

# BEAUTY

and the

# BEAST



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*I dedicate this book to my husband Brian - my "Prince," the one whom God has used to bring out the "Beauty" in me!*

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# BEAUTY AND THE BEAST<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Most of us have entered our marriages with preconceived ideas. We expected our husbands to be the "Knight in Shining Armour" who would whisk us away and we would live happily ever after, pretty much like a fairy tale. We expected our husbands to be "Prince Charming." However reality soon hits home. The fairy tale becomes a nightmare and "Prince Charming" seems more like a beast. At our wedding, the DJ mistakenly played "Beauty and the Beast" for our first dance! I have often joked with my husband that the song was quite appropriate because indeed I was "Beauty" and he was the "Beast"! But all glory to God; because my husband has become my "Prince" (and he did whisk me away to a romantic holiday in Spain). I love and appreciate him very deeply. But it was a journey. It did not just happen. I will tell you how it came to be.

## MY STORY

When we got married, my husband and I were very much in love. Initially I was blinded by love. They say "love is blind and marriage is an eye opener." In a marriage you cannot really hide who you are and I soon began to see his faults and weaknesses, and became annoyed when he did not meet *my* expectations. I am sure he would say the same about me. I am sure he saw my faults and weaknesses and I did not meet his expectations. These things can cause strife in a marriage - which is what happened with us. I was a modern woman with a career; he was a modern man, with a bit of a traditional slant. We had many good days together, but we also had bad days and the bad days almost destroyed our relationship. In as much as I was a modern woman, I believed that I had a biblical view of my role as wife and I thought that I was doing a good job at practising the Word of God. *'All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits (the thoughts and intents of the heart.)* Proverbs 16.2 (AMP). In my heart I believed that I did respect my husband and that I was submissive to him. My husband

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<sup>1</sup> This book is a work in progress.

disagreed with me. I would get upset with him when he complained about me not respecting him.

One day after hearing a message on how incorrect mindsets can prevent us from having the best in God, I asked the Lord to show me, according to His Word, what my role as a wife was. The Lord answered me through many scriptures, beginning with 1 Peter chapters 3 and 2. I also allowed the Lord to show me my mindset and the 'thoughts and intents' of my heart. When He did that, I was astounded because I realised that I was selfish and disrespectful. My selfishness and disrespect led to much unpleasantness in my marriage and I became an angry and bitter woman. I also realised that my mindset was not biblical after all, but worldly. I began applying the Word in my life and that changed everything. Not only did I change, but my husband changed as well. The Bible says that we are to win our husbands over without a word, but by our conduct. I am a true testimony to the truth of that Word. I have seen it happen in my own marriage. All the time I was waiting for my husband to change. *I* was trying to change him. But *I* had to change. God always starts with us.

There is some truth in the tale of Beauty and the Beast, because Belle was gentle and kind and took care of the Beast. She showed him love and this changed him. She brought out the "Prince" in him. By me showing my husband love (God's kind of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13) and by my gentleness and respect, my husband became my "Prince." Indeed that song at our wedding was appropriate after all!

I will now share my revelations from the Word of God that changed me.

## **1 PETER 2**

1 Peter 3 says '*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands.....*' I could not get past the word "Likewise." because it means "in the same way." What that scripture is saying is '*Wives, in the same way, submit to your husbands. In what way? Let's take a look at what was written just before 1 Peter 3.1 - 1 Peter chapter 2 (NKJ):*

*Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,<sup>14</sup> or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.<sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—<sup>16</sup> as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.<sup>17</sup> Honour all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

*<sup>18</sup>Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.<sup>19</sup> for this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.<sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.<sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:<sup>22</sup> "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";<sup>23</sup> who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;<sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.<sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

The Amplified version puts it this way:

