, and then expects him to come up to snuff; religiously approved snuff, that is. (After all, we don't want the geldings to get to feeling their oats.)

## From Macroview To Microview

Chapter 10 & 11 delved into the state of the Church with regard to the acceptance of the idea of female superiority. While I will concede the possibility that my marshaling of examples might not be a complete juggernaut of logic, I do think that I've presented a case that merits further consideration of this idea as a problem.

Being a guy, though, means that theoretical discussions can become frustrating, and I start wondering when we are going to get around to fixing something. In this case, I'd like to leave the abstract and look at the problem of this bad teaching in concrete terms. And being a person who believes that one's faith should be put into action, I am given to wondering...

### How Does This Play Out In The Sticks?

I get that Eggerichs, Paul Byerly, Paul Coughlin, et. al., have had discussions that let them know that the Feminine Superiority teaching exists, but I begin to wonder how this plays out in real marriages. I get that we can talk about this supposed teaching in the abstract, but what happens when this occurs in the raw, in the face to face interaction of a real marriage? How can this teaching be maintained?

#### **By Practicality:**

It works, as long as the husband buys into the teaching that he is sinful and inferior to his wife. One man I know tells of being in a spiritually abusive church for ten years that taught husbands that, in essence, they were lower than pond scum and that they needed to heed their wives. The wives loved it and the men were docile enough to submit. He said, "The upshot of this false teaching, and the constant hammering on the congregation's men, resulted in a lot of men handing over authority of the family to the wives—all because we were told how bad men were, and how spiritually immature."

As long as the husband buys into it, it works for both. But should he "fall from grace", (meaning the scales drop from his eyes), he's in for a fight, because attempting to reclaim ceded authority is met...

#### **By Pride:**

Pure spiritual pride. George Bernard Shaw, a great quote machine, is supposed to have said, "Any government that robs Peter to pay Paul can count on the support of Paul." I'm pretty sure the same dynamic occurs in churches, as well. After all, when the preacher strokes your fur the right way, it feels g-o-o-o-o-d!

And you just know that the preacher is a discerning and perspicacious leader when he tells you just how marvelous you are, that you are a fine asset to the kingdom. And you get to jump to the head of the line in your marriage when the church tells you that you are the fair-haired child. Yeah, pride.

When you think about it, though, doesn't the whole inconsistency of the situation just floor you? Basically, it's a complete contradiction, right? After all, someone who is spiritual knows that pride is a sin, that Christians are enjoined to humility, right? I'm pretty sure that this inconsistency isn't lost on the proud, but I think that there is a reason to continue to desperately hold onto this facade of pride. Any attempt to get at the reality will be met...

### **By Panic:**

Pure fear of exposure. This last one I didn't tumble to on my own. Last year, I came across one of Sheila Wray Gregoire's older books, *honey, i don't have a headache tonight*, and in the second chapter, I read a paragraph that surprised me, but yet connected with statements I have seen many times over: a wife's insecurity and low-esteem, a common malady. Gregoire wrote:

*Women tend to want to be seen as the "good ones" in the marriage. We usually feel far more vulnerable in relationships than men do,... If we admit to being wrong, we give our husbands a reason to leave. So instead we have to prove that they are the ones who need to improve so they understand what a good deal they've got. Why would someone with as many faults as he has leave a relationship? Who else is going to take someone so messed up? **We have a vested interest in preserving the status quo**, where he is seen as the one who is too demanding, too insensitive, and too unromantic.*

~ my emphasis

I think this last, fear of exposure, makes spiritual superiority the security blanket that must be clutched, the last fig leaf to be allowed to hide behind. Holding to a doctrine of spiritual superiority confers an aura of rectitude that is darn near unassailable. If you read different writers and bloggers, you won't have long to wait before you come across posts and articles about wifely anxiety and esteem problems, and encouragement for these wives to trust that their husbands actually do love and care for them.

