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Introduction

These sermons were put together into a booklet because they all relate to marriage and family life. In our society, marriage and family values are under attack and are being redefined. Many men and women do not enter into marriage with a deep sense of commitment. Throwaway marriages, quickie divorce and the subsequent breakup of families do not leave us untouched.

I do not claim to have come with anything original in these sermons. In the first place, I am indebted to the LORD, who through the Book of Knowledge and Wisdom – the Holy Scriptures – opens to us what he demands in the covenant. Moreover, you will be able to trace back the origin of many of the ideas contained in these sermons from the sources listed in the bibliography.

I pray that these sermons may assist you in understanding the will of the Lord. Encourage your loved ones to read and study what the Lord promises and requires of them. May the theme of these sermons be the theme of your life: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)

I wish to thank my dear wife, Jeanette, for proof-reading and giving many helpful comments. Thank you Jeremy, Bonita, Reuel, Adena, Sarah and Darren for your patience as we worked on this project. A special word of thanks to Sharon Pearsons for the many hours spent on “cleaning up” these sermons in preparation for publication and on the administrative work that followed.

After being in print since 1995, it was time to give this book a “face-lift.” I am grateful to Cathy Jonker and all those on the ILPB “team” for making it possible that you may now have this book in your hands in its updated format. Enjoy!

*Peter G. Feenstra
October, 2007*

*An Appeal to Married Christian Women to
Know their God-given Position*

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Liturgy:

Ps. 113:1,3

Ps. 68:2,5

Hy. 38:1,2,3

Ps. 128: 1,2,3

Hy. 65:1,2

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Beloved brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

By the standards of modern society the passage we have in front of us may appear to be hopelessly out of place and outdated. Let someone try standing up in a university lecture hall or in a public gathering and declare to all present what Paul wrote: “Wives, be subject to your husbands”. Your audience will consider you backwards, out of your mind, and a threat to progress. Try stating it on a radio talk show and angry callers will light up the switchboard. Submission is put on par with oppression or dominance.

What goes on in the world always affects the church to a certain extent. Instead of warding off an infiltration of worldliness many churches and individuals buy what the world offers. Thus some will argue Paul told women to be subject to their husbands because he was a male chauvinist and had an anti-feminist bias. He just did not like women. That is why he himself did not get married. Others suggest Paul’s remarks about women being subject to their husbands were made within a particular context and cultural setting. The congregations at that time could accept this rule. They did not know any better.

We, however, are living in a different age. We simply cannot transport what the apostle wrote over the highways of time and apply it to our society. Such an approach would be simplistic and naive.

All this begs the question: can we, as church, still endorse the principle that a woman should be subject to her husband? Let's be honest; the words of the apostle make us somewhat uneasy too, don't they? For if we continue to uphold that women are to be submissive to their husbands, we may be opening the door to wife abuse or mistreatment of some sort.

Beloved, having faith in God, we are to subject our lives to the authority of the entire Bible. The Lord's norms and standards are for all times. If we are going to listen to the LORD – and that is our reason for coming together as congregation – we will have to apply all of Scripture to our lives. And when we listen to what the Spirit says to the churches we will discover that our text does not promote wife abuse; nor does it put women down. Far from it!

This sermon and the next one will elaborate on the function and responsibility of wives and husbands in marriage. Our text deals with wives, and our theme is:

THE APOSTOLIC APPEAL TO MARRIED CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO KNOW THEIR GOD-GIVEN POSITION

1. THE CONTEXT OF THIS APPEAL

2. THE CONTENTS OF THIS APPEAL

At the beginning of this letter the apostle Paul sings a song of praise regarding God's work of election. It is in this light that he reviews the life of the congregation; their sanctification and renewal. He sees a church called out of the darkness of sin to the light of the gospel of life. The apostle sees adults and children being baptized. There are people who confess their faith in God and commit their whole life to his service, thereby submitting themselves to the Word of God. Observing all these things the apostle exclaims, "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:5,6). Paul recognizes that the Lord uses what happens in the church to fulfil his purpose in reaching the sum-total of the elect.