*<sup>13</sup> Be submissive to every human institution and authority **for the sake of the Lord**, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,<sup>14</sup> Or to governors as sent by him to bring vengeance (punishment, justice) to those who do wrong and to encourage those who do good service.<sup>15</sup> For it is God's will and intention that by doing right [your good and honest lives] should silence (muzzle, gag) the ignorant charges and ill-informed criticisms of foolish persons.<sup>16</sup> [Live] as free people, [yet] without employing your freedom as a pretext for wickedness; but [live at all times] as servants of God.<sup>17</sup> Show respect for all men [treat them honourably]. Love the brotherhood (the Christian fraternity of which Christ is the Head). Reverence God. Honour the emperor.*

*<sup>18</sup> [You who are] household servants, be submissive to your masters with all [proper] respect, not only to those who are kind and*

*considerate and reasonable, but also to those who are surly (overbearing, unjust, and crooked).<sup>19</sup> For one is regarded favourably (is approved, acceptable, and thankworthy) if, as in the sight of God, he endures the pain of unjust suffering.<sup>20</sup> [After all] what<sup>l</sup>kind of glory [is there in it] if, when you do wrong and are punished for it, you take it patiently? But if you bear patiently with suffering [which results] when you do right and that is undeserved, it is acceptable and pleasing to God.<sup>21</sup> For even to this were you called [it is inseparable from your vocation]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [His personal] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps.<sup>22</sup> He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (guile) ever found on His lips.<sup>23</sup> When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] He was abused and suffered, He made no threats [of vengeance]; but he trusted [Himself and everything] to Him Who judges fairly.<sup>24</sup> He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree [as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.<sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like [so many] sheep, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian the Bishop) of your souls.*

How does this scripture apply to us as wives? Firstly, we are to submit to every human institution and authority *'for the sake of our Lord'*. In doing so, we will *'silence (muzzle, gag) the ignorant charges and ill-informed criticisms of foolish person*. That implies that by submitting to the institution of our husband's headship and authority as head, if he is ignorant, ill-informed and critical of us, he will be silenced - silenced by our conduct, not our words. What conduct should we have? A gentle and quiet spirit; a respectful and submissive attitude.

Secondly, we are to submit to our husbands as servants submit to their masters. How should servants submit to their masters? With all fear (v 18 NKJ); with proper respect (v18 AMP) - not only to those who are good, gentle, kind, considerate and reasonable, but also to those who are harsh and surly (overbearing, unjust, and crooked). This implies that whether your husband is good, gentle, kind and considerate or harsh, inconsiderate, overbearing, unjust or crooked, you are to submit to him. "Surely God does not expect me to submit to a harsh man that is not treating me right," you may say. That's not my word. It's God's word! You read it for yourself. Read 1 Peter 2.18 from both the New King James Version and Amplified version. I

have set it out for you above. "But how can I do that?" you may ask. Jesus showed us how. He left us an example –when he was reviled and insulted, he did no revile or insult in return. When he was abused and suffered, he made no threats, but, he committed and trusted **himself and everything** to God, the One who judges fairly. If our husbands insult us we should not insult back, if they revile (*criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner*) us we should not retaliate but commit ourselves and our situation to the Lord, the One who judges fairly. God will judge each one of us individually. We will all have to give an account of ourselves (Romans 14.12) - that means you and your husband individually. So work on your attitude because when you stand before Jesus you will want Him to say 'Well done my good and faithful servant.' (Matthew 25.21).

According to Romans 13. 11-14, we need to *put on the Lord Jesus* and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The lusts of the flesh include strife, arguments, quarrelling. What does it mean to put on the Lord Jesus? Who is the Lord Jesus? He is love. He is peace. He is patience. He is understanding. He is wisdom. He is salvation. He does not condemn us but sees the best in us. He does not remember our sins nor does He hold our sins against us. He willingly laid down His life for us. He is not easily offended and when he was wrongfully accused he did not defend himself. When he was insulted he did not insult back. When he was reviled he did not revile back. When he was wrongfully punished He said '*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*' (Luke 23.24). So if we are to put on The Lord Jesus, we are to put on forgiveness, love, peace, patience, salvation, and so forth. As we do so we are in a position to defer to our husbands and thus submit to and respect them.

