

DOCTRINE OF SARAH'S DAUGHTERS

- I. Introduction.
- A. This doctrine is based on several passages that deal with the inner and overt decorum that is expected of women in the Royal Family that claim to be oriented to God's plan. ITim. 2:9-15
 - B. The nomenclature is derived from the language of I Peter 3:6, which designates women as Sarah's children (daughters) if they comply with Sarah's example.
 - C. While the doctrine is directed primarily toward wives in the Royal Family, it is wise for the younger woman to be aware of the biblical standards for an adjusted wife; this is critical if she intends to enter into the Divine institution of marriage.
 - D. The proper understanding of the principles contained herein, coupled with the acclimation to these principles, form a good starting point for becoming an oriented wife and mature believer.
 - E. If a woman aspires to be recognized as one of the spiritually elite women of history, as certain women were before her, she must understand the particulars of her niche and submit herself to them. IPet. 3:5
 - F. These particulars relate not only to the external decorum and demeanor, but to the internal attitudes that are necessary for a woman to effectively please God.
 - G. In that regard, one should recognize that the regular intake of doctrine and time are necessary to attain to the standards that God desires; it does not happen overnight.
- II. The example of Sarah, which is found in Genesis 18:1-15, provides some of the critical standards by which women who profess positive volition will be evaluated.
- A. The historical setting.
 - 1. The Lord and two angels visited Abraham on a particular day when the heat was apparently at its peak. Gen. 18:1-2.
 - 2. Abraham, who appears to have desired their fellowship, immediately begins to offer the appropriate hospitality, and asks them to stay for a meal. Gen. 18:3-5
 - 3. His overture was accepted (18:5), and Abraham instantly begins to make the necessary preparations to provide them **a piece of bread**, which turned out to be a pretty impressive meal. Gen. 18:6-7
 - 4. He goes to Sarah first, and essentially orders her to begin preparing a recipe for bread; note that Abraham did not explain himself to Sarah since he was moving quickly to the next application he had to make.
 - 5. He then chooses a baby beef from his herd, which was delivered to a servant who prepared it. Gen. 18:7
 - 6. Once all the items had been prepared, Abraham assembles the meat, bread, cheese, and some milk and serves them to his guests. Gen. 18:8
 - B. Sarah's response to this situation and her immediate obedience to Abraham demonstrated her mental attitude and overt acclimation to his authority.
 - 1. The command to bake the bread came at a hot, inconvenient time of day; this is the exact time that a woman would naturally not want to fire up the oven and begin baking.
 - 2. Abraham did not explain himself, but gives a rather terse command that was very specific; he told Sarah to do it **quickly**, and told her exactly how much to prepare. Gen. 18:6

3. This type of incident can place pressure on the sin nature of any individual; people often do not respond well when they are given orders without explanation, and then told precisely what to do.
 4. Sarah obeyed immediately and executed every detail, acclimating to the authority of her husband without any mental reservations or verbal contradictions.
 5. Her overt obedience to Abraham was definitely a product of her inner orientation to his authority over her; it may also have reflected her desire to demonstrate the proper hospitality to her guests.
- C. The Lord then makes certain that He has the attention of everyone when He asks Abraham where Sarah was. Gen. 18:9
1. Sarah was in the tent, listening to the conversation, and was very well aware of what was being said. Gen. 18:10b
 2. The Lord then made the stunning pronouncement that the two elderly people would receive the blessing of the promised son by the next year. Gen. 18:10
 3. This promise was all the more remarkable in that Sarah was well past menopause, sexually dead, and physically unable to conceive. Gen. 18:11
 4. Sarah's immediate reaction was one of incredulity, which she expressed in the form of an unbelieving bit of laughter. Gen. 18:12
 5. However, the important point that is not to be overlooked in this is that Sarah referred to Abraham as Lord within her soul and private thoughts - this clearly demonstrated her inner orientation to Abraham's authority.
 6. Further, Sarah demonstrated the gentle and quiet spirit by not intruding upon the conversation and by remaining quiet (IPet. 3:4); she was later addressed by the Lord for her unbelief, and attempted to cover up her laughter by lying. Gen. 18:12-15
 7. In spite of her moment of unbelief with respect to the promise, Sarah plainly demonstrated her inner and overt acclimation to the authority of Abraham.

