

# Learning to Become a Help Meet

by Rachel Weaver



“Do you and your husband understand each other? Do you even speak the same language? Sometimes I feel like I have been married to my husband for 14 years and I still do not know him.” She paused, her eyes brimming over with tears, and looked at me pleadingly as if begging me to understand and sympathize with her. “Do you ever feel that way? Please tell me you do!”

The question struck me right between the eyes. I had my own issues that God had been dealing with me on for the past number of months in relation to our relationship. Only a few days before He had brought me face to face with my own ugly self in the mirror of His Word. I was at a place where I was realizing a need for a total surrender of my own rights, myself and my will, again, at the foot of the Cross. We are always here, but I faced an issue that was needing special brokenness and surrender, one that I must give immediate attention to. Now here I was, face to face with an honest seeker, and I knew that God had given me the answer, not only for myself, but also for her. Would I be humble enough and transparent enough to share who I had become over the past few years, and what God was saying to my own heart? The clock ticked loudly for a few seconds as I pondered how to share. “Grace, Lord. Wisdom, please, and put the words in my mouth.” “It isn’t just my fault is it? There are two sides, surely?” her brown eyes sought mine earnestly. The age-

old question! The age-old response. How nice it would be if we could so easily get off the hook. “He expects so much of me,” she said with a sigh.

Drawing a deep breath, I took the plunge. “Sister, I understand far too well, the struggles and the emotions that you are dealing with. It could just as easily be me that you are talking about. I am in need of heart changes myself. I would rather talk to you when I have gotten the victory myself.” That talk set me to really looking at myself.

It shouldn’t ever have been me, after all the commitments I had made to God and myself before we got married. Not after saying and feeling for so many years that we were best friends, and resolving to always honor and respect my husband publicly, and in our home. Not after seeing so many homes destroyed by a critical, nagging spirit! Why did I find myself here? Why had I fallen lower and lower into self pity? Where was the honor and respect in my heart? What had happened? I had prayed about it with a desperation. But on reflection, it was mostly the self-justifying prayer of the Pharisee, ending with begging God to please change my husband. I always came away from those times feeling emptier than before.

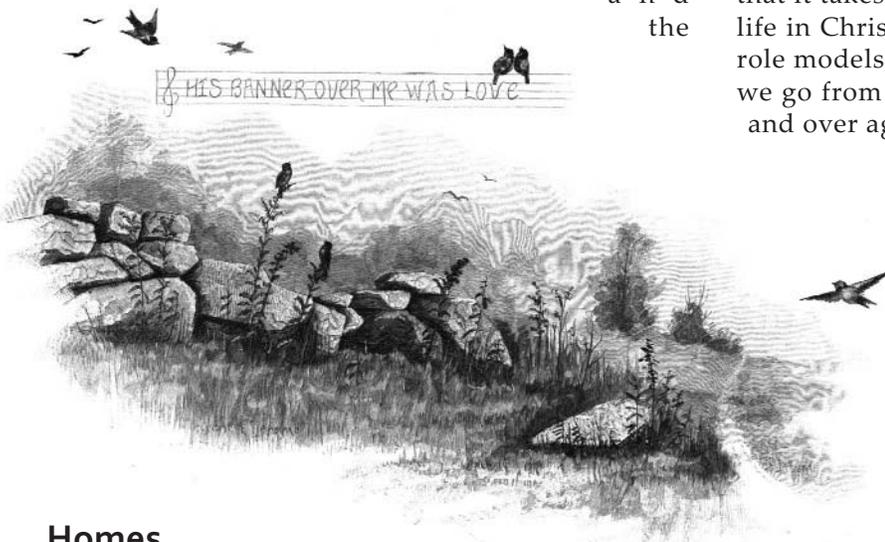
There were things that I desired for our family, that he thought were right and wanted, but didn’t always accomplish. True, these things were good, B-U-T. . . I had slipped into a habit of reminding and fretting. I had begun to see the bad and forget

the good. I had been taking my expectations to God, but instead of repenting and leaving them there at His feet, I had picked them back up and carried them away, and they were getting awfully heavy. The ground at my feet was becoming dangerously like the Slough of Despond. The clouds rolling in looked very similar to the fog around the Castle of Despair! I was having a harder and harder time singing and being joyful and blessing those around me. It seemed the very air was oppressive! Whose fault was it??