1 Peter 4.1 -2 (AMP) states: "*So, since Christ suffered in the flesh for us, for you, arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God],<sup>2</sup> So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites and desires, but [he lives] for what God wills.* In our marriages we must have the same mind of Christ. We need to arm ourselves with the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is part of our armour. The mind of Christ refers to the attitude Jesus had. He did not revile, did not insult, and did not threaten. He was like a sheep to the slaughter, silent as a lamb, humble. He could have been angry. He could have

retaliated because He was wronged. But he did not. He patiently endured suffering. In pleasing the Father with His attitude/mindset, God's will was fulfilled. Jesus' patient endurance of suffering, which he did voluntarily, resulted in our freedom and healing. If we arm ourselves with the attitude of Jesus in our marriages it will bring healing not only to our husbands but also to us.

As we follow in Jesus' example we are healed - our hearts are healed and our attitudes change (1 Peter 2.25). It is interesting that this scripture "*By whose stripes you were healed*" is part of the message on submission. I believe it's there because it's not just physical healing, but also emotional healing. As we follow Jesus' example, we are healed emotionally. The Lord Jesus took our sins *into* His own body- He took our faults and weaknesses *voluntarily* into His body so that we might be clean, holy, pure, and righteous. What love! We did not deserve it. We did not ask for it but He desired that we be pure and holy. He submitted to the will of the Father and laid down His life for our sake (John 10) even though we were sinful and walking in disobedience so that we may have a relationship with the Father. That's what he expects of us as wives. We need to lay down our lives as Jesus did. In Genesis 2.18, the woman is referred to as a helper for her husband. "*Now the Lord God said, "It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him."* You are your husband's helper. You are suited to him, adapted to him and complementary to him. You are a vessel that God can use to set your husband free and bring healing to him.

How can you be a vessel? 1 Peter 3 tells us.

## **1 PETER 3**

<sup>1</sup> *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,* <sup>2</sup> *when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.* <sup>3</sup> *Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—* <sup>4</sup> *rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.* <sup>5</sup> *For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who*

trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands (**they adorned themselves by being gentle, quiet and submissive**),<sup>2, 6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. (1 Peter 3.1-6 [NKJ])<sup>3</sup>

The Amplified version puts it this way:

*IN LIKE manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands [subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to them], so that even if any do not obey the Word [of God], they may be won over not by discussion but by the [godly] lives of their wives,*<sup>2</sup>*When they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband; you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him--to honour, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband].*<sup>3</sup>*Let not yours be the [merely] external adorning with [elaborate] interweaving and knotting of the hair, the wearing of jewellery, or changes of clothes;*<sup>4</sup>*But let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which [is not anxious or wrought up, but] is very precious in the sight of God.*<sup>5</sup>*For it was thus that the pious women of old who hoped in God were [accustomed] to beautify themselves and were submissive to their husbands [adapting themselves to them as themselves secondary and dependent upon them].*<sup>6</sup>*It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham [following his guidance and acknowledging his headship over her by] calling him lord (master, leader, authority). And you are now her true daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you [not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you].*

Let us dissect this scripture. I have highlighted the words which I believe are key to our role as wives:

- We are to **subordinate** ourselves to our husbands as being secondary to them. The Oxford dictionary<sup>4</sup> defines subordinate as lower in rank,

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<sup>2</sup> Own emphasis

<sup>3</sup> biblegateway.com

<sup>4</sup> www.oxforddictionaries.com

a person under the authority of another. That is actually in line with the Word of God. Sarah acknowledged Abraham's headship over her, and called him 'lord'- her master, leader and authority over her, (even though he told the king she was his sister in order to protect himself). We are regarded as her true daughters if we do the same. We wives are under our husband's authority. The husband is head of the wife (Ephesians 5.23). Problems arise when we usurp his authority. Perhaps you do that because he is not fulfilling his role and it's human nature to fill a gap when there is one. However the moment we do that we are stepping out of line with God's word. We begin to take control in the home and problems arise. Therefore remain subordinate to your husband - even if he is not fulfilling his role. But do not judge him for failing to do so. He will be judged by God.