## **Practicality, Pride, Panic ~ Meet Jesus**

In ch. 7 on the Church and Porn, I gave my solution for dealing with pornography in our society:

*We can do what the church is supposed to do: present the Truth and stand firm in that Truth. When the Church has preached Christ and lived out the truth of the Gospel, then they have affected society and changed the culture around them.*

*Stand firm in the truth.*

I realize that this isn't a whiz-bang, grab-your-attention solution, but it's how the Church has changed society down through the ages. Truth triumphs. And for a marriage

in which the doctrine of Wifely Superiority has taken root, standing in the truth seems to me to be the only solution. Arguing and fighting over who is “better” is a guaranteed loser from the get-go, and continued compliance is also unacceptable. I know that it would be sexier if I could come up with a five-point plan, with diagrams and dialogs, for changing such a marriage; something like that I could probably turn into a book. But, no; as a Christian man/husband, simply stand in the truth of the Word of God.

Here is the truth for both husband and wife. Yes, you are a sinner saved by grace. So is your wife. As such, we are children of the King. But here’s the catch: you also have foibles, faults and failings. And so does your wife. Yes, it is wonderful, even glorious, to be saved, but if you can’t even cop to needing to be saved from your sins, then why do you need a Savior?

In C. S. Lewis’s *Prince Caspian*, Aslan tells the title character, “*You come from the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve. And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth; Be content.*”

CSL

If any of my readers are dealing with this specific problem, I want to offer these suggested resources as tools for dealing with Wifely Spiritual Superiority:

*Love & Respect* by Emerson Eggerichs – Excellent book for learning The Crazy Cycle and how to get off of it.

*Boundaries* by Cloud and Townsend – If you are dealing with sanctimony in your marriage, this book will help you in learning to define acceptable guidelines on attitudes and actions.

My articles on what *Loving Your Wife As Christ Loved The Church* really means, and how to recognize the manipulation of false LYWACLTC™ teaching. [in the Bad Teachings .pdf]

CSL, *Please Lead (But Do It My Way)*;

<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/please-lead-but-do-it-my-way-part-1/>



## Chapter 13: The Church and Your Marriage. What Could Go Wrong?

Time to tell the truth and shame the devil: a comment by a husband who said that he felt somewhat abused by our feminized church culture caused me to turn to the dark side of the Curmudgeonly Force and deliver a rant. Given my curmudgeonly nature, this is a surprisingly rare occurrence, but what can I say? I felt exercised in my spirit.

In the back and forth to my *Reset #3* article [see link below], I responded to a reader's comment by saying that a refused husband needs to take action in his marriage, and not let things coast along in a sexless marriage. I made the statement that the husband in a situation where the wife insists that he needs to move first should say "This is not a negotiation. Yes, it is my duty to meet your emotional need for connection, but by the same token it is your duty to meet my need for connection, as well. You have to be willing to step up."

Part of his response to me is what is triggering my rant. He wrote:

*I agree that the man should take such action. However, I don't think the church generally teaches such behavior on the part of the husband. Instead the teaching is that such action is tantamount to verbal abuse and sexual harassment, and **certainly NOT loving**. Consequently, the church leaders would not support the husband, but would most likely side against him with the wife. Do you agree this is typical of the church? How do we get this corrected in the church? How does a husband deal with a wife's reluctance?*  
[my emphasis]

Unfortunately, this reader is only right. Long-term readers of my blog know that I can really get myself in a lather about the bad teachings of the Church concerning marriage. If you are a new reader, let me to direct you to *The Sexless Marriage Series* page of my blog which lists the following posts I have made on the subject [see link below]:

- Bad Teaching: Soulmates
- Bad Teaching: Unconditional Love
- Bad Teaching: "As Christ Loved The Church
- Bad Teaching: "Like Christ Loved The Church", pt. 2
- Bad Teaching: "Like Christ Loved The Church", pt3
- Bad Teaching: "Like Christ Loved The Church", pt. 4
- Bad Teaching: "Unconditional Love" Marries LYWACLTC
- Love And Respect: A Two-Way Street
- Bad Teaching: "What God Has Joined..."
- Re-addressing "What God Hath Joined"

But as to the specific concern expressed by the reader, that the church would say that the advice I gave, that telling a wife that both spouses have duties to the other would be labelled as abuse and harassment, I have two responses:

### **First Response:**

You're right. Quite possibly, they will. Today's feminized church is more than capable of doing that very thing. As has been demonstrated from time immemorial, them as puts the dollars in the plate gets to call the tune. And since the Church today caters to the female trade, men do—and will continue to—get short shrift in most churches.