My thoughts would go like this, "But what I want is right? My husband is sweet, and he does love me, but I feel so overwhelmed. I need him more than I did at one time because \_\_\_\_\_" (anything could fit here). These thoughts were never helpful and they got me nowhere. I knew that my attitude was deteriorating and it was affecting every detail of my life. But somehow, I could not seem to get a handle on it.

Then God answered my desperate cry for help. He sent me the solution in the form of a challenge in a message, "Total Surrender." As I listened to the Spirit speaking to me and fell on my knees, the answer seemed so simple, and yet so hard. Here I was at the foot of the Cross. And as I knelt and saw my need, I also saw my

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answers, and the way through. My heart was deeply touched and softened. Tears of repentance coursed down my cheeks, and I gave ALL my rights and desires to God once again. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt: 11:28). Immediately there was a rest that I had not had for days and weeks. My responses, my heart attitudes, and my thoughts were cleansed. Life looked so much sweeter and the day so much brighter.

Remember, nothing changed but my attitude. But that makes ALL the difference. And now I had the power to live victoriously, and an open heaven for my prayers. What a blessing! Now I had the chance to try again and step out in faith, knowing that God's promises are true.

This problem is everywhere before us, in many shapes and forms. All around us women are having difficulties with relationships. Homes are breaking up. Friends that I have known and loved for years are leaving their husbands! They are throwing away all the principles that they have held dear and taught diligently to their children, for the froth of the world! Hurts are everywhere. What is the answer?

We know that Jesus is the answer. We know that it takes a bowed heart. But how do we live out life in Christ, as we desire to? Many of us have no role models, or role models that are bad. Where do we go from here? I have heard this statement over and over again, "I was a better wife until I met the

Remnant people." That may or may not be true. Perhaps you were. Or perhaps since you have seen some different role models, you see how much work needs to be done in your own life. My suspicion is that since you have heard good teaching, you have begun to carry expectations around with you.

You have heard what a godly man should be like and now you would be so-o-o happy to have one like THAT at your house. And with that attitude comes a critical and nagging spirit. "Honey, if you would . . . Honey, don't you think that we should. . . If only you would start a home business because the boys really need you . . . If only you would be here . . ." Many, many of your

heart's desires may be fine, but you will never, never get them by nagging and pushing. The Proverbs writer speaks to that. He says, "It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house" (Prov. 21:9). It seems that the more we push and shove to get what we want, the farther away we drive our husbands. I expect that God has made it that way so that we do not get to run things. He has planned for our husbands to be the ones in charge, and He has given them the will to be in authority. He has put things in order, and we need to find our place there.

You cry, "Why? Why did I get the burden and the vision before my husband? I was convicted long before he was, to cover my head, or to train the children, or to get rid of the TV." These cries are all around me, and I, too, often pondered the why. It seems backward. Shouldn't he get the vision first? And sometimes, indeed, he does. But sometimes we do, and one dear pastor's words will forever be with me. "Sisters, do not be discouraged. Be patient. God has given you this burden so that you can get on your knees and work behind the scenes. He wants you to pray, to intercede, and to be so prepared that when your husband is ready, you will work with him and be a tremendous support to him. Remember, God told Sara that it was wrong for her to be in the king's harem before Abraham was willing to obey. And she "obeyed him without fear and amazement." How many of us have that testimony?



**God is calling us to learn to know what our husband needs and wants. Be a student of your husband's heart and desires. You are his help meet.**

You may be laboring under the burden of doing what someone else has preached or talked about. Their thoughts and ideas may be ever so good, but they may not be exactly right for you and your husband. You may say, "But her husband gets up at 5 to pray for his family and my husband should too. Or he helps her with the home-schooling and that is what a father, as the head of his home, should do." But perhaps your husband presently has an hour's drive to work and there is no way that he is home to

help. How can you find your way between the right and the good, and the necessary? As I already said, "What works for you and you husband may not be exactly the same as what works for someone else." Perhaps you have learned to live together according to knowledge, and your husband is asking for something different than another husband is.