- We are to be **dependent** on our husbands. How dependent are you on your husband? Perhaps you think that you cannot depend on him. You may be correct in thinking that, but that does not change the WORD. Wives depend on your husbands. Once again do not judge him if he's not dependent. Leave the judging to God. You do your part. If your husband is not dependent forgive, bless & release him and call those things that be not as though they are (Romans 4.17) - start calling him dependent. When you see his weaknesses and failures declare the Word over him - he is a child of God (John 1.12), anointed (1 John 2.27), appointed, set apart (Ephesians 1.3-4 AMP). God has great plans for his life (Jeremiah 29.11). God is thinking good and precious thoughts towards him (Psalm 139. 17) - and if God is thinking good thoughts towards him who are you to think bad thoughts towards him. I have asked The Lord to help me see my husband through His eyes. God sees in my husband the person that he has created, not what I see. I only see what's on the outside, but God sees his heart- God sees the inner man. God sees him as dependent. Ask the Lord to help you see your husband through His eyes.
- We are to **adapt** ourselves to our husbands - to adapt means to adjust or to change oneself to suit different conditions. We need to change our ways to suit our husbands. Find out his likes and dislikes. Get to know your husband. Perhaps he likes you dressing in a certain way. Dress up to please him. Wear your hair the way he likes it. Adapt to

him in the bedroom. Make his tea the way he likes it. These are just some examples. Do not expect your husband to adapt to you, but you adapt to him.

- We are to **reverence** our husbands. Reverence is defined as deep respect for someone or something. Respect is defined as a feeling of deep admiration for someone, due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others. Revere is another word which means deep respect or admiration. Deeply admire and respect your husband. Have regard to his feelings and wishes. Find out his love language - what makes him feel loved. Work on that. Work on making him feel loved.
- We are to **defer to** our husbands. "Defer to" is 'to accept someone's opinion or decision, especially because you respect them.'<sup>5</sup> That implies that we need to respect the opinions and decisions of our husbands even though we may not agree with them. If you disagree with your husband, instead of arguing with him and inviting strife into your home, take it before the Lord. Proverbs 17:14 says 'The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. James 3.16 (KJV) says, '*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*' You do not want confusion in your home. You do not want evil in your home. Therefore avoid strife at all costs. Pursue peace with your husband. Go after it. According to 1 Peter 3:10-12 '*For "He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.*' Romans 12.18 says '*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*' As much as depends on you, live in peace with your husband.

There were many occasions when I did not agree with my husband and would voice my opinions. At times it led to arguments. I have learned to take our disagreements to the Lord in prayer rather than strive with my husband. God always brings peace and His best solution. His plans are established. Recently, I had written a letter

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<sup>5</sup> Macmillan Dictionary

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/defer-to>

seeking permission for a particular project but my husband had stopped me from sending the letter. I was upset because it was something that I felt the Lord had laid on my heart and knew that I had to do it. I could have vehemently disagreed with him. However, rather than argue with him and get into strife, I chose to submit to him, to be subordinate to him and to respect him, and I prayed. I deferred to my husband, left it in the hands of the Lord, and continued to show love and respect to my husband. (In the past I would have argued and then sulked!). Well, Lo and behold (!) God indeed had his way because the person to whom I was supposed to have sent the letter contacted us and gave permission for us to pursue the project without me even sending the letter off! I was astounded! God is good. You see, if something is of God He will have his way. We do not have to strive about it.

- We are to **honour**, **esteem**, and **appreciate** our husbands. Honour is high respect, great esteem. *To regard with great respect.*<sup>6</sup> Esteem is to *respect and admire and appreciate is to 'recognize the full worth of.'*<sup>7</sup> Recognise your husband's full worth, rather than his faults and failures. Give him honour. Esteem him.
- We are to **prize** our husbands. Wow!! That speaks volumes. A prize is *'something of great value that is worth struggling to achieve'*.<sup>8</sup> It's of extreme high value. See your husband as your prize. See him as extremely valuable, not as thrash that can be thrown out. God is using you to bring out the best in him. You may be struggling in your marriage. Allow God to use you as His vessel, despite the struggles, to bring out the man that He has created him to be and at the same time to bring out the woman that He has created you to be.

