



## ME? OBEY HIM?

Dorothy Kelley Patterson

**B**iblical submission is putting yourself—knowledge, opinions, feelings, energies, understandings—wholly at the disposal of the person to whom you choose to submit. It is framed and illustrated on a completely different level than what is understood and practiced in the world. Nevertheless, the world's distortion of this assignment does not negate or revise its meaning. Submission denotes humility, selflessness, helpfulness, respect, and honor. There is no hint of inferiority or worthlessness. That submission is a self-determining choice is inherent in the definition.

Though an attitude of general submission in the sense of deference to others should characterize all believers, there is also a particular submission assigned to a wife in relating to her own husband. A wife is always free to present the merits of her views, but she is not left at liberty to disregard the headship of her husband when he does not do things her way. A wife committed to biblical patterns chooses to yield herself to the God-ordained servant leadership of her own husband (Eph. 5:21-24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5).

Submission extends over all life but is limited in that no human being can make it obligatory for you to do what God forbids or for you not to do what God commands. Submission is not relegated to a period established by mutual agreement of the parties involved. It is an all-encompassing lifestyle. To decide how much and in what areas to submit is to refuse the directive altogether or to make a mockery of it.

When a decision must be made in the midst of two diametrically opposite wills, a wife should respond with gracious and loving cooperation out of affection for her husband and honor for her husband's God-assigned position of leadership. Since the Holy Spirit is fully God, He cannot be charged with directing a wife to rebel against her husband, whose authority is assigned in Scripture, unless that husband blatantly violates a clear moral principle in Scripture (Acts 5:29). Interestingly, most New Testament references admonishing submission to authority are coupled with a warning to the one in authority not to abuse that responsibility.

The focus becomes your own individual commitment to the Lord, and the question is whether or not you are willing to trust God's providence as being sufficient for you. A wife must be committed to obeying God since He is the One under whose authority she finally rests.

My husband and I are committed to gracious submission and servant leadership in our own home. We began this commitment with a public covenant in which my husband promised to cherish me, offering his provision, protection, and leadership. I responded with my own promise to submit to his leadership. There is a beautiful reciprocity in the commitments we have made to one another. As a wife, I am not excluded from having self-sacrificing love for my husband, nor is my husband excluded from selfless submission to meeting my needs. Yet we each have particular ways of fulfilling our assignments. Neither of us fulfills that commitment perfectly, but both of us are committed to working at the assignments we believe came to us from God Himself.

## Graciously Submitting

*All because of Him,  
June Richards*

*Graciously submitting* are two words which have provoked a lot of discussion within our denomination toward the role of today's married woman. However, these words may apply whether you are single, married, divorced or widowed; for God's Word reveals His Heart for you as an individual. He has a specialized plan for your need at any phase in your life. I want to share a witness to this truth.

Years ago, a young, unmarried woman realized she was pregnant with another child. She desired for this baby girl to have a better life. She "graciously" submitted the baby to another family. The adopted mother taught this little girl about Jesus. When the little girl was nine years old, she "graciously submitted" her heart to her Savior on Mother's Day. Later, she attended a Christian college and met her husband who loves the Lord and preaches His Word. She "graciously submits" to the honor of the roles of a wife and a mother to three precious children.

This illustrates the Providence of our Heavenly Father Who orchestrated the "unusual" circumstances for her in His Plan for her life here on earth. I am eternally grateful; for it is my testimony of God's Grace. (Romans 8:28 ...and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.)

*Graciously submitting* should not be interpreted in a demeaning manner for the woman's role in His Work. (Proverbs 31:30 ...but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.) As a lady submits her thoughts (1 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 2:5), and disciplines her mind on His Word, it establishes intimacy with her Savior. She would not want to usurp the authority God has placed in her life. God has placed everyone under authority. Therefore, in the assigned roles that we have, everyone is called to *graciously submitting*.