I remember well what a dear sister said to me before I got married. As we discussed many practical issues of supporting our husbands and staying in our place, she told me, "Never tell your husband when it is time to go home while you are away visiting. That is his decision. It is something that my husband says a wife should never do." I filed that one away for future reference. The day came when my new husband and I were taking Sunday lunch with folks from church. The hours passed by and my husband was visiting and visiting. We had an evening appointment and I was getting restless. When would he notice the time? We were going to be late! When he finally noticed the time and came out to where I was, we were late. Then he was distressed. He hates to be late! In fact, if he remembers, he is usually early! "You should have called me," he said reproachfully when we were alone. Then I told him the story of our friends. "No," he said gently. "God gave you to me to be a help meet. This is one area where you will need to help me. I hate to be late or to miss appointments, but I do not have a good mental calendar and clock. Please

remind me quietly, and then I will decide when to go. Do not be pushy. Catch my eye. Hold up your wrist discreetly and tap your watch and I will get the message."

And so, we have worked together in that way for years. There were times when I had really fussy, tired little ones and I gave him the sign, and he did not decide to leave. Then the choice was in my hands. Would I happily occupy my babies and hold no ill

will, or would I wait impatiently and grumble and continue to remind him and fret when we finally did leave? Sometimes I passed the test and sometimes I failed.

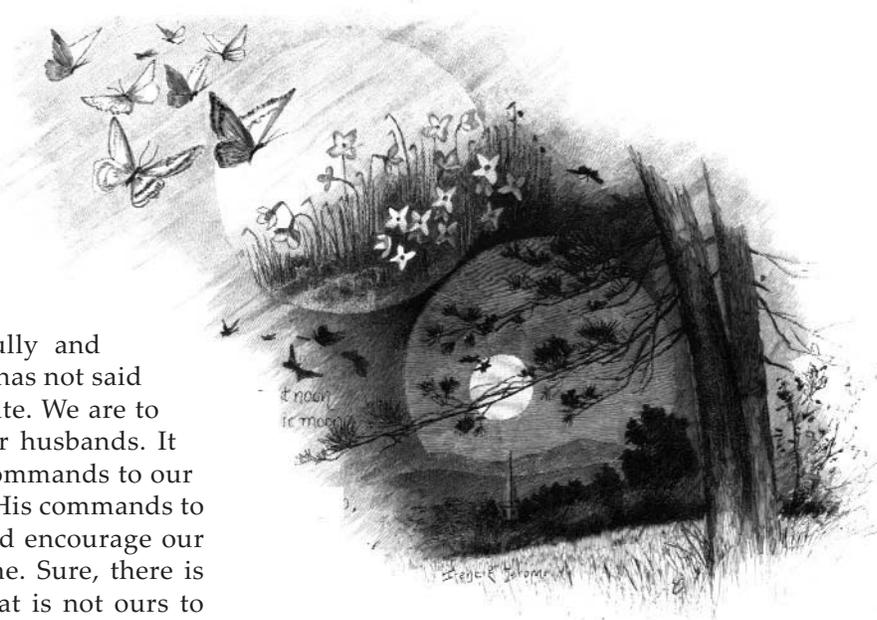
God is calling us to learn to know what our husband needs and wants. Be a student of your husband's heart and desires. You are his help meet. In America, we have been led to believe that he owes it to us to . . . . Many, so many of us, have had the expectations that he would help with the dishes or

with the cleaning. He would do home-schooling. . . . . You fill in the blanks. Some of us have been told by our mothers to give our husbands chores and make them accountable so that they will do their share. If you don't, they say, you will be stuck with a husband who will do nothing around the house.

If you study the Word carefully and openly, you will discover that God has not said this. In fact, He has said the opposite. We are to be help-meets. We are to serve our husbands. It does us no good to look at God's commands to our husbands. We only need to look at His commands to us. We are to support and bless and encourage our husbands. We are to keep the home. Sure, there is another side, but that is a side, that is not ours to correct. Most of us have plenty of work to do on the growth we need ourselves.

The practical side bears talking about. My husband is a very sweet man. In fact, he often blesses me. The sister who was speaking at the beginning of the article agreed that her husband blessed her too. Neither of us was blessing our husband as much as he was blessing us. Why weren't we feeling like blessing? Why were we critical? Ponder the reason.