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<sup>6</sup> Oxford Dictionary

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/honour?q=honour>

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<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/appreciate?q=appreciate>

<sup>8</sup> [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

- We are to admire our husbands. Admire is to *regard with respect or warm approval; look at (something impressive or attractive) with pleasure.*' Take time to notice how attractive your husband is and make it known to him (even though he may have put on a few pounds!). Tell him he's good-looking. **Praise** him - for his achievements, for helping with household chores, for being smart, for being talented, whatever praise you may give. Take time to think of the good in your husband, admire him for it and praise him in those areas. Rather than bring his faults and weaknesses to his attention, concentrate on his good points. By doing that you will build him up. You may not see immediate results, but you will someday. Your husband surely has good in him. Inside every "Beast" is a "Prince" waiting to be released. If you think long and hard, you will see the good. List all his good points and focus on them even though all you may see are his faults and weaknesses. You will begin to see things shift in the spirit. Train yourself to think good thoughts toward your husband no matter how annoyed you may be with him. (Luke 23.34). If you want to see your husband become the man you want him to be, if you want to see your "Prince" manifest, then think precious thoughts towards him, no matter what his weakness. Pursue peace with him. Tell him how good he is. Make a choice. Joshua said *'I lay before you life and death, therefore choose life'* (Deuteronomy 30.19). I encourage you wives to choose life. Make a choice to overlook your husband's weakness. If your husband has a weakness, do not judge, condemn or despise him for it but receive him and help him. Romans 14.1 says *'receive one who is weak in the faith.'* We all have weaknesses, Jesus said, *'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.'* (John 8.7) and *"judge not, that you be not judged.<sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.<sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? And why do you look at the speck in your brother's*

*eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?* (Matthew 7:1-3). Make a choice not to judge, condemn, or despise him because of his weakness. Make a choice to think precious thoughts toward him and help him.

You can start by seeing your husband as the handiwork of God. God has fearfully and wonderfully made him and skilfully put him together in his mother's womb (psalm 139). God has chosen your husband even before the foundation of the world and set him apart and appointed him. (Ephesians 1). God knew your husband and called him before he was born (Jeremiah 1.5). Your husband has been anointed and appointed by God. The devil is trying to destroy your husband, God's handiwork. Sometimes (without us even knowing it) the devil uses us to destroy our husband. Romans 14. 20 says '*do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.*' That could be interpreted to mean do not destroy the work of God (your husband) because of his weakness or his faults. God has given you to your husband as his helper. Allow God to use you as His vessel to bring out the true character of your husband - the character that God has created in him, not what you are seeing now. Do not be a tool in the devil's hand. Do not judge or condemn or despise your husband because he thinks differently to you and he does not live his life according to *your* standard. If you continue to do so, you will be a stumbling block to him and you will destroy him. Receive your husband, exhort him, and love him, despite his weakness. Do not judge your husband because of his weakness but rather help him in his weakness. '*Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to dispute over doubtful things* (Romans 14.1). '*For who are you to judge another's servant?*' He is God's servant. God receives him and God is able to make him stand. None of us lives or dies to himself. But we live and die to God. Therefore do not judge him; do not show contempt for him. (Romans 14.7-13).