- III. In order to become a Sarah's daughter, a woman must manifest the same overt obedience that comes from the inner orientation to the authority of her husband that characterized Sarah.
- A. In fact, inner obedience and orientation to authority (recognizing him as your lord when no one can see it, or when circumstances do not compel you to do so) are essential elements necessary for a woman to join this elite society.
 - B. Peter makes it clear that women in other dispensations also possessed this quality of submission to the authority of their husband. IPet. 3:5
 - C. Some may suggest that overt compliance is sufficient no matter what the internal mental attitude may be, but such is not the case; it is evident that if overt obedience is absent, then inner orientation is likely not present.
 - D. This inner beauty is characterized by a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which denotes a temperament that is characterized by a lack of occupation with oneself, gentleness, meekness, and having the attitude and tongue under control. IPet. 3:4
 1. The term *πραῦς* (praus—gentle) denotes one that has power under control, one that is unassuming, and not impressed with his/her own importance.
 2. The Greek term translated **quiet** is *ἡσύχιος* (hesuchios), which denotes a lack of turmoil, a peaceful, tranquil, and quiet state of mind and body.
 3. Women that are verbally loud, constantly voicing their opinions without regard to decorum or dignity, demonstrate that they are not in compliance with the quiet aspect.

4. A woman that is constantly badgering her husband, seeking to get her own way, correcting him in public, and engaging in other inappropriate or manipulative behavior does not manifest a gentle and quiet spirit.
 5. A woman is designed to be the reflected glory of her husband, which she cannot be if she is constantly challenging his authority mentally, verbally, and overtly in a loud or abrasive fashion. ICor. 11:7
 6. Women should recognize that overt beauty is fleeting (Prov. 31:30), but the imperishable quality of inner beauty lasts long after overt beauty fades. Gen. 12:14
- E. The gentle and quiet spirit, coupled with the inner submission to authority, are elements that God considers to be quite valuable in His plan; these qualities are what He seeks in women, and bring His approbation to those that possess them. IPet. 3:4

IV. The Bible prescribes an overt decorum that should accompany (indeed reflect) the inner beauty of the soul.

- A. Both Paul and Peter exhort women to place their emphasis on the priority of inner beauty; however, both teach that the woman is not to neglect her overt appearance. IPet. 3:3-4; ITim. 2:9-10
- B. Paul is dealing specifically with the overt dress and decorum that are required for the public assembly; however, these principles can and should be applied by ladies at most times.
- C. The Royal dress code for ladies indicates that women are to spend the appropriate time to consider how they present themselves overtly; this should cause a woman to avoid the extremes of neglecting her personal appearance, or excessive preoccupation with it. ITim. 2:9
“Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves...”
 1. This is qualified by the phrase that is rendered variously **with proper clothing** (NAS), **with modest dress** (NIV), **with suitable clothes** (NJB), and **in suitable apparel** (NET).
 2. The clothing is to be reflective of the inner qualities of modesty, which respects normal conventions of society, and sound judgment; it should take a number of factors into consideration, such as one’s age, build, position, budget, the occasion, and other factors.
 3. This certainly excludes sexually suggestive clothing, as well as clothing that is not appropriate to a discerning believer.
 4. It prohibits excess and extravagance in hair styles or jewelry that are designed to draw attention to one’s wealth and/or encourage sensuality.
 5. The woman is to have relatively long hair (just as God’s will is for men to have short hair), styled in a manner that is attractive, and that does not demand excessive maintenance. ICor. 11:10,15
- D. The emphasis on the fact that the woman is to generally be silent in the public assembly while Bible doctrine is being taught should be very much in line with her customary submission to authority. ICor. 14:34-35; ITim. 2:11-12
 1. While we are not slavish about it, there is a general decorum and procedure for believers to follow when they have questions.
 2. The spiritual chain of command exists for a reason, and it should normally be observed when one is seeking information about spiritual matters.
 3. A woman should first consult her husband if there is something in the teaching that she does not understand. ICor. 14:35
 4. If he does not have the answer to her question, he or she should consult a deacon, who may well have the doctrinal frame of reference to explain the issue clearly.
 5. The pastor-teacher is available to all members of this local church, and is not opposed to answering the questions believers may have.