(Does that make me an Man-o-Sphere supporter? Not hardly, given my posts excoriating those folk. However, trying to slap a pejorative label on me doesn't make anything I am saying less true.)

### **Second Response:**

*“So?”*

*“CSL, what do you mean, “So?”*

Just that. To borrow from Jesus, *“what is that to you? Follow me.”* Yes, I understand that, mayhap, your local church will *tsk-tsk* you, but so what? I hope that this doesn't give you the vapors, but let me put a flea in your ear: you are married to your wife, you aren't married to your church!

Tell me, if you had a 'friend' who was always telling you how bad you are and that you need to do things that you know are not right, how long would you keep that 'friend'? Now, I'm not talking about those friends who are true brothers, who are like “iron sharpening iron”; instead, I'm talking about a so-called friend who thinks that you're an idiot and can't do anything right if you aren't doing what they tell you to do. That kind of 'friend' you can, and should, do without.

And I don't think that it would hurt you one iota to let your church know that. In my reading, I've come across many tales of counselors and pastors who want to push off the concerns of the husband, simply because he is a husband. But if the problem in the marriage is two-sided, a one-sided solution just won't cut it, and pastors and/or counselors need to understand that the concerns of husbands are just as valid as the concerns of wives. Again, you are married to your wife, not your pastor or counselor.

## **Three Questions**

In looking at the paragraph above that triggered this post, you will see that the reader asked me three question, and here are my answers:

*1 – Do you agree this is typical of the church?*

Why, yes. Yes I do. After all, I did write the Women Rule, Men Droll chapters, right?

2 – *How do we get this corrected in the church?*

By not playing their game. If dollars and butts in the pew are trump, be willing to take your trump cards (butt and money) elsewhere. (See recommendations below.)

3 – *How does a husband deal with a wife's reluctance?* [Wives, this is for you, too.]

By getting Cloud and Townsend's *Boundaries* and *Boundaries in Marriage*, and learn how to live in your own integrity. You are to be a man of God, not a doormat of God. It might be helpful for you to read my *Go-To Marital Tools* posts, as well, which are also listed on my *Sexless Marriage Series* page, below.

## “Follow Me”

“CSL, you aren't telling us to go church-hopping or church-shopping, are you?!?”

I don't think I am. But given the fact that our churches are somewhat less than saintly nowadays, I do advise that Christians be more loyal to God than to a building. I realize that I am capable of making incendiary statements, but when we have churches and church leaders fronting for either abortionists and perversion on one hand, or for a *p\*ssy-grabbing* adulterer on the other, I don't think that I am too far off the beam in being tempted to throw up my hands in disgust.

So how should loyalty to God rather than to churches play out? Psalm 119 is a paean of praise to God's Torah, and in it the question of “How shall a young man keep his way pure?” is answered in one simple sentence: obeying God's word.” (Psa. 119.9)

So how do you show loyalty to God rather than a church?

- You read your Bible
- You study your Bible
- You start to live your Bible.

And I don't mean a cut-and-paste Bible. *Nossir!* Many today like to do what Thomas Jefferson did, which was to cut up two Bibles and glue the parts he liked into a blank book. I'm sorry, but a Choose-Your-Own Scripture won't cut it. You have to be open to conforming your life to *Torah*, God's teaching. (By the way, *Torah* does not mean *Law*, but *teaching*, specifically, *God's teaching*.)