When we carry expectations around, the result is that we become critical and judgmental in heart and in actions. For example, you may think, "He should really help with the child discipline when he is home. After all, he is the leader, and Brother Denny's home tapes say that he should." Then the door opens and hubby walks in. You all greet him enthusiastically and he sinks into his favorite chair. You hurry around to get the last minute supper details together. You are not ready, even though you should have been. The afternoon has not gone very well. The children were fretful and quarrelsome. Now a dispute breaks out over who had the new game first. Your tired nerves are on edge and you hope "Joe" will take care of the problem. You wait a bit, and the volume goes up. Where is Joe? Why isn't he correcting the children? You peek in, and your tired husband is dozing in the corner. What will you do next? How will you respond? Listen to this familiar scenario... "Jo-o-e? The children are fussing. Would you please correct them?" This is said ever so *sweetly*, but very insistently. Joe stirs. He slowly gets up and goes to see what is the matter. He doesn't really know because he has been resting and not paying attention, so he makes a mistake in how he administers the correction. He is a bit irritated and not as gentle as you thought he



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should be. Then you feel more critical. Have you considered that this is partly your fault? If you had settled the little issue as it came up and allowed Joe to rest a bit he probably would have come to supper more refreshed and ready to minister to you and the children. But when you pushed him, he knew that he should help you, but he did not really have a clue as to what was going on between the children. He was insecure and irritated and did not respond well. Now you are not quite satisfied and he knows it. The stage is set for an evening of poor communication.

God has made most of us as women to be multi-tasking. This means that we can usually be cooking and see what the children are doing at the same time. Some men are gifted in this way, too. But many of our husbands are more one track and find it harder to work and watch children at the same time. When we expect them to operate like we do, we put them in a difficult place. You are the one who works with the children all day. I understand well that you would like him to take over when he comes home because you have done it all day. Maybe he will. But it is NOT your responsibility to make him. Be a diligent, faithful mother during the

day. Do NOT let all the little incidents and difficulties pile up for your husband to deal with at the end of the day. Deal with each problem as it comes up. If there is a problem, especially with an older child, that you feel needs his help, do not bombard him with it when he comes in the door. Deal with it the best that you can immediately, and discuss it with him in the quietness of the evening when the children are in bed. Above all, pray earnestly that he will have a vision and a burden for this enormous task of raising godly children. Then love him for who he is. He will be able to tell the difference.

I always feel extremely sorry for any man whose wife complains that he does not help her with the training. She usually goes on to say that he does not work with the children in the evening and how can she train them if he does not. After all, he is the leader. My mind spins as I realize that this misguided sister does not train the children much all day, simply waiting for him to come home and do it in the evening. Even if he is a really determined, godly dad, he will have a very difficult time making up for the lost hours of training during the day! What a sad thing it is when this happens. No man, short of a miracle, can make up for all the time an unwise wife lost in the day, by his child training in the evening, no matter how diligent. Training must be done, line upon line and precept upon precept. Do your part and allow God to do His.

What should you do now? You, with me, may see your failures. You see how high your expectations are and what difficulties they have made. You

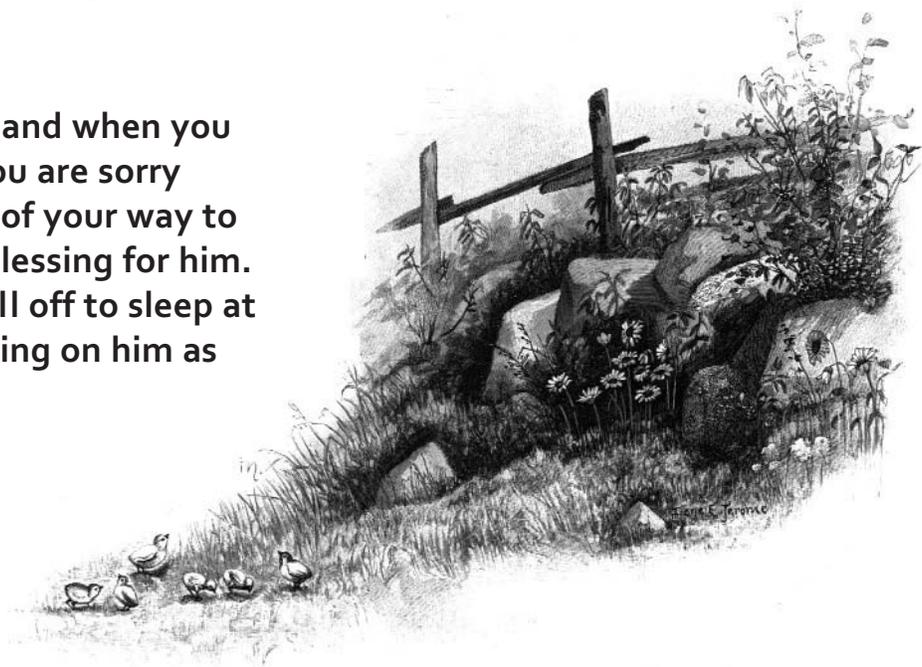
see great needs. Where do you go? Go to the Lord. Get on your face and repent. Then ask Him for guidance as to how to live with your husband and work with the dear little ones that God has given to you. Finally, get up and be obedient. The more obedient that you are, the better things will go and your husband will be delighted to come home in the evening to the restful atmosphere that is there.