6. However, operating within the Royal Chain of Command is designed to facilitate things for everyone, and can often provide what believers need without demanding that the pastor-teacher handle every question.
 - E. Both Paul and Peter stress the proper mental attitude that manifests itself in the proper overt decorum and the necessity of engaging in Divine good production. ITim. 2:10; IPet. 3:2,6
 - F. Paul is exceedingly clear that part of the overt decorum of an adjusted woman is the recognition that the Scripture bans women from teaching positions, which demand that they exercise authority over men. ITim. 2:12
 1. This should be limited to what it says, and not taken to the extreme that women can never engage in any type of teaching ministry.
 2. This allows for women to **teach/instruct/exhort** other women in the appropriate forums (generally private) with respect to issues of doctrine. Tit. 2:3-4
 3. Further, this allows for women to exercise a spiritual gift of teaching, which can involve other women and children. Rom. 12:7
 4. However, in a formal, public setting only the pastor-teacher is qualified and authorized to teach adults; further, there is no evidence in the New Testament that a woman taught publicly in a bona fide sense. Acts 18:26; Rev. 2:20
- V. The internal enemy that every woman will have to conquer in order to become a Sarah's daughter is comprised of the trends of the female sin nature.
- A. Eve serves as a negative example for all females, demonstrating two distinct problems in the Garden of Eden that led to the fall. Gen. 3:1-6
 - B. The first problem that she manifested was that of acting in a unilateral fashion; when the serpent began his approach, she did not consult either her physical authority (Adam), or her spiritual authority (the Lord).
 1. She manifested her willingness to act on her own, which is a not-so-subtle rejection of Adam's authority.
 2. She manifested her rejection of the doctrine she had been taught by accepting the false doctrine the serpent advocated.
 3. In short, Eve should not have been in this position in the first place; she should have consulted Adam about the very strange talking animal.
 - C. In our dispensation, a woman can manifest these same trends by rejecting the authority of her own husband, to whom she is commanded to submit (Eph. 5:22,24), or the spiritual authority of the pastor-teacher by rejecting the doctrine espoused from the pulpit. Heb. 13:17
 - D. The second problem that Eve manifested was a tendency to not pay close enough attention, which was manifested by her conversation with the serpent and her legalistic addition to the doctrine God had provided. Gen. 3:2-3
 - E. As a believer, each woman has the potential for following the example of Eve and suffering the consequences, or she will emulate Sarah, via the isolation the sin nature, and hold fast to the doctrine she has received.
 - F. It should be observed that the fall simply reinforced the principle of the husband's authority in the life of the woman; it did not reverse it or eliminate it. Gen. 3:16
 - G. However, as Sarah demonstrates, a woman is able to grow in grace, reject the trends of her sin nature, and move to maturity by acclimating to the authority of husband; this can occur in spite of the fact that he has an active sin nature, and is an imperfect leader/authority.