You may say "I do not condemn my husband. I do not judge him. I do not despise him." Judge yourself (1 Corinthians 11.31-32). Perhaps your husband has a bad habit which annoys you (it could be anything - from alcohol to gambling to snoring!!). What do you think about this habit? What do you say to him? What are your thoughts about him? What is your attitude towards him? Do you think loving thoughts

towards him at that time? Do you show him love? Or do you condemn him (perhaps not verbally but in your mind)? I have had whole conversations with my husband in my mind! I was still destroying him and being a stumbling block to him even though I was not using words, because according to Proverbs 23.7 'as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. I was thinking bad thoughts towards him and thus had a bad attitude. We are admonished in 2 Corinthians 10.5, to take every thought captive and make it obey Christ. We have the power over our thoughts. If we find ourselves thinking thoughts that are contrary to the Word of God- contrary to what the Lord is saying about our husbands, then we need to capture that thought and make it obey the Word of God. Put on The Lord Jesus, follow His example. Even though we are sinful, He is thinking many precious thoughts about us (psalm 139). He is thinking good thoughts towards us (Jeremiah 29.11). His thought towards us are only of a hope and a future.

Hebrews 3.13 says "*exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"* (Hebrews 10.24). Exhort your husband on a daily basis. Make it a priority each day to tell him something good about himself. This will start breaking down hard heartedness and will protect him from the deceit of sin. Consider your husband and stir up love and good works. You stir it up. Do not wait for him. You start the process and eventually you will reap what you sow (Galatians 6.7-9). But be patient and do not become tired of doing good because you will reap your harvest at the appropriate time (Galatians 6.9).

- Be **devoted to** your husband. Devoted to is to '*give all or most of one's time or resources to (a person or activity).*' Apart from God, your husband should be number one in your life - even before your children. Devote yourself to him. Do not gossip about him. Do not tear him down in front of the children or anybody. Highly esteem him.
- We are to speak to them in a **gentle** and **peaceful** manner. A gentle and quiet spirit is precious in the sight of God. We adorn ourselves with beauty when we are gentle, quiet, and submissive. We are

regarded as Sarah's true daughters if we are not hysterical or anxious. We may sometimes speak to our husbands hysterically or anxiously. That will not attain much. However a gentle and quiet spirit attains much and brings out beauty in us. If our husbands do not obey the Word of God we should win them over by the way we live our lives rather than by our words. We should therefore live pure and modest lives.

The rest of chapter 3 gave us more guidance on our role as wives. Verses 8-9 state: "*Finally, all [of you] should be of one and the same mind (united in spirit), sympathizing [with one another], loving [each other] as brethren [of one household], compassionate and courteous (tenderhearted and humble). Never return evil for evil or insult for insult (scolding, tongue-lashing, berating), but on the contrary blessing [praying for their welfare, happiness, and protection, and truly pitying and loving them].*<sup>9</sup> For know that to this you have been called, that you may yourselves inherit a blessing [from God—that you may obtain a blessing as heirs, bringing welfare and happiness and protection].<sup>10</sup>

So then we also need to be sympathetic towards our husbands; compassionate and courteous (tender-hearted and humble) towards them; not return evil for evil or insult for insult. We should not scold them, give them a tongue-lashing, or berate him, but we must **ble**ss them. We must pray for their welfare, happiness and protection and truly pity and love them. If we do this we will inherit a blessing. Pray for your husband everyday.

- We are to **adore** and **deeply love** our husbands. Adore is to 'love and respect deeply'. Let's have a look at God's idea of love.

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<sup>9</sup> own emphasis

<sup>10</sup> biblegateway.com

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13

1 Corinthians 13.4-7 (AMP) spells it out for us:

*'Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. 5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. 6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. 7 Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].*

Be patient with your husband. Do not expect him to change overnight. He is a work in progress and you are the vessel that the Lord is using to bring the changes in him. Be kind to him. Speak to him in a gentle manner, as Sarah did. Do not be envious or jealous of him. Do not be arrogant or rude to him. Do not insist on your own way or your own rights.

Do not be fretful, touchy or resentful? Do not take account of the wrongs he does to you. If he wrongs you, forgive and bless him. Romans 12.14 says "*Bless those that persecute you, bless and do not curse.*" Jesus said in Matthew 5.44 "*bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*". Even though your husband may be spitefully using you, persecuting you or cursing you, bless him, do good to him and pray for him.