And if the time comes that you do feel that your church isn't going to help you do that, conforming to God's teaching rather than the world's teaching, then that might just mean taking a hike.

Guys, if this post speaks to you, bookmark it and come back to it. I'm not saying that you declare your independence today or tomorrow. As with everything, take a big chunk of time to pray, read your Bible, and earnestly seek God's will. I don't think that you can go wrong by reading my posts on Waiting, Watching, and Working, as you work on being

the best You that God wants you to be. The *Waiting, Watching and Working* series is also listed on my *Sexless Marriage Series* page, given below.

Lastly, get David Murrow's book *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, and check out his website, *Church for Men*. Again, this is not for the purpose of finding a place that strokes your fur the right way, but to find a place that will challenge you to be a man of God, not a piñata.

Be blessed,

CSL

CSL, *Of Resets, Resolutions and Reality #3*:

<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2018/10/08/of-resets-resolutions-and-reality-part-3/>

CSL, *Sexless Marriage Series*:

<https://curmudgeonlylibrarian.wordpress.com/2018/10/08/of-resets-resolutions-and-reality-part-3/>

Cloud & Townsend, *Boundaries*:

[https://www.amazon.com/Boundaries-Updated-Expanded-When-Control-ebook/dp/B06XFKNB2Y/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543085227&sr=8-1&keywords=boundaries+by+cloud+and+townsend](https://www.amazon.com/Boundaries-Updated-Expanded-When-Control-ebook/dp/B06XFKNB2Y/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543085227&sr=8-1&keywords=boundaries+by+cloud+and+townsend)

Cloud & Townsend, *Boundaries In Marriage*:

[https://www.amazon.com/Boundaries-Marriage-Henry-Cloud-ebook/dp/B000SELDB8/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543085284&sr=8-1&keywords=boundaries+in+marriage+by+cloud+and+townsend](https://www.amazon.com/Boundaries-Marriage-Henry-Cloud-ebook/dp/B000SELDB8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543085284&sr=8-1&keywords=boundaries+in+marriage+by+cloud+and+townsend)

David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*:

[https://www.amazon.com/Why-Men-Hate-Going-Church-ebook/dp/B005VHBQSM/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543012935&sr=8-1&keywords=david+murrow+why+men](https://www.amazon.com/Why-Men-Hate-Going-Church-ebook/dp/B005VHBQSM/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1543012935&sr=8-1&keywords=david+murrow+why+men)

David Murrow, *Church for Men website*:

<http://churchformen.com/>

## Chapter 14: Addressing the “Man-O-Sphere”

In a post on my blog, I made a passing reference to a portion of the Internet called the “Man-O-Sphere” (herein shortened to MoS). I believe my exact statement was, “... idiotic Man-O-Sphere.” One of my readers asked me for more on my antipathy toward the MoS, so this is something I’ve just dashed off. I freely admit this is not an attempt at a point-by-point refutation of the MoS; I also admit that it is also heavily weighted by my emotional response to what I’ve seen and read by MoS writers, and not a dispassionate rebuttal. Suffice to say that I believe the MoS to be an equal and opposite evil to feminism.

### The Man-o-sphere...

First of all, it is composed of an extremely broad collection of types, many of which, to my mind, hold to the very antithesis of God’s creation and design for men and women. Because I try to maintain at least a veneer of Christian temperament, I won’t begin to give vent to my spleen concerning that Man-o-sphere sewer dweller, the execrable *pick-up artist* (PUA). This particular piece of scum sees women as merely potential notches on his bedpost. There is even a subculture in MoS, the *seduction community*, built around the idea that women are merely sexual prey to be metaphorically mounted (sorry for that unintentional pun) as heads upon a wall.

Then there are the straight-up knuckle-draggers of the MoS, the out-and-out misogynists labelling themselves as “men going their own way” (MGTOW). There’s not a whole lot to be said for these jerks, as their words are enough to condemn them. Here’s a quote from one of them “What nobody wants to see when couples are spewing their fraudulent wedding vows lies at each other.” Nuff said. (I feel like I need a shower whenever I encounter a MGTOW site.)

