



# LENEXA EDIFIER

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## OBSTACLES TO OUR FAITH

*Jim Stauffer*

Of all the great tests man has faced in life an impediment to his intended goal is the greatest hurdle to overcome. Great feats of accomplishment have followed tragedy in the lives of men time after time.

One of the great stories in the history of America is the great accomplishments of Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf from birth. She became an author and lecturer throughout the country and was influential in many aspects of American life. To have overcome her illiteracy caused by her physical disabilities is an amazing story. *The Story of My Life* is the autobiography of Helen Keller and has led to *The Miracle Worker*, a film about the life of Helen Keller and her friend and mentor, Anne Sullivan.

While overcoming obstacles does not equate with miracles, Anne Sullivan's accomplishments were many. Sullivan contracted trachoma at the age of five and after several efforts to treat it eventually lost her sight. Her parents were illiterate immigrants from Ireland and her mother died when she was eight. Her father then deserted her and a brother, who both ended up in a poor house just trying to survive. She had no skills or education so could only work as a housemaid. She was sufficiently persuasive to convince her overseer to allow her to attend the Perkins School for the Blind. She applied herself and eventually at the age of 20 graduated as the valedictorian of her class. When the Keller family sought an instructor for their daughter she was recommended and moved from Massachusetts to Alabama to live with and teach Helen Keller.

Just reading about these two women who faced

such seemingly insurmountable odds will cause us to feel shame for the lack of effort we sometimes put forth and the complaining we are capable of when things do not go the way we think they should.

In the Scriptures we see those who had obstacles standing between them and faithful service to the Lord. Some of those obstacles were of their own doing. Both the Jews and Gentiles had self made obstacles to overcome in accepting the gospel of Christ. Paul says the Jews considered Jesus of Nazareth being depicted as the promised Messiah to be an obstacle and the Gentiles looked upon Jesus as too weak and foolish to be a King and Ruler (**1 Cor. 1:22,23**).

Each of us can find many obstacles that will prevent us from doing what God would expect of us. Just how much am I supposed to sacrifice to serve the Lord according to **Rom. 12:1,2?** I know it says I am to be transformed by the renewing of my mind and that my life, as a result of that transformation, is to prove to the world that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect. The transforming of my mind is the same concept as *rising to walk in newness of life* (**Rom. 6:4**). Again it matches the teaching of Paul to put off the old man of sin and put on the new man who has been created in righteousness and holiness (**Eph. 4:22-24**).

It is looking like we may have a difficult Winter season. It has already been very cold and we may compound the cold with snow as the season moves on. How will we respond to this relatively simple obstacle? I say simple because we ride to the well heated and comfortable building in cars with good heat and comfort.

*continued on page 2*

We sit on padded pews and study with every conceivable aid such as study outlines, power point presentations, etc.

It might do us good to read again such passages as **Mat. 26&27; Mark 14&15; Luke 22&23 and John 18&19** and then ask ourselves how much Jesus had to overcome in order to *...become sin on our behalf...* (**2 Cor. 5:21**).

## Excuses #2, "It's My Life."

Last week we examined how expert we all are at making excuses for our shortcomings and examined the excuse that, "It's only for a while. I'll change later." We noted that "later" never seems to come for many people once they begin to excuse their behavior. Even if the time to change is granted, the sin becomes entrenched in the lifestyle and many pass the 'point of no return'.

Another excuse is the "It's MY Life!" syndrome. Like many of the excuses here there is just enough truth to float the falsehood. The truth is that, yes, there is a choice to be made and God expects YOU to make it and NO ONE can make it for you: Not your Mama, your Papa, your Sister or your Brother. You must make it and you alone. Also you are free to choose to ignore God and His desires for your good. But this is not the only truth you must consider.

You belong to God by right of creation. Which of you asked to be conceived in your mother's womb? None of us! God's the one who saw to that and He is the one who knit your body together while you knew nothing of the process (**Ps. 139:15f**). You also belong to God by right of purchase. Jesus paid the price for you on the cross, **John 3:16**. The price was paid whether you like it or not. Question: How do YOU feel when you pay a high price for something you treasure but don't get it?

Finally, your decisions affect others whether you admit it or not. I grew up in a smokers' household. My parents smoked like freight-trains and it affected me.

You see, it's not just about YOU!

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## HUSBANDS, HEADSHIP AND AUTHORITY

by **Berry Kercheville**

Many years ago a young man brought his wife into my office for counseling. The woman was in tears and the man displayed a stern, hard look. His words were even harsher: "Would you tell her that since I'm the head she has to obey me?"

How would you have answered this man? Is this the kind of relationship the Lord expected when he said, "For the husband is the head of the wife" (**Eph. 5:23**)? In commenting about this incident, my wife said, "Do men really think that women who are single are just

dying to get married so they can have a man to boss them around? If that is the case, why would any woman ever desire marriage?" Indeed.

My answer to the man went something like this. "Who told you that you are the head of your wife?" Obviously this question took the man by surprise. He answered by quoting the text. I opened the Bible and asked a second question: "Was that text written to you?"

Even though most men would not follow the demanding approach this husband displayed, many still speak of headship in a way that does not reflect the scripture. Notice that the paragraph which speaks of headship begins with "Wives..." It is not until **Ephesians 5:25** that the text says "husbands..." When Paul addressed husbands, he never said a word about headship. If anything, Paul described headship as a man laying his life down for his wife just as Christ did for the church. Where in the text is there any suggestion that a husband is to take an authoritarian approach in his relationship with his wife? Though Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, that is not even the approach that he has taken with us.