- H. In that regard, even if a woman has a husband that is an unbeliever, or a negative believer, she is expected to acclimate to his authority and thus, emulate Sarah. IPet. 3:1-2
1. If a woman is married to someone that is negative, she is to be submissive to his wishes, and render the same obedience that she would if her husband were positive.
 2. If he is negative, he will likely not understand or seek to orient to the principle of the weaker vessel; however, the primary purpose of I Peter 3:1-6 is how to handle undeserved suffering in the context of marriage
 3. The wife is not to seek to convert her husband to Christianity (an unbeliever), or to doctrine (a negative believer), by verbally badgering or harassing him.
 4. Rather, she is to seek to win him through the witness of the life; the wife should avoid sinful activities that would give him an excuse for rejecting the truth.
 5. She must continue to submit herself to him, according him the respect that his God-given authority demands.
 6. The wife should dismiss any idea that she is going to convert him by her overt attire, but must recognize that the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit provides the witness God seeks. IPet. 3:4
 7. The wife is to avoid the mental attitude sin of fear when confronted with moments of antagonism, hostility, guilt, or threats with respect to her pursuit of the truth. IPet. 3:6
- I. The woman that finds herself married to a negative spouse (believer or unbeliever) is provided instructions in I Corinthians. ICor. 7:10ff
1. Although Paul sometimes might seem to minimize the authority of his teaching, these are not simply his suggestions; these principles come from the Lord Himself. ICor. 7:10,12
 2. The general rule is that if a negative person is willing to remain married, the positive believer is to not abandon the marriage. ICor. 7:12-13
 3. However, if the negative spouse insists on dissolving the marriage, the positive believer is not to withstand him. ICor. 7:15
 4. While Paul allows for divorce in certain cases, there are no biblical grounds for remarriage apart from adultery. ICor. 7:11
- J. There are exceptions (although rare, and involving extreme behaviors) to the principle of submission and orientation to the authority of one's husband.
1. All believers are under a Royal Imperative to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. IIPet. 3:18
 2. If a husband forbids a wife from attending Bible class, he has overstepped the boundaries of his authority and may be disobeyed; the wife may appeal to the higher principle that her relationship to the Lord takes precedence. Lk. 14:26
 3. If the husband becomes involved in immoral or criminal activity and seeks to involve his wife in it, she does not have to submit to his authority, since obedience to the Establishment Chain of Command takes precedence. Rom. 13:1
 4. If the wife finds that her husband becomes physically abusive and/or dangerous, she may have to divorce in order to assure her physical safety; the reason being that one cannot continue to grow in grace if she is dead.
 5. In all these extreme cases it should be recognized that even if the wife's disobedience is legitimate, it may very well bring retribution and suffering that she will simply have to endure and faith-rest.
 6. In all other situations in which he may be demanding, unjust, or unfair, the husband is still to be obeyed; this frees God to administer any corrective that He may choose.
 7. However, just because a wife believes that her husband has been unfair, and may deserve discipline, does not mean that this is God's view of the matter.

- VI. Concluding observations.
- A. Just as Abraham is the pattern for all in terms of the salvation adjustment, Sarah serves as the Divine example for women that desire to make the maturity adjustment, and orient at the highest level. Rom. 4:1-5; IPet. 3:1ff.
 - B. Those women that emulate Sarah and demonstrate the quality of submission in the soul will become part of a spiritually elite group.
 - C. The key to being so recognized is found in the Royal Imperative to be in subjection to your husband and obey him; this overt obedience must begin with the mental attitude that recognizes his lordship.
 - D. Any woman with a negative husband is still a candidate for this distinction, providing she manifests the same obedient spirit.
 - E. Other qualities that distinguish Sarah's daughters are a gentle and quiet disposition, which is manifested in a proper overt decorum, and a high level of Divine good production. IPet. 3:4; ITim. 2:10
 - F. The believing husband that is married to one of Sarah's potential daughters has some things that are incumbent on him. IPet. 3:7
 1. Although the husband is in the position of authority, he must acclimate to the principle of the weaker vessel.
 2. This means that he does not function as an autocrat or dictator, but takes things into consideration (like his wife's feelings, thoughts, needs, etc.) as he exercises his authority.
 3. If a husband is insensitive to his wife's niche and does not accord her the honor that is appropriate, he may find that he will come under discipline, and his prayer life may be frustrated.
 4. There may be a dual sense in how we are to understand that **honor** since the term is sometimes used of overt treatment of a person, as well as the monetary honor that one may show. Matt. 15:4-5; ITim. 5:3,17
 5. The first deals with the mental attitude assessment of someone, particularly as it relates to his/her position in God's plan. ITim. 6:1
 6. The husband must recognize that his wife is a **fellow heir of the grace of life**; she not only occupies an important position as his wife, but has an important position in God's plan.
 7. In the second sense of monetary honor, it would indicate that the husband is to provide the appropriate finances for his wife, so that she can properly execute in her niche.
 8. As with any other area of the Christian way of life, the husband is not to expect perfection in this matter of his wife's obedience; he must allow his wife the time and space to grow with respect to her submission and obedience. Col. 3:19
 - G. Patience on the part of the husband, coupled with diligence on the part of the wife, certainly have the potential for yielding great blessing in the lives of both. Prov. 18:22
 - H. On the other hand, the husband that becomes embittered against his wife and does not grant her the requisite honor may come under Divine discipline. Col. 3:19; IPet. 3:7
 - I. The wife that does not take these issues seriously and strive for compliance with them will find that God does take these matters seriously.