Someone once told me "offence is not given, it is taken." I took that on board and every time I felt offended by my husband, I chose not to take the offence. I chose to forgive him and bless him. Forgiveness is the key to freedom.

Eighteen years ago, I was on the verge of walking out of my marriage. One day as I was driving on the motorway I cried out to the Lord, saying "Lord I want to die on this road. I do not want to go to that man." I drove extremely fast with the intention of crashing the vehicle and dying. In the midst of my tears, I heard the audible voice of the Lord in the car. He said to me, "Child you are placing too much focus on your husband, no focus on me. Focus on Me." I decided to obey the Lord. Thereafter, every time I had reason to be suspicious of my husband, I would go down on my knees before the Lord, and say, "Lord, you can see what he is doing. I leave him in your hands. You sort him out." No more than two weeks later, the Lord, indeed, answered my prayer. My husband met with God. He had a vision which turned his life around. That was the day the Lord called my husband into ministry. I was overjoyed and praised the Lord. However it did not end there. My husband, having met with God and endeavouring to be clean and pure before the Lord, confessed to me that he had been unfaithful in our marriage. That shattered my whole world. I walked out of home, never to return. However I had seen the change in my husband. I knew that he had genuinely met with God, so I went before the Lord. Even though my heart was so broken, I wanted to do what the Lord wanted me to do. I knew I had two options. According to the Word of God, I had grounds for divorce, or I could forgive him. I earnestly went before the Lord seeking His will - whether to divorce or forgive my husband. The Lord softened my heart and helped me forgive my husband. I forgave him and we began a brand new relationship. Today we are in Ministry, helping many couples who have similar problems. God has turned my mourning into dancing, my sorrow into joy. I use my testimony to show women that there is hope - hence this book. If God could do it for me, He can do it for you.

## **CONCLUSION**

Always believe the best of your husband, no matter how he may let you down. Search your heart and change your ways in whatever way you fall short. Love your husband. Adore him because this is what we are commanded to do.

I thought that I was helping my husband by reminding him of his faults. In doing so I was accusing him. Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12.10). God sees good in us and does not accuse us. He knows everything about us. He knows our faults, he knows our weaknesses, yet he does not pick on them. He only thinks good and precious thoughts towards us (Psalm 139.17; Jeremiah 29.11). He calls us His children. He calls us righteous (2 Corinthians 5.21). He calls us royal priests. He calls us holy (1 Peter 2.9). He called Gideon a mighty man of valour even though Gideon was hiding from the Philistines in the wine press (Judges 6.12). He called Abraham Father of many nations even though Sarah was barren and they had no children (Genesis 17.4-5).

Instead of picking on my husband's faults and weaknesses, I speak the Word of God over him because life and death is in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18.21). I say that he is the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5.21), he is anointed (1 John 2.27); he is chosen, he is royalty (1 Peter 2.9); he exhorts (Hebrews 3.13); his speech is seasoned with salt (Colossians 4.6); his words are like honey and he speaks kind words (Proverbs 15.1, 16.24); he is patient and kind, he does not keep a record of wrongs(1 Corinthians 13); he is the head of this house (Ephesians 5.23), and so forth.

Romans 12.2 says *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed inwardly by the renewing of your mind*. My mind was renewed as I searched the scriptures for my role as wife and I have been transformed inwardly. I made a choice. I chose to obey the Word of God, no matter what the world says. I chose life! As I did that **my** "Prince" began to manifest himself. At the same time, my inner "Beauty" started reflecting on the outside. My husband and I still have our differences. I still do falter, but each day I am learning something new. As I earnestly sought the Lord about my role as wife, He changed me and I have come to deeply love and respect my husband, in spite of his faults and weaknesses. I now love him with the love of Christ. I can live with him because of the love of Christ that has been poured into my heart. My husband is not perfect. I still do get annoyed with him, but I have changed. You too can have a fairy tale marriage. You can bring out the "Prince" in your husband, but it takes much obedience to the Word of the Lord. I pray that you will choose the way of the Lord and that you will have your fairy tale marriage. If God did it for me, he will do it for you.