



CHAPTER 10

Total Equality in Theory and Practice

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TOTAL EQUALITY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

God created man and woman. God created marriage. God's Word gives us axiomatic truth. We are not at liberty to add to or take away from God's truth. Nor shall we assault the omniscient God by questioning His truth. God's truth is true and there is no debate.

God's Word established the truth that God created man and woman as **EQUALS**. Neither the male race nor the female race is smarter than the other. Neither the male race nor the female race is better or stronger than the other (although there may be some disparities in physical strength favoring men, or in the ability to withstand pain favoring women, or other differences in certain aspects of bodily strength). Women are as mentally tough as men. Neither the male race nor the female race is more important to society.

Being equal, however, is not tantamount to being **identical**. I once heard someone say that "Anyone who thinks that the only difference between men and women is the plumbing, is nuts." Herein lies one of the beauties of the marriage relationship. There should not be any type of turf war or battle of the sexes. Instead there is the wonderful opportunity for the husband and wife to **compliment** each other so that each is of greater capability and is wiser because of the counsel with the other, than if each were going it alone. This seems basic and simple, but unless each spouse respects the other's worth and equality, the couple will not appropriate this advantage. Just as each individual is unique in his or her combination of talents, gifts, abilities, and the like, so each couple has a unique combination of talents, gifts, abilities, and the like, so that each couple has a unique combination of the same. In God's wondrous orchestration each couple has the capacity to develop into the whole unity that God planned when He brought the two together.

Rather than the difference of the sexes being a point of conflict, it should be a life long inquiry and blessing. In my heart I really do care about people. However, one of my areas of weakness is that I am slower to perceive people's feelings and hurts. By contrast my precious wife is especially sensitive and perceptive. By respecting Pam as my equal I can seek her perspective and perceptions without in any way diminishing my value. Similarly, I have an open door for her to inform me about needs and feelings of those around me that she sees and feels, but to which I simply am unaware.

If the husband truly knows and believes in his inner being that his wife is fully his equal, then he is less likely to misapply Scriptural instructions concerning the headship of the man and the submission of the woman. If the wife accords her husband full equality, there is less likelihood of disrespect, resentment, conflict, or manipulation. It seems to me that if true equality is **CHOSEN**, understood, spoken, and re-affirmed by both, then conflict is minimized and the ultimate questions of "who is going to make the final decision" or "who is to submit to whom" will not often arise. I do not believe there has ever been a time when I have proclaimed that because I am the head of my wife, I insist or require that something be done my way. I have never tried to demand or force my precious Pam to submit to me or to respect me. We know our roles and we fit well together. We are true equals – with understood roles and responsibilities. When such equality in the marriage relationship is affirmatively considered, it brings you to the

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conscious recognition of the worth of your spouse and to the fresh understanding of the infinite value of your spouse to you.

Here is a word of emphasis from the negative side. When either the husband or the wife takes a spoken or unspoken position of superiority in worth, it will be destructive to growth in the relationship and may ultimately be destructive to the relationship itself. Each of us has weaknesses, limitations, flaws and faults. If one spouse decides to dwell upon the faults or weaknesses of the other spouse, there will always be something to pick at or be dissatisfied with.

It is your **CHOICE** to NOT dwell upon the imperfections of your spouse. Why not instead remember what caused you to fall in love with your spouse in the first place. Most likely those qualities and aspects of your spouse are still in place. **CHOOSE** to concentrate on those things and remember that your spouse is your **equal**. God says so (see I Peter 3:7 which reveals that if the husband fails to recognize his wife as a **joint heir** in Christ, his prayers will be hindered).

Chapter 16 **A Partnership** addresses in some detail the equality of the husband and wife in some other areas, including finances. **Equality** does not require that the husband and wife be clones of each other. When equality is understood there is a freedom to be different and to effectively compliment each other.

I Corinthians 12:12-31 relates to the Christian church, and how the body of Christ works with many parts. I fully recognize that this portion of Scripture does not apply directly to the husband and wife relationship. I do submit, however, that when both the husband and wife are true Christians, they are each parts of the body. I would like for you to consider how this instruction to the church does indeed give guidance for practical application in your marriage. On the wedding day the husband part and the wife part became “one flesh.” The couple is formed into one body (I Corinthians 12:12). The husband and wife may have different roles, duties, and employment, and they may have differing talents, gifts, strengths, experience and abilities, but neither can say that the other is unnecessary or inferior. Both the husband and the wife are “indispensable” to the marriage unit.

Consider specifically verses 24b through 27 of I Corinthians 12. “But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that **each part should have equal concern for each other**. If one part suffers, every part suffers with; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

The principles of these verses apply to your marriage. They also help to understand and appreciate that both the husband and the wife, as parts of the marriage body, are **equal**.

You must continue to **CHOOSE** to accord your spouse true equality with you and you must **CHOOSE** to manifest that equality in your actions, countenance words and attitudes.