One key that has taken me so long to learn is earnest prayer. The Bible says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous *woman*" availeth much." It really does. I never cease to be amazed at what God does in answers to my prayers, when my own heart is first clean and pure and obedient. What if your husband just does not see his job? What if he is not in tune with God and you really are doing the training alone? God will be your helper. He has promised never to leave you nor forsake you. You can raise godly children like Eunice and Lois did with Timothy. It will be harder, but a beautiful attitude and a lovely spirit are very irresistible and God is on your side. What is more likely to touch a man's heart than a wife with a sweet spirit.

Decide now to honor and respect your husband. Never discuss him and his faults with anyone who is not part of the solution. Most of the time that means do not discuss your husband with anyone but God. Even when it looks like it is all wrong, take Sarah's example and follow it bravely. God will honor that and bless you abundantly.

Even as a child, I had an aversion to hearing women discuss their husbands in a disrespectful

**Be a sweet help meet and when you fail, be quick to say you are sorry and do better. Go out of your way to provide support and blessing for him. Pray for him as you fall off to sleep at night and pray a blessing on him as you wake up.**



**Live a life of “total surrender,” and obedience and the clouds will lift. “God is a lifter up of mine hands.” Surely, with a God like that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**



way. I would wonder, “Why did she ever marry him if she is not going to respect him?” Now, as a grandmother, I understand their dilemma a bit more, but not their response. Make it a point never to say snide or sarcastic things. There is no reverence in sarcasm. Be a sweet help meet and when you fail, be quick to say you are sorry and do better. Go out of your way to provide support and blessing for him. Pray for him as you fall off to sleep at night and pray a blessing on him as you wake up. It is amazing how something this simple will help to set your attitude straight.

Ask the Lord to show you ways you can minister to your husband even if he does not minister to you. These choices will influence the way your children respond to you too. Respect breeds respect just as surely as disrespect breeds contempt. Your godly example will bear good fruit!

It also helps to remember that men and women are different, made so by their Creator. We do not think and react in the same way most times. Your husband may be calm and steady and you may be quick and flighty. He may be artistic and you may be practical or the other way around. If you understand this, you will respond better in difficult situations. Your husband might help you clean but he will probably not do it the way you do. Be thankful for his effort and do not criticize it. When you are “under the weather,” he may not respond the way you would like. Perhaps he does not stay there and serve you. Maybe you want him to talk with you and he gets busy with chores. He may not see your need, or you may be more difficult than you realize and he may not know how to respond to you. I think that I do not realize how hard I am to please when I am physically and emotionally “down.” It is sometimes easier just not to be around an emotionally

touchy woman than to have conflict. And over the years, I have come to understand that most men do not want to have conflict with the woman that they love. In an honest effort to do that, they often go where they will not have that conflict, to the workshop or the back yard or the computer. So if your man seems to be somewhat absent, check your attitude and let God deal with you first.

I hear you sigh again and say, “Does it all lie with me? Is it all always my fault?” No, of course not. But you can only change what is in your own camp. You cannot and should not try to change your man. The work is yours in your camp. Do not wait until things cannot be changed. Do not wait until beautiful things are broken beyond repair. Come to God and open the wounds in your heart and let Him be the surgeon. Allow Him to do the cutting and take out all the bitterness and the bad attitudes. Bitterness is like infection in a wound. It always spreads and causes pain. Allow Him to give you the fruit of the Spirit and your joy will be full.

Take courage. “The Lord is your helper.” Embark on a journey. Choose to be cheerful, to bless and to encourage. Choose not to answer again in a difficult situation, but rather speak gently and lovingly. Pray earnestly. Pray often. Pray when you are troubled. Pray when you feel in need. Support and minister to your husband and remember that the God who sees the sparrow fall will not let your labor of love go unnoticed. He will go before you and make your paths straight. Live a life of “total surrender,” and obedience and the clouds will lift. “God is a lifter up of mine hands.” When I read that verse one day in my devotions it blessed my whole day and my whole week. Surely, with a God like that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” □