I know of the MMSL phenomenon, and the “red pill” language, speaking “game” and “frame” and “hamsters”. I can understand its popularity, but it relies on deception and manipulation. A few years back, on a christian marriage forum that I read, a wife came on and started sharing about her marriage and its difficulties. Through investigation and discussion on this christian forum, she discovered that her husband was spending hundreds of dollars getting ‘counseling’ from someone online. And on the MMSL site itself, there was a thread that suddenly was closed by the original poster when the guy posted a goodbye message, saying that he’d been found out by his wife; it turned out that he was the guy that the wife was writing about on the christian forum. If it is so honorable, then why did he have to keep it hidden?

I get the frustration and anger at what feminism has done to our society, and to our churches and marriages. But that is no excuse for husbands to abandon being a Christian man. I’m willing to stack up my blog entries against anyone else’s in trying to

defend husbands; my *Bad Teachings* .pdf alone demonstrates that I have no truck with the castrati of today's feminized Church. But that doesn't mean I have to react in kind and renounce God's truth.

Mankind and womankind are all fallen. A recurring mantra of mine is that every marriage is blessed with two sinners loved by God. To me, the fact that God loves wives does not negate the fact that God loves husbands, and vice versa. That means that if I choose to embrace hateful debate and engage in sexual subterfuge against those loved by God, I depart from God. Yes, be angry about injustices and sins against men AND women, but do so without treasuring injustice and sin in your heart.

In my initial response to the reader who asked for me to give my reasoning on why I dislike the MoS so much, I promised to write an entry giving a fuller analysis; this post isn't that, being a mere rant. In the next chapter, I delve deeper into my antipathy toward the Man-O-Sphere.

CSL

## Chapter 15: Addressing the Man-O-Sphere: My Last Word

In the previous chapter, which was my quick reaction to questions about the Man-O-Sphere (MoS), I did not spare readers my feelings about it (okay, I did. I kept it clean.) But I did promise that after I got that rant out of my system, I would address the MoS phenomenon and so, here goes.

First off, let me say that I understand the appeal of the MoS. To borrow terminology from Newtonian physics, it is an equal and opposite reaction to feminism in our society. However, an equal, opposite reaction is not necessarily a good thing. Everyone has seen images of the little device called a Newton's Cradle, which has 5-6 balls suspended in a frame. When one or two are pulled away from the others on one side and allowed to drop back, the force is transferred through the stationary balls to the other side, and they, in turn, are knocked from their place, and so it goes, back and forth.

I see feminism as one side of the cradle and MoS as the other side. I get the reaction to feminism, but that doesn't mean that an equal and opposite reaction is corrective. In fact, I believe that it is just as toxic as the feminism that it reacts to.

### *Trashing The Low-Hanging Fruit First*

I'm assured by those with greater familiarity with the MoS that the *Pick-Up Artists* (PUA) and the *Men Going Their Own Way* (MGTOW) troglodytes represent a small percentage of the MoS. Well, good. Fine. I'm pretty sure that the *all men are rapists and all sex is rape* advocates represent a small percentage of feminism, as well, but that doesn't stop them from being part of their larger whole, does it? So, I'm going to assume that we can all agree that the activities and ideas that these sods promote are loathsome and repugnant.

### Red Pill? Blue Pill?

Every movement, every faction that comes into being has its own lingo. In today's uber-liberal mentality, what with its intersectionality, gender fluidity, and what-have-you, the term *du jour* is "woke". As in "I used to be unaware of my cis privilege, but now I'm woke."

If you do any reading around the MoS, you quickly learn that the equivalent term is *Blue Pill/Red Pill*\*\* . Using terminology taken from the movie *The Matrix*, the MoS says that men who are still compliant with the culture's subjugation of men are *asleep*, taking the Blue Pill of acceptance. On the other hand, those taking the Red Pill are shocked into wakefulness and, seeing that society has modified the structures of gender roles for the benefit of women to the detriment of men, are given information to fight the System.