### Misunderstanding Genesis 3:16

After the sin of Adam and Eve, the Lord pronounced the consequences of their sin. In regard to the woman's relationship to her husband, God said, "Your desire shall be for [or "against," marginal rendering] your husband, and he shall rule over you" (ESV). This is the rendering of most of our versions. However, the NET version may give us better clarity on what God was saying: "You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you." The NET translators offer a note indicating the similarity of this verse and **Genesis 4:7**. To Cain, God said, "If you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for ["against," margin] you, but you must rule over it" (ESV). Both the construction of the sentence and the words "desire" and "rule" are the same in each text. In the case of Cain, sin's desire was to rule over him, but Cain needed to dominate or subdue sin. In regard to the woman, she would want to control or rule her husband, but he would dominate her.

Consider the contrast of the relationship of Adam and Eve before and after their sin. Prior to sin, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh... Therefore a man shall leave father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh." Adam pictures his relationship in the same nurturing, loving way Paul pictures Christ and the church and the way husbands and wives should relate in **Ephesians 5**. But after their sin, their relationship turned into a battle. We have observed the battle in carnal cultures ever since the Fall. Just as Eve violated her role in urging Adam to sin, and Adam violated his role by being a passive husband in listening to his wife and allowing her to lead him into sin, so the marriage

relationship would suffer with similar battles. The wife's desire would be to control her husband, but the man would dominate his wife. It is not a picture of Christ and the church nor of a loving relationship.

### God Reverses Curses

One of the interesting patterns in Genesis is how God sets out to reverse the curses that resulted from sin in the Garden. When God called Abraham, he gave three promises or blessings that would take away the curses of sin. The curse on the ground is reversed through the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey, and ultimately in the rich blessings and security that is found in Christ (**Cf. Amos 9:11-15**). The curse of death is reversed through the offspring promise. Through healing the barrenness of Sarah, Rebekah, and others, we see glimpses of the reversal of the pain in childbearing/rearing and the ultimate fulfillment of the great nation promise in the kingdom of Christ.

In **Ephesians 5**, we see Christ portraying the original intention of the relationship of marriage. The husband nor wife attempts to dominate one another. Instead, just as Christ wooed us to him by laying his life down for us, so husbands lay their lives down for their wives, nourishing and cherishing them, treating them as their own bodies, and bringing them to glorious splendor. Paul even quotes from **Genesis 2:24**, prior to sin, to show God's plan in the beginning both for marriage and for our eternal relationship with Christ.

### God's Intentional Design of the Woman

None of the above is to suggest that God created a man and a woman with equal *roles*. Men and women are equal, we are all one in Christ, but we still have differing roles. In **Genesis 2:18**, God created woman as a "*helper, suitable*" for the man. Paul reaffirmed this in **1 Corinthians 11:9**, when he said the woman was created "*for the man.*" However, when we read "*helper*" we tend to think in worldly terms as if the woman was created beneath the man, as in, "she's just a helper." That is not the connotation of the word helper. This same word is used throughout the Old Testament when God refers to himself as the "*helper*" of man (**Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; 1 Sam. 7:12**). The woman was created *for* the man, but she is not beneath him. The wife is commanded to submit and adapt herself as a helper to her husband, but the husband is never given permission to *dominate* his wife.

### "Authority"

Jesus warned the disciples against dominating and exercising authority over one another:

*"You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (**Mark 10:42-45**)

We need to give careful attention to Jesus' words. Whether we are talking about husbands, elders, deacons, evangelists, or other leaders within God's kingdom, no one is allowed to "*lord it over*" another or "*exercise authority over*" others. It is sad that our carnal minds cannot think of differing roles without thinking of one person being on a higher plane than another or one person being in a diminished position or even a servile position. The home nor the church is like the military or like a corporation. Instead, these are kingdom relationships, and though there are submissive roles, we all are also commanded to "*submit to one another*" (**Eph. 5:21**).

Therefore, when a husband attempts to put his wife into submission or believes he needs to demand her obedience, he has already lost the battle. He is thinking the way the "Gentile" world thinks. But when a husband is a shepherd-like leader, who in following the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his wife, he will draw her to him, and cause her to desire him and follow his lead. Would a husband really want her to submit to him for any other reason?

**focusmagazine.org**

## We Dare You To Try This For One Month!

1. Resolve not to miss a single service of the church. No excuses!
2. Read and study your Bible every day, even if it means turning off the TV for a little while.
3. Try praying every time you have a problem or a decision to make. Pray for others, even pray for your enemies.
4. Make it your responsibility to bring at least one visitor to the services.
5. Take at least one night to go visiting -- visit the elderly, the sick, recent visitors to our services.

Try this for a month. You'll be surprised at the results.

**- selected Taken from the Beacon Electronic Edition**

**Heb. 10:24** *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1 Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

**Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

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**Check out the following websites:**

[facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/](https://facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/)

[lenexachurchofchrist.org](http://lenexachurchofchrist.org)

**NEWS AND NOTES:** REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS. JAN PATRICK, L.A. STAUFFER, STEPHEN KIMKER, CHRISTIE CARTER AND J.T. PECK.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:  
CHRISTIAN PARENTING - RON PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK  
OF ROMANS - J STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: JUST WHAT IS A  
CHRISTIAN



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10