As I've stated above, I do believe that feminism has been an evil that has done great damage to society as a whole and to individuals by the countless millions. And no, I do not wish to debate this belief. After all, abortion, divorce rates, the current Church of the Castrati that passes for Christianity today, all speak of feminism's havoc.

## A Tale of Two Toxic Journeys

Several years ago, Chris Taylor of Forgiven Wife, published a post that rubbed some of the Femi-sphere the wrong way, and for some time, she was savaged by non-Christian retromingents who accused of her of being a rape-enabler, among other things. Given my cootish tendencies, you can guess that I did not take kindly to their game of Whack-The-Piñata, and decided played merry hob with their fun (not my most christian moment, I freely admit.) However, I did use that moment as an opportunity to springboard into the section of the internet that found her post so objectionable. And let me tell you that it was a toxic brew of anti-Christian hatred, misandry, and paganistic license.

After seeing the MoS referenced by a blogger I highly esteem, I decided to do some exploring and read around the MoS in order to see for myself what was out there. Just as I was sickened by the witchy/bitchy portion of the web that took umbrage with Chris's christian stance on marriage and sex, I was sickened by the complete misogyny of the MoS.

I have been told that, *"yes, CSL, the PUAs and the MGTOW are an aberration, that they are not true representatives of the MoS, but there are also good Christian MoS sites."* I am going to have to let these people down easily, but I have not been impressed by the readings I have come across. I will say that I read posts by Christian men containing less-than-christian sentiments.

I had the same reaction to the MoS websites that I did to the feminist/queer/pagan websites. I came away from them nearly despairing at the hatred, anger, and bile that make up the toxic melange of both worlds.

## The Man-O-Sphere Is A Natural Reaction

..., right? Of course it is! In a comment to my earlier MoS post [ch. 14 above], Paul Byerly, of Generous Husband, noted the following about denizens of the MoS :

*... some of the guys have legitimate complaints, while others were horrible husbands who are alone because their wife got tired of it. The second group joins in because it feels better than admitting they were wrong, and it's easier to gripe about how horrible ALL WOMEN are than doing something to become the kind of man a good woman wants to be with.*



While some of the men of the MoS are truly dirtbags (my stated opinion, not Paul's), Paul B. notes that some of the MoS populace do have legitimate complaints, so naturally they give vent to their complaints.

But that's the problem with the MoS; it's a natural reaction, which, for Christians, makes it an ungodly reaction.

Just as women kvetch about being victimized by men, apparently so have the guys of MoS turned to belly-aching about being victims of women. It's all so natural, so predictable. But here's the thing—yes, it's natural, but returning evil for evil and spite for spite is also corrosive and toxic. Paul Byerly said it best when he commented, *“The Manosphere is a classic example of two wrongs not making a right. The solution to a house fire is NOT to throw on gasoline.”*

## No Blue Pill, No Red Pill...

*Until the early 20th century, the primary treatment for syphilis was mercury, in the form of calomel, ointments, steam baths, pills, and other concoctions. Side effects of mercury treatments could include tooth loss; mouth, throat, and skin ulcerations; neurological damage; and death.*  
~ *“Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics”*

In my mind, taking the red pill of the Man-O-Sphere to counteract the ills of toxic feminism is just as toxic as taking mercury to kill syphilis.

And although I realize that I am being both as cheesy and trite as I can possibly be, I have to urge, with all of my being, that neither blue pills nor red pills are of any consequence to the Christian man, whether he is single or married. The only thing that should matter to him is the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian man should be Christian in conduct and in response.

Nuff said,

CSL

\*\* The Blue Pill/Red Pill meme is so ubiquitous, even outside of the MoS, that it has its own entry on Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_pill\\_and\\_blue\\_pill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_pill_and_blue_pill)

Newton's Cradle video:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newton%27s\\_cradle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newton%27s